Inspiring all Learners:
Creating successful inclusive classrooms for students with significant support needs

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People First Language

Language shapes and reinforces our attitudes toward others. Therefore, the words that many people use to describe individuals with disabilities must change before these citizens are viewed as equal members of our society.

Disability labels focus on what the individual cannot do rather than the person’s abilities. People First Language looks at the individual before the disability. A disability is something that an individual has, not what an individual is.

Here are some examples of People First Language:
• Adam is a young boy with cerebral palsy.
• Jason is a thirteen-year-old with a learning disability.
• Alex is a kindergartner and has autism.
• A family has a son with Down Syndrome.
• Lucy uses a wheelchair.

Notice how much more positive People First Language sounds than saying a CP boy, a learning disabled teen, an autistic kindergartner, a Downs son, or a wheelchair bound girl.

As our language changes, perceptions and attitudes also change. People First Language helps in the movement toward the acceptance, respect, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. If you do not know what to say, ask the person who has the disability to help put you at ease. Just ask what term makes them feel comfortable. Respect their language and remember, they are the experts.

Consider the following introduction of a friend who does not have a disability. “This is my good friend, Molly Stone. She grew up in Maine and has always loved art. Now she works as a landscape painter. She also is taking an Italian cooking class.” Molly sounds like an interesting person. We are now able to talk about Maine, painting or Italian food. Molly’s introduction was positive and it did not say what she cannot do or include negative information.

Why should the introduction of a friend who just happens to have a disability be any different? How would it sound if we introduced a friend with a disability as, “Her name is Kelly. She is retarded, but she can talk though. And, she is an epileptic too.” What a showstopper. How can anyone build on this? No one wants to be identified by something they cannot do or control.

All individuals are made up of several characteristics. An individual’s disability is just one part of them. People First Language takes the focus off of the disability and places it back on the individual.
Strategies for Presuming Competence

• Examine your attitude—practice saying, “How can this work?”, “How can this child be successful?”

• Question your stereotypes—how someone looks, walks, or talks does not tell you about how they think and feel.

• Use age appropriate talk—examine your tone of voice and topic.

• Support communication.

• Listen openly—work to shed judgments.

• Teach peers and others how to interpret potentially confusing behavior.

• Do not speak in front of someone as if they were not there.

• In conversation, refer to the person in a way that includes them in the conversation.

• Ask permission to share information with others.

• Be humble.

• If possible, always let the person explain for himself or herself and do not speak for them.

• Assume that every student will benefit from learning age appropriate academic curriculum.

• Look for evidence of understanding.

• Support students to show understanding using their strengths.

• Design adaptations and accommodations to support access to academics.

• Be sure to acknowledge the presence of a person with a disability in the same way you would acknowledge others.

“If you want to see competence, it helps if you look for it.”

—Douglas Biklen

Reflection on Belonging

Think of a time when you truly connected to sometime, like you belonged or were a part of something.

How did you feel?

How did you act?

Think of a time when you felt disconnected from something, like you did not belong or were left out of something?

How did you feel?

How did you act?

Causton-Theoharis, 2009
Inclusive Education

Norman Kunc

In Principle, inclusive education means:

…the valuing of diversity within the human community. When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become “normal” in order to contribute in the world…We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and in doing so, begin to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging (pp. 38-39).

In Practice, inclusive education means:

A Classroom Model in which students with and without disabilities are based in a general education classroom and benefit from shared ownership of general and special educators.

A Student-Centered Approach Beginning with Profiles that help educators appreciate the strengths and challenges of learners with and without disabilities and the individualized accomplishments that can be attained.

A Schedule that accounts for the full range of needs in the class—where no student engages in “pull out” or alternative activities to the extent that disruptions in the daily schedule and in peer relationships do not occur.

A Curriculum that is rich and accommodating for all students—and when further individualized to meet the needs of a particular learner.

A Teaming Process in which support staff work in flexible, coordinated ways to strengthen the collaborative relationships among special and regular educators, parents, and the community.

A Classroom Climate that embraces diversity, fosters a sense of social responsibility, and supports positive peer relationships.
You are a nurse in the emergency room and 12 people come in all at the same time with various emergencies. You need to place the people in an order where the first person (1) to be taken care of is the most critical and the last person (12) is not critical at all.

With your partner, number these emergencies in the order you think they should be taken care of 1-12.

1. A woman in labor  
2. A child with a broken leg  
3. A person in a coma  
4. A man with a severe cut on his head  
5. A boy with a bad nose bleed  
6. A girl with a pole through her leg  
7. A person having a stroke  
8. A teen with a cut off finger  
9. A man with a collapsed lung  
10. A baby with a temp of 104  
11. A man having a heart attack  
12. A boy with a pencil stuck in his arm

Causton-Theoharis, 2009
## Diner Menu—Photosynthesis

### Appetizer (Everyone Shares)
- Write the chemical equation for photosynthesis

### Entrée (Select One)
- Draw a picture that shows what happens during photosynthesis.
- Write two paragraphs about what happens during photosynthesis.
- Create a rap or song that explains what happens during photosynthesis.

### Side Dishes (Select at Least Two)
- Define respiration, in writing.
- Compare photosynthesis to respiration using a Venn diagram.
- Write a journal entry from the point of view of a green plant.
- With a partner, create and perform a skit that shows the differences between photosynthesis and respiration.

### Dessert (Optional)
- Create a test to assess the teacher’s knowledge of photosynthesis.
Diner Menu—

Appetizer (Everyone Shares)

Entrée (Select One)

Side Dishes (Select at Least Two)

Dessert (Optional)
THINK TAC TOE

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Team Meeting Minutes

Date: ________________

Team Members Present & Assigned Roles:  
Facilitator:  
Recorder:  
Timekeeper:  
Consensus Builder:  
Observer:  

________:  
________:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today’s Agenda Items</th>
<th>I-Information D-Discussion R-requires decision</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Time Guidelines</th>
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Items Discussed: (Continue on back of page)

Items Discussed (continued):
### Task Delegated, Timelines, Follow-up:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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### Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

**Next Meeting Date:** ________
IEP at a Glance

Student__________________________ Grade _____ Age _____

Date Completed______________

Goal ______________________
Objectives: *
* * * * * *

Goal ______________________
Objectives: *
* * * * * *

Goal ______________________
Objectives: *
* * * * * *

Goal ______________________
Objectives: *
* * * * * *

Important Student Information

Objectives: *
* * * * * *

* * * * * *
## Program Planning Matrix

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<th>IEP Goals</th>
<th>Class Schedule</th>
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**Key:**
- x = instruction provided
- O = Classroom Participation Plans with General Adaptations required
- ● = General Adaptations Plan and Weekly Plan for Specific Adaptations required

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## Types of Supplementary Aids and Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Types of Aids and Services</strong></th>
<th><strong>Examples</strong></th>
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</table>
| **ACCOMMODATIONS**            | • Audio books  
                            • A note taker  
                            • Use of a laptop  
                            • Extended time for assignments or tests  
                            • Enlarged print |
| **MODIFICATIONS**             | • Key ideas from a lesson or unit  
                            • Same only less  
                            • Representative sample of skills |
| **PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**  | • One on one support  
                            • Small group instruction  
                            • Instructional support provided to the teacher  
                            • Data collection  
                            • Preparation of materials |
| **PEER SUPPORTS**             | • Paired reading  
                            • Quiz review  
                            • Presentations  
                            • Group work |
| **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**      | • Calculator  
                            • Reading strips  
                            • Highlighter tape  
                            • Book stands  
                            • Fidget toy  
                            • Raised line paper  
                            • Word prediction software |
| **RELATED SERVICE PROVIDERS** | • Lap top  
                            • Physical therapist  
                            • Speech therapist  
                            • Occupational therapist  
                            • Vision specialist  
                            • Nurse |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengths, Gifts, Interests, and Talents for ___________</th>
<th>Effective Strategies for ___________</th>
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Adapted from Strengths and Strategies: Assessing and Sharing what Matters by Paula Kluth & Michelle Diamon-Borowsky (see www.paulakluth.com)

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**Strengths, Gifts, Interests, and Talents for Jordon**

- Loves to read and is a good reader
- Great sense of humor
- Friendly and outgoing
- Great memory; remembers a lot of personal information about others after meeting them
- Knows a lot of information about cars
- Is very interested in all areas of science
- Loves to travel and has traveled all over the United States
- Is skilled at basic internet searches on specific topics
- Enjoys working to help others
- Loves school
- Likes PE and other physical games
- Enjoys swimming
- Works well with a schedule
- Loves football and soccer
- Loves to hang out with friends
- Interested in joining school clubs and sports teams
- Is a good public speaker and presents at conferences
- Has a lot of creative ideas to write about
- Is interested in going to college

**Effective Strategies for Jordon**

- Make sure all literature is accessible — Use text reading software or make sure that material is at Jordon’s reading level
- Highlight key points on text using highlighter tape
- Focus on Jordon learning big ideas in science and social studies
- Pre-teach points for him to share out loud
- Have students work in groups when possible
- Use buddy notes in all classes
- Color code notebook by subjects
- Have him dictate a brainstorm or story map prior to writing
- Color code what will go 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th... to support writing
- Use laptop and co-writer for all writing assignments
- Practice math skills while working in the school store
- Encourage him and provide praise in the same way as to others
- Use peer supports
- Teach in naturally occurring general education environments
- Have high expectations

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