

Accessing the Curriculum



Differentiating of Work Post Primary School



Educational Targets for Students at Post Primary School

- To become socially competent – learn the social rules, manage emotions and make friends
- To develop language and literacy skills
- To develop math skills
- To learn about the world around – science, history, geography
- To develop physical abilities
- To engage in art, drama and music
- To find strengths and develop self-esteem and self-confidence

The same as all children – relevant to their age



Adapting Teaching and Learning

Social Strengths

Build on these – high expectations for social behaviour, friendships – relationships matter

Cognitive Delay

Slower learning

Small steps, developmental approach, daily instruction, record progress, frequent opportunities for practice and consolidation



Adapting Teaching and Learning

Speech and Language:

Delayed development

- Activities and instructions at language comprehension level
- Language teaching and speech work a priority

Short Term Memory:

Visual stronger than verbal

- Visual supports for learning, memo games/training



Adapting Teaching and Learning

Motor Delays – influence play, learning and social activities

- Adapted seating, practice for fine and gross motor, compensate (letters, computer, apps)

Behaviour and Attention

- Short, varied activities and teaching approaches that ensure success



Adapting Teaching and Learning

Wide range of ability

Scope to tailor programmes/teaching for individual abilities



Able to Learn & Participate

Hearing loss

- Hearing aids, well adjusted and worn (sound field system)
- Speak clearly, see face, sign, use pictures etc
- Sit near teacher
- Reduce background noise, small spaces

Visual impairment

- Wear spectacles, keep them clean (adult responsibility)
- Black on white contrast – avoid coloured pencils on coloured paper – Big and bold (Use 18pt+ font size)
- Sit near board - [see http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/downs-syndrome-vision-research-unit/get-advice/for-teachers](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/downs-syndrome-vision-research-unit/get-advice/for-teachers)

Health

- Sleep, respiratory infections, temperature control



Accessing the Curriculum

Literacy and Maths:

- Same developmental steps as all children. Basic concepts = building blocks - no short cuts
- Smaller steps – more explicit teaching and modelling
- More time to learn – more repetition and practice
- Generalisation needs to be taught

Science, Geography, History etc:

- Most topics can easily be simplified and often one topic not dependent on knowing another.
- Adds to general knowledge – link to the child's world, the world of the family –what siblings may be learning or doing and to the community and culture

Take care individual targets do not limit students



Accessing the Curriculum - Reading

- Reading targets need to be based on real reading progress –balanced instruction, all components
- Record of all books child can read – easy/favourite books read for comprehension and fluency
- Record of all sight words child can read until high frequency and 800 word core vocabulary mastered
- Record of progress with learning letter-sounds, hearing sounds in words (PA) and applying to text (phonics - decoding, spelling)
- Sight word and phonics work should be linked to book reading
- Record of comprehension strategies student knows
- Each child will have personal targets for sight words, phonics, new books and comprehension strategies



Accessing the Curriculum - Writing

- Ability to put thoughts on paper, share ideas and to record
- Take photos then write about the photo
- Build a sentence, using word cards or computer software
- Use a story board
- Progress is measured by length and complexity of sentence
- Ability to write 'by hand'
- Motor skill – handwriting programme
- Handwriting: will improve – at child's developmental level. We should not hold back learning to record ideas, develop sentences, spell.
- Writing will affect numeracy – same solutions (plastic numbers, number cards)



Accessing the Curriculum - Maths

- Basic understanding of number concepts and counting procedures with numbers 1 to 10 essential
- Say number words in order, recognise numerals
- Correctly link quantities to numbers,
- Count items accurately
- Demonstrate understanding of cardinality, equivalence
- Understand ordinality – each next number = one more
- Demonstrate understanding of inversion
- Add with 'count-on strategy
- Add, subtract, divide, multiply with quantities to 10
- Needs lots of counting and sharing experiences with wide variety of items to count

Danger of rote learning - no conceptual understanding



Accessing the Curriculum – History, Geography

- Take class topic – simplify (differentiate)
- Identify meaningful learning for child – link to their current experience and/or relevant to their future
- Identify new concepts – new words to be learned
- A topic can be a language development opportunity – building knowledge networks around theme
- Extending depth of understanding of words
- Bring learning alive, child has real experience



Visual Supports for Learning

- Think visual – how can I make this visual
- Make full use of photos – phone, ipad/tablet
- All children learn from personal books – make books based on child's learning experience – for all children, especially non-readers
- Use internet to find topic materials, pictures, videos
- Work with other children in groups
- Topics can be used to develop sentences and grammar
- Always work from what child says or communicate – what child is thinking about or doing



Adapt for Language Levels

- Remember to talk to students in simple rather than complex sentences at grammar level for each student
- Consider vocabulary being used in a lesson – does student understand all the words being used?
- Remember students' understanding is ahead of expression – they cannot always put what they know into words – but if able to select answers from choice or use software, they may be able to show understanding
- Simplify language in stories to put across main points
- Provide visual supports for both talking and writing about topics and events



Differentiation

- Differentiation is the process of reducing the amount of work and reducing the level of work involved for students.
- A need for this differentiation support for students with Down syndrome and an intellectual disability has been identified by parents, teachers and other educators.
- It is particularly evident in the early years of second level where the lack of differentiated materials is having an adverse effect on the inclusion of children with Down syndrome in mainstream classes.



Differentiation

The syllabus for second level subjects, as presented in current text books and materials, is beyond the level of comprehension and reading ability of many students with Down syndrome.

To help support children, teachers and parents who are faced with this dilemma, a small, voluntary group of parents, teachers and other educators worked with Patricia Griffin, former Education Officer at Down Syndrome Ireland, on the provision of some differentiated materials



Differentiation in Action

- English
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics
- C.S.P.E.



Differentiation in Action

Workshop



Acknowledgement

Effective Education for Children with Down Syndrome in School

Professor Sue Buckley OBE

Down Syndrome Education International

Discovering Potential Transforming Lives

