Strategies For Academic Success
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Only the curious will learn
and only the resolute overcome
the obstacles to learning.
The quest quotient has always
excited me more than the
intelligence quotient.

Eugene S. Wilson
Helping students succeed academically is what we as educators are about. Strictly speaking, it is our primary goal, our mission, the purpose of our employment. As important as academic success is in its own right, however, it is also tied up with myriad other issues that schools today must grapple with.

One issue critically tied to student academic success that lurks in the back of many educators’ minds, is school safety. “Control Theory” suggests that if an individual does not feel a sense of power about their own situation, if they do not feel confidence in their own success, they may act aggressively to feel power in an inappropriate way. Extended to the arena of student learning, this model implies that students who are not successful academically, will attempt to gain power in other ways. They may do this by bullying, acting out, making threats or even with violence.

Another critical issue is equity. Young people who have not had the opportunity to feel success as a student, have difficulty achieving success later in life. All too often students are categorized as non-achievers on the basis of their identification with a particular group. Whether that group is based on ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status, learning style, specific abilities or disabilities, clothing or the presence of body piercing, teachers and administrators may limit their attempts to assist students in achieving academic success based on their identification in real or perceived categories. As educators, our efforts to promote academic success for ALL students, not only address our primary responsibility of teaching, but contribute to a more equitable and safer society.

In this month’s edition of The Special Educator, a variety of articles highlight strategies and programs designed to increase academic success for all students. Daimar Robinson’s article on Pat Beckman, 1999 winner of the Council of Exceptional Children’s prestigious Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year Award, reemphasizes the importance of making students feel smart. William Jensen, Daniel Olympia, Ken Reavis and Deb Andrews in their article “Lessons we have learned: Academic performance and behaviorally disordered students,” discuss meaningful academic achievement with severely behaviorally disordered students. Their review of insight gained from the Children’s Behavior Therapy Unit’s Generalization Project, outlines specific guidelines to promote academic success for the severe student.

Marla Merrill and Malynda Cloward discuss creative ways of providing students with special needs access to the general curriculum, and share strategies for adapting the curriculum to resource students. Diane Miller from the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, emphasizes that providing access to the general curriculum for IDEA students is not “rocket science;” it’s just “good teaching.” Alan Hofmeister compares two approaches for effective academic instruction and provides instructional and curriculum strategies to ensure learner verification. Other articles discuss the importance of using multiple measures of assessment to ensure all students are able to not only achieve academic improvement, but that improvement is measured and rewarded.

The structure of the school and school reform can be important tools in setting up environments conducive to student academic success. Special needs students are particularly at-risk of academic failure during their pre-adolescent years if their social and emotional needs are not addressed. Alan Bailey, Ann Smyth and Catherine Wright from Bonneville Jr. High, review their attempts to incorporate a more developmentally appropriate philosophy into the junior high setting, thereby improving chances for academic success of all students, while Karen Johannesen and Cori Groth review key factors for successful school reform.

When all is said and done, competent, well-trained, caring and creative teachers are the key component of educational excellence. The state of Utah has been fortunate in receiving a variety of significant grants to impact student academic success by addressing professional development of educators. The Reading Excellence Act Project (REA), the Utah Academy for Teachers (UAT) and the SIGNAL Project (State Improvement Grant, Networks and Alliances for Learning) all seek to improve the academic performance of students by focusing on the establishment of reliable, research based programs, with an emphasis on staff development. Included in this edition is an overview of each of these important projects.

These are just a few of the timely articles that await you in this month’s edition of The Special Educator. Along with our regular updates from the USOE, UPC, ULRC and SIPC, this edition is brimming with ideas to help us achieve our most important goal-helping all students to succeed academically. Let us remember, however, that whether our efforts are part of a federal grant, a comprehensive reform or a school or classroom project, whether focusing on professional development or strategies for individual learners, whether addressing statewide educational programs or the specific needs of individual students, our efforts to improve academic success for ALL students result not only in more confident, successful students, but in a safer, more equitable society.
n instructional program combines a curriculum component (what we teach) with an instructional method component (how we teach). This combination of curriculum and method components must be replicable, i.e., we must have ways to reliably share the program across instructors. Without replicability, there can be no systematic, progressive improvement, particularly improvement based on student outcomes. The curriculum component is linked to IEP goals, and we must systematically and progressively revise the instructional methods based on measures of success in achieving student goals.

Strategies for effective academic instructional programs consist of two overlapping approaches. The first approach involves the use of validated, replicable programs. The second approach involves the use of unvalidated programs.

Approach 1: Strategies for Selecting and Implementing Validated Programs

A validated instructional program is a replicable program that has data on student outcomes to support claims of effectiveness. Programs are only valid for the “target population” of students. This “target population” requirement is a major problem for special educators. Too often, the special educator serving low incidence populations has very little choice among available programs. There may be no valid programs which match the curriculum goals and the specific student population. For those serving high incidence populations, e.g., students failing in reading, there are choices. Even with high incidence populations, there are problems for the special educator. Most of the widely marketed and adopted textbooks have very modest validity information, and most lack evidence of cost effectiveness with at-risk populations.

The instructional accountability requirements of IDEA 97, particularly the inclusive student assessment mandates, were designed to increase the emphasis on programs validated for students with disabilities. Strategies related to the selection and implementation of validated instructional programs are driven by the following questions.

**Question 1. Is the Instructional Program Clearly Defined?** For example, are there clear, practical descriptions of what instructors and learners will do?

**Question 2. What Evidence Exists That the Program is Effective?** For example, does the evidence involve measures of student impact, or is it limited to expert opinion?

**Question 3. Is an Accountability Process Built Into the Program?** For example, will learner monitoring procedures ensure timely, instructional adjustments to prevent learner failures?

**Question 4. Is the Program Sustainable?** For example, will the needed staff development be available to ensure uniformly high teacher success?

**Question 5. Is the Program Equitable?** For example, will the program impede the progress of any group of students?

(More information on these questions and a checklist can be found in www.Reference 1).

Approach 2: Strategies for Designing and Implementing an Instructional Program

If a validated program is not available to address an IEP goal, then we have to select or design a program using the research on effective instructional practices.
The research has much to tell about the most effective methods. The following five areas and associated questions address many of the important issues to be considered when selecting or designing a methods component for an instructional program (see www. Reference 2).

**Time Management.** Have allocated time, engaged time, and academic learning time issues been appropriately addressed?

**Teaching Functions.** Have daily reviews, prerequisite checks, new content, guided practice, independent practice, mastery testing, and homework issues been appropriately addressed?

**Academic Feedback.** Have feedback opportunities, questioning and question clarity been appropriately addressed?

**Academic Monitoring.** Have assignment clarification and follow-up, daily monitoring, and instructional alignment issues been appropriately addressed?

**Classroom Management.** Have issues related to high success tasks, rules, prevention, and reprimands been appropriately addressed?

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**Curriculum Strategies**

Unlike the method components, where strategies such as time management can be applied with confidence across many settings, curriculum strategies are less generalizable, and many are “domain specific.” The following strategies do apply in most academic content areas.

1. Select an instructional sequence that moves in small, measurable steps from least difficult to most difficult.

2. The difference between a low achiever and high achiever must be based on placement in the curriculum sequence, not on success levels.

Low and high achievers should both experience consistent demonstrations of success. It is inappropriate, but very common, to place the low achiever and the high achiever at the same place in the curriculum sequence. In this case we may accept a 60% success rate for the low achiever and a 90% success rate for the high achiever. This practice generates a downward spiral of competence and confidence for the low achiever and increases rather than closes the gap between low achievers and high achievers. Under no circumstances should we ever use the IDEA 97 general curriculum and regular education requirements to justify a low success placement in the general curriculum.

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**The Bottom Line: Learner Verification**

The bottom line in both Approach 1 and Approach 2 is a dependence on “learner verification.” In both approaches, we make decisions on effectiveness based on the changes in learners. In both approaches, careful curriculum-embedded monitoring and assessment will be important. In Approach 2-the use of unvalidated programs-the monitoring and progress of the individual student will often be all we have to defend claims of effectiveness.

*References available upon request from the ULRC.*
Guest Editorial

Lessons We Have Learned: 
Academic Performance and Behaviorally Disordered Students

William R. Jensen, Daniel Olympia, 
Ken Reavis, and Deb Andrews, The BEST Project

Ean significant academic achievement with behaviorally disordered students can be difficult and frustrating both for the educator and student. This is particularly true for externalizing behaviorally disordered students who show high rates of noncompliance and aggression. These students are generally off-task, argumentative, and appear very nonmotivated when it comes to basic academic performance and achievement. However, if managed correctly, these students can make significant progress academically. In fact, the long term research shows that behaviorally disordered students who do not have basic academic skills, especially reading, will have a less chance for success in young adulthood.

The information presented here are from the lessons learned in the Children’s Behavior Therapy Unit’s Generalization Project which ran for several years and was partially funded by the USOE. The hardest lesson to learn was failure. Many promising students who had made significant progress with behavior, social skills, and self-management often failed when returned to regular education environments. On closer examination, it was found that the students who failed often did so because of basic academic difficulties. It does not take a complex functional behavior assessment to discover that if behaviorally disordered students are placed in an academically demanding environment, and are unable to do the work, they will revert back to disruptive behavioral excesses to escape that environment.

From the experience and research of the CBTU Generalization Project, we learned five basic lessons. These lessons are as follows:

Lesson 1: Curriculum Means Everything: Just like the adage of three important factors for real estate sales, what matters in the curriculum realm for behaviorally disordered students is reading, reading, and more reading. The research is clear, many current reading programs used in public schools put behaviorally disordered students at risk. This is particularly true of the developmental, constructionist, whole language reading programs. A basic direct instruction, phonetically oriented reading program is far superior to whole language reading approaches. Excellent programs continue to be the SRA Corrective Reading Series or Reading Mastery. For younger children, the Reading for All Learners Program is superb, extending basic reading skills of at-risk younger students. Similarly, the new Read Well Program series is excellent for teaching decoding, phonemic awareness, blending skills with high interest material. Without basic reading skills, the behaviorally disordered student is lost.

Lesson 2: Study Skills for the Jump Years: The “jump years” is the time when students transition from elementary to secondary schools; when they go from one or two teachers, to seven teachers in a large and impersonal school. Our research found that many behaviorally disordered students went to secondary grades without the requisite study skills needed to succeed. Skills needed at the secondary level are basically the skills to extract, organize, and regurgitate information required by
seven new teachers. Skills such as outlining, note taking, homework organization, test taking, and many more are needed. There are several excellent programs that teach these basic study skills, but the critical variables for a good study skills program are comprehensiveness and simplicity. The Skills for School Success program takes all the skills necessary for student success from the third grade through high school and presents them in a simple and easy to learn format. Research done with this program and behaviorally disordered students shows particular promise combined with instruction in self-management of study skills. Reading and basic study skills, are critical to the success of a behaviorally disordered student in the jump years.

**Lesson 3: Motivation to Keep them Going:** For a behaviorally disordered student, to keep working academically is to work hard. This is particularly true for older students who have substantial basic skills deficits. Such students have a long history of failure. They feel embarrassed about their poor performance and their current performance generally results in negative feedback and failure. There are many myths about the use of external incentive systems to help students. For example, the popular lay book *Punished by Rewards* reviews selected research and suggests that external motivation systems harm internal motivation. This is a sensationalistic approach, based on poor scholarship and hurts struggling students. However, some educators use this slanted type of information to discourage the use of motivation systems for academic performance. A scholarly review of twenty-five years of incentive research published in the *American Psychologist* shows how powerful incentives can be for both internal and external motivation and in improving creativity.

Academic productivity is very hard work for over 80% of behaviorally disordered students. Proven incentives to keep them going include high rates of teacher praise (this has been shown to be one of the most potent incen-
tives), token systems, mystery motivators, reinforcement “beep” tapes, advertising achievement for success, “Dots” for motivation, contracts, and reinforcer chart moves. The list is endless. Without some external motivation systems, many behaviorally disordered students simply give up or act out to escape the work environment.

**Lesson 4: Extended Practice to Catch Up:** If you are behind and deficit, the only way for you to catch up or compensate for academic skills deficits is to practice more. The ways to extend academic practice are limited in public schools by insufficient resources and large class sizes. However, two approaches have been shown to be particularly effective, peer tutoring and homework.

Most peer tutoring programs are set up incorrectly to successfully extend academic practice. Approaches such as peer tutoring clubs or having accelerated students tutor floundering behaviorally disordered students are generally ineffective. Reciprocity, where one student is the tutor and then switches and becomes the tutee, is a proven approach. Students learn as much from tutoring as they do from being tutored. Differences in ability levels can easily be compensated and adjusted for in peer tutoring programs. Tutoring across the whole class rather than pull out tutoring sessions is another proven approach that works extremely well. One of the best researched approaches, shown to make dramatic academic differences in at risk students, is the classwide peer tutoring program from Juniper Gardens in Kansas City. This program is available in an excellent book, *Together We Can: Classwide Peer Tutoring to Improve Basic Academic Skills*.

Homework is another area to extend academic practice, and it has been shown to be very effective in improving basic academic skills. Yes, behaviorally disordered students will do homework if it is meaningful and not a busy work assignment, if it is graded and returned quickly, if the majority of comments on the assignment are positive, if it parallels the instruction presented in class (no canned assignments), if the homework assignment is started in class, and if performance on the assignment is linked to a motivation system. Students at the University of Utah have won the national American Psychological Association’s Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award twice with their research on improving academic ability through homework with behaviorally disordered and at-risk students. This research has involved self-management strategies, cooperative learning teams, parent training, peer tutoring and several other proven strategies. These proven homework programs have also been published in the *Homework Partners Series*.

**Lesson 5: Accommodate or Lose Them:** This lesson is particularly true at the secondary level when a student has massive academic deficits. Teachers must accommodate for behaviorally disordered student. They simply will not continue academically if they are held to the same exacting standard as a nondisabled student. Simple accommodations such as reductions in assignment length, extra time on assignments and tests, easing the grading standard so they can be successful, and helping with organizational skills are but a few. The BEST Project and Granite School Districts *Pre-referral Ideas and/or Modification for Regular/Special Education Classes* is an excellent checklist and accommodation guide for secondary students.

These are some of the lessons we have learned in helping behaviorally disordered students become successful academically and acquire basic skills. These students are not “unmotivated,” rather, they have a long history of failure, negative feedback for their performance, and basic skills deficits. Many of them cannot see the connection between personal success and academic performance. We can teach them that connection, however, if we learn our lessons. References available upon request from ULRC.
Feature Article

Observations From A Newcomer To The Utah System Of Special Education

Lynn Wilder, Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling and Special Education, Brigham Young University

I recently moved from David Letterman’s alma mater, Ball State University (BSU) in Muncie, Indiana, to accept a teaching position at Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah. As part of my assignment at BSU, I supervised student teachers with special education majors/minors in about 80 different schools. All of our special education majors/minors were trained both in the schools and in the university classroom for four to five long years. Many were dual majors in elementary education and special education. Indiana public school class size was reasonable, both in special education and general education. Paraeducators were plentiful. Inclusion was the trend. Many school districts were hiring only graduates who were dual majors in general education and special education.

Utah has been an interesting new adventure for me, in many ways; however, I will discuss only my public school experience here. I am again assigned to train new special educators both in the classroom and the schools but conditions vary from my past experience. Dorothy is no longer in Kansas (or Indiana as the case may be). BYU is participating in a program that trains special educators in a year. Students entering the certification training may have backgrounds in other areas of education but they may not. Some come from fields outside of education such as speech and language pathology and audiology or social work. In four months these students cram special education courses and by fall, many are hired as interns in special education classrooms with full time responsibilities receiving half the pay of a regular special education teacher for the year of internship. They are to learn on the job with support from BYU staff and public school teacher mentors.

I must say I was skeptical at first. Train special educators in four months well enough that they can teach the toughest of the tough and reach the difficult to reach, with little to no teaching experience? As I have worked within this new system, I have been humbled to learn a number of things I would like to share with you.

First, most Utah schools I have visited possess a warm, friendly, almost homey environment that is conducive not just to learning but to caring. I get the impression even school secretaries and janitors watch over the children and count their jobs a pleasure. Parent volunteers are visible in the schools. Principals are welcoming and positive and I feel they are not defeated by the numerous challenges placed in their paths daily. BYU interns are welcomed and become part of the school community.

Classrooms are large and many I visit are overcrowded with students. Paraeducators are in short supply, and teacher pay is not too motivating. Despite these troubles, I see teachers making the most of their resources and doing it with enthusiasm and expertise. I see these same teachers willingly assist the new interns on their own time. Dedicated, industrious, skilled teachers are an invaluable resource to this state.

I am impressed with the collaboration that takes place in Utah between the state department, school district and even university personnel (thank you!). This manner of collaboration keeps university folk from being so “ivory tower” isolated and out of touch. Monthly consortium meetings, frequent conferences, i.e., opportunities for improving practice, and a host of statewide projects support and inform teachers. The system is well organized and remarkably functional. Even local Directors of Special Education meet with university personnel as often as monthly to hammer out issues related to, well, whatever they need to hammer out. Incredible.

“Dedicated, industrious, skilled teachers are an invaluable resource to this state.”

In my particular field of interest, children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders, Utah is recognized nationally as being a front-runner. The Utah Chapter of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) won recognition at the International Convention for the Council for Exceptional Children in North Carolina last April. Deb Andrews, Director for Utah’s Behavioral and Educational Strategies for Teachers Project, is nationally acknowledged for her work as Committee Chair of the Advocacy and Governmental Relations Committee of CCBD.

Train effective special educators in a year? Perhaps it just might work here. It’s a funny sort of Oz, but I’m glad to be in Utah! ■
The last two decades have brought considerable attention to school-wide improvements intended to raise student achievement-particularly in the area of literacy. In response to the emphasis on improved student achievement, many promising programs for school improvement have emerged. These programs, often centered around particular curriculum or teaching practices, cannot effectively address the issue without approaching the school culture as a whole. It is common for such programs to put forth a blueprint for school improvement, often viewing the changes as a set of procedures that, if followed, will automatically lead to increased student achievement. However, if school improvement is to be effective and have a lasting impact, it must be approached as a process rather than a blueprint. School improvement is a continual process and requires changes in the culture of the school.

In order to create an effective school culture, the improvement process must combine six factors: professional development, monitoring and evaluation, level and type of staff involvement, area of focus/vision, resource reallocation and leadership. Implementation of a program that omits any one of these factors will not result in the envisioned changes. As an example, school improvement programs that do not provide adequate professional development offerings for each staff member will not produce a change in classroom practice; similarly, a school improvement program that does not include careful monitoring and evaluation will have no ability to assess implementation progress. Any program for school improvement must be evaluated by the extent to which these factors are present. Each of the six factors will be summarized briefly:

**Professional Development**
Professional development is a key element in school change. As a school identifies the need for change, professional development that will result in a change in classroom practice becomes central to the process. The staff development must involve all staff in quality inservice activities that provide strategies to achieve instructional focus goals. Joyce and Showers (1995) indicate the necessity of an internal support structure such as a peer coaching model and continue with recommendations for effective professional development programs. Their recommendations include: at least 40 hours of professional development through inservice offerings, opportunities for peer observation and feedback, involvement of all staff members in the support plan, time for collaborative study of teaching and implementation of curricular/instructional plan, clean evaluation procedure for professional development plan.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**
The two primary issues that need to be addressed in the monitoring and evaluation activities are (1) student performance and (2) the implementation of new practices. In addition, benchmarks must be designed in order to measure progress along the way. Goals and benchmarks must be measurable so that specific, practical data can be used to make the necessary modifications or changes to the original plan. Finally, the establishment of goals and benchmarks should be coupled with thorough record-keeping that includes quarterly data on each student. One of the most important issues schools face is setting aside time for such analysis, which must take place on a regular, ongoing basis (weekly, quarterly, yearly, etc.). These activities should become a regular part of a faculty’s work and eventually lead to the school becoming a learning organization, where the entire staff is focused on continual inquiry and evaluation of the quality/effectiveness of teaching. Data sources include student achievement scores, implementation evaluation, teacher evaluations, and external feedback on adopted practices.

"Each of the six factors must work together in concert with the others in order to produce the level of change desired."

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Level, Type of Level and Type of Involvement

Involvement in the change process takes place along two dimensions: who is involved (the level to which all staff members are involved) and how they are involved (the type of involvement). Consistency among and involvement of, the staff is crucial for schoolwide reform. In order for schools to make the kinds of changes necessary to ensure that all students benefit from the improvements, the entire staff must be involved in the change process. This happens as a result of a variety of factors, including strong leadership, a collective sense of responsibility, and the existence of a climate of trust and professionalism where difficult issues may be raised and discussed openly. The distribution of power in a school will determine the level and type of involvement of its members.

Area of Focus/Vision

Areas of focus found to be consistent with high performing schools include: improving student outcomes, creating intellectually challenging teaching practices and a structured day. Schools tend to experience more success when there exists a shared vision and a common value system, where consensus on the definition of the goals is reached, and when the entire school is focused on teaching and learning.

Resource Reallocation

All of the resources available to the school must be considered for reallocation in order for school reform to take hold; willingness to reallocate resources becomes an indicator of staff commitment to change. Resources must be coordinated in a manner that optimizes the utilization of time, space, people and funding.

Leadership

The quality of the leadership of the principal is a significant characteristic of effective schools and has been the topic of much research. However, as stated by MacGilchrist (1995), a single individual, regardless of talent or determination will not be able to change a school without the involvement of others. The leadership team, directed by the principal, has direct authority for decisions in terms of power distribution and decision making norms, distribution of time and money, allocation of space and the presence of voice in decision-making.

Each of the six factors must work in concert with the others in order to produce the level of change desired. Implementation of a program that omits any one of these factors will not result in the envisioned changes. An improvement as routine as a new approach to language arts will not effect the desired improvements without consideration of all the above factors. School change requires a change in the very culture of the school. Improvement is a process and, as such, school faculties should evaluate potential programs based on the inclusion of these factors. The change process is a continual spiral with a tension to balance and maintain all six factors. The process of change is not a destination, but the creation of new norms for the school. It includes the creation of a school culture that can be responsive to the changing needs of the students and the community. A school that incorporates all six of the factors will be able to recognize and address problems and create solutions.

Feature Article

Utah Academy Of Teachers

Rebecca Anderson,
Utah State Office of Education

Last fall, the Utah State Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Education announced the formation of the Utah Academy of Teachers. The Academy will serve quality teachers in various school districts who have the potential of becoming exemplary educators. Initially teachers in Iron, Jordan, and Ogden School Districts will be involved in the project. It is expected that the Academy will spread to neighboring districts in the coming years. The first session begins in February with a total of 80 educators at Academy sites in Salt Lake City and Cedar City.

Teachers apply as a school team consisting of two classroom teachers, a school special educator and a school/district administrator. An additional teacher will be hired to work with the two classroom teachers. Teams will also include preservice candidates qualified by the partnering institutions of Brigham Young University, Southern Utah University, and Weber State University.

Team members will attend the Academy during two nine-week sessions. While one classroom teacher attends the Academy, the newly hired teacher will cover the regular classroom responsibilities while they are away. After the first nine-weeks, the other classroom teacher from the team will attend the Academy while the additional faculty member covers the classroom. Special educators and administrators will attend the sessions of the Academy throughout both sessions. Teams will receive training in social studies and language arts core curriculum and instruction, action research, technology, curriculum frameworks, diversity, and character education. Other areas of expertise will be added as needed by the various teams involved in each Academy session. Team members will be observing exemplary teachers in the field as well as demonstrating their expertise to other Academy members.

School teams will be working together to improve student performance particularly in the areas of social studies and language arts as well as meeting the unique needs of all students in their classrooms. Teachers will also work on preparing personal professional portfolios, some of which may be submitted to complete the requirements for National Board Certification.

Academy participants will not only have the opportunity to have personal and professional renewal experiences, but will be able to develop a network of collaborative colleagues. This association will mold a stronger relationship between higher education, the public schools, and the general public.

Rebecca Anderson will be directing the Utah Academy of Teachers. Rebecca was formerly the social studies specialist for the Utah State Board of Education. She has been a coordinator for Granite School District and a high school teacher at Granger High School. Besides the overall responsibility for the project, Rebecca will be conducting the Academy in northern Utah, which will be held at West Jordan High School.

The Academy’s associate director will be Mark Marriott. Mark was an associate professor of education at Southern Utah University and a classroom teacher in Weber County School District. He will direct the Academy in southern Utah, which will be housed at Fiddler’s Elementary School in Cedar City.

For more information about the Academy you may contact Rebecca Anderson at (801) 538-7575 or email her at raanders@usoe.k12.ut.us.

References available upon request from ULRC.
The Utah State Office of Education has been awarded a 2-year, $7 million Reading Excellence Act (REA) grant on behalf of the Utah Reads Project. The goal of this grant is to help all children read on grade level by the end of the third grade. Utah was one of 17 states awarded REA funds from the US Department of Education.

The Utah REA Project targets high poverty and low-performing districts (LEAs) and schools in the state as determined by:

- Title I Program Improvement status.
- The highest or second highest number of children living in poverty.
- The highest or second highest rate or percentage of children living in poverty.

Eligible Utah LEAs include:

- Alpine
- Jordan
- Salt Lake City
- Tintic
- Carbon
- North Sanpete
- San Juan
- Tooele
- Granite
- Ogden
- Sevier
- Washington

Each of these eligible LEAs could apply on behalf of eligible schools as determined by applying the same criteria used to establish eligible LEAs.

These Local Educational Agencies could apply for two sub-grants:

1. Local Reading Improvement Sub-grants - awarded to support eligible schools that use scientifically-based reading research to accomplish the following five goals of the Reading Excellence Act:
   - Increase the school readiness skills in early childhood.
   - Significantly increase the number of children who are at or above grade level reading by the end of the third grade.
   - Improve the instructional practices of all instructional staff.
   - Expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs.
   - Provide transition K-1 classes for children experiencing difficulty with reading.

2. Tutoring Assistance Sub-grants - awarded to provide tutorial assistance in reading based on scientifically based reading research to children who have difficulty reading. LEAs must agree to provide:

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• Multiple choices among tutorial assistance providers including school-based programs.
• At least one tutorial assistance program operated by a qualified, contracted outside provider.

Eligible districts could apply for one or both of the above sub-grants.

Districts applying for Reading Excellence Act funds were required to use the funds to support activities that would advance the reform of reading instruction at the classroom level. Districts were to design, articulate and assure the implementation a program of reading instruction for students in grades K-3 that is based on rigorous, scientifically based reading research. The Utah Literacy Model provided the framework for the content of these programs and required districts and schools to address curriculum and instruction, engaged practice and the literacy environment of both the classroom and the school.

Applicant districts were to provide assurances that they would carry out effective professional development for teachers and other instructional staff that combined conceptual knowledge about the early reading process and opportunities for instructional staff to demonstrate proficiency through practical experiences working with children.

Applications were also to include the development and implementation of family literacy programs that combined early childhood education, adult literacy education, parenting education and opportunities for parents and children to interact together in literacy based activities. Additionally, plans were to include assurances that well prepared, highly capable instructors would provide additional support during non-instructional time (summer, before and after school, inter-session, etc.) for students who are experiencing difficulty reading. Districts were to specifically describe how children who are at-risk of being referred to special education based on their reading difficulties would be provided appropriate instruction and intervention.

Applications required districts and schools to coordinate existing funds with a significant focus on reading and early literacy (Title 1, Highly Impacted Schools, Alternative Language Services, etc.) and to ensure that these funds would be used to support practices that could be supported by current, scientifically based reading research. While districts were not required to use these funds in their entirety, to support K-3 reading programs, they were required to assure that where such funds were used in support of K-3 reading programs, the philosophy and implementation would be consistent with REA goals, practices and strategies.

Eligible districts had the opportunity to gain additional information about the Utah Reads Literacy Model, current scientifically based reading research (SBRR) and the application process at four REA conferences. District teams attending these conferences included District Superintendents as well as representatives from early childhood education, adult literacy programs, Head Start programs, Regional Reading Specialists, Title 1 Directors, District Curriculum Directors and school and district bilingual and ESL teachers and program administrators.

The project will be evaluated throughout both the development and implementation phases. The Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity (IBRIC) has been awarded a contract to evaluate the effectiveness of all components of the REA. The primary activity at this juncture is the development of observation tools to be used at the classroom level in determining the effectiveness and quality of reading instruction as well as the impact of professional development. Additional evaluation activities include (but are not limited to) student achievement as measured by Informal Reading Inventories and the Core Curriculum end-of-level assessments, the number of students referred for special education services for difficulties in reading, individual student school readiness upon entry into kindergarten, teacher, parent and student surveys, and access to programs. Information gathered on the efficacy of REA activities will be used to improve the quality of reading instruction and increase student reading ability statewide.

Final district applications were due to the USOE on January 14, 2000. These applications are being screened by a team of 21 reviewers with expertise in reading, family literacy, early childhood, alternative language services and professional development. It is anticipated that grants will be awarded to between 5 and 7 districts on behalf of 20-28 schools.

The Utah Reads Literacy Model, or any other relevant material are available through the State Office of Education by calling Laurie Lacy (801-538-7501) or Jan Dole (801-538-7823).
This is the third installment in an ongoing dialogue concerning the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised (WJR).

Would a student in a wheelchair be asked to get up and run around the athletic track? Would a student with glasses be asked to take them off and take notes from the board? Of course not. Yet, students are routinely asked to perform far beyond their potential, and teachers and parents sometimes express disappointment when students exhibit frustration, do not complete assigned work, demonstrate behavior problems or fail to learn.

Not so long ago, automobile mechanics had few sophisticated tools available to diagnose specific problems. Intuition, fluid reasoning and experience were essential skills, and a certain amount of trial and error was practiced. He/she would remove and replace a part that was suspected to be at fault. If the replacement fixed the problem, good. If not, the mechanic had to dig deeper until the problem was diagnosed. Many makes/models have built in diagnostic computers that mechanics access to tell them the nature of the difficulty, and how to fix that problem. A mechanic hooks up a small electronic diagnostic tool to the on-board computer. The screen display prompts the mechanic through a series of tests and procedures until the solution is identified and only necessary services and parts are provided. Wouldn’t it be helpful to have a similar diagnostic device that teachers can hook up to a student, run a series of procedures (assessments), know if a student was achieving commensurate with their potential? Wouldn’t this save time, reduce behavior problems and student and teacher stress? What if this information could be obtained in as little as 90 minutes (not all at one sitting), but would save hundreds of wasted hours of instruction a year. What would this be worth to you? Would you find a way to do it?

“Standardized assessment can be a powerful diagnostic tool for the assessment team when used in conjunction with observation and other relevant data.”

Assessment data drive all qualification, placement and instructional decisions. The standardized component of assessment should include enough information to: 1) diagnose the learning difficulty, and 2) identify preferred practice approaches to remediation or instruction. Best practice using the WJR would be to:

- Administer (at minimum) cognitive subsets 1-14, 17, 18, 20, 21(table).
- Administer appropriate achievement subtests to answer specific referral questions (table).
- On computer scoring printout, compare Predicted SS score with Actual SS score (present level of educational performance).

If there is less than 22 standard score points difference between them, no significant discrepancy exists and the student is achieving at or about their potential at this time. This suggests that the current strategy is maximizing the students potential, and additional progress will be slow or non-existent. Teach to maintain achievement skills and focus on other instructional goals.

More than a 22-point discrepancy (-1.5 SD) suggests that the student is not working at their potential, and there is room to improve in that area. Appropriate remedial strategies are indicated.

Continued on next page
• Determine instructional range from testing data. The WJR yields age and grade level equivalent scores in a range from (E) easy, to (H) hard. Begin a new achievement intervention at the present level of ability, and consult data to advance rapidly.

• Identify intra-cognitive strengths, weaknesses and functional limitations from data. Design appropriate accommodations or remedial strategies, based on these data.

“Effective teachers have high, but reasonable expectations for their students.”

Use Intra-Cognitive Discrepancies To Diagnose Learning Problems

Intra-cognitive strengths, weaknesses and functional limitations vary in their contributions to achievement, vocational selection and progress, creativity and happiness. Analysis of an individual’s intra-cognitive performance can help to explain inconsistent or poor achievement. To maximize instruction, make accommodations based on remedial strategies for weaknesses and functional limitations.

Standardized assessment can be a powerful diagnostic tool for the assessment team when used in conjunction with observation and other relevant data. School teams or districts interested in receiving more information or in-service training in assessment administration or interpretation are encouraged to contact the author at the ULRC.
## WJ-R Cognitive Subtest Selection Matrix

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<thead>
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<th>WJR Assessment Option</th>
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<td>Tests of Cognitive Ability</td>
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<th>ADMINISTER:</th>
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<td><strong>BROAD COGNITIVE ABILITY, EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL SCALE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BROAD COGNITIVE ABILITY, STANDARD SCALE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BROAD COGNITIVE ABILITY, EXTENDED SCALE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTRA-COGNITIVE COMPARISON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ORAL LANGUAGE</strong></td>
<td>2,6 (Standard) 13, 20, 21 (Supplemental)</td>
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<td><strong>ORAL LANGUAGE APTITUDE</strong></td>
<td>2,6 (Standard) 13, 17, 18, 20, 21 (Supplemental)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>READING APTITUDE</strong> <em>(predicted reading ability based on intra-cognitive performance)</em></td>
<td>2,3 (Standard) 11,13 (Supplemental)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MATHEMATICS APTITUDE</strong> <em>(predicted math ability based on intra-cognitive performance)</em></td>
<td>3,7 (Standard) 13,14 (Supplemental)</td>
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<td><strong>WRITTEN LANGUAGE APTITUDE</strong> <em>(predicted writing ability based on intra-cognitive performance)</em></td>
<td>3 (Standard) 8,11,13 (Supp)</td>
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<td>ACHIEVEMENT AREA</td>
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<td>BASIC READING</td>
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or years there has been an implied view that the skills and training needed to provide an appropriate education for students with special needs was akin to the level of “Rocket Science.” The unspoken message was that there must be some kind of “secret code” to be mastered in order to teach students with special needs. As a result, when IDEA ‘97 emphasized the significance of educating students with special needs in the general education classroom, there was a gasp that could be heard in schools around the country. How could general education teachers be expected to do more? How are they to deal with the additional demands for time it would take to prepare materials and address the personal needs of a few students? How? How? How? This is with the exception of highly specialized programs to address the needs of students with severe or medically related disabilities, the pre-service training programs for individuals seeking special education endorsement, when aligned with programs for individuals receiving general education endorsement, differ most noticeably in the additional coursework focused on teaching strategies and methods.

Teacher classrooms, offices, and home bookshelves most likely include numerous books or workshop materials designed to provide teaching strategies and meet student needs. Resources providing strategies to address student learning needs are also in abundance as one searches the Internet. Whether you have been in the classroom for one or fifty-one years, think for a moment of your training experiences. Has there ever been a time when you have returned from an in-service and made comments similar to the following: “I should have thought of that method.” “It’s so easy, why didn’t I think of trying that technique?” “I’ve been doing it in my classes for years and, just think, I could have made money by telling others.”

There are many excellent teachers in our classrooms. These teachers have been using strategies and modifying their lessons to provide learning opportunities for students who have not been “identified” as having a special need or who may fall between the cracks. These teachers have learned and developed “strategies” for teaching children who have difficulty grasping concepts in the perceived standard manner. But now, with what seems to be an overwhelming number of students with a broad spectrum of needs, how can teachers begin to develop the repertoire of strategies they will need?

Strategies that promote Successful Student Learning

A first step in addressing the question, How?, requires one to step back and look at the shared strategies that promote learning for all students. In a “General Information Overview” of IDEA’97, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), provides an outline of the “Strategies for Success” that IDEA’97 promotes. It includes:

- Raising expectations for children with disabilities
- Increasing parental involvement in the education of their children
- Ensuring that regular education teachers are involved in planning and assessing children’s progress
- Including children with disabilities in assessments, performance goals, and reports to the public, and
- Supporting quality professional development for all personnel who are involved in educating children with disabilities.

For a moment, let’s look at how each of these strategies might transcend learning for “all” children.

Raising Expectations

One of the attributes associated with teachers that are often referred to as “good teachers” is their commitment to accepting a student at his or her present level of ability. They also believe they can provide the learning environment that will enable the student to achieve more. It is this commitment to the profession that sustains their enthusiasm and results in the self-motivation necessary to meet the daily challenges in the classroom. Behind successes within each person’s life is the shadow of another individual who communicated high expectations and a belief that success was attainable. In education, this most often is a teacher who first considers the educational needs of the student, provides a positive learning environment that takes into consideration the student’s strengths and interests, provides resources that support successful learning, and importantly, communicates to the student an expectation for their success.

Parental Involvement

As teachers discuss areas that fundamentally impact student learning success, one area that looms high on the list is “parental involvement” in a child’s education. Again, as one thinks back to attributes of “good teachers”, efforts to increase parent and family involvement in a student’s educational experience are most likely noticeable. The strategy of increasing parental involvement requires both parties to recognize that the child is the “primary” focus for education. It urges teachers and parents to embrace the concept of collaboration that nurture and support the child. IDEA ‘97 seeks to promote parental involvement in the education of their children.

Regular Education Teacher Involvement

An illustration of this strategy is a large art canvas with a child painting. The top of the canvas towers high above the child’s head and on the bottom portion of the canvas, the child paints only a sketch of an individual’s lower legs and shoes. Why?
Because this is what he saw. If an individual’s education and future success can be viewed as unfolding on a large canvas, and multiple painters are controlling the brush strokes, does it not seem reasonable that each painter’s strokes should support the successful completion of the final picture?

Similarly, the involvement of general education teachers in planning and assessing a student’s progress is necessary in the successful completion of the education program. IDEA’97 seeks to emphasize the importance of viewing a student’s education in its totality, impacted by many individuals and circumstances. Ensuring that regular education teachers are involved in planning and assessing progress of a student with special needs is significant in completing the picture for a successful future.

**Including Children with Disabilities**

Including children with disabilities in assessments, performance goals, and reports to the public validates the philosophy that “all” children can learn and experience success. Most individuals can quickly identify a personal area of strength and an area where improvement is needed. In order to provide an appropriate education for students, it is necessary that they be included in assessments, supported in efforts to meet performance goals, and that progress toward established goals is appropriately reported. A commitment to high expectations for student learning is reflected in actions.

**Quality Professional Development**

The final strategy for success listed in OSERS overview of IDEA’97 emphasizes the need to support quality professional development for all personnel who are involved in the education of children with disabilities. One of the most prevalent attributes of “good teachers” is a passion to learn. They embrace the concept of “life long learning!” In order to address the challenges that daily confront teachers in the classroom, society must also commit to providing adequate resources and training necessary to assist teachers as they address student needs. Few teachers, if given adequate support and training, wave at taking on the challenge of helping a child learn.

In conclusion, one might notice that the “Strategies for Success” outlined in the OSERS overview and the philosophical concept permeating IDEA ’97, reflect the beliefs expressed and practiced by “good teachers” throughout history.

**It’s Not “Rocket Science”**

**It’s “Good Teaching.”**
district personnel. The task force is in the process of defining and recommending to the Granite Board of Education concepts of the Carnegie Report that should be implemented throughout the district.

Until a direction is defined and adopted by Granite District, teachers at Bonneville Junior are putting into practice ideas found in the Carnegie Report. The following are key examples of implementing ideas into practice to better meet the needs of all students.

All young adolescents should have the opportunity to succeed in every aspect of the middle grade program, regardless of previous achievement or the pace at which they learn.

**Positive Recognition**

Ann Smyth has instituted a program that reaches all students and has remarkable success in motivating students to achieve their potential. She describes it in the following way:

One of the greatest challenges in the Middle School is motivation. I discovered some strategies that when applied to the classroom work in motivating students to succeed. The focus in my classroom changed from maintaining crowd control to rewarding positive behavior. The result was more learning took place and teaching became exciting and enjoyable. By recognizing and rewarding the positive behavior, the majority of disruptive students became positive participants.

The following fundamental concepts and practices worked a miracle in my classroom:

- Recognize everyone in a positive manner. Too often the only recognition is associated with negative behaviors.
- Target and acknowledge the desired behavior while ignoring, as much as possible, the negative.
- Entice all students to achieve their highest potential. Each student can improve with consistent positive recognition.

**Create Student Teams**

Teaming fosters an effort to create a positive learning environment through unified classroom behavior and academic expectations.

As teachers, we should acknowledge student success. We need to have goals that expect the success of all students. This does not mean success at the expense of high standards. Lowering standards to insure passing is false success. True success breeds self worth. Our schools today are filled with so much negative energy it is not surprising to find parents and teachers discouraged and students distracted from learning. Creating a positive learning environment has made a difference.

**Service Learning**

Responsibility for each middle grade student’s success should be shared by schools and community organizations.

Catherine Wright has worked with students in a service learning class that links students with adults and programs in the community.

The Service Learning class offers 8th and 9th grade students the opportunity to become familiar with needs in their community. The curriculum is set up to allow students indirectly or directly to interact with three or four community organizations throughout their semester in the class. This year students have acted as mentors to preschool children at the community center, and twice a month go by school bus to visit and teach their new friends. A strong bond develops between the students and the preschoolers.

On Thursdays a small group of Service Learning students walk over to Meadowmoor Elementary school to tutor a 3rd grade class in math and reading.

Twice a month the students play bingo and visit with the elderly at the Evergreen Care Center. They make seasonal gifts for the residents during class time to take to the residents on the bimonthly visits.

The students also focus on one or two donation drives during the school year. This year, in October, they conducted a used blanket drive for animals being housed at the Humane Society. In December they held a used clothing drive for teenagers living on the streets. They also went shopping for the teenagers with money they had raised, and bought backpacks and Christmas decorations. As a culmination of the December activity, the group took a field trip to deliver the donations and decorate the homeless facility for the holidays.

In January the students held a canned goods drive for the Utah Food Bank, and in February they will be hosting a Valentines Day dance for the senior citizens.

The Service Learning class touches a need in all students to do something they see as relevant and worthwhile. Students who are normally not motivated by school, respond in a caring way as they serve others.

Bonneville Junior High School will continue to implement ideas and concepts that are successful with our students. Our faculty is well versed in Middle Level concepts and is willing to implement them on a school wide scale. We are waiting for direction.
This Is A Resource Class?

Marla M. Merrill & Malynda K. Cloward
West Lake Junior High Resource Teachers

Marla M. Merrill & Malynda K. Cloward

In an attempt to enrich and ensure academic success in our resource classes, we are expanding our curriculum, bringing what has typically been reserved for mainstream students to the resource students. To begin, we are collaborating with the content area teacher to map out curriculum and align with the state core standards.

The next step is to review strategies that can be used in an English or Math classroom. To demonstrate some strategies used to adapt English curriculum, we will use one of the most enjoyable units used in our Resource English classes, Romeo and Juliet. To begin, the unit activates students’ background knowledge. Students use a “What Do You KNOW, THINK You Know, WANT To Know, and What Did You LEARN Chart (KTWL), by completing the first three columns. Historical backgrounds of Elizabethan England and Shakespeare are presented. Movie clips about this period are plentiful and help students gain additional background knowledge. Listening to a tape of Shakespearean English helps students become more accustomed to the sound and rhythm of the language.

One important strategy is to require students to keep a response journal. After each scene, students will answer questions in three areas:

1) What passage did the students find the most meaningful and why?
2) A question geared toward checking students’ understanding, allowing them to analyze the scene.
3) Predicting what they think will happen next, or writing a question they have about the scene.

Teaching vocabulary is also an important component. Students receive a worksheet with three columns of Shakespearean words. One word is chosen from each column, creating a “Shakespearean Insult”. They preface each insult with the words, “thou art...”. The students practice hurling the insults across the room, then use a Shakespearean glossary to look up the meaning of their insults. This activity is extremely motivating to our junior high students. It helps to get them excited about the language of Shakespeare and the activities to come. Another method of introducing vocabulary before each act is to use word squares. The square is divided into four boxes. In box one the student writes the word, in box two the definition is written, in box three, the student uses the word in a sentence, and in box four the word is illustrated.

To read the play, the strategies of oral repeated reading and reader’s theater are used. Our text includes the original works and a modern version side-by-side which helps clarify parts students may not understand. Showing movie clips also adds to understanding. Many different media versions of the play are available.

Students work in cooperative groups to complete promptbooks of the famous balcony scene. They decide how the characters should say things and move across the stage. Once the activity is completed students watch four different versions of this scene to compare/contrast how others designed the scene. The tomb scene is a wonderful place to have the groups design a set. Other activities students engage in are costume design, construct a masquerade mask and learn a waltz.

As the bell rings to end class, the students are disappointed that the time is over for English but, are excited to be moving across the hall to see what is in store for them in math class.

Algebra and geometry concepts are introduced to our resource students by using manipulatives, vocabulary, and explicit instruction. Geometric terms such as plane, point, and angle can be taught while constructing window stars out of tissue paper. Students practice adding, subtracting, and multiplying integers in a game of war using a deck of cards. Partners each draw two cards to form their equation. They solve it and the person with the highest answer takes the cards. This also teaches the concept of comparing positive and negative integers. This game can be used to practice reducing and comparing fractions.

Vocabulary is introduced daily and written by the student in a journal. After the word is introduced, students try to determine if they can give a definition for the word themselves. The correct definition is discussed and then written down with several examples. A glossary is created to be used any time needed.

All lessons are presented through explicit instruction. Teachers assess the student’s knowledge of the concept to be taught. The concept is modeled by the teacher before the students begin guided practice, then move into independent practice. Students may be assigned a cooperative group. When the group feels they understand the concept, they can “test out” of completing the rest of the assignment. All members of the group must pass the concept for the group to be excused from completing the assignment. Group members who understand help teach group members who do not understand.

Tests can be modified by adding symbols, pictures and examples used during instruction to help with understanding, word problems and written directions. The use of consistent visual cues in instruction, increases test success.

Maintaining a curriculum rich classroom environment is key to the success of these methods. In such an environment, students are more motivated to learn. We see an increase in self-esteem in our students as they learn the same information their non-disabled peers are learning. Students are more successful when they are ready to mainstream to a regular education class. This curriculum rich environment makes students and other teachers often ask, “This is a resource class?”
hat is what many special education students at Westland Elementary School would tell you if you asked them about Pat Beckman, named as the Council of Exceptional Children’s (CEC’s) prestigious Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year for 1999.

Those five simple words speak volumes about Beckman’s certainty that for the most part, children with disabilities are just as unique as other individual students.

Feeling smart feels good, of course, to every student, even to us, and Beckman is a staunch believer in handing special education students the tools, formulas and cues—the secrets, if you will—that their counterparts in regular classrooms use to master basic skills. She thinks we underestimate what many students with a disability can learn. It is important that we empower them with pride, self-esteem, and confidence.

Beckman insists that except for children with severe physical and/or mental disabilities that make learning to read a one-of-a-kind challenge, these boys and girls deserve reading materials that are carefully chosen to suit their individual level of proficiency. She is sure that in the heart of most special education students dwells an independent, responsible learner eager for a chance to prove what he or she can do.

Beckman began her career in elementary classrooms in Southern California where she implemented the first special education pull-out program for Santee School District. When they came to Utah in the early 1980s to enroll their daughter at Brigham Young University, the Beckmans decided to make Utah their home, and Pat got a job teaching first grade at Mountview Elementary School in Jordan District.

Sensing she had the patience to bring out potential in slow learners, Beckman earned a master’s degree in special education from the University of Utah in 1988. Colleague and mentor Carol Weller was a powerful influence. Six years ago, Beckman began to hold an after-school class not just for disabled students, but kids who simply needed extra help and encouragement in reading and spelling. It worked.

Long before concurrent enrollment existed, Utah educators began talking about a “seamless system” connecting the K-12 grades to higher education at the college level. Self-paced learning, multiage/multigrade classrooms, peer tutoring, and integrated curriculum that applies academic concepts to solve hands-on, real-problems are rapidly moving from being innovative to being “business as usual.”

Beckman envisions the logical next step as classrooms without barriers “Eventually, all teachers will consider all students’ strengths to decide the most appropriate strategies,” she told CEC Journal writer Sharon Riechmann. “Special educators know about disabilities, counselors know behavior, and regular educators know curriculum. In 20 years, there will be no separation—we’ll work for all kids.”

This year, Beckman is working under the direction of Jordan Special Education Director Cal Evans to facilitate the district’s School-to-School Project. It’s purpose—to offer all students access to the general education Utah State Core Curriculum, and to monitor their progress on the basis of past performance, goals, and Individual Education Plan evaluations—and measure each child’s eligibility to participate.

For more information, contact Pat Beckman by e-mail: pat.beckman@m.jordan.k-12.ut.us or at Westland Elementary School by fax: 801-565-7152.
Educator Idea Exchange

Becoming Strategic: Reading Is A Great Place To Start

Pat Beckman, Strategic Learning Specialist, Jordan School District

We’re all too familiar with the law: All students need to have access to the general education curriculum and are to progress and be assessed in that curriculum. Thus, encouraging students to become strategic, independent learners should be at the top of the priority list for teachers.

According to Klinger and Vaughn, both general and special education teachers must maximize the learning of all students, including those who look, speak, behave, and learn differently from their peers. Their research indicates that most students want teachers to slow down instruction when needed, explain concepts and assignments clearly, present material in different ways so that everyone can learn, and teach strategies for learning.

Strategies for Learning

Teachers should expose ALL students to strategies so that each can begin to develop a personal schema for learning, as described by Anderson and Pearson. They state that children develop an individual schema of learning processes which serves as the foundation for building a knowledge base, acquiring skills, and developing an independent learning style. Unfortunately, many students do not develop an adequate schema on their own.

A major component of teaching students to be independent learners and helping them to build a schema is teaching them how to use strategies that can aid them in information processing, skill development, and completion of tasks with accuracy. These strategies include visualization, verbalization, chunking, association, tracking, anticipation, use of cues and prompts, questioning, and self-checking and self-monitoring, as well as others. Important concepts and by-products of strategic learning are listed below:

- Students learn to trust their minds.
- They learn that there’s more than one right way to do things.
- Students learn to acknowledge their mistakes and rectify them.
- Students learn to evaluate their product and behavior.
- Memories are enhanced.
- Learning increases.
- Self-esteem increases.
- Students feel a sense of “Power”.
- Students take on a greater sense of responsibility.
- Work completion and accuracy improve.
- Students learn “how” to study.
- On task time increases; students become more engaged in the learning task.

When children are not strategic they either withdraw or act out to avoid tasks, or they continually depend on others to help them, thus the development of the “learned helplessness” learning style. At all costs, we need to discourage this from happening. The first step is to teach children to do and learn for themselves through strategy instruction.

Continued on page 23

Ms. Beckman with students Brandon and Phillip
Reading

The skill of reading is a good place to begin to teach children to be strategic and independent. For maximum success, the reading material must be at the student’s instructional level, which can be determined through an informal reading inventory. The teaching and reinforcing of reading strategies, both for oral reading and reading comprehension, can take place in various settings and groupings, including the resource and/or regular classroom.

Oral Reading: Some strategies for accurate and fluent oral reading include:

- **Finger-point (tracking).** Many poor readers lose their place when reading. It is suggested by the author that students be taught to point to the first letter of each word to help avoid word reversals. As students progress they will automatically glide their finger across the page without pointing to the first letter.

- **Make sense.** Poor readers often make substitutions and omissions as well as miscall words. When they use this strategy they realize when they’ve read something that doesn’t make sense, then go back and change the miscalled word.

- **Blank.** By saying the word “blank” in the place of an unknown word, the student uses the meaning of the sentence to help determine the word.

- **Sound out.** Phonetics is a strategy that readers can use to unlock unknown words. It is a very efficient strategy and needs to be taught, along with phonemic awareness, at the beginning of reading instruction.

- **Chunk.** Students often “crash” when they see a long word coming up as they read. This is because they have not practiced breaking up large words into small parts. When students begin to do this they’re amazed at the difficulty of the words they are able to read.

Reading Comprehension: Because the goal of reading is not the act of reading but learning from and enjoying what is read, students should also be strategic in reading comprehension. They can be taught to use these and other comprehension strategies:

- **Self-Questioning.** Students might ask themselves, “Do I understand this?” or “Why did that happen?”

- **Summarizing/Paraphrasing.** To self-check understanding, the student can verbalize the ideas of the text in his/her own words, periodically.

- **Monitoring.** The reader is engaged in the reading process and tries to make sense of the text. Visualizing ensures student engagement and assists in the internalization of key concepts and events.

For more comprehension strategy ideas, Dowhower discusses a framework within which to expose students to strategies they can use to increase comprehension as well as help students become more strategic in their overall learning.

Eventually, not all students will use every strategy they have been taught. After students have been given opportunities to practice and use strategies, each will determine and use those strategies that work best for him/her. Thus, they are beginning to build their own schema for learning.

Teaching students to become strategic in reading, as well as in other skill and content areas, is a fun and rewarding process. It is gratifying to see students going from an “I can’t do this” attitude to one of “I can do this!” Think about your own schema for learning and how it has helped you through the years. Give your students that same edge. They will be grateful. References available upon request from the ULRC.

Students and their parents learn strategies at evening workshops
Q: Dear Dr. Ed:

I have had a few parents insisting that the IEP team needs to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) because of the student’s out-of-school behavior when the other team members do not believe the student’s behavior is impeding his/her learning in school or the learning of others. Must the team consider out-of-school behavior in deciding whether a BIP is needed?

A: Basically, no. There is no specification in the regulations or the statute that indicate the kind of information that the IEP team must consider. While it may be helpful in many cases for members to have an understanding of the student’s functioning (including behavior) outside of school in developing an educational plan for the student, it is not required in determining whether or not the student needs a BIP.

Q: Dear Dr. Ed:

Must each IDEA-eligible student who exhibits behavior problems have an individualized discipline or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)?

A: No, not necessarily. The student’s IEP team has the responsibility to decide the extent to which a student with a disability is able to follow the school’s regular discipline structure. In discussing discipline (as opposed to a BIP), I now am talking about what is done to the student. If students are able to comply fully, then they don’t need an individual discipline plan. However, other students may require an individual plan in order to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). This decision should be made thoughtfully.

Now, aside from considering the discipline plan (what is done to the student), don’t forget the requirement for the team to consider the development of a BIP (what is done for the student) if the behavior impedes that student’s learning or the learning of others. The difference between a discipline plan and a BIP is an important distinction!
“Life is Change; Growth is Optional!”

This month we continue in the Life is Change; Growth is Optional format of chronicling changes and growth activities in the State Office of Education SARS staff since last month’s update.

Changes

This past month has seen the departure of Donna Suter and Deb Andrews to school psychology positions in the Jordan School District.

New Assignments

Nan Gray assumes the duties of Coordinator of the Special Education Services Unit, while retaining her program responsibility for transition programs. Sandra Johnson assumes the duties of Coordinator of the Title I Services Unit. On February 2nd we will be welcoming Kreig Kelley as a new specialist in the Title I Services Unit. Kreig comes to us from the Jordan School District, where he has been a teacher, principal, and most recently, the Title I Director for the district. Brenda Broadbent has accepted the assignment to become the Specialist for State and Federal Compliance, moving from her current assignment as the Specialist in Preschool Special Education. A replacement for Brenda’s preschool position will be recruited, and replacements for Donna Suter (monitoring and assessment) and Ken Hennefer (who retired January 6) will be forthcoming. School personnel from around the state are invited to apply for a challenging and rewarding opportunity. If you’re interested in any of these positions, don’t hesitate to give me, or Nan Gray, a call.

Growth

Growth experiences have included retreats within the SARS Section, including all of the project staff represented by our special projects, with the purpose of collaborating and coordinating across sections and across projects. The goal is that USOE staff and project specialists may collaborate and coordinate as they travel and assist school districts in presentations or technical assistance activities that deal with several projects.

Special Education Rules

The rules are nearing completion. When they are available in draft, copies will be provided for statewide advisory committees and all interested parties, for feedback to the Utah State Office of Education. Public hearings will also be held, with written comments welcomed from all. Since Federal policy requires that states have their new policies/rules in place by July 2000, we are on track to meet that goal. Announcements of the public hearings, draft policies, and input period, will be forthcoming.

Watch this space for more exciting announcements of a new and improved State Office of Education, Special Education Services Unit! □
The IDEA 97 federal mandate has stipulated a major change with regard to the provision of appropriate education for students with disabilities and the requirement that schools must provide students access to the general curriculum. Additionally, schools are mandated to provide students (as appropriate) placement in, and the opportunity to make progress in the general curriculum.

As Utah’s schools prepare to ensure compliance with this requirement for access to the general curriculum, they are engaged in rethinking traditional educator roles and methods of teaching. School-based partnerships are forming across disciplines to discuss necessary accommodations and supports with regard to teaching format, materials, student activities, and prerequisite skills needed for learning. The decisions school teams are making are determining what accommodations are necessary, how and where they will be implemented, and by whom.

Initiating and maintaining cross-disciplinary conversations is the key to ensuring the educational success of our students with disabilities. It necessitates that each member of the student’s education team shares in the ownership and commitment to educate all students. The team is engaged in rethinking individual roles and responsibilities and includes those members of the school community involved with providing an education to the student. The participants on the team include: general educators, special educators, administrators, parents, paraeducators, speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, and other related service providers.

Each member of the student’s education team assumes a key role in facilitating the student’s access to and participation in the general curriculum. Successful school teams must establish an ongoing working relationship with regularly scheduled meetings in order to facilitate discussions regarding the provision of appropriate modifications. They will provide a forum for collaborative decision-making concerning the role each person will play in facilitating student access to the curriculum.

Conversations to rethink educator roles and methods of teaching are also important between Utah’s school districts and universities/colleges. To meet the demands in the schools, educators will need continuing professional development. Discussions are currently being facilitated by the Utah SIGNAL Project with institutions of higher education and school districts to consider an appropriate continuum of professional training from preservice through career professional development for educators.

The ultimate outcome of the statewide systems change effort of the Utah SIGNAL Project, is to improve the quality of general and special education services for students with disabilities. As such, one of the key goals of the Utah SIGNAL Project is to ensure that students with disabilities have access to, placement in, and progress within the general curriculum. To address this goal, the SIGNAL is engaged in facilitating partnerships between universities and colleges, parents, and school districts to rethink policy and practice for preparing school administrators, general and special educators, speech-language pathologists, and school psychologists both in preservice and inservice programs. It is through these partnerships that the SIGNAL is working to establish a statewide framework to facilitate the effective preparation and ongoing training of quality general and special educators to meet the challenges of the classroom.
On January 13-14 we presented the Eleventh Annual Utah Mentor Teacher Academy Conference at the Provo Marriott Hotel. According to the evaluations and verbal feedback from participants it was a huge success and new learnings were had by all. Before I mention some of my insights and learnings I would like to thank Davalee Miller who coordinated this conference and the myriad of details associated with it. I would also like to thank the amazing Mary Baldwin who worked hand-in-hand with Davalee to make the conference successful. This leads me to my first insight from the conference. I knew it would be a huge success before we arrived at the hotel. The ULRC is assigned many projects each year and all of them are accomplished through a team effort. Davalee and Mary conducted this effort but all other staff played a role in the production. Several times during my teaching career I’ve had the good fortune of working with a team that has absolute trust in each others’ abilities, where they support and nourish each others’ efforts, where everything just seems to click. This is one of those fortunate times when it is exciting to go to work and you look forward to seeing your colleagues. The ULRC is one of those teams.

If it sounds like I’ve had too much Diet Coke (again) let me touch on some of the other insights that inspired me at the conference. Our first keynote speaker was Stephen Barkley from Performance Learning Systems, Inc. If Steve were the superintendent of a school district I would move to that district, so I could register my grandchildren in one of his schools and then apply for any available work regardless of the pay. He talked about the importance of celebrating our successes, keeping humor in our schools and the power of an effective mentoring program. He said, “You know you are the most experienced teacher in the school when you are only observed at your craft every three years.” He suggested these experienced teachers should be observed and observe new teachers daily through an in-school mentoring program.

Phil Stella from Effective Training & Communication, Inc., conducted a session on Career Goals. He made the point that it is O.K. to have a goal to simply be happy doing what you are doing. Your goal might be to make your current job the most exciting, fascinating job in the world! Your goals don’t always have to lead you from new job to new job. I liked his perspective on goal setting.

Debbie and Kim Hepworth conducted a session on the use of Portable Document Format (PDF). If you’ve ever received an email with an attachment you were unable to decipher, you would have appreciated this session. They explained the power of creating documents in this format and suggested that it is becoming a universal format. PDF documents can be read by any computer, they can easily be posted on the web and using Acrobat reader (free shareware) has a powerful sort function. If you don’t have Acrobat Reader on your computer, get it. It is the future.

The crackerbarrals had standing room only. I picked up a lot of ideas quickly while standing around each crackerbarral table. I think this format provided a nice mix to the usual session format.

An old friend of the mentor academy, Dr. Stevan Kukic, presented the final keynote. Steve is always motivational and featured “all new overheads”. He talked about some of the lessons he had learned over the years working at the ULRC, USOE and now for the FranklinCovey Company. He humorously described himself as an “arrogant behaviorist” stuck with a behaviorist paradigm. He went on to say that no technique will work very well if you forget the human element of what we are doing. If the student knows you like him/her and care about him/her then those traditional proven techniques become very powerful.

Those are some of my insights from the conference. Everything just clicked.
Part of the learning process is reviewing what we’ve learned and thinking about how to apply that information. With that in mind, I thought it appropriate to share just a few of the “golden nuggets” on mentoring we received at the 11th Annual Utah Mentor Teacher Academy Conference on January 13th and 14th.

Stephen Barkley reminded us that natural leaders (mentors/coaches) offer support to others by helping them to feel satisfied with what they are doing and who they are, find approval for their efforts, feel part of the “group” and/or process, and feel equipped to survive, and more importantly, celebrate it. We assist others in these areas by promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness, offering strategies and ideas that allow them to feel empowered and helping them to find enjoyment and fun in what they do.

Much of mentoring centers on problem solving. One of the best tools we can give to those we mentor is the ability to problem solve. Stephen Barkley also discussed the use of Empowering Questions as a way to increase the effectiveness of mentoring and the skills of mentees. Evaluative questions such as “How do you think the lesson went today, and why?” can give information to mentors on the teacher’s criteria and value structure. Understanding this can help us structure future questions. Creative questions such as “How else could you teach this objective?” or “How could you combine strategies?” help the teacher to generate new ideas or look at something from a new perspective. Personalized questions are connected to what the teacher has previously said and shows you are listening. These can be questions or statements such as “You said before that”... or “When you were describing”... Asking questions thoughtfully and planfully helps others to learn to problem solve and generate answers to their own questions.

Phil Stella discussed another aspect of mentoring: networking. Networking is not something that just happens. It must be done with purpose, with efficiency and with finesse. This requires that as mentors, we must be willing to extend ourselves and maximize time spent at meetings and conferences, etc. by being available and creating opportunities to network with others whom we can possibly help and who can possibly help us. We have to be able to ask questions that give us information we are seeking and also talk about who we are and what we do in “outcomes” not job descriptions. This gives us the opportunity to effectively and positively promote what we do. And lastly, we must follow-up on what we start through networking and maintain those relationships.

The last thought I’d like to share comes from Phil Stella’s session on Career Survival Skills for Mentors. This is important not only for those we mentor but also for ourselves as well. Phil encouraged us to set career goals: short range, mid-range, and long range, realizing that career goals are lifelong goals because everything we do, in reality, is temporary. He also stressed the importance of remembering the “psychic” income that we receive. This can be the relationship with colleagues, the progress of students, the joy of helping others, or anything that we truly value far more than the paycheck for what we do.

Thanks for your participation at the conference and for mentoring. All the best to you as you Mentor for the New Millennium!
D o you know a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, friend or fellow teacher who believes preschool children should know colors, shapes, write and recognize their name, count to 20, and sing the alphabets all at the beginning of the year? What skills do children need when they arrive at preschool? Are we expecting too much from them? Do you think it is our job to get them “ready for kindergarten?” These are questions you as educators must answer individually. Your understanding on how preschool children learn will determine the answers to these questions.

As Joseph Chiltool Pierce states in Star Power for Preschoolers: “The best way to prepare children is to make sure they have been allowed to fully be children in a true child’s world. A three-year-old is not an incomplete five-year-old, but a perfect three year old. Allowing a child to be exactly what he or she is at three years old assures us a healthy five year old, fifteen year old, fifty year old.” Are we allowing children to be children when we push academics on them in preschool? I say NO! Let me explain why.

In the past decade, much attention has been focused on defining and detailing developmentally appropriate practices for educating young children. Leaders in early childhood education have been warning the public about the consequences of miseducation in the early childhood years. Validated research states that irreparable damage can be done to young children’s disposition to learn, when inappropriate educational practices are introduced at a too early age. Young children learn differently than older children do, therefore the education of young children must be in keeping with their unique modes of learning. It is important to note three basic facts about how young children learn.

- Young children learn through active exploration.
- Young children construct knowledge from their personal experiences.
- Young children learn in an interactive environment.

What this is telling us is that curriculum and environment in a QUALITY early childhood program must be designed for active, interactive, child-directed learning. Children need years of play with real objects and events before they are able to understand the meaning of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with things and interact with people. Throughout early childhood, children’s concepts and language gradually develop to enable them to understand abstract or symbolic information. Pictures and stories should be used frequently to build upon children’s REAL experiences. YOU, as the teacher are the facilitator of this learning. You create linkages among the child, the environment, the curriculum, and the other children, as well as between home and school.

As educators we know children arrive at school with many different types of experiences. We also know that activity that stimulates one dimension of development and learning affects other dimensions as well. For example, children playing with tabletop toys, such as puzzles, not only work on motor skills, but also on social, emotional and cognitive skills. They can practice eye-hand coordination, learn how to match objects, and experience the satisfaction of successfully completing a task. We must remember we need to educate the whole child and this education does not occur in narrowly defined subject areas; their development and learning are integrated.

Is most of your day teacher-directed? Are you working hard at “teaching” and focusing less on facilitating learning in children? If your answer is “Yes,” you just might be focusing on skills and deficits and not seeing the whole child. No wonder you are tired at the end the day! By continually changing and enriching the environment, setting up open-ended activities, and becoming the FACILATOR of children’s learning you will truly be able to step onto the child’s playing field.

Does that mean we do not teach pre-academic skills? No, I mean, HECK NO!! We teach pre-academics throughout the day, in every way, following the child’s lead. Pre-academic concepts are integrated throughout the setting. For example:

- Cognitive; classification, causality, seriation, number, space and time.
- Physical; balance, locomotion, body image, spatial relationships, eye-hand coordination, and creative movement.
- Interpersonal/Interaction; between child-adult, child-peer, personal social, self-concept, expressing feelings.
- Adaptive; routines/rules and independence.
- Language; speaking, vocabulary, intelligibility, personal data, retelling a story, and social language. Understanding and listening include vocabulary/grammar, following directions and understudying stories.
- Literacy; book/print awareness.
- Prewriting; journals and portfolios, small motor activities.

Are our plates full? You bet ya! Who said teaching preschool is easy and a NO BRAINER-NOT! But, YOU are doing a wonderful job, just ask your families and children.
To see those smiling faces, when it finally clicks—that’s the measure of my success.

In most schools, that success is usually measured by A’s and B’s. For students who struggle with the printed word, organizational skills, sound-symbol relationships, comprehension, memory skills and language processing, those A’s and B’s may not be easily achieved. And these students may face negative comments—words like “lazy” and “dumb.”

Legitimating the real daily struggles of students with learning disabilities is vital. Measuring success must be judged with a different guide. Teachers and parents often ask these questions:

• How do I grade these students?
• How do I recognize where the legitimacy of the problem ends and the excuses for the problem begin?
• How can true effort be recognized?
• How can independent learning skills be encouraged without demanding too much or too little?

When evaluating students with learning disabilities, it is a good idea to grade effort as well, if not more so, than actual achievement. Grades may reflect growth. Many students with learning disabilities work twice as hard to get a C as the average student who achieves a higher grade. They may easily get discouraged, so teaching toward a child’s strengths is important.

Self-esteem issues should be monitored. Often low self-esteem affects productivity and achievement. Students with learning disabilities often feel frustrated, anxious and embarrassed about their lack of success, both academically and socially.

It’s important for the teacher to keep in mind that students with learning disabilities usually have average or above-average intelligence, and their performance doesn’t reflect laziness.

These students often learn the art of manipulation, which they can use as a technique for survival. The masking of learning problems by the student can be an impediment to learning, so we must learn to sort out the differences between real problems and survival techniques.

Because students with learning disabilities often blame themselves, criticism may not be the right approach. We must teach them to accept themselves. With proper help, skills can be developed to bring success. Sometimes less is more, and repetition of a task, after a student has demonstrated progress, may cause frustration.

Having a clear understanding of what to expect from students is important. Providing the correct curriculum and the right approach, knowing how much to expect, and realizing the abilities of the student can be the difference between success and failure.

As a parent of a teenager with learning disabilities, as well as a professional in the field, I speak from the heart. School has been a struggle for my daughter since the first grade. The road has been rocky. Tears and fears could have been avoided. Her role models haven’t always been knowledgeable about her problems. Their views became part of the self-concepts she developed. Mistakes have been made, but now it’s time to go on.

She has learned how to manage and go forth to be successful in overcoming a complicated array of weaknesses. Her strengths and talents in art and with children have surfaced. Belief in herself has been a series of evolving episodes with peaks and valleys. Maturing has been a long road. At times, frustrations, anxieties and feelings of helplessness seemed unbearable. But we share a strong belief in her abilities. Helping her achieve her goals continues.

Children with learning disabilities grow up to be adults with learning abilities. Their successes depend on their self-esteem, motivation and curiosity about life around them. Success breeds success.

When my daughter graduated from high school, I brought two boxes of tissues, one for her and one for me. Because of the help of many dedicated people, her face is happy, her life is clicking and her future looks promising.

But at one time, I wasn’t sure if I would ever be able to say these words. I have had to learn how it is to walk in her shoes. Because of her experiences, I feel comfortable helping others understand the complications learning disabilities brings to their lives. Understanding and compassion are vital in helping children with learning disabilities grow, achieve and believe in themselves.
Art Access/VSA Arts of Utah is the Utah affiliate of the international organization, VSA arts, an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. We believe the arts should be part of every person’s education. The arts are especially relevant to the person with disabilities as they may be that person’s natural and preferred means of expression. The arts can be used to good effect to teach and reinforce perceptual, motor, academic and developmental skills.

Creating through the arts often encourages the growth of independent living skills and self-esteem. In addition, participating in integrated arts programming can be effective in preparing students with special needs for the many transitions they make during life, including entering pre-school from the home environment, going from pre-school to elementary school, leaving a specialized environment for a more integrated one, and leaving high school for community living.

Art Access/VSA arts of Utah provides arts programming assistance and funding* for teachers to implement the arts with students who receive special education services. These services include: artist-in-residencies, arts festivals, teacher incentive awards, arts workshops for teachers, artist/teacher training partnerships, an artist resource directory, and an arts curriculum library.

Art Access is also the name of our well known and respected art gallery. The nonprofit Art Access Gallery, also a program of Art Access/VSA arts of Utah, is located at the Artspace complex in the historic Eccles-Browning warehouse at 339 West Pierpont Avenue in downtown Salt Lake City. Approximately 16 solo and group exhibitions of established and emerging contemporary Utah artists, both with and without disabilities, are shown each year. Inclusive in nature, the gallery reviews exhibition proposals annually, giving priority to exhibitions that include artists from underserved communities.

Art Access Gallery also presents Teen Visual Art Workshops for students with and without disabilities, in middle, junior high and senior high schools. Held in the Art Access Gallery, the workshops are taught by the professional artists whose work is on exhibit at the time of their workshop. This year workshops will be conducted by artists including Brian Kershisnik, Frank McEntire, Alex Bigney, Julie Lewis, Bevin Chipman and Carla Gourdin. Please let us know if you have a student who would benefit from taking a workshop.

We also love to explain our exhibitions to visiting students. Several teachers assign students a visit to local galleries on a regular basis. We also host tours of our gallery for classrooms. Just let us know and we will be delighted to have you visit the Gallery.

Please call us at (801) 328-0703 to find out more about our programs or to schedule a visit! Watch this column in next month’s issue to learn about opportunities to earn a financial award for doing what you do best.

* We thank the Utah State Office of Education: Special Services Unit, VSA arts, and the Arts-in-Education Program of the Utah Arts Council for assisting us with this funding.
Announcing the Annual Spring Conference of the

Utah Federation Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
& Utah Association for Supervision Curriculum and Development (UASCD)

Where: East High School, 840 S. 1300 E., Salt Lake City, UT

When: Friday, March 17
5:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Keynote Speaker: Phillip Strain
Caracker Barrel Sessions
Dinner

When: Saturday, March 18
7:45am-2:30pm
Keynote Speaker: Jo Mascorro
Breakout Sessions
Continental Breakfast & Lunch

Who Should Attend?
School teams or individuals...
• Special education teachers
• Regular education teachers
• Related services personnel
• Paraeducators
• Title I personnel
• Counselors
• Parents
• University students
• Others interested in student learning and success

For more information or to request a registration form contact Margo Thurman: 801-486-4546, 801-964-7514x109 or email: mjthurman@worldnet.att.net or FAX 801-964-4255.

Call for Presentations: The conference theme concerns lessons we have learned from our careers and how we can use them to improve our performance. Submit demographic information, 50 word description and list of presenters by January 14, 2000 to Margo Thurman, 1344 E. Emerson, Salt Lake City, UT 84105 or fax information to 801-964-4255 or email to mjthurman@worldnet.att.net. Topic suggestions: behavior, autism, early childhood, curriculum, administrative concerns, assistive technology, transition, math, reading, or spelling.

Announcing the

2000 UTAH AUGMENTATIVE CONFERENCE
Thursday February 10th & Friday February 11th, 2000
at:
The Ogden Marriott Hotel
247 24th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401 • Phone 800-421-7599

The 2000 Utah Augmentative Conference is sponsored by the Utah State Office of Education and the Utah Augmentative Alternative Assistive Communication and Technology Teams (UAAACT). Keynote speakers will include Linda Burkhart, a specialist in augmentative communication and Amy Staples, a leading expert on literacy and assistive technology. Other sessions will be presented by UAAACT teams, assistive technology experts, and vendors who develop and sell technology tools.

There is no fee for Utah residents to attend the conference, but registration is limited to the first 300 individuals who mail in a registration form. Conference participants may choose to register for credit from the University of Utah on Thursday morning, February 10th, at the conference registration table. The registration fee for university credit will be approximately $60.00.

Conference registration and a continental breakfast will begin at 7:45 a.m. on Thursday, February 10th and the conference will conclude at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, February 11th. A confirmation notice will be mailed to conference participants around February 1, 2000.

For more information or to request a registration form, call The Computer Center for Citizens With Disabilities at 887-9380 or 888-866-5550-toll free in Utah.
Call For Articles

The 1999-2000 issues of Utah Special Educator will focus on providing ongoing information for educators to implement IDEA 1997 as well as a monthly series of articles entitled “Educator Idea Exchange.”

“Educator Idea Exchange” Articles
Articles for this section of each issue do not need to focus on the monthly IDEA 1997 topical focus. Educators are encouraged to submit articles describing programs, practices, interventions or strategies that have been successfully implemented in their school or classroom that improve the education of students with disabilities. Articles submitted for “Educator Idea Exchange” should include descriptions of: (1) the program, practice, intervention or strategy; (2) how it can be implemented by others; (3) its impact on teachers and the education of students with disabilities; and (4) reference for others to obtain additional information.

Guidelines for Articles

The following information provides guidelines for submitting an article to the Utah Special Educator.

1. Consider the publication’s audience. Approximately 5,000 copies of the Utah Special Educator are distributed to all special education personnel and principals throughout the State of Utah as well as several hundred to out-of-state educators. Articles that contain successful strategies, practical information and specific accomplishments are encouraged.

2. Articles should be 650 to 900 words long. Narrow your focus and be concise.

3. Avoid jargon, abbreviations and specialized terms. For example, spell out Council for Exceptional Children the first time it is used and reference it with the abbreviation/acronym (CEC) in the remainder of the article. This enables the reader to have a common understanding of terms.

4. Be sure to reference your article when necessary to give credit to other sources.

5. Include a title that entices the reader to pursue your information.

6. Articles must be written and double spaced. If you prefer, send a diskette as well as a hard copy of the article. Computer disks will not be returned. Articles may be submitted on e-mail to: cherylh@ms.provo.k12.ut.us

7. A photograph of yourself may be included to accompany your article. Photographs of classroom scenes are also accepted. If photographs include students and other adults, please obtain their permission to have the photograph published. Photographs will be returned only at the writers request when the article is submitted.

8. All articles may not meet the needs of a specific issue. Writers of submitted articles will receive notification of acceptance of their article for publication.

Article Due Dates

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The Utah Special Educator publishes announcements that are of interest to our readers by special education oriented organizations and educational institutions within the State of Utah. Limit items to one half page in length. Contact Cheryl Hostetter, Editor, Utah Special Educator, 2290 E. 4500 S., #220, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117, (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624 in Utah. Announcements must be received by the following dates for publication:

March 8th–March Issue
April 12th–April Issue
February 2000
4 CSPD Consortium. Salt Lake Airport Hilton, Salt Lake City.
17-18 Utah Mentor Academy at the Provo Marriott, Provo, UT. Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.
17-18 Regional Inclusion Conference for Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Logan, Ogden, Weber Districts. Conference in Ogden, UT. Contact Loydene Hubbard-Berg 801-538-7567.
28-Mar 1 Student Assistance, Ogden Egyptian Center, Ogden, UT. Contact Patricia Bradley 538-7817.

March 2000
8-9 Transition Conference, Provo Marriott, Provo, UT. Contact Nan Gray, USOE, 538-7757.
14-18 20th Annual National Conference, Historic Old Town Alexandria, VA. Contact ACRES Headquarters (785) 532-2737.
16-17 Utah Mentor Academy at the Provo Marriott, Provo, UT. Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.
17-18 Spring CEC/ASC Conference, East High School, 840 S 1300 E, SLC. Contact (801) 964-7514 x109 or ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.
27-31 SARS Week. St. George, UT. Contact USOE.

April 2000
5-8 National CEC Conference, Vancouver, B.C. Contact Peggy Milligan (801) 264-7400.
28-29 Family Links Conference for Families of People with Disabilities. Jordan High School, Sandy, Utah. Contact Utah Parent Center (801) 272-1051 or (800) 468-1160.

May 2000
5 CSPD Consortium. Salt Lake Airport Hilton, Salt Lake City.
11-12 Utah Mentor Academy at the Provo Marriott, Provo, UT. Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.
11-12 Troubled Youth, Snowbird, UT. Contact Patricia Bradley 538-7817.

June 2000

July 2000

August 2000

September 2000
20-22 Initial Mentor Training, Snowbird Center. Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.

October 2000
26-27 Mentor Training, Cavanaughs Olympus Hotel. Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.

November 2000
16-17 Mentor Training, Cavanaughs Olympus Hotel. Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.

*This information is provided as a service. We believe it to be accurate, but it is important to confirm with the contact listed. To obtain additional information and to supply important upcoming dates, please contact us at the number below. Current information is also available at the ULRC web site www.ulrc.org
SERVICE DIRECTORY

Utah State Office of Education

Special Education Services

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Statewide Projects

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Utah Project for Inclusion (UPI)
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Supporting Inclusion for Preschool Children (SIPC)
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Utah State Improvement Grant (SIG) & CSPD
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Utah Project for Children with Dual Sensory Impairments (CDSI)
Utah School for Deaf and Blind, 742 Harrison Blvd., Ogden, Utah 84404
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