

Success for Special Needs Learners

"The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it."
Moliere

Special needs learners present a challenge to every teacher. When a teacher rises to that challenge, the rewards are commensurate with the challenge for both the teacher and the learner. Moliere's words exemplify this philosophy, and set the tone for an upcoming exciting conference.

On Thursday, May 22, 2008, Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center will present: **Meeting the Challenge: Success for the Special Needs Learner**. The conference will be held at the Hilton Long Island, 598 Broadhollow Road (Route 110), Melville, from 8:30AM to 2:45 PM.

Dr. Paul Yellin will present the keynote, **Helping Struggling Learners Find Success**. Dr. Yellin is Director of the Yellin Center for Student Success and an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at NYU School of Medicine. He has served as National Director of the Student Success Program at the **All Kinds of Minds Institute** through April 2007. He chairs the New York State Task Force on Pediatrics and Childhood Learning Differences.

Throughout the day you will have a choice of informative workshops to attend.

Morning Workshops

- Transitions for Middle and High School
- Response to Intervention for Teachers
- Increasing Social IQ and Social Skills

- Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Classroom
- ADHD
 - Afternoon Workshops
- (Eye) Tracking Your Way to Success, an Intro to Brain Gym® and Bal-A-Vis X® for Increasing & Strengthening Whole Brain Neural Pathways
- Testing Accommodations
- ABCs of Special Education
- Managing Defiant Behavior
- Practices in Literacy for Struggling Students.

This conference is suitable for all educators:

General Educators, P-12
Speech Teachers
Special Educators, P-12
Administrators
Career and Technical Educators
Guidance Counselors
College Educators
School Nurses
Support Staff
School Psychologists
Social Workers
Teachers of the Visually Impaired
Therapists: Occupational and Physical

A seated, three-course lunch will be served at noon, and is included in the cost of the conference. The conference fee is \$50 for SETC members and \$70 for non-members. You can find the conference registration form online at www.seteachercenter.org.

For additional conference information please contact the teacher center at 631-254-0107 or teacher_center@wsboces.org

Did You Know....

Special education refers to a range of educational and social services provided by the public school system to individuals with disabilities who are between three and 21 years of age. Disabilities that qualify for special education include physical disabilities, such as deafness or blindness; mental disabilities, such as Down's syndrome and autism; medical conditions, such as oxygen dependence or traumatic brain injury; learning deficits, such as dyslexia; and behavioral disorders, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorders.

In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act mandated that states provide a "free and appropriate public education" (FAPE) to all students, including those with physical, mental, or behavioral disabilities. This special education must include a comprehensive screening and diagnosis by a multi-disciplinary team and the development of an annual Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student, outlining academic and behavioral goals, services to be provided, and methods of evaluation.

In 1997, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) expanded special education services by mandating that all children with disabilities—regardless of the type or severity of their disability—between the ages of three and 21 years are entitled to FAPE in the least restrictive environment. This stipulation led to today's inclusion classrooms.

(Excerpted from Answers.com).

Six Classroom Strategies to Use with Autistic Students

Upcoming NYSUT Courses

Classroom Management

LIU EDUC 506A 3 credits
July 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 2008
7:30 AM to 5 PM
Location: Amityville UFSD
Instructor: Paul Schmelter

Multiple Intelligences: Theory and Practice

CSR SED 672 3 credits
July 7 to July 11, 2008, 8 am to 5 pm
Location: Half Hollow Hills HS East
Instructor: Jeff Frankel

Professional Learning Communities

one inservice credit
July 8-11, 2008, 8 AM to 12 noon
Location: Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center
Location: 31 Lee Avenue, Wheatley Heights NY 11798
Instructor: Jane Lombardo

History and Philosophy of Education-

Touro College 3 credits
July 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 7:30 AM to 5 PM
Location: Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center
31 Lee Avenue, Wheatley Heights NY
Instructor: Patricia Mastrandrea

Register online at <http://nysut.org/elt/> or by phone at 800-528-6208.

A. Students with autism often need highly structured visual teaching. The main elements of structured teaching include daily schedules, individual work systems, and classroom arrangement. Structuring helps in several areas.

- Makes the environment predictable.
- Reduces student stress, confusion, anxiety.
- Builds on the student's desire for predictability, organization and routine, and his/her comfort with repetitive tasks and the need to finish.
- Leads toward independence.

B. Teach the meaning and value of a schedule. Focus on what you want the child to do.

- Use daily schedules, calendars, and lists to assist in the sequencing of activities and to aid in transitions.
- Use a variety of visual cues (objects, photos, icons, sentences, check lists, words).
- Determine the length of the schedule based on the student's skill level.

C. Develop independent work systems geared to student's skill level. Work systems need clear visual cues the student can understand.

- What work?
- How much work?
- How does the student know when the work is finished?
- What comes next?

Gear activities so they end before the student becomes frustrated.

D. Consider location, distractions, and boundaries. Buzzing lights, motors, hallway sounds, visual distractions, and extraneous smells can interfere with concentration.

- It should be visually clear what activities happen in which areas.
- Furniture and materials should be clearly organized.
- Locate the student near or facing you or at the end of a row.
- In large groups, place him/her between two model students.
- Use visual barriers or study carrels.

E. Behavior is communication. Work at reading the child's behavior and not taking it personally.

- Write behavior rules for the child to read when necessary. List what to do, rather than what not to do, if possible.
- Use role playing to model appropriate behavior in social situations.
- Use if/then patterns to aid in understanding actions and consequences.
- Teach the child ways to be flexible.

F. Use instructional accommodations – repetition of instruction, rephrasing questions, redirection to activities, modeling tasks, reinforcement and visual cues to modify behaviors. Break assignments down into smaller tasks, allow for ample movement during assigned tasks, use verbal & visual prompts and cues, and a reward system. Use assistive technology devices – shortened writing utensils, weighted pens or pencils, grips, and highlighters.

Nancy Pearl—Under the Radar Books for Kids

Known as “America’s librarian”, Nancy Pearl is a regular commentator about books on National Public Radio’s *Morning Edition*. Readers can’t get enough of her *Under the Radar* recommendations. Nancy has become a rock star among readers and an authority people turn to when deciding what to read next. Here are a few of her recent recommendations for kids, along with her commentary.

Gimme Cracked Corn and I Will Share by Kevin O’Malley. You can always count on Kevin O’Malley for an entertaining picture book — his *Little Buggy* has long been a favorite of mine. But even by the standard of his past work, this book is something special. In the spirit of the book and its barnyard setting, I’d go so far as to say that it’s something *eggstra* special. Although it’s clearly aimed at 6 to 8-year-olds who are just beginning to appreciate the possibilities of language and the pleasures

of playing with words, this groan-worthy, pun-filled picture book will delight the grownups in their lives, as well.

Whales on Stilts, by M.T. Anderson, illustrated by Kurt Cyrus. Lily Gefelty and her two friends, Jasper Dash, and Katie Mulligan, are all that stand in the way of an evil plot by a devious whale-human hybrid. Together, they confront and confound an admittedly senseless conspiracy. But the fun lies in Anderson’s lively writing, full of outlandish digressions. For ages 10 and up.

If these pique your curiosity, explore her latest, ***Book Crush: For Kids and Teens - Recommended Reading for Every Mood, Moment and Interest***. In this economical paperback, Nancy recommends and comments on 1000 books from Mother Goose to Young Adult. You can find it on Amazon.com along with a delightful podcast of her reminisces about books.

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