



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
Summer 2008-2009
FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: __ Cognitive Disabilities _____

List of group members: __ Amy Nugent, Amy Paolini, Sheila O'Brien _____

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

Our initial goal was to read, research, and discuss 2 books that are relevant to our teaching. The books were Making Sense of Autism and Effective Literacy Instruction for Students with Moderate or Severe Disabilities. We continue to look for ways to effectively reach our students who have a wide range of significant disabilities that have hindered learning. We realized that these may not answer our concerns, but the books would possibly lead us in the directions to become teachers that are more effective. We did not need to make any adjustments.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

Our ACTION PLAN included reading the 2 books. We were to break down the book into manageable “chunks” that we would discuss each meeting time. We would also use our time to develop concrete ideas that we will utilize in our classrooms.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We followed the action plan, breaking each book down into 3-4 chapters that we discussed at each meeting. Each discussion was written into the summaries of our meetings.

Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance. How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

The impact of the study group was enormous. With the book on autism, we got a better insight of autism, and we were able to relate much of the book to our autistic students. The Effective Literacy book gave us many concrete ideas that we will use in the classroom with our students. Although the Effective Literacy book is a strong advocate of total inclusion, many of the chapters affirmed that our model of self-contained classroom is a better model for literacy instruction. We have all been changed as teachers with the new ideas, and the chance to brainstorm ways to reach some of the hardest to reach students. The books also helped us to remember that true learning takes time- much, much more than we have given our programs. The study group also affirms for us that we are using effective strategies already, but need to stay the course longer than we thought. One of the changes we will make is to better utilize our aides, each other, and the entire school. We have also identified the main things that each student should be able to do upon moving to the next classroom. We will try to incorporate more learning into all aspects of the school day, and relate the learning to the student’s lives.

What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

We expect to see more student growth with more effective literacy teaching ideas. One of our biggest hopes is for better student participation and more effective classroom management. We also hope to see more effective use of classroom aides. We realize that this continues to be a work in progress, but have utilized our time to start working as a more unified team. With a unified group of teachers, our students will continue to achieve the level of independence to become better citizens of the school and their community.

What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

The goals of our study group have been met. We are coming away from this time with a great deal of ideas that we will implement in our classrooms. All of the summaries of our meeting have the concrete ideas that we will use in our classrooms.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

We made excellent use of our time together. This was extremely valuable for us as teachers. We learned many ideas from the books, the books sent us to other areas for further information, and we validated in many of the activities that we already do. This study group worked very well for us!

How can we make this study group program better?

It would have been nice to be able to get the books before July 1 so that we had more time to read before the 1st session.