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The keys to success in working with students with Intellectual Disabilities are the instructional organization and the delivery. Instructing these students cannot be done in an unorganized setting but rather in a detailed oriented manner, with goals in place so that the student gets the maximum out of the class that they should. Taking into account their disability when planning the learning instruction has to be paramount in the instructors mind from start. Because of the unique learning traits of students with ID, the procedures used to instruct these students is probably not the same way you would teach a student without and ID. The way they learn is affected by the intellectual disability they suffer from. Their learning goals will be vastly different than students with in the general population that do not have to work around an ID.

Their IEP will play a significant role in the educational objective of the student and the goals they are trying to achieve. Teachers of students with ID should ensure that the progress of the student is adherent to a structured instructional pattern that is direct and explicit (Beirne-Smith, Patton, & Kim, 2006). It is critical for special education teachers who are working with students that have an ID to be fully skilled in the knowledge and learning characteristics of their student. We as educators need to make sure we are using the appropriate procedures needed for the instructional purposes the impact of ID can be witnessed in many ways, not the least of which involves loss to short-term memory. Due to the lack of metacognitive processes or the ability to use the information from learning to apply it to another skill in these students’ teachers and educators need to find ways to improve a student’s short term and long term memory (Intellectual Disability, 2011).

Despite the seemingly challenging task associated with improving memory in students with ID, researchers have suggested that enhancements in short-term and long-term memory can be reached. The transmission and simplification of knowledge and skills is predominantly difficult for individuals with ID, which is why planning for it is very significant. Students lacking in these skills will have difficulty using the knowledge and skills needed in one situation and then apply them to other situations. Teaching without preparation defeats the purpose of this instruction in the first place. It is really essential to anything that is taught to any student in really all aspects of life from school, to life, to sports and their future. If you do not plan and are not taught how to plan then many students are just being set up for failure. We as the educator need to make sure our plan is explicit and direct and that it is understood by the students, ones with ID or ones without.

I viewed the IEP of a student with Autism from his 9th grade year and his 11th grade year. I wanted to see the difference in the goals, instruction, accommodations and modifications that were adapted from the beginning of his high school career until him entering the 11th grade. Whether or not the goals that they set from 9th grade were attained and what was different about the instruction given over multiple years due to his increase in learning and knowledge.

The IEP team had various goals and objective suggestions for this student as an incoming 9th grader, who from looking at his IEP from 9th grade and then 11th grade; it looked as though they had modified their goals due to them being too lofty as an incoming freshman. The student came from a relatively smaller junior high setting with only six students in his main special education class to having more than 10 in high school. The transition into high school was hoped to be a smoother one than what actually had happened and therefore they needed to be adapted for his level of comfortableness within the school and class.

There were five sections of suggestions, social understanding skills, social-emotional skills, social communication skills, narrative discourse skills and functioning skills within the school environment. All five sections had a minimum of five objectives crossed off in his incoming 9th grade year with an expectancy of him performing these skills and objectives 4 out of 5 times within each section. I felt those were lofty goals not having even met the student but having seen many students with Autism and knowing their level of skills interacting with a lot of different people in many different situations. Four out of the five times seemed to be high. After viewing the student in class and seeing him interact with the students and the teachers I made my own observation that the goals set forth for him as a freshman were high, but for him as an eleventh grader seemed more appropriate for him now.

Some of the strategies used with this students were social scripting/computer conversations that deduced the demand of social situations, visual directions, Audio-taping and story-mapping, or Inspirational software. Limiting the amount of busy interactions for the student seemed to be the best fit. When there was too many distractions in the classroom the student would act out, or even shut down and not speak or move at all. The boy had limited speaking skills but rather used his body language to display how he was feeling or reacting. He seemed to work well in small groups of two to three students as so long as there was a helper with them directing the interactions and what to do next. If the paraeducator left the circle to grab paper or something to write with all of the students, although not all with the same level of Autism would visually remove themselves from the “ group”, going back to what they were doing by themselves.

I did feel that the student identified with various non-verbal commutation behaviors, (i. e. Tone of voice, personal space, vocal volume, body orientation and facial expressions) most times he was called upon to do so. Helping pupils with ID attain the greatest success and individuality in life can be accomplished through life goal development and DPE teaching. With the information that I wrote about previously it is imperative with the variety and limitations imposed on an individual’s ID, an individualized curriculum is needed that can be modified to each student’s situational and family needs. The different mechanisms take into account all the available information about the student and their/abilities, and matches it against their life goals (Heward, 2014).

Using all the data that a team or educator collects on a student a more defined life goal can be set and achieved if taught in a highly directional oriented manner. Progress can be monitored and evaluated on a formative basis. The DPE approach is one that is used for accomplishing the goals of an IEP and thus should be used in that manner and not in replacement of a student’s IEP. This is an effective means to and ends for students who have an IEP to help them achieve the success they deserve.

References

Beirne-Smith, M., Patton, J. R., & Kim, S. H. (2006). Mental Retardation: An Introduction to Intellectual Disibilities. Pearson Education. Heward, W. (2014, April 14). Characteristics of Children with Mental Retardation . Retrieved September 12, 2014, from Education. com: http://www. education. com/reference/article/characteristics-children-mental-retardation/ Intellectual Disability. (2011, January). Retrieved from National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities: http://nichcy. org/disability/specific/intellectual#def