

SAMPLE PACK

Universal Design for Learning **in Action**

100 WAYS to
Teach All Learners



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Jobs

Create authentic classroom jobs. Job charts are ubiquitous in classrooms. To engage all students, classroom jobs should be more than just busy work. Titles for jobs should be the same as professional positions so that students can gain experience in areas of interest while feeling their efforts have a true impact on the classroom community. Rather than rotating small jobs to every student for a brief time, consider offering complex jobs needing many workers that are assigned for longer stretches so that students can develop higher level skills and solve problems relating to the work. Realistically not everyone in a community holds every job, but each person should do something to contribute to the community. Some people explore various jobs throughout their career, whereas others maintain one job over time.

Try This

Christopher Simmons, a fifth-grade teacher, has students apply and interview for positions of Class Captain (takes care of morning attendance and lunch count and facilitates class meetings), Archivist (manages lesson materials and distributes handouts), Fire Chief (leads the line and takes attendance during a fire drill), Chairman of the Boards (cleans the whiteboards and sets up the SMART Board), Mail Carrier (delivers notes, paperwork to the office or other classrooms), Zookeeper (feeds class pets and cleans the habitats), Interior Designer (creates bulletin board displays), Librarian (manages the books and bins in the class library), Tech Specialist (turns on and off equipment as needed), Classroom Super (manages classroom clean-up), Gofer (fetches supplies or information from areas of the classroom or school), and Social Committee Members (plan parties and other events).

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Johnson and Thomas (2009) indicated that jobs that matter are part of caring classrooms that promote a sense of community, feelings of empowerment, and moral sensibility.
- **Student involvement.** Creating classroom jobs facilitates the highest level of student involvement. It makes it possible for teachers to step back and allow the students to completely run certain aspects of the classroom. Students can actively apply, interview, and evaluate their own and others' job performances.
- **Reasonable use.** Training for the jobs will take more time at the beginning of the school year but will quickly diminish when students teach each other.
- **Expectations maintained.** Classroom jobs up the ante for students in terms of responsibility and self-management. In addition to academics, students are expected to maintain the physical classroom and contribute to the community, which is a lifelong skill.

(continued)



- **Equity and universality.** The authentic nature of the jobs, the choices provided, and the expectation that *all* students will contribute to the classroom sends the message that the classroom belongs to everyone and is the responsibility of everyone.

► IF ... THEN ◀

If classroom jobs are used so that the teacher can determine level of independence and mastery on a daily or weekly basis while students practice and demonstrate job-related skills, then this can also be a strategy for **Assessment.**

ASSESSMENT





Meetings

Hold regular class meetings. Called many things—class meetings, morning meetings, class circles—and using many formats, these structured and regular times serve to engage students of all ages in their learning and classroom environment. Morning meetings, as outlined by Kriete (2002), consist of greeting, sharing, a group activity, and a morning message. The purposes of regular morning meetings are to set a tone of respect and trust that lasts throughout the day and beyond school walls; to address the needs to feel significant and to have fun; to repeat ordinary moments of respect so that students are able to interact in extraordinary ways; and to merge social, emotional, and intellectual learning.

Try This



Class meetings

Dr. Walter Cooper Academy (<http://www.rcsdk12.org/10>), a K–8 school built on the expeditionary learning model of engaging inquiry-based curriculum and development of positive school culture, starts every day with morning meeting time. Each classroom conducts its own meeting on most days, but on Wednesday mornings, the whole school gathers for a schoolwide meeting led by Principal Camaron Clyburn.

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Kriete (2002); Nelson, Lott, and Glenn (2000); and Kohn (2006) described how class meetings develop a sense of belonging, empowerment, and capability in students. Class meetings provide students with decision-making opportunities so that they are more engaged and invested in the classroom community.
- **Student involvement.** The structure and routine of class meetings prepares students to eventually take over the meetings and facilitate them independently.
- **Reasonable use.** Class meetings are very simple, but their implementation is a process. Adhering to a predictable routine and scaffolding respectful interactions may take a few weeks or so depending on individual student needs.
- **Expectations maintained.** Class meetings uphold high expectations for students to collaboratively share, make decisions, plan, and reflect.

(continued)



- **Equity and universality.** Rapp and Arndt (2012) asserted that class meetings are one way to engage students by showing them they are welcome in the classroom. By allowing students to share responsibility for creating a safe and supportive environment, you show them that the classroom and its community belongs to everyone.

IF ... THEN

If the meetings are used to offer a responsive context for demonstrating social skills, then this can also be a strategy for **Output**.

OUTPUT



Games

Collect board and card games. What's more engaging than a board game or card game—especially if there are many to choose from? Playing a game is an excellent way to reinforce many academic and social skills, but it does not feel like skill practice. There are several adapted games and game pieces to meet various physical, sensory, or cognitive needs, for example, large foam dice or dice with raised markers and numerals printed on each side, checker and chess pieces with pegs on the bottom that fit easily into holes on the board, and magnetic boards so pieces stay put.

Try This



Games

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Games are a fun and effective way to build skills, such as negotiating, taking turns, following rules, being a gracious winner or loser, sharing, patience, and strategizing (Lavoie, 2005a).
- **Student involvement.** Students are responsible for set up, cleanup, and maintenance of the games. Self-reflection sheets included in each game box can be completed individually or collaboratively by the players. Questions on the sheet might be, “Was playing this game a good use of your time for practicing ____?” or “How could you modify the rules of the game in order to practice ____?”
- **Reasonable use.** Games are relatively inexpensive, ranging from \$5 to \$20, or they can be found at garage sales for considerably less. Only one of each game is typically needed for the whole classroom to share, although having multiple decks of cards is a good idea. A few new games each year builds an impressive classroom library of engaging teaching tools. One classroom planned a game drive that outfitted several rooms with many gently used or new games.
- **Expectations maintained.** If you walked by a classroom full of students playing board or card games, you might assume it was free time. However, very effective academic and social skill learning is truly taking place!
- **Equity and universality.** The teacher's job is to offer choice in games and grouping while making careful note as to which students consistently choose or avoid a certain activity. One way to encourage students to move outside of their comfort zone on occasion is to set up carefully planned game stations and have small groups rotate through. All of the games should be accessible to everyone.

IF ... THEN

If games are used so that the teacher can observe and gather a great deal of formative evaluation information, then this could also be a strategy for **Assessment**.

ASSESSMENT





Grouping

Use various grouping. Changing up the grouping for classroom lessons or activities provides everyone with their most engaging situation. It is important for everyone to have practice at times working alone, in pairs, in small groups, and in large groups, but students should have times when they can choose, too. For the times when the teacher selects the group size, having prearranged groups will save a lot of transition time. At the beginning of each marking period, write each student's name on an index card. Create groups by labeling the cards with symbols (e.g., numbers, letters, stickers, words) so that each student is grouped with different classmates in various group sizes. Now all you need to say is “number groups” or “animal groups” depending on the size group that is most appropriate.

Try This



Grouping cards

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Cooperative learning in the classroom has positive effects on academic achievement, relationships, the development of English proficiency, acceptance of diverse students, self-esteem, liking of self and others, and attitudes toward school and teachers (Success for All, 2012). In addition, research shows that independent learning can increase student motivation, academic achievement, and self-regulatory skills (Meyer, Haywood, Sachdev, & Faraday, 2008), indicating that various grouping is important.
- **Student involvement.** Once students have been in each grouping situation and have been given ample opportunity to select their own arrangements, they should be involved in reflecting on appropriate group sizes for various activities and reflecting on the arrangements they find most or least helpful.
- **Reasonable use.** The only resource needed is time. It takes some time initially to create grouping cards, and it takes a few minutes to have students choose or form groups.
- **Expectations maintained.** When students are in groups larger than two, it is important to carefully assess the performance of each group and to scaffold accountability by all group members.
- **Equity and universality.** As long as students are sometimes provided with choice in group size and members, as well as an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness, this is a responsive strategy that promotes citizenship and inclusion in the classroom.

IF ... THEN

If small groups are used so that students can cooperatively formulate and present their work and responses, then this can also be a strategy for **Output**.

OUTPUT



Schedules

Create classroom schedule variations. An agenda helps frame the day for everyone. There are many different ways to display the daily schedule or agenda so that everyone can use and apply it. Golden (2012) shared a fantastic example that incorporates needed information in several ways. A vertical chart with four columns displays the time in two ways (analog and digital) and the event in two ways (text and picture). Once each event is past, a “finished” sign is placed over the event. In addition to an enlarged schedule such as this posted in the classroom, individual students could have customized schedules taped to their desks with text, icons, pictures, and braille that depict events unique to that student.

Try This



Class schedule

Why This Works

- **Research base.** A clear, predictable schedule of the school day cultivates student productivity and greater opportunity for learning (Kamps, 2002).
- **Student involvement.** The schedules should be interactive. Students should be able to assemble the daily schedule themselves and check off events, remove events, and post the “finished” signs as the day progresses.
- **Reasonable use.** The only costs associated with the handmade schedules are for materials (e.g., poster board, Velcro) and laminating. They require time ahead to make the event units and times.
- **Expectations maintained.** Expectations of students can be increased. They now have a way to manage their own time.
- **Equity and universality.** The schedule variation described by Golden (2012) can be accessed by readers and nonreaders, novice and advanced time-tellers. It meets the needs of students who need the predictability of what is coming next and how long it will last.

IF ... THEN

If schedules are used to relieve students' stress about what to expect in the daily schedule so that they can be more productive, then this can also be a strategy for **Output**.

OUTPUT





Syn-naps

Take Syn-naps. Whew! We have been busy. The neurons in our brains have been releasing neurotransmitters to carry information to the next neuron in order to create a pathway of new knowledge. It is time for a brain rest. Brains need naps like bodies need naps. Willis (2006) used the term *syn-naps* to describe the periodic rests needed to replenish neurotransmitters and allow executive functions to process information. One- to two-minute breaks should be worked into lessons about every 15 minutes. Simply have students move, stretch, sing, dance, or use the bathroom, then sit back down. Once the break is over, be sure to help the students make a meaningful connection to the material just learned so that they can move it from their working memory to their long-term memory. For example, “How are input strategies like vitamins?”



Try This

When Jamie Nells, a fifth-grade teacher, notices his students losing focus, he has them “touch the tree.” The tree is across the schoolyard. He is lucky enough to have an exit near his classroom from which he can see the tree and students at all times. It takes the whole class less than 3 minutes to touch the tree and return to the lesson, rejuvenated.



Why This Works

- **Research base.** When neurotransmitters are depleted, students become restless and distracted. If a break is not given, stress can build up in the amygdala and block processing of new information and storage of new information (Willis, 2006).
- **Student involvement.** Students can be in charge of when they need a break. One of the class jobs assigned can be Amygdala Regulator, a student who signals for a break every 15 minutes or when he or she notices fidgety behavior.
- **Reasonable use.** Breaks are free and do not require special training, but the solidifying activity does require knowledge of lesson closure techniques and must be planned and ready when the break ends.
- **Expectations maintained.** Some teachers may feel like frequent breaks take away from time on task, but really they increase the quality of time on task a great deal. Mr. Nells attests to this.
- **Equity and universality.** Everyone needs a break and should be given one even if his or her work is not done. Denying a break should *never* be used as a consequence in the classroom. That would be the same as withholding teaching or learning opportunities. Also, make sure everyone has the support he or she needs to participate in the break if you choose to do a physical activity (e.g., stretching, yoga, touching the tree).

IF ... THEN

If syn-naps are used to help maintain positive emotional states, then this can also be a strategy for **Engagement**.

ENGAGEMENT



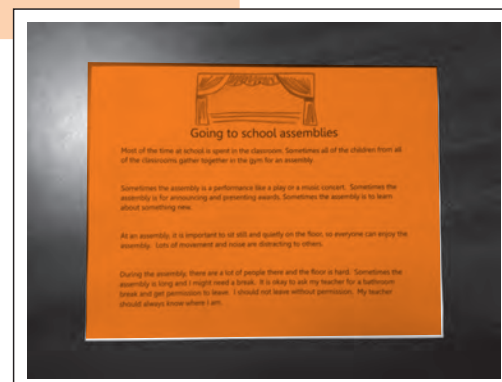


Social Stories

Use purchased or self-created Social Stories.

In addition to academic content, sometimes students need support to learn about the complex social context of school. Many expectations for appropriate behaviors and reactions in certain situations are not directly taught. Social Stories can provide support needed. Social Stories are brief narratives that share accurate, meaningful information about a situation that helps students understand what is happening. They can be used for temporary events (e.g., substitute teacher, fire drills, change in daily schedule) or more complex long-term situations (e.g., divorce, moving, new sibling).

Try This



Social Stories

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Gray (2010) described the benefits and purposes of Social Stories, addressed how to create your own Social Stories, and provided several prewritten stories.
- **Student involvement.** Students can be involved in deciding which Social Stories are needed.
- **Reasonable use.** Social Story resources are available from The Gray Center web site (<http://www.thegraycenter.org>), or you can create your own.
- **Expectations maintained.** Some students react in ways we do not expect given unpredictable or confusing situations. We need to support students in better understanding the situation, not try to train them to behave or react differently. We need to provide supports in the environment to meet their needs, not change the students. They are fine just the way they are.
- **Equity and universality.** All students should have access to Social Stories, particularly stories that have an impact on the whole class (e.g., fire drills). Everyone can benefit to some degree from better understanding unpredictable situations.

IF . . . THEN

If Social Stories are used to support more effective responses in certain situations as the students' comfort level increases, then this can also be a strategy for

Output.

OUTPUT





Social Skill Autopsy

Implement a social skill autopsy to teach new skills.

Some students are able to pick up on subtle social skills to determine appropriate behavior in a variety of settings. These students learn quickly and easily from mistakes so that they are not repeated. Other students have difficulty picking up on the many nuances of social expectations and may not be able to figure out what went wrong in a given situation in which they may have offended someone or otherwise acted inappropriately. The purpose of the social skill autopsy is to walk a student through this complex process by analyzing a specific social skill error and planning the behavioral options that could be implemented to improve interactions in the future. The steps to follow are to ask the student what happened, identify the mistakes made, assist in determining alternatives, share a similar scenario, and give social homework so that the student can practice in a real-life situation.



Try This



Social skill autopsy



Why This Works

- **Research base.** Lavoie (2005b) developed the social skill autopsy to be a structured, constructive, problem-solving strategy that provides an opportunity to learn in a realistic setting, as opposed to a punishment for unintentional errors. It is more effective than role playing, demonstrations, or theoretical discussions.
- **Student involvement.** Students are directly involved in all of the steps of this strategy. The student identifies the problem and the solutions.
- **Reasonable use.** This strategy does not involve formal training, but it does involve some preparation and familiarity with the method. Lavoie (2005b) is a great guide for implementation.
- **Expectations maintained.** All students should be expected to have appropriate social skills. If they have difficulty mastering them, the expectations should not be lowered; rather, the level of support should be raised.
- **Equity and universality.** Because this strategy is built around actual events, rather than theoretical scenarios, it is responsive to individual skill needs. It provides concrete, structured supports for any situation.

IF . . . THEN

If social skill autopsies are used to provide students with several potential solutions for expressing themselves in social situations, then this can also be a strategy for **Output**.

OUTPUT





Integrative Movement

Include integrative movement in the daily schedule to enhance expression of ideas.

Some examples of mind–body integrative movement are walking, dancing, skipping, twirling, Tai Chi, and yoga. Just a few minutes of integrative movement each day can help to increase student performance in several areas including reading, writing, test taking, physical tasks, and musical and artistic performance. Brain Gym, established in 1987 by the Educational Kinesiology Foundation, has been shown to have an impressive impact on reading and math performance (Hannaford, 2005). Brain Gym consists of a series of focused, physical movements that can be performed easily and quickly in any classroom space without equipment. Yoga provides students healthy ways to express and balance their emotions; eases anxiety and tension (e.g., pretest or performance jitters); and enhances focus, concentration, comprehension, memory, organizational skills, communication skills, motor skills, and balance.

Try This



Brain gym

Visit these web sites for more information and ideas:

- Brain Gym: <http://www.braingym.org>
- Yoga 4 Classrooms: <http://www.yoga4classrooms.com>
- Tai Chi for Kids: <http://www.taichiforkids.com>

Why This Works

- **Research base.** The body plays an integral part in cognitive processes. Movements express knowledge, facilitate cognitive function, and help develop nerve cell networks in the brain as they grow more complex (Hannaford, 2005).
- **Student involvement.** Students can follow the teacher's instructions or use integrative movements on their own when needed. Students can choose the movements to be used each day.
- **Reasonable use.** Brain Gym, Tai Chi, and yoga require training sessions, but dancing and walking do not. Until you are familiar with the more formal movements, it is simple and easy to take a couple minutes each day or class to walk, stretch, or march.

(continued)



- **Expectations maintained.** Students are still expected to express what they know and use their class time productively. Integrative movement provides a support to do just that.
- **Equity and universality.** All methods of integrative movement can be adapted for any physical need.

► IF ... THEN ◀

If integrative movement is used before listening to lectures or studying material because the exercises facilitate better processing, then this can also be a strategy for **Input**.

INPUT





Transition Areas

Provide a transition waiting area in the classroom. Transition times in the classroom (e.g., moving to and from special classes, dismissal time) can be difficult. The shift in focus and the change in expectations call for purposeful management strategies. Clear expectations and student self-management are two key elements for smooth transitions. Golden (2012) and Kluth and Danaher (2010) have all suggested the idea of marking or arranging a transition area. If you place markers on the floor (or chairs along the wall), spaced adequately apart, students can tell where to stand or sit while they wait at the door. If each student is on a marker, no students will bunch up or linger behind. Providing a transition area can also scaffold understanding of personal space.

At one primary school, there are masking tape lines along both sides of the floor in every hallway. They are off to the side, but still a few feet from the wall. When students are in the hallway, they focus on staying on the line. It keeps them from bunching up or touching items on display in the halls.

Try This



Transition areas

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Wong and Wong (1998) listed these aspects of a well-managed classroom: Students are deeply involved with their work; students know what is expected of them; there is relatively little wasted time, confusion, or disruption; and the climate of the classroom is work-oriented but relaxed.
- **Student involvement.** A great idea for a class meeting is discussing ways to make transitions smoother and quicker. Ask students what is most difficult about transitions (e.g., switching gears from one task to another; coping with anxiety or excitement; knowing what to do, where to go, or what to bring) and brainstorm solutions.
- **Reasonable use.** Creating a transition area requires only masking tape or extra school chairs.
- **Expectations maintained.** This idea focuses student attention and supports them so that they can act independently during transition times.

(continued)



- **Equity and universality.** Providing a transition area gives all students what they need at these times. Remember to ensure that all students have a turn to be the Line Leader (or better yet, Trailblazer) if they choose.

IF ... THEN

If transition areas are labeled by names or skill concepts (e.g., coins, letters, numbers) so that students can reinforce learning while lining up, then this can also be a strategy for **Input.**

INPUT





Response Scales

Use response scales to scaffold social skills.

Social skills may be the most difficult thing to master in school, and they are the least often directly taught. Not all students are able to pick up social skills on their own and know how to respond in given situations. Appropriate responses are not black and white. There is a gray scale. A strategy for managing this scale is to provide a concrete version—list the options on an escalating scale. The gradients can be represented by numbers or symbols. This scale was created to help students choose the correct voice volume to use. Once they are familiar with the scale, students can be prompted with just the number.

1. *No voice*: tests, movie theater
2. *Whisper voice*: buddy reading, library
3. *Talking voice*: small-group work, [play]dates, restaurant
4. *Loud voice*: cafeteria, crowded party
5. *Yelling voice*: playground, ball game

Try This

Must-reads

Buron, K.D. (2007). *A 5 is against the law: Social boundaries: Straight up! An honest guide for teens and young adults*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing.

Buron, K.D., & Curtis, M. (2012). *The incredible 5-point scale: Assisting students in understanding social situations and controlling their emotional responses* (2nd ed.). Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing.



Response scales

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Scales such as this help create plans for self-management for students with difficulties in social thinking and emotional regulation (Buron & Curtis, 2012).
- **Student involvement.** Students should be involved in deciding which situations require the support of a scale and in the development of the scales. Reflect with students on the format that works best for them to indicate the points on the scale—numbers, letters, symbols, photos. The must-reads listed previously walk you through the development process.
- **Reasonable use.** The must-reads are available for approximately \$20 each. Creating your own scales is free but takes time to develop with students.
- **Expectations maintained.** Students should not be excused from inappropriate social-emotional responses, but they should not be punished for them either. Mistakes in social skills, just like any other area, are teachable moments.

(continued)



- **Equity and universality.** Everyone has the right to develop meaningful, valuable relationships.

► IF ... THEN ◀

If response scales are used to build social relationships and help students feel at ease in the learning environment, then this can also be a strategy for **Engagement.**

ENGAGEMENT





Mix-Freeze-Pair

Use Mix-Freeze-Pair to encourage conversations with different peers.

During class discussion, some students may be reluctant to contribute in front of the large group. Pairing students to communicate their ideas provides a safer audience for sharing and refining ideas before they are then shared with the class as a whole. Mix-Freeze-Pair is one strategy for this paired discussion that provides opportunities for students to interact with many different classmates over time. The steps, as described by Candler are as follows:

- When the teacher announces “Mix!” students move around the classroom.
- When the teacher calls “Freeze!” the students stop where they are.
- When the teacher calls, “Pair!” the students find the nearest partner.
- The teacher announces the topic or task for each pair to discuss or complete. (2000, p. 12)

Try This



Mix-Freeze-Pair

Why This Works

- **Research base.** Candler (2000) explained that this strategy increases opportunities for communication and discussion and provides for a great energizer after periods of sitting still.
- **Student involvement.** Students actively pair up with other students and decide together how to complete the given task.
- **Reasonable use.** Once students are given clear instructions and have had an opportunity to practice, this strategy is quick and easy to use any time.
- **Expectations maintained.** Expectations must be outlined so that students do not gravitate toward the same partner during every mix time. Also, students are expected to complete the task at hand, not only socialize during the pair time.
- **Equity and universality.** All mobility and communication supports in the classroom are used during this activity so that all students can fully participate and interact with any other student in the classroom.

IF . . . THEN

If Mix-Freeze-Pair is used so that students have the opportunity to learn new perspectives and ideas from different sources in the classroom, then this can also be a strategy for **Input**.

INPUT

