Supporting Inclusion for High School Students with ASD

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Goals For This Session:

As a result of this session, you should be able to:

• list high school inclusion strategies for students with ASD
• analyze strategies appropriate for your setting
• integrate new strategies unique to your setting
Essential Concepts:

COMMITMENT
COMMUNICATION
COMPASSION
COLLEGIALITY
COMMON SENSE
Disclaimer:

This presentation is **NOT** about skills for data collection, BIP’s, FBA’s or IEP’s.

It **IS** about understanding, identifying, and developing a culture or an environment.

“You can’t replicate ‘IT’ until you know what ‘IT’ is... and we’re not really sure what ‘IT’ is yet...”
Who Are We?

Our setting:

- an Atlanta suburb, “outside the perimeter”
- A nationally recognized, high-performing, public high school in a large school district
- a (conversion) charter school for the past 13 years
- very high AP class and AP testing participation
- mild-to-moderate disability services
- on-site MID program
- HAVEN satellite program for SW/ASD with severe behavior difficulties (not administered through the local school; these students are almost completely self-contained and not the population we will share about)

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Who Are We?

DAVIS

Perspectives:
- case manager
- inclusion teacher

Experience:
- 13 years teacher (high school)
- 25 years behavioral scientist (psychologist/mental health professional)

Certification:
- special education
- general education social studies
Who Are We?

ADRIENNE

Perspectives:

• classroom teacher
• 9-12 math
• inclusion teacher

Experience:

• 4 years paraprofessional (preschool & primary)
• 12 years teacher (high school)
• current Ph.D. student in special education (academic achievement & cognitive/metacognitive processing across milder disability categories)

Certification:

• special education co-teaching
• general education math
• highly qualified special education English
COMMITMENT

DAVIS:

Respond to this statement from a case manager’s perspective:

“Failure is not an option!”
COMMITMENT

• “You don’t find Autism, Autism finds you.”
• What is commitment?
• Who is committed?
• Give 100%! Really? How about 99.9%?
• At what price?
COMMITMENT

ADRIENNE

Respond to this statement from a classroom teacher’s perspective:

“Failure is not an option!”
COMMITMENT

I assume that every one of my students belongs in my class, unless they really belong in a higher level curriculum.

• Total commitment by teachers to creating effective and inclusive classroom communities (not willing to fail at the task of ensuring welcome, respect, participation, and contribution by all)
• A long-range goal, not just a short-term one (two sociograms, three years apart)
• Strategies implemented to support the most vulnerable members of a class will benefit all students in the class (not limited to SW/ASD)
• What is LRE for all students in a class? (Fall 2011)
COMMUNICATION

DAVIS:

As a case manager, how has your communication changed since you’ve been serving SW/ASD in terms of:

*With whom do you communicate?
*How you communicate with them?
*When do you communicate with them?
COMMUNICATION

• You are the principle liaison and advocate for your students with:
  • Parents
  • Administrators
  • School staff (administrative, guidance, PPO, custodial, media center, CSO, and school nurse
  • General education faculty
  • Special education faculty
  • Students
COMMUNICATION

ADRIENNE:

How has your classroom communication shifted to support students with ASD throughout the grade levels?
COMMUNICATION (not just SW/ASD)

- Making my hidden curriculum explicit:
  - Pre-correction, behavior-specific praise, & corrective feedback to shape desired behaviors (usually before & after for SW/ASD)
  - Quizzes: “Every student deserves to feel like they’re the first one finished.”
  - Peer coaching: “OK”
- Direct, clear, and bold conversations that support case manager’s & family’s “big picture” perspective:
  - “17-year-old” behavior
  - Going up a level in math
What is the role of compassion in your job as a case manager?
COMPASSION

• The technical term is empathy, not sympathy
• It is an essential characteristic of a special education teacher
• Do you see the paradox: data driven vs. heart driven?
• What do you do if you don’t have compassion?
COLLEGIALITY

DAVIS:

What is collegiality, and why is it essential for inclusion for SW/ASD?
Concerns the quality of the relationships between and among the professionals in a school setting

It can be learned

Collegial relationships result in high personal satisfaction, professional development and overall school effectiveness
School Collegiality

Administrative Effectiveness

Classroom Excellence
What factors impact collegiality in your school?
In no particular order or likelihood of impact:

“There’s nothing like a good recession to stabilize your teaching workforce and special education department...”

- Charter governance structure
- Peer coaching program and incentive to participate
- Special education office setup
- 4-year case managers
- Recognition of specialty skills
- School & community reputation
COMMON SENSE

• Hopefully, this information will be redundant
• Rule #1: NO WHINING
• Always do what you know is right
• Don’t over-think an issue
• Don’t recreate the wheel; if something works for someone else, use it
• Ask for help
• Be honest and forthright
• Always expect success
• Realize that no matter what your greatest expectations are of students with ASD, they will always exceed your expectations
Wrap up

• Were we clear, concise, complete and to the point?
• Does the information presented have utility for your situation?
• Did we leave anything out?
• Did you get what you wanted from this session?

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