

Community Connections:

Build learner knowledge of self, community, and world at large

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Focus of Session

Personal and Social Development

- **Advance Academic, Functional and Life Outcomes** for learners with severe cognitive, communication and motor challenges
- **Crossover of multiple content areas:** Social Studies, Literacy, Pre-Vocational, Personal Living and Life Skills
- **Gain skills in planning and delivering hands-on activities** to enable learners to:
 - Generate facts about self.
 - Learn facts about the community and the world at large; recognize membership in the community.
 - Identify (access) resources and supports in the community
 - Build relationships with peers, school community and the community at large.

Padmaja's Sarathy' Books and Publications



- **Autism: Support Strategies & Interventions, Autism Seven Steps of Support; Music CD - Transitions**
- **Behavior Guide (Preventive and Positive Approaches), Mindfulness Guide**
- **Early Childhood: Transition: Parenting Guide; Executive Function - Early Years; and STEM Teaching Strategies**
- **Paraeducator Training Guide and DVD**
- **Severe and Multiple Disabilities: Significant Disabilities and ESSA**



The Main Sources



The material for this presentation is mainly drawn from my book published by LRP Publications: **Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities: A Guide to Strategies for Successful Learning**, (Second Edition, 2014). (www.lrp.com)



Another book focusing on Significant Disabilities Students With Significant Disabilities: At the Crossroads of IDEA and ESSA: Aligning Standards-based Instruction, Alternate Assessments, and IEPs with UDL-based Instructional Techniques and Technology. Sarathy, P. (2017). LRP Publications. (www.lrp.com)

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Pursuing Academic, Functional and Life Skills and Overcoming Barriers

- **Advance Academic, Functional and Life Outcomes** for learners with significant disabilities, – A **crossover of multiple content areas**
- **Understand clearly the needs of learners with significant disabilities to personalize and match activities, adaptations and supports.**
- **Learners may exhibit:**
 - Communication and cognitive needs
 - Difficulties in generalizing concepts and skills from one situation to another
 - Learners with most severe/profound impairment may experience difficulty separating self from the environment.
 - Decreased attention span and high degree of distractibility.
 - Presence of visual, auditory and/or medical problems and physical mobility issues

(Adapted from Sarathy, 2014, LRP Publications)

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Pursuing Academic, Functional and Life Skills and Overcoming Barriers

- Lack of exposure and limited practice pose barriers to learners.
- Over-prompting and facilitating adult dependence interfere with self-dependence.
- Inadequate adaptations and support tools may pose problems.
- Attitudinal barriers? Lower expectations?
- Professional training issues?

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Begin with the end in mind!

- How will this activity/lesson advance the student in personal living/ functional skills?
- How will it prepare the student to be more independent and to improve his/her quality of life?
- Where do you want to see the student in three to five years and/or at the end of the school year?
- How can you broaden his/her world?
- How can you build a positive perception about the learner in the eyes of others through this lesson/activities?

(Adapted from Sarathy, 2014)

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Instructional Framework: The Essentials

Serving Students with Significant Cognitive, Communication and Motor Needs to Access and Attain Academic and Functional Outcomes

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
To Make Learning Accessible to Address Needs of Diverse Learners
Engagement, Representation & Action and Expression

Engaging and Interactive Instructional Delivery
for Active Engagement and Learning

Partial Participation
to Promote Learner Independence

Technology Aids
(both Mainstream and Assistive Technology (AT) to Support Learners

Age-Appropriateness
in Activities and Materials

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Designing and Delivering Instruction

- Ensure accessibility, adjust task complexity level and foster active learner participation** with a diversity of tools applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and technology supports.
- Begin with a clear vision of your learning objectives.**
 - Break individual steps into sub-steps as needed.
 - Adjust task complexity level.
 - Provide student-specific adaptations.
 - Offer diverse ways for student to communicate his/her thoughts and experiences.
- Facilitate partial participation** if the student is able to perform 1-2 steps in a task independently and not the entire task.

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Personal Development

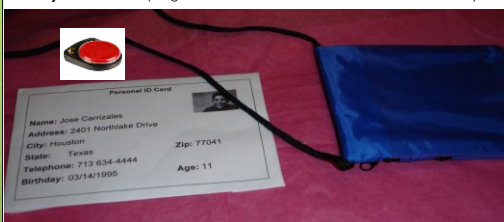
- Help build student's deportment.** Assist student's efforts to build his/her image to positively influence the perceptions of others.
- Teach the student how to greet others** within school/community - wave, shake hands or nod - a gesture that motor strengths will permit.
- Appearance Counts!** Work with the family closely to ensure that the student is always well-groomed and sharp in appearance.
- Teach replacement behaviors** that draw less attention and are more acceptable.
- Enable student to earn respect.** Create adaptations that allow students to be as independent as possible with minimal adult support.
- Example: Avoid holding student's hands when escorting from one location to another. Let the student lead you. If the student is using a wheelchair, let the student point to the direction or hold up/point to or eye gaze a card showing the location (cafeteria or gym or library)*

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Introducing Self

A Personal ID card

- Students create their own personal ID card using a power point presentation template (aided with peer mentor/teacher help).
- Student types in the information or inserts (moves) words from a word bank. Print the slide, laminate it (and insert it in a pouch).
- Student introduces self touching, pointing, or eye-gazing the badge.
- "My name is..." (Programmed into an AT device and student shows ID).



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Activity # 2

Belonging, Member of the Group

Recognition of Self and Peers in Class

- Help student to create power point slide pairing photo with student's name.
- Students take turns in presenting the PPP to class to assist with recording attendance.
- Students either verbally respond to indicate presence or hold up/point to their ID card when they see the slide with their photo and name.
- Student practice daily recognizing and naming self and peers aided by the slide show.
- Or students can use an attendance display chart paired with student photos and names.
- Provide AT support as needed.

PowerPoint® Presentation



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Activity # 3 **A Timeline**

Get student to create a personal life story: a timeline of events with photos paired with text.

- Use the same format for creating a biography (a brief biography of a famous historical person/ character)
- Provide pre-printed labels with text to go in the template. Student can pair it with the corresponding photos.
- Program an AT device with the matching statements to go with the sequence chart.

Super Talker

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Activity # 4 **My Favorites – Learning About Self**

- Provide a graphic organizer for student to use to identify favorites.
- Offer choices to select from if a learner is not able to verbally name it.
- Attach multisensory items (or photos) to text representing the favorites.
- Have student prepare a power point presentation (PPP) to share with peers.
- A peer mentor could type the text and add the audio on the PPP.

Choices provided using 'Talkingbrix'

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All About Me Book

Another Option

Selecting from Given Choices

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Activity # 5 **Map-reading**

- Activity: Students learn to navigate around the school using a map of the school.
- Have students begin with identifying one location (cafeteria) within the school with peer support.
- Gradually, expand to 2-3 specified locations.
- The students can use a school map with small colored tactile shapes to indicate specific locations:
 - The nurse's station (a blue circle)
 - The principal's office (a small red circle)
 - The restrooms (a green circle), etc.
- Students using wheelchairs can direct where to go using left/right signals.

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Activity # 6 **Interviews**

Connect With Who's Who in the School Community

- The interviews should be pre-arranged with staff.
- Have students get acquainted with the staff they will be interviewing.
- They can explain their project and request if they can take their photos and conduct brief interviews.
- The interview questions – could be self-generated or selected from a choice of questions. Sample questions:
 - What do you like about your job?
 - What is your favorite thing about this school?
 - What do you like to do for fun?
- For students with communication challenges: questions can be pre-recorded on an AT device with peer support.

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Activity # 7 **Access Community Resources**

Resources in the Community:

- The Mall
- Fast-food Places/Restaurants
- Grocery Store
- Bank
- Hospital
- Library


Guide students how to locate places in the immediate neighborhood and in the community.

- Guide students to use internet tools to practice locating places in the community.
- Identify and locate the key landmarks in the community.
- Role-play scenarios to practice how to seek help when lost.
- Practice prior to students going on CBI trips how to access these locations as independently as possible.

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Access Store & Restaurant

- Set up a **Mock Store** to practice accessing a store, selecting, buying and paying for items.
- Have students practice roles of cashier/customer.
- Gain math skills and vocabulary and life skills




- Set up a **Restaurant** (open once a week)
- Practice preparing simple items.
- Practice familiarizing with selecting from the menu, buying and paying for items.


iTalk4 with levels



Single message



Sample Food Item Price: \$ 3.99

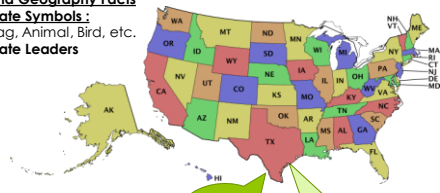


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Activity # 8 Knowing Where I Live

My Community, City, State and Country *(is important to me).*

- Learn State History and Geography Facts**
- State Symbols:** Flag, Animal, Bird, etc.
- State Leaders**




Provide choices with an iTalk2 Communicator.



The State that I live in is _____

The city that I live in is _____


Select from 3 choices.



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Activity # 9 My Country


- Locate the country (USA) on the globe.
- Mark it with a sticky tag.
- Identify a country in the South.
- Locate a country to the North
- Challenge Questions:
Learn to read directions
Locate a country in the East/West



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Activity # 10 A Portfolio

- Promote Self-advocacy**
- Assist student in developing a portfolio.
- Have student include the best examples of his/her work.
- Collect comments about the student from peers, teachers and other school staff. Have student take photos and include them in the portfolio.
- Include descriptions of activities that the student is involved in at school and outside. Provide a template for the student to fill-in.
- Provide pre-printed text labels with the most commonly used/repeated words for student to use in the portfolio.
- Add Clip Art and Board Maker pictures as needed to provide a visual appeal to the portfolio.



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Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives linked to Self, Community and the World at large

- Identify self in photo and identify photos of peers.
- Generate information about self.
- Identify favorite things given choices.
- Sequence pictures in order to tell a story about self.
- Learn to use a time line to present sequenced events.
- Share information about self with others.
- Conduct interviews of school staff to gather information.
- Identify and access resources in the local community.
- Increase geographical knowledge (city, state and world) and gain map skills
 - Locate city (state and country) that she/he lives in on a map.

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Recommended Strategies

- Diverse and complex learner needs are addressed to promote access, engagement and response.**
 - Instruction is complemented with multi-sensory materials (auditory, visual, kinesthetic & tactile)
 - Hands-on activities and real-life situations are used.
- Paraeducator support is discreet and not intrusive.**
 - Understands and follows prompt hierarchy to avoid over-prompting the student.
- Systematic and consistent use of progress monitoring** occurs in targeted learning objectives.
 - Re-teaching and re-assessing occurs with modified instructional strategies.
- Learner independence is continuously fostered.** Allow and promote student to perform whatever skills are possible without adult assistance.

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Response Tool

Some may respond with a Response-Participation Tool.

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Templates and Tools

Object	Label
Object	Label
Object	Label
Object	Label

A 3-column chart

Select/Choose
(A choice Board)

Likes	Dislikes

A 2-column chart

A Graphic Organizer

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Ideas and Strategies: Adapted Tools

An Object-based Daily Activity Schedule for students with Significant Communication Needs

Teacher-made Response Tools to respond during academic/personal living/functional activities

Create your own Adapted Cuff: The headliner cloth is wrapped around the hand with an opening for the thumb and fastened with Velcro.

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Assistive Technology Supports

Talkingbrix

Power Link To connect with appliances

Blue 2 Bluetooth Switch

Voice Output Devices

BIG Step-by-Step with Levels

ITalk2 Communicator

Little Step-by-Step With Levels

Super Talker can be used for group participation activities

A Quick Talker can assist with supplying a bank of words (vocabulary) for writing activities.

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An Elementary Student: Meel Sam

- Greets with a "hi"
- Communicates using a few phrases/words.
- Attends to story/lesson for 2-3 minutes gradually increasing time.
- Able to grasp and hold objects
- Throws or knocks items off his desk.
- Likes to pace around the room frequently
- Likes to listen to music
- Able to eat independently

(From: Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities, Sarathy (2014). LRP Publications)

UDI Tools:

Power Point Presentations, Graphic Organizers, Picture & Object Supports, Choice boards, Self-help tools, etc.

Functional Focus

- **Self-initiation with minimal amount of prompting** to pursue personal grooming, and personal hygiene. Use associated vocabulary words paired to Community Connections/Personal Living.
- Follow directions to make book about self.
- Use **calming cards** when feeling agitated.
- Respond to redirection with text paired with pictures.
- Make choices to increase sense of control.
- **Drama and Role Play activities** to increase communication and to promote group participation and interaction with peers.

Technology Aids:

Use **Apps** and **Quick Talker** to build vocabulary and increase communication; **Step by Step** for group participation, gradual transition to using iPad independently with limited icons.

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Paraeducator Support

- **Minimize proximity while maximizing discreet** and targeted instructional support from paras.
- Close and constant contact between student and para has an adverse effect on student learning and performance - on social interactions and teachers' academic expectations of the student, etc. especially if the paraeducator is not trained (Giangreco, 2003; Giangreco et al., 2005; Causton-Theoharis, et al., 2007)
- It is stigmatizing and embarrassing for the student if para is always next to the student helping him/her.
 - Avoid sitting or placing a chair next to the student. Circulate among all students.
 - Encourage peers to support - a natural support available in the classroom.

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Helpful Tips for Families

- Engage with your children in motivating activities to sustain attention and active involvement:
 - Weather-related activities:** Daily forecast, temperature comparison
 - Language and Literacy:** Read stories together daily. Use role play and have fun pretending to be different characters, animals, etc. Build vocabulary associated with personal grooming, cooking, etc.
 - Create a personal life story:** or a story associated with Covid-19.
 - Math:** Play games using dice and dominoes.
 - Math-Measurement:** Weigh items using the kitchen scale.
 - Nature and Science:** Go for a 'Nature Walk', find leaves, twigs, seeds, tree bark, etc. Create a collage.
- Enable and Motivate:**
 - Use concrete objects, photos, pictures to sustain attention.
 - Use activities that connect with real life application.
 - Use visuals and technology supports.
- Encourage self-dependence:**
 - Get your child to make choices.
 - Facilitate social interactions with family & friends virtually.

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Resources for Significant Disabilities

- Browder, D.M., & Spooner, F. (Eds.). (2006). *Teaching Language Arts, Math, & Science to Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*. By Brookes Publishing, MD
- Causton-Theoharis, J. (2009). *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms*. Paul Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD
- Causton-Theoharis, J., Giangreco, M. F., Doyle, & Vadasy, P. (2007). Paraprofessionals: The "sous-chefs" of literacy instruction. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(1): 56-62
- CEC has a number of resources for educators and families to assist during the current Covid-19 crisis. <https://www.cec.sped.org/Tools-and-Resources/Resources-for-Teaching-Remotely>
- Downing, J.E. (2005). *Teaching Literacy to Students with Significant Disabilities*. Corwin Press, CA
- Giangreco, M. F., Yuan, S., McKenzie, B., Cameron, P., & Fialka, J. (2005). "Be Careful What You Wish for ...": Five Reasons to Be Concerned About the Assignment of Individual Paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37(5), 28-34.
- Paths to Literacy: Ideas to Engage Students with Significant Disabilities in Activities During the Summer Holidays: <https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/blog/ideas-engage-students-significant-multiple-disabilities-activities-during-summer-holidays>

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Resources for Significant Disabilities

- Sarathy, P. (2012). *Paraeducator Power Training for Supporting Students with Disabilities: A Trainer's Guide* (CD and Trainee Manual). Austin, TX: Ed 311
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- Sarathy, P. (2014). *Positive Behavioral Intervention for Students With Autism: A Practical Guide to Avoiding the Legal Risks of Seclusion and Restraint*. West Palm Beach, FL: LRP Publications.
- Sarathy, P. (2015) *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Seven Steps of Support* - a laminated guide, NPR, Inc.
- UDL website: (Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) <http://www.cast.org/research/udl/index.html>)

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Thank You.



Thank you to all our participants for joining this virtual presentation and
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