



*And*



*Present*

## *Engage The Special Needs Students In Your Room!*

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## BASICS

- Structure your class the same way every time:
  - Roll Call
  - Stretching
    - Reach high to the sky
    - Touch your toes
    - Shake it out, shake it out, shake it out, shake it out, shake it out, shake it out and FREEZE (3x)
  - Warm up
  - Singing Game
    - Hel-lo, hel-lo how do you do, hel-lo (name) it's good to see you
    - Sol-La, Sol-Mi Sol (Mi Mi) Sol, Sol La (speak name), (Mi Mi) Re Do
      - All syllables are quarters except those in parenthesis which are eighths
  - Song that you are working on
  - Activity
- Assigned seating helps a lot!
  - Think about where you are putting each child
  - For kids that are having a really hard time, they can sit in a chair or on a carpet square
  - Sometimes making a large square out of tape helps kids with parameters. They can still move around, but within a set space as to not hurt others or themselves
  - Sometimes a weighted vest helps or a squeeze toy (always ask the child's teacher or specialist)
- Special needs kids can feel overwhelmed or scared because they do not know what is coming next. This is why having a set schedule can help. You can also make pictures of the activities and move a marker next to each one as you go through them. This helps kids know where the class is and what is next.
  - You may need to talk to kids ahead of time to let them know of upcoming activities or if the schedule has changed
- Let kids feel successful immediately in your classroom
  - Scaffold: start from where they know and take them to where they don't know. Repeat process throughout curriculum
  - Encourage children to construct their knowledge. They will own the material and be more likely to remember it.
- When teaching concepts, think about them in their most basic form. What is necessary for kids to remember?
- Learning needs to be active
- Children with special needs tend to be concrete learners
- Assessment is ongoing

## CRA

- What do we mean by CRA?
  - Concrete (manipulatives)
  - Representational (pictures)
  - Abstract (symbols)
- According to Nancy Berkas and Cathy Pattison (NCTM News Bulletin, Nov 2007)

- The use of manipulatives show generally positive impacts when combined with:
  - Virtual manipulative software
  - Reflective practices
  - Cooperative learning
  - Learning activities that are exploratory and deductive in their approach
- Maria Montessori
  - She created her program primarily for kids with special needs
  - Her materials utilized color, form and texture to help children learn concepts
  - Her materials were self correcting so that children would be successful without help from a teacher
- NOTE KNACKS
  - Notation block manipulatives – *Concrete*
  - Children trace blocks to create compositions – *Representational*
  - Children then simply extract the notation from the blocks are left with the symbols- *Abstract*
  - “All lessons need to be presented in a minimum of 4 ways for kids with special needs: aural, visual, tactile, kinesthetic.” –Elise Sobol (music teacher Nassau County NY’s Board of Coop Ed Service, Department of SPED, Rosemary Kennedy School.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Plan activities that have children both sitting and moving throughout the class
- Kids may have sensory issues, so be aware of
  - Volume (kids may need headphones at times)
  - Light
  - Smells
  - The way your room is arranged
- Slow your teaching pace
- Allow kids to take a break
- Repetition will be necessary
- You can have your kids echo your directions or other important concepts
- Assign a buddy to your students with special needs
- Transitions are tough, so create a ritual:
  - Play music
  - Sing a particular song
  - Give those kids a specific job that they can do every transition
- Be specific and thoughtful in the words you use with kids/ limit the number
- Take advantage of nonverbal cues
- Ask kids their thoughts on how to help them learn better and with greater ease
- Express how much you want them involved
- Positive reinforcement “I like the way you are...”
- Get to know your kids!
- Ultimately, it is thoughtful teaching that will help kids experience thoughtful learning