STATEGIES, ACCOMODATIONS, MODIFICATIONS AND RESOURCES

for Exceptional Children

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INTRODUCTION

The most important thing to keep in mind when working with exceptional children regardless of their disability is to collaborate with their parents, special education teachers, administrators, or other multidisciplinary professionals that may provide individualized insight in providing the student with an appropriate education that not only meets their needs but provides them with maximum learning opportunities.

In addition to collaboration, the general education (GE) teacher who has exceptional children in their classroom must be familiar with and adhere to the students' Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will include accomodations and modifications specific for the student. It will also include attainable and appropriate yearly goals for each student to work towards. As a supplement to the individual students' IEPs, this flip chart summarizes some practical applications that may assist the general education teacher who has exceptional children in their classroom.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities, including several disorders such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and ADHD, are disabilities in which a student has difficulty learning in a conventional manner. These students have average intelligence however, there is a discrepancy between their academic achievement and their intellectual ability. They may have trouble in one of the following areas, oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, math calculation, and/or math reasoning. Services related to learning disabilities represent the largest single program for exceptional children in the United States (nearly 50% of all students with disabilities).

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Use visualization/graphic organizers
* Use dramatization/role playing
* Use games/manipulatives
* Encourage drawing/artwork
* Use music/movement/mnemonics
* Be verbally brief and use simple language – say what you mean
* Use repetition and ask for confirmation of instructions

Accomodations/Modifications

* Limit the quantity of work
* Allow additional time to complete assignments
* Increase personal assistance
* Adapt instruction and provide them with options for their responses

Technology Resources

* Encourage keyboarding skills
* Encourage use of spell check and word prediction software programs

Environmental Resources

* Consider child placement in the class
* Use proximity
* Reduce distractions
* Use cooperative learning/peer tutoring

ADHD/ADD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or Attention Deficit Disorder, is a disability characterized by the co-existence of attention problems and hyperactivity which affects the students' ability to learn. It is often associated with other learning disabilities. Students with ADHD often exhibit a variety of characteristics including unusually impulsive behavior, fidgeting or hyperactivity, inability to focus attention, or some combination of these behaviors. Approximately 3-7% of all school-aged children may have the disorder with the occurence being higher in males than females.

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Use behavior modification/self management strategies
* Use distinctive cues/signals to redirect or modify behavior
* Use music/movement/mnemonics
* Be verbally brief and use simple language – say what you mean
* Allow for frequent breaks/shorter work sessions
* Reward good/acceptable behavior
* Use positive reinforcement
* Use on-the-spot individual, extrinsic rewards

Accomodations/Modifications

* Limit the quantity of work
* Allow additional time to complete assignments
* Provide written instructions/notes for the student

Technology Resources

* Use stimulating/engaging educational computer games
* Use computer games/music/ipad/ipod as a reward

Environmental Resources

* Consider child placement in the class – preferably in the back to not disrupt others
* Use proximity
* Reduce distractions

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISABILITIES

Emotional and behavioral disabilities include several disorders such as anxiety, depression, panic disorder, feeding/eating disorders, tic disorders, schizophrenia, selective mutism, ODD, and OCD. These disabilities are characterized by inappropriate types of behaviors, feelings, or depression and by the inability to build and maintain relationships with peers or teachers. Typically these students have average to below average intelligence compared to their peers, however, the emotional or behavioral disability affect their ability to learn in a conventional school setting.

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Establish a healthy/trusting relationship with the student
* Address concerns privately
* Use distinctive cues/signals to redirect or modify behavior
* Teach anger management skills
* Teach behavior modification/self management strategies
* Encourage drawing/artwork
* Use music/movement/mnemonics
* Use positive reinforcement
* Be verbally brief and use simple language – say what you mean
* Choose your battles/ignore what's not critical

Accomodations/Modifications

* Allow additional time to complete assignments
* Limit quantity of work
* Adapt instruction and provide options for their responses

Technology Resources

* Use stimulating/engaging educational computer games
* Use computer games/music/ipad/ipod as a reward

Environmental Resources

* Consider child placement in the class – preferably in the back to not disrupt others
* Use proximity
* Reduce distractions

COMMUNICATION DISABILITIES

Communication disabilities can be either receptive or expressive in nature and involve difficulty in comprehension or expression in written or spoken language. The disability is characterized by a serious disruption of the language acquisition process. Communication disabilities may include delayed speech, articulation disorders, voice disorders, stuttering, and aphasia.

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Encourage the student to talk about events and things in his or her environment and to describe experiences in as much detail as possible
* Promote vocabulary enhancement for the student
* Encourage activities that can be used to promote speech and language development
* Use dramatization/role playing
* Use repetition and ask for confirmation

Accomodations/Modifications

* Allow additional time to complete assignments
* Adapt instruction and provide options for their responses
* Provide written instructions/notes for the student

Technology Resources

* Encourage keyboarding skills
* Use communication boards, GoTalks, ipads, auditory trainers, or other communication aids
* Encourage assistive technology that allows students to speak/write with a computer touchscreen

Environmental Resources

* Consider child placement in the class – preferably near the teacher
* Use proximity

AUTISM

Autism or autism spectrum disorders, including Aspbergers, is a disability characterized by combinations of varying deficiencies in language, interpersonal skills, emotional or affective behavior, and intellectual functioning. It significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction which affects educational performance. Characteristics include impairments in communication as well as repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Use visualization/graphic organizers
* Teach organization strategies
* Teach behavior modification/self management strategies
* Be verbally brief and use simple language – say what you mean
* Communicate with specific instructions, not open-ended statements
* Plan ahead for change and introduce upcoming changes slowly
* Use distinctive cues/signals to redirect or modify behavior
* Reward good/acceptable behavior
* Use repetition and ask for confirmation

Accomodations/Modifications

* Limit quantity of work
* Allow additional time
* Increase personal assistance
* Adapt instruction and provide options for their responses
* Provide written instructions/notes

Technology Resources

* Encourage keyboarding skills
* Encourage any assistive technology that allows students to speak/write with a computer touchscreen
* Use stimulating/engaging educational computer games
* Use computer games/music/ipad/ipod as a reward

Environmental Resources

* Establish a safe environment
* Maintain a structured/organized classroom
* Provide consistency/practice routines
* Use cooperative learning in small groups/ peer tutoring

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) occurs when there is a blow to the head or when the head slams against a stationary object resulting in a total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects the students' educational performance. This disability can range anywhere from developing a personality disorder, mood swings, or short term memory loss to more severe physical and intellectual disabilities.

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Learn about the unique needs of the individual student with the disability
* Consult with parents/administrators about making any necessary modifications for the injured student
* Be prepared for emergency situations
* Use visualization/graphic organizers
* Be verbally brief and use simple language
* Encourage drawing/artwork
* Use music/movement/mnemonics
* Use repetition and ask for confirmation
* In the case of personality disorders or mood swings use positive reinforcement and teach anger management skills
* Reward good/acceptable behavior

Accomodations/Modifications

* Accomodations and modifications will vary depending on the students needs and abilities
* Limit quantity of work
* Allow additional time to complete assignments
* Increase personal assistance
* Adapt instruction to the individual's needs and provide options for their responses

Technology Resources

* Technology resources will also depend on the students needs and abilities
* Encourage keyboarding skills
* Encourage any assistive technology that allows students to speak/write with a computer touchscreen
* Use communication boards, GoTalks, ipods, or any other communication or cognitive aids
* Use stimulating/engaging educational computer games
* Use computer games/music/ipad/ipod as a reward

Environmental Resources

* Consider child placement in the classroom
* Use proximity, eye contact
* Reduce distractions
* Provide stimulating/engaging activities
* Encourage cooperative learning/peer tutoring
* Provide a safe environment

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Gifted and talented students are exceptional in that they have extraordinary abilities. Students who have exceptionally high intelligence are considered gifted, however the adjectives 'creative and talented' have been used to describe other areas of performance than those measured by traditional intelligence tests. This exceptionality differs from others in that there is no federal mandate in the United States requiring educational services for students identified as gifted or talented.

Strategies for GE Teachers

* Provide opportunities for enrichment as well as acceleration
* Allow students to pursue individual projects requiring critical thinking or problem solving skills
* Encourage students to participate in science fairs, spelling bees, or music/art competitions
* Provide a variety of activities to keep these students actively engaged

Accomodations/Modifications

* Adapt instruction to include more challenging engaging areas of the curriculum

Technology Resources

* Use stimulating/engaging educational computer games
* Use computer games/music/ipad/ipod as motivation

Environmental Resources

* Provide stimulating/engaging activities
* Encourage cooperative learning/peer tutoring/mentoring
* Provide a structured/organized classroom