

AUTISM NEWSLETTER

10 Critical Components for Success in the Special Education Classroom

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Summarized from Chapter 7

Component #7 - Instructional Strategies

Rationale - The goal for students is to learn and apply academic skills, to demonstrate functional skills, and ultimately, to do both with as much independence as possible. Instructional strategies and methods that keep your students interested, engaged and excited about learning should include community based instruction and the use of age-appropriate materials in the classroom.

Some students will be auditory learners, and many will be visual learners. Some students will need to move a lot during the day. Others will learn best when using concrete objects. Some students will find learning new skills and retaining what they have learned is a daily challenge. By providing a positive and upbeat learning environment that includes a variety of instructional strategies, all your students will benefit.

Using **Age Appropriate Materials and Activities** speaks to treating your students with dignity and respect. No matter the developmental, cognitive, or behavioral age of students, it is important that they are exposed to activities and use materials similar to or the same as their peers who are nondisabled.

Community Based Instruction - Teaching and practicing skills and behaviors in the natural environment in which they occur make lessons meaningful to students. Lessons and skills must be directly taught and then generalized out into the school environment.

Summary - Will this lesson....

- ◆ Strengthen skills and teach facts that will work toward meeting IEP goals?
- ◆ Teach skills that will enable students to be more independent as adults?
- ◆ Build skills that can be used in a variety of environments?
- ◆ Promote communication and social skills?
- ◆ Teach skills or facts that will enable students to secure and maintain a job?



Executive Functioning Skills

The Autism Helper

Possible accommodations for Task Initiation

- ◆ **Model how to get started**
- ◆ **Social Narratives**
- ◆ **Checklists**
- ◆ **Break down the task**
- ◆ **Reduce distraction**
- ◆ **Word bank**
- ◆ **Transition cues**
- ◆ **Give step by step instructions**
- ◆ **Clear instruction of what needs to be done**
- ◆ **Visually mark where to start**

MTAS Changes for 2023

MTAS will soon be called Alternate MCA. In the spring of 2025 Science will be the Alternate MCA and in the spring of 2026, Reading will be Alternate MCA. No word yet on when the change for Math will occur. Alternate MCA will be available online or in paper format. Spring of 2023 will have Reading and Science with 15 questions each and Math with 9 questions. Reading and Science will each have 6 questions that MDE is field testing. Each question will have 3 levels of complexity and each level must be asked of the student. Text and answers will be in booklet form with no more response option cards. Scoring will now be changed to marking the answer the student chooses. The window for testing begins March 6, 2023. Per past history, GCED will have kits available and a schedule for use will be shared prior to the beginning of the testing window. Training will also be available for test administrators.

Upcoming events:

- There is More to Play Than Fun and Games:Adapting Play for Early Childhood - March 3, 2023 12:30- 3:30 Zoom (https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSf-CuqTgsEOTlwClhEe_6mmpIvHdw83U)
- What is Structured Teaching? - March 15th, Mankato. www.eventsquid.com/event/18622
- Case By Case - "A Deeper Understanding of Treatment Interventions for Developing Executive function Skills" March 16, 2023 8:00 - 3:30 AEP Connections
- State Autism Conference - April 26 - 28, 2023

Something to think about -

"It's natural for kids to want others to recognize their light. They crave it. They grow with it. And if they're made to feel invisible, they will often find other, less productive ways to be seen. They'll act out inside the darkness they've been left with. If kids aren't given the chance to feel pride, they won't have any reason to respect the spaces they're in or the authorities who have pushed them into the margins. It becomes easier to destroy something that doesn't belong to you."

Michelle Obama