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Don't You Dare Dumb it Down: Supporting High Expectations in Inclusive Classrooms

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Don't You Dare Dumb it Down: Supporting High Expectations in Inclusive Classrooms

Abstract

In successful inclusive classrooms, all students, including those with disability labels, are provided with high expectations as well as equitable supports to strive for those expectations. This session describes the theoretical foundation needed to realize successful inclusion for all students and the danger of lowering expectations or limiting supports. Exemplary lessons that respond to the needs of all students in an inclusive setting are shared. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Identify that the theoretical foundation that best facilitates successful inclusion in diverse classrooms is a combination of high expectations and supports that are highly differentiated and universally designed. 2. Explain that lowering expectations and/or providing insufficient supports are functions of, and reinforce, medical or pity models of disability. 3. Explain that lowering expectations and/or providing insufficient or inappropriate supports negatively impact student success in school as well as transition to adulthood. 4. Share specific strategies for responding to all needs in an inclusive setting, including needs of students with significant disabilities, as well as students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. 5. Implement ways to advocate for inclusion of all students in an inclusive, responsive learning environment without 'dumbing down' the curriculum.

Disciplines

Education

Comments

Presented at the TASH Annual Conference in Washington DC on December 4, 2014.

Don't You Dare Dumb It Down: Supporting high expectations in inclusive classrooms



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Session Objectives



- **Discuss theoretical foundations and the impact of each on successful inclusion in diverse classrooms.**
- **Discuss impact of insufficient or inappropriate supports on transition to adulthood.**
- **Share specific strategies for responding to all needs in an inclusive setting, including needs of students with significant disabilities, as well as students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.**
- **Share ways to advocate for inclusion of all students in an inclusive, responsive learning environment without 'dumbing down' curriculum.**

Theoretical Frameworks



- **Models of Disability (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)**
- **Least Dangerous Assumption (Jorgensen, 2005)**
- **Full Citizenship (Kliewer, 1998)**

Models of Disability: Medical Model (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)



- **Disability is...**
- **Abnormal, sick, illness**
- **Something that needs to be fixed**
- **The medical profession is the authority**
- **This is a problem if/when doctors predict into the future too much: “she will never walk” or “ put her in an institution because she will never contribute to your family”**

Models of Disability: Pity/Charity Model (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)



- **Disability is...**
- **A terrible fate, something to feel bad about**
- **Jerry Lewis' telethon is an example**
- **Many professionals in special education have this model, maybe without realizing it**

Models of Disability: Social Model (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)



- **Disability is...**
- **Not a personal failing**
- **Part of a range of human diversity**

- **Premises of the social model (Winter, 2003):**
- **1. people with impairments are disabled by society's failure to accommodate to their needs**
- **2. people with impairments can and should take control of their own lives as much as possible (p. 8)**

Least Dangerous Assumption (Jorgensen, 2005)



- The least dangerous assumption is a paradigm articulated by Donnellan in 1984.
- It states that “in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to function independently as adults” (Jorgensen, 2005, p. 1).

Expectations/Support Framework

(Rapp, 2014, Working draft. Do not copy or cite)



High Expectations/Low Support



- **Mainstreaming**
- **Aliens/Squatters**
- **Medical Model**
- **Some Students Have to Prove They Can Learn**
- **Disability = General Inability (so they're out)**

Low Expectations/Low Support



- **Exclusion**
- **Aliens**
- **Some Students Can Learn**
- **Disability = Bad, Scary**

Low Expectations/High Support



- Segregation
- Squatters
- Pity/Charity Model
- Some Students Can Learn
- Disability = General Inability (so typical peers must help)
- Doing For, Not Providing For

High Expectations/High Support



- **Full inclusion**
- **Citizens**
- **Social Model of Disability**
- **All Students Can Learn**
- **Disability = Challenge, Opportunity, Difference**

Strategy - Response to Intervention

High Expectations, High Support

Academic Systems

Intensive, Individual Interventions

- Individual Students
- Assessment-based
- High Intensity

Targeted Group Interventions

- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

Universal Interventions

- All students
- Preventive, proactive

← 1-5%

← 5-10%

← 80-90%



Behavioral Systems

Intensive, Individual Interventions

- Individual Students
- Assessment-based
- Intense, durable procedures

Targeted Group Interventions

- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

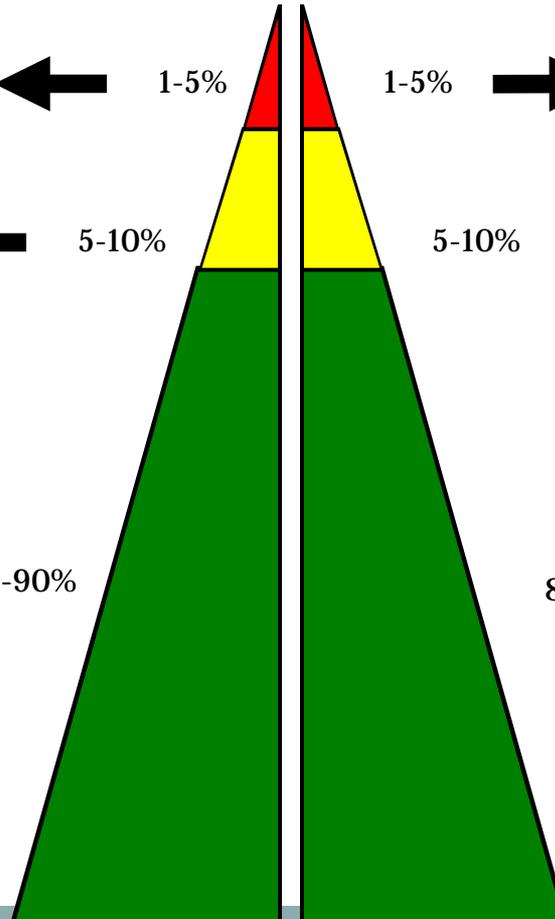
Universal Interventions

- All settings, all students
- Preventive, proactive

→ 1-5%

→ 5-10%

→ 80-90%



Strategy and Support Resources



SWIFT Schools

<http://www.swiftschools.org/>

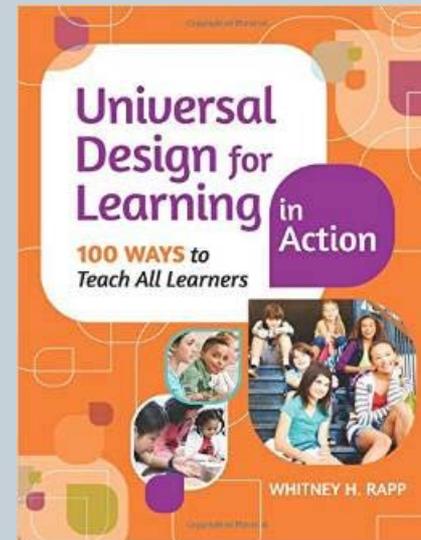
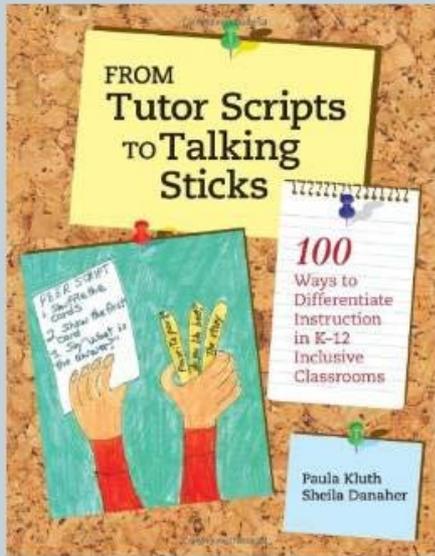
Intervention Central

<http://www.interventioncentral.org/>

CAST – Universal Design for Learning

<http://www.cast.org/about/index.html>

Strategy and Support Resources



Transition to Adulthood



- Why do some students succeed and others do not?
 - Evidence-based research tells us:
 - Need to set specific goals.
 - An example- Jake's transition plan
 - ✦ Jake will live independently or in a supervised setting
 - ✦ Jake will work or go to college
- Too generic, conflicting options within goals

It all starts with the transition plan

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations



- **Culturally responsive planning**
 - Perspective of family culture, characteristics, values and experiences
 - Respond to diversity
 - ✦ Appreciate **and incorporate** the culture that exists outside of school
 - ✦ Make connections between school, home and community
 - ✦ Language of school and work

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations



- **Be careful of unintended or unexpected bias, stereotypes and generalizations.**
 - Understand personal identities, experiences of the individual and the family.
 - Make sure everyone has access to information
 - Build on cultural and social capital

**Universal design in transition planning:
Embrace differences, differentiated to meet individual preferences,
strengths and needs.**

Person Centered Planning



- **Strengths and skills**
- **Decision making/ freedom to make choices**
- **Self Determination**
- **Work ethic**
- **Self Advocacy**
- **Connections between home, school and community**
- **Transportation**

Vocational Competence



- **Early school and work experiences shape future opportunities for:**
 - Competitive employment?
 - Supportive employment?
 - Customized employment?

For many students with disabilities, opportunities are elusive.

Without opportunities, students with disabilities do not have the chance to practice these skills.

Action Plan



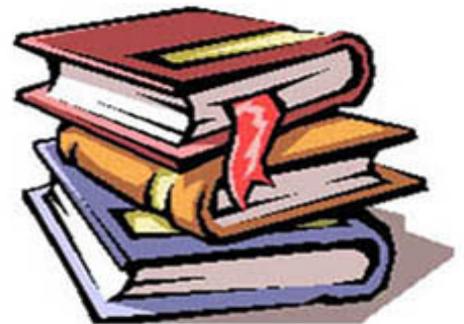
- **What is my plan?**
- **What skills do I need? What can I do to learn what I don't know? (Targeted instruction).**
- **What might be a barrier? What can I do to remove these barriers?**
- **Timelines**
- **Do I need to adjust my plan or timelines?**

Post-secondary Education



- **Plan for success**
 - Support in place, just in case!
 - Ask for feedback
 - Expectation that you will function without direct parental involvement/ privacy laws
 - Complete the loop, every semester
 - Own your education

- **2 year and 4 year degrees do not have to be limited to 2 years and 4 years.**



Academics

Social experiences at school and/or work



- **Stay off your phone during orientations**
- **Join a club (social and/or major related at school) and participate in school and work social events**
- **Attend planned social events or activities**



CONFIDENCE

- to be part of a team
- learning new skills
- learning more about sport
- being the winner of a game
- being coach's helper
- being trophy winner

CO-OPERATION

- work as part of a team
- co-operate with coach
- co-operate / compromise with others

SPORTSMANSHIP

- learning to be part of the team
- not to be angry or upset if not the winner

INDEPENDENCE

- leave parents & come to play
- accept that parent doesn't stay and watch
- practice alone
- join the group at waterbreak
- make up class in another lesson in now class

FLEXIBILITY

- do things others like
- change to accommodate
- realising you can't do what you want

PERSISTENCE

- practise / don't give up
- don't become angry / frustrated
- get a part right then move on

RESPONSIBILITY

- to attend lessons
- bring back trophy

LEADERSHIP

- stand in front of team
- to be leader / demonstrator
- award trophy
- be "on" in the game
- helping others

LIFE SKILLS

Yikes!

GOAL SETTING

- achieve things step-by-step
- complete a stage to win a certificate
- goal to be trophy winner

RESPECT

- respect for team mates
- respect for others belongings
- respect for those that win
- respect for coach's help and advice

SELF WORTH

- feel good about participating
- striving to meet a challenge
- feeling worthwhile
- feeling proud

POSITIVE RELATIONS

- learning to communicate and share
- respect for others feelings
- working with others
- making new friends
- feeling successful
- positive interactions
- having fun
- being expressive

DECISION MAKING

- choosing a team mate
- choosing a partner
- sports related decisions

COMMUNICATION

- communicate with coach
- communicate with those you don't know
- communicate with others in team

COURAGE

- getting involved with something new
- being captain / teacher in front of the team
- continue trying when skill can't be achieved
- not to be sad about not winning

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