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Special Education Service Agency Newsletter



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Letter from the Editor

Jennifer Schroeder, SESA Multiple Disabilities and DeafBlind Specialist

Whether you are a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a paraprofessional, a related service provider, or an administrator, making sure that ALL of the students you work with are successful is a huge priority. What that success looks like, and how it is achieved, may differ, but in the end, having strategies that work for all of your students - whether they are on an IEP, haven't had enough sleep, have things going on at home, or come to school ready to learn - is beneficial for everyone (including you!).

The staff at SESA have varying experiences when it comes to teaching: from teaching in a village, to teaching at a residential school, to working with special needs students overseas. We have staff that have worked with high school students, and others who have focused more on primary aged students. Our staff have experience co-teaching with general education teachers, as well as working with multiple paraprofessionals. With all of our varied experience, we have been able to see what supports work across ages, settings, and students. These are the strategies that we want to talk to you about: strategies that will help to support your students no matter what setting you are in!

Happy Thanksgiving,
Jennifer Schroeder, SESA DeafBlind and Multiple Disability Specialist
jschroeder@sesa.org

Dynamic Classrooms: Feedback and Growth

By John Barrowman, SESA AI Specialist

Do you have a class-wide behavior support system? I find that a lot of teachers do, but I've seen some differences in how often it gets used.

Here's a thought: A strategy can only work if you use it, and you will only use it if it works.

So now what? If every classroom has 3 - 5 basic rules and some sort of a system to encourage students to follow it, everything should be perfect, right? I wish, but it's not always as easy as having a chart on the wall. So here are some tips to SUPER CHARGE your wall chart by using FEEDBACK to drive GROWTH for all of your students.

FEEDBACK: Every lesson you teach, make sure that students are getting feedback on following the class rules. This means that for every one person who needs a reminder, be sure to praise at least FIVE who did something right. All too often, the clips only move down or not at all, and this can cause students to lose interest or to only fear the chart. If they WANT the chart, it will motivate them to improve. Consider your lesson complete once that chart has been used to point out the great things your students are doing (maybe even provide an incentive for the first 3 students to reach the top of the chart for their behavior).

GROWTH: Not all students are going to be on the same level behaviorally. Some may struggle, while others may excel; this is natural. If you are curious about this, take note of your chart for a while and you will likely notice the same kids at the bottom: those who often get in trouble. These are students who may require extra support, but can get that from the class-wide chart! Set goals that are unique to your student, but use the class-wide chart. This can give that student recognition and a sense of accomplishment to see themselves at the same level as their peers.

Prevent, Teach, Reinforce
By Samantha Cowper, SESA ED and AI Specialist

The "Prevent Teach Reinforce" (PTR) model is an evidence based model designed to meet the behavior support needs of students with serious behavior challenges. This same model, and the strategies embedded within the model, can be applied school-wide to help create learning environments where all students are focused and engaged in instruction. The model uses positive behavior supports to create well managed and safe classrooms.

In addition, social emotional learning (SEL) components have been integrated into the model as an additional support to promote student's well-being and success. SEL components are intended to address the fundamental conditions for learning, and fosters students' capacity to learn. These strategies can be tailored to student needs. When the whole environment supports positive behavior, research suggests students with disabilities do better.

Prevention Strategies:	Teaching Strategies:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing choices • Transition supports • Environmental supports • High ratio of positive to negative comments • Classroom management • Non-contingent reinforcement • Opportunity for pro-social behavior • Peer modeling or peer reinforcement • Teachers provide opportunities for sensory activities • Teachers model emotional regulation • Calm zones in the classroom • Behavior specific praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific problem-solving skills • Classroom procedures • Classroom expectations • Self-regulation and general coping strategies • Specific social skills • Learning skills strategies • Self-management (self-monitoring) • Independent responding • Study skills • Functional classroom behaviors

Reinforcement Strategies:

- Reinforcement methods/classroom reinforcement systems
- Discontinue reinforcement of problem behavior
- Group contingencies
- Increase ration of positive to negative responses
- Home to school reinforcement system
- Delayed gratification
- Differential reinforcement
- Contingent reinforcement
- Reinforcement schedules

Relationship Strategies:

- One-to-one interactions with children
- Get on child's level, face-to-face
- Use pleasant, calm voice
- Use simple language
- Provide warm, responsive physical contact
- Follow child's lead
- Help children understand classroom expectations
- Redirect to divert from challenging behavior
- Listen to children
- Encourage children to listen to others
- Acknowledge children for their accomplishments and effort
- Classroom community building activities/restorative circles

Social Stories

By Kendra Wolf, SESA AI Specialist

Social stories are written or visual cues used to assist students in navigating a social situation, setting, or event by preparing for and teaching appropriate behaviors. Social stories or social narratives are most often used to help children with autism or other disabilities learn specific social or coping skills, as well as how to work through behavior management strategies. An example of this may include how to introduce yourself to a new peer.

Social stories can be used to help all students have success in social routines! All students can be provided assistance in perspective taking, understanding expected behaviors, working through interpersonal issues, and practicing conflict resolution skills.






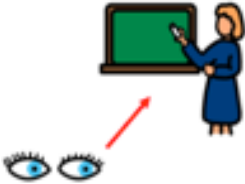
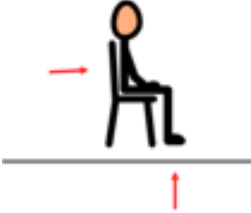
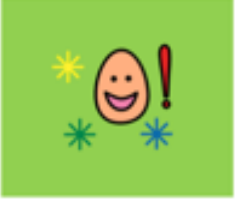
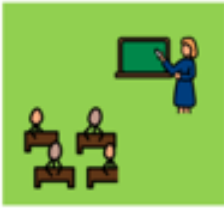
Social stories can specifically help any student with:

- new experiences (first day of school, riding the bus)
- transitions (moving from one activity to the next, attending a new classroom)
- social skills (taking turns, initiating conversations)
- learning routines (clean-up routine, lunch routine)
- specific behavioral issues (name-calling, hitting)
- setting expectations for behavior (behavior during learning time, quiet voices in the library, going on a field trip)

By using social stories in the classroom, we are helping all students by:

- encouraging perspective taking. Social stories address the feelings and opinions of other people. By recognizing the point of view of others, it encourages the development of empathy and the understanding of how a student's actions can impact the feelings and behaviors of others.
- setting specific expectations. When students are given step-by-step instructions of what is expected of them, they are more likely to understand and follow through with the strategy.

As a teacher or classroom staff member, you may find that many of your students in the classroom are working on the same behaviors or social skills, including using expected behavior when standing in line. The teacher can use social stories to review behavior expectations for specific transitions, routines, or instructional activities before the class begins the targeted activity or routine. Using a social story with the entire class will encourage all students and staff to use consistent language.

 <p>It is time to learn.</p>	 <p>I am in control of my body.</p>	 <p>My mouth is quiet.</p>
 <p>My ears are listening.</p>	 <p>My hands are on my desk.</p>	 <p>My eyes are on my teacher.</p>
 <p>My body is clam. I am sitting straight in my chair. Both of my feet are on the floor.</p>	 <p>I am showing expected behavior.</p>	 <p>When I have control of my body, the teacher and other students feel safe around me. My class feels happy when I show expected behavior.</p>

Success for ALL!

By Angel Black, SESA VI and MD Specialist

Having a student with visual impairments in your classroom may be a bit intimidating at first (let's be honest, maybe even a little scary). But, it doesn't have to be! There are research-based strategies that will not only be helpful to your student with visual impairments, but can be useful and helpful to ALL your students!

First, verbalize, verbalize, and then verbalize some more! ALL of your students will benefit if you read and/or talk about everything as you write it on the whiteboard, review from a presentation, or show something on the SMARTBoard. Be descriptive! Set the mood with your tone. You may feel like you are talking too much, but you aren't. You are bringing the world to your students in a different, but very appealing and exciting way. Try not to point to things without saying what you are pointing to. Remember: 80% of what a student learns is done visually, so be sure you add an auditory clue to the visuals you are using.

Second, have fun, increase their knowledge base, and enhance ALL your student's education by actively encouraging and modeling tactile exploration. Your student's tactile system is their ability to sense the world around them through touch. This is especially important for the student with a visual impairment, but also significant for each every one of your students. We interpret everything through our tactile system. Our ability to process tactile input is directly related to our ability to visually discriminate, motor plan, have appropriate body awareness, and is invaluable in developing emotional security, social skills, and academic learning. See! Amazing benefits and great for ALL students!

Third, create a literary rich environment: one that ALL students participate in, either in groups or individually. Think of the different ways that your students read (visually, auditorily, tactually). Make your classroom a place where everyone can read in the way that suits them best, give them the time and space to do it, and encourage conversations about what they are reading. Literacy is the foundation of education; make sure all your students have the opportunity to engage in reading every day. Successful learning really can be for ALL!

Visual Strategies to Support All Students

By *Olivia Yancey, SESA DHOH Specialist*

A general strategy recommended for students with hearing loss is to provide visual aids that he or she can reference throughout the lesson. It also helps visual learners in your class determine the routine, lesson goal, or vocabulary being introduced or reviewed throughout the day. Here are a few examples:

- When reviewing multi-step directions or instructions, provide a visual chart, graphic organizer, and display page numbers for homework or the activity to support listening skills.
- Reference the graphic organizer or visual more than once as you discuss the content. This supports not only the student with hearing loss, but also those peers who learn best by seeing content visually.
- Consider providing fill-in-the-blank notes for students to use during lectures.
- Write all assignments on the board - including page numbers - in the same location on the white board or SMARTboard.

My SESA Story

By *Mary Lillie, Special Education Teacher, Manokotak School*

I had a student who had one hearing aid, and another who had recently been given one hearing aid. We asked Olivia to come out and show us how to correctly clean and work their hearing aids. Throughout the process, she was a huge support. She went above and beyond and was very thorough with her suggestions. One of the suggestions she gave was to consider an FM system for one of the students.

I have to admit, I was a bit leery about this because the student only had/needed one hearing aid, but I did the necessary things/paperwork on my end and we eventually got the student an FM system. You should see the smile on their face! Plus, their academics, learning, socialization, participation, and a million other things went way up! They also think it's hilarious when I show a teacher how to use it and tell them not to forget it and go to the restroom with it; they crack up every time!!!! I have to admit, I was wrong, but 100% right utilizing the team approach and using SESA Specialists, they are so instrumental for me and my students.



Manokotak Special Education Team Top: Ariel, Mary, LeEsia, Pantia, Tyler, and RayShawn Bottom: Virginia, Grace, Rachel, M.A. and Gayle Not pictured: Agnes

"But what if..."

As SESA specialists travel around Alaska, we are often asked the same question (or a variety of the same question) by people in many different areas. To help address these questions to a broader audience (if they come up multiple times then they are important question) we have added the "But what if...?" section to answer them. The answers will vary depending on the specialty, but you may find something that works for you - even if you have a student with different challenges!

Questions this month were answered by **Patrick Pillai, SESA Executive Director and former DHOH specialist**; **Meriah Cory, SESA MD Specialist**; and **Samantha Weiland, SESA AI Specialist**.



...one of my paraprofessionals calls in sick (or goes home partway through the day)?"

First, I breathe to think calmly. Then I mentally go through a checklist of my resources should I need them: the custodian if I need a spill cleaned up, the principal if I have a crisis, the parent if they are available to help. I then organize my class based on how I structure the day to accommodate no aide assistance.

Keep in mind that while change is hard, it can also be a learning experience. Perhaps on the day when staff are not there, less academics will get done, but more exposure to personality differences will happen. While this might make for a challenging day, it can also be a great learning opportunity. Your students will have to learn to work with a new person, or independently, both of which are opportunities for growth!

Always have a backup plan in case your paraprofessional calls in sick. Have lesson plans so that your students can be successful with one less paraprofessional. Inform your administrator that you are short a para and see if it is possible to borrow another para, even for a short time.



... not all of my staff have enough training (or I get a substitute with no training)?

I have been here before! I created a one page handout that explains simply the core assistance I need. I give the substitute a few minutes to read and to ask for clarification if needed. I take a minute to welcome the aide so they are immediately comfortable with me and the class.

If possible, have paras switch during the day so that a few people become comfortable working with each student. This way, when someone is out, it is not hard to find someone who can cover. If that is not an option, when a student is out sick see if you can talk to your administrator and use that time for his/her para to shadow another student.

At the beginning of the day, go over key strategies that work for each of your students. Working with your staff, having a meeting at the beginning or end of the day to do mini trainings about

working with your students and their specific disabilities. I would also encourage my staff to check out training modules online; there are many wonderful resources available.



... my students are spread out in several different classrooms around the school?

I make sure the classroom teacher is aware of modifications and expectations of my student. I provide the teacher updates so they remain responsible for and aware of the progress of the child. I am upfront in my efforts to clone myself to be in all classrooms at one time!

Make sure when you are writing out the schedule, behavior plans, reward charts, and data sheets that they are simple, but contain all the directions needed for someone to follow. The only requirement should be for the staff to read each plan, and, of course, have patience (with the student and with themselves).

Create a schedule of your student's class schedules and visit them at the times that they need the most support. If you have two students that need support in a class at the same time, schedule one of the students on a Tuesday and Thursday, and the other student on Monday and Wednesday.

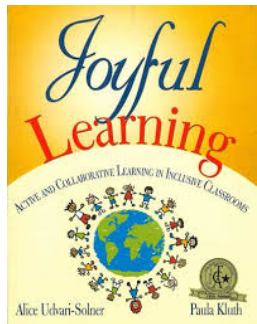


... my student has pretty specific communication needs, and only one person knows how to work with them?

Too often 100% of communication becomes the responsibility of one person. We need to bring more people into the communication circle to expose the child to different communication styles. How bored would we be if we had only one person to communicate with?!

Provide an opportunity to train other staff who may work with this student, such as the general education teachers the student works with and other paraprofessionals. Talk with your administrators about being trained in the communication, too. It is important that everyone who works with the student as a team be trained to help the student be successful.

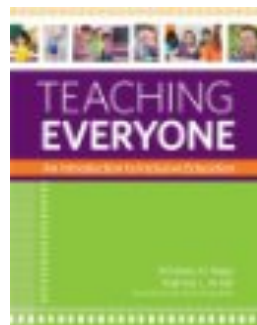
SESA Library Resources
Anne Freitag, SESA Librarian



Joyful Learning: Active and collaborative learning in inclusive classrooms / Alice Udvari-Solner, Paula Kluth. Corwin Press, 2008.

Description: "This accessible resource for K-12 inclusive classrooms helps teachers create an environment for active and collaborative learning that encourages and supports all students, including those who may have marked differences in ability, need, language, culture, and/or learning profile. Promoting the concept that learners with differing abilities can learn side by side, this book illustrates how to use a practical, differentiated approach to help develop every student's abilities. ... presents a range of

strategies that can be used at both the elementary and secondary levels to engage students in discussion, debate, creative thinking, questioning, and teamwork. Providing classroom-tested examples, specific guidelines, and reproducibles, the book provides tools for teachers to: promote relationship building and interdependence, help students teach one another as they make discoveries about course content, support learners in preparing for assessments, engage in whole-class learning while assisting students who need personalized instruction, assess learner understanding and celebrate growth. This versatile book can also be used as a co-planning tool by general and special education professionals working with occupational therapists, speech clinicians, and physical therapists to effectively support all students, including English Language Learners and learners with disabilities." - Publisher, via LOC website.



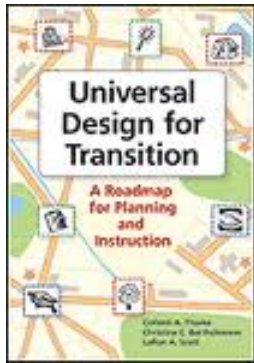
Teaching Everyone: An introduction to inclusive education /

by Whitney H. Rapp, Ph. D. & Katrina L. Arndt. Paul H. Brookes, 2012.

Description: "Align ... teaching with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Initial Content Standards. Each chapter clearly explains how the content helps students meet specific standards. ... work with each child as an individual instead. ... covers all the critical topics teachers need to know about ... Learn effective teaching strategies for major academic content areas. Educators will get clear, research-backed strategies for teaching reading, writing, science, math, and social studies-including guidance on

keeping students engaged and assessing their progress. Get a deep and personal understanding of student and teacher perspectives. With the case studies and narratives from teachers and people with disabilities, educators will have keen first-hand insights that will inform their teaching for years to come. A foundational text for tomorrow's teachers-and a valuable reference for inservice teachers who want to sharpen and update their skills-this important volume will help usher in an era of truly inclusive classrooms where all children learn and thrive. With cutting-edge information on: differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, instructional strategies for academic content areas, assessment and evaluation, social and communication skills, response to intervention, early intervention policy and practices, classroom management positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), functional behavior assessment, IEPs,

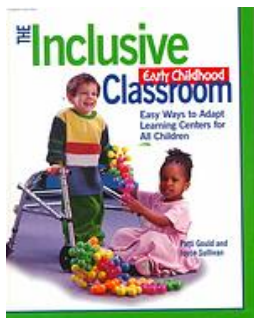
home-school collaboration, teacher collaboration, transition to adulthood, special education legislation, child and adolescent development." - [publisher's website](#).



Universal Design for Transition: A roadmap for planning and instruction / by Colleen A. Thoma, Christina C. Bartholomew and LaRon A. Scott, with invited contributors. Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 2009

Description: "Apply the principles of universal design for learning to transition for students with disabilities with this groundbreaking guidebook. Schools across the country already use universal design for learning to improve all students' access to the general curriculum and tap each learner's individual strengths - and now they'll have a practical book that takes this powerful teaching approach one step further for students approaching the transition to adult life. Transition specialists and

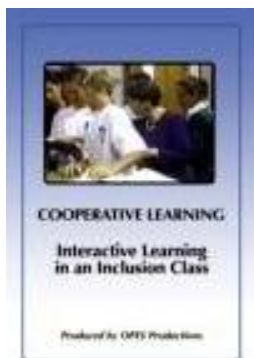
educators will discover how to apply universal design for transition (UDT) during the critical middle- and high-school years, using its guiding philosophy - presenting information in multiple formats and media - to help students achieve academic goals, make sound decisions about their future, and make a successful transition to adult life." - [publisher's website](#).



The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom: Easy ways to adapt learning centers for all children / Patti Gould and Joyce Sullivan; illustrations by Joan Waites; photographs by Paul Baskett. Gryphon House, c1999.

Description: All children require nurturing and stimulating learning environments, but typical early childhood classrooms should be modified for children with special needs. The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom is written to help teachers look at classroom design in a new way and suggests different ways of approaching activities to help children with special needs become successful. By modifying the classroom and

activities, all children will be actively engaged. Each chapter focuses on either a learning center, such as art or science, or a time of the day, such as snack time or dismissal, with particular attention to the needs of children who are developmentally delayed, orthopedically impaired, have autism/Pervasive Development Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, behavioral issues, motor planning problems, or visual impairments." - [publisher's website](#).



Interactive learning in the inclusion classroom [videorecording (DVD)] / producer, Jerry Lang; video photography/editing, Todd Mobray; The Teachers College, Emporia State University. OPES Productions, [2010?], c1995.

Description: Shows how to use cooperative learning systematically as part of an interactive learning classroom environment. Teacher Darla Mallein of Emporia Middle School shows techniques in an 8th grade social studies class.



You're Welcome / Patrick Schwarz & Paula Kluth. Heinemann, c2007. Three volumes: [1] Differentiating instruction in the inclusive classroom -- [2] Collaboration & teaming in the inclusive classroom -- [3] Positive & peaceful behavior supports for the inclusive classroom.

Description: Three handbooks; 30 key ideas presented in small, smart packages; all the information necessary to start making inclusion work effectively. Whether you're a general educator, a special educator, an administrator, a therapist, or a family team member, *You're Welcome* presents the thinking you'll need to open your classrooms to all students. Each book contains ten big ideas that provide the most pertinent information for understanding and supporting diverse learners. Schwarz

and Kluth distill the research and best practices behind inclusion into concise, actionable nuggets for professional learning that include: classroom structures; instructional strategies; organizational principles and activities ; lesson ideas examples from real schools ; recommended print and Web resources. Get answers to frequently asked questions about crucial topics such as coteaching, team building, collaborating with students, integrating the IEP into the general education curriculum, creating personalized learning agendas, and writing sensitive and responsive behavior plans. ... a powerful tool for implementing educational practices that provide meaningful help for students with a range of diverse abilities, needs, gifts, and struggles as they achieve effective educational gains.

**For more information on any of the titles listed above or questions about the SESA Lending Library, please contact:
[Anne Freitag, SESA Librarian.](#)**
