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**Inclusive Teacher Guide**

**Kristina A. Vlahon**  
SED 7050  
April 28, 2003

## Inclusive Teacher Guide

### FOUNDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

I have been a sixth grade middle school teacher ever since I got my first teaching job three years ago. For the past three years I have taught math and language arts. I must admit that at first I was quite scared and intimidated by the sixth graders, but now I feel much more comfortable in my teaching. I have managed to build a strong learning community in my classroom and among my students. The students have come to see me as their advocate, someone they can come to and talk to if they need help with something. It is very important to me to build this in my classroom. I feel that it is very important to build a sense of community in your classroom, that way the students respect you and the others in the classroom. It also allows for things to run more smoothly in class. If the students respect you, then more times than not they will do what you want them to or need them to. Also, I just like to take time to get to know each one of my students on a more personal level and take interest in their lives so that I might be able to use that information later on when planning lessons and activities.

When I first began teaching, the whole idea of manipulatives in math seemed very elementary to me. I felt that if the students learned math the same way that I did by doing problem after problem, they would learn the concepts just as well as I did. Plus I must admit I was a little bit scared of the manipulatives and the new ways of teaching math because I was not sure how to do that myself. Now, after teaching math for three years, I feel that manipulatives are a very important part of math. For the students who do not have the logical-mathematical intelligence, math can be very hard. Many of them need to see it visually and be able to touch something for it to make sense. I believe in teaching to the multiple intelligences and I now take into account the different learning styles of students, rather than thinking that none of those things applied to math. I believe that the students need to sometimes get up and act out math and language arts and also sing. These two ways of teaching deal with the bodily kinesthetic and the musical intelligences. The right-brained learner many times need to see it more visually whether through technology, manipulatives or acting it out and that is why I try to do a variety of things in my teaching. I have also found that with the sixth graders, building a routine of what to do everyday when you come in has made them feel much more comfortable in my class because it gives them a sense of security, knowing no matter what else is going on they know what they are to do first.

I do believe also that technology is now playing a huge role in school and I would like to attempt to use it more. Some of the websites out there for math are wonderful ways to teach students concepts. For language arts, just seeing something typed on the computer rather than written helps some of them with their spelling and grammar.

I feel that all students can be taught in one way or another. You just have to build a relationship with the student so that they feel comfortable enough to learn from you and your class. If you do not have a “connection” so to speak with a particular student, you can pretty much assume most of the time that you have lost them. The only way a student will learn from you and try in your class, I believe, is if you have built a strong enough learning community for them to feel like they belong and that they can ask you or any other student in the classroom a question and not feel stupid. Building a strong sense of community in your classroom is what makes a class good.

### **Partnering with Parents**

Working with parents is a huge part of their student's success in your class. My school requires us to make parent contacts every month. I have found that keeping in contact with the parent, whether to tell them that I am having a problem with their student or that their student did an awesome job on a project helps out because the parents know what is going on and they feel comfortable calling you if they have a problem or a concern. Our school also provided planners to each student and I keep in daily correspondence with some parents by writing in their child's planner what kind of day they had. Just that alone has helped with many of the discipline problems that had occurred earlier in the year. I also think it makes the student responsible for their own behavior, knowing that their parent is going to see their planner and read about what kind of day they had.

At parent teacher conference times, my team teacher and I choose to do student-led conferences. It is a great way to celebrate student learning and progress. The teachers walk around the room and sit down with the families while the student is sharing his or her work and we discuss any concerns, problems or good reports that we have about that student. I have found that the students enjoy sharing their work with their parents in this fashion. Also for some of them, because of their home life or their parents' work schedule, this may be the only time they actually get to sit down and talk with their student and see what goes on in his or her life. The students and parents alike enjoy this and we have always had positive feedback. This is something I will continue to do no matter where I am teaching and with who I am teaching because I think it is such a valuable experience for all involved.

I also extend the invitation to any and all parents to drop in or sit in my class for a day just to see how things work. If they have any concerns, maybe their observations of my class will help ease those concerns. I had one parent who came in and sat in my class once a week for approximately a month because her son was giving me so many discipline problems. Through our constant communication we managed to stop a majority of the behavior.

For students with sensory-physical challenges, I would work as closely as needed with the parent(s). I would make sure there was weekly correspondence with the parent and that all of their concerns were addressed. I would ask them for any suggestions they have for me, and I would offer to them my own views and ideas of what should be or could be done. I really believe that to have a successful classroom, not only do you need to develop community, but you also need the support of the parents.

### **Collaboration and support**

In the school I am in right now, the special education teachers, support staff and general education teachers work very closely together. I would hope that collaboration would continue. I would expect to have help from the special education teacher, but I would invite her into my classroom, rather than the pull-out method that so many of the schools use. I want to work closely with the special education teacher and sit down together and plan lessons and plan who would teach what and coteach with her. Coteaching I feel is much more beneficial than pulling the students out so that they miss some of the class instruction.

We also have a math aide who I would like to try to have come in and help when I am teaching math. She can assist me with the students and when they are to be doing work, maybe she or I could pull a few students aside who are having problems and work with them in a small group or even individually while the other one of us is walking around helping the other students. The paraprofessionals in the classroom will also be a great resource to me. Maybe if

we are reading a novel in class and some of the students are slower readers than the rest, the paraprofessional could pull them aside or have a little read-along with them while the rest of the students are reading themselves.

The social worker is also another great resource to have for the students. I am not sure that I agree with the pullout method that is done at our school, but she does make sure that the students are keeping up with their work by checking with both them and their teachers. She then either rewards them for keeping up or makes them catch up when she takes them out. I have worked with her with a number of students already who have problems at home or in school and she has done a wonderful job with the students so I hope that I could keep that up with her.

If need be and if available, the speech-language pathologist, bilingual aide and gifted and talented coordinator could come in and help out as well. At this time, my school only has the speech-language pathologist, but she is a great resource for us to have. If she could come into the classroom and see what we are doing and possibly hold her session in the class so that the student would not miss anything, I think we could work together well as a team.

## **ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION**

### **MATH**

My approach to teaching in an inclusive classroom is to use a variety of teaching strategies. Math can be a very boring subject if you just lecture and then have them do the problems. I like to try to vary my lessons by using lecture, but projects, activities, manipulatives, technology, group work and individual work. I would try to teach the curriculum that I am required to teach, but make it more student friendly. In my classroom now I like to try to relate math to things that they know or like so that they can understand it better. I truly believe that if they can relate a concept to something they do or like in their life, then it will make more sense to them and they will catch on to it quicker. I would use the math textbook as more of a resource than an everyday tool that they have to bring to class and have homework out of every night. I would also allow the students to teach each other concepts. That way if the students do not understand it the way that I taught it, maybe with the help of a classmate they would understand the concept. I would let them work in pairs or small groups most of the time. That way they can teach each other easier and I can walk around the room and monitor their progress, helping them when it is needed. Math is a very difficult subject for most students so I think by using a variety of different approaches; it will help make math a subject that the students do not hate.

In my math class, I would start off with a daily warm-up for the students to do. I do this in my classroom right now and it seems to settle things down right away because they know exactly what they are to do once they come in. It sets up a routine to the students' day and Harry K. Wong states in his book, *The First Days of School*, that "a well-managed classroom has a predictable environment." He goes on to say that by establishing a routine right from the first day, the students learn this routine and allows the teacher to have less wasted time and discipline problems and more time on task and learning taking place. He says that a well-managed classroom should be one in which if the teacher is gone, the students know exactly what to do with a substitute and there is no confusion (Wong, p. 86-91). After the daily warm-up, we would review the previous day's material, go over any homework and move on to the task at hand. Sometimes I would introduce a new concept through notes and lecture, sometimes through an activity that allows them to see the concept before knowing what it is. Of course, they would

know the objective ahead of time, but through activities in math it allows the students to explore the concept before it is officially taught to them and they do not even realize they are learning. That way they come up with their own understanding and definition of concepts and then I will correct them or assist them as needed. Generally, these activities would take place in small groups.

For some concepts, I would attempt to make pretests, in order for some of the more gifted students to test out of the unit and work on more challenging activities related to that concept. I once attended a session at a middle school conference in which the presenter was a teacher and she did this exact same thing. Then she usually had about three groups of students, broken down into smaller subgroups. There were the students who passed the pretest and were working on more accelerated or enriched activities, the students who knew some of the material but still needed a little bit of assistance and then the students who needed more help and more one-on-one time. She would then get the different groups started and work mainly with the lower group, doing small group mini-lessons and more individualized instruction. She also worked by the “hardest five” rule for homework. If you could do the hardest five problems and get them right, then you would not have to do the rest of the assignment. I liked this concept, but not for every assignment; maybe just once a week. Eventually I would like my classroom to look something like that. I could be more of a facilitator with the students who understand the concepts and help those who need more help. There are always new concepts that everyone will have to be introduced to, but with those I would introduce and then let them work at their level, giving assistance or enrichment when needed. For the students with sensory-physical needs, I would adjust the curriculum, have them work with partners and allow them to learn concepts by what their IEP and curriculum matrix say.

One more big thing in sixth grade is that (in my district) they are just finally learning their multiplication tables. I know that they should be learning them earlier, but if they are then they are not reinforced in their minds so I have to work with them more. I start off by giving them multiplication quizzes every day, and they move up every time they pass a quiz. Once they finish multiplication, they move onto division tests (there are six of them) and then finally the power builders, which are charts they have to fill in. I also have them listen to Multiplication Rock from the Schoolhouse Rock series and we watch the video. We sing these songs quite often now while doing homework. They also have to make up their own songs. I think that giving them different approaches to learning their multiplication tables like through music just helps reinforce the tables even better in their heads. And I must admit that I love those songs so I am singing with them and dancing around the room so that is motivation enough for some of them.

In the following sections, I have included two lessons that I have taught in class that work really well with my students. One is an activity that not only teaches measuring, but graphing as well. The other is a project that teaches many of the concepts that are covered in sixth grade: ratios, percents, mean, median, mode, bar graphs and circle graphs and predictions. Both of these lessons were very well liked by all of my students.

### **Action Figure Bungee Jumping**

This activity I did when I was teaching the metric system and measurement. The students were given a meter stick or measuring tape, rubber bands and an action figure either provided by myself or by them. Just the thought of playing with the action figure for the lesson was enough motivation for most of them. The objective of the lesson was for the students to measure how far

an action figure would fall each time a rubber band was added to his “bungee cord.” Then they would use that data to make a line graph so that they could see the relationship to the number of rubber bands and the distance that it would fall. It was a very successful lesson. Some of the students dropped their action figures from closet doors to see if they would fall farther than a meter, some just from the desks. I let them choose where they dropped the figure from and how many rubber bands they wanted to use. I informed them that they had to use at least a total of five rubber bands and that they had to do at least five trials. Some of them did many more than five trials with many more than five rubber bands. Then they were to write a brief paragraph explaining their results and what they learned, as well as make a graph. One group of students did a PowerPoint presentation to explain their results. For students with sensory-physical difficulties, they could hold the meter stick or the bungee cord and assist their group in the activity. Then they could answer yes/no questions on how to present the information. For a student such as Isaac that we learned about in class, even though he cannot really perform the activity, he can visually see the results of what adding rubber bands can do for the action figure. As I said before, this activity was a huge hit, and some of the explanations of activities were wonderful.

### **Lesson Outline**

**Objective:** At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to measure how far an action figure falls and graph the results to see what happens when you add more rubber bands.

1. Explain the procedures to the students and do a quick demonstration.
  - A. First wrap a rubber band around the action figure’s foot.
  - B. Attach another rubber band as the “bungee cord.”
  - C. Choose a place to “jump” off of and set up meter stick to measure how far it falls.
  - D. Jump and measure how far the action figure went.
  - E. Record results in a table.
  - F. Teacher demonstration.
2. Have students collect their materials and begin the activity.
3. Bring class back together and briefly explain line graphs and how to plot points.
4. Explain they have to write a paragraph as a summary/what they learned.
5. Students can then do their graph and paragraph.
6. Wrap-up and discussion.

### **M & M Project**

The second math activity I put in the appendix was the M & M project. As I mentioned before, this activity covers many of the concepts that the students are required to learn, all with the help of one of their favorite candies – M & Ms. Of course, you could do this with Skittles as well. First the students find the results of their bag by sorting the colors and then recording their numbers, their percentages of colors in the bag and the ratios of the colors to the whole bag, and graph the data. Then they use class data to find the mean, median and mode and percentages and then graph that information. Then they are given questions to answer at the end about the graphs and the averages. This is a really fun activity, if not just for the simple fact that they get to eat the M&Ms at the end. They tell me that it is a fun way to learn the concepts and helps them remember it when we come back to those concepts later in the year. They questions at the end allow the students to get as in depth as they want. And for all students, including a student such as Isaac, the circle graph allows them to come up with their own ways of arranging the colors of the M&Ms to be in the graph. Also, once again you have that visual aspect there so it allows

them to see it and also touch it for it to make sense. The M&Ms act as manipulatives for them to physically act out the activity.

### **Lesson Outline**

**Objective:** Through the use of a small snack size bag of M&Ms, the students will learn how to find ratios, percentages, mean, median, mode how to make bar and circle graphs, how to make predictions and how to answer constructed response type questions.

#### **Day One**

1. Explain the purpose of the project and hand out small bags of M&Ms.
2. Give the main direction: Do not eat the M&Ms until you are told you can.
3. Open the bag carefully and sort the M&Ms by color.
4. Fill in the data table of how many you have for each color and the total in the bag.
5. Teacher gives short minilesson on how to write ratios and how to find percent.
6. Students then find the ratios of colors to total in bag.
7. Students use the fractions they found for ratios to find the percent of each color in the bag.

#### **Day Two**

1. Minilesson on how to make bar graphs and circle graphs.
2. Students produce their own graphs.
3. As a class we collect the data from each group and put data in the data table.
4. Use calculators to find the totals for each color.
5. Use calculators to find the percent of each color compared to the total, using the classroom data.

#### **Day Three**

1. Minilesson on finding the mean, the median and the mode.
2. Students will find the mean, median and mode.
3. Students will produce graphs of the classroom data based on their percentages.

#### **Day Four**

1. Answer questions on the data, the averages and what they predict they will find in a new bag of M&Ms.
2. Do a cover page for the project.

#### **Day Five**

1. Hand in project.
2. Discuss results.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

I take the same approach to language arts. I would teach minilessons, and set my classroom up as a sort of Readers/Writers Workshop type atmosphere. I would set up a daily routine for the students to follow. They would come in and work on their Daily Oral Language (DOL), we would correct that and then get on to the lesson for the day or the planned objective. I use the literature circle approach in my classroom and I really feel it works wonderfully. The students could read a novel, either individually, with a buddy or in small groups and then discuss it based on what their roles are. I think that having a role while reading develops a purpose and students many times need a purpose to read material. Fridays will be the DOL, sustained silent reading and then a short book talk at the end where a few of the students can share a good book that they are reading. I have followed this approach this year, and the students really look forward to Friday. They know that Fridays are our day in language arts to kind of chill and relax

and share. I would attempt to have them learn different types of presenting information as well, be it as a report, project, presentation, speech, demonstration, pamphlet, letter to the editor, etc. Using different methods of presenting information and research they have done allows them to show their creativity. It also allows them to work at their own level and produce something that they can be proud of and works up to their potential.

Once again I have included two lesson outlines in this paper to show what my students have done in class. The first one is a project they did based on the NCAA men's basketball tournament and their presentation of information about a college that made it to the "Sweet 16." The second lesson outline was a sort of interdisciplinary unit, where they were studying different countries in Asia and the South Pacific in Social Studies and they were researching information about the countries and then presenting the information in the form of a display board that they were allowed to do any way they wanted which eventually led up to our sixth grade Multicultural Celebration. All of these projects allowed the students to work at their own level, in small groups and present information in their own way.

### **NCAA Sweet 16 Project**

I do this project during the NCAA men's basketball tournament as a way to get them interested in current events. Because they work with current events in social studies so much, they do not consider anything that goes on in sports to be current events. However, I try to help them see that it is. They also have a chance to get to know where different colleges are and produce a pamphlet to give information about a particular college or university that they research. This also touches on research skills, which are touched on all year, but this is a different type of research than writing an actual paper.

I start out by playing up the basketball tournament. I tell them that we are going to do a project based on the tournament and that in order to do this they have to form a team of four people, preferably two girls and two boys. I give them exactly one minute to form their teams. Then I explain to them that they will be working with this team for the remainder of the tournament, finding information and making predictions. I explain to them that points will be kept based on their work and that the team with the most points at the end gets McDonalds' gift certificates. Then I tell them the first activity is a mascot sheet. I give them a sheet of schools (about 30 of them) and they have to find their mascot. They are allowed to look in the newspaper, on the Internet, go to the library, and ask other students, teachers and family members. They get points based on how many of the mascots they can find. Some find all 30 and there was one group that found four of them. The next day they are given a list of colleges (about 20 of them) and told that they have to find the city and state they are located in. They can use the same resources as the previous activity. Once again they earn points based on how many right answers they get. The final warm-up activity is on winning percentages. They are given a sheet with the records of 15 teams. I do a quick minilesson on how to find the winning percentage by dividing the games won by the total number of games. That weekend they are told that they have to get the scores of at least 5 games, many of them ended up getting all of the scores from all of the games that were played.

After the weekend, we know who is in the "Sweet 16" so I make each team chose a school in the "Sweet 16" to research. I then explain to them that they have to research this team, find the school name, location of school, school mascot, school colors, basketball record (including tournament wins) and winning percentage and give three interesting facts about the school. They then have to put this information into a colorful pamphlet and make it interesting.

They also have to make a pennant for that team and make a jersey for that team. Finally, they will have to do a presentation on their school, using an infomercial type concept to present the information. They really enjoyed that part and the infomercials were quite interesting. This project allowed all the students to be creative, no matter what their academic level was. They could be really creative and do the pamphlet on the computer, or they could just fold a piece of paper in half and then write the information in the paper. For a student such as Isaac that we learned about in class, once again he can answer yes/no questions about the project and what they group should do and he could develop a possible color scheme for the pamphlet and/or the pennant. The jersey has to be made just like one the players would wear. I think all students benefited and could work at their own level during this project, including my inclusion student who came up to me later and said he really enjoyed this project.

### **Lesson Outline**

**Objective:** During this project the students will not only get involved in current events, they will produce another way to present research rather than just a report on a university or college. Plus they will find out where different universities and colleges are and do some math by finding winning percentages.

#### Week One

##### Day One

1. Introduce the tournament and project.
2. Choose classroom teams for the project.
3. Activity on mascots.

##### Day Two

1. Choose team names.
2. Activity on school location.

##### Day Three

1. Minilesson on finding winning percentage.
2. Activity on winning percentage.
3. Weekend homework to get the scores of at least 5 games.

#### Week Two

##### Day One

1. Explain the pamphlet, information needed for the pamphlet, pennant, jersey and infomercial.
2. Choose a school in the "Sweet 16" to research.
3. Students begin research.

##### Days Two-Four

1. Continue research.
2. Do pamphlet, pennant, jersey and infomercial.

##### Day Five

1. Infomercials and project presentations.
2. Predictions of teams to win.

### **Country Project**

In this project, I work with the social studies teacher, to help the students research a country and present information on that country to other students from different sixth grade teams. In social studies, the students studied Asia and the countries of the South Pacific. The

teacher then informs them that they will be researching a country from that area of the world and that they will be working in groups. She had already chosen team captains and allowed the team captains to choose students to be in their group. Then the social studies teacher allows them to choose a country to research from a list of countries in the area they studied. She then explains the project to them and how they will research the country, find interesting information on the country based on the five themes of geography and then produce a presentation board, which will be decorated by them, their own way, with information on it about their country. They are also told that they have to prepare a dish from that country to share with other students. Then they begin the project. The project itself, research and presentation boards, takes about two weeks to complete and will be displayed in what our school called our “Multicultural Celebration.” The students work in both social studies and language arts to do research and presentation boards. Once again a project like this allows all students to work at their own levels, even within a group. And once again for students like Isaac, they can answer yes/no questions about information to be included on the board, food dishes to prepare and the presentation itself. They can also develop a color scheme for the board to represent the country that they are studying. The students enjoyed this project as well and it was a great learning experience not only for the preparers of the boards, but all who saw the boards. I admit that I learned a lot that day about different countries and I also ate quite a bit of good food.

### **Lesson Outline**

**Objective:** Through this project, the students will learn research skills and how to present information in a different way from writing the traditional report. They will gain social interaction benefits from this to strengthen their interpersonal intelligence and they will also gain knowledge of a number of different countries from a variety of areas of the world.

#### **Week One**

1. Choose teams for project.
2. Choose countries to research and explain the project.
3. Begin research and plan presentation.

#### **Week Two**

1. Continue and finish up research.
2. Discuss and work on presentation boards.
3. Discuss recipes to prepare.
4. Finalize and finish everything.

#### **Week Three**

1. Multicultural Celebration – a celebration of different cultures and learning.
  - board presentations to other classes, PowerPoint presentations (if done), explanations, write down information, and eat.

### **Accommodations and Adaptations**

I have added the accommodations and adaptations I would make when I was explaining the lessons and my academic approaches. Of course, I will reiterate that I will make all accommodations needed for each and every student, allowing them to be the best possible student they can be. I will most definitely look at the IEP at the beginning of the year and throughout to make any accommodations and adaptations that I need to based on their needs. Some of these accommodations I will review: calculators in math class, reduced assignments, partner and group work, using computers to type rather than writing, have a scribe for writing,

use classroom aides or have parents volunteer as classroom aides, use books on tape or computer for those who have difficulty reading and provide opportunities for enrichment for the gifted students.

## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL**

### **Building Community**

In the middle school where I teach, we have something called Advisory. It is a 30-minute period every day where each teacher has a group of 14-19 students that they meet with everyday to get to know them and do various activities during this period. We play games, do team building activities, get-to-know you activities, cooperative learning activities and problem solving activities. We also go to a place called Holiday Camp where we spend a whole day with our Advisory at an adventure camp working together to solve problems and overcome feats.

According to Chapter 11 in *Inclusive Teaching*, building a community gives students a sense of belonging and allows everyone in the community to receive the support and care that they need. It is also a place where problem solving takes place. Building a community in the classroom allows all students to feel comfortable contributing in classroom discussions and gives them a sense of responsibility when being a part of the community (Peterson, 322-323). As mentioned in the above paragraph, Advisory manages to do all of those things. In the classroom, I try to create an environment where all students can work together and help each other with assignments and projects. I try to convey to all students that we can easily work together and get along together if we just learn to look past our differences. There are some times when I allow students to choose a wrap-up to units, whether it be a test, paper or project. This way we try to develop a sense of a democracy, where the students get at least some choice in what they do. Generally when a project or activity is assigned, I give the students the option to work together or by themselves, and I usually allow them to choose the people they work with. However, once in a while I make up the groups myself so that I have different students working together so they get to know each other better (ideas seen in Figure 11.1, Peterson, p. 325).

When problems arise in the classroom, usually I take the students out in the hall to speak with them. I try my hardest not to yell at them and give them the opportunity to tell me what the problem is, that way they are taking responsibility for their own behavior. If I see a problem between a group of students, many times I allow them to go into the hallway to solve their problems on their own, rather than bringing the counselor in or trying to solve them myself. I try to be more of a facilitator and make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak, but I basically keep my comments to myself and let them figure out what to do. Allowing them to do this is working on their problem solving skills as well.

I generally have the rules set up the first day of school before the students arrive. I think for the sixth graders it gives them a sense of security to already know what they can and cannot do. As suggested by Harry Wong, I only have five rules and I explain them on the first day. I also explain the procedures for different times of the day or what they do for certain assignments or to line up for lunch. I explain to them the daily routine as well. Then I continue to reinforce it everyday so that there is not a doubt in what they are supposed to do. I teach them how to help one another and I make it clear to them the first day and every day following in the first week, what will happen if they misbehave (Wong, Chapters 12-13).

One thing I stress is the use of “killer statements.” I explain to the students that anything said with the intent to hurt someone else is known as a “killer statement” and this is a term that is used throughout our school. Then we do an activity called the IALAC, which stands for “I am lovable and capable.” The counselor comes in and helps with this activity in which he tells a story that shows how things can really damage a person’s IALAC and then they make their own IALAC sign and decorate it any way they want and they hang it in their lockers. This reminds them that even when nothing else is going their way, they are lovable and capable.

### **Behavioral Challenges**

When it comes to behavioral challenges, the best advice I have ever been given is to “Be Consistent.” I do have a very hard time with this, but many teachers I have talked to including Harry Wong himself, have told me to be consistent in dealing with behavior (Wong, chapter 11). Once the students see that you are consistent handling misbehaviors, then they will begin to respect you more and they will know not to try anything because they will know what will happen. There are occasions when you have to make exceptions depending on the student and the number of warnings or their previous behavior, but being consistent is key.

Like I said before, I explain the rules and consequences the first day and reiterate them everyday for the first week. I also try to stay in contact with parents to let them know what is happening with their child in class. Some parents I keep in more contact with than others because of behavior, but if the students know that you are not afraid to call home, they generally behave better for you. I proved that point to myself this year. Many times if there is a problem, I will remove the student either to the hall or the in-house suspension room (which is connected to my classroom) for a time-out and then let them come back to see if the behavior has improved. Very rarely do I need to go much further than this because the students know that the next step is a referral depending on the severity of the behavior. I realize and have read in books that a majority of problems in classrooms is a lack of discipline (Lewis, p. 114). I learned that my first year, the only way that a first year teacher knows how, through experience. I tried to be their friends, and while I try to be friendly with them, I realize now that being their friend is not the answer. Now I know to consistently deal with behaviors, make my expectations clear to them and consult other teachers and colleagues when needed (Lewis, p. 115). I give positive feedback when good behavior occurs so that the students are aware of what they are supposed to be doing and a warning and then time-out usually occurs when there is a negative behavior (p. 119).

I do believe that if you treat students fairly and equally, then you will have less problems in your classroom because they will see that you respect them. This then results in respect from them. You will have occasional problems, but if you are consistent, you set a routine for them to follow, you make expectations clear and they know your rules and consequences then severe problems are less likely to occur.

## **SENSORY-PHYSICAL**

### **Physical design**

I see my classroom being accessible to all students and adults. I will try several different seating arrangements, but for the most part I will put desks and tables into small group clusters. This way four to five students will be sitting together and it will allow for a better learning environment. If I assign group work, or if students need help, they can turn to someone in their cluster of desks/tables. For a student with a sensory or physical need, this will be helpful to them as well because they will be surrounded by students and/or others who can assist them. I would

like to set up my classroom where essentially you would not be able to directly point out who the special needs students are. I would like it set up so that all students are working together to provide a healthy and welcoming community.

I would like to set up a spot in the back of my classroom as a sort of quiet place where my students can go and work if they need a quiet place. Right now I have the in-house suspension room attached to my classroom where I sometimes allow students to work when they ask me. I have cupboards right now set up specifically for my students where they can get any supplies they need for an activity or assignment, such as scissors and markers. I try to store equipment where it will be out of the way of students. Any area where the students frequently walk through is kept clear of anything that would get in their way. I also want to be able to move about the room easily myself so that I can be accessible to all students, so I make sure that there is enough room between clusters of desks for me to move freely throughout the room. This set-up is also accessible for a student in say a wheelchair, because there is enough room for them to be able to move about the classroom without problems. With the desks it is also easy to allow students to have their own personal space and I stress that all other students respect each other's personal space (Lewis, p. 172).

### **Accommodations**

In the area of accommodations, I would first consult anyone and anything I needed to make sure I knew how to accommodate the student. I would look at the IEP, speak with previous teachers, social workers, counselors, and aides. I would contact the parents and see if they had any concerns and any suggestions. I would also find out everything I could about the student's disability so I could be the best possible teacher for him or her. I would address the medical concerns and make sure that there are no additional problems that I do not know about. I would ask questions about how the student would travel from class to class and if any accommodations need to be made during that period of time, such as will he/she arrive late and leave early and will he/she need someone to accompany them. I would make sure that all technological devices needed for that particular student were easily accessible in my classroom. And I would make sure that I knew about the individual's self-care, what they can and cannot do without help, such as feeding and academic activities (Lewis, p. 329).

In my classroom, I would hope to have the physical stimuli needed to accommodate all students. I would make sure we do a variety of different things in my class where we would touch on the perceptual, auditory, visual and kinesthetic sides of things. I would take into account the right brain and left-brain learners and try to do activities that work with both sides. The hardest thing for me is the motivation of students. Even though I have so much energy in class and I attempt to get all the students excited about lessons through my own excitement, sometimes I am not sure that I provide the appropriate motivation (Peterson, p. 183).

For assignments, I will base assessment on what students can do. If they need to work with a partner or have their assignment shortened, I will accommodate them in that way. I have had to do this already several times for various students that I have had. Other perceived accommodations I might need to make for someone who cannot write is a scribe to write everything down for them, access to a computer if they can type, or a tape recorder for them to speak into so that is their form of writing. I would provide to students with special needs books on tape, textbooks on tape, calculators, computer access and books on the computer or websites to assist them. For someone with a hearing disability I would see any of the following accommodations being made, a phonic ear, a microphone, a sign language interpreter or a

computer for him or her. For someone with a visual disability, they would need an aide, books in Braille or on tape and as with all students, interaction with other students. And finally, the seating arrangements can always be adjusted and changed when needed.

## **SPECIFIC STUDENTS**

### **Eddie**

The first student I will introduce is a student I currently have in class that we will name Eddie. Eddie is EMI and has difficulty with just about everything. He currently has an aide to assist him in the classroom and I try to assist him myself when I can. I usually shorten Eddie's assignments because he has difficulty with them and he feels overwhelmed many times when he is expected to do as much as everyone else. In math he is allowed to use a calculator for assignments as well. In language arts, he tells his aide what he wants to write about, gives her the details and usually tells her the story and she writes it out for him first. Then Eddie just copies what she has written. Sometimes he writes his own papers, which are shortened for him and spelling and grammar usually do not count as much because of his disabilities. He is allowed to read picture books and verbally give me summaries of what he has read. When we are reading a classroom novel, he either reads with a partner, his aide or myself and sometimes we read together as a whole class. Often I allow him to work with other students and they are very tolerant and helpful to them. The students all like Eddie and they rarely make fun of him. He is treated as if he is just like everyone else. He is able to participate in classroom discussion with help from his aide and the people that sit around him. And he is always so proud of himself when he can answer a question in classroom lessons. He has his tests read to him and they are also shortened because of his disability.

Eddie comes from a very bad home environment. Mom is much worse off than him. We have been told that Eddie is the best one out of the mom, brother and him. His father is in jail in another state. His mother cannot drive, cannot read and can barely write. It was very sad for us to see this at Eddie's IEP. His brother is also a special needs student, but he has violent tendencies as well. He has tried to choke and beat up both the mother and Eddie several times before moving out to live with another brother that we know nothing about. The family was evicted from their house because they never cleaned it and never kept it up and now lives with a sister of the mother. They are close to being evicted as well. As you can see, his only relief is coming to school because he gets nothing from home.

The curriculum matrix that I have attempted to make for Eddie follows the case study section. These are some of the things that I would expect from him and that I try to have him do in my classes – math and language arts.

### **Lee**

Lee is a student that I had two years ago. He was an autistic student who had a very hard time functioning in the classroom. He had a full-time aide with him to help him in any way, academically, socially and behaviorally. Lee frequently had outbursts in class and had to go for walks with his aide because of them. He continually rocked back and forth in his chair at a pace that was so fast I have never seen anyone rock that fast. He had difficulty writing legibly, he had difficulty in math because he could not even add or subtract, let alone do anything else. He had numerous medical problems and was always missing class to go to a doctor's appointment for this or that. He would get up in the middle of class to leave for the bathroom and inform all of us

that he had to leave because he had diarrhea, which happened often. He had difficulty with his speech as well and went to see the speech therapist once a week for help. He also saw the social worker once a week. The accommodations made for Lee were shortened assignments, if he did the same assignments as the rest of the class at all. His mom wanted him to learn his basic math facts and the special education director felt that the math program was too hard for Lee so many times he would just do other worksheets or practice his flashcards. I only had him for math but in language arts I would have had shorter writing assignments for him and have him read books at his own level and give me oral summaries. If we did literature circles I would have him read with a buddy, his aide or myself.

Lee's parents were both very large people who seemed to care about him a lot. However, I know there were stepsiblings and last year as a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Lee had threatened to kill one of his stepbrothers, so he has been in to see a psychologist many times. He has also been in the hospital for suicide watch a few times and has uttered the words at school "I'm going to kill you" to a few students. As you can see, he has psychological problems along with having autism.

His curriculum matrix follows after Eddie's. I tried to come up with goals for him as well.

### **Jonathan**

\*\*This case study I got from one of the case studies handed out in class so it will be word for word from the handout and then the next paragraph I will explain my accommodations.

Jonathan is 16 and severely multiply impaired. After being abused in a separate school, Jonathan has been out of school for the last two years. Over the last few months, a group of students in the schools service club agreed to help Jonathan be a part of the school and his IEP calls for him to participate in the high school, phasing into full time over the next two months to build his stamina. Jonathan has cerebral palsy, severe mental retardation, and gets around in an electric wheelchair, which he has learned to direct in basic ways. He communicates through facial gestures and use of a computerized "communications board." He has no measurable reading or math skills. He has a large smile and people seem to like to be around him. He likes music of all sorts. His IEP goals include improving his sitting position, developing basic interaction skills using the communications board, and responding to simple requests. His mother wants for him to be a part of his community with people that know and care about him.

For Jonathan, just participating in classroom activities and group activities would help him to become a part of his community. The students from the schools service club would be very willing to help him out in class and out of class. He could use his communications board to communicate with many of us, including the teacher, on activities and just at leisure. With the help of an aide and other students, Jonathan can phase into coming to school full time because that is what he needs. Just the social interaction alone will work wonders for Jonathan. I would make sure that I had someone work with him and that I would work with him from time to time. Someone could read to him from either novels or picture books and communicate with him through the use of the communications board. We could teach him the basic math skills and he could take part in the activities in math not just for social interaction but also for learning purposes. I think for a student such as Jonathan (and I could be very wrong) just the social interaction itself will prove to be more useful to him than the academic side, which will come throughout his participation over the year.

**Curriculum Matrix**

**EDDIE**

**6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE CANTRICK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

<u>IEP GOALS</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Language Arts</u>
Increase ability to express himself orally.	X	X
Increase positive interactions with peers.	X	X
Read three books that he enjoys over the semester.		X
Express himself in writing and through other tools, using his own life and other topics of interest.		X
Learn basic math skills that can be applied to everyday life.	X	

**LEE**

<u>IEP GOALS</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Language Arts</u>
Increase positive interactions with peers.	X	X
Participate in group activities more often.	X	X
Learn basic math skills that can be applied to everyday life.	X	
Learn to tell time on an analog and digital clock.	X	
Work on handwriting to become more legible.		X
Read at least three books (picture books) that he enjoys over the semester.		X

**JONATHAN**

IEP GOALS	Math	Language Arts
Increase positive interactions with peers.	X	X
Increase amount of time spent at school to become a full time student.	X	X
Use computer books or students to read at least two picture books that he enjoys.		X
Work on basic math skills with other students to help him.	X	
Express himself through the use of his communications board.	X	X

**References**

\*\*\*Michael, I am sorry if my references were not cited properly and my references are not done correctly. I am currently trying to find my APA manual.\*\*\*

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