Effective Teaching

In this introduction to effective teaching, you are going to do three activities.

1) We ask you to think critically about what makes a good teacher in Activity 1.

2) You will compare what you think about a good teacher with what the State of Kentucky says make a good teacher in Activity 2.

3) You will review best practice sin teaching students with moderate and severe disabilities and connect them to the standards for all teachers in Activity 3.

In this peer tutoring course we want you to learn about people with disabilities and improve you understanding of what is helpful to them. An important point to recall throughout this course is the basic principle that standards of quality are pretty much universal. If you think something would be good for you then it probably would also be good for your peers who have a disability. Yes, it is true that sometimes the nature of a disability means that an accommodation may be required, but the basic standard remains the same. If you think some place would be a good place for YOU to live, work, or learn, then it is likely that with needed accommodation it will be a good place for anyone else to live, work, or learn.

Since as a peer tutor you are working in a classroom a major focus of the content of this course is on effective education of students with disabilities. In this unit we are going to examine certain aspect of effective instruction for students with moderate and severe disabilities, but we want to start with some reflection on what are the characteristics of good teaching--for everyone!

As an experienced student, you know quite a bit about good teaching. Anyone who has made it as far as high school has spent thousands of hours with teachers. Although you may not have ever careful thought about it you know some of your teachers have been excellent while others were less effective.

What makes for good teaching? Sometimes when we are in class and we have not done our homework or we are feeling stressed by the demand being placed on us, we think good teachers are easy teachers. But think about it--is that true? Of course not! The good teacher is the person who really teaches us something. They help us develop the skill and knowledge we need to get by today, make in next year's classes, get into college, get a good job, and otherwise provide us with a foundation for success in life beyond the walls of the school.

Good teaching is effective teaching--it does more then keep us entertained (although the ability to make material interesting is certainly part of the job). Think about it. Think about your best teachers (the ones who taught you the most) and think about your worst teachers.

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Let's compare the two groups. Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of

notebook paper. On the right side title the column BEST and title the left column WORST (no names--this is not to demean people but to get you thinking about what is good teaching). In the right column, brainstorm everything that comes to mind about your best teachers--stretch those memory cells. Try to fill the whole column. What did they do; how did they act; how did they grade; what were their assignments like; how did they structure the classroom; what were their rules like; how did they make decisions; how did they present information; and how did they deal with students who had a tough time learning?

After you have completed that column do they same thing for the your least effective teachers. As you are making your list you will probably find it useful to do an item-by-item comparison. What did a less effective teacher do that was different from an effective teacher?

After you have finished your list turn your page over and summarize what you have learned form this process. Write a couple of paragraphs that compare and contrast effective and ineffective teaching. Don't just repeat what you put in your two columns on the front--reflect on what you have learned in this process. You should be able to easily fill the entire backside of the paper with your reflection. When you have finished the other activities in this section turn this paper in to your peer tutoring instructor as part of your assignments for this unit.

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There has been a lot of research into effective teaching we know that people a can learn to be highly effective teachers. Certainly inborn talent and personality can contribute something to the art of effective teaching, but the truth is that not all good teachers are born that way. Effective teaching is not a only a question of native ability. Just like other professions, hard work and practice can enable a person to become a fine teacher--just like someone can learn to become an automobile mechanic, a pharmacist, or a software engineer.

The research that has identified the basic skills needed to be a good teacher used the same basic approach that you just used to focus your thinking. Researchers who examine this topic start by asking what is the result: They first identify groups of successful student. They then use these student outcomes as the basis for identifying effective teachers. They compare what effective teachers do with the behavior of teachers who are less effective. Based on this work we can develop a list of what is sometimes called "best practices," tools for teaching that are most likely to contribute to student success.

Since so much public money is invested in education, these best practices are becoming increasingly important. Taxpayers, your parents, and political leaders want to be assured that all that money is being well spent. They want to know that what teachers are doing is likely to lead to student success. They do not want their money and your time being wasted on approaches or teachers that are ineffective.

For this reason many states have made these research based best practices part of the process for

certifying teachers. They establish standards of practice that require teachers to demonstrate these skills at a certain level in order to be allowed into the classroom. In Kentucky this list of behaviors is call the New Teacher Standards for Preparation and Certification. Colleges use them as a basis for teacher training. Principals and others use these standards for evaluating new teachers during their first year of teaching.

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Carefully review the Kentucky New Teacher Standards at http://www.kyepsb.net/standards/new_teach_stds.html. Each one of the nine is a general statement of needed skills. They are followed by a list of performance criteria, actions you could see a teacher performing in the classroom that show they are actually putting the standard into practice. Now reflect how your personal list of good teacher behaviors compares with the indicators listed under the New Teacher Standards. Write a one page reflection on the similarities and difference between your list and the Kentucky standards. Write about how are the two lists the same and how they are different. What accounts for this variation? As an experienced consumer of teaching, do you agree with everything on the Kentucky list? What did you learn about teaching from this process?

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Now we shift our focus to how these standards for effective teaching apply to the education of students with moderate and severe disabilities. To start we want to repeat what we already said: “Effective teaching is effective teaching--everything we have already looked at about teachers standards applies to special education teachers!”

The same basis for evaluating effective teaching applies: Do the students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in this class, next year, and as an adult.

The main difference is that students with moderate and severe disabilities have a harder time learning than anyone else in the school. Because of the nature of their disability, they need support and accommodation to access, participate, and be successful in school. This means that many of the topics relevant to their effective education are addressed under other topics such as “Inclusion,” “Access and participation,” “Preparation for adult life,” and others. Here we want to build on our general discussion and emphasize key aspects of the teaching process.

Creating Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Multiple Disabilitiesisan on-line resource manual published by the Saskatchewan Provincial Department of Education to assist teachers working with students with severe disabilities. Chapter four of this manual provides an over view of effective practice in delivering instruction. The discussion is divided into two parts. The first summarizes inclusion as a critical context for meaningful learning. The second part, on effective instruction practices, is our primary focus in this unit.

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Access the Chapter 4 of the Creating Opportunities document and review the section beginning on page number 36 (page 10 of the section you will down load). It lists 15 "Recognized Successful Practices" in education of students with severe disabilities. Reflect on these 15 topics by writing a brief reflection of a sentence or two on why you thing this factor needs to be considered in teaching students with disabilities. Please do not merely repeat how the topic is describe in the manual based on what you learned thus far an observed write about why you think this topic merit consideration. How do these 15 topic connect with the New Teachers Standards we looked at earlier? At the conclusion of your discussion of each of the 15 practices, in one sentence indicate to which of the nine New Teacher Standards you feel this practice relates and why. (Example: "…Use of assistive technology is directly related to New Teachers Standard nine because the standard requires teachers to use computers and other technology in teaching.")

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As you have seen careful instructional planning, effective delivery of information, continuous tracking of student progress, and evaluation of teaching are consistently identified as important components of effective teaching. In the 4 sections of this unit we want to look at each of these four elements in greater detail as we consider the following topic.

· **Individualizing Instruction**. It is true that every student is different. However, the need to carefully consider individual differences becomes critical when a person has significant disabilities that require unique supports and accommodation to be successful. We will look at the process involved in developing a special education Individual Educational Plan (IEP) that addresses these differences and outlines a plan for success.

· **Systematic instruction**. Many of us learn some things almost accidentally with almost no study. Some time we are very good at something or very interest in it and we learn stuff related to that topic very quickly with out much study. Other times we have some trouble learning something but we have figured out how to work at it and learn what we need. In addition, sometimes we need to have the teacher or a peer explain or demonstrate it repeatedly before we start to put the pieces together. When people have a hard time communicating and learning that means the teacher may need to use a more structured way of teaching to insure student learning. In this section, we will introduce you to some of the techniques that are often used with students with moderate and severe disabilities.

· **Tracking student progress**. Sometimes students with moderate to severe disabilities learn things very slowly, so standard teacher tools like a quiz or a test will not provide a good picture of whether a student is leaning. This section will have you explore some of the ways teachers can collect useful information. Your teacher may have you use some of these tools as you are working with your peers.

· **Alternative Portfolios**. As a student you know that on a regular basis the State require tests and portfolios to evaluate whether your school is teaching you what you are supposed to know

and whether you are learning it. These test or assessments are part of educational accountability, holding schools and teacher responsible for student leaning. This kind of on going checking up on the school has become a valuable tool in assuring effective teaching. The state says we are not going to just take your word that you are doing a good job--we want you to prove it. However, you have spent time with students with moderate and severe disabilities and you know that much of what they are learning is different from the material you are covering. Does that mean that the school does not have to be accountable for what they are doing? No! The school is accountable for every one. In this section we will look at the Kentucky Alternate Portfolio, the tool the State is using to assure effective instruction of all students.

Individualizing Instruction

Every student is “special.” Every person is a unique individual. Why then do some students have Individual Education Plans (IEP)? Some authorities will say that the basic difference between “special education" and “regular education" is the focus on the individual. As we point out throughout this course, the distinction between special education and regular education is artificial. There is one education system for all students. Special education is about additional resources needed for some students to be successful in obtaining their education. Nevertheless, there is some truth to saying that the focus on the individual is centerpiece to special education. Most students can be successful with the resources that are available in the regular classroom; some cannot. Some students need a greater than typical degree of individualization in order to be successful.

The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that special education...

…means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability…

(3) Specially-designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction--
(i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and
(ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. (20 U.S.C. 1401(25)

Actually, the language of the law is very general; it sets up some broad guidelines, then leaves it to the state and the local school to figure out how to meet the needs of each child. A state defines its curriculum by outlining the expectations for all students within its boundaries (we discuss this under the heading “Curricular Connection” in the unit on Inclusion). The law then leaves it to the people who know each student best: parents, teachers, and administrators at the local school to figure out what is needed for the student to be successful in meeting this challenge. The document that is prepared at the school and outlines this plan is call the Individual Education Plan (IEP). This document is the heart of the special education process. It literally defines what special education means for each individual student.

Remember from the discussion on the types of disabilities that two things must be present for a student to be eligible for special education supports. First, the student must have a disability.

Second, the disability must adversely effect their educational progress: they must be failing because their disability hampers the learning process. The answer to this problem before there was a law guaranteeing an appropriate education was often to a.) do nothing, sometimes even telling the parents to take the student home, because the school had nothing for them, or b.) continue to do more of the same (i.e. drill and practice). Obviously for the majority of students with disabilities who were already being unsuccessful, this approach was not going to work.

An alternative to this largely useless approach was to try to mirror the approach used by doctors in treating illness. This begins with a systematic evaluation of the areas of difficulty (diagnosis). This is followed by the design of a plan that identifies specific treatments for each area of difficulty. Finally, this plan outlines the changes that will be seen if the treatment is effective. This approach was written into law and describes as the IEP.

Translated into school language, this means that first there needs to be clear identification of the areas of the curriculum where the student is having difficulty due to his or her disability. Then the changes to regular classroom procedure (special designed instruction) or extraordinary services (related services) needed to address these areas of weakness are outlined. Finally, the anticipated improvements in each area of the curriculum are laid out in a step-by-step fashion. In other words, the student, parents, teachers, and school officials agree upon the following:

1.) where the student is having problems.
2.) what the school will do to meet the student's individual needs, and
3.) how the student will improve as a result of the school's actions.

This framework of a treatment plan as a way of addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities was a step in the right direction. However, care needs to be taken in applying this “diagnostic-prescriptive model” to education. First, it is important that this model not lead people to view people with disability solely from a medical perspective. As we discuss in other units of this course, people with disabilities are ***people*** first and foremost; they are usually not sick and should not be viewed as patients. Therefore, it is critical that our educational approach not reinforce the misconception that people with disabilities are ill and need to be “taken care of.” A second limitation in this approach was and is the tendency to limit the description of areas of need to a catalogue of deficiencies. While it is important to clearly identify where the student is having a difficulty, the discussion needs to also highlight areas of strength, so the planning team can identify the abilities that they can use as a foundation on which to build. For this reason, the IEP speaks not about “areas of need” but about “present level of performance.” This way, the planning team is led to highlight strengths and needs.

While this is the basic approach underlying the IEP, the document itself is much more complicated because of its central role in defining what special education means for an individual student. The law requires that numerous other questions be answered in completing the plan. The law is also very specific in outlining who needs to participate in the development of the IEP. Essentially, it says anyone who knows this student, or will be involved in the delivery of his or her education, is involved in the IEP process. It is an attempt to assure that everyone’s voice will be heard, and that there will be a common team approach to meeting the student’s needs.

To get a better understanding of the IEP and the process used to develop one, please carefully read A Student's Guide to the IEP developed by NICHCY. It can also be down loaded in pdf

(adobe reader format).

Now that you have better sense of what an IEP is intended to do and know something about the process, it might be useful to look at a couple of examples of an IEP. In an effort to help its teachers write better IEPs, a school district in Minnesota has posted an example of a complete IEP for a young man with a learning disability named Theodore Cleaver (nick name "the Beaver"). Take a look at this IEP to gain a better understanding of the material you have just studied.

The Minnesota IEP is for an elementary age student, so let us also review one written for a high school student. Jason Colby, the fictitious young man in the IEP below, also has learning disabilities. This example was developed by the Transition Coalition at the University of Kansas to help teachers better understand how the IEP for a high school student needs to focus on developing the skills needed for what the student wants to do after graduation. Please review this IEP, and remember to follow the link at the bottom of the first page to look at the goal and objectives developed for Jason. Please note that this is not a complete IEP, some of the material on the Cleaver IEP was not included in this example. You should also be aware that while the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) specifies what must be included in an IEP, every state has a slightly different format.

Click here to see a completed example of an IEP in Kentucky. The Kentucky Transition Collaborative offers many materials to better assist with transition planning for high school students.

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Let's pull this altogether by developing a very basic IEP for a student you know very well—yourself. Use the following format, and when you are done, turn it in to your teacher to demonstrate that you have mastered the topic of individualized planning. We are not asking you to address all of the questions asked on a regular IEP form, but the point is the same. Use this assignment to seriously think about what would help you be more successful in high school.

Individualized Educational Plan for:

_____

Present Level of Performance:
Makes list of your strengths and needs or weakness in each of the following areas

Strengths
Weakness/Needs:

Communication:

Social/Emotional Status:

Academic Achievement: English

Academic Achievement: Mathematics

Academic Achievement: Science

Academic Achievement: Social Studies

Academic Achievement: Other

Physical Ability/Health:

Supports that help you learn more effectively (these could be across all subjects or could be specific to one subject):

Goal and Objectives:

· Pick two or three areas from you present level of performance.

· Write a goal for each area. A goal is something you plan on achieving in that area during the next year.
(Example: To raise my grade in geometry to a B.)

· Now write 2 to 4 objectives for each of your goals. An objective is the steps you need to take toward achieving your goal. These steps should include some of the supports that help you learn (which you have listed above).

(Examples:

1. I will attend morning tutoring sessions in geometry 2 days a week for the next three months.

2. I will complete all alternative assignments in geometry.

3. I will get at least at least 85 % on all Friday quizzes in geometry by studying 2 hours every Thursday night.)

Transition Planning:
Planning for life after high school includes making sure that what you do in high school helps you prepare for your long term goals.

Transition Goals: What do you want to do after graduation?

Transition Services: What does your school need to do to help you be better prepared for what you want to do after graduation?

Systematic Instruction

You will need Acrobat Reader to download the forms linked on this page.

What is systematic instruction?
Systematic instruction is a method of teaching where the same set of procedures is used over and over on a continuous basis to teach the same information or a specific skill. When we use systematic instruction, it is very important that we use the same procedures or steps each time we teach. Each person who is providing that instruction must be trained, so that the same procedures are followed and the student knows what to expect every time. The student's progress with systematic instruction is recorded on data sheets.

Why do we use it?
Research has shown that when teaching students with multiple and severe disabilities, precise and repeated instruction of the same material/skill leads to quicker mastery of the material/skill. Some students may master the material/skill very quickly, and other students may take months or years to master the skill or learn the material.

Listen & Learn
During your peer tutor training, the teacher will demonstrate types of systematic instruction, and have you practice using several of those types. You need to make sure that you understand everything that the teacher shows you. Make sure that you observe the teacher performing the steps, and that you then practice with the teacher watching you. If you do not understand, ask questions. As you begin to use systematic instruction routinely, you will feel more comfortable. If at any time you have any questions, please ask.

Terminology

Least-to-Most (L-to-M):
This is a type of systematic instruction where a prompt hierarchy is used to teach material. A prompt is the help that is given. The prompt hierarchy that is frequently used is Independent, Verbal, Model or Gesture, and Physical. In this type of instruction, the first step is to deliver the request or stimulus. A stimulus is the request for information, or the cue that it is time to perform a task. After the stimulus, the instructor waits a pre-determined amount of time (e.g., five seconds). If the student performs the step independently, then an I (Independent) is recorded on the data sheet. If the student does not perform the step independently within the predetermined time, then a verbal prompt is delivered. If the student performs the step after this prompt, then a V (Verbal) is recorded. If the step is not performed correctly within the time interval, then a model or gesture prompt is delivered. If the step is performed correctly within the time interval at this level, an M is recorded. If the step is still not performed correctly within the time interval, then a physical prompt is delivered and a P is recorded. If the student needs a physical prompt, the teacher or para-educator should be conducting the instruction. A peer tutor should not be delivering any type of physical prompt.

With this type of systematic instruction, a task analysis is developed and used. A task analysis is

the process of breaking down a behavior into smaller parts. The best way to develop a task analysis is to observe someone performing a task and write down every step that is performed. A task analysis makes a task easy to replicate and teach. A teacher can determine what parts of the task the student has difficulty performing and then those steps can be broken down and taught systematically. Examples of things that can be taught using L-to-M are going through the lunch line, filling a pop machine, operating a VCR, cleaning, cooking, doing the dishes, getting dressed, etc...

When first using this procedure, it can be difficult. Make sure that you fully understand the different types of prompts that are being used and make sure that the steps of the task analysis are clearly defined and in the correct order. Also, always be sure to wait the correct time interval at each prompt level, so that the student has time to begin that step. If a student starts to make an error, you should tell the student to stop and then give him or her or the next prompt in the sequence (e.g., if a student starts to make an error with a verbal prompt, stop the student and immediately give him or her the model prompt). Finally, when you give a student a model prompt, be sure to repeat the verbal prompt, too. That will enable the student to associate what you are showing him with the verbal directions for that step.

Below are instructions and forms for providing and recording the systematic instruction called Least to Most Prompts:

Least to Most Prompts Information Sheet
Least to Most Data Sheet

Time Delay:
During this type of systematic instruction, the stimulus, or request for information, is delivered and then the instructor waits a pre-determined amount of time. If the correct answer is not given in the amount of time, the instructor then delivers the correct answer. With time delay, there are not several different types of prompts (e.g., verbal, model, physical) to give. The only prompt is the correct answer. There are several different types of responses that the student can give, so the teacher will have to review them with you and how to respond in each situation. For example, the student could get the answer right in the pre-determined amount of time, or the student could make a wrong response in that time interval. Your teacher will show you how to respond in each of these situations. Or the student could get the answer right after your prompt but past the pre-determined time frame (that is, the student correctly repeats your answer, but takes too long to do it), or the student could make an incorrect answer past the pre-determined time frame. Examples of things that can be taught using time delay are sight words, definitions, math facts, history or social studies facts, etc.

Below are instructions and forms for providing and recording the systematic instruction called Constant Time Delay:

Constant Time Delay Inofrmation Sheet
Constant Time Delay Data Sheet x10
Constant Time Delay Data Sheet x20

Consequences and Reinforcement:
Reinforcement is how you respond after the student has performed or responded to a task direction. There are two broad types of consequences, positive reinforcement for a correct

response or behavior and punishment for an incorrect or inappropriate behavior. As a peer tutor, you should never deliver punishment, and in fact, punishment should be rarely used by anyone! Whenever the student does what has been requested, you should deliver positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement allows the student to know that he/she has done the correct thing. Even if you have not given the task request, if the student does something good, then deliver positive reinforcement. If positive reinforcement is delivered at the right time, it could change a behavior. Many times, if a student is performing a behavior that needs to be changed, then the teacher will use positive reinforcement to change the behavior. Every time that student does the correct, or desired, behavior, then the teacher provides positive reinforcement. The assumption is that the student will want the positive reinforcement and then will start performing the correct behavior more often. Positive reinforcement could be many different things. It could be a pat on the back or shoulder, a smile of approval, a 'thumbs up' sign, a verbal word of good job, or a 'high-five'.

Baseline:
Whenever instruction on a new skill or set of information begins, baseline is conducted. If you have not been taught how to conduct baseline, then do not do it without instruction from the teacher. Baseline is like a pre-test to see if the student already knows the material that is going to be taught. If the student knows the material, then it does not have to be taught. There are several ways for conducting baseline, and some teachers will do up to three baseline sessions before a skill is started. During baseline, typically no prompts are given and no reinforcement is delivered for correct responses, though students are usually reinforced during baseline for working hard and attending. In baseline, the stimulus, or task request, is delivered. The instructor then waits for the student's response. That response is then recorded on the data sheet. If the student makes an incorrect response, then the correct answer is not given. The student has to be reminded that this is just a test and that the correct answer will not be given. Students may expect the correct answer to be given, especially if they have received a great deal of systematic instruction in the past!

Generalization:
After the student has reached the teacher's criteria for mastering the skill, the teacher will then see if the student can generalize, or transfer, the skill to different people, tasks requests, or settings. This is very important, in that many students with severe disabilities have difficulty in generalizing what they have learned to new situations. Depending on what is being taught, the teacher may have a peer or another teacher (or even a stranger to the student) do the instruction with the student. The teacher may arrange for the student to do the skill in different settings. If the student has been learning to cook using the microwave in the classroom, then the teacher may take the student to the home ec room or to the teacher's lounge, or even to the student's home, and perform the skill there. Many times, students can master the skill in the classroom, but when it comes time to perform the skill in other locations, the student has considerable difficulty. Once the student can perform the skill across different people, settings, and materials, then the student will move on to maintenance phase of learning.

Maintenance:
After the student has reached criteria, or the goal, for a skill and the student has been able to generalize, or perform, the skill with different people or in different settings, then it becomes important to insure that the student is able to maintain the skill. Maintaining what we learn is important for all of us! For students with significant disabilities, the purpose of maintenance is to make sure that the student can maintain the skill over time without daily instruction. In this phase, the teacher typically sets up a schedule for periodically having the student perform the

skill. The schedule may start out with instruction being once every two weeks, and then once a month. If the student maintains the criteria or goal over a period of time, then it can be said that a student has mastered a skill. Of course, maintenance can be improved by selecting skills for instruction that students need to perform on a daily basis; if we choose to teach skills that are frequently demanded in daily life, and then students will have many natural opportunities throughout the day to practice maintenance!

When should I stop doing instruction and give it over to the teacher?
A peer tutor can be a great instructor for systematic instruction (Miracle et al. 2001). Often, students learn more from their peers then they do from the teacher! You have probably had that experience yourself, when one of your friends was able to explain something from your class so that you could understand it in a way better than your teacher could. But there are times when a peer tutor should not be delivering the instruction.

Any time that there will be a behavior issue, the peer tutor should not be doing the instruction. Any time that the student may need a physical prompt, the peer tutor should not be doing instruction. Any time that the peer tutor does not understand what to do, the peer tutor should not be doing instruction. If the peer tutor does not know what to do, then it is time to go to the teacher. It is too important for our students that we teach consistently and accurately – never teach when you are unsure of what you are doing. Even the data sheets are very important – they are the records of what a student is learning, and can become part of students' official records. Treat them with confidentiality and with seriousness; they are just as important as any student's grades.

ACTIVITY

The activity for this section is to take the blank task analysis data sheet (provided as an attachment) and develop a task analysis for a daily living activity. The activity can be anything that you do on a regular basis. Remember that the easiest way to develop a task analysis is to observe someone doing the skill and write down each of the steps.

You should first write the steps on a piece of paper, as you may need to make changes. After you have written the steps, then ask a different person to perform each step as you read it. During this part, you will notice if a step has been left out. After you write out the steps of the task analysis, turn it in to the teacher. Be sure to be accurate! Your teacher may ask you to walk her/him through the task with the steps that you have written down.

Tracking Progress

One of the purposes of systematic instruction is to keep track of progress, successful or not, of the goals on the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). When tracking progress, one can

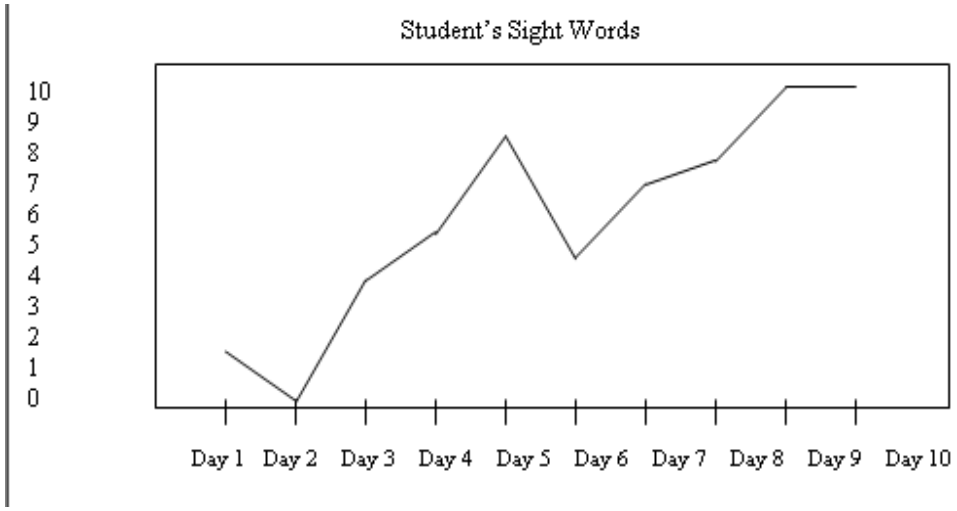
see if the instruction is being successful or not. If the instruction is not being successful, then the teacher will make a decision as to the changes that need to be made. If the instruction is successful, then by keeping track of the data one can see when the student has met the criteria for completion of the goal.

At least once a year, a group meets to discuss the IEP of the student. As you read about in another part of this unit, one part of the IEP is made up of the goals that the student needs to work on. The teacher is expected to report on the progress that is being made on these goals. Due to the IEP being a legal document, the teacher has to keep track of all of the progress that the student is or is not making. On occasion a teacher's data sheets are called into a legal question. For this reason, the data sheets need to be kept up to date.

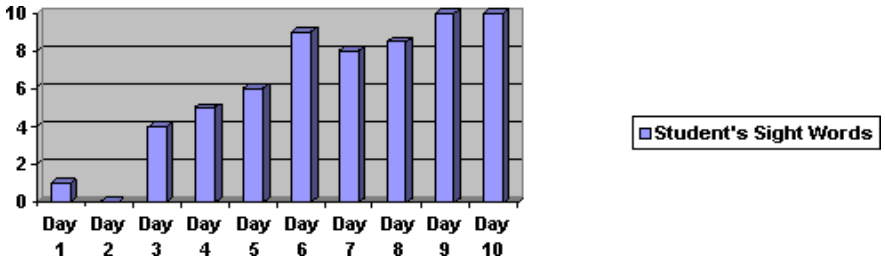
The data sheets that you read about and saw examples of in the systematic instruction section of this unit are the first step in keeping track of the progress. The second step is to take the data and transfer it on a graph. You can see the progress on the data sheets, but graphs are much easier to read. Most likely the teacher will take the data from the data sheets and transfer it to the graph. Some teachers may have the peer tutors do the graphs, so make sure that you understand each part of the graph. The students should also be keeping track of the data on a graph of their own. The purpose of having the student keep track of her/his own progress, is that the student will know how she/he is doing. After having the student complete the graph, the progress needs to be discussed. It needs to be discussed where the student is and how far she/he still has to go to meet the goal.

Most teachers keep the data graphs in the form of a line graph. For students a bar graph is probably much easier. Below you will find examples of a line graph and a bar graph. Take a close look at them both and think about which would be easier for you to do and easier for the student to complete and understand. There are several pieces of information that needs to be on every graph. There needs to be the student's name, the task that is being worked on, the dates, and the number or percentage correct. It is also advised that in some way the goal be indicated. Some teachers do this by highlighting the line the student needs to reach.

Example Line Graph



Example Bar Graph



ACTIVITY

The activity for this section is to develop a graph on your own. You will need a piece of graph paper and an instructional unit data sheet on one of the students. Make sure that you have person from the teacher to use the data sheet. You will develop a graph and transfer the data from the data sheet to the graph. After you have set up and transferred the data, turn the graph into the teacher. Make sure that you make the graph easy to read and follow.

Alternate Assessment

In the unit on inclusion, you learned that IDEA requires that all students have access to general curriculum. It also says that schools are accountable to show that students with disabilities are actually learning. It says that if a State uses a test or other technique (like our CATS test here in Kentucky) to assess the progress of students without disabilities, then students with disabilities must also take part in these assessments. The law does provide that students with disabilities can use any accommodation that is a regular part of their program during the assessment test. It also acknowledges that some students with severe disabilities cannot participate in the regular assessment, even with accommodations. In these cases, the law requires the state to design an "alternate assessment" to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction that these students are receiving. In writing this part of the law, Congress was influenced by a program of alternate assessment that started here in Kentucky!

Within Kentucky's alternate assessment, students with significant disabilities create portfolios of their work just like you develop a writing portfolio. These portfolios are very different, however, than the writing portfolios that you complete. A portfolio for a student with s amoderate to severe disability is referred to as an Alternate Portfolio. Alternate Portfolios ensure that students with significant disabilities are represented in the school accountability system, provide a way to measure progress on student outcomes, encourage student choice and decision-making in their learning and evaluation of their work, and build support for meaningful participation in the regular education curriculum.

ACTIVITY

Look at the following website to learn more about alternate assessment in Kentucky. What are the six dimensions that are used to score the Alternate Portfolios? http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/kap/faq.asp

Students complete Alternate Portfolios in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Each portfolio must include a table of contents, a letter to the reviewer, a letter from the parent/guardian validating the portfolio, a daily schedule, a resume for twelfth grade, and five entry areas, which are different for each grade level.

The student, or a peer, can write the table of contents and the letter to the reviewer. They student can dictate to a peer, who can then write it for the student. These entries can be pictorial or they can be audio taped. The following page offers an example of a pictorial table of contents.

(MISSING EXAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS)

Alternate Assessment and Student Schedules

It is very important for us to plan our days. We all use some form of schedule to keep us on task. Many people use a planner to keep track of the things we need to do. Most of us think about our day and what we are going to do without writing it down. For students with disabilities, it is important for them to be able to plan their day so that they will know what to expect.

ACTIVITY

Look at the following website to learn about different types of schedules and how they are used. Move through each page by clicking on the continue icon at the bottom right hand corner.

http://www.setbc.org/projects/vss/default.html

Scoring Alternate Assessment

Each portfoio is scored according to six dimensions: standards, performance, settings, support, social relationships, and self-determination. These dimensions reflect what is considered to be best practice in educating students with significant disabilities. The standards dimension includes the academic expectations that all students are expected to know. The more academic expectations that are evidenced through student work, the higher the score.

In the performance dimension, a targeted skill must be identified for each entry, and progress must be shown on that skill. This progress may be demonstrated in the form of a chart or graph. All of the materials in each entry must also be age-appropriate.

For the settings dimension, there must be evidence that the student attends regular classes with non-disabled peers. Other settings may include other areas in the school or community, but those settings must be with other students without disabilities.

For the support dimension, there must be evidence of peer tutor support or natural support. Natural support comes from a regular education teacher or a peer who is working on the same content. Peer tutor support can become natural support when the students involved are working together on equally challenging activities. These activities may include working on homework together or going to the library to look for materials. Adaptations to the regular curriculum must be evidenced, as well as the assistive technology that the student uses.

The social relationships dimension shows that the student with a disability has regular opportunities for interactions with peers who are non-disabled and among a social network of friends who choose to spend time together. Peer tutoring can lead to the development of a social network of friends who choose to spend time together outside of school. Letters from a peer describing how they spend time together, possibly going to the movies or out to eat, could

evidence this social network.

The last dimension, self-determination, has to do with students' choice, planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. They must also use their evaluations to improve their performance the next time they go to a particular setting.

ACTIVITY

Below you will find an example of a planning, monitoring, and evaluating sheet used by a student. The student can either write 'yes' or 'no' in the boxes or the student can use a yes and no stamp. Look at each question and see which dimensions are evidenced on the following form.

(MISSING GRAPH)

As a peer tutor, you may assist a student with his or her portfolio. You may also attend classes with a student who is working on an Alternate Portfolio. Now you know a little about Alternate Portfolios. If you would like to see what a complete portfolio looks like, ask your teacher about them.