

Beyond the Classroom:
Calendars, Routines, and
Communication

Leading Researchers

- Jean Piaget- Defined the 4 stages of cognitive development
- Lili Nielsen- Outlined strategies for teaching our special learners
- Jan van Dijk- Created meaningful assessments

Sensory-motor learners

Sensory-motor Stage: the stage during which children learn through the senses and motor activities

- Uses innate sensory-motor systems of sucking, grasping, and gross-body activities to build schemes
- Begin to develop object permanency (the idea that objects can exist without being seen, heard, or touched)
- “Think” with their senses and their innate reflexive actions
- “Solve” problems by playing with toys and using everyday “tools” such as a spoon to learn to feed themselves
- Earliest stage of language acquisition occurs late in this stage.

Sensory-motor learners cont.

- We use calendars with both sensory-motor and pre-operational learners.
- The sensory motor student uses an object to represent the activity, many times it is an object that is incorporated into the routine itself. You must use the same routine object each time to define that particular activity.
- A “Start” or “Now” container is used. This is a container that will only be used to signal the beginning of a specific routine or activity.
- A “Finished” container is used in the same manner, to indicate the end of a specific routine.

Routines and Calendars

- Routines and calendars are the building blocks and give structure to the ALC's day. They work integrally together to enhance and explain the learning environment to the student.
- Calendars tell the student what is happening, when it is happening and when it is finished. Calendars are used to introduce routines and daily activities. The calendar objects, partial objects, or pictures are the foundation of our student's vocabulary.

Using Start and Finished Containers

- The student is presented with the routine object in the “Start” or “Now” container, the presenter says “Now Eating” keeping the verbiage to a minimum will help the student connect the word with action.
- The student should be encouraged to acknowledge the beginning of an activity by acknowledging the calendar through touch or eye gaze.

Using Start and Finished Containers contd.

- This can be done through aiding the student with the physical participation of taking the objects out of or putting the objects into the containers, eye gaze, hand under hand or a recognizable state change.
- When the routine is over the same object is placed into the “Finished “ container.

Pre-operational Learners

- **Preoperational Stage:** the stage in which young children are capable of mental representation
 - Depend on concrete representations; “think” with concrete materials
 - Moving to using symbols to represent objects and events—symbols such as language, pictures, etc.
 - Use the world of here and now as a frame of reference.
 - Are egocentric in thought and action
 - Think everything has a reason or purpose
 - Are perceptually bound
 - Make judgments based primarily on how things look

Pre-operational Learners Contd.

- The object can be changed to part of the object, or a picture of the object paired with the object, working up to just pictures.
- The calendar will become increasingly more involved and provide more information.
- you will introduce the “Next” box after the “Now” box.
- As the student’s understanding increases you can add boxes and routines.

Routines

- A calendar is always used in conjunction with routines.
- A routine is a highly structured activity. When a routine is first introduced it is implemented by the same person, in the same place, with the same objects and using the same script every time it is experienced.
- The student's IEP goals and learning objectives are imbedded within the routines.
- When you create a routine it must be from the learner's perspective.

Sensory Motor Routines

- This rigid structure is especially critical to sensory motor learners. We are building neuron pathways and creating memories, through the use of routines.
- However, as the student becomes more comfortable with the routine, a role release can be implemented. In role release another individual is taught the exact steps of the routine, therefore “releasing” the routine.

Pre-operational Routines

- The routines can become more complex as the student masters the concepts and moves towards the pre-operational stage.
- As the learner masters the IEP goals and learning objectives imbedded in the routine and is anticipating the next step in the routine, the routine can be modified and adjusted so as to ensure continued learning.

Vocabulary

- The objects, partial objects, and pictures are the foundation of a sensory-motor learner's vocabulary.