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# SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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## Staff Member of the Month

Linda Still- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Co-Teacher and Case Manager



Linda Still is our new

7th grade special educator and comes to us from Harford County, MD. Although she grew up in suburban Darby, Pennsylvania, Linda moved to Maryland to teach and that is where she met her husband, Shawn, on a blind date. They married at the Concord Point Lighthouse in August, 2003. Together they share three children- Sondra, a former student of Linda's who became their custodial child in 2009, Emily, who is now a junior in high school, and their son, Riley, who is in 6th grade.

Linda was the first in her entire family to attend college. She received her Bachelor's Degree from West

Chester University in

Elementary Education in 1994. Mrs. Still taught the bulk of her 17 years experience in Northern Maryland. While there, she earned her APC in Special Education and Elementary Education. Her passion is working with at-risk students and helping individual students find moments of success that can lead to greater confidence and growth. Sometimes she employs some crazy strategies to foster motivation and self-discipline, trying to help children understand their disabilities and teaching them ways to compensate for those struggles. She is very excited to be part of the SEED community and loves working with the 7th grade team and Special Ed team.

## ISSUE 7: OCTOBER 2016

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### Newspaper Staff:

**Contributing Writers:** Dr. Lando, Mrs. Richardson, Dr. Footman, Mr. Brown, and Mrs. Fausel

**Editor in Chief:** Mrs. Fausel

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## Accommodation of the Month: Reduced Workload

In the classroom and dorms:

- Give the student 50-80% of the problems you give everyone else by:
  - o Cross off some problems if you see they are struggling
  - o Give 1-2 problems per concept rather than 3-4
- Ask the student to write 1-2 quality paragraphs rather than 3-4 paragraphs.
- As always check in with the student's case manager to be sure that you are meeting their individual needs.

By: Kristi Fausel

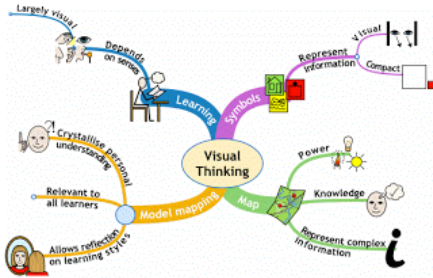
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# Strategy of the Month: Incorporating Visual Aids!

Visuals can help struggling learners better grasp the material but how do you incorporate visuals other than just using a power point every lesson? Visual aids can be very simple and easy to incorporate once you get used to it. Here are some ideas on how to incorporate visuals into various subject areas.

In English have the students create posters, find pictures of characters, or draw their vocabulary words. This gives them a chance to interact with and even create visuals to help them 'see the story'.

In math you can have them take a difficult concept and try to break



it down to be taught to young students. This could include drawing out the numbers, making word problems with objects they can picture, or using manipulatives.

In science and social studies, the students can look at maps, illustrate vocabulary words, make timelines, or even create posters for the class.

Visuals can be as creative or as simple as you'd like them to be, for more information see the links below. Try to challenge yourself to incorporate some form of a visual in 2-3 lessons this week.

<http://www.inspiration.com/visual-learning>

<https://www.lanec.edu/sites/default/files/fpd/htvisuals.pdf>

By: Kristi Fausel

## Grit and Growth: Teacher Response during Crisis

Teacher response to student misbehavior can either increase or diminish the behaviors. Scholars agree that student misbehaviors, generally, fulfill the needs for **Attention, Power, Revenge, and Avoidance** of failure. The previous article in this series discussed how proactive teachers can minimize the occurrence of negative behaviors in the classroom. This article details how effective teachers respond when misbehaviors (minor and major) occur in the class despite proactive planning. To understand the basis of misbehavior, the teacher should start by examining his/her own decisions and actions within the context of the classroom.

<u>Minor Interruptions</u> (tapping, mouthing/whispering a word to a friend, humming during silent work, snapping gum)	<u>Major/Repeated interruptions</u> (derogatory comments, aggression, shouting, bullying, fights, etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Minimize your verbal response.</li> <li>✓ Do not interrupt the lesson flow</li> <li>✓ Invest little emotions into the interruptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stay calm</li> <li>✓ Stalk to the student individually</li> <li>✓ Implement consequences effectively (consistently, respectfully, Provide power to the choices they make).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Physical proximity</li> <li>• Sudden silence</li> <li>• Post-it Notes</li> <li>• Physical cues</li> <li>• Individual signals</li> <li>• Touch/tap on the shoulder</li> <li>• The "Look"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address the behavior directly.</li> <li>• Use calm, clear and direct voice.</li> <li>• Avoid verbal exchange with the student.</li> <li>• Give firm instructions for consequences (Change seats, locations, take a break out of the).</li> <li>• Call for additional support</li> <li>• Remove the other students</li> </ul>

By: Francis Lando, Ed. D

## Psychologist Corner: Developmental Milestones

### Middle School Milestones:

Kids meet developmental milestones at widely varied times in middle school. It's easy to see the huge variation in middle-school students physical maturity. In addition to changes in physical growth, there are certain cognitive and social skills middle school students are likely to develop by the time high school rolls around. Here are some milestones you can expect from middle school students:

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/signs-symptoms/developmental-milestones/developmental-milestones-for-typical-middle-schoolers>

### High School Milestones:

Development really takes off in High School. Awkward tweens turn into high school students who start looking and thinking more like adults with the skills to envision the future. Here are some typical developmental milestones in teens:

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/signs-symptoms/developmental-milestones/developmental-milestones-for-typical-high-schoolers>

By: Mr. Brown

## Footnotes by Footman: Support for Managing Students with ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects many children and adults. Up to 11% of youth ages 4-17 have been diagnosed with ADHD (6.4 million in the United States, per the CDC). To best serve our students with this diagnosis, here are a few reminders:

**ADHD is hard work!** A student with ADHD can place many demands on your time, energy and sense of competence. The constant interruptions, need for repeated instructions and close supervision can be taxing.

<p><b>Remember that children with ADHD are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Curious</li> <li>➤ Creative</li> <li>➤ Energetic</li> <li>➤ Entertaining</li> <li>➤ Not trying to be disruptive</li> <li>➤ Regret their behavior but are unable to stop</li> <li>➤ Often unaware of their disturbing behaviors</li> <li>➤ Not mounting a personal attack on you</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students with ADHD do best with teachers who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are flexible</li> <li>➤ Follow clear routines</li> <li>➤ Are consistent</li> <li>➤ Provide a range of activities</li> <li>➤ Recognize and support individuality</li> <li>➤ Maintain a positive teaching environment</li> <li>➤ Present information and tasks in steps</li> <li>➤ Set firm limits on student behavior</li> </ul>
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*Teaching techniques that help students with ADHD maintain their concentration on your lesson/their work can be beneficial to the entire class:*

- Keep instructions simple/structured! Use props, charts, and visual aids.
- Vary the pace and include different kinds of activities. Many students with ADHD do well with competitive games or other activities that are rapid and intense.
- Have an unobtrusive cue set up with the student who has ADHD, such as a touch on the shoulder or placing a note on the student's desk, to remind the student to stay on task.
- Summarize key points. If you give an assignment, have 3 different students repeat it, then have the class say it in unison, and put it on the board.
- Be specific about what to take home!

By: Dr. Footman



## Director's Corner



The case of *Legget v. District of Columbia*, decided in July 2015, focused on parents who sued District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) for failure to conduct the requested special education evaluations in a timely manner. Parents requested a learning disability evaluation at the beginning of their child's 9<sup>th</sup> grade year of high school. The school didn't begin the evaluation of the student until the student's 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. Had the school been conducting interventions at the classroom level during the student's 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade years and monitoring progress, classroom teachers would have identified the student's need for additional support. During the intervening two years, it should come as no surprise that the student began to experience acute academic and behavioral issues because of the school's failure to conduct and monitor interventions and because of the IEP team's failure to create and implement an IEP.

Tired of waiting for the school, the parents had their son evaluated by an outside professional and was diagnosed with manic-depressive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other conditions. After the parents shared the results of the evaluation with the school during their son's 11<sup>th</sup> grade year, the school decided to create an IEP for the student based on the outside testing. The parents requested that the IEP team create the IEP in time to be implemented for his summer program. Unfortunately, the IEP team failed to meet and failed to create the IEP; their lack of urgency and failure to act on the IEP team's part meant that the student's needs continued not to be met, and he continued to struggle. For almost three years, the student suffered as a result of the IEP team's and school's multiple failures. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and DCPS were required to pay for the tuition, room and board for the student to attend a private, boarding school.

As a school, we need to work continuously to put interventions and progress monitoring in place school wide and in the classroom to meet the needs of all of our students so that we are able to identify and support students and move them towards increased levels of independence and success. Additionally, we need to first work at the classroom level to address and close student skill gaps and deficits through evidence-based classroom interventions and progress monitoring which is one aspect of Response to Intervention (RtI). Examples of classroom-level interventions are: repeated readings, paired-readings, reading reflection pauses, timed drills with math facts, intermixing challenging problems with easier problems, graphic organizers for writing and guided notes. RtI, an additional level of tiered support, was created so that short-term gaps and deficits are addressed by classroom teachers using evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring to ensure that students who just need more targeted support move through the tiers of support and are not erroneously labeled as SPED. Lastly, my hope in writing this piece is to empower teachers to create targeted interventions in their classrooms to address academic and behavioral challenges to eventually determine if a student has a disability in a timely fashion so that students don't go years without the proper supports. Targeted, evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring help students by shoring up skill gaps and deficits while making us, as educators, more deliberate and thoughtful in our efforts to support students while expanding our teaching repertoire which creates wins for students and teachers alike!

For more information about this case visit:

[https://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/5A8A115B0627963D85257E7E0052C1DB/\\$file/14-7021-1561879.pdf](https://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/5A8A115B0627963D85257E7E0052C1DB/$file/14-7021-1561879.pdf)

By: Patricia Richardson

## OUR TEAM

[Sarah Strycula](#)- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Case Manager

[Linda Still](#)- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Case Manager

[Steven Douglas](#)- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Case Manager

[Toni Gonzales](#)- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Case Manager

[Francis Lando](#)- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Case Manager  
and 504 Coordinator

[Kristi Fausel](#)- 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Case  
Manager and Special Education Coordinator

[Brian Fausel](#)- Pull-Out Specialist

[Patricia Richardson](#)- Director of Special  
Education

[Ryan Brown](#)- School Psychologist

[Louisa Footman](#)- Social Worker