

LEARNING MODULE #4

Part 3 of 3

CURRICULUM PLANNING

Part 3 will include the remaining topics:

8. Adapting & Modifying Music, Art And Drama Activities
9. Reading And Listening To Stories
10. Instead Of Workbooks
11. Gym Adaptations & Modifications
 - 11.1 Full Participation
 - 11.2 Adapted Participation
 - 11.3 Parallel Participation
 - 11.4 Supportive Participation
12. How Do We Keep The Student's Planning Tools Current With The Changing Regular Classroom Activities?
 - 12.1 Communication Through On-going Program Planning Meetings
 - 12.2 Informal Communication
 - 12.3 Communication Through Long Term Planning
 - 12.4 Communication With The Student's Therapists & Itinerant Teachers

Conclusion

8. Adapting & Modifying Music, Art And Drama Activities

Music and movement activities are often favourites. They provide excellent opportunities to practice communication, imitation, sequencing and following directions. Some of the following adaptations may be made to maximize the student's participation:

- **Simplify fine and gross movements** to maximize the student's participation. (incorporate movement goals from therapists).
- **Slow down the speed** of the song or activity to help include the student.
- **Simplify, shorten and repeat** directions.
- Keep the vocabulary **simple but age appropriate** (intermediate words can be replaced for primary songs).
- Where possible, **match words with sign language** for extra cues if the student uses signs.

- **Add sound effects** or words to be used with the **voice output device**. A repetitive phrase can be used throughout the class' song as a rhythm beat.
- Incorporate **visual aids** or objects to encourage imaginative play.
- Stop periodically and look for a response from the student to continue on with "**more**" of the song and activity to promote communication.

Click on the PISP "How to ..." Video for **Music Therapy** to see how skills & objectives can be reinforced in music:
http://www.pisp.ca/video/index_how_to_videos.html

Click on video clip: **How To Work On Skills In Music**



Reference

- Musselwhite, 1985. Songbook: Signs and symbols for children, Don Johnston Development Equipment, Inc.

9. Reading And Listening To Stories

Most classrooms involve students in reading on a daily basis as a routine activity. We need to be clear about the objectives that students on modified programs are working on through these activities. The student should always be involved as **an active participant** in some way during reading time and not just a passive listener. Some of these objectives may include:

- Use of **vision** when looking at pictures, pointed out by peers
- Use of **switch** to read a repetitive phrase, word, question, sound effect, etc.
- **Choice making** with representational objects or pictures
- **Comprehension** with "yes/no" questions if appropriate
- Use of **simple language**, picture board or sign language to answer simple comprehension questions (what, who, where, and if possible - why)
- **Answering questions** for simple academics (matching, numeracy, letter/sound/word recognition, colours, etc.)

The following are some strategies that can assist students on modified programs, in participating with peers during reading time.

- A story can be sequenced on a **voice output** device. Classmates can record the story highlights onto each section of the device. This reinforces sequencing objectives, switch work and comprehension.
- Attach **Styrofoam peanuts** from packaging to paper clips or glue on to tongue depressors or Popsicle sticks to assist the student to participate in turning the pages and thus work on functional hand skills.
- If the student has a problem with control of saliva, slip a **clear plastic page protector** over the pages, which are in use. This works for small books of 9 X11 inches or less.
- **Audiotapes** and books can be borrowed from the library for the student to access with a switch and tape recorder. If these are not available, classmates may volunteer to read and record stories to build an audio library for the class and/or school.
- Look for stories with **repeated lines** or phrases. The repetitious phrase can be recorded on a voice output device. You can record a word, phrase, question, or sound effect that relates to the story.

Click on the PISP "How To..." Video for incorporating a **voice output device** into a story that is being read to the class, on the PISP website:
http://www.pisp.ca/video/index_how_to_videos.html

Click on video: "**How To Use The Step-by-Step Communicator During Story Time**" to download.



- **Switch activities**: The student can hit a voice output device for such statements as: "Turn the page, please"; "What's that?"; "What's going to happen next?"; "That's funny!"; "I want to read a book with you", "What just happened?: "Can you sum that up for me?" etc. It is also possible to list several books for the student to choose from on a choice board or E-Tran, if appropriate.

Reference

- Some suggestions are from "10 Low Tech/No Tech Ideas" by Susan Blockberger, M.A., S-LP. (c). Vibrations. Nov. 1993. Volume 22, #7)

	
<p>This classmate is gently physically prompting this student to use her Step-by-Step Communicator for her part in the story.</p>	<p>Create your own stories written by peers with repeated words, phrases, questions or sound effects for voice output.</p>

10. Instead Of Workbooks

As students move into the intermediate grades, often more time is spent working and learning with ...

- Direct instruction.
- Quiet seatwork.
- Worksheets, workbooks and/or textbooks.
- Paper and pencil work.

Activities that allow students to learn and practice objectives using alternative materials and techniques often are more **user-friendly** for all learners. This includes students with learning difficulties, gifted students, students with physical disabilities and students with severe/profound cognitive disabilities.

Reference Folder

- Refer to the PISP website for more ideas that reflect universal design and/or modifications: **Instead Of Workbooks - Classroom Activities For Universal Design**
<http://www.pisp.ca/strategies/strategies100.pdf>

11. Gym Adaptations & Modifications

Students with disabilities can be involved in gym activities at a variety of levels depending on their cognitive and physical challenges. The objective is to reinforce some of the multidisciplinary objectives through the gym activity as well as provide social inclusion. Teachers can involve peers on a one-to-one basis with scripted routines. Small group activities may involve the use of **communication** objectives (e.g., signing, using a communication board or voice output device involving a Communication & Interaction Model, etc.), and **fine motor** (reinforcing cause and effect objectives and switch use), or **gross motor** objectives (e.g., mobility, stretching, etc.).

The levels of participation may vary for different units and lessons. The following are various **levels of participation**:

11.1 Full Participation

No modifications are necessary to engage in the activity, (e.g., an ambulatory student may engage in swimming with minimal supervision).

11.2 Adapted Participation

The student participates in the class activity with some adaptations to the following:

- **Equipment:** Modify the game or activity in some way (e.g., everyone in the class uses scooter boards or is blind folded; larger/lighter equipment is used such as nerf balls; partially deflated balls or balloons are used to slow down the speed; a netted ball is used for throwing; a bowling ramp is used; bright coloured pinnies assist the visually impaired; etc.)

*Refer to the video clip of the student using the enormous **soccer ball** in the adapted high school soccer game. This can be viewed on the PE Modifications video on this website: www.pisp.ca*

- **Rules:** (e.g., additional strikes, throws, etc. are allowed; change the scoring system such as first base = home run; a classmate runs for the student; increase or decrease the number of players to offset the team with the disabled student; etc.)

*Refer to the example of the high school **relay races**, where the teacher changes the students in the relay team for the special needs student in the wheelchair. This can be viewed on the PE Modifications video on this website: www.pisp.ca*

- **Distances:** (e.g., the student runs/wheels half the distance; serve a volleyball closer to the net; modify boundary lines with bright orange pylons for increased visibility; lower the nets; move closer to the target; etc.)

*Refer to the example of the student who only works as a **goalie** in a small area with a buddy during a floor hockey game. This can be viewed in the PE Modifications video on this website: www.pisp.ca*

- **Complexity:** Simplify the objective in the game/activity. (e.g., the student's job is to move with or follow one student with a matching pinnie in a basketball game; the student sits unsupported for 2 minutes straddled on the horse for upper body work; focus on range of movement and reinforcement of physio objectives in the activity; focus on a specific skill such as choice making or switch use; etc.)

Refer to the example of the student participating as the "out of bounds" person, retrieving the ball when it leaves the boundaries in the soccer game. This can be viewed in the PE Modifications video: <http://www.pisp.ca/video/index.html>

11.3 Parallel Participation

Here, the student is involved in the class activity but focuses on his/her own objectives, (e.g., the student communicates with vocalizations for "more" to a classmate to continue to jump beside him/her on the trampoline; the student works on physio stretches in the pool during swim time with full support from the assistant; etc.) Peers are best involved on a one-to-one basis for meaningful interactions.

11.4 Supportive Participation

The student does not participate directly in the game or activity, but is involved in providing a service of some sort to the class (e.g., cheers recorded on a voice output device; switch access the starting gun sound for a race; switch access a buzzer to change stations in the gym.) This last example is demonstrated by Todd in the PISP video: Integration - Meeting The Challenge, found on the PISP website: www.pisp.ca

Reference Folder

- The above strategies were adapted from the "Moving To Inclusion" series from the Ministry Of Health. http://www.ala.ca/Images/PDFs/MTIintro_e.pdf
- Refer to the reference folder for this module for "Gym Adaptations". http://www.pisp.ca/learningmodules/mod4_gym_adaptations.pdf

Review the video clip for sample PE Modifications in the Video section on the PISP website at:

<http://www.pisp.ca/video/index.html>



Points To Ponder

- Where does your student function on the participation scale?
- What are some of the barriers to your student's participation?
- How has your team problem solved solutions to address these barriers?

12. How Do We Keep The Student's Planning Tools Current With The Changing Regular Classroom Activities?

In order for teachers and assistant(s) to be able to continue to plan for on-going classroom modifications, we need to address the **need for regular program planning time**. The classroom teacher should bring to this planning meeting the changing **classroom activities, themes** and possible **small learning group activities** for the upcoming week(s). The special education teacher (school based resource, learning assistance or district itinerant integration support) may help brainstorm modifications with the classroom teacher and teaching assistant. The assistant needs to learn what his/her role will be in preparing materials for a learning centre or other upcoming activity. Together, this group of individuals (i.e., classroom teacher, special education teacher and teaching assistant) needs to continue to plan modifications on a regular on-going basis because the **classroom keeps changing**. It is **dynamic!**

Regardless of how often the student's team decides to meet, they will most likely need to look at some **creative time management** options in order to accomplish this. Some school teams find that a bi-weekly meeting is very effective. An agenda sheet (posted somewhere accessible but private) in the classroom is also helpful to build an ongoing agenda for upcoming meetings. The classroom teacher needs to bring the new activities and themes to this meeting to help the resource teacher and teaching assistant brainstorm ways to include some of the student's objectives. Some teams have built in space for the **classroom teacher's contribution on the student's actual schedule**. There are a variety of ways for the school resource teacher to connect and obtain the above information from the classroom teacher.

Reference Folder

- Refer to the sample agenda for a secondary school team meeting between teachers and assistants called "**High School Team Meetings**".

http://www.pisp.ca/learningmodules/mod4_high_school_team_meetings.pdf

12.1 Communication Through On-going Program Planning Meetings

Meetings between the resource teacher, teaching assistant and classroom teacher should be defined as to their purpose and the outcomes desired by all parties involved. It is important to be clear about each person's role in the meeting (e.g., the classroom teacher may bring an upcoming unit, or an art and/or science activity where the resource teacher can facilitate brainstorming a modification based on the student's objectives and motivators).

Meeting regularly usually involves some creative time management on the part of most districts or schools. In order to find release time for the classroom teacher, some districts have used the following strategies listed below.



- The principal or resource teacher may teach one class a week or every other week to free up the regular classroom teacher to make adaptations and program plan for changing curriculum with the assistant.
- Some schools have designated weekly school assemblies, where they alternate meetings with their teachers and assistants for planning time. At one school, this is called “**Time Carved In Stone**”.
- Some schools or districts have set aside funds for the year to release the classroom teacher to meet with the resource teacher and assistant.
- Parent volunteers may be able to come in and monitor an art activity (assist students working independently), while the classroom teacher meets in the back of the room with the assistant and resource teacher to plan for the upcoming week.
- A parent or perhaps an older student could read a story or couple of chapters from a novel to the class, while the classroom teacher meets for a short time in the room with the resource teacher and assistant.



When teachers and other school staff take time to get involved and meaningfully interact with students with special needs, this **models** social skills for peers and provides a **powerful** message to classmates!

12.2 Informal Communication

In some situations, the resource teacher informally drops in before school or during break times to communicate with the classroom teacher regarding plans for the upcoming week. The resource teacher needs to be clear about what it is that is needed from the classroom teacher for the next week. This type of communication may work for some teams, but many assistants report that when relying solely on this method they often do not have a clear sense of what they are doing the next week.

12.3 Communication Through Long Term Planning

In most schools, the classroom teacher submits a long-range overview of topics and themes to the principal. Sometimes this overview is shared with parents at the beginning of the year as well. The classroom teacher can also forward to the resource teacher the **yearly overview** of themes and concepts for the class, followed by a **term overview** (if developed), which provides more detail. A **unit outline** (which might be prepared for the class) can provide the resource teacher, assistants and often therapists with helpful information for planning and modifying activities, particularly when creating parallel learning centres or small group work which supports classroom learning topics.

12.4 Communication With The Student's Therapists & Itinerant Teachers

An occasional phone call to therapists can provide additional assistance to the resource and classroom teachers when planning modified activities for the student. The resource teacher needs to be clear about what is expected from the therapists and provide as much detail about the activity as possible, as their caseloads are often very heavy. We need to stretch ourselves to think of ways to include all areas in activities. For example, we may be aware of the gross motor objectives the student could work on during a swimming activity. However, what kinds of communication objectives might also be incorporated into this activity? (e.g., choice making, stopping and looking for the student to communicate the need for "more of a favourite activity", interpretation of the student's communication with scripted feedback from the personal dictionary, etc.) Some teams have posted a **team communication log** for the student, so that therapists can address questions from school staff during their visit to the school, without needing to interrupt the teacher. They can also leave messages or questions for the school staff to address as well.

Points To Ponder

- How might you improve your communication between classroom teacher, resource teacher and assistants to better address classroom planning? (What are the challenges and what solutions do you propose?)
- What kinds of features does your current student's schedule include? (e.g., are objectives listed for each activity?)
- How might inclusive activities change from primary to intermediate and from elementary to secondary environments?

When teachers interact with students with special needs in their classrooms, they provide a powerful message to other classmates. They model for classmates that the student is there to learn and to communicate and to contribute.

View the "How to..." Video demonstrating how a teacher can give feedback to a student about his/her non-verbal communication through the Personal Dictionary, from the PISP website:

http://www.pisp.ca/video/index_how_to_videos.html

Click on the video: **How To Give Feedback To The Student Using The Personal Dictionary.**



Conclusion

There are varying opinions as to what inclusion should look like. Some individuals feel that in fact it is not realistic to even contemplate inclusion without the intent to change, adapt and modify our learning environments for students. Most individuals do agree that learning environments need to include students working on their own objectives within functional frameworks and social contexts. (Downing, J. 2008) Many experienced team members will indicate that **there can be a breakdown in communication and planning from the student's IEP to the regular day-to-day plans in the classroom.** The diversity of the classroom seems to be increasing, which places more demands on the classroom teacher. Thus the need for a general classroom format, which is conducive to **diversified learners** (i.e., utilizing constructivist approaches to learning). Students' weekly schedules and planning formats need to be dynamic and fluid, incorporating the vital information from the regular classroom teacher.

Reference Folder

- Refer to "Purpose of Schedules", (2002) written by R. Vitale, Highschool Resource Teacher, Lambrick Park Secondary, Victoria School District.

http://www.pisp.ca/learningmodules/mod4_purpose_of_schedules.pdf