

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Teaching Coping Skills to Adolescents with Learning Problems

Rita Silverman, Naomi Zigmond, and Jan Sansone

All adolescents, whether learning handicapped or not, are in a confused and confusing state as they enter high school. They are struggling to achieve some independence from their families. They are attempting to develop an identity and set of personal values. They are adjusting to the physiological changes that accompany the teenage years and trying to understand and control the emerging, sometimes frightening, feelings of sexuality. They are working to establish and maintain relationships with same sex and opposite sex peers, and to be accepted into a peer group. And they are beginning to consider what they will do after high school and for the rest of their lives (Conger, 1977).

For students with learning problems, adolescence may be an especially difficult time. Many of these students have serious problems with peer acceptance. Because they may be developing physically, cognitively, and socially at a slower pace, they are often out of synchrony with their age peers. Adolescents seem to have an overwhelming need to perceive themselves as "normal" (Erickson & Friedman, 1973). This need for sameness is demonstrated in the fads and cliques so common among teenagers. Subtle differences in the rate of physical and intellectual development, or subtle delays in the emergence of sexual characteristics (beards, deep voices and body hair in boys; breasts, pubic hair, and menstruation in girls) may contribute to the rejection of educationally handicapped students by their peers (Erickson & Friedman, 1978).

Handicapped adolescents may also be grievously lacking in experience. Their parents may have considered them too vulnerable or too gullible to be permitted many independent, unsupervised forays into the outside world. They may have been educated in self-contained, segregated elementary school programs, thereby limiting their access to nonhandicapped students and to models of appropriate social behaviors. Furthermore, if they lacked the coordination or social aptitude required for the sports teams or other neighborhood activities in which nonhandicapped children took part, they were probably excluded from those experiences as well.

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Even adolescents who have had opportunities for peer interactions and modeling as children may have failed to learn social skills. Many learning handicapped youngsters have as much difficulty learning social skills as they have with reading, writing, and arithmetic. They reach adolescence with inadequate social tools to choose the right clothes to wear, the right things to say, the right things to do. They often do not seem to develop a broad enough repertoire of social behaviors to react differently to different situations. As a result, their behavior is often inappropriate. They also seem to lack social judgment. They are continually getting themselves and their peers into trouble, both in school and in the community (Zigmond, 1978).

Thus, learning handicapped adolescents often enter high school lacking experience in independent, responsible decision making. They are on the periphery of peer groups that could provide support and models of appropriate teenage behavior. They may be deficient in the development of verbal and nonverbal social behaviors that could help them interact appropriately with peers and adults.

Difficulties of the educationally handicapped adolescent are exacerbated by the very structure of a secondary school. Students are expected to move from class to class

independently and promptly, to adjust their behaviors to a wide variety of teachers' styles and requirements, to navigate large complex buildings and grounds, to develop work habits so they can cope with increased academic pressures and expectations. The majority of educationally handicapped students cannot be expected to "make it" through high school unless their school experience provides them some form of support.

Many communities have addressed this problem by offering students alternative high school programs. Some of these emphasize vocational or prevocational training. Some offer a self-contained, lower track, less demanding curriculum. Some provide tutorial assistance from special education teachers to help students in regular mainstream courses. These alternatives may help a student complete the requirements for high school graduation, but they do not address a critical issue: Most learning handicapped adolescents need explicit instruction in social skills or they will leave high school unprepared to function independently and responsibly.

Recognition of this need has led us to develop a School Survival Skills Curriculum, which we believe should be an integral part of any comprehensive program to serve secondary school-age students with learning and behavior problems. Its purpose is to prepare students to deal effectively with demands of the secondary school environment and the world beyond school.

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SCHOOL SURVIVAL SKILLS CURRICULUM

The School Survival Skills Curriculum is divided into three strands of activities, each strand focusing on a set of skills that seems to be lacking in high school students with learning problems. The Behavior Control strand of the curriculum is designed for students who are always getting into trouble, who consistently do the wrong things, and who are often suspended or punished. These students do not seem to understand the role they play in influencing the consequences that accrue to them. In the Behavior Control strand the goal is to help students alter their locus of control and regain control over their environment. Students learn that they can change the consequences because they can control their own antecedent behaviors.

The second strand of the curriculum, Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors, is for students who have difficulty coping with the demands of the regular classroom. This strand helps

students acquire behavior patterns that usually lead teachers to consider students more positively. Most students learn, in an incidental fashion, that certain behaviors ingratiate them with teachers. They learn to make eye contact, to look interested, to respond, to look busy. Many students with learning problems do not learn these behavior patterns. They need to be taught explicitly that their classroom behaviors have an impact on how the teacher responds to them and that, depending on the behaviors they display, the teacher's response will be positive or negative.

The third strand in the curriculum deals with Study Skills. Most special education students do not have adequate reading and writing skills. But the problems they face in mainstream classes are a function of more than just limited academic skills. These students do not know how to organize their time, how to approach a textbook, how to take notes, how to organize information, how to study for tests, how to take tests. The goals of the Study Skills strand are to teach students some "tricks" or shortcuts to gathering and retaining information. Students learn systematic methods for approaching classroom tasks and strategies for compensating for deficiencies in basic skills.

These strands in the School Survival Skills Curriculum will be examined in detail after we have described the format for delivering the SSS Curriculum to high school students and an approach to assessing competence in School Survival Skills that should be used before beginning any instructional sequence.

Format for Instruction in School Survival Skills: The Group Meeting

A weekly small-group meeting provides the format for implementing the School Survival Skills Curriculum. In a resource room program in which students receive basic skill instruction for one or two periods daily, one period a week is reserved for group instruction in school survival skills. During that period individually prescribed activities in reading, math, or written language, or tutorials in content area subjects, are set aside and students engage in a group activity designed specifically to each some aspect of the School Survival Skills Curriculum.

Because adolescents are particularly responsive to their peers, this small-group format provides an effective context for exploring, developing, and practicing

new coping skills. Peers are usually more credible than teachers as models of behavior and as sources of feedback. They provide authentic sources of social information. Peers interacting together, supporting one another, learning from one another are the backbone of the school survival skills lessons. Therefore, the School Survival Skills Curriculum is implemented in a group setting. We recommend that the curriculum be included as part of the students' schedules, and that the group meet on a regularly scheduled basis, not in a random fashion.

Ideally, the special education teacher would decide on the composition for each group by scheduling students with common skill needs or compatible personalities for given periods. But the exigencies of secondary school schedules usually preclude this. Therefore, the group composition may be quite diverse and not lend itself automatically to interactions that facilitate teaching the School Survival Skills. To overcome this constraint, the teacher must plan initial activities that will foster group cohesion and allow students to feel comfortable in a structured group environment. Teachers usually begin by helping establish the rules for what will be acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the group meeting. Generally, the teacher does not set up the rules but instead leads a discussion in which the students design the rules themselves. Although the teacher may have to enforce the rules at first, with time the group itself is encouraged to monitor individual behavior problems.

A discussion of the purpose of the group meeting should be the next step. Students require reassurance that the class will relate only to school goals and will not explore personal lives. A chart outlining general goals and sample activities to reach those goals could be introduced. Audio-visual equipment such as a polaroid camera, tape recorder, or videotape machine might also be introduced, and students could explore how multi-media equipment might be used to help them understand their present behaviors and to help them learn new behaviors.

After rules have been established and students understand the purpose of the group meeting, the teacher begins a series of activities designed to develop group cohesion. The activities are based on the concept of cooperation and sharing information among group members as a requisite to reach a goal or solve a problem. In accordance with this, one application is to create a problem which, when solved, leads to a reward for the students. Clues — of which each student is given

one — must be “pieced together” to find the solution. “Red herrings” can also be included. The “problem” can be putting together a puzzle, solving a “crime,” or following a recipe.

Following are some additional activities that can be used to facilitate group interaction:

- The students are paired randomly, and each interviews his or her partner to find out something about the student no one else knows. Each student then “introduces” the partner to the rest of the group and includes the new piece of information in the introduction.
- Each student writes down something about himself or herself that he or she thinks the group does not know. The teacher reads each statement and the group tries to match the statement to the appropriate person. (If the teacher also takes part in this activity, barriers between students and teacher may begin to break down.)
- Students (and the teacher) in turn describe themselves to the group by naming their favorite food, TV program, sport, or similar items.
- Everyone anonymously finishes the statement, “If I could be anyone, I would like to be . . .” The written responses are transferred to the chalkboard, and the group tries to match the responses to the correct persons.

Many variations of these activities can be designed and tailor-made to fit the group’s composition. Initially, students may be most comfortable with short, written responses or paired interviews because these activities structure the group interactions and are less threatening than speaking in front of the entire group. Eventually, students will feel comfortable enough to share their ideas with the whole group. The more willing the teacher is to participate in the interactions, not just by leading the group but by taking part in the activities, the more willing the students will be to participate.

The teacher has the responsibility to keep the group moving, to involve all the students, to plan activities that are appropriate for the students’ interests and experiences, and to determine when the group is ready to move from this initial phase to working on the actual School Survival Skills Curriculum. Although developing

group cohesion is essential to meeting the goals of the curriculum, it is only an enabling activity and the curriculum itself should be introduced as soon as possible.

Assessment of Student Needs in School Survival Skills

Because the program of instruction in School Survival Skills must be tailored to the needs and characteristics of the adolescents who comprise each instructional group, the teacher cannot begin to teach School Survival Skills until these needs have been assessed. And because the curriculum is taught to a group, the assessment procedures do not end with a determination of individual needs. The teacher must summarize several sets of information to ascertain common needs in each instructional group. Skills needed by all or most of the group members become the priority and focus for instruction. The teacher identifies which of the curriculum strands will be taught to each group and which objectives from within each strand will define the curriculum based on the group needs.

Sources of Information

We have found no useful tests or formal assessment tools to assess student competence in school survival skills. Instead, teachers may rely on three methods of data collection: reviewing school records, observations, and interviews.

Records. Over the student’s years of attending school, various facets of behavior and school experience are permanently recorded, and these are often accessible and useful in understanding how well the student has managed to cope. School records give an overall picture of student grades from year to year, subject by subject. They also reveal student attendance patterns. This information helps the teacher place the student’s current performance into a context. In addition to past records, current information is available in the records kept by the student’s present teachers. By assembling the information on a student’s past and present grades, attendance, behavior, and rate of progress, the special education teacher can get a clearer picture of how well the student is functioning in school.

Observations. A revealing way to assess how well a student can cope is to observe the student in a mainstreamed class. This firsthand observation gives the special educator an opportunity to note the teacher’s

expectations for the students, the classroom organization and management patterns to which students must adapt, and the extent to which the target student is using teacher-pleasing behaviors and study skills in the classroom. To contrast observation data on students in classes in which they are succeeding and in classes in which they are failing may be particularly revealing.

Figure 1 is an example of a form that entails observation by the teacher. This particular one is generated by the resource room teacher. The same basic form, minus academic areas, could be given to the student to check off areas in which he or she sees a need for help.

Observation of student behavior outside the classroom can provide additional information. By observing students interacting with peers and teachers in the halls, in the lunchroom, or in the gym, the teacher can obtain a more complete picture of behavior patterns, social skills, and ability to understand and use appropriate behavior. Observations provide information on student weaknesses and also on strengths. A student who demonstrates poor social skills and poor behavior control may need specific instruction; a student who has good social skills may serve as a leader in the instructional group and as a peer model in role playing activities.

In addition to remediating reading, math, and written language, the Resource Room helps students develop the behavior and study skills necessary for success in their mainstream classes. So that we may concentrate on the specific skills required in your class, please check off areas below in which this student needs to develop further.

Student _____ Date _____

Subject _____ Teacher _____ Period, Days _____

Study Skills

- using the text
 - table of contents
 - index
 - glossary
 - finding specific information in chapters
- taking notes or copying
 - from lecture
 - from the board
 - from the text
 - from transparencies, filmstrips
- doing homework
- taking tests
- keeping a notebook
- listening for important facts
 - from lecture
 - from A-V
- bringing necessary supplies to class
 - text
 - pencil
 - paper
 - homework
- following directions
 - oral
 - written

Academic

- reading skills
- math skills
- writing skills
- other (please specify)

Behavior

- on time
- in seat
- paying attention
- raising hand
- peer interaction
 - individual
 - small group
 - whole group

Other (please specify)

Figure 1
Information From Teacher: Behavior and Study Skills

Whenever possible, students should be observed more than once in each setting. Although the observations may be unstructured and informal, the special education teacher should keep written records of each observation by noting any evidence of deficiencies or strengths in School Survival Skills. An additional effect of observational data is that the special education teacher is able to validate information obtained from students and teachers in conversation and interviews.

Interviews. Interviews represent another way of gathering assessment information. They can help teachers determine expectations for students in mainstream classes and special education students' performance patterns in the areas of academic achievement, behavior control, teacher-pleasing behaviors, and study skills. To obtain the necessary information for planning the School Survival Skills Curriculum, regular education teachers and special education teachers must maintain mutual, ongoing dialogue. This dialogue can take place only after the special educator has established some rapport with the school faculty and has become an integral part of the school environment. Then, through both formal, prearranged meetings and informal conversations while sharing a duty period or a lunch break, special educators and regular educators have opportunities to share information about specific students' progress and needs.

Interviewing students also provides valuable assessment information. Many students are eager to share their perspective on the mainstream — the expectations of their various teachers and their own strengths and weaknesses. Interviews give students an opportunity to help shape their curriculum by defining the skills they need to learn to become more successful in school. Through the interview the teacher may also uncover areas of special interest to the students, and this information may be useful in developing motivational schemes or more stimulating lessons.

These three methods of data collection are used to compile information on critical aspects of each student's school experiences. By focusing on grades, attendance and suspension patterns, tardiness, interactions with peers and teachers, and noteworthy experiences outside of school, the special education teacher can begin to identify the needs of individual students.

Information to Collect

Student Grades. Unsatisfactory grades are common among high school students who have learning problems.

Many teachers interpret this to mean that the students lack the required academic skills to handle mainstream content area classes. In our experience, this is an incomplete interpretation. Although unsatisfactory grades may indicate deficient skills, they may also reveal that the student lacks the teacher-pleasing behavior and study skills that might permit him or her to "get by" despite relatively poor academic skills. The special educator must probe for evidence of problems other than academic deficits that contribute to these grades. Indications of inappropriate behavior patterns or poor study skills may clarify which aspects of the School Survival Skills Curriculum should be taught.

Consider, for example, the case of Bill, a poor reader who may fail social studies because the assignments require high level reading skills. If Bill could talk to the teacher and present himself as an interested, industrious student, a more positive outcome might result. He might draw the teacher's attention to another of his skills, such as his drawing ability. He could learn to negotiate with the teacher for alternative or supplementary assignments or projects that require less reading. He could learn to analyze the classroom rules and be sure that he is following them. He could learn to compensate for poor reading skills by learning how to follow directions on worksheets, how to find key words and headings in the social studies text, and how to keep a notebook.

Attendance. A major problem in today's schools is poor attendance. Many students simply do not attend classes. Students with learning problems are no exception, but these students are often systematic in their attendance patterns. They attend classes in which they are interested and successful and do not attend classes they find difficult, frustrating, or boring. In these latter classes they often receive unsatisfactory grades. Information about students' attendance patterns is frequently useful in planning the School Survival Skills Curriculum.

Many students who have erratic attendance patterns do not understand that this has a negative impact on the teacher and that it eventually results in negative attitudes toward the student, and poor grades. Some students have to be taught that neither their grades and skills nor their teachers' attitudes are likely to change unless they attend school regularly.

Suspension Rates. In examining student records, teachers should not be surprised to find that students who have poor grades and poor attendance patterns are

frequently suspended from school. Students are suspended for such things as continual absence, tardiness, failure to hand in required work, or sleeping in class. These students may need instruction within the Teacher-Pleasing Behavior strand of the School Survival Skills Curriculum. Other students are suspended either because of infractions of school rules or because of negative interactions with teachers or peers. These students should be taught the objectives within the Behavior Control strand of the School Survival Skills Curriculum. Interviews with them often reveal that they need to accept greater responsibility for their behaviors and the consequences.

Interactions with Teachers and Peers. Students with learning problems often have a "reputation" by the time they reach high school. A student's name may conjure up a specific negative image in both peers and teachers. This reputation may be more damaging to the student's interactions with peers and teachers than his or her actual behavior.

As special educators gather information about each student, they should consider the student's reputation and the kinds of interactions students actually have with peers and teachers. Does the reputation match the behavior? Has it become a self-fulfilling prophecy? Are negative interactions situation-specific (e.g., the student is unruly in classes in which the teacher requires a great deal of reading) or generalizable across situations (the student is unruly in every class)?

Consistent negative interactions in school may lead to suspension, detention, loss of privileges, or exemption from extracurricular activities. These punishments establish or confirm the student's reputation as a troublemaker, and the likelihood of "making it" becomes even more remote.

Of course, not all students with learning difficulties have consistently negative interactions. Students with positive peer and teacher interaction patterns should not be exempt from the School Survival Skills meeting but should serve as leaders for group activities in those areas.

Experiences Outside of School. Adolescents are complex people whose lives and identities are only partly defined by school. Many other experiences contribute to the person we classify as "student." Some factors in students' lives outside of school reinforce the special educators' efforts in teaching school survival skills. Others do not. Information about the student's life outside of school completes the teacher's picture of the

student and leads to selection of more realistic teaching objectives in the School Survival Skills Curriculum.

No one can know everything about all students. And one should take care not to pry into sensitive areas. Yet, certain information is critical. For example, if a student is working on study skills, the teacher would benefit from knowing if the family can support this effort at home. The student may need quiet and privacy for 30 minutes of homework. Is this possible? Can someone at home help the student practice math facts or study for a test? Will the student receive praise or acknowledgment for improved grades or for staying out of trouble for some time? If reinforcement from outside of school is not forthcoming, the teacher and student must plan accordingly. The student will have to accept more responsibility for changing his or her behavior, and the teacher will have to find a different way to reinforce new behaviors outside of school.

Other information about the student's life circumstances may help explain some behaviors. For example, a student who is chronically tardy may be irresponsible — or may have overwhelming responsibilities at home that contribute to tardiness to the first period class. The correct interpretation may help define what should be taught to this student.

Knowing something about how a student spends time outside of school is also useful. Information about a student's job or interests can help the teacher select activities and materials that are motivational.

Individual Assessment Summary

Figure 2 summarizes assessment information collected on Sidney, a ninth grade boy. Systematic use of such information leads the teacher to curricular decision making.

The teacher, Mrs. Miller, has collected and recorded information in each assessment area. She has noted that Sidney got a D in his science class. Science is his first period class, and Sidney has reported that he hates to get up in the morning and also that he doesn't like science class. Through informal observations and interviews with his other teachers, she became aware that Sidney's attendance record at other classes is fine and that his interactions with teachers and peers are usually good (although he sometimes gets into fights in the halls).

The next step is to interpret the information to see how the student's individual behaviors and experiences interrelate and the implications for instruction. The teacher in this example linked Sidney's tardiness and detention record to his science class. She concluded that Sidney needs to become aware of the relationship between his attitude and behavior and his grades. He needs structure and direction for his interactions with his science teacher.

A profile emerges. The teacher begins to identify appropriate strands from the School Survival Skills Curriculum. In the example the teacher concluded that Sidney needs instruction in Behavior Control and Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors, and she checked these areas on the Assessment Summary Form. She did not have any reason to suspect that Study Skills were poor.

Finally, the teacher selects a priority for instruction. A rating scale like that of Figure 2 is suggested. Sidney's teacher indicated that the greatest need seemed to be for instruction in Behavior Control.

Assessment of Group Needs

After collecting information on all individual students, the teacher must organize the data to identify overlaps in student needs. Figure 3 illustrates how this can be done, to create a profile of group needs. The skills representing the collective needs of the group of students become the initial focus of instruction.

The group of students represented in Figure 3 (including Sidney, whose profile is given in Figure 2) need instruction in all three curriculum strands, but the need for instruction in Behavior Control seems most acute. This is where the teacher might choose to begin the School Survival Skills Curriculum. After the initial assessment of student competence in School Survival Skills, the teacher continues to monitor student performance in the mainstream and to note evidence of progress or new problems. Through continued conversations with students, teachers, and parents, and repeated observations of student behavior, the special educator obtains new information that helps to clarify individual and

Student: Sidney		Date: September, 1980			
ASSESSMENT AREAS	ASSESSMENT INFORMATION	INTERPRETATION	STUDENT NEEDS		
			BC ¹	TPC ²	SS ³
Grades	D in science; C's in others.		X	X	
Attendance	Frequently marked tardy for 1st period science class — attendance otherwise OK	Impact of tardiness on teacher attitude — tardiness and grades related		X	
Tardiness					
Suspension					
Detention	Frequent detention for tardiness	Link detention to tardiness	X		
Interactions — with teachers — with peers	OK — sometimes gets in fights in halls			X	
Experiences: Outside of School	Works part-time at McDonald's Takes care of younger siblings at home in a.m.	Discuss with counselor parental response to his oversleeping	X		
¹ BC = Behavior Control ² TPC = Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors ³ SS = Study Skills			Rating Scale: 0 = no problem 1 = moderate problem 2 = severe problem ? = no data		
			2	1	?

Figure 2
Assessment Summary — Individual Student

Day	Period	Date		
		BEHAVIOR CONTROL	TEACHER- PLEASING BEHAVIORS	STUDY SKILLS
	<i>NAMES OF STUDENTS</i>			
	Sidney	2	2	?
	Mary Kay	2	1	?
	Tom	1	2	2
	Tim	2	1	1
	Vicky	1	1	2
	Robert	2	?	1
TOTAL:		10	7	6

Notes: Begin Behavior Awareness;
link to impact on teachers.

Code:
0 = no problem
1 = moderate problem
2 = severe problem
? = no data

Figure 3
Group Skill Summary

group needs and to define further objectives of the School Survival Skills Curriculum.

Principles of Instruction

Students who need to be taught SSS do not learn easily. If they did, they would probably have picked up these coping skills early in their school careers, by observing and modeling others, interpreting teachers' facial expressions and body language, intuiting appropriate and acceptable behaviors, and generalizing across social settings. Instruction in SSS must therefore be planned carefully and systematically if it is to be effective. New skills should be taught in three phases: presentation, practice, and mastery.

In the presentation phase the skill is introduced. The student is given a reason to learn the skill and a structure for learning it. The presentation phase is teacher-directed. The teacher enables the students to be sufficiently organized to learn the skill, makes learning the new skill relevant to the students' lives, explains what is expected from the students, and offers them appropriate strategies

for learning the skill. Many students need more than one lesson when a new skill is introduced. The presentation phase should be continued, using a variety of activities, materials, and teaching techniques, until the students are prepared to begin independent practice.

The goal of the practice phase is for students to gradually increase their competence. The teacher manipulates instructional variables so the students are engaged in activities that systematically stretch their capacities to perform. These variables include, but are not limited to: the amount of teacher direction, the immediacy of corrective feedback required, the number and type of cues, the concreteness and relevance of materials, the level of memory required in the activity, and the size of the task. Practice activities continue until the student can perform when less teacher direction is required, when feedback is delayed, when cues are no longer provided, when materials are abstract, when the level of memory required has moved from recognition to recall, and when tasks are longer and more complex.

Then the student may be said to have mastered the skill, but the mastery phase branches out in two dimensions — mastery in isolation and mastery in application. When students first demonstrate mastery, they perform the skill in a familiar environment, for an encouraging teacher, with materials that are appropriate, interesting, and consistent with those used in practice. This is mastery in isolation. While it is an essential step in the learning process, full mastery has not occurred until the student can demonstrate the ability to apply the skill in varied settings, without the teacher present, and using different materials. This is mastery in application, which completes the sequence.

The stages in a teaching sequence and the directions in which the variables of instruction change are illustrated in Figure 4. When teaching the School Survival Skills Curriculum, each skill should be taught through all four phases to increase the probability that new skills will be applied in the mainstream setting.

Teaching the Curriculum

For each of the three strands of the SSS Curriculum, we have identified a set of teaching components and a terminal behavioral objective for each component. These terminal objectives should be considered hierarchical; that is, earlier skills should be taught before later ones

VARIABLE	PRESENTATION STAGE	PRACTICE STAGE	MASTERY STAGE — ISOLATION	MASTERY STAGE — APPLICATION
Teacher Direction	Total →	Less →	Independent →	
Feedback	Immediate →	Less Immediate →	Delayed →	
Cues	Total →	Fading →	Internalized →	
Materials	Concrete →	Similar →	Similar →	Different and More Abstract
Level of Memory	Matching →	Recognition →	Recall →	
Size of Task	Few items →	More →	More →	Many items

Figure 4
Stages in a Teaching Sequence

and considered prerequisite to later ones. Figures 5, 6, and 7 give the components and terminal objectives for Behavior Control, Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors, and Study Skills. The following sections describe sample activities for each component and terminal objective. These samples suggest the types of lessons teachers might design and provide the barest outline of the curriculum. In implementing the SSS Curriculum, teachers are to expand, adapt, and modify these to provide appropriate, interesting, and motivating presentation, practice, and mastery activities for students in each unique instructional group.

Teaching Behavior Control

Component 1: Behavior Awareness. Often, students who would benefit from the SSS Curriculum are not sensitive to their own or others' behaviors. To begin the process of sensitizing students, the teacher creates a story of a typical school situation. It could center on a fight in the halls, an altercation between a teacher and a student, or a student caught with a cigarette by a security guard. The teacher reads the story and asks the students to identify how the actors in the story

Components of Strand	Terminal Objectives of Instructional Module for Component
1) Behavior awareness	1) Students will be able to identify the behaviors they exhibit in typical school situations.
2) Impact of behavior	2) Students will be able to say how their behavior in specific situations affects others.
3) Behavior consequences	3) Students will understand that the consequences they experience are the result of behaviors they exhibit.
4) Behavior options	4) Students will be able to identify options to their present behaviors in typical school situations.
5) Behavior change	5) Students will be able to identify and substitute another option to a habituated behavior which results in negative consequences (in a contrived setting).
6) Practicing change	6) Students will practice substituting a behavior option in a specific school situation when negative consequences usually occur.
7) Exerting control	7) Students will generalize their awareness and knowledge of options to any situation (school, home, job, etc.) by selecting and exhibiting behaviors that lead to positive consequences.

Figure 5
School Survival Skills
Curriculum Strand: Behavior Control

behaved (after having explained that the purpose of the activity is to have students focus on and describe student actions and reactions).

In a follow-up practice activity, the teacher presents a school situation in a story without an ending. Each student responds by discussing how he or she would act in that situation. The next activity might involve

the students' identifying how they think other students in the group typically respond to a given situation.

A final activity in learning to identify behaviors uses a real-life situation. The teacher or the student(s) recreates a recent school event that turned out badly for the student(s) involved. Students are expected to identify the behaviors they exhibited in the situation.

Components of Strand	Terminal Objectives of Instructional Module for Component
1) Rule	1) Students will be able to identify the overt and covert rules in each of their classrooms.
2) Classroom requirements	2) Students will be aware of the requirements of one classroom and be able to identify the behaviors they exhibit which match the requirements and those which do not.
3) Appropriate behaviors	3) Students will be able to identify appropriate behaviors in a variety of classroom settings.
4) Behavior change	4) Students will be able to substitute more appropriate behaviors for identified inappropriate classroom behaviors in contrived settings.
5) Using Teaching-Pleasing Behaviors	5) Students will select a mainstream teacher and an inappropriate behavior, and contract to substitute a Teacher-Pleasing Behavior in the mainstream setting.
6) Improving Teaching-Pleasing Behaviors	6) Students will generalize Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors to more settings and/or more teachers.

Figure 6
School Survival Skills
Curriculum Strand: Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors

Components of Strand	Terminal Objectives of Instructional Module for Component
1) Organizing assignments and study time	1) Students will be able to organize assignments for more efficient use of study time.
2) Following directions — written — oral	2) Students will be able to follow oral and written directions in the regular classroom setting.
3) Listening for information from lecture	3) Students will be able to listen to a lecture and identify the central theme, and facts to support that theme.
4) Locating information in a text	4) Students will be able to use the table of contents, index, and glossary to find specific information from a text.
5) Taking notes from a text	5) Students will be able to identify and record pertinent information from a textbook using an organized procedure.
6) Preparing for tests	6) Students will be able to use notes from lecture and reading to study for different types of tests.
7) Taking tests	7) Students will be able to apply strategies for taking different types of tests.

Figure 7
School Survival Skills
Curriculum Strand: Study Skills

Figure 8 shows how these four activities for the first component of the Behavior Control strand are examples of systematic teaching. Note that the presentation and practice activities involve contrived (teacher-created) situations, and the application activity is a real-life situation. Our experience has shown that students are better able, initially, to meet the demands of the task if they are not too personally involved and if the task is not too threatening. But they must be able to demonstrate, by applying the new skill in a real-life situation, that the objective has been mastered.

Component 2: Impact of Behavior. Role playing in conjunction with audio and video taping is a useful tool in helping students recognize that their behaviors have an effect on other pupils with whom they interact. The teacher creates scenarios, and the students assume various roles. A typical scenario might be a confrontation between a teacher and a group of students in the lunchroom, or a meeting between the principal and two students. The scene is taped, and the students listen to or watch the interactions.

Students are directed to recognize that others respond to their behaviors. They learn to identify the impact that a certain tone of voice or facial expression has had on

Objective	Presentation Activities	Practice Activities	Application Activities
Students will be able to identify the behaviors they exhibit in typical school situations.	Teacher-created story; students identify behaviors.	Teacher-created story without ending. Students identify how they would typically respond.	Teacher or students describe recent incident. Students identify their own behaviors.
		Teacher-created story without ending. Students identify how they think other students would typically respond.	

Figure 8
Curriculum Strand: Behavior Control
Component: Behavior Awareness

the person with whom they were interacting. They are taught to notice body language, eye contact, gestures, and voice intonations while watching the tapes.

In application activities students are asked to articulate how a certain set of their behaviors has had an impact on another person. These application activities are neither teacher-created nor contrived; they grow naturally out of the group interactions. Competency is demonstrated when students can answer a question like, "Norm, what was Jim's reaction when you put him down?"

Component 3: Behavior Consequences. This set of activities follows naturally from students' new awareness of the impact of their behaviors. In fact, some teachers may choose to combine Components 2 and 3. We have separated them to emphasize the significance of each as part of the Behavior Control strand.

In this component students become aware that both the positive and negative consequences they experience result from their own behaviors and, therefore, are within their control. To introduce this concept the teacher describes to the group a series of events with a variety of endings (or consequences). Students are asked to choose the appropriate ending based on the behaviors of the students in each vignette. The teacher then leads a group discussion. Students are helped to recognize that consequences occur because of earlier behaviors: If Student A hits Student B in the presence of a teacher, the negative consequence that ensues to Student A (being suspended) is a result of Student A's behavior (hitting Student B). Students are encouraged to understand that consequences (in this case, suspension) do not occur randomly and do not occur simply because the teacher does not like the student. Rather, consequences are the result of behaviors the student exhibits.

In application activities students identify the behavior(s) they exhibited in a recent interaction that ended negatively. When students change their response to the question, "Why are you being punished?" from "I dunno" to "I did . . ." they have mastered this component.

Components 4 and 5: Behavior Options/Behavior Change. As students begin to deal with the knowledge that their behaviors may lead to negative consequences, they need to understand that their behavior patterns are not fixed, even though many of their responses are quite automatic. They have to come to realize that alternative

ways of behaving are possible. One activity involves introducing a typical school situation and listing several ways in which students might behave. Students are asked to identify potential consequences for each of the options presented. In a second activity the teacher describes another typical school situation, and the students are asked to think of all the possible responses they can for that situation. The students then break into smaller groups and each group puts the alternative behaviors in order from least likely to produce negative consequences to most likely.

Another activity involves a teacher-made game. Using a simple game board with spaces and dice, students roll the dice and land on either blank spaces or situation spaces. If a player lands on a blank space, the next student takes a turn. Any player who lands on a situation space draws a situation card. The card describes a school situation, a behavior option, and a consequence. If the behavior has led to a positive consequence, the student takes another turn. He or she loses a turn if the consequence is negative. The first student to reach the "finish" space wins the game.

Another useful activity involves role playing. The teacher creates a variety of situations for the students to act out. The students take turns playing the main character, who role plays three behaviors: one that will lead to a positive consequence, one to a neutral consequence, and one to a negative consequence. Students demonstrate mastery of this component when they can consistently identify the behavior options that lead to positive consequences.

Component 5: Behavior Change. At this point students begin to apply the earlier competencies they have learned. They identify one of their current behaviors that leads to negative consequences and work on substituting a more appropriate behavior *in a contrived setting* — for example, during group meetings in the resource room. This affords the student an opportunity to become more comfortable with a new behavior in a supportive environment. It also allows students to have responses from their peers as to how the new behavior appears. Is it sincere? Is it appropriate? Is it consistent?

Component 6: Practicing Change. The next step is for the student to practice the behavior *in a specific school situation*. If, for example, the new behavior is to make eye contact when talking with someone, the student may decide to practice it in a social studies class. Students are taught to monitor and record how often they practice the new behavior and what responses they

receive. The student might carry a simple form on an index card to record this data, under the headings: Behavior, Date, Time, Who, and Response.

We recommend that several different behaviors be included in components 5 and 6 (Behavior Change and Practicing Change) until the students' day-to-day interactions or school records reflect that they are exerting control and changing previously negative consequences.

Component 7: Exerting Control. Students must apply all the skills learned in the Behavior Control strand. They must demonstrate that they have accomplished all the objectives by exhibiting more appropriate behaviors in a variety of settings in and outside of school. Changes in student behavior can be verified both by student self-reports and by talking with school personnel and parents. Further verification should come from school records indicating a decline in the number of suspensions, detentions, demerits, or similar factors. Even when students seem to be controlling behavior at this high level, teachers should return to activities in the Behavior Control strand regularly to review skills with students — just as they review arithmetic algorithms or punctuation rules.

Teaching Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors

Component 1: Rules. Secondary school teachers generally have definite expectations for student behaviors, but they are seldom explicit about these classroom rules. Furthermore, the rules are not always the same from teacher to teacher or class to class. Students need to be able to identify both the overt and covert rules in all their classes. Before they can do that, they must understand that rules are necessary, that rules may be fair or unfair, but that failure to follow teachers' rules has consequences. They must also understand the difference between overt and covert rules. To begin, the teacher engages the student in a familiar game, then suddenly announces that no rules will be in effect during the next five minutes. A follow-up group discussion centers on what happened when no rules were in force.

In a second activity, the teacher asks the students to give examples of circumstances in which rules are necessary and when they are not. To reinforce the idea

that some rules are necessary, the students read a teacher-created, open-ended story of an episode in which rules are suspended. Students discuss how the story would end if rules would be reinstated and if they would not.

Next, students list the rules they must follow in the world outside of school, and the group discusses which of the rules seem legitimate and which do not. The teacher might use traffic signals as an example: Are traffic lights as necessary in the middle of the night as during the middle of the day? Should one have to wait for a red light to turn green at 1:00 a.m.? What are the possible consequences of not waiting for the light to change? This same task could be repeated, but focusing on school rules. Students identify the school rules and discuss which they feel are needed and which seem unfair. A discussion of the consequences of not following school rules follows naturally. At this time the teacher should introduce the concept of overt and covert rules. Students list the types of classroom behaviors that lead to negative consequences. For each behavior listed, they supply the consequence and the rule that was broken. The teacher then asks them how they knew a rule existed. Figure 9 is an example of one final product from this activity. The various answers to "How did you know it

Behavior	Consequence	Rule Broken	How did you know?
Didn't do homework	Failing	Must hand in homework	Teacher said so
Swore at teacher	Sent to office	Can't swear in class	Everyone knows that
Late to class	Detention	Be on time to class	Posted on board
Punched Tony	Suspension	No fighting	Posted on board
Talked to friend	Teacher yelled	Can't talk in class	Teacher said so
Didn't answer teacher's question	Teacher got mad	Answer when called on	I just know
Took money	Suspension	No stealing	School rule
Cut class	Detention	Must attend	Posted on board
Misbehaved for substitute	Lowered grade	Behave for substitutes	Teacher told us later

Figure 9
Example of Student Responses to Activity Involving Overt and Covert Rules

was a rule?" demonstrate the difference between overt rules (those posted) and covert rules.

In the application activity students are to list the rules for each class they attend. Then they are to indicate which rules are overt and which are covert.)

Component 2: Classroom Requirements. Students with learning problems often feel inadequate in academic classes and take the position that they cannot succeed. To help them begin to recognize that they might be successful in those environments, a first activity could be to have the students list all the behaviors on which teachers base grades. A typical list generated from this activity is shown in Figure 10.

Turning in homework	Having the textbook
Coming to class on time	Grades on tests
Not cutting	Answering questions
Staying in your seat	Working quietly
Not talking to your friends	Not going to the bathroom
Not swearing	Raising your hand to talk
Having a pencil and notebook	

Figure 10
An Example of Students' Listing of "What Teachers Base Grades On"

After the students have completed the list, the teacher asks the students which of the items on the list require reading or writing skills. As a result, the students will become aware that grades are based in large part on behaviors that even academically deficient students can exhibit.

Each student chooses one class in which he or she is having problems and generates a list of behaviors on which the teacher of that class bases grades. The students identify which of the classroom requirements they are meeting. They then compare their own behaviors over a one-week period with those of another student who is more successful. Students might use notecards similar to the one shown in Figure 11.

Component 3: Appropriate Behaviors. The last activity in Component 2 leads naturally into this area. The teacher directs a discussion on the observable, non-academic behaviors exhibited by a "good student." Students generally characterize a "good student" as one who: attends class regularly, comes on time, is prepared (with pencil, books, etc.), and follows the overt rules for "good" behavior. Many students, however, fail to notice additional verbal and nonverbal behaviors that contribute to the impression of a "good student": tone of

Classroom Requirements	Me	Jimmy
Contributed in class	I	LLL III
Raised hand	II	LLL
Brought pencil and notebook	II	LLL
Handed in homework	O	III
Came on time	III	LLL

Figure 11
Behavior Comparison Chart

voice, eye contact, posture, displays of effort. The teacher elicits these from the group by using some of the role playing or audio-video taping activities described in the Behavior Control strand. If these activities have already been introduced, the teacher may only have to remind students of them and help them bridge the gap from general behavior awareness to awareness of specific classroom behaviors. If these activities have not been used, this would be an appropriate time to introduce them.

An application activity for this component might be for each student to identify appropriate behaviors for various classes. The ability to do the activity would indicate mastery of the component.

Component 4: Behavior Change. Now that students have identified classroom requirements and "good" behaviors, they are ready to attempt to choose appropriate behaviors and practice them during group meetings or at other times in the special education class. The behaviors to be changed are ones students have identified as those that get them into trouble with mainstream teachers and ones that they have chosen to change. The risk that students will return to former, more automatic behavior patterns is reduced when they are able to articulate that a behavior is inappropriate and that they will attempt to change it.

The teacher's role is to help the student find a way to remember to try the new, more positive behavior and to reward the student when he or she consistently substitutes the appropriate behavior for the inappropriate one. The nature of the reward and the schedule for delivering the reward should be negotiated between student and teacher. For example, if a consistently tardy student is going to try to come to class on time, the student and teacher may decide that the student will earn 20 minutes to listen to a record album if he or

she exhibits this on-time behavior 90 percent of the time over a two-week period. At this point, students are asked only to demonstrate mastery of this component in isolation. Once the student has changed an inappropriate behavior in the special education setting, he or she is ready to generalize the behaviors.

Components 5 and 6: Using and Improving Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors. These components represent the mastery in application phase of the teacher-pleasing behavior skills. Students begin to substitute more appropriate behaviors in several of their mainstream classes and perhaps even demonstrate that they can generalize these behaviors and exhibit "boss-pleasing behaviors," "parent pleasing behaviors," and so forth.

A useful technique is to have students enlist their classroom teachers as they practice new behaviors. They explain to the teachers that they are going to try to come to class on time, turn in homework, be prepared, and so on. Each day they present the teacher a simple chart like that of Figure 12. The teacher is asked to initial the items the student has fulfilled that day. This chart is a constant reminder to the student of the behaviors he or she is working on, and it also alerts the teacher to the efforts the student is making in class.

Behavior	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Be on time					
Have book					
Have pencil					
Turn in homework					

Figure 12
Suggested Chart for Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors

Students who learn to use teacher-pleasing behaviors report that their grades improve and their interactions with teachers are generally more positive. The TPB strand appears to be most helpful to students who seem to have given up. They do not come to class on time or do not attend at all; they do not carry books and pencils; they do not hand in homework; their body language and attitudes indicate disinterest; they no longer believe that they can be successful in school. Instructing these students in the components of the Teacher-Pleasing Behaviors strand is a concrete way to change their defeatist, failure-ridden attitudes. In our experience, it is a much more successful approach than the hackneyed refrain, "If you would only try harder."

Teaching Study Skills

An appropriate time to begin a unit on study skills is shortly before the first report cards are issued. During the group meeting students are given a sheet of paper with each of their class subjects listed vertically down the left side, and two columns headed across the top by "Grade I Think I'll Get" and "Grade I Got." They record the grades they think they will receive. After students receive their report cards, they compare their actual grades with their predictions. Invariably there will be some discrepancies. The teacher should discuss with the students why the grades they received were different from those they had anticipated. The students then are to sort their grades into two categories: "OK" grades and "Not OK" grades. They analyze reasons for the "not OK" grades and try to identify the differences in academic and social behaviors between the classes in which they received "OK" and "not OK" grades. Analyses of this kind encourage the students to take responsibility for their grades and for their behaviors. Finally, each student selects one "not OK" class in which to focus by applying new study skills, as described in the following paragraphs.

Component 1: Getting Organized. This component covers three areas of organization: notebook, time, and assignments.

Organizing a notebook: Students are required to keep and use a notebook in many of their classes. The notebook is supposed to help students collect relevant class information in an organized way. It provides a format for students to keep track of their assignments. Teachers check to see if the student's work is current. Often, students are graded on the quality of their notebooks.

Activities involving organizing a notebook first ask students to identify which teachers require a notebook, how the teacher wants it used, and the purpose of the notebook in that class. Then the group is exposed to two sample notebooks. Each is a three-ring binder containing folders with pockets, color-tabbed dividers, and several sheets of paper, including vocabulary lists, worksheets, study guides, two quizzes, and an assignment sheet. Some of the papers are wrinkled; others are torn. The students are divided into two groups. Each group gets one of the notebooks and "grades" it according to neatness and organization. Then the students modify the notebook so it will receive an improved grade. The two groups compare their evaluations of the notebooks and

their improvements. The teacher records their findings, and the entire group creates some basic guidelines for organizing notebooks.

Next, students bring their own notebooks to the group and spend time analyzing and improving them. The students can use group time to redo their notebooks, with the guidelines developed during previous group meetings as reference points.

As students learn to create acceptable notebooks, they can begin to use them in their mainstream classes. Responses from mainstream teachers and students' own reports on the effectiveness of the notebooks reinforce the students for taking part in this set of activities.

Organizing time: To make students more aware of how they spend their time, they could be asked to keep a schedule for one week, recording what kinds of activities occupy their time from school dismissal until bedtime. The activities are recorded in half-hour segments. A sample activity log is given in Figure 13.

In analyzing their logs after one week, most students will recognize that several slots each day *could* be used for studying. The students are to compare their logs, discuss what they do during after-school hours, and allot study time. They continue to record their after-school activities for one more week to see if their study time increases. Logs are compared again after that week, and students who have increased their study time are given some type of reward or bonus.

Organizing assignments: Students frequently say they have no homework, no tests to study for, and no project due, when in reality they cannot remember what their assignments are. To help them keep track of assignments, the students could talk about and then create some possible assignment sheets. Figure 14 is an example of a student-created assignment sheet. The teacher makes copies of the various assignment sheets for everyone, and group members practice using them.

In an accompanying activity the students might be asked to create a series of assignments that approximate those typically delivered by classroom teachers. They write each assignment on a separate card and place the cards in the middle of a table. The students take turns role playing a teacher, by taking a card, standing before the group, and "giving the assignment." The other students use the newly designed assignment sheets to record the assignments. This activity affords the students immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the various assignment sheets. It also provides practice in listening

for important information and recording it in an organized way. During the activity students role play "student" as well as teacher. They practice raising their hands and asking for information to be repeated or to be written on the board.

Component 2: Following Written Directions. Students should be made more aware of the impact of written directions on their everyday lives. Through discussion and demonstration, group members can generate evidence to this effect. Job applications, instruction manuals, bus schedules, telephone directories, and labels on products verify the importance of being able to interpret and follow written directions. To reinforce

this concept, the teacher might use a cooking activity in which each student must follow the directions for one of the steps. This activity has the additional benefit of an edible reward for following directions and for working cooperatively with other group members to achieve a goal.

A number of activities may be required to reinforce the importance of attending to written directions and to help students develop their skills in this area. Some of these activities might involve group discussions on the many contexts within the school where following written directions is essential — the school handbook,

Name _____ Week _____

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
3:30-4:00 p.m.					
4:00-4:30 p.m.					
4:30-5:00 p.m.					
5:00-5:30 p.m.					
5:30-6:00 p.m.					
6:00-6:30 p.m.					
6:30-7:00 p.m.					
7:00-7:30 p.m.					
7:30-8:00 p.m.					
8:00-8:30 p.m.					
8:30-9:00 p.m.					
9:00-9:30 p.m.					
9:30-10:00 p.m.					
10:00-10:30 p.m.					
10:30-11:00 p.m.					

POSSIBLE CATEGORIES

- TV
- Eating
- Family
- Friends
- Outdoors
- Nothing
- Telephone
- Talking
- Messing Around
- Work/Chores

Figure 13
Sample Form for Organizing Study Time

bulletin board announcements, hall posters, worksheets, tests, and textbooks, to name just a few.

Component 3: Listening. Typically, adolescents have highly refined, if selective, listening skills. When asked to recite lyrics from a "hit" song, they do so with ease. With a cue to a TV commercial, they readily fill in the rest. But they need to generalize these listening skills to school situations in attending to oral directions, key facts, and central ideas in the classroom.

One suggested listening activity entails either the teacher or one of the students reading aloud an interesting set of paragraphs, such as a write-up of Saturday's football game, a description of a rock concert, or a portion of a horror story. Then the students try to paraphrase what they heard and assess who could most accurately restate the content. The "reader" could also create five or six questions based on the content and see which listeners can answer them most accurately. The school's TV or radio could be utilized for this type of

"listener's quiz," with new or other broadcasts as a basis.

As another activity, the teacher might tape the same material three or four times, but omit increasing amounts of information with each recording. The listeners would then "fill in the blanks" as practice in attending to relevant information.

Materials to enhance listening may have to be highly motivating to the students at first. But material from actual classes should be introduced as soon as possible so they can begin to apply their listening skills to the prevailing oral language, style, and content of their regular classes. For example, students might obtain permission from a classroom teacher to tape part of an oral presentation, and this tape could be used for listening tasks. Or students may select one class as a target and be responsible for bringing back to the next group meeting a specified number of "facts" from an oral presentation in that class. Several students from the same class might compare the information they remember.

NAME:

Leo

Week of:

March 16

Day	Class	Assignment	Date Due
Monday	<i>English Science</i>	<i>Read pages 117-128. Do questions Turn paper</i>	<i>Wednesday March 26</i>
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Notes:			

Figure 14
Sample Assignment Sheet

Activities that afford the students practice in following oral directions are appropriately introduced at this point. One such activity involves preparing Language Master® cards, each with an instruction such as, "Find a social studies book and turn to page 80," or "Go to the board and write your name backwards." The Language Master is connected to a listening post, and each student has a set of headphones with which to listen to the directions on the cards. The activity itself can develop in a number of ways. For instance, students might take turns selecting a card, putting it through the Language Master, and following the directions. Or they could each create their own directions cards, pool them, and practice following each other's directions.

To increase the interest level, the initial items could be silly or humorous, but eventually the students should create a set of cards with oral directions typical of those used by their regular classroom teachers. In developing an appropriate set of directions, students could be asked to pay attention to all oral directions in their classes for one week and come to the group meeting with a collection of these directions.

Variations of the above activities include using a tape recorder in lieu of a Language Master; or writing out the oral directions on index cards or strips of paper, taking turns being the teacher, and reading the directions aloud while other group members take turns following them.

Component 4: Locating Information. Before engaging in actual activities, the students should be given a multiple-choice pre-test to determine their knowledge of textbook components and their ability to use an index, a table of contents, and so forth to locate information. This should be followed by a discussion that emphasizes the need for understanding how textbooks are organized.

Then, one activity involves placing several texts, each from a different content area, in various locations of the room. The students sit at a table, in the center of which is a pile of colored index cards. The color of the card has been coded to one of the texts (e.g., social studies - blue; math - red, etc.) Each student picks a card, goes to the area of the room where the text is, and uses it to follow the directions on the card. Each card contains three (or other number of) items such as, "What is the title of Chapter 3 in the history text?" "Use the index in the science text to find the page with

information about gorillas." "The glossary of the math text has a definition for *fraction*. What is the definition, and on what page did you find it?"

The students record their findings on an answer sheet that has been placed next to the text. When they finish, they return with their texts to the central table. After all group members have completed their tasks and are at the table, each student in turn reads his or her items and demonstrates how he or she used the textbook to find the answers. This way students have an opportunity for immediate corrective feedback on their answers. Moreover, they have an opportunity to learn by watching other group members use textbooks to find specific information. If desirable, the activity could be turned into a competitive game, with points awarded for finishing first and for each correct use of the text.

In the follow-up activity, students come to the group meeting a week later with a textbook they are using in a mainstream class, along with an assignment. The students exchange books and make up questions for each other that require use of the index, glossary, or table of contents. Next, students look at their class assignments and determine how to use the textbooks to find the information.

Variations of these activities can be devised to give students practice in using reference books like a dictionary, an encyclopedia, an atlas, or the *Reader's Guide*. The format for the series of activities can remain basically the same. First the teacher determines that the students lack the ability to locate information efficiently in reference books. The students then are directed to consult the sources and review their organizational components. The teacher should consider the motivational factor when selecting topics for students to "research" as practice in locating information in various reference books.

Component 5: Developing Notetaking Skills. For students to become competent in taking notes, activities should stress how to listen to and look at information systematically. Students may have to be taught that information is usually presented in a structured way and that they must look for cues and use them to record relevant information.

For example, in teaching that chapters within a text follow a consistent pattern, each student in the group might be asked to bring one of his or her texts from the regular classroom. First the teacher points out that key words and ideas are highlighted in the book (italicized

or listed at the beginning of each chapter or set in bold type, etc.) Then students practice finding and copying headings and sub-headings within chapters and locating information summaries and chapter check-ups. Also, they learn to look at pictures, charts, graphs, photographs, maps, time lines, number lines, and any accompanying captions as sources of information.

Component 6: Preparing for Tests. Studying can be described as the process of assimilating key information and remembering it. It is systematic preparation for a demonstration of knowledge.

To help students learn how to study for tests, they must first learn to look at their sources (e.g., notebooks, notes, word lists, study guides) and organize the information available. The next step is to commit this information to memory. Students may benefit from working in pairs or small groups to study and master the content. They could make tapes for themselves or for each other and study from these. They also may have to communicate with their teachers about their problems in taking tests and the possibilities of arranging alternative ways of demonstrating competence. Finally, systems for organizing and remembering information, such as SQ3R, are introduced and the students practice learning an appropriate system.

Component 7: Taking Tests. The steps involved in taking tests include reading directions, asking questions for clarification if necessary, going through the test item-by-item answering the items that are known and skipping those that are not known, and coming back to answer unknown items as time permits. Teachers should outline these steps to the students and as a subsequent practice activity, teach them how to create cue cards for themselves.

Later, using actual tests as vehicles for teaching how to take tests will help students recognize that tests represent an obstacle they can overcome. These tests should be adaptations of what the students face regularly. Thus, if content teachers typically include true-false, multiple choice, or matching sections on their

tests, several practice tests should be created for each type of test item.

CONCLUSION

The School Survival Skills Curriculum we have proposed purposely links special education content to mainstream requirements. This curriculum is considered to be mastered only after the students have demonstrated the competencies in their content area classes. We believe that installing such a curriculum for secondary students with learning handicaps is one way to facilitate integration of these students into mainstream education.

Students who have had this curriculum generally report better interactions with peers and adults, more passing grades, and fewer altercations with authority figures. Teachers report that the students seem to be better prepared, more involved in their classes, and less abrasive in social situations.

Of course, the curriculum has not worked for all the students who have been exposed to it. Some have continued to be suspended and receive failing grades. Others have dropped out of school. We acknowledge that the School Survival Skills Curriculum will not solve all the problems of adolescents with learning problems. No single curriculum could do that. Nevertheless, our experience suggests that a curriculum like that described here can be a crucial component of a comprehensive model of services.

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