

The future of special education

Co-teaching, instructional delivery seen as key

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Learning

This past summer, the Center for Research on Learning marked its 20th anniversary. The Center celebrated the occasion in July during its annual update conference for members of the International SIM Trainers' Network.

The conference featured two keynote speakers: **Floyd Hudson**, professor of special education in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas, and **Richard Lavoie**, headmaster of Riverview School, a residential school in East Sandwich, Massachusetts, for 150 students with learning disabilities. In this issue of *Strategram*, read about Hudson's keynote address and his special workshop on his *Class-within-a-Class* instructional model. An account of Lavoie's keynote address and his special workshop on motivation appeared in *Strategram* Volume 10, Number 4. Information about both presentations may be found on the Center's Web site at www.ku-crl.org.

Floyd Hudson, who has devoted the last 30 years to the field of learning disabilities, sees changes on the horizon for special educators.

"I am convinced that the future for us is in instructional delivery, not curriculum content," said Hudson, professor of special education in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas. "The other direction we're going to see much more of is co-teaching."

Hudson expanded on these two points and others related to the future of special education during an address to members of the International SIM Trainers' Network in July.

Co-teaching

The concept of co-teaching is very familiar to Hudson, who is the originator of one of the oldest and largest inclusion programs in the country. In fact, co-teaching is central to his *Class-within-a-Class* program. In this program, general education and special education teachers

work together in the general education classroom.

"The emphasis is on teaching kids how to learn," Hudson said. The use of learning strategies and Content Enhancement Routines reinforces that goal.

Read about Hudson's Class-within-a-Class program. Page 3.

Several supports must be in place for the *Class-within-a-Class* program to be successful, but perhaps the most important one is for teachers to be allowed time to plan together. During co-planning, teachers must analyze the curriculum demands for the class and determine the learning needs that must be addressed for students to be successful. Then, the special education and general education teachers engage in a parallel teaching approach in which the general education teacher provides the content and the special education

You have to give every child consideration based on his individual needs.

teacher ties in the strategies that fit the learning needs of the students.

This approach can be especially difficult at the secondary level for a couple of reasons. First, co-planning time is hard to come by.

“Sometimes, planning time is more important than co-teaching because without the plan, you have no direction,” Hudson said.

Schools can overcome this difficulty with a little bit of flexible thinking. Hudson listed several examples of creative solutions to the planning time crunch problem:

- Some districts run a program called “Fifth Day Floats” in which special education teachers teach four days intensively, sometimes every hour. On the fifth day, special education teachers schedule co-planning time with general education teachers and take care of the paperwork required in their jobs.
- Some districts have hired “building subs” full time in each school to fill in for teachers to do co-planning.
- Some districts hire substitutes for a full day every four weeks to allow for full-day planning.
- School assemblies monitored by the principal and counselors provide co-planning time for teachers.

This kind of flexible thinking allows special education and general education teachers to spend the necessary time working together to build an effective teaching relationship.



Instructional delivery

A second obstacle to the parallel teaching approach at the secondary level is that individual courses are driven by content, and general education teachers are viewed as content specialists. This

creates a situation governed by the assumption that teachers can't teach at this level if they don't know the content.

“But I don't have to know anything about your content to support you,” Hudson responds. “I don't have to know your content to do tandem teaching.”

Special education teachers can support the learning needs of students in general education classes through mediation and the use of graphic organizers and Content Enhancement Routines.

“I can teach strategies,” Hudson said. “I don't have to know who discovered America because I get that from you. We are teachers of instructional strategies.”

In this mindset, the special education teacher's role is to bring expertise about learning and about how instructional delivery can affect learning to the partnership with the general education teacher.

Unification

Another trend Hudson addressed is the move away from special education and general education as separate fields and toward a unified field called education. Unification

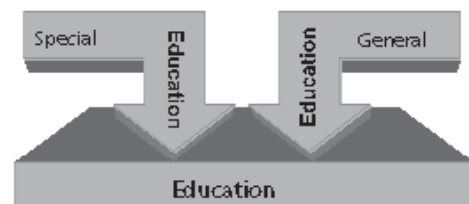
raises fears among some special educators, he said, especially those who remember the old days when the two fields were not separated and funds were not available for special education services.

Hudson, however, hopes unification will strengthen the ownership teachers feel for the success of students. Too many times, he said, when a student has a problem in a general education class, the special education area is called on to solve it. In a unified system, general educators may feel more of a joint responsibility to help solve the problems, he said.

Responsible inclusion

Although Hudson is firm in his belief that inclusion programs such as Class-within-a-Class are beneficial for students, he is adamant that the education community must be responsible in its inclusion efforts. Hudson noted that educators have known since the 1950s that youngsters learn best when they can learn from other students. However, he said, it is not responsible to automatically place *all* students in the general education classroom without making other options available. Rather, responsible inclusion means working to decide what really is the best practice for students. Responsible inclusion embodies several components

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CWC implementation basics

Floyd Hudson, professor of special education in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas, is the originator of one of the oldest and largest inclusion programs in the United States. He started his Class-within-a-Class program in 1982. It features general education and special education teachers working together to meet the learning needs of all students in a general education classroom.

Hudson described the program during a special workshop for members of the International SIM Trainers' Network in July.

"There's nothing magical about it," he said of the CWC program. "It's really very common sense. It's the things you've already thought of."

Hudson talked about the components needed for Class-within-a-Class to be successful, including the mix of students in the general education classroom and class size. He also described the results of studies of the effectiveness of CWC programs so far.

Class composition

The Class-within-a-Class program focuses on students with learning disabilities and mild behavior problems because they represent the largest number of exceptional children in the school district. The program combines one-third special education students (identified with individualized education plans) and two-thirds general education students in a general education classroom. The general education students should be chosen at random

and represent a normal distribution of high-, middle-, and low-achieving students. The normal distribution of general education students is very important, because these are the students who will provide the necessary modeling behavior for the students with learning disabilities and behavior problems.

Hudson noted that many districts find it easier to include children with more profound disabilities in general education classes because they have their own paraprofessionals and other supports. However, he said, if schools pull out students with learning disabilities and don't make the extra effort to include them in general education classes, the students who can benefit the most from the general education experience will not get it.

Class size

In setting up a successful Class-within-a-Class program, not only is the mix of students important, but class size is important, too. The CWC class must start the year smaller than other classes to allow for growth throughout the year. As new students transfer to the school or as disabilities are newly identified among current students, the size

of the CWC class will grow. By the end of the year, the class will be much larger than when the school year started.

Prerequisites

Hudson believes that co-teaching, co-planning, and the appropriateness of schedules are the reasons Class-within-a-Class works. To help ensure the success of the program, all of the processes associated with scheduling, planning, and co-teaching should be spelled out in a "process plan" before launching a Class-within-a-Class program. Likewise, co-teachers must identify their roles and belief systems first to make sure they will be able to work together in a successful partnership. Mismatched belief systems, even over something as simple as how each teacher feels about noisy kids, can create stumbling blocks for the program.

Open ended

Hudson cautioned that a successful Class-within-a-Class program should not make students "lifers" who stay in CWC settings forever. The program must incorporate the ability for students to move back to more protective services and a more structured environment when they cannot function in the

Floyd Hudson has been a general education classroom teacher at both the elementary and secondary levels, has held a host of special education positions, has been a principal, school psychologist, director of special education, and professor of special education. He is the originator of one of the first programs funded by the federal government to prepare teachers to teach students with learning disabilities.

general education system, but it also must allow students to leave the program when they're ready.

"There comes a time when kids no longer need you," Hudson said. "They have learned how to learn."

Hudson gave the example of an 8-year-old boy with severe language problems who was included in a Class-within-a-Class program starting in the third grade. By the latter part of his sophomore year of high school, he no longer needed special education.

"He was still LD, but he didn't need us because we had not emphasized the curriculum as much as we had emphasized how do you learn the curriculum," Hudson said.

The story also illustrates the importance of implementing the program over the long term and across all grade levels.

"The whole idea of this program is continuity, staying with it," Hudson said.

Just as the student's role in CWC may shift over time, so may the teacher's role. At the point at which students are capable of learning without special education supports, the role of the special education teacher shifts from co-teacher in the CWC classroom to consultant to the general education teacher. It's just one more way of working with students, Hudson said.

Effective instruction

An important aspect of Class-within-a-Class is that content integrity remains intact, Hudson said.

"I do not believe in watering down and changing objectives and goals for kids who are cognitively intact," he said. "If we have taken a position that

Albert: A success story

One of the expected outcomes of the Class-within-a-Class program is that special education students will be socially integrated with their general education peers. The success or failure of that goal is hard to measure. Instead of trying to incorporate additional teaching requirements, such as social skills instruction, in the program, Hudson and the teachers he has worked with have discovered that leading by example is best.

"What those kids are doing is they're watching you," Hudson said. "They're making decisions based on how you react to a person."

He illustrated his point with the story of Albert, a fifth-grader who had been in special education from the very beginning of his school experience. Albert's clothes were always about half on, and his hair was always a mess. He just lay in his chair all day. The goal for including him in the general education classroom was for Albert to be socially integrated. None of the other students wanted to be near him, and they generally avoided walking near his desk.

One day when Albert was absent, the special education teacher stopped by Albert's desk, touching it and rubbing the desktop. "I miss old Albert when he's gone," she said. "We should say something nice to him when he comes back."

The next day Albert returned. One of his classmates turned to him and said, "We sort of missed you yesterday."

The day after that, Albert came to school with a part in his hair.

this child can profit from being included in a general education classroom, then we should have the same expectancy for that child's achievement."

The fact that special education students learn differently from general education students does not mean they *can't* learn. It does mean teachers must deliver instruction effectively.

The CWC co-teaching process lends itself to effective instruction because two teachers are much more effective than one, Hudson said.

"Co-teachers are more goal directed," he said. "They're more outcomes based. They do more measurement than single

teachers in terms of how well the kids are making progress. They're much more effective. They have more strategies. They choose many more options. When they teach, they give something every day that equalizes the chance for all kids to be successful in that class time."

Results

Not every special education student will do well in CWC classes, just as not all general education students do well. In fact, in Hudson's studies, the distribution of grades of special education students included in Class-within-a-Class settings

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Visual/tactile prompts

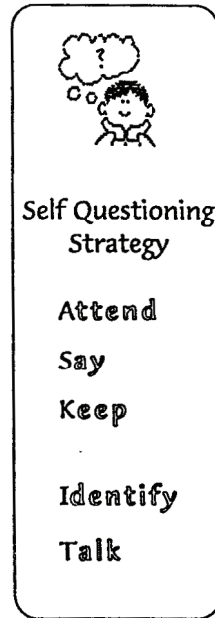
Shared by **Linda Estes** and **Alberta Roth**, SIM Trainers in the Klein Independent School District in Klein, Texas

Students require both visual and tactile prompts to use a strategy in various educational environments. To assist with the generalization of a strategy, Linda and Alberta have designed bookmarks. They have found that implementation will occur if both the teachers and students have a visual prompt (the strategy steps) and have something to manipulate with their hands.

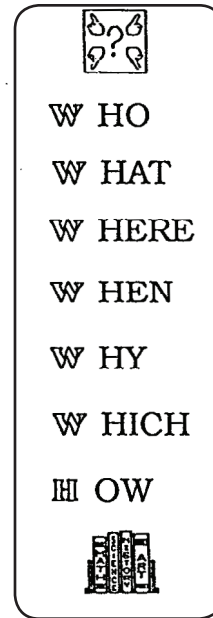
More ideas:

- Match the color of the bookmark to the color of the strategy manual
- Laminate the bookmarks
- Distribute bookmarks to students before the generalization stage
- Make extra bookmarks

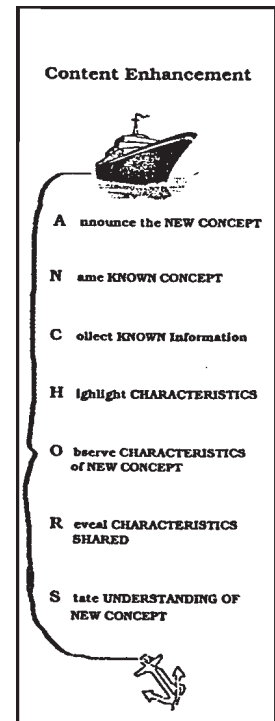
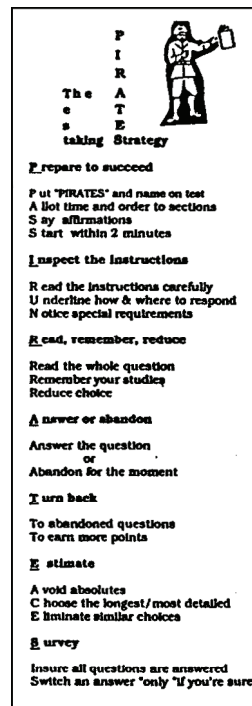
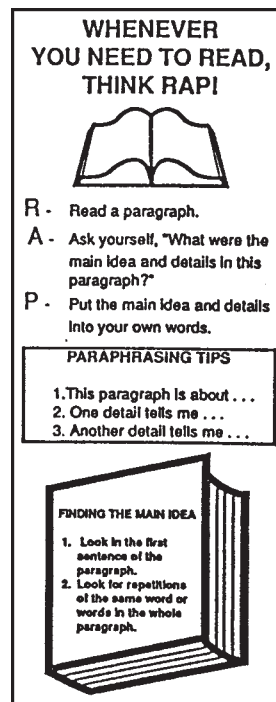
To the right are examples of some of the bookmarks Linda and Alberta have designed.



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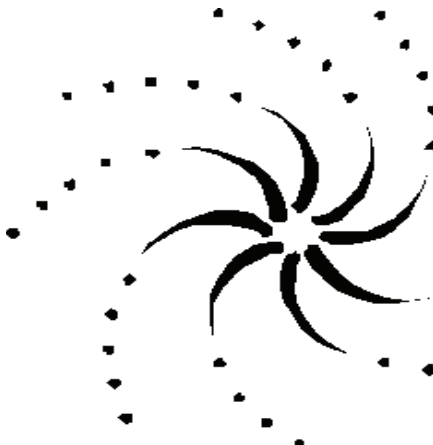


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Vocabulary activities

Shared by **Pat Parrot**,
LD Liaison and SIM
Trainer in Chesterfield
County Public Schools,
Chesterfield, Virginia



Pinwheel

This cooperative learning activity can be used with the whole class after studying vocabulary in a lesson or in an entire chapter. If your classroom is not large enough, this is a fun activity to play in an empty cafeteria or outside on a sunny day.

Students work in groups of six (3 x 3), eight (4 x 4), or 10 (5 x 5). An explanation for a group of eight follows:

Divide the class into groups of eight, and divide each group in half. Four students stand back-to-back to form an inside circle facing out. Four students form an outside circle, with each student facing one of the students in the inside circle.

Each of the inside students is given five vocabulary words and their definitions. They quiz

their outside partner as directed by the teacher (give the word and expect the definition, or vice versa). Students may offer assistance as needed.

After each dyad has completed its assigned five words, the outside students are cued by the teacher to “pinwheel” one position to the right. Now, each student has a new partner and the outside students have new vocabulary words to review.

This process continues two more times, until each outside student has worked with each inside student.

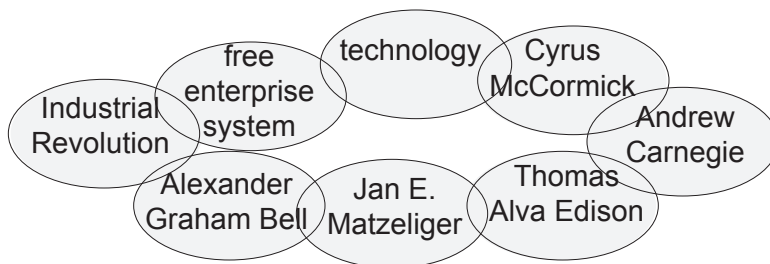
Then, the teacher calls “inside out and outside in” and the students switch roles. The new inside students take the vocabulary words and quiz their partners in the same way.

The Chain Game

The teacher draws links on the blackboard or overhead to create a chain, then writes a vocabulary word in each link.

The teacher selects the first player. This student chooses any word in the chain, reads the word, and defines it.

The teacher or first player selects the second player. This student will determine the direction of play by choosing to go to the right or left of the original word. The second player reads and defines the word selected by the first player, then reads and defines the word of his or her choice to the right or to



the left of the first word.

Successive players are chosen in the manner determined. Each player from No. 3 on will begin at the starting word and proceed in the chosen direction to the next word in the chain, reading and defining each word in between.

Note: When the teacher selects the students, the difficulty of the task can be

controlled for students who have memory deficits. Some students with poor memories prefer to go early in the game. This is less taxing on their memories and may give them more flexibility to choose words they know. Some prefer to go later and take pride in repeating definition after definition, which they have learned because of the intensity of the repetition.

Class within a Class

(Continued from page 4)

mirrored the distribution of general education student grades by the end of the third year of CWC.

“What we have to do is look at how far from normal are our kids, and people, they’re not very far,” Hudson said. “They just are different in the way they explore and learn things.”

When people are first introduced to the Class-within-

a-Class program, concerns invariably arise about the general education students in the CWC room, Hudson said. Will the curriculum be watered down? Will these students be neglected?

Hudson has now finished his third study that shows that not only do general education students do well in Class-within-a-Class, they also significantly outperform general education

students in non-CWC classes. In addition, his studies have found fewer office referrals for behavior problems in co-taught classes at all grade levels and an increase in attendance.

“Class-within-a-Class clustered classrooms do work—not just for special education kids, but they work for regular ed kids as well,” Hudson said.

Responsible inclusion

(Continued from page 2)

that facilitate special education teachers and general education teachers working together to meet students’ needs:

- Schedules that allow teachers to work together
- Schedules that allow the right kinds of students to be in the right places at the right times
- Schedules that allow for co-planning
- Definition of roles so teachers know what roles they play

Responsible inclusion requires administrative support as well as a sense of ownership among team members. Overall, responsible inclusion means focusing on what’s best for students as individuals.

“That’s what this is all about. It was never about groups,” Hudson said. “You have to give every kid a consideration based on his individual needs.”

Share your good ideas!

If you have a classroom activity associated with learning strategy instruction or the use of Content Enhancement Routines and you would like to share it with other teachers, please send a detailed description to Julie Tollefson, *Strategram* editor, at KU-Center for Research on Learning, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045. You also may e-mail a description of your activity to Julie at jtollefson@ukans.edu.

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