



# Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!

Winter 2006 Edition

Individuals with Down syndrome have unlimited potential when given the opportunity to succeed.

## MANAGING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IN THE RESOURCE ROOM

Because the needs of students who come to the Resource Room are so diverse, it can be challenging to structure the learning environment. I have begun managing my Resource Room in the following manner:

### Setting Up/Getting Prepared

- I created a chart with three columns. Each column has an arrow pointing downward (one orange, one blue and one green). I laminated the chart so that I could write on it with wipe-off crayons.
- Each day, I decide how I want to group students. Generally, grouping by ability level or IEP objectives works best. I end up with an orange group, a blue group and a green group. Then, assigning one column on the chart per group, I write student names in the columns.
- I then assign certain tables as work spaces by placing an orange marker on one table, and so on. My markers are simply folded pieces of manila that stand up. Using this system allows me to set up everything the night before. Students can come in, look for their names on the chart, and group themselves according to color. They usually look over the materials I have already set out. So far, this seems to increase their enthusiasm.
- I have 1 or 2 paraprofessionals in my room most of the morning. I write brief instructions on sticky notes (the larger ruled brand) and stick the notes on the materials. This usually is sufficient explanation.



Thank you to everyone who participated in the 11th Annual Buddy Walk Festival on September 30th. With over 180 teams, 5000 walkers and \$300,000 raised, we are proud to host one of the largest celebrations for Down syndrome in the nation!

### Rotation/Instructional Time

- I provide direct instruction (mini-lessons on a skill or strategy; reading from a Linguistic Reader, etc.) to the first group of students while the other 2 groups work with paras. The paras do a lot of skills games, review and reinforcement/practice activities. When I finish my mini-lesson, the groups rotate.
- Then, we rotate again! Simple! Sometimes I teach the same mini-lesson to 3 groups. Sometimes my instruction is more individualized. Likewise, paras may do different activities with different groups. It all depends on what the students need are on a particular day.



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### Variation:

One group could do independent work or simple games (SIGHT Word Bingo, for example) if sufficient paraprofessional help is not available.

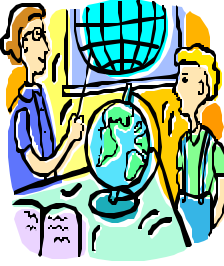
Originally printed online with information provided by: Jan Demontigny

# STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING EFFECTIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION

There are many practical strategies that are effective in the classroom. It is up to the classroom and special education teacher to ensure that appropriate strategies are being used in the classroom to assist individual learning styles and provide success to all students with special needs. It is recommended that a multi-model approach be used to include visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile strategies to achieve optimum success.

## Classroom Environment

- Provide the use of a study carrel when necessary.
- Seat student in area free from distractions.
- Eliminate all unnecessary materials from student desk to reduce distractions.
- Use a checklist to help student get organized.
- Keep an extra supply of pencils, pens, books and paper in the classroom.
- You may have to allow the student frequent breaks.
- Have an agreed upon cue for student to leave the classroom.
- Reduce visual distractions in the classroom.



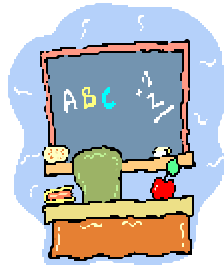
## Assessment, Grading and Testing

- Provide a quiet setting for test taking, allow tests to be scribed if necessary and allowing for oral responses.
- Exempt student from district wide testing if possible.
- Divide test into small sections.
- Grade spelling separately from content.
- Allow as much time as needed to complete.
- Avoid time test.
- Change percentage of work required for passing grade.
- Permit retaking the test.
- Provide monitored breaks from test.

# A

## Presentation of Materials

- Modify expectations based on students needs.
- Break assignments into segments of shorter tasks.
- Give alternative assignments rather than long written assignments.
- Provide a model of end product.
- Provide written and verbal direction with visuals if possible.
- Break long assignments into small sequential steps, monitoring each step.
- Highlight key points in written directions to alert the student to important information.
- Check that all homework assignments are written correctly in some kind of an agenda/homework book.
- Number and sequence steps in a task.
- Provide outlines, study guides, copies of overhead notes.
- Explain learning expectations to the student before beginning a lesson.
- Make sure you have the students attention before beginning a lesson.
- Allow student to use tape recorders, computers, calculators to obtain and retain assignment success.
- Allow oral administration of test.
- Limit the number of concepts presented at one time.



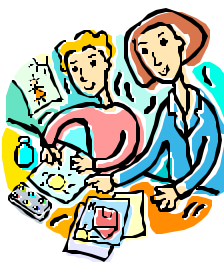
## Time Management and Transitions

- Space short work periods with breaks.
- Provide additional time to complete assignment.
- Allow extra time for homework completion.
- Inform student with several reminders, several minutes apart, before changing from one activity to the next.
- Reduce amount of work from usual assignment.
- Provide a specific place for turning in assignments.

# B

## Behavior

- Avoid confrontations and power struggles.
- Provide an appropriate peer role model.
- Develop a system or code that will let the student know when behavior is not appropriate.
- Ignore attention seeking behaviors that are not disruptive to the classroom.
- Arrange a designated safe place that he/she can go to should they be overwhelmed.
- Develop a code of conduct for the classroom and visually display it in an appropriate place where all students can see it, review it frequently.
- Develop a behavior intervention plan that is realistic and easily applied.



## ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Thank you to everyone who entered our recent essay contest. We were pleased to receive six thoughtful entries from the following educators: Beth Wood, Jamie Haden, Marcy Hatfield, Janet Hensler, Terre Graham and Megan McVay. It's clear that the students with Down syndrome you have taught have touched your lives.



## GOT A GREAT IDEA?

Do you have a great idea you would like to share with other educators? The Down Syndrome Guild would love to hear from you on the methods you are using to create positive outcomes for students with Down syndrome.

Educators who submit a tip, strategy or article for the Spring edition of Inclusion Solutions will be entered in a contest to win a \$50 Plaza Gift Card.

Submissions should be emailed to: [kcdsg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kcdsg@sbcglobal.net) by January 15, 2007. One winner will be drawn from the entries and the winner will be notified in early February. All tips will be published with the educators name so others will recognize the great work you are doing.

Our Public Education Committee reviewed all entries and have selected the following winners:

**1st place:** Terre Graham who will receive \$150

**2nd place:** Jamie Haden who will receive \$100.

Terre's winning essay will be published in our upcoming January/February 2007 Connections newsletter.

## CHALKBOARD CHATTER: TIPS FROM OTHER TEACHERS

- Present information visually (overhead projector, posters, pocket charts, chalkboard) and auditorally. Whenever possible, tie in a hands on component as well. I had a teacher who threw a koosh ball to a student if he wanted them to answer a question. It helps to keep everyone focused! Doing this will help all the students in your class; they each have their own unique learning style after all.
- Have students do simple exercises before writing (pushing palms of hands together, pushing down hard on a desktop, squeezing and relaxing fists). Provide a variety of writing instruments such as pens, pencils, markers, crayons. Allow the student to sample them and choose the writing instrument they are most comfortable using.
- If a student cannot do the worksheet the rest of the class is doing try modifying the worksheets. Cut the problems out of the worksheet and use the rest of the original as a "frame". Create some problems appropriate to the student's level and paste them onto the modified original. After you copy it, the student has a worksheet that looks like everyone else's; but he or she can do work at their own level.
- Have a large variety of multi-level reading books in your classroom. A listening center is also a "must have". Have parent, high school and other volunteers put some of your textbooks (relevant chapters) on tape so that students with disabilities may have these cassettes as a tool.
- Use story maps and other graphic organizers to assist students with writing tasks. Advance organizers (outlines) can help students search for meaning when they read. Make up a chapter outline and give it to all the students. It teaches them to attend to the important points in a chapter.
- Use color coded index cards in a file box to keep track of your students' objectives and modifications. The student's names should not be on these cards!!! By color coding, you have the information handy without violating confidentiality.



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## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students with special needs often excel, or just feel good about participating, in all of the "extras" at their school. Music, drama, art, student council, sports, drill team, etc., are only a few examples of activities which may be valuable for special education students. Everyone benefits through greater understanding of each other as a result of this extra-curricular contact. However, a couple of steps need to be taken in order to ensure that the special ed. student has a valuable, rewarding and successful time while under the direction of a regular education teacher in an extra-curricular setting.

- In order for these students to participate, everyone, including the students themselves, must be comfortable with the situation and the behavior expectations. It is up to the special education teacher to prepare the student properly--especially with behavior expectations!
- The special education teacher may also need to coordinate and provide assistance initially to the regular education teachers facilitating the extra curricular activities so they will feel comfortable supporting the student.
- The students need to know that they are responsible for the requirements of the activity: practice, memorizing, asking questions, taking notes, etc. If they have trouble with any portion of this, they need to find a solution: practice with a friend, ask for help from their special ed. teacher, etc.
- Case study: A Musical Theatre production group at a magnet school takes its cast members by audition from the magnet population. They also had two special education students audition. They both passed, and were welcomed as full performing members of the group. The only adaptation that the teacher had to make (and was fully willing), was to allow the two students extra time to memorize words of songs, (since their disability involved language processing). However, this adaptation was not a hindrance to the group, nor a burden to the teacher. An end result was one of these special education students had a singing solo at the major show of the year!



If all parties accept the expectations of the students, the teachers, and the program itself, success is almost always assured. These students in the special ed. program are there for specific needs...much, if not most, of their talents and personalities are the same as students in the regular education program. Therefore, why shouldn't they participate fully whenever appropriate?

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