



WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER

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“EDUCATING EVERY CHILD”

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“HOLIDAY JOY . . . HOLIDAY BLUES”

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View From The Corner Office By Bill Pumo



*H*appy Holidays to all of our WCISEC families and friends. Please take the time during this festive season to reflect on how lucky we are to be employed in occupations that allow us to help others. I am going to personally take the time to find a family in need and lessen their burden during this holiday season.

Due to the similarities of our thoughts for the upcoming holidays, I have included a segment composed by C. Kay Best, MSW, LCSW in my reflections which embraces the need for our continued student support through what may be difficult times ahead.

“Holiday Joy . . . Holiday Blues”
By: C. Kay Best

“We’re in the midst of the holiday season and we all have expectations of what it will be like and the type of Christmas we want to create for our family time together. The children we work with, also, begin feeling this rush to Christmas. For them, they may have expectations of reliving previous holidays filled with gifts and happy family get togethers. But for many, many of the children in our classrooms, their Christmas memories are painful, disappointing, and disconnected from all the commercial hype.

For families dealing with separations and divorce, children can feel the stress and strain of

their parents arguing over the visitation schedule, family visits, and gift exchanges. They overhear arguments about financial problems ever looming and more apparent as relatives struggle with gift buying. For our students, holidays can be filled with anxiety over family problems and acute sadness rather than the happiness they see on T.V. shows and in store aisles.

Children and teens can feel the strain of their parent(s) as they see their mother or father try to meet all the bills and eek out money for gifts. Children and teens often feel the pain of disappointment when told not to set their sights on that present they dream about because Santa just doesn’t have the money this year. Yet, they see and hear classmates tell of fantastic Christmas gifts expected, amazing family vacations taken and commercials and stores filled with dream presents.

Holiday stress on families often takes its toll on children and teens by witnessing domestic violence between the parents. Incidents of family violence increase with relationship and monetary stress during the holidays. Our children and teens often experience shattered holiday dreams mixed with intense sadness when an absent parent misses a visit, a phone call, or a present or another year of not sharing Christmas with a parent who has never been in their life. All this while the world shimmers and shines with ribbon lit trees, abundant presents, and Christmas programs promoting happiness and joy.

The more sensitive we are to our students’ family situations, the more we will understand the different attitudes, emotions, and behavior we may see manifested in the classroom during the holi-

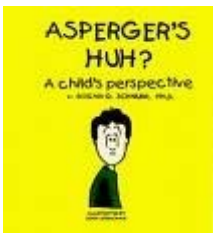
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days. The more we can support students with 'unconditional positive regard', the more we help soften whatever negative stress they are experiencing at home. The more we can teach our students about stress and stress management, the more we enable them to develop coping mechanisms that will serve them their entire life.

The more we can share our hope, love, and high expectations for their success in life, the more we give them 'presents' that can sustain and encourage them when they feel alone or unloved amidst the world's holiday cheer.

A teacher is the most admired person in a child/teens life, next to the parent. Our words of understanding and love during the holidays can be one the brightest holiday lights in our student's lives."



Asperger's Or Autism?

Many people ask what is the difference between Asperger's and Classic Autism? Here is a brief explanation from Rachel Evan's website: www.essential-guide-to-autism.com

"People with Asperger's Syndrome display autistic characteristics like:

- Obsessive behaviors*
- Lack of social and communication skills.*
- The level and severity of these signs will vary from individual to individual*

But unlike individuals with Classic Autism:

- They do not show delayed skills.*
- They have a normal or above normal IQ.*
- Verbal IQ tends to be higher.*
- There is usually no speech delay.*
- They have good language skills, but their use of language can be awkward and speech patterns can be unusual, without inflection or changes in pitch or tone.*
- The subtleties of language, such as irony and humor can be lost on someone with Asperger's and they may struggle to understand how a conversation should flow.*
- Individuals with Asperger's tend to be clumsy or awkward in their movements.*
- Asperger's is usually diagnosed at a later age, with social and communication problems that are less severe than Autism"*

By: Marla Johnson/Autism Consultant



"7 Habits" Workshop Held

The following is a short description of the Student Achievement Workshop held at Project Insight on August 22, 2007. The workshop presenter was Joel Hinchey. Jordan Egler, a teacher at PI, was also trained that day as a facilitator and would be available to WCISEC programs to present this highly effective training. *Chester Lien, Principal, Project Insight*

Using Sean Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, students are given a powerful overview of the 7 Habits in their language. In the one-day workshop, students learned the time-tested principles of the 7 Habits and how to apply them to the tough issues and life-changing decisions they face. Utilizing full student participation plus humor, anecdotes, videos, real-life scenarios, and relevant interactive exercises, students had fun while they learned how to believe in their own abilities. In addition to the book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, each participant also received the Success Guide workbook. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens are essentially seven characteristics that happy and successful teens the world over have in common. Habits 1, 2, and 3 deal with self-mastery called the "Private Victory." Habits 4, 5, and 6 deal with relationships and teamwork, or the "Public Victory." The last habit, Habit 7, is the habit of renewal. It feeds all of the other six habits. The training provided students with a step-by-step framework for boosting self-image, building friendships, resisting peer pressure, achieving goals, improving communication and relationships with parents, and much more. The habits build upon each other and foster behavioral change and improvement from the inside out.

The in-depth course allows teens to delve deeper into each of the habits and truly apply them to their lives. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens. This version simplifies the 7 Habits for younger readers to better understand them

1. Be Pro-active. You can either be proactive or reactive when it comes to how you act about certain things. Being "proactive" means taking responsibility for everything in life. When you're reactive, you blame other people and circumstances for obstacles or problems. Initiative, and taking action will then follow. Covey talks about 'Stimulus and Response'. Between Stimulus and Response, we have the power to choose the response.
2. Begin with the End In Mind. This is about setting long-term goals.
3. Put First Things First. This is a framework for prioritizing work that is aimed at long-term goals, at the expense of tasks that appear to be urgent, but are in fact less important.
4. Think Win/Win describes an attitude whereby mutually beneficial solutions are sought, that satisfy the needs of oneself as well as others, or, in the case of a conflict, both parties involved.
5. Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood. Thoroughly listening to another person's concerns instead of reading out your own autobiography is purported to increase the chance of establishing a working communication.
6. Synergize describes a way of working in teams. Applying effective problem solving. Applying collaborative decision making.
7. Sharpen the saw focuses on balanced self-renewal. Regaining what is called "production capability" by engaging in carefully selected recreational activities. *By Jordan Egler, Teacher, Project Insight*

On The Edge By Lou Pruett



When talking about RTI (Response to Intervention), once again we are inundated with several new acronyms which can be confusing. Sometimes I have the same experience children have when they encounter a new vocabulary word in a passage. I need to see it again and again in context. In addition to the RTI acronym, we now have CBM, BM, PS, PM, SM, and then there is BS to name a few. Now I know a lot of people proficient in BS, but much of it is not functional when it involves RTI. That's why I will take some time here to define the above acronyms as they relate to RTI- which is the coop's focus for this year.

- **BS (Basic Skills)** Basic skills that are valid indicators for a student's success in learning to read.
- **CBM (Curriculum Based Measures)** CBM's are a set of valid and reliable, short, easy to administer, sensitive and time efficient meas-

ures of reading designed and used for educational decision making. (Gary Germann)

- **BM (Benchmarking)** Administering short, easy assessments to every student in the school three times a year at their grade level. In reading, students are assessed in the five big ideas of reading: phoneme awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.
- **PS (Problem-Solving)** The school team reviews and monitors student data continuously. The team identifies research-based instructional interventions and evaluates the effectiveness of implemented interventions within general education classrooms over time.
- **SM (Strategic Monitoring)** Students whose scores from benchmarking indicate that they are at risk in learning the basic skills in reading. Strategic Monitoring is for Tier 2 students and they are assessed at least once per month at their grade level. Interventions are implemented with small groups of students in addition to core reading instruction.
- **PM (Progress Monitoring)** Using the scores from benchmarking, progress monitoring is usually for Tier 3 students whose scores are significantly lower than their peers. The students at this level are assessed weekly at their instructional level and the interventions are customized to meet their individual needs.

All of the above acronyms basically allow educational teams to evaluate their instruction for individual students on an ongoing basis. "The

“ACRONYMS FOR THE RTI PROCESS”

likelihood of a poor reader becoming a good reader after grade three is small. That child is facing the tyranny of time” (Kameenui, 1993). Educators must know from the earliest possible moment who is and is not succeeding. Starting early affords time to rectify the situation for students who are not on target to succeed on their state's reading assessments. "Such frequent measurement prompts teachers to adjust instruction as needed to affect more progress for each student" (Deno & Fuchs, 1987).

What Is Assistive Technology? Some Things You Should Know!

What is Assistive technology: Basically, Assistive technology provides supports for students with special needs. It is any tool or device that a student with a disability uses to do a task that he or she could not do without or that helps the student do the task better, easier, or faster. Legally, assistive technology must be considered at every student's IEP.

Types of Assistive Technology: There are many different types of assistive technology. The following categories may help you think about assistive technology: writing, computer access, communication, reading, learning/studying, math, recreation and leisure, daily living activities, mobility, vision, hearing, and vocational.

Infinitec: WCISEC is a member of Infinitec, which has many wonderful things to offer,

including workshops, with nationally renowned speakers and online videos which offer CPDU's. Additionally, the website offers many supports for various areas of education. It is very easy to create an account. Log on to <http://il.myinfinitec.org> and click on "Create a New Account" link on the home page, then click on "please click here to login to MyInfinitec". Then simply log in with your username (email address) and password. Please use your district e-mail address when setting this up. (TIP: If you don't have a district account and will be using your own personal email account, please notify Lou Pruett and she will have it approved.)

TECHTALK: is a free publication of TechConnect & Illinois Assistive Technology Project

(IATP). You can subscribe to this free and informative newsletter by calling: 800-852-5110. The newsletter is packed with interesting and useful information and tips on assistive technology. The website is: www.itech.org/techtalk.

Support for the Struggling Reader: Free Text-to-Speech tools can be downloaded using the internet. The text-to-speech sites for windows platform computers are: <http://www.wordq.com>, <http://www.readplease.com>, and <http://helpread.com> Macintosh users can access Simple Text in the Macintosh system software.

Good Reading On The Web

By: C. Kay Best, LCSW, Autism Consultant

It's hard to beat the Internet for finding the latest in Autism research. A few Web sites you might want to check out include: Autism Speaks at : www.autismspeaks.org

NICHD (the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) at www.nichd.nih.gov; and the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities at www.nichcy.org. These sites will not only give you great info on the latest articles and research on Autism, but provide information on other issues and disabilities we deal with as educators.

The latest research information on early identification of children with autism can be found at the Academy of Pediatricians site at: www.aap.org. This study was released the end of October and explains early assessment that parents, caregivers, and doctors can do to assess for autism. Early identification of autism and early treatment can have a profound positive impact on the child. The earlier the treatment begins after diagnosis, the sooner the child can begin, with treatment, to learn those adaptive skills needed to succeed in school.

WCISEC Calendar For December, 2007

Dec 3	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Dec 6	Early Childhood/SLP Mtg, 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM
Dec 7	SSW Meeting, 1st floor, 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM
Dec 10	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Dec 13	OT/PT/APE Meeting, 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
Dec 14	BIC Meeting, 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Dec 17	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Dec 20	HI/VI/SLP/Aud Meeting, 2nd floor, 1:00 PM
Dec 20	WCISEC Open House, 1st floor, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Dec 21	Executive Cmte. Meeting, 2nd Floor, 9:00 AM
Dec 24	WCISEC Office Closed Until January 3, 2008

Future Rocketeers

After a 9 week study of Rockets, Ms. Pyles's Earth Science class at the WCISEC Jr/Sr High School ED Class at Macomb, built rockets and launched them outside. The rockets went amazingly high, and the kids had a fun time applying the book work to actual models.



Pictured above are: Tera Pyle (Rt), with her High School Class

Business Office Bits

... By Denise Ratermann



With the end of the year quickly approaching it is time to review a few procedures that occur each year that have a direct impact on either your paycheck or your benefits. The first item is the annual enrollment period for the flexible spending program. This year you may complete this either from the website, or on paper, if you prefer. Remember that every full-time employee must complete an application form by either choosing to participate, or by signing the waiver.

The other item of business is the estimated time sheets for all hourly employees. Remember that hours will need to be estimated for your time for December 1- 15. This will ensure that you will get a check at the end of December. There is a schedule for the time sheets and pay dates enclosed with this paycheck. Remember that your sick bonus, if you qualified, will be paid on the January 15th paycheck.

Project Insight Celebrates Thanksgiving

Project Insight Jr./Sr. High School celebrated Thanksgiving with students, staff, parents, and special guests on Tuesday, November 20 with a turkey and ham dinner with all the extras. The celebration is an annual tradition at PI and is part of the monthly Parent Support Meetings. The day-long affair was well attended, with approximately 150 in attendance. Special guest for the event was Principal-For-the-Day The Honorable Richard P. Myers, State Representative from the 94th District.



Preparing the Thanksgiving Dinner at Project Insight are: (L to R) Principal Chester Lien, The Honorable Richard Myers, and Vajo Necak, Project Insight Head Teacher

Locks Of Love



Jasmine Climer, a student who attends the WCISEC Intermediate class at Carthage Elementary, donated 12 inches of her hair to the Locks of Love organization. Locks of Love is a public, non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to children under age 18 suffering from long-term medical hair loss from any diagnosis. The mission of Locks of Love is to return a sense of self, confidence and normalcy to children suffering from hair loss by utilizing donated ponytails to provide the highest quality hair prostheses to financially disadvantaged children. The children receive hair prostheses free of charge or on a sliding scale, based on financial need. Pictured is Jasmine with beautician Angie Ufkes at the Hair Port in Carthage. If you or anyone you know is interested in donating or if you know anyone in need of a hair prosthetic, www.locksoflove.org will give you the specific information.



*Please join WCISEC for fun and festivities as we celebrate the
Holiday Season with an*

OPEN HOUSE

On: Thursday, December 20, 2007

From 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the WCISEC

1st floor conference room.

DisABILITY Etiquette/ People First Language

People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases. We are individual human beings. For example, a person is not an epileptic but rather a person who has epilepsy. First and foremost we are people. Only secondarily do we have one or more disabling conditions. We prefer to be referred to in person, in print or broadcast media as People with Disabilities.

Acceptable Terms

Person with a Disability

Disability, a general term used for functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability, for example, to walk, hear or lift. It may refer to a physical, mental or sensory condition.

Person who had a spinal cord injury, polio, a stroke, etc. or a person who has multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, etc. Has a disability, has a **condition** of (spina bifida, etc.), or born without legs, etc

Deaf / hearing impairment. Deaf refers to a person who has a total loss of hearing. Hearing impairment refers to a person who has a partial loss of hearing.

Person who has a mental or developmental disability.

Use a wheelchair or crutches; a wheelchair user; walks with crutches.

Person who is able to walk, see, hear, etc.; people who are not disabled. People who do not have a disability.

Unacceptable Terms

Cripple, cripples - the image conveyed is of a twisted, deformed, useless body.

Handicap, handicapped person or handicapped. This term originated from the street person - cap or hat in hand - begging for money... not a pleasant picture.

Victim. People with disabilities do not like to be perceived as victims for the rest of their lives

Deformed, vegetable. These words are offensive, dehumanizing, degrading and stigmatizing. **Deaf and Dumb** is as bad as it sounds. The inability to hear or speak does not indicate intelligence.

Retarded, moron, imbecile, idiot. These are offensive to people who bear the label.

Confined/restricted to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound. Most people who use a wheelchair or mobility devices do not regard them as confining. They are viewed as a liberating means of transportation.

Healthy, when used to contrast with "disabled." Healthy implies that the person with a disability is unhealthy.

Para Pro Testing Dates:

The Hancock/McDonough Regional Office of Education has announced the following Para Pro Testing dates:

December 3, 2007
January 7, 2008

The testing time is from 8:30 to Noon on the second floor of the ROE. To register, call Lynn or Penny at 309-837-4821. There will be a \$50.00 testing fee collected on the day of the test.

The Fulton/Schuyler ROE is offering the Para Pro Test through Spoon River College. To register for the test, call SRC at (309) 647-6260 or (309)833-6031. The testing site is the Spoon River College Technology Center at 45 E. Side Square, Suite 302, Canton. The cost of the test is \$40.00, payable in advance by check. In 2008, the test fee goes to \$50.00. The testing time is from 1:00 to 3:30. The testing schedule is as follows:

March 6, 2008
June 12, 2008

Test study materials for WCISEC employees are available at no cost. Call the Macomb office at (309) 837-3911 to obtain them.

"If a child doesn't know how to read, *we teach*.

If a child doesn't know how to swim, *we teach*.

If a child doesn't know how to multiply, *we teach*.

If a child doesn't know how to drive, *we teach*.

If a child doesn't know how to behave,

We Teach? Punish?

Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2

How Are We Doing?

We are interested in your newsletter ideas. Send any suggestions for future issues to Jim Armstrong at: jarmstrong@wcisec.org

We're On The Web!
View our Newsletters at:
www.wcisec.org



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