

THE T/TAC TELEGRAM

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Northwestern Consortium T/TAC
This newsletter is a collaborative effort by the Northwestern Consortium of the T/TACs, which includes James Madison University, co-directed by Cheryl Henderson and Melinda Bright, and George Mason University, directed by Lynn Wiley.

Designed by Jeff Richards

Providing Early Childhood Foundations

By Kris Ganley, M.Ed., VDOE T/TAC @ GMU

Opportunities abound for the young child to experience and participate in inclusive settings. Preschools, nursery schools, Head Start programs, places of worship, classrooms and kindergartens in neighborhood schools are just a few of the natural environments that provide opportunities for inclusive practices. Active participation by all young children should be guided by a developmentally and individually appropriate curriculum. Just as there is an array of settings, there are a variety of curricula used in which early childhood special educators seamlessly make adaptations and modifications for students; however, it is important to be mindful of the general education expectations.



Access to and participation in the age-appropriate general curriculum has been central to the identification and provision of specialized support services for over a decade (DEC Position Statement, 1996). Today, early childhood educators can follow Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Standards for Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and History

and Social Science which attempts to establish a measurable range of skills and knowledge essential for four-year-olds to be successful in kindergarten. It is organized to build towards the Virginia Kindergarten Standards of Learning (SOL). The Foundation Blocks provide early childhood educators with a set of minimum standards for success based on scientific research.

The material in Virginia's Foundation Blocks is presented in a format that allows it to be used as a tool to develop

curriculum and plan meaningful lessons. Sample activities are provided to serve as a springboard for adapting and modifying the curriculum to meet individual children's needs. Some early childhood preschool teaching teams

have used the foundation blocks for ideas for differentiation. Each teacher wrote a section of the unit, using the Foundation Blocks as a basis, and combined the content (literacy, mathematics, etc.). This resulted in a complete unit, combining the necessary content, and employing a variety of lessons and activities.

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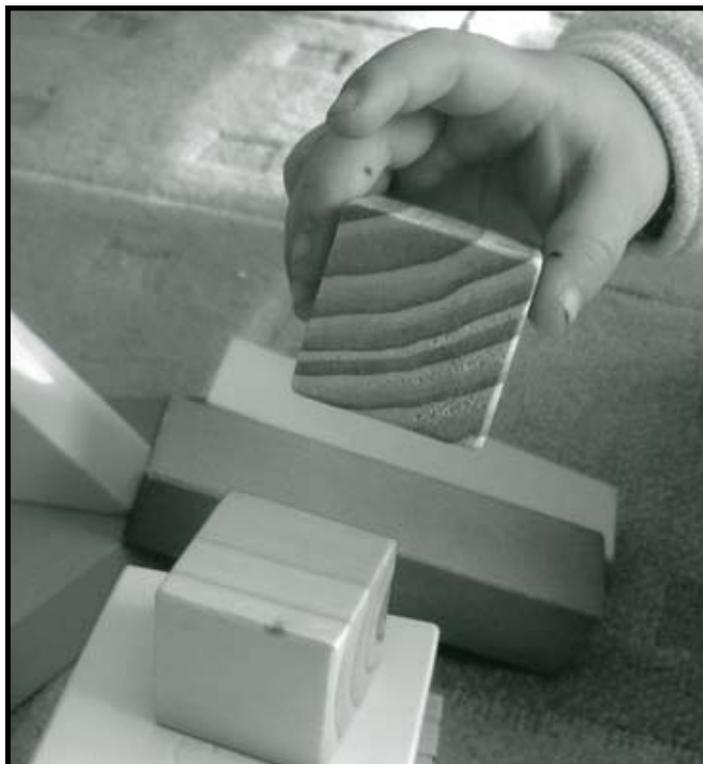
Following are a small sample of the standards within the Foundation Blocks and related activities in each content area. Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Standards for Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science can be accessed on the VDOE website at: http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf.

Foundation Blocks	Sample Standards	Sample Activities
Literacy (6 Blocks)	Block 1: Oral Expression	Engage children in conversation throughout the daily routine
Mathematics (6 Blocks)	Block 3: Measurement	Plan food preparation activities to include the use of clocks, thermometers, and balance scales
Science (7 Blocks)	Block 2: Force, Motion, and Energy	Find five objects that are attracted to a magnet and five that are not.
History and Social Sciences (7 Blocks)	Block 7: Civics/Citizenship	Provide toys, books, and materials that encourage sharing, empathy, and cooperation

Resources:

Division for Early Childhood (DEC). (1996). Position statement on inclusion. Retrieved March 9, 2007, from <http://www.dec-sped.org/positionpapers.html>

Virginia Department of Education. (2005). Virginia's foundation blocks for early learning: Standards for literacy, mathematics, science and history and history and social science. Richmond. Retrieved March 9, 2007 from http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf



Serving Young Children with Disabilities Who are Parentally-Placed in Private Preschools: Questions, Answers, and Resources

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Serving children with disabilities who are parentally-placed in private preschools is a complex issue for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). Currently, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is one of the few situations where public preschool is offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As early childhood special educators work to provide services to young children in settings with their same-age peers, they must understand what their obligations are to these students. They must also coordinate efforts with the private preschool involved, as well as the LEA where the private school is located, if it is not the LEA where the child resides.

Following are a few of the questions and answers that should be part of the discussion on serving young preschool students in parentally-placed private school settings.

Q: What does it mean to be a “parentally-placed private school child with disabilities”?

Excerpt from IDEA:
Parentally-Placed Private School Children with Disabilities means children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools or facilities that meet the definition of an elementary §34 CFR 300.13 or secondary school §300.36; 300.130. Preschool students only meet this definition if the private school/daycare they are enrolled in is a nonprofit school that provides elementary education as defined by state law §34 CFR 300.13(a)(2)(ii).

Q: Who is obligated to evaluate a child to determine eligibility for special education services?

A: A school system is required to have a child find process for all children enrolled by their parents in private elementary and secondary schools that are located within their school district and a school system must develop a individualized service plan (ISP) for all such students that it has decided through the required consultation process to serve §34 CFR §300.131-32.

Q: What if a child resides in one LEA's jurisdiction, but is parentally-placed in a preschool within another LEA's jurisdiction?

A: If the preschool meets the definition of an elementary school and is nonprofit, the responsibility for child find and for the development of an ISP rests with the LEA where the private school is located.

If the preschool does not meet the definition of an elementary school and/or is a for-profit school, the responsibility for child find and for the development of an ISP rests with the LEA where the child resides.

Q: I understand that, under IDEA, the public school system where the student resides is responsible for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) regardless of where the student attends private school. However, is it true that if a child is enrolled in a private school, parental consent must be obtained before any personally identifiable information about the child is released between officials in the LEA where the private school is located and officials in the LEA of the parent's residence? §34 CFR 300.622(b)(3).

A: Yes, this is correct. This means that the LEA where the private school is located and the LEA of parent's residence cannot communicate unless parental permission is given. Parents may sign a permission form at any time of evaluation so that information can be exchanged between LEAs when necessary.

Q: Who determines whether or not a private preschool meets the definition of having an “elementary curriculum” when the school is non-profit?

A: Virginia allows the LEA to determine their definition of elementary/secondary curriculum.

The Virginia Department of Education has developed standards for early learning, Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning. It includes standards in mathematics, science, history and social science and is being updated to add other curriculum areas, such as social/emotional development. The entire document can be found on the VDOE web site at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf

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Resources

US Department of Education
Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004
<http://idea.ed.gov/>

Office of Non Public Education
(Private schools information)
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/postcard.html>

Questions and Answers on Serving Children With Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools
January 2007
<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C1%2C>

Virginia Department of Education
Virginia Preschool Initiative
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/early/preschoolinitiative.html

Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Standards for Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Sciences 2005 http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf

Regulations Revision Process

The Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, effective March 27, 2002, (the Virginia Regulations), must be revised to comply with the changes outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04) and its 2006 federal implementing regulations. This process was initiated on October 25, 2006. Anticipated completion of this process is summer 2008. During the process, there will be two formal comment periods; however, public comment may be submitted at any time. How to Provide Comments for the Revision Process

1. Any individual or organization may submit written comments regarding the revision of the Virginia Regulations to the Virginia Department of Education via email, fax, or mail, using the contact information below:

EMAIL: ReviseSpedRegs@doe.virginia.gov

FAX: (804) 786-8520

MAIL: Special Education Regulations Revision Process
Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services
Virginia Department of Education

P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Individuals and organizations who submit public comment are entitled to receive a summary of all public comments received by the Virginia Department of Education during the revision process, as well as the agency's response to the comments submitted. If you are interested in receiving this document at the end of the revision process, please include either an electronic or surface mailing address with your comments.

2. Oral public comment may be submitted during the five public hearings which will be convened in the Commonwealth. Once set, the dates and the locations for the hearings will be posted at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html>.

CULTIVATING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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Senge and colleagues (2000) contend that "the safest prediction [for schools] is change; schools can no longer prepare people to fit in the world of twenty years ago, because that world will no longer exist" (p. 10). In order to meet the challenges of preparing students for the future, school mission statements commonly include a goal for students to become lifelong learners. According to Haberman (2004), however, "the frequently espoused goal of lifelong learning for our students is hollow rhetoric unless the school is also a learning community in which teachers demonstrate engagement in meaningful learning activities" (p. 52).

What can school personnel do to ensure that they are modeling the same type of behavior that they want their students to exhibit? First, teachers need to share their enthusiasm and love of learning with their students (Haberman, 2004). Second, schools should thoughtfully consider and review the core principles of professional learning communities (PLC) to ensure that the PLC model is being implemented with integrity.

At the heart of professional learning communities is the collaborative dialogue that takes place as teachers work together to analyze and improve their instructional practices (DuFour, 2004). Effective professional learning communities demonstrate the following seven characteristics (DuFour & Eaker, 1998):

- Shared mission, vision, and values
- Collective inquiry
- Collaborative teams
- Action orientation
- Willingness to experiment
- Commitment to continuous improvement
- Focus on results

When seeking to create and sustain effective professional learning communities schools should be guided by the following three “big ideas” (DuFour, 2004).

Big Idea # 1: A Focus on Student Learning

Professional learning communities shift the focus from ensuring that students are taught to ensuring that students learn. DuFour (2004) identifies three questions that colleagues are continually engaged in answering as part of a PLC: “What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?” (p. 8).

In a PLC, students who are experiencing academic difficulty are identified quickly and a plan is in place to provide intervention as soon as students need additional support. In other words, a PLC does not wait for summer school, remedial courses, or retention before academic support is provided. In addition, a PLC does not invite students to ask for additional help. Instead, students are required to participate in the intervention.

Big Idea # 2: A Culture of Collaboration

Professional collaboration in a PLC is specifically targeted at analyzing and improving the teaching and learning process. Professional learning communities are determined to work together to improve student learning by sharing and improving upon all aspects of the instructional process.

Big Idea # 3: A Focus on Results

A PLC turns the multitude of data available in a school into meaningful information that enables educators to develop improvement goals that focus on student learning. The development of common assessments allows teachers to look at how individual students are

performing in relation to essential content and skills as well as to one another. Once individual students who are having difficulty with a particular skill are identified, PLC members can share successful strategies and materials to meet the needs of these students.

In closing, professional learning communities provide the structure for teachers and administrators to focus on improving the teaching and learning process. Schmoker (2002) notes that improvement in school and student performance is inevitable when teachers:

- Focus on the assessed learning standards;
- Use student achievement data to set a small number of measurable goals in low-scoring areas; and
- Regularly work in collaborative groups to design, adapt, and assess instructional strategies targeted at the identified low-scoring areas.

Note: This article was reprinted with permission from Lee Ann Sulzberger; originally published in T/TAC Link Lines, September/October 2004.

References

DuFour, R. (2004). What is a “professional learning community”? *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 6-11.

DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Haberman, M. (2004). Can star teachers create learning communities? *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 52-56.

Schmoker, M. (2002). Up and away. *Journal of Staff Development*, 23(2), 10-13.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York: Doubleday.

Additional Resources

DuFour, R., DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (2006). *Professional learning communities at work plan book*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Manny, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Eaker, R., DuFour, R. & DuFour, R. (2002). *Getting started: Reculturing schools to Become professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

SOL Enhanced PLUS = Lesson Differentiation at your Fingertips!

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Clare Talbert, M.Ed., VDOE T/TAC @ GMU

Looking for sample content

Lesson plans that are aligned with the essential knowledge and skills in the Curriculum Framework? Interested in ways to differentiate instruction for all students, grades K through 12? Check out the SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS, an invaluable resource available on the T/TAC Online website.

What is it?

SOL Enhanced PLUS is a searchable database of the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS lesson plans. These lessons are the result of a collaborative effort between general educators and special educators, along with Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff. This resource has been created to provide Virginia teachers with a tool to deliver SOL-based instruction to a diverse population of learners. Currently, curricular and instructional information is available for Mathematics, English and History/Social Studies. Science will be available in the summer of 2007.

The lesson plans and activities are not only aligned with the SOL, they feature strategies to facilitate differentiated instruction in the following areas:

- Technology use
- Multisensory options
- Community connections
- Small group learning
- Vocabulary strategies
- Student organization of content

How do I find them?

- Go to T/TAC Online: www.ttaonline.org and click on your region on the Virginia map
- Click on SOL Enhanced (at the top)
- Click on Search SOL+ Lessons (left margin)
- At Option 1- choose a subject area and choose a grade/course - click Go
- Click on any SOL standard and click Submit (at bottom of page)
- Choose from the lessons listed for the standard
- Click on Word or PDF format to download lesson

You will have a complete lesson plan that includes:

- ❖ An objective
- ❖ Prerequisite understanding/knowledge/skills
- ❖ Materials needed
- ❖ Procedures to follow
- ❖ Specific options for differentiation

Did you know that April is National Poetry Month? Take a look at this SOL Enhanced PLUS lesson plan.

English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence
for Grades 6-8: Oral Language

ORAL LANGUAGE Lesson Plan → Say It Like This

Organizing Topic Presentation

Related Standard(s) of Learning 7.2 a, b, c; 8.2 b, c

Objective(s)

- The student will explore verbal and nonverbal techniques for showing expression and enhancing meaning while reciting a poem.

Prerequisite Understandings/Knowledge/Skills

- The students are expected to be familiar with the vocabulary words: tone, pitch, emotional content, technique, rhythm, verbal, nonverbal, and volume.
- The students are expected to identify the theme of the selected poem.

Materials needed

- A poem memorized by the class

Lesson procedure

1. Have all students in the class memorize the same poem, either as an assignment or through class recitation.
2. Have the students say the poem each day, varying the way it is said. Possible ways to say the poem include the following:
 - The teacher starts the line and students finish it.
 - The students say the poem in a monotone.
 - The students whisper the poem.
 - The students get louder and softer as they say the poem (*the teacher can use hand signals to indicate changes in volume*).
 - The students say the poem in rising and falling tones, like a chant.
 - The students say each line as a question.
 - Each student says one line.
 - Each student says one word.

SOL Enhanced PLUS – Check it out, use it and spread the word!

References and Resources

T/TAC Online www.ttaconline.org

VDOE Training & Technical Assistance Center at George Mason University. (2007). Priority Projects: An Update. [Booklet]

Virginia Department of Education. (2004). English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence for Grades 6-8: ORAL LANGUAGE; ORAL LANGUAGE Lesson Plan → Say It Like This. Retrieved March 8, 2007. Website: www.ttaconline.org

Virginia Department of Education. (2006). T/TAC Online: A community linking people and resources to help children and youth with disabilities. [Brochure].

Virginia Department of Education: Curriculum Framework www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/CurriculumFramework/

Virginia Department of Education: Enhanced Scope and Sequence www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/EnhancedSandS/

Virginia Department of Education: Instructional Services, Standards of Learning Resources www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html

- The students say the poem with a different accent, such as Southern, British, French, etc.
- The students say the poem with a certain emotion or attitude, e.g., surprise, anger, sadness, happiness, silliness, snobbery, sarcasm, indecision, seriousness, frustration, puzzlement, slyness, etc. Gestures can help indicate tone.
- The students walk around the room saying the poem.
- The students clap the accented syllables of the poem.
- The students perform the poem, acting it out in a group.

3. Have the students discuss how changing ones voice in tone, pitch, emotional content, technique, rhythm, or volume can change the meaning or impact of a poem.

Specific options for differentiating this lesson

Technology

- Provide students with picture symbols of various emotions.
- Provide students with a talking word processor with different “voices” to “read” the poem.
- Allow students to videotape the assignment rather than perform in front of class.

Multisensory

- Provide flow charts, pictures, or symbols to help students remember the poem.

Community Connections

- Have students present their poems to parents, other classes, or senior citizens.
- Invite a poet to class to recite his/her poetry.

Small Group Learning

- Allow students to divide into smaller groups to select a poem of interest and various lengths.
- Have one group recite the poem; the other group may interpret the poem using an analysis chart. Not all groups may need to recite the poem.

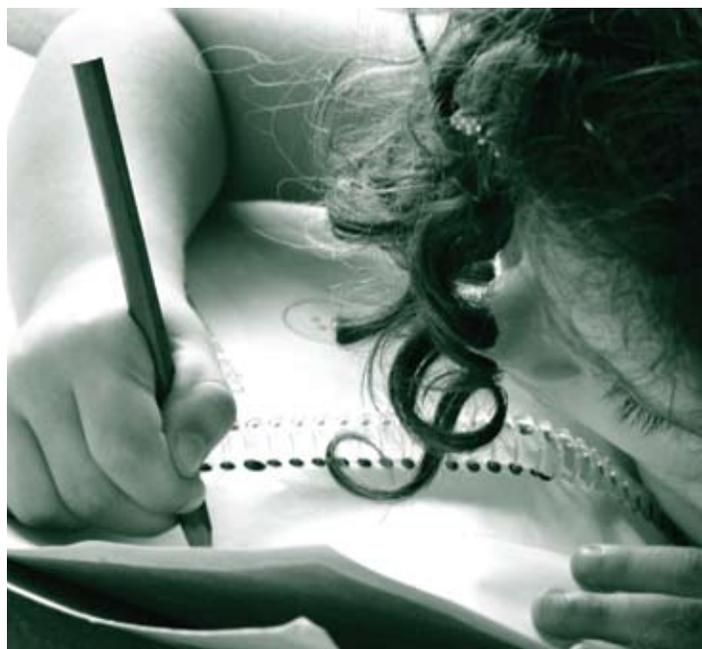
Vocabulary

- Create a word wall, with each word illustrated with a picture or graphic representation.
- Have students act out the meaning of the vocabulary words.

Student Organization of Content

- Provide students with a written copy of the poem rather than having them memorize.

Virginia Department of Education 2004



One Size Fits None: Primer On Differentiation

Judith L. Fontana, Ph.D. VDOE T/TAC @ GMU

Collaborative, or Co-Teaching is defined as a service delivery model in which two or more professionals combine their expertise and share responsibility for instructing a diverse group of students for part or all of a school day (Friend, 2007). While not a new concept, the likelihood of being part of an instructional team is almost a given for most special educators and certainly on the horizon for a significant number of general educators. Legislation requires that all students have access to the general education curriculum. Additionally, most students with an IEP will participate, with or without accommodations, in state performance assessments (NCLB, 2001; IDEIA, 2004). Legislation and social justice support the concept of inclusion, that is, the belief that students with disabilities have the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers.

In many classrooms where two teachers are working together, the general educator is considered the content expert and the special educator is thought of as the expert in the methods and strategies for learning. Quality instruction for all students requires both types of expertise. For these teaching teams, co-planning is critical. Administrative support for this process begins with creating a master schedule that allows teachers time to plan and discuss.

Before jumping into how to address content, it is important to reflect on what you already know about the students in your class. Conduct a big picture analysis. Do students respond well to cooperative groups? Is the textbook user friendly? Is the readability level appropriate? In general, what is the level of prior knowledge? Also, think about the pre-requisite skills needed for success in the lesson/unit you are planning.

Both the general and special education teachers must be aware of accommodations noted on each student's IEP. IEP requirements become your first level of differentiation. Keep in mind that things like "hard copies of notes" may be helpful for many students, and might be routine to address student absences. Well planned instruction that incorporates a variety of delivery methods and performance options may lessen the need for differentiation.

Remember that differentiation is more than teaching to, or though, different modalities. It is about a unique adaptation designed to address specific needs of a student.

Core content lessons begin with the SOL and, if provided, the school division's pacing guides. With that in mind, let us review the annotated "best practice" instructional sequence.

1. Objectives for the day should be clearly stated as student performance goals.
 - a. SOL English 7. 5e Essential understandings about poetry
 - b. Students will be able to define, compare and contrast a variety of poetic forms (haiku, limerick, ballad, couplet, quatrain and free verse)
 - c. Some teachers list performance as an "I" statement. Students then read, "I will be able to compare and contrast the features of"
2. Day 1 of a unit or concept: Activate and/or assess prior knowledge. Day 2 +, review previous day's lesson. Pre-assessment: Finding out what your students know and what they can do cues you to when, where, and how you may need to provide alternatives.
3. Introduce new information: Instruct
4. Guided practice
5. Independent practice
6. Formative assessment: Student responses should be used to confirm the next day's plan, or prompt you to adjust your homework assignment, pacing, content or activities.
7. Closure: Summarize the current lesson and preview the next.

Where does differentiation fit into all this? Tomlinson (1999) identified three areas to consider as you plan to differentiate instruction. These are content, process and product. Content is your curriculum, the program of study. You cannot change the standards. However, content is also the materials you use to teach the curriculum, the resources including books and other text, videos or video clips, websites to name a few.

Process refers to the task or method of instruction we use to help the student access, organize or recall the content. Related to access, many publishers provide audiotapes with their text books. Peer tutoring and reciprocal reading are other avenues to enhance access. Notetaking templates, charts, tables, webs and other visuals facilitate organization of information. Mnemonic devices, rehearsal in a variety of formats including games and homework may be used to support recall of facts, events, and concepts.

Finally, product is the assessment or how we ask students to demonstrate their knowledge. Options extend beyond oral response to the test. Projects (with benchmarks and rubrics), student constructed tutorials, cause and effect diagrams and, once again, charts, tables or other visuals that students create to demonstrate their understanding of the content. Hallmarks of a classroom where differentiation is the norm you are likely to see that:

- A wide variety of materials and resources are available
- Student differences are analyzed as a foundation for planning
- There is flexibility among cooperative groups
- There is variation on how time is allotted or adjusted
- There is provision for student choice.
- Assessments are on going and guide instruction
- Variations in assessment formats may be student or assignment specific
- A pervading sense that all students are accepted as learners and valuable members of their classroom community permeates the classroom

The purpose of this article was to open the door to the concept and mechanics of differentiating instruction, while also encouraging teachers to move one step closer to meeting the needs of all students in one setting. Having two adults combine their expertise in content and instructional strategies is powerful. Having two adults in the classroom to manage the pace, materials, and efficacy of differentiated instruction makes it much more likely that effective inclusive practices will take place.

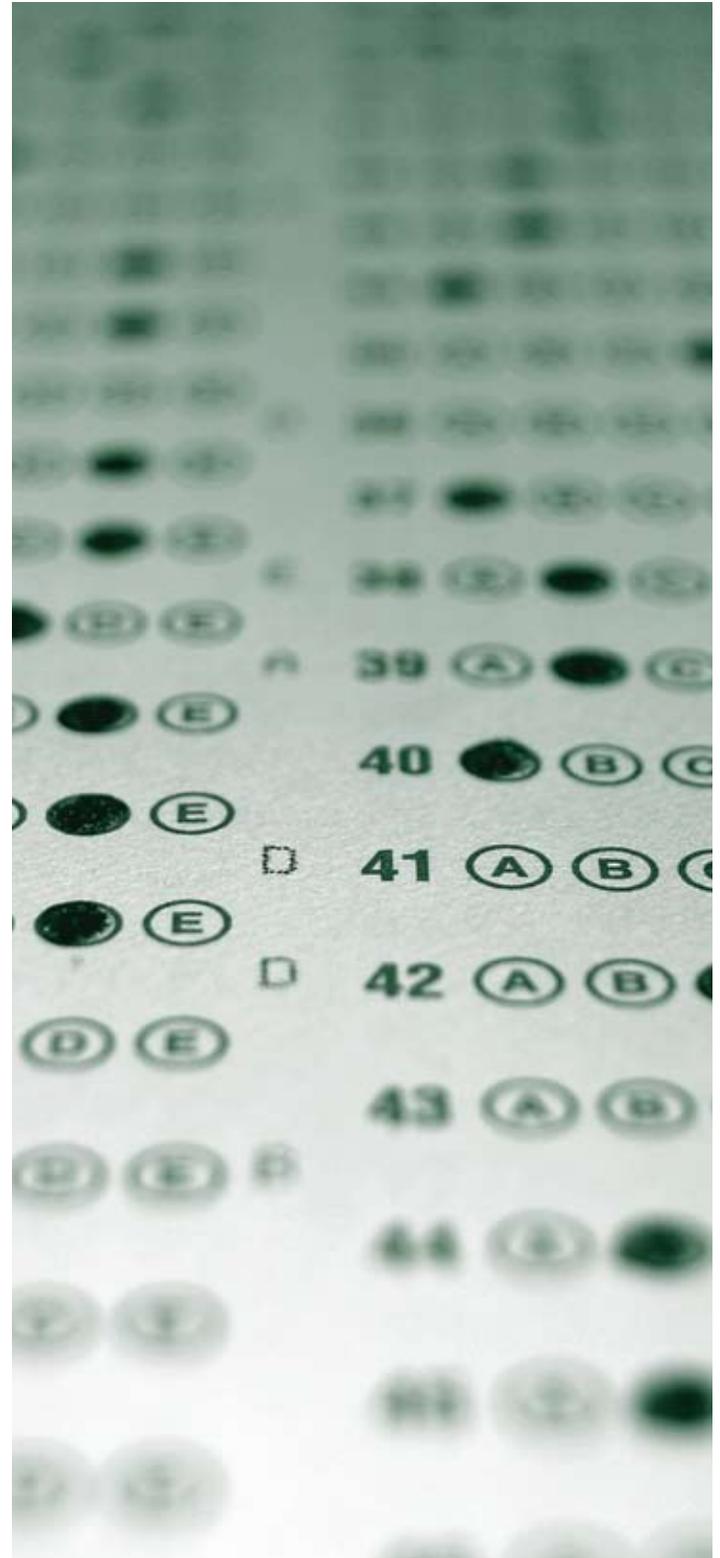
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Tomlinson, C.A. (1999). The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners. Upper Saddleback River, N.J.: Pearson: Prentice Hall.

Tomlinson, C.A. (2001). How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms. (2nd Ed.) Upper Saddleback River, N.J.: Pearson: Prentice Hall.



Inclusive Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Karen L. Berlin, M. Ed. T/TAC @ GMU

Even with shared beliefs and well-planned inclusive practices, educators may still struggle with how to effectively teach students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in general education classrooms. Success for students with ASD in inclusive classrooms is often dependent upon effective and appropriate supports being in place. Incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) assures that alternatives are accessible and appropriate for all individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities and disabilities (CAST).

The following UDL considerations may be helpful to educators delivering instruction to students with ASD in inclusive settings.

Classroom Structure

Students benefit from structure, organization, and the familiarity of routines (Kluth, 2003, p.86). To enhance students' independent functioning and success:

- Create and maintain a structured classroom. Clear designation of boundaries and areas for group work vs. individual work, content specific work, and free choice activities make the learning space safe and predictable for students.
- Create and maintain a classroom organization system. Designate locations where homework assignments, bookbags, lunches, and notes from home should be placed. Similarly, designate a place where homework assignments will be written or posted each day. A systematic and organized classroom will enhance student independence.
- Create and display a daily schedule. Having the daily schedule visually accessible and maintained offers predictability and important information regarding what comes next for all students.
- Develop and utilize classroom routines. Develop cues for getting ready for work, getting out materials, packing up, recording homework and other important daily activities.
- Establish and follow set routines for transition times. Use forewarning strategies such as verbal cues and visual timers to prepare students for transitions.

- Display classroom rules. Anything shared verbally of long-term importance should be written down and posted as a visual reference point for students.
- Develop and utilize organizational systems for student and classroom materials. Checklists, folders, containers, and color coded materials can be very helpful to students who manage multiple materials throughout an instructional day.
- Schedule and practice daily/weekly cleaning and organizing time for students.

Classroom Environment

Too much or too little of various sensory inputs can annoy, distract, or aggravate students. Appropriate levels can soothe, calm or energize (Kluth, 2003, p. 77). When arranging the learning environment, take into consideration:

- **Lighting:** The use of natural light; lower levels of lighting; upward, rather than downward, projecting light; or incandescent, rather than fluorescent, bulbs may enhance the learning environment for those with visual sensitivity.
- **Sound:** Identify annoying sounds to students, and work to reduce them or move them away from the noise source. Consider offering a noise alternative, such as soft music, earplugs or headphones. Placing tennis balls on the bottom of chairs, or using carpet remnants can also help to reduce echoes and noise levels within the classroom. When possible, provide a quiet area where students can retreat when needed.
- **Smell:** Avoid the use of products with heavy smells, including personal fragrances and cleaning supplies. In classrooms with strong smells, seat students with high smell sensitivity near a doorway or open window. Afford students the option of keeping a personal fan at their desk to self-modulate olfactory input.
- **Temperature:** Classroom temperature is difficult to adjust to individual student needs. To empower students to self-modulate temperature needs, encourage them to dress in layers, keep a sweater at their desk, or keep a cold drink at hand during learning activities.
- **Tactile:** For some students, comfortable seating is pivotal to their classroom success. Offering seating choices, such as a rocking chair, seat cushions, mats,

pillows, bean bag chairs, or an exercise ball can increase in-seat and on-task behavior.

- Kinesthetic: Provide movement opportunities within the classroom. While some students need quiet to learn, others need movement and activity. If possible, designate an area of the classroom for movement where students can pace, or move in a nondisruptive manner during instruction.

Classroom Instruction

Differentiated instruction will assure success for all learners (Tomlinson, 2001). When planning instruction, take into account individual learning needs:

- Use flexible grouping.
- Represent abstract information in more concrete forms.
- Relate information to prior knowledge.
- Provide opportunities for students to work in small groups and in pairs.
- Provide activities that appeal to different learning styles.
- Give students choices regarding both learning activities and assessments.
- Assist students in prioritizing work, estimating task completion time and creating “to do” lists.
- Allow extra time to complete assignments when requested.
- Provide timelines and rubrics to clearly delineate what is expected when.
- Offer checklists to guide independent completion of assignments.
- Provide written instructions whenever oral instructions are given.
- Incorporate students’ interests and passions into instructional activities.
- Use visuals to support verbal instruction, such as graphs, objects, charts, diagrams, photographs, drawings, and graphic organizers.
- Read aloud to help students gain access to the

content and improve their own fluency.

- Increase teacher wait time and student response time to allow students who process more slowly time to answer.
- Present questions in written form.
- Allow for multiple modes of expression in student answers, such as speaking, pointing, or circling a correct answer.
- Rewrite text passages, test directions and test items at varying readability levels.
- Provide study guides of key concepts and vocabulary terms.

While this list of UDL suggestions was created with students with ASD in mind, implementation of the considerations listed may be of benefit to multiple learners within the general education classroom.

References:

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). Summary of universal design for learning concepts. Retrieved 3/23/07 from <http://www.cast.org/udl/index.cfm?i=7>

Janney, R. & Snell, M. E. (2004) *Modifying Schoolwork*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing

Cluth, P. (2003) *You’re going to love this kid*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing

Tomlinson, C.A. (2001) *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms* (2nd ed). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

CICO supports positive student behavior

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Managing student behavior is a priority for many school personnel. Check In/Check Out (CICO) is a support used in the Effective Schoolwide Discipline (ESD) model to support students who need additional supports to meet schoolwide behavioral expectations.

What's CICO?

A student in the CICO program checks in with an identified CICO staff member first thing in the morning. He attends classes as usual throughout the school day, presenting each teacher with a simple carbon copy daily progress report, tailored to his needs. At the end of the day, the student returns the daily progress report to the CICO staff member, who takes one copy and sends the other home with the student. Parents are asked to provide relevant feedback each evening. Biweekly, a team reviews the student's progress and continues, revises or ends the student's participation in the program.

The CICO staff member remains positive and supportive, assisting the student in monitoring his own behavior using the progress report data and brief discussions. Immediate and delayed reinforcement are used to motivate and reward students for demonstrating expectations. Weekly and monthly data summaries of the information on the data cards are used to make decisions about how to help the student. The CICO tools provide students with a positive connection between home and school and help students develop a positive self-management system.

What students are included in the CICO program?

CICO is a school-based intervention for any student who would benefit from assistance in meeting schoolwide behavioral expectations and is interested in participating in the program. Students with and without disabilities, in any placement or setting, should be offered the opportunity if the staff members feel they would benefit.

What about the time involved?

One of the strengths of the CICO procedure is that it can be developed by a team and made available to a student

in approximately 72 hours. Checking in and checking out with a staff member takes only a few minutes. The information on the cards is simple and easy to summarize each week. In ESD schools, CICO's structure does not stress staff members' already full schedules, but instead blends into the schoolwide behavioral expectations already in place (and fulfills the requirements of ESD Level II student supports).

In any school, the requirements of CICO need not fall too heavily on any one teacher or administrator. Because the task of supporting students in meeting schoolwide behavioral expectations involves everyone in the building, CICO staff members could represent a variety of different school personnel, including guidance counselors, PE teachers and foreign language teachers. Any positive and supportive staff member who is in the building and available at the start and end of the day can participate.

Why does CICO work?

This level of targeted intervention works because it provides students with the structure to be successful through community connections, relevant feedback and opportunities for positive interactions. Students who participate in CICO ask for and agree to the assistance; participation cannot be forced. Continuous monitoring provides opportunities for implementation, reflection and feedback — all important steps in effectively supporting students with behavioral needs. How do we learn more about CICO?

First, take a look at the CICO cycle (Figure 1). The first step is for a student support team to meet and determine which students, if any, might benefit from support in meeting schoolwide student behavioral expectations. (If student behavioral expectations have not been established, focus on establishing and reinforcing these first.) If expectations have been communicated to students and reinforced, and the team feels that a student needs additional support, ask the student if he is interested in participating in the CICO program. Explain the benefits of participating, including the individualized attention and the specific reinforcement system. If the student agrees to participate, the student, parent and team create a collaborative contract.

Resource

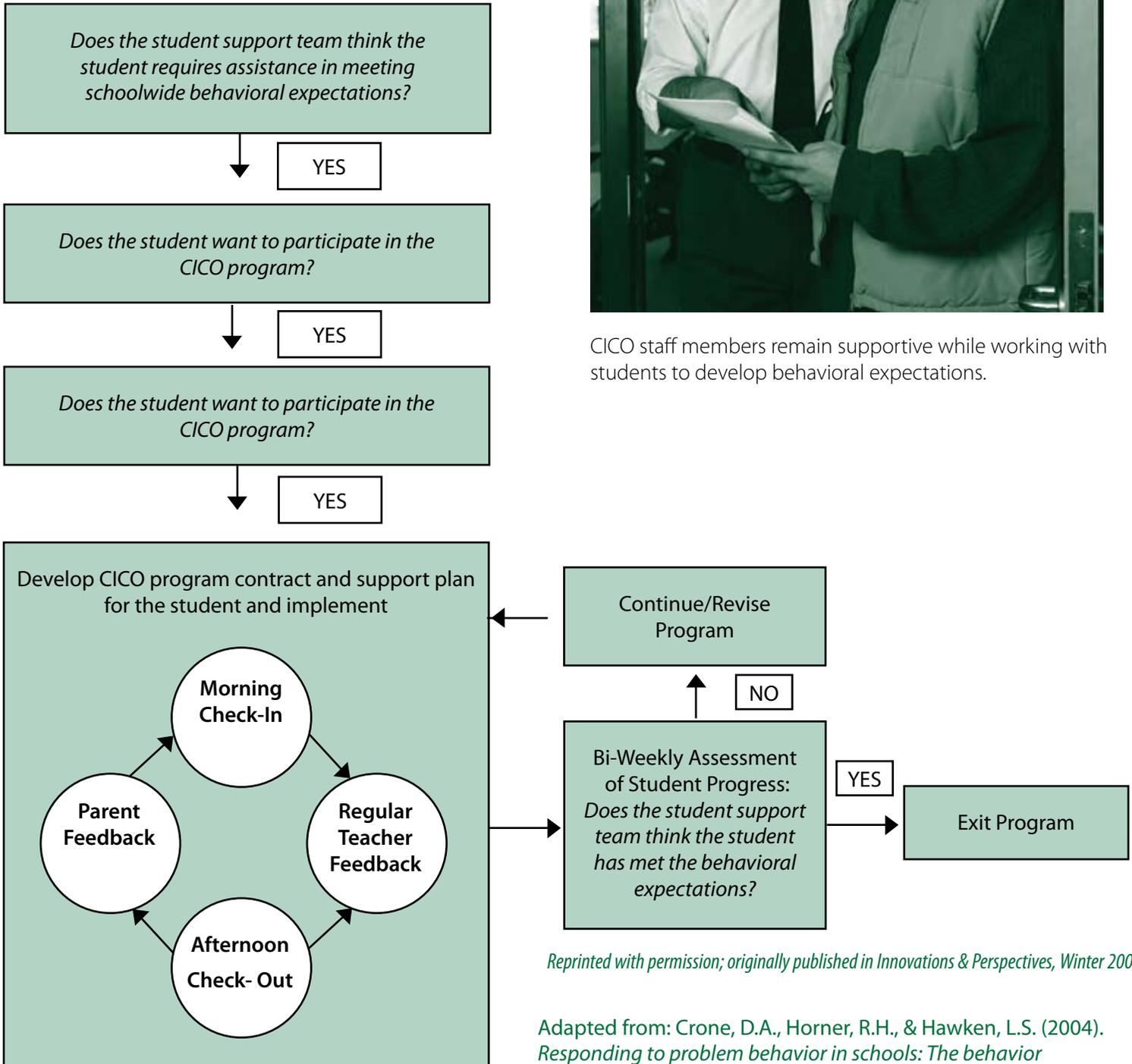
For all of the steps and materials a team would need to get started with the CICO behavior support check out the following book:

Crone, D.A., Horner, R.H., & Hawken, L.S. (2004). Responding to problem behavior in schools: The behavior education program. New York: Guilford Press.



CICO staff members remain supportive while working with students to develop behavioral expectations.

Figure 1. Check In/Check Out cycle



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Adapted from: Crone, D.A., Horner, R.H., & Hawken, L.S. (2004). *Responding to problem behavior in schools: The behavior education program*. New York: Guilford Press.

Conferences & Trainings:

April

17th Emergent Literacy Intervention-Evidence Based Practice
4-6 pm - Longwood University
434.395.2369 speech-language@longwood.edu

18th-21st Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention
Kentucky International Convention Center
Louisville, Kentucky <http://www.cec.sped.org>

21st Connections 2007 - A free resource fair for parents, family members, caregivers, and any member of the community interested in making a difference in the lives of children and youth with special needs.
9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
The Children's Museum of Richmond
2626 W. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23220

21st 2007 Transcending Brain Injury Conference
The Brain Injury Association of Virginia's annual conference includes seminars and exhibit area.
Radford Conference Services
540.342.9531
conf-serv@radford.edu - www.radford.edu/~conf-serv

24th (Lynchburg, VA & 25th in Richmond, VA) Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence: Strategies for Success in Middle and High School
Offered in Lynchburg, Virginia Registration fee - \$30.00 This workshop, presented by Diane Adreon, will focus on specific strategies to ensure a successful school experience for students with Aspergers Syndrome in middle and high school. Workshop participants will gain an understanding of how Asperger Syndrome impacts school functioning, as well as a working knowledge of specific social, academic, and behavioral interventions that lay the foundation for school success. Also included will be specific consideration for transitions from one school setting to another with special emphasis on the transition to middle and high school.
Contact: Susan Bowman, 540.568.8843 bowmansp@jmu.edu
ttac.cisat.jmu.edu/pdfs/Diane%20Adreon%20Flyer%204%201%2007.pdf

April Continued

25th Instructional Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
This is a practical, interactive workshop which addresses classroom concerns related to the unique learning style of students with ASD. A basic understanding of ASD is suggested as a prerequisite to the workshop.
Norfolk, VA Fee: \$100
Contact Phyllis Kozakiewicz at Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP), 757.892.6100 or kozakiewicz.phyllis@secep.net

26th-27th AT Consideration and Evaluation Take Teamwork
Participants in this interactive and informative session will learn about legal, ethical, and practical issues in AT consideration and evaluation and about how the SETT (Student, Enviroments, Tasks, and Tools) Framework can be used as a guide for: 1) considering and evaluating a student's possible need for assistive technology tools strategies, supports, and services; 2) making recommendations for tool systems that addresses identified student needs, in useful in inclusive environments, and supports task participation and completion; 4) supporting recommendations with data; and, 5) communicating recommendations to decision-makers.
Questions, Comments, please contact:
Estela Landeros 703.993.4496 elandero@gmu.edu
To Register for this event:
https://www.sporg.com/registration?link_type=reg_info&form_id=78345

28th 4th Annual Understanding the Spectrum and the Strategies that Work Conference Presenter: Carol Schall, Director, Virginia Autism Resource Center
James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA
Contact Sally Chappel, VDOE Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU, 540.568.8095 or chappesl@jmu.edu
This conference will focus will focus on the basic understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders including Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorders, and other related disabilities. Participants will use their knowledge of the characteristics associated with this spectrum and learn what strategies are the most effective when supporting the individual at school, at home, and in the community.

May

5th-6th **2nd Annual Wide Open Doors Conference**
Workshops on a variety of topics including: ADHD, Virginia's Alternate Assessment Program, Assistive Technology, Grassroots lobbying, Anxiety and Depression, Disaster Preparation, Transition, Person-Centered Planning, Behavior Management, ADA, Music Therapy, Waivers, Sign Language, Sibling Issues, Disability Etiquette and MORE!
Brochure Online: <http://www.woolridgeroad.org/Default.aspx?tabid=130>

25th-26th **IntelliBraille**
IntelliBraille, used with IntelliTools Classroom Suite, Overlay Maker 3, and IntelliKeys, is one of the few educational software programs for blind students. It contains over 115 activities, all accessible for Braille and low vision students. Participants will learn to create their own activities to provide access to Classroom Suite for blind and low vision students.
Contact: Karen Sheehan - 800-899-6687 X2052
KSheehan@intellitools.com www.intellitools.com

June

18th-19th
AT & Aug Com '07 A New Direction
Annual Assistive Technology and Augmentative Communication Conference for 2007 sponsored by the T/TAC at Virginia Tech. New conference format along with the first AAC Camp for students. Come and join us. You will not be disappointed!
Contact: Lora Kingma 800-848-2714 - lkingma@vt.edu
www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/augcom/

July

9th-13th **2007 Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)**
Sponsored by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, the YLF-VA program seeks to empower young people with disabilities to further develop their leadership skills. Students, serving as Delegates from communities throughout Virginia, participate in a wide range of activities and learning experiences during the four day Youth Leadership Forum set on a university campus (Christopher Newport University, Newport News).

Teri Barker-Morgan - 804.786.9381
Teri.Barker@vbpd.virginia.gov vaboard.org/y lf.htm

11th-13th **Virginia's 4th Annual Early Childhood Conference**
Shining Stars: Charting the Future for Today's Children
Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, VA
This statewide summer conference will focus on strategies for assessment and instruction that provide positive outcomes in

July Continued

inclusive settings for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with and without disabilities.
Program and registration is now open on T/TAC Online www.ttaconline.org
Program session info available mid-April

24th **Autism Summer Institute on Literacy Instruction**
Staunton, VA Presenter: Susan Norwell
More information will be available in the near future.
Contact Sally Chappel, VDOE Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU, 540.568.8095 or chappesl@jmu.edu

August

6th&7th **The Job Accommodation Network(JAN) 2007 Conference**
JAN will hold its annual training conference. This conference is held in different areas of the country each year to provide an opportunity for employers, service providers and individuals to benefit from the expertise of JAN's staff. Save the date and watch for information on the conference by visiting their website at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu>
The Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Virginia

8th-9th **Unlocking Opportunities, Unleashing Potentials**
Educating Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Through Communication, Literacy, Technology and Transition
Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center, Staunton
Sponsored by VDOE and Partnership for People with Disabilities
Contact: Anne Hughes: awhughes@vcu.edu

9th-10th **Virginia Chapter, Division of Career Development and Transition Annual Summer Institute**
Roslyn Center, Richmond, VA
Be on the lookout for the registration flyer

November

5th-6th **TechKnowledge: 2007**
The Koger Center, Richmond VA

George Mason University
The Helen A. Kellar Institute for
Human disAbilities
4400 University Drive
MS 1F2
Fairfax, VA 22030
703.993.4496
<http://ttac.gmu.edu>

VDOE
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