

What strategies can we use in an elementary school to help students with LD build self-advocacy skills?

Why is self-advocacy important?

- Research indicates that students whose difficulties are not adequately addressed in school are at risk for developing social-emotional and achievement related difficulties later in life, such as :
 - ❖ problems in relationships
 - ❖ stress and depression
 - ❖ difficulty attaining and maintaining employment
- students with LDs need to have the support and necessary skills taught to them as they come to understand their LDs throughout their lifetime
- individuals must continually negotiate the differential effects of their processing difficulties on their daily functioning throughout their lives
- studies found that the successful young adults with LDs:
 - ❖ were self-aware individuals who had accepted their LD
 - ❖ actively sought out environments in which they could plan, solve problems, access supports, and subsequently achieve their goals
 - ❖ had greater self-acceptance of their learning disability
 - ❖ displayed proactivity, perseverance, and emotional stability
 - ❖ utilized effective social support systems

~Perry, 2001; Spekman et al., 1992; Goldberg, 2003

What is self-advocacy?

- people with disabilities taking control of their own lives including:
 - ❖ understanding their own unique abilities and disabilities
 - ❖ being active participants in the outcomes of their lives
 - ❖ speaking up for themselves
 - ❖ calling upon the support of others
 - ❖ being in control of their own resources and how they are directed

"enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy"

~ BC School Act, Chapter 412

Why in elementary school?

- children's early experiences in school can have a powerful effect on their success as adults

- early intervention appears to be a strong positive factor for students with LD
- important to not only identify LDs at a young age for the sake of appropriate program planning but also to reinforce positive life-long outcomes

- students with LD need specific interventions and support during their entire educational career
- secondary teachers in BC had a more difficult time accommodating those students with LD in their classroom; it is important that students entering secondary school have the awareness of their disability, needs, and available resources to begin to advocate for themselves

~ Perry, 2001; Lerner, Lowenthal, & Egan, 1998

What strategies can teachers use?

Include students in the IEP process

- ❖ encouraged to share their perceptions of their learning strengths, needs, talents, and interests
- ❖ this information may be gathered through:
 - ✓ Psych-Ed. Assessment/ Level B testing
 - ✓ interviews & discussions
 - ✓ interest inventories
- ❖ with the support of a resource teacher, the student will display their strengths, needs, and goals to the group during an IEP meeting:

John Smith
Gr.4
My plan for 2013

What am I good at?

- ✓ PE
- ✓ talking with my friends
- ✓ drawing pictures

How do I learn best?

- ✓ when I use my hands
- ✓ working in a group

Direct teaching to build self-advocacy skills

It doesn't define me

- ❖ compartmentalize the disability
- ❖ positively reframe the experience of having LD

How can I learn the best?

- ❖ strength based teaching
- ❖ teach self-regulation
 - ✓ set specific and attainable goals
 - ✓ help monitoring progress
 - ✓ problem solving and coping skills
 - ✓ evaluating progress
 - ✓ persevering

What do I need to be successful?

- ❖ knowing what is available, who to ask, and when & how to ask for it
- ❖ social skills training

What difference will this make?

Autonomy

Competence

Teaching Strategies

Inclusion

Policy Change

Key References

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