Special Education Tools

Headphones

Facilitate the use of headphones for students who would benefit from noise cancellation. Students who can focus with extra stimulus of background noise to help them remain focused.

**How to Use**

1. Use media center headphones, have students provide them, or purchase some from a dollar store to play music.
2. For sound blocking headphones purchase several pairs from a hardware store, or earplugs when age appropriate children.
3. Encourage students to wear the head phone during individual work time.
4. Encourage students to wear headphones when class or room is noisy or has extra distractions.

**When to Use**

* When a student is easily distracted and is frequently losing focus
* When a student has ADHD/ADD
* When a student is unfocused and inattentive
* When a student is sensitive to loud sound, noise, or sensitive hearing
* When a student has an Autism Spectrum Disorder and needs quiet time

**Variations**

Extra Assignment Time

Use headphones for students who need extra time for assignments for cancel or provide background noise.

Hallway Headphones

Use for students with hearing or noise sensitivity when transitioning in the hallways.

Physical Education Headphones

Use for students during physical education in the gymnasium for hearing sensitivity.

Triangle-Square-Circle

This strategy encourages students to reflect on their learning and process information presented in the lesson. This allows students to examine important pieces of information and to question anything they don’t completely understand.

**How to Use:**

* 1. Triangle
* After a lesson, have students draw a triangle and next to it write down three important points from the presentation or reading they just saw or completed.
  1. Square
     + Then, have students draw a square and next to it write down anything that “squares” with their thinking or anything they agree with.
  2. Circle
     + Finally, have the students draw a circle and next to it write down anything that is still “circling” in their head or questions that they have.

**When to Use:**

* Use as a formative assessment
* Use as an exit slip
* Use to gauge understanding on any part of a lesson
* Use to determine reteach opportunities
* Use to learn about students thought patterns

**Variations:**

1. Alternate Triangle Options: Where they need more clarification
2. Alternate Circle Options: How it fits with prior knowledge, or how to use in everyday life
3. Alternate Square Options: What they may disagree with

Rhythm is your Friend

This strategy involves using a drum in the classroom for autistic students to use melodies in order to enhance their learning ability.

**How to Use:**

1. Bring a drum to class and introduce it to the children
2. Pass it around for the students to observe/practice with
3. Once the drum is passed back to the teacher, they will give instructions on how to use the instrument for the lesson that day
4. Students will tap the drum for every syllable in the term they are trying to use

**When to Use:**

* Identifying geographical features from a photograph
* Using correct terminology for people of different color over the years of history
* Using correct dates for any historic event that took place
* Providing basic knowledge of states and capital cities in U.S. Geography

**Variations:**

* Students who do not have Autism may help those who do by demonstrating how to use the drum for communicating the proper term to students who are autistic
* Students may also tap their legs or their desk for rhythm in case there is no drum present
* Students can also receive an electronic drum pad to tap in order to make a syllable

English as a Second Language Tools

Quizmasters

This cooperative learning activity has students review information and test their knowledge by creating their own short answer questions for other groups to answer. Students will be grouped and allowed a certain amount of time to write short answer questions that they classmates will have to answer for points.

**How to Use:**

1. Grouping

The class will be broken into three different groups (Group A, B, and C) by assigning each student a number between 1-3. The students will then move to sit with in their groups.

1. Write Questions

Each group will have 3-4 minutes to create 3 short answer questions about the class book that was just finished.

1. Test Each other

Group A will read their first short answer question to Team B. If Team B is not able to answer the question, then Team C get a chance to answer. Whichever group answer the question correctly gets the point. Team A will ask all of their questions before Team B is able to ask their questions.

**When to Use:**

This activity is great to use when teaching new concepts, or as a review for a test or just to review information discussed in class.

* At the end of class story
* At the end of a math lesson
* Before a test over a book
* In the middle of a longer lesson to review information at the beginning
* Could assign each group different chapters of a book to review information from the beginning, middle, and end of the book

**Variations:**

Math Quizmasters

This activity could be used to help review different math formulas that the students are struggling with. Instead of randomly placing students in groups, they could be placed together based off math level. They could quiz each other in their group, instead of quizzing the entire class. This will help make sure the students are working in groups with others on their math level.

Spelling Quizmasters

The groups would be given different words from our spelling list to work with and write questions on. This would be more of a spelling bee style game. Students would ask one person from an opposing group how to spell the word and use it in a sentence.

Small Group Quizmasters

Students would work in their reading groups and each student would write one question about their group books. Students would write their individual answers on a piece of paper to turn in with the paper that had their questions on it.

Save the last word for me

This discussion technique encourages meaningful classroom conversations by eliciting differing opinions and interpretations of text. Asking students to think about their reading stimulates reflection and helps to develop active and thoughtful readers. Save the Last Word for Me also prompts classroom interaction and cooperative group discussion.

**How to Use:**

1. Read

Assign a section of text and ask students to find three to five quotes from the text that they think are particularly interesting. The quotes may be something they agree or disagree with, something they find interesting, something they didn’t know, something they would like to tell someone about, etc.

1. Write

Pass out index cards or slips of paper to each student, one card for each quote they have found.  On one side of the card, ask students to write down the statements from the text.  On the other side, instruct them to write any comments or feelings about their statements.

1. Group and Share

Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students. All students in the group are allowed to share one of their quote cards. The first student reads one of their quotes to the group and shows where to locate it in the text.  However, the student isn’t allowed to make any comments about his or her quote until the other members of the group give their reactions.  Therefore, the student gets the last word in the discussion of the statement.  This process continues until everyone in the group has shared at least one quote and has provided the last word in the discussion.

**When to Use:**

* While reading a story, novel, professional article, or chapter of text
* After completing a reading selection that could be debatable or thought-provoking
* Before students debate a topic
* When teaching fact vs. opinion and how to support an opinion
* As a researching or note-taking tool before writing a paper

**Variations:**

* Film-Watching

Students can use this same strategy while watching a film, choosing five moments in the film, five actions, five characters, five images, etc.

* Using Images

This same process can be used with images instead of quotations. Give students a collection of posters, paintings and photographs from the time period you are studying and then ask students to select three images that stand out to them.

* Using Question

Ask students to write down three “probing” questions the text raises for them.  Students answer the questions on the back of their cards. In small groups, students select one of their questions for the other students to discuss.

Tell Me Something Good

Devote a portion of class to allow students to share with a partner something good. The exercise

provides students an opportunity to practice oral language skills to promote a positive

environment, build confidence, and build a sense of classroom community.

**How to Use:**

1. Teach expectations by informing that each “Tell Me Something Good”, the students will share something with other students or teacher something positive form their life.
2. Allow students time to prepare what they will share.
3. Instruct students to share the positive in a complete sentence and not in story form.
4. Instruct students to congratulate each other with a “high five”, “fist bump”, or “thumbs up”.

**When to Use:**

• At the beginning of class

• On a specific day each week

• During extra time at the end of class

• For students needing to develop language skills

• When students need practice formulating sentences orally

**Variations:**

* Compliment Jar

Place a jar in classroom and have students write a compliment to another person in a complete sentence.

* Exit Tickets

Instruct students to write a positive moment from class or their life in a complete sentence to turn in at the end of class.

* Tell Me a New Word

Instruct students to share a new word they have learned to read or write. Allow students to share the word and definition.