Let the Race Begin ~ Getting the Co-Teaching Partnership Off On the Right Foot

Lisa W. Norris, M.Ed., Coordinator, VDOE Region 5 T/TACs at James Madison University

VDOE Region IV T/TAC at George Mason University

Contact Information

Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.
Principal Investigator
mbehman@gmu.edu

Lynn Wiley, Ph.D.
Director of T/TAC@GMU
Academic Review & School Improvement,
Early Childhood
lwiley@gmu.edu

Kay Klein, M.Ed.
Assistant Director of T/TAC@GMU
Effective Schoolwide Discipline
maklein@gmu.edu

Nancy Anderson, M.Ed.
 Policies and Procedures, Family Involvement
nanderson7@gmu.edu

Bonnie W. Bell, Ph.D.
Secondary Education & Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Family Involvement
bbell5@gmu.edu

Karen Berlin, M.Ed.
Autism & Intellectual Disabilities Coordinator
kberlin@gmu.edu

Sheryl Fahey, M.A.
Early Childhood Coordinator
sfahey@gmu.edu

Judith Fontana, Ph.D.
Curriculum & Instruction
Projects Coordinator, ICT, SIM®
jfontana1@gmu.edu

Kris Ganley, M.Ed.
Early Childhood Coordinator, Autism
ganley@gmu.edu

Seojin Jang, M.Ed.
Assistive Technology Coordinator
sjang@gmu.edu

Estela Landeros, M.Ed.
Assistive Technology Coordinator
elanderos@gmu.edu

Diane Loomis, Ph.D.
Transition Coordinator
dloomis@gmu.edu

Kathy Nett, M.Ed.
Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator
knett@gmu.edu

Seunghun Ok, M.Ed.
T/TAC Online Administrator
sook@gmu.edu

Dionne Paul-Wiggins, MTA
T/TAC Librarian
dpaulwig@gmu.edu

Jackie Petersen, MLS
T/TAC Librarian
jpetersk@gmu.edu

Sandra Price
Administrative Office Support
sprice@gmu.edu

Jeff Richards
Graphic/Web Designer
jrichard@gmu.edu

Judy Stockton, M.A.
Curriculum & Mild/Moderate Disabilities Coordinator
jstockton1@gmu.edu

Clare Talbert, M.Ed.
T/TAC Online Coordinator
ctalbert1@gmu.edu

Have you been asked to co-teach this year? Are you unsure of how to manage a classroom with two adults? The following information will outline four basic strategies necessary to ensure a good year for everyone.

**Strategy 1: Sweat the Small Stuff**

You will need to sweat the small stuff for the co-teaching partnership to start off well and to run smoothly throughout the year. It is important to discuss the things that seem routine or mundane. It is these very items that, if left unattended, will ruin your partnership, causing frustration and resentment. The two of you need to discuss the classroom discipline policy and its implementation. You will also need to focus on grading and planning, classwork and homework, materials, and student modifications and accommodations, as well as noise level tolerance, giving and receiving feedback, and instructional strategies. The classroom now belongs to you both, as well as to all your students. To become a safe learning environment, everyone, the small stuff must be discussed, decided, and implemented.

**Strategy 2: We Are Family**

Taking the time to build a relationship with your co-teacher is an important step towards being a successful team. Co-teaching is a collaborative relationship that depends on parity, shared goals and responsibilities, shared accountability for student outcomes, and joint decision making. To be an effective team you must also establish good communication skills, be flexible, and learn to trust and respect each other. These pieces do not fall into place overnight and they require time and dedication to the process.

Another difficult piece for many teachers entering into a co-teaching partnership is the ability to give up control. As teachers it is necessary for us to be in control of kids, curriculum, instruction, etc. However, when another adult is added to the classroom full control is no longer an option. The environment needs to change from one where everybody is welcome and mine, mine, mine to to be in control. As teachers it is necessary for us to be in control of kids, curriculum, instruction, etc. However, when another adult is added to the classroom full control is no longer an option. The environment needs to change from one where everybody is welcome and to allow for everyone to be in control.

**Strategy 3: Divide and Conquer**

Enhanced instruction and positive student outcomes are clearly goals of the co-taught classroom. Having two teachers in the classroom, both with important but different areas of strength, benefits all students not just those receiving special education services. The general educator brings a wealth of knowledge about the curriculum that needs to be taught, while the special educator brings a strong background in the learning strategies that assist everyone. When there are two teachers in the classroom, instruction should look very different than when there is only one. With two teachers we are able to raise the level of engagement and instructional intensity. To do this, Marilyn Friend and Cook, 2007 has identified six approaches to co-teaching. These approaches are identified as One Teach/One Assist, One Teach/One Observe, Station Teaching, Parallel Teaching, Alternative Teaching, and Team Teaching or more simply put, divide and conquer.

The co-teaching approaches allow us to divide students in ways that better meet their needs and enhance learning. By implementing these instructional models we can increase student interest, assess understanding, raise student involvement, involve a safe small group environment, encourage risk taking, and ensure learning. In a true co-taught classroom, both teachers are used to divide students, instruction, and tasks needed to conquer the learning challenges of today.

**Strategy 4: To Be or Not To Be?**

When the question is about planning, Let the Race Begin ~ Getting the Co-Teaching Partnership Off On the Right Foot

Lisa W. Norris, M.Ed., Coordinator, VDOE Region 5 T/TACs at James Madison University

VDOE Region IV T/TAC at George Mason University

Contact Information

Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.
Principal Investigator
mbehman@gmu.edu

Lynn Wiley, Ph.D.
Director of T/TAC@GMU
Academic Review & School Improvement,
Early Childhood
lwiley@gmu.edu

Kay Klein, M.Ed.
Assistant Director of T/TAC@GMU
Effective Schoolwide Discipline
maklein@gmu.edu

Nancy Anderson, M.Ed.
 Policies and Procedures, Family Involvement
nanderson7@gmu.edu

Bonnie W. Bell, Ph.D.
Secondary Education & Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Family Involvement
bbell5@gmu.edu

Karen Berlin, M.Ed.
Autism & Intellectual Disabilities Coordinator
kberlin@gmu.edu

Sheryl Fahey, M.A.
Early Childhood Coordinator
sfahey@gmu.edu

Judith Fontana, Ph.D.
Curriculum & Instruction
Projects Coordinator, ICT, SIM®
jfontana1@gmu.edu

Kris Ganley, M.Ed.
Early Childhood Coordinator, Autism
ganley@gmu.edu

Seojin Jang, M.Ed.
Assistive Technology Coordinator
sjang@gmu.edu

Estela Landeros, M.Ed.
Assistive Technology Coordinator
elanderos@gmu.edu

Diane Loomis, Ph.D.
Transition Coordinator
dloomis@gmu.edu

Kathy Nett, M.Ed.
Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator
knett@gmu.edu

Seunghun Ok, M.Ed.
T/TAC Online Administrator
sook@gmu.edu

Dionne Paul-Wiggins, MTA
T/TAC Librarian
jpetersk@gmu.edu

Sandra Price
Administrative Office Support
sprice@gmu.edu

Jeff Richards
Graphic/Web Designer
jrichard@gmu.edu

Judy Stockton, M.A.
Curriculum & Mild/Moderate Disabilities Coordinator
jstockton1@gmu.edu

Clare Talbert, M.Ed.
T/TAC Online Coordinator
ctalbert1@gmu.edu

Have you been asked to co-teach this year? Are you unsure of how to manage a classroom with two adults? The following information will outline four basic strategies necessary to ensure a good year for everyone.

**Strategy 1: Sweat the Small Stuff**

You will need to sweat the small stuff for the co-teaching partnership to start off well and to run smoothly throughout the year. It is important to discuss the things that seem routine or mundane. It is these very items that, if left unattended, will ruin your partnership, causing frustration and resentment. The two of you need to discuss the classroom discipline policy and its implementation. You will also need to focus on grading and planning, classwork and homework, materials, and student modifications and accommodations, as well as noise level tolerance, giving and receiving feedback, and instructional strategies. The classroom now belongs to you both, as well as to all your students. To become a safe learning environment, everyone, the small stuff must be discussed, decided, and implemented.

**Strategy 2: We Are Family**

Taking the time to build a relationship with your co-teacher is an important step towards being a successful team. Co-teaching is a collaborative relationship that depends on parity, shared goals and responsibilities, shared accountability for student outcomes, and joint decision making. To be an effective team you must also establish good communication skills, be flexible, and learn to trust and respect each other. These pieces do not fall into place overnight and they require time and dedication to the process.

Another difficult piece for many teachers entering into a co-teaching partnership is the ability to give up control. As teachers it is necessary for us to be in control of kids, curriculum, instruction, etc. However, when another adult is added to the classroom full control is no longer an option. The environment needs to change from one where everybody is welcome and mine, mine, mine to to be in control. As teachers it is necessary for us to be in control of kids, curriculum, instruction, etc. However, when another adult is added to the classroom full control is no longer an option. The environment needs to change from one where everybody is welcome and to allow for everyone to be in control.

**Strategy 3: Divide and Conquer**

Enhanced instruction and positive student outcomes are clearly goals of the co-taught classroom. Having two teachers in the classroom, both with important but different areas of strength, benefits all students not just those receiving special education services. The general educator brings a wealth of knowledge about the curriculum that needs to be taught, while the special educator brings a strong background in the learning strategies that assist everyone. When there are two teachers in the classroom, instruction should look very different than when there is only one. With two teachers we are able to raise the level of engagement and instructional intensity. To do this, Marilyn Friend and Cook, 2007 has identified six approaches to co-teaching. These approaches are identified as One Teach/One Assist, One Teach/One Observe, Station Teaching, Parallel Teaching, Alternative Teaching, and Team Teaching or more simply put, divide and conquer.

The co-teaching approaches allow us to divide students in ways that better meet their needs and enhance learning. By implementing these instructional models we can increase student interest, assess understanding, raise student involvement, involve a safe small group environment, encourage risk taking, and ensure learning. In a true co-taught classroom, both teachers are used to divide students, instruction, and tasks needed to conquer the learning challenges of today.

**Strategy 4: To Be or Not To Be?**

When the question is about planning,
the answer is always To Be. Planning for the co-taught classroom is always a difficult task. Everyone is busy; it is easy to let other responsibilities of work or home get in the way. However, the success of the co-taught classroom depends heavily on the planning involved. To put in place all that is discussed in this article, planning is critically important. Planning can involve macro-planning sessions before the school year starts or on workdays. During these sessions a unit of study is outlined so that both teachers understand the direction the class is going. Micro-planning sessions are shorter, with a more narrow focus. These sessions can take place weekly for an allotted amount of time or even on the fly when teachers have been co-teaching together longer and are more familiar with the curriculum. When planning for the co-taught classroom assign roles and responsibilities, establish the co-teaching models that will be used, and address the accommodations and/or modifications that will have to be made to meet the needs of the students. It is difficult to emphasize how important co-planning is to the success co-teaching. It is during this co-planning time that relationships are built, trust is established, responsibilities are assigned, and communication is practiced. Co-planning is a difficult thing to commit to and one of the most important aspects for successful co-teaching. So, the strategies are in place, the students are walking through the door, and it is going to be a great year...let the race begin!

Resources:

Self-Determination: A Key Component to Success in an Inclusive Classroom

John McNaught, M.Ed, I’m Determined State Project Coordinator, VDOE Region 5 T/TAC @ James Madison University

What?

What is inclusion? Can it look more than one way? Let’s try to simplify the concept of inclusion and inclusive practices so we can then look at a strategy to help all students be successful in the classroom. Inclusive instructional practices can be described as methods of instruction and assessment that are tailored (or differentiated) to the strengths, preferences, interests, and needs (SPIN) of the learners in the classroom.

Why?

In his new book, Unmistakable Impact, Jim Knight identifies the key ingredient to success: simplicity. The American school system is ripe for change. Take a look at some sober statistics from the Alliance for Excellent Education:

*Every year, over 1.2 million students - that’s 7,000 every school day - do not graduate from high school on time (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).
*Unless current trends change, more than 12 million students will drop out during the course of the next decade - at a loss to the nation of more than $3 trillion (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

How?

The Virginia Department of Education’s I’m Determined Project has developed a simple tool to help all students identify and communicate their SPIN (strengths, preferences, interests, and needs): the One-Pager. Figure 1 is a template explaining the kind of questions for students to answer when identifying their SPIN. In the middle, students can use a Web cam, flip camera, or cell phone to record themselves explaining their own One-Pager. The students can then e-mail the One-Pager to all of the teachers, administrators, counselors, and anyone in their support system.


Resources:


fig. 1

fig. 2

fig. 3
### The Good Day Plan

#### What it is

The Good Day Plan is a simple tool used to help you identify factors that play a role in whether or not you have a good day.

#### What it does

The Good Day Plan allows you to view your day from beginning to end and helps you identify a structure/routine that enables you to have a good day.

#### How to do it

The student and a teacher/parent/mentor visualize a good day and write down the steps to achieve it. Then, following the template, they create an action plan to make your good day happen more often.

A student sample of a Good Day Plan showing a completed template is on the next page. The student sample is comprised of information given by a seventeen year-old male who lived with his grandmother and who had a good relationship, to think critically about the opportunities that he had to control his environment in the classroom by improving the quality of relationships he initiated and maintain with his students. Colvin (2009) states that the “quality of teacher-student relationships is an important motivational factor for students to improve and maintain desirable behavior and academic performance in the classroom” (p. 61). It is important that we build relationships with students is the foundation to their academic and behavioral success. By building these foundations, educators can give students the skills and the tools that they need to produce positive behavioral outcomes to be successful at home and at school.

#### Teacher-Student Relationship

Building and maintaining relationships with others are some of the very first skills students learn before they even enter school. This is why it is important for educators to model and nurture appropriate relationships and expectations, to help create lasting and meaningful relationships with school staff and peers at all ages. Teachers can offset non-compliant behavior in the classroom by improving the quality of relationships they initiate and maintain with their students. Colvin (2009) states that the “quality of teacher-student relationships is an important motivational factor for students to improve and maintain desirable behavior and academic performance in the classroom” (p. 61). It is important that we build relationships with students based on facts rather than perceptions.

### The Good Day Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What happens on a Good Day?</th>
<th>Does it happen now?</th>
<th>What needs to happen to make it a Good Day?</th>
<th>Who can help me?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>breakfast at home</td>
<td>once in a blue moon</td>
<td>ask for/save breakfast foods same</td>
<td>grandma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen to music in shower</td>
<td>always</td>
<td></td>
<td>rae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit alone on bus/ stay out window</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>get a one person seat</td>
<td>bus driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have all materials</td>
<td>almost always</td>
<td>get all things together the night before see one every day</td>
<td>Ms. Greenfield/planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive contact w/ principals</td>
<td>just about every day</td>
<td></td>
<td>principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to have my water/ drink milk and good lunch</td>
<td>half the time</td>
<td></td>
<td>ree/grandma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoid people I don’t get along with</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>get it ready the night before</td>
<td>Ms. Greenfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not go near them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources:


### Footnote

Getting to “I got it!!!” in the Co-taught Math Classroom

Linda Hickey, M.Ed., Coordinator, VDOE Region 5 T/TAC @ James Madison University

An awareness activity I often do with adults during professional development is to ask them to process the addition of two numbers such as 7 + 9. Then I go around the group and ask them, “How did you process this task?” The variation of responses often becomes enlightening to the participants. Some will say they took 9, added one and took one from the 7, giving them a sum of 16. Others will say they used doubles, 2 x 7 plus 7, giving them a sum of 16. Some will say they just knew the answer. Rather than all of us using the same thought processes, we as adults have developed a processing procedure for every math problem we approach. This process is one that we comprehend and know will work for us as individuals. The realization is that not everyone is using the same process. When teaching children mathematics, do we as educators give students the same opportunity to identify how math can make sense for them as individuals? How do we know how students are processing information and what does this have to do with co-teaching? With the content specialist and the strategy specialist in a math classroom, the resources are doubled for helping students grasp an understanding of the math concepts. Here are some suggestions:

1. Bring meaning to mathematics beyond procedural processes. Use the Concrete, Representational, Abstract approach to teaching which allows students to visualize mathematics. By using good manipulatives, students are aided in building, strengthening, and connecting various representations of mathematical ideas.
2. Afford students the opportunity to express their personal interpretation of any math concept through conversations, drawings, journal writing, or other representations.
3. Determine what students already know. Research tells us that sustained learning exists when students can make connections to prior knowledge. This helps give students understanding of mathematics through thinking processes that work for them individually.
4. Use open-ended problem solving to promote student engagement and the opportunity for discovery learning.
5. Use opportunities to observe progression of the student’s learning process and differentiate accordingly through a variety of strategies and co-teaching models.
6. Provide equal opportunities for the general educator and special educator to implement good questioning techniques and formative assessment.
7. Use conversation and error analysis to address students’ misunderstandings before they become ingrained in the learning process.

“Good instruction is good instruction, regardless of students’ racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds. To a large extent, good teaching – teaching that is engaging, relevant, multicultural, and that appeals to a variety of modalities and learning styles – works well with ALL children.”

Educating Everybody’s Children, ASCD, 1995

As we approach this school year we need to look at the reason we want to keep our youth in school and increase our graduation and school completion rates. As you know, it is not just about meeting standards, we need students to stay in school so they can be prepared to attend further education and training and enter the workforce. In the end the goal is for our youth to work, prosper, and live fulfilling lives. One way we can help achieve this is to provide them with the skills that are needed to prepare them to enter and remain in the workforce. Virginia has provided us with a resource to help make this a reality.

Researchers have been talking with Virginia employers regarding the skills and abilities needed for entry level workers since the mid-1980s. Over the past two decades many aspects of the workplace have changed; however the need for basic workplace readiness skills has not. No matter what field of work a student enters or what level of education or training s/he has, these skills will need to be demonstrated (Carrier & Gunter, 2011). This past year an updated workplace readiness skills document was created by the Demographics & Workforce Group at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia. The critical workplace skills were developed based on comparing what Virginia employers reported with national studies and initiatives in other states. The center’s goal was to gain a comprehensive understanding of workplace skills needed by employers in every aspect of the economy and the importance of teaching these skills in the school setting. The skills are divided into three areas:

1. Personal qualities, academic skills, and applied/technical skills. Below are the Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth (“Introducing the New Workplace Readiness Skills,” 2010):

**Personal Qualities & People Skills**
- Positive Work Ethic
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Self-Representation
- Diversity Awareness
- Conflict Resolution
- Creativity & Resourcefulness

**Professional Knowledge & Skills**
- Speaking & Listening
- Reading & Writing
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Health & Safety
- Organizations, Systems, & Climates
- Lifelong Learning
- Job Acquisition & Advancement
- Time, Task, & Resource Management
- Mathematics
- Customer Service
- Technology Knowledge & Skills
- Job-Specific Technologies

Information defining the skills and instruction can be viewed at Virginia’s Career Resource Center’s Web site (http://www.cteresource.org/about/search). Under each career and technical education course is listed each of the 21 Workplace Readiness Skills including a definition, process/skill questions, related standards of learning, and instructional resources.

Research has determined that schools, as well as employers, need to take a more active role in teaching these skills. Traditionally youth gained these skills through work experience. Studies indicate that from 1979 to 2009 work experience for youth has decreased significantly (Sum, 2009). For the past ten years career and technical education classes have taught workplace readiness skills. These skills should be incorporated into the entire curriculum so that all students have the opportunity to learn them. This commitment to workplace skills and attitudes should be reflected in the school, home, and community. Employer involvement in the schools can also facilitate the development of work-ready graduates (Carrier & Gunter, 2011).

As we approach this school year we need to look at the reason we want to keep our youth in school and increase our graduation and school completion rates. As you know, it is not just about meeting standards, we need students to stay in school so they can be prepared to attend further education and training and enter the workforce. In the end the goal is for our youth to work, prosper, and live fulfilling lives. One way we can help achieve this is to provide them with the skills that are needed to prepare them to enter and remain in the workforce. Virginia has provided us with a resource to help make this a reality.

Researchers have been talking with Virginia employers regarding the skills and abilities needed for entry level workers since the mid-1980s. Over the past two decades many aspects of the workplace have changed; however the need for basic workplace readiness skills has not. No matter what field of work a student enters or what level of education or training s/he has, these skills will need to be demonstrated (Carrier & Gunter, 2011). This past year an updated workplace readiness skills document was created by the Demographics & Workforce Group at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia. The critical workplace skills were developed based on comparing what Virginia employers reported with national studies and initiatives in other states. The center’s goal was to gain a comprehensive understanding of workplace skills needed by employers in every aspect of the economy and the importance of teaching these skills in the school setting. The skills are divided into three areas: personal qualities, academic skills, and applied/technical skills. Below are the Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth (“Introducing the New Workplace Readiness Skills,” 2010):

**Personal Qualities & People Skills**
- Positive Work Ethic
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Self-Representation
- Diversity Awareness
- Conflict Resolution
- Creativity & Resourcefulness

**Professional Knowledge & Skills**
- Speaking & Listening
- Reading & Writing
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Health & Safety
- Organizations, Systems, & Climates
- Lifelong Learning
- Job Acquisition & Advancement
- Time, Task, & Resource Management
- Mathematics
- Customer Service
- Technology Knowledge & Skills
- Job-Specific Technologies

Information defining the skills and instruction can be viewed at Virginia’s Career Resource Center’s Web site (http://www.cteresource.org/about/search). Under each career and technical education course is listed each of the 21 Workplace Readiness Skills including a definition, process/skill questions, related standards of learning, and instructional resources.

Currently a team of educators and parents are generating a list of activities and resources that will prepare students from pre-school to post high for the skills they are going to need to be successful in the workplace. These activities can be used at school, home, or the community and will be posted on T/TAC Web sites later this year. It is time to take the initiative and prepare our students to be successful employees in the workplace.

References


Let’s Build the Airplane Before We Fly! Making Decisions about Assistive Technology That Can Increase Inclusion Opportunities for all Students!

Deborah M. Yancey, M.Ed., Speech/Language Pathologist, Rockingham County Public Schools, Region 5

Virginia Department of Education’s Assistive Technology Guide exists as a wonderful resource to guide IEP teams in developing a framework for the consideration and trials of AT needed for students. As IEP teams begin to discuss AT needs, the guide can help ease teams’ anxiety of this challenge and make inclusion happen. Using these two documents routinely can help ease teams’ anxiety of this challenge and make inclusion happen. Give it a try this year!

If teams get stumped and need ideas, there is a wonderful framework entitled Virginia Assistive Technology Resource Guide under the Consideration & Assessment link for identifying relevant tasks within instructional areas, as well as appropriate accommodations, modifications, and technology solutions that could be tried. This framework can be printed and given to all the team members surrounding the student, allowing true AT consideration and trials to occur. Often providing simple AT devices and services can make all the difference in a student being included in classrooms. The challenge is for the teams to make sure the tasks and the tools recommended match the student’s abilities and instructional goals. Using these two documents routinely can help ease teams’ anxiety of this challenge and make inclusion happen.

Reference: http://www.ttaonline.org/atsdp/
It is that time of year when teachers, instructional assistants, therapists, and students are coming back to school with high expectations for a great year. One of the most essential components to a well-oiled classroom is supporting young children to engage in positive behaviors. Any teacher of young children knows that on any given day the range of emotions and behaviors in the classroom can be unpredictable. Children with and without disabilities are learning to manage their feelings as well as communicate their needs and desires. The best strategy to manage challenging behaviors is to set up the classroom environment with supports that encourage positive behavior as well as active learning. Young children thrive when provided with a consistent routine that is full of interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and developmental level.

One strategy is to use daily routine cards that can be displayed and reviewed with children to visually represent the activities for the day. This will build the foundation for smoother transitions as children recognize the predictable order of activities that are part of the daily schedule. Within each time block of the day, create routines that encourage expectations for children’s behavior, such as starting large group or circle time with an easy to join in song, assigning consistent members at small group tables, including activities that children can get started on their own, and listening for clean up transition activities that are presented to children each day (i.e., when you hear the bells it is time to clean up).

Staff zoning throughout the day is a great way to plan for intentional teaching and support for positive behaviors. Staff members plan together to prepare the activities and tasks that each adult will participate in to ensure children have attention and support during all parts of the day (i.e., outside, small group, center time, etc.). It is essential that staff members continuously observe and monitor children and redirect when necessary to proactively support positive behavior. To promote positive adult/child interactions, staff members should be available to children at their level to physically and verbally assist children with activities that may be difficult for them to complete independently. This can include self-care skills as well as cooperative play experiences that require sustained interactions and sharing. Children who do not yet have the skills or understanding to engage in activities independently benefit from the development and implementation of strategies that may simplify tasks. For example, using visuals that have the small steps for completing activities is a great way to provide information on what is expected within a situation.

Transition times during the day are especially difficult for young children. Visuals that support helping children understand what is happening next are essential to the ease of transition. Small daily routine cards on a ring that can be referred to as children are being guided from one activity to another are very helpful. Some additional strategies that work well include auditory and visual timers that signal start/stop, back-up materials for times when children have to wait for a portion of the day to finish (puzzles, books, drawing, etc.), bins of fidget toys and conversation starters – providing pictures to use for interactions with children during mealtimes, etc.

Young children are learning how to regulate their emotions. Providing books and visuals in the classroom that discuss and/or portray emotions gives the opportunity for staff to identify feelings and skills that lead to appropriate behaviors. The Heas Start Center for Inclusion and the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) are two resources that have many strategies on how to promote social emotional skills that lead young children to develop appropriate behavior. The problem solving solution kit from CSEFEL gives steps and strategies (visuals provided) to help children solve their own social problems in the classroom. Helping children to learn ideas to calm themselves is essential; breath control - by breathing in (pretend to smell the flower) and breathing out (pretend to blow out the candle), and heavy work activities – moving books, pushing against the wall, etc., give calming input into children’s systems (Heavy Work).

As the school year begins, take time to review the 10 signs of a great preschool program as identified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Reviewing and researching best practices in early childhood education will support all children, with and without disabilities, to achieve appropriate classroom behavior and reach their learning potential.

Resources:
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/
- Heavy Work, http://www.ateachabout.com
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), http://www.naeyc.org
Welcome back to a new academic year!

This summer the T/TAC at GMU bid a fond farewell to our colleague, Nikki Miller. We will miss her academic expertise and willingness to team with us in so many of our work efforts. We will also miss her boundless energy and spirit and her ability to make us laugh. Nikki promises to visit us periodically, but her main plan is to spend more time with her children, grandson, and husband. We wish you well in the next chapter of your life, Nikki!

We welcome Kathy Nutt, who will be our new coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction. Kathy comes to us from Fauquier County Public Schools, where she has worked for many years at the middle and high school level in special education. Kathy has “jumped right in” to the job as she has already been out training and visiting schools in Region 4. We are excited to have her as a member of our team!

The staff at the T/TAC at GMU is available to help you. Please visit our web site at: ttac.gmu.edu to GMU is available to help you.

The future of Virginia assessments, differentiate your instruction using the SOL Enhanced section, and participate in online trainings.

Below are a few valuable and free regional events that you might be interested in attending this fall, as well as information on our T/TAC library and the VDOE’s I’m Determined project. Have a great school year!

**AT Share Fair**

**October 7th, 2011 from 9:30 – 2:30 on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University**

Join fellow educators who provide Assistive Technology (AT) services within Northern Virginia (NOVA) school districts for the second annual AT Share Fair co-sponsored by the VDOE T/TAC at GMU and the NOVA AT Coordinators Group. This event will showcase various methods for integrating both assistive and instructional technology into the curriculum. Session topics include: iOS-related tools, creating podcasts, professional development, interactive manipulatives and more. Camilla Gagliolo (Instructional Technology Coordinator from Arlington County Public Schools) will be providing the keynote. The fair will be held in the Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall (1st floor) on the Fairfax campus of GMU. To register, visit: http://www.regonline.com/atsharefair2011

**Future Quest 2011**

**Saturday, November 19th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University**

Come to the biennial career and college forum for students with disabilities, their parents and professionals held at George Mason University in Fairfax. There will be sessions on a variety of topics that focus on life after high school. These sessions will include: career planning, employment strategies, the college application process, and supports and resources in college. To register, visit: http://www.regonline.com/futurequest2011

**The T/TAC at GMU’s Kellar Library**

The T/TAC at GMU’s Kellar Library now has new, longer hours of operation! It will be open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The library is closed on weekend and GMU holidays. We hope these new hours will accommodate those people who may want to visit during their after-work hours or when they are on campus for evening classes. Please note that the Kellar Library is now located in the Finley Building in room 116. Our library specialist, Jackie Petersen, will be happy to help you find anything you need, from text material to assistive technology equipment. To review the items in the library, you can access the catalog at: http://kihd.gmu.edu/library/

The Virginia Department of Education’s I’m Determined Project is proud to unveil its newly redesigned website: www.imdetermined.org. The new site has tabbed sections at the top that are designed for three groups: Youth, Parents, and Educators. By clicking on one of these tabs, information is accessed that explains the I’m Determined Project, offers a variety of tools and resources to support the process, and discusses the impact that it has had on the lives of students.

Using the side menu, you can access six modules that are designed to provide background information on the self-determination movement for people with disabilities and the history of the Virginia Department of Education’s I’m Determined Project. These modules provide a strong foundation for beginning your journey toward self-determination.

In the side menu, Films will take you to a collection of documentary videos about the I’m Determined process. The videos focus on a number of different topics such as: Determined Student Involvement in the IEP and It’s all about you! Get to know your IEP (for both elementary and secondary school). The I’m Determined Project is currently working to have all online videos captioned. DVD versions are available upon request by contacting John McNaught at mcnagui@gmu.edu.

In the same side menu, you will have access to some important tools which include: the One Pager, the Good Day Plan, the Goal Setting & Attainment plan, Student Involvement templates for IEP and other conferences, and Life Lines – lesson plans that focus on the core component areas of self-determination and are linked to the SOLs. Within each of the tool sections, there are video examples of how to use them with students.
What’s in YOUR library at VDOE’s T/TAC at GMU?

September/October 2011

Featuring some of our Most Wanted resources . . .

**Day One and Beyond: Practical Matters for New Middle-Level Teachers** by Rick Wormelli; Call number - 373.11 WOR 2003

This book discusses the practical details of day-to-day teaching in the middle school environment.

**Bully-Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Middle Schools** by Marla Bonds & Sally Stoker; Call number - 373.1782 BON 2000

You’ll find valuable information about developmental issues unique to middle school students and how those issues affect the bully-victim dynamic in the middle school environment. This is a complete curriculum for grades 6-8, containing appropriate lessons and reproducible handouts for the classroom as well as programs for parents, faculty, bus drivers, etc.

**Differentiating Instruction: Collaborative Planning and Teaching for Universally Designed Learning [DVD][VHS]** by Jacqueline S. Thousand, Richard A. Villa & Ann I. Nevin; Call number - VIDEO 371.394 DIF 2007

This kit includes all the tools needed for training educators to combine co-planning, co-teaching, universal design for learning and the retrofit approach to effectively differentiate instruction that reaches all learners in diverse classrooms. It is appropriate for training of groups of any size from small workshops to large seminars.

**The First Days Of School: How To Be An Effective Teacher** by Harry K. Wong & Rosemary T. Wong; Call number - 371.102 WON 2005

A resource full of practical strategies and advice for becoming an effective teacher.

**Helping Children Learn: Intervention Handouts for Use in School and at Home** by Jack A. Naglieri & Eric B. Pickering; Call number - 371.926 NAG 2010

This book is helpful for providing teachers and parents with practical methods they can use to help children acquire academic knowledge and skills. The CD includes intervention handouts in both English and Spanish.

**How To Deal Effectively with Inappropriate Talking and Noisemaking** by Lee Kern & Gabriell Sacks; Call number - 371.1024 KER 2003

Part of the How to Improve Classroom Behavior Series, this book describes the necessary skills teachers need to manage students’ talking and maintain acceptable noise levels in their classrooms and how to implement effective rules.

**How to Help Students Follow Directions, Pay Attention, and Stay on Task** by Sherry L. Mlickich; Call number - 371.1024 MIL 2003

Also from the How to Improve Classroom Behavior Series, this book focuses on applying proven classroom management strategies and effective instructional techniques to help students follow directions and increase attention to teacher and tasks.

**Involving Parents of Students with Special Needs: 25 Ready-to-use Strategies** by Jill C. Dardig; Call number - 371.9 DAR 2008

Ready-to-use techniques for involving parents in the education of their children are found in this book. These strategies can be used by both general and special education teachers in Grades PreK-12 to reach parents of students with a wide range of learning needs and parents of typically developing students.

If you like these, search our catalog for more @ http://kihd.gmu.edu/library

No time to come to the library? No problem! Most items can be mailed to your school or home address.

To request one of the items above or any other materials available for checkout, please contact Region 4 T/TAC Librarian Jackie Petersen, jpetersk@gmu.edu or 703.993.3672

New library location: Finley Hall, Room 116, GMU Fairfax Campus

**New hours for the Kellar Library!**

Now open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 9:30 PM and Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

**The Kellar Institute**

Improving the lives and productivity of persons with disabilities

Helen A. Kellar

Library

Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities

George Mason University

**Library Line-Up**

Jackie Petersen, MLS, VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University

The T/TAC Telegram September/October 2011 19
**OCTOBER**

October 13, 2011: Transition Practitioners’ Council West Annual Fall Meeting  
**Location:** George Mason University, Prince William Campus, Manassas  
**Sponsored By:** VDOE’s Training and Technical Assistance Center at GMU  
**Information:** The focus of the meeting will be on the use of technology to assist students in secondary transition. Guest speakers will address the use of assistive technology for students; a student panel will present their thoughts on the importance of technology in their lives.  
**For More Information and Registration:** To attend the GMU location, please register online at http://www.ttaconline.org/staff/s_events/s_event_detail.asp?cid=1916. For questions, contact Dionne Paul-Wiggins, 703.993.4496.

October 20 – 22: Insight 2011: Practical Solutions for a Supportive School, Home, and Community for Students with ASD  
**Location:** River Road United Methodist Church, Richmond  
**Sponsored By:** VDOE’s Training and Technical Assistance Center at VCU and Autism Society Central Virginia  
**Information:** Insight 2011 is showcasing nationally renowned speaker, Kristi Sakai. Sakai is the mother of three children with Asperger Syndrome; she translates how to use best practices for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in practical ways.  
**For More Information and Registration:** Visit http://www.cvent.com/d/4dqhyx. If you have questions about registration, contact Krystle Aidif at aidifkm@vcu.edu or 804.827.0108.

**NOVEMBER**

November 7-8: 5th Annual I’m Determined Youth Summit  
**Information:** The Virginia Department of Education’s I’m Determined project, in conjunction with the Partnership for People with Disabilities, invites applications for sponsorship to the Fifth Annual I’m Determined Youth Summit at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville, Virginia. Youth with disabilities who are at least age 14 by November 6, 2011, are encouraged to apply.  
**For More Information and Registration:** http://www.ttaconline.org/staff/s_events/s_event_detail.asp?cid=1834

November 17 – 19: 27th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs & Their Families  
**Location:** Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, Maryland (Washington, DC, Metro Area)  
**Sponsored By:** Council for Exceptional Children/Division for Early Childhood (CEC/DEC)  
**Information:** Join colleagues from around the world to explore the evidence, present practical strategies, and engage in discussions that will change the way you think. Join the Division for Early Childhood and over 300 outstanding presenters who will inspire your work with transformative approaches. This comprehensive professional development experience offers sessions on topics such as: policy, autism, recommended practices, tiered interventions, challenging behavior, personnel development, research, assessment, cultural diversity, and more!  
**Opening Keynote:** This year’s keynote presentation will focus on the Kondrich family’s journey. Learn how Chloe, who was born with Down syndrome, initiated a family transformation that is a lesson for us all. Find out how early intervention services and supports created a solid foundation for Chloe and her family. Hear about what it takes to create and sustain community inclusion. Listen to a passionate parent’s call to focus on each child’s ability. Chloe’s family found their voice as strong advocates for investing in early intervention and early childhood special education. Their family story will challenge, inspire, and most of all – remind us of the power of transformative practice.  
**For More Information and Registration:** Visit http://www.dec-sped.org/Conference

November 19: Future Quest  
**Location:** Johnson Center, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA  
**Sponsored by:** VDOE’s Training and Technical Assistance Center at GMU, and the Northern Virginia Transition Coalition  
**Information:** You Can Learn About: Options after High School • Career Planning • Career/Technical Schools • Employment Strategies • College Application Process • Supports and Resources in College  
**For More Information and Registration:** http://www.ttaconline.org/staff/s_events/s_event_detail.asp?cid=1834
2012 EVENTS

March 7 & 8, 2012: 11th Annual Autism Conference: Autism - Imagine the Possibilities
Location: The Westin, 6631 West Broad St., Richmond, VA 23230
Sponsored By: Commonwealth Autism Service

March 12 – 14, 2012: Technology for Transition; Making the Connection. Virginia Transition Forum
Location: The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center, Roanoke
Supported By contributions from: Virginia Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Student Services and Division of Technology and Career Education; Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center; Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired; Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education - Special Needs Division; Virginia Division on Career Development and Transition; Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Information: The Virginia Transition Forum brings together students, parents, educators, rehabilitation professionals, and others to guide youth with disabilities to achieve successful employment and life outcomes.
For More Information and Registration: Visit www.virginiatransitionforum.org

Sign-Up Today
The T/TAC Telegram has gone electronic. If you would like to receive our quarterly newsletter, please sign up on our website at: http://www.regonline.com/ttac_newsletter. You will receive each new issue of our newsletter delivered right to your inbox.