

MIDDLE YEARS

INCLUSION

ACTIVITIES THAT WORK!

Toby J.
KARTEN


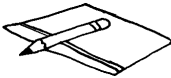
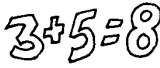




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Introduction

Educators teaching students with exceptionalities in general education classrooms need practical tools and strategies to help ease their workloads, while meeting individual needs and standards at the same time. As difficult as it may sound, it is indeed possible to simultaneously embrace standards and differences, differences in abilities, learning styles and intelligences. With the right tools, appropriate accommodations and modifications can be seamlessly and appropriately applied.

This book attempts to ease frustrations and replace them with proactive, research-based, effective strategies that apply across the curriculum. A multitude of activities offer practical ways to embrace educational standards, while differentiating the learning. These activities are not intended to replace your curriculum. Instead, they are designed to enhance your instructional repertoire through active learning environments that accommodate students' differing needs.

As an educator, you know your students best. The activities in this book can be adapted or modified to meet the needs of specific students in your classroom. In addition, this book includes teacher-friendly inclusion forms designed to simplify the inclusion process. Use them to help with documentation, communication, reflection, organisation and inclusion implementation. These forms help break through the educational jargon to provide direct, simple support.

As educators, meeting the standards is not the goal; *exceeding* the standards is the goal! Instead of thinking "My students can't do this", change your thought process to "How can I get them to do this?" Concentrate on strengths, not weaknesses. The eighteen activities are the backbone of the lessons offered in this book (see page 7). These approaches can be applied to a student with vision or hearing impairment, a student who has high cognitive needs, a student with behavioural challenges, as well as a student with more advanced skills. This book provides the "roadmap" to inspire the potentials and strengths of all learners and educators. Enjoy the journey!

Valuable Everyday Activities to Promote Inclusion

- Establish prior knowledge.
- Preplan lessons with structured objectives, allowing for inter- and post-planning.
- Proceed from the simple to the complex by using discrete task analysis, which breaks up learning into its parts, while still valuing the whole.
- Use a step-by-step approach, teaching in small bites, with lots of practice and repetition for those who need it.
- Reinforce abstract concepts with concrete examples.
- Think about possible accommodations and modifications that might be needed.
- Incorporate sensory elements including visual, auditory and kinesthetic/tactile.
- Teach to students' strengths to help compensate for their weaknesses.
- Concentrate on individual students, not syndromes.
- Provide opportunities for success to build self-esteem.
- Give positives before negatives.
- Use modelling with both teachers and peers.
- Vary types of instruction and assessment, with multiple intelligences and cooperative learning.
- Make learning relevant by relating it to students' lives using interest inventories.
- Remember the basics, proper hygiene, respecting others and effective listening, in addition to the "three R's": reading, writing and arithmetic.
- Establish a pleasant classroom environment that encourages students to ask questions and become actively involved in their learning.
- Increase students' self-awareness of levels and progress.
- Provide many opportunities to effectively communicate and collaborate with parents, students and colleagues.

Newspaper Articles

Newspapers are wonderful educational tools. However, students with learning differences can be overwhelmed by newspapers, considering the amount of print and the often “high level” language used. This activity, **Read All About It! (page 28)**, breaks down a newspaper into comprehensible, less intimidating parts. Students will learn how all these parts make up the “whole” of the news.

Bring in newspapers for students to peruse. Place them in a box labelled *Here’s What’s Happening!* Add copies of easier-to-read periodicals, and print out acceptable online news articles as well.

Invite students to work in small groups to focus on one topic only, such as entertainment or international news. Point out that newspaper articles must answer the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* questions to provide all the important information.

Rotate weekly assignments of local, country, international, sport and entertainment, so everyone has a chance to investigate each type of article. You may use this activity as a starting point for having students write their own school newspaper! Invite them to write about school events, sports, excursions, awards and more.



Inclusion Tips

Invite students to write assignments on a calendar to keep track of articles for which they are responsible.

Writing Rubric

Students must realise that their writing has standards. The standards listed in the **Writing Rubric (page 29)** offer direct focus on writing elements, from introduction to sentence length, word choices, transitional words, grammar, spelling and conclusion. This rubric can be used for self-review, peer review or for one-on-one teacher/student conferences. This rubric is also a great student reference for various writing assignments to see where they are achieving and where they need improvement.

Read All About It!

Directions: Write facts about each topic, answering the questions: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?* Write the source for where you found the information.

	Local (Neighbourhood)	Country (Australia)	International (Other Countries)	Sport	Entertainment (Movies, Music, Dance, TV)
Who?					
What?					
When?					
Where?					
Why?					
How?					
Source (Newspaper and Reporter):					

Writing Rubric

Directions: Use this writing rubric to score the writing.

Category	4–Excellent	3–Good	2–Fair	1–Needs Improvement
Introduction (Organisation)	The introduction is inviting, states the main idea and previews the rest of the paper.	The introduction clearly states the main idea and previews the rest of the paper, but is not inviting.	The introduction states the main idea, but does not adequately preview the rest of the paper or invite the reader to read on.	There is no clear introduction of the main idea or rest of the paper.
Transitions (Organisation)	A variety of transitions are used and clearly show how ideas are connected.	Transitions clearly show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety.	Some transitions work well, but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.	Transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistent.
Support for Topic (Content)	Relevant details give important information beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key part is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key parts are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.
Focus on Topic (Content)	There is one clear, well-focused topic. The main idea is firmly supported by details.	The main idea is clear, but the supporting details are general.	The main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting details.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.
Sentence Length (Sentence Fluency)	Every paragraph has sentences that vary in length.	Almost all paragraphs have sentences that vary in length.	Some sentences vary in length.	Sentences rarely vary in length.
Grammar and Spelling (Conventions)	There are no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	One or two errors in grammar or spelling distract the reader from the content.	Three or four errors in grammar or spelling distract the reader from the content.	More than four errors in grammar or spelling distract the reader from the content.
Word Choice	Vivid words and phrases paint pictures in the reader's mind. The choice of words is accurate and natural.	Vivid words and phrases paint pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately.	Words used communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair.	Limited vocabulary does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Some words are overused and not very specific.
Conclusion (Organisation)	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling of "getting it".	The conclusion is recognisable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	The conclusion is recognisable, but it does not tie up several loose ends.	There is no clear conclusion; the paper just ends.