

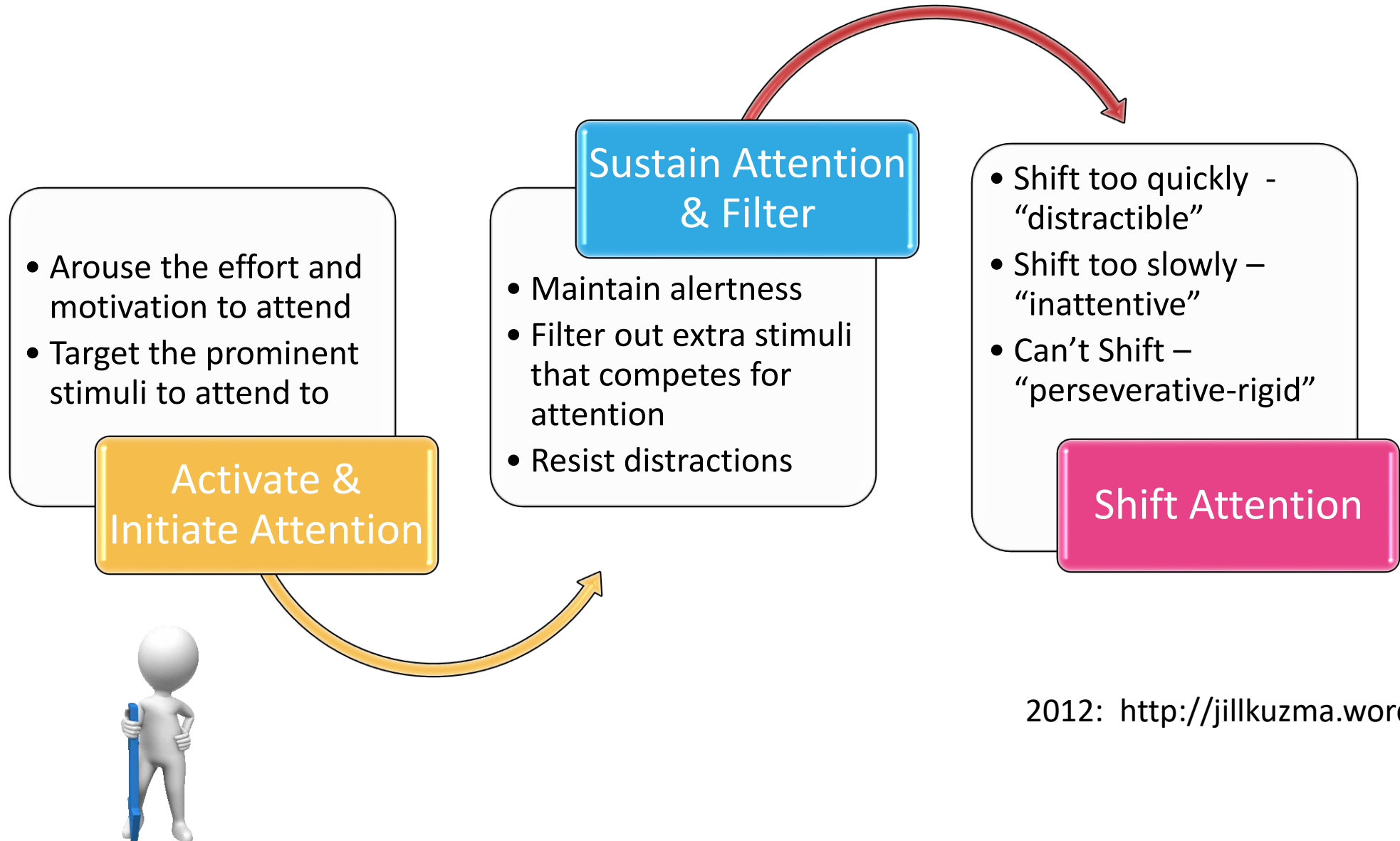


Activating  
and Initiating

Executive  
Function:

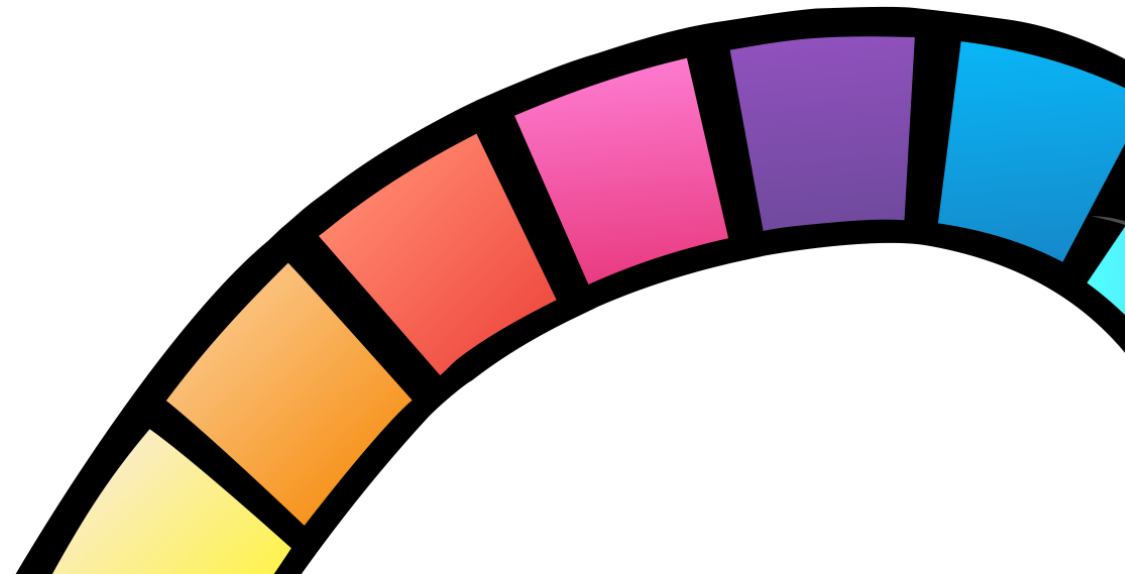
**START HERE**

# Executive Function Skills: Focus and Attention



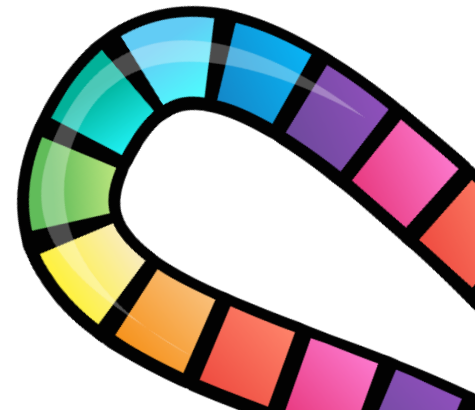
# Initiation and Activation

- **Beginning a task** – ideally without prompts or as few prompts as possible
  - How to start?
  - Where to start?
  - Trying to do too much at one time
  - The need to have things perfect
- **The ability to initiate appropriate actions or responses to achieve a targeted outcome or goal** (Ward, 2016).
- **Focus:**
  - Distracted by other people
  - Distracted by things
  - Distracted by another task



# Initiation and Activation

- Often need reminders to get started on classwork, tasks, chores, or other responsibilities
- Slow to start a secondary task after the primary task is finished
- Dependent on others to initiate or begin activities
- Can **appear** unmotivated or noncompliant
- Can result in prompt dependence or learned helplessness
- Longer projects – may wait until the last minute to complete (science fair, research projects, quarterly projects, presentations, or other culminating activities)
- **PAST FAILURE** may make initiating the task difficult



# Attention

Listen and Follow Directions

# Other Executive Functions that impact Task Initiation -

- **Organization:** students may be so disorganized it is difficult to begin a task because they can't find or don't have what is needed. See: [Supports for Organization](#)
- **Working Memory:** students may struggle to remember the directions along with their own ideas for the task. [Supports for Working Memory](#)
- **Shifting Attention:** students may struggle to shift their attention from one assignment, task, activity or mind set to another. They may require more time to transition between settings, activities, and even thoughts. [Supports for Shifting Attention](#) (YESNet.yk.ca, 2017).

# Environment:


- Research indicates that effective classroom teachers and managers have a structured schedule and environment (Oliver & Reschly, 2010).
- Studies have found that children spend nearly 20-35% of their day in transition between activities (Casey & McWilliam, 2005).
- Research has consistently indicated that the way the classroom environment is arranged influences the learning of individuals with ASD (Hurth, Shaw, Izeman, Whaley, & Rogers, 1999).
- “...we must take the responsibility to create environments for children that are designed to externally regulate them. A regulated environment can mean everything to a child who has a compromised internal regulatory system.” (Forbes, 2012)




# Teach Expectations Regularly - and teach different expectations for different activities.

## Read Aloud Expectations

Voice Level 1 


Track the Speaker 


Sit on the carpet 

Hands and Feet to Self 

## Teacher Station


Voice Level 3 


Sit in your seat 

Practice Warm-up Cards 


## Word Work

Voice Level 3 

Sit at Your Desk 


Work on Your Words 

Clean Up 


Put paper in the tray 

## Writing

Voice Level 1 

Sit in your seat 

Get your notebook, paper and supplies 

Put paper in the tray 

Clean Up Station 

We assume students know our expectations (can read our mind) or that students know when the expectations change!

“I think a lot of times, other people try not to hurt an AS (aspergers) person’s feelings so they are **not explicit enough about their own rules.**” Luke Jackson, Frecks, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome.

(EBP)



You must **TEACH**,  
**PRACTICE**, and  
**REINFORCE**  
expectations  
**REGULARLY!**

Over correction paired with reinforcement!

When developing expectations, consider:






**MAC:**

**M**ovement

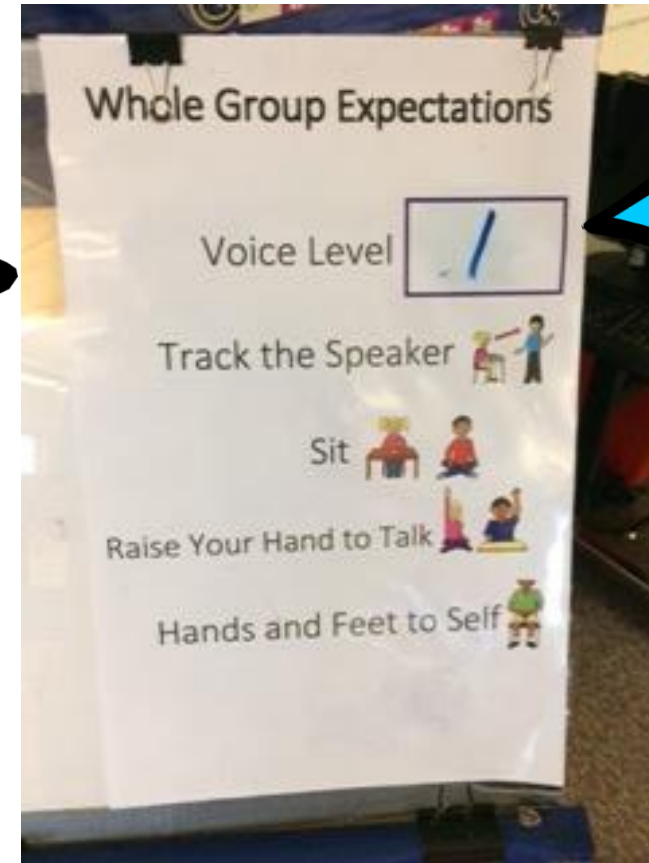
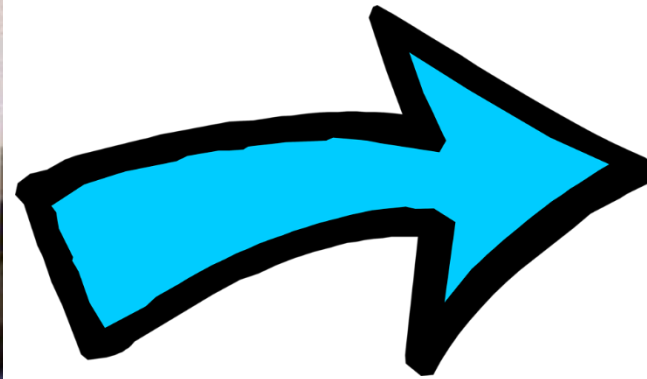
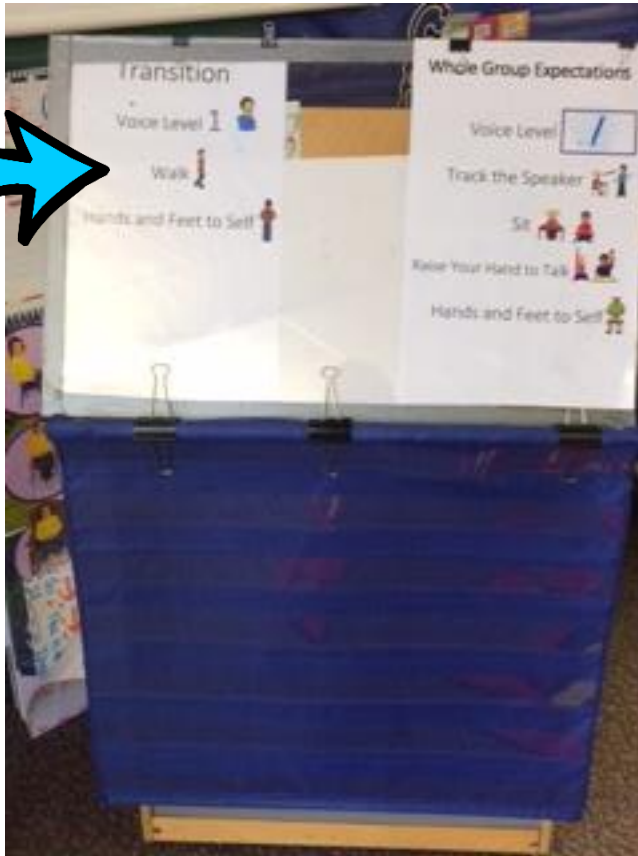
**A**ctivity

**C**onversation

## Voice Levels

Level		
5		Outside Voice
4		Strong Speaker
3		Table Talk
2		Whisper
1		Quiet - NO Talking

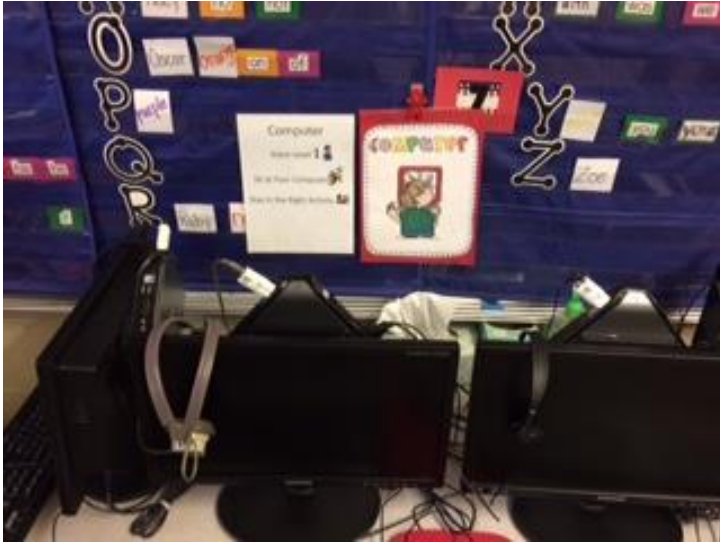
# Visual Expectations In and Around the General Education Classroom



Voice Levels

Level		
5		Outside Voice
4		Strong Speaker
3		Table Talk
2		Whisper
1		Quiet - NO Talking

# Visual Expectations In and Around the General Education Classroom





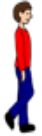
# Other environmental visuals to create consistency -

## Transition

Voice Level 1



Walk



Hands and Feet to Self



## Line Up Expectations

Voice Level 1



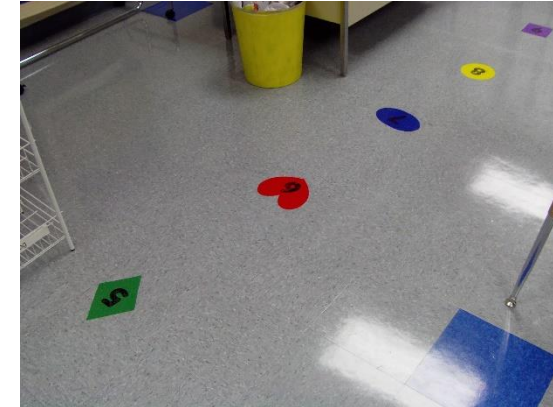
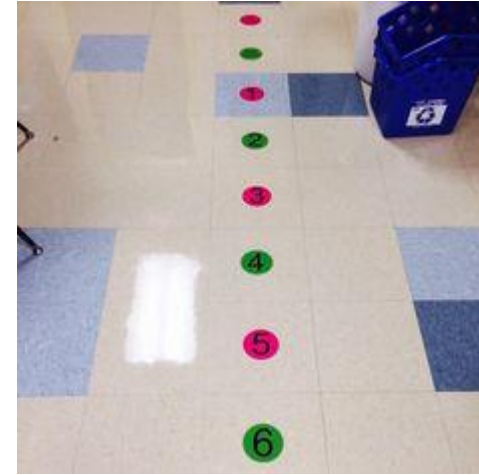
Push in Your Seat



Hands and Feet to Self



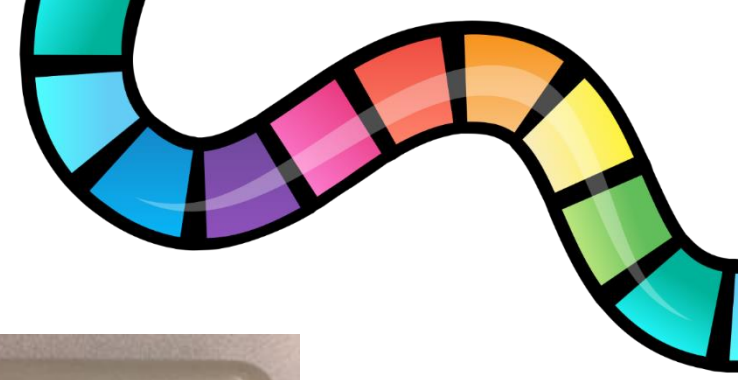
Leave Space Between  
People



# Environment:

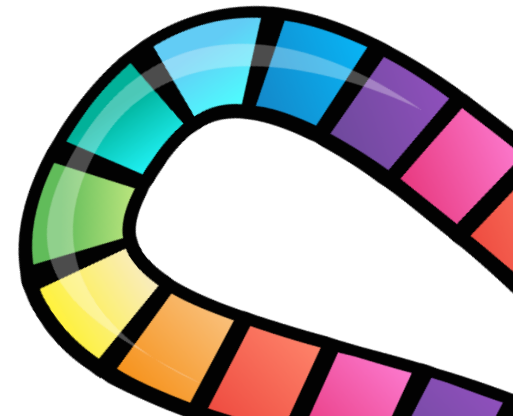
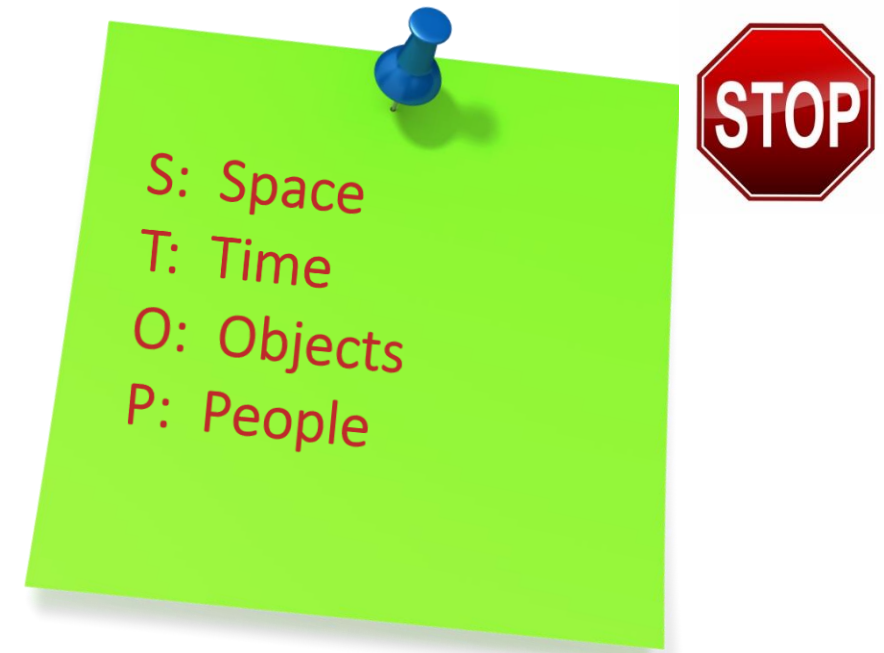
- Consistency with activities and expectations
  - Reduces transition times
  - Reduces confusion as to what to do where
  - Predictability reduces anxiety and fear
  - Areas and expectations labeled
- Student seating:
  - Avoid high traffic areas
  - Avoid high distractions (windows, computers)
  - Consider alternate seating

Individual cue on student desk



# Situational Intelligence

- This is the ability of the student to “read the room”
- Comprehending the different zones:
  - Space of the room
  - Timing of activities, time management
  - The objects in the room
  - The people in the room
- Self-directed recognition and observation to ascertain:
  - What is happening now?
  - What is important now?
  - What is my role?
- Finally – If this is what I am observing then I need to . . .





Teacher says:

Get ready for math -

- Get out last night's homework
- Get your math manipulatives
- Open your books to page 53



# Situational Awareness/Intelligence STOP and Read the Room

## Space

Navigate the Room

- ☐ Kind of space?
- ☐ What's going on?
- ☐ Is it Expected or Unexpected?
- ☐ Pathways used to Navigate to different areas within the space?
- ☐ Is there a shift between wide angle lens of the space(Whole), the zones (parts) and the details?

## Time

Get on the Timeline

- ☐ Time of day
- ☐ Kind of time?
- ☐ **What is happening at this Moment in Time**
- ☐ Sequence of actions
- ☐ Pace
- ☐ What is coming up?
  - Predictable?

## Objects

Organization/Objects

- ☐ Organization of The Space: Whole-Parts
- ☐ How is that part organized?
- ☐ Location of objects: In sight? Out of sight?
- ☐ Purpose/Priority of objects?
- ☐ Necessity & Relevancy

## People

Read the Person

- ☐ Face
- ☐ Body
- ☐ Appearance
- ☐ Mood
- ☐ Pace
- ☐ Saying-Tone



Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC/SLP

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections



# Mind MIME

**M** – make a future picture

**I** – imagine: what will I look like

**M** – movement, what motions are needed

**E** – emotions: how will I feel



# MIME- to improve non-verbal working memory, situational intelligence, planning

- Mental dress-rehearsal
- Mental trial and error without the risk of error leading to failure
- Can run multiple plans – teach Plan A and Plan B (flexible thinking)
- Predict the emotions that may relate to a situation
- Develops PLANNING skills (plan vs actual)
- \*\*Antecedent Based Intervention -





# Mind MIME Skills -

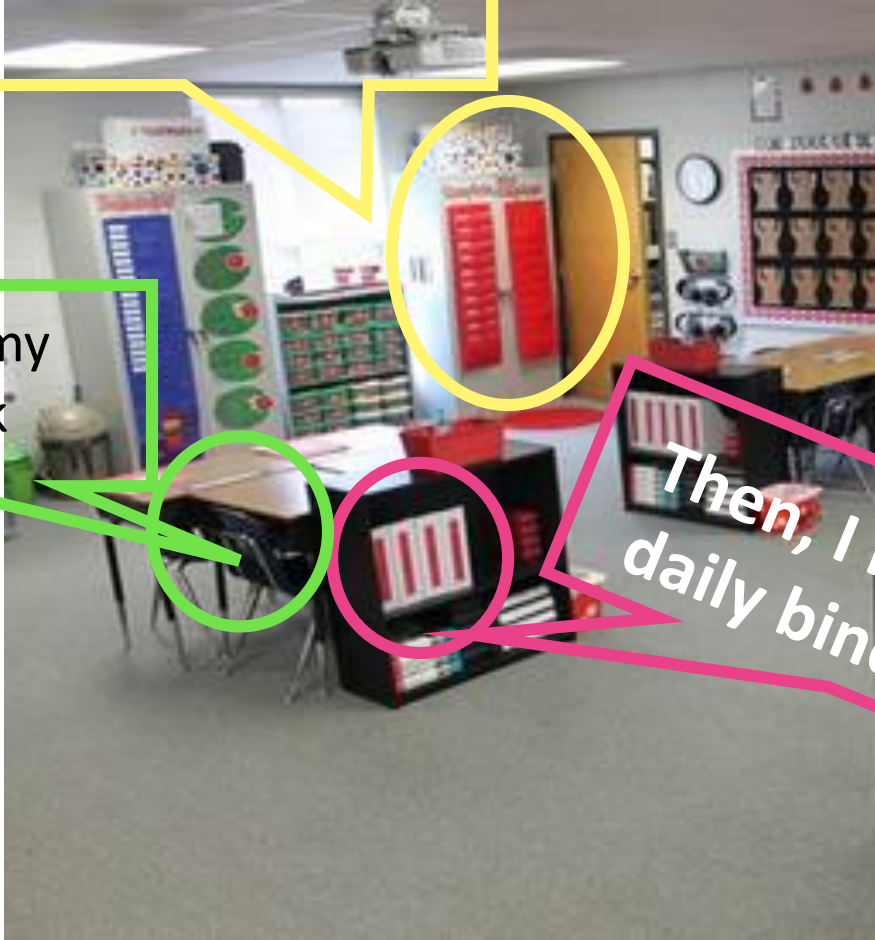
- Walk it Out
  - Map it Out
  - Draw it Out
    - Tap it Out
- Walk it out targets motor memory
  - Map/Draw – increases future mental imagery, task planning, initiation and impulse control



First I need to move my lunch card

Finally, Start my morning work

Then, I need my daily binder



## Morning Routine

Turn in Lunch Card

Get my Daily Binder

Start Morning Work

- ☐ If I finish: I can read from my book box
- ☐ If I don't finish – it can go in my To Do later (Blue) folder



Set out plan, talk out the plan, tap or walk out the plan, and pair with a visual.



# Sensory

Monitor the students' energy or arousal level: (antecedent based intervention)

- For student with low energy, they may benefit from some vestibular activities to help increase energy levels
- For students that are high energy or overactive,

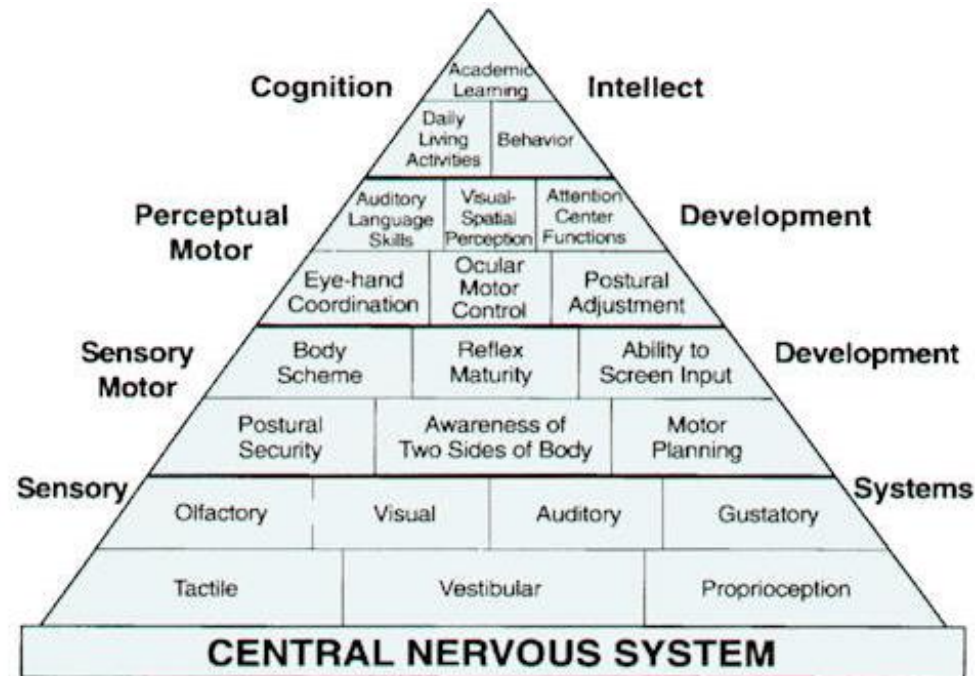


Figure 5. Pyramid of Learning. (Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4)



# Sensory Input –

(When in doubt go with proprioceptive or end with proprioceptive.)

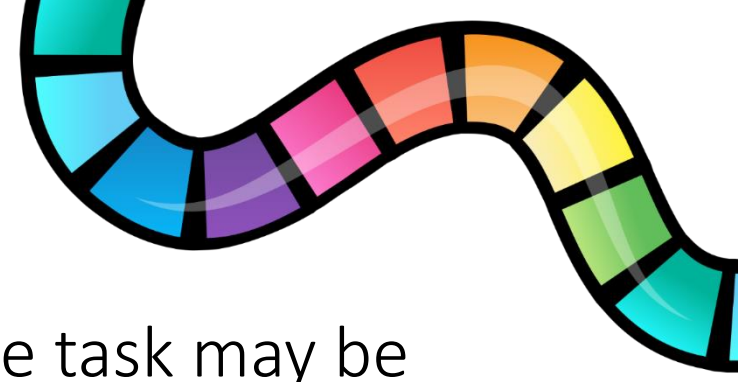


- **Vestibular** – alerting, wake up
- Swinging
- Toe Touches
- Help teacher pick up items
- Climbing up and down on playground equipment
- Swinging
- Animals Walks
- Bending over to pick up items from the floor
- Dizzy disc for spinning, or chair
- Teach student to do somersaults
- Spin on a scooter
- Bending over an exercise ball on belly or back



- **Proprioceptive** – Calming
- Weighted or compression items,
- Jump on a trampoline,
- Push, pull or carry something heavy,
- Roll up in a blanket like a burrito, body sock,
- Push play-doh/clay to make pancakes,
- Wall, floor, desk pushups,
- Crab walk or crawl with scooter,
- Toss a weighted ball,
- Weighted back pack to and from set location, and/or
- Crunchy or chewy snacks.

# How We Can Help -



## Low Interest Level:

- Validate the student's feelings: acknowledge that the task may be difficult, not their favorite or even boring - (We all have to do things we don't want to do.)
- Normalize this feeling – share about your own struggles with things that you did not necessarily want to do.
- Pair with importance/purpose
- Pair with reinforcement
- Incorporate student's area of interest
- Offer Choices when possible (not just the work – writing utensil, where they will sit, who they work with, subject matter, problems, etc . . . )

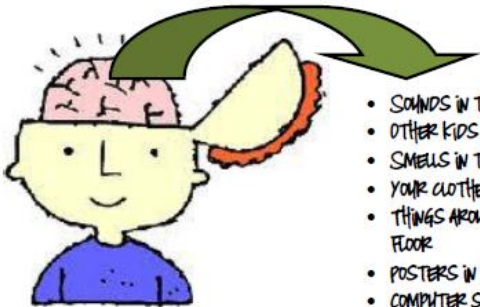
# Teach Students About Distractions — self-monitoring

## INSIDE THE BRAIN DISTRACTERS



- VIDEOS, MOVIE SCENES, TV
- REPEATING WORDS OR LINES FROM A VIDEO OR MOVIE
- WORRIES
- BEING HUNGRY, TIRED OR SICK
- OTHER:

## OUTSIDE THE BRAIN DISTRACTERS



- SOUNDS IN THE HALL OR CLASSROOM
- OTHER KIDS
- SMELLS IN THE ROOM
- YOUR CLOTHES
- THINGS AROUND YOU ON THE TABLE OR FLOOR
- POSTERS IN THE ROOM
- COMPUTER SCREEN SAVERS
- OTHER:

Created by: Jill D. Kuzma, 11/2012 — <http://jillkuzma.wordpress.com>

AT SCHOOL, HERE ARE MY MOST COMMON INSIDE THE BRAIN DISTRACTERS



THESE GET IN MY HEAD AT SCHOOL DURING: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

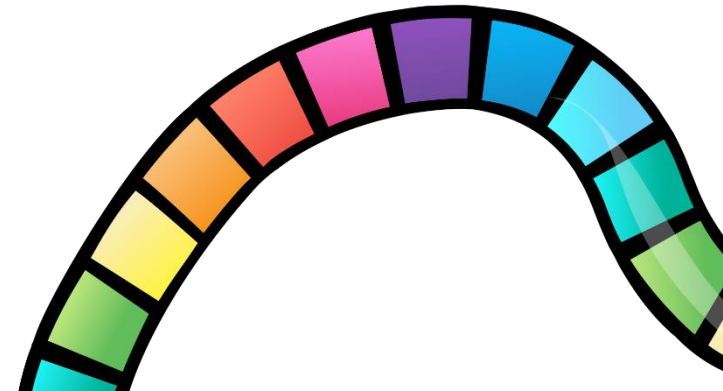
AT SCHOOL, HERE ARE MY MOST COMMON OUTSIDE THE BRAIN DISTRACTERS



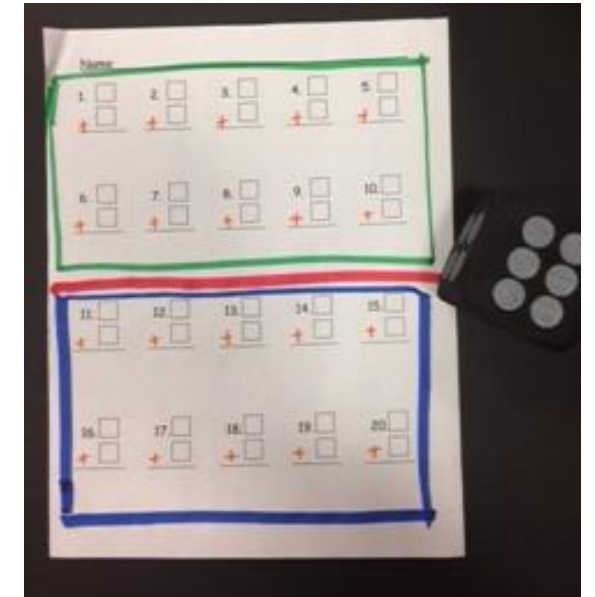
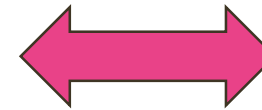
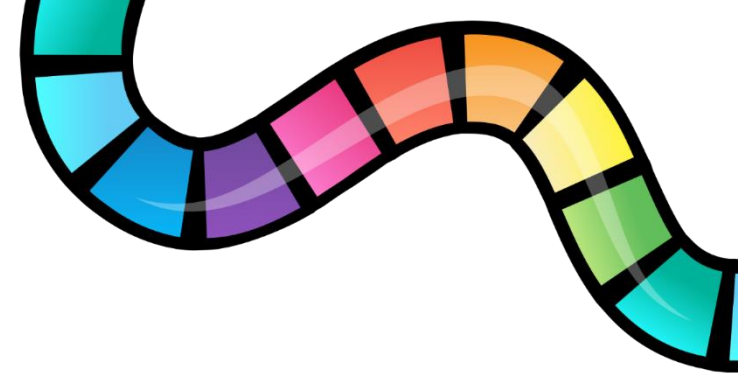
THESE GET IN MY HEAD AT SCHOOL DURING: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Created by: Jill D. Kuzma, 11/2012 — <http://jillkuzma.wordpress.com>



# Pair Distractors with Clock and Reflection



Use orange/red times as a half way check point – identify if on target or if there were distractors or “time robbers”



# Teach the Student **HOW** to Start -

Review the activity, task or assignment — support with a visual

- Break task into smaller chunks
- Create a to do list to help with sequence and expectations
- Show the student how to do the first one
- Provide a sample finished product or picture of one
- Question, don't accuse (often labeled as non-compliant or unmotivated)
  - How can I help you?
  - What do you need?
  - How can we make this better?
  - Do you have a plan?
  - What is the first step in getting started or improving this situation?
  - What feels difficult?
  - How can we handle this together?

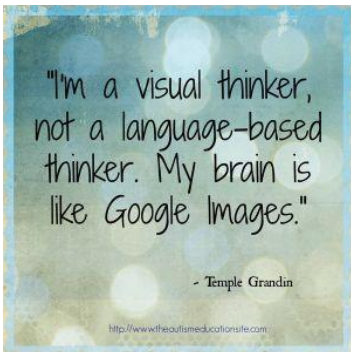
What work?	Spelling Lesson 27
How?	Write your words in your agenda. Have a friend check and initial.
What do I do when I am finished?	Complete Lesson 27 workbook pages Skip number 15
	Turn lesson 27 into the blue tray Read chapter 5 from Bridge to Terabithia and answer the Chapter 5 questions. This is due Friday.



Use formula  $y = mx + b$ , use given information to find  $m, b$ .

Example - Find the equation of a line that has a slope of 2 and passes through the point  $(3, 9)$ .

$y = mx + b$   
 $9 = 2(3) + b$   
 $9 = 6 + b$   
 $b = 3$  equation of line  $y = 2x + 3$

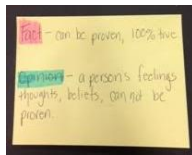




# Sample Finished Products/Sketches, Graphic Organizers & Rubrics

- All Clarify Expectations
- All are visual supports that can be utilized at other times and/or when teacher is not present
- Help eliminate the need for the student to remember the “how to do the assignment, they can focus on the context of the assignment
- Providing the rubric for students BEFORE they begin the assignment identifies and clarifies expectations

Name _____	Period _____
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Fact vs. Opinion</h2>	
<p><b>Directions:</b> Decide if statements in the passage are fact or opinion.</p>	
<p><b>Title of Passage:</b> _____</p>	
<p><b>Facts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 400px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>	<p><b>Opinions</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 400px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>



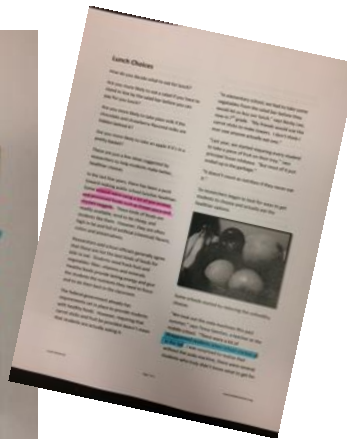
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**Fact vs. Opinion**

DIRECTIONS: Circle if statements in the passage are fact or opinion.

Title of Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

Facts	Options
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Fact vs. Opinion**

**Fact** - something that can be proven, 100% true

**Opinion** - a person's feelings, thoughts, beliefs, cannot be proven


**Facts**

**Opinions**

© 2004 by Linda Ward Beech, Scholastic Teaching Resources

### Long Division

3 digit by 1 digit



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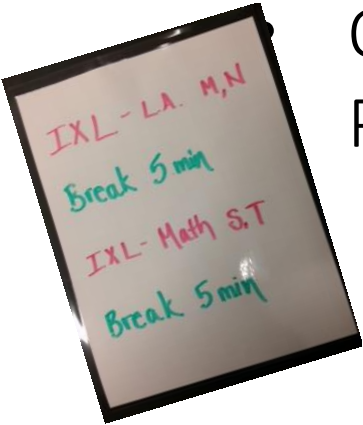
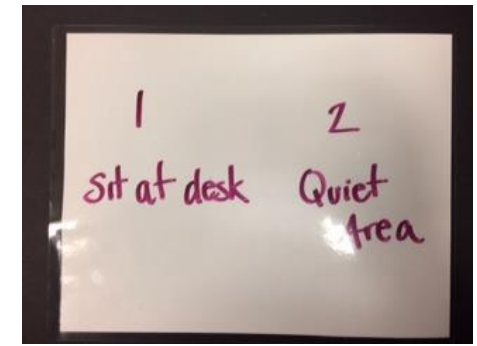
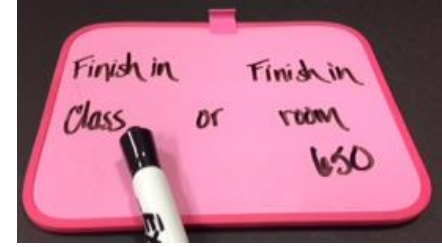
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# Visuals – dry erase board or laminate white cardstock

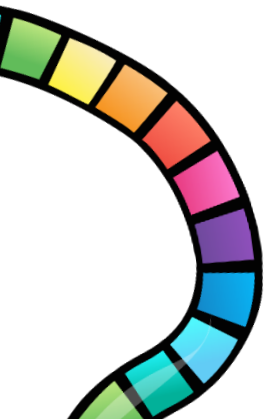
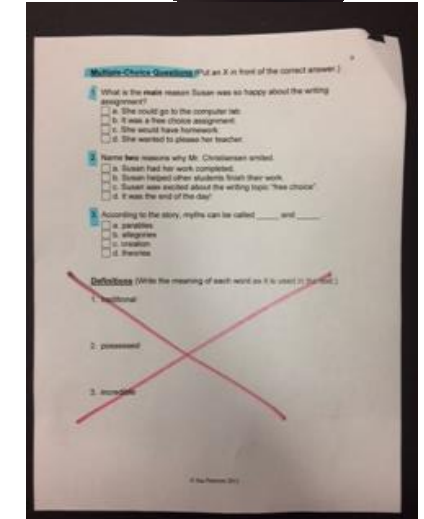
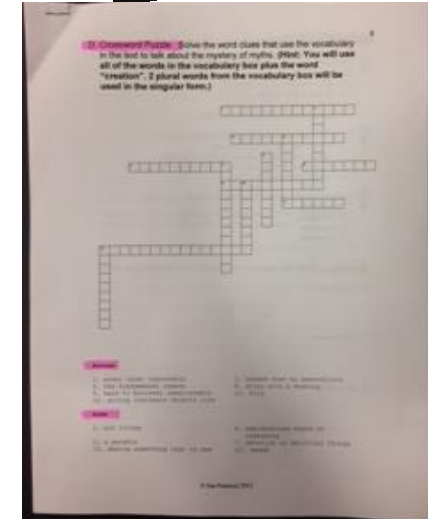
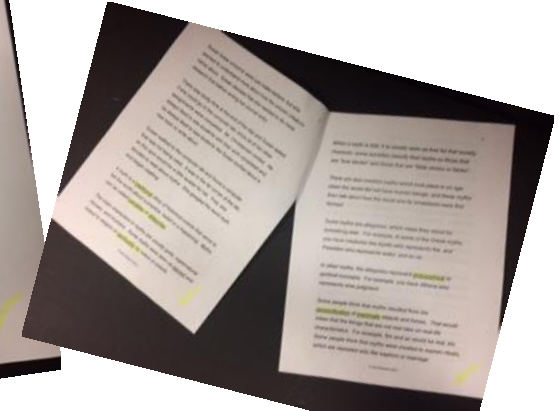
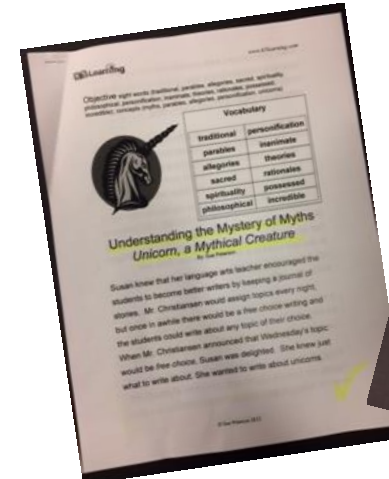
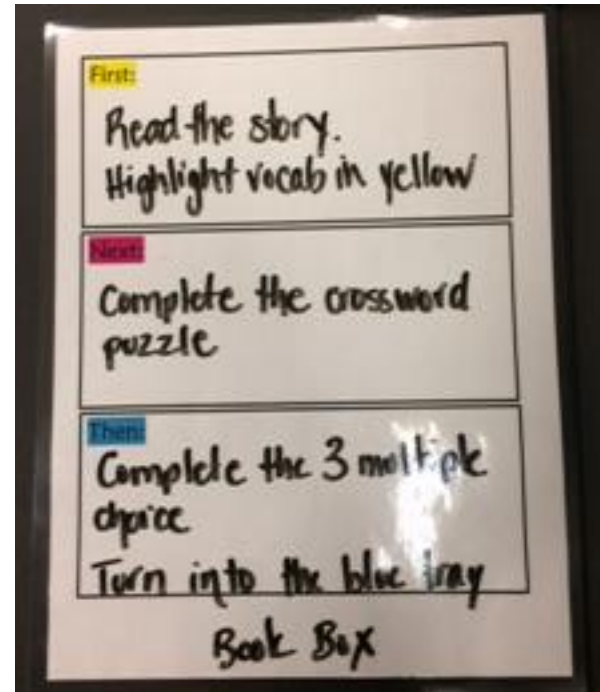
- Cues
    - Choices/Options
    - Sequence of events or activities
- Quick, easy, transportable
- Pair with highlighter (develop system)





First:


Next:


Then:





# Cue, Practice and Model Coping Skills/Growth Mind Set


 When I think - I Can't or I Don't  
Instead, I can say . . . 


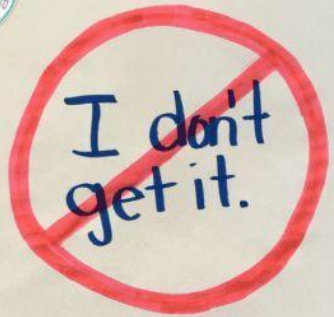
Can you help me with one? 

Can I think for a minute? 

Could you say that again? 

Could you say it slowly? 


Can you try to explain it in a different way? 

  
  
What to say instead:  
I tried \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_.  
I still have a  
question about \_\_\_\_\_.

I can have a growth mindset!  
Instead of: I'll say:


I'm not good at this.

→




This is too hard.

→




I'll never be as smart as him.

→



I'll never understand this.

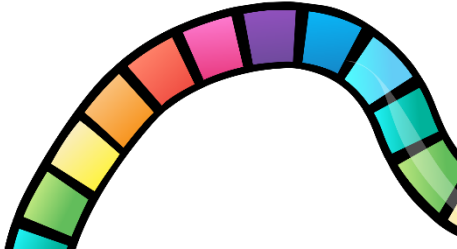
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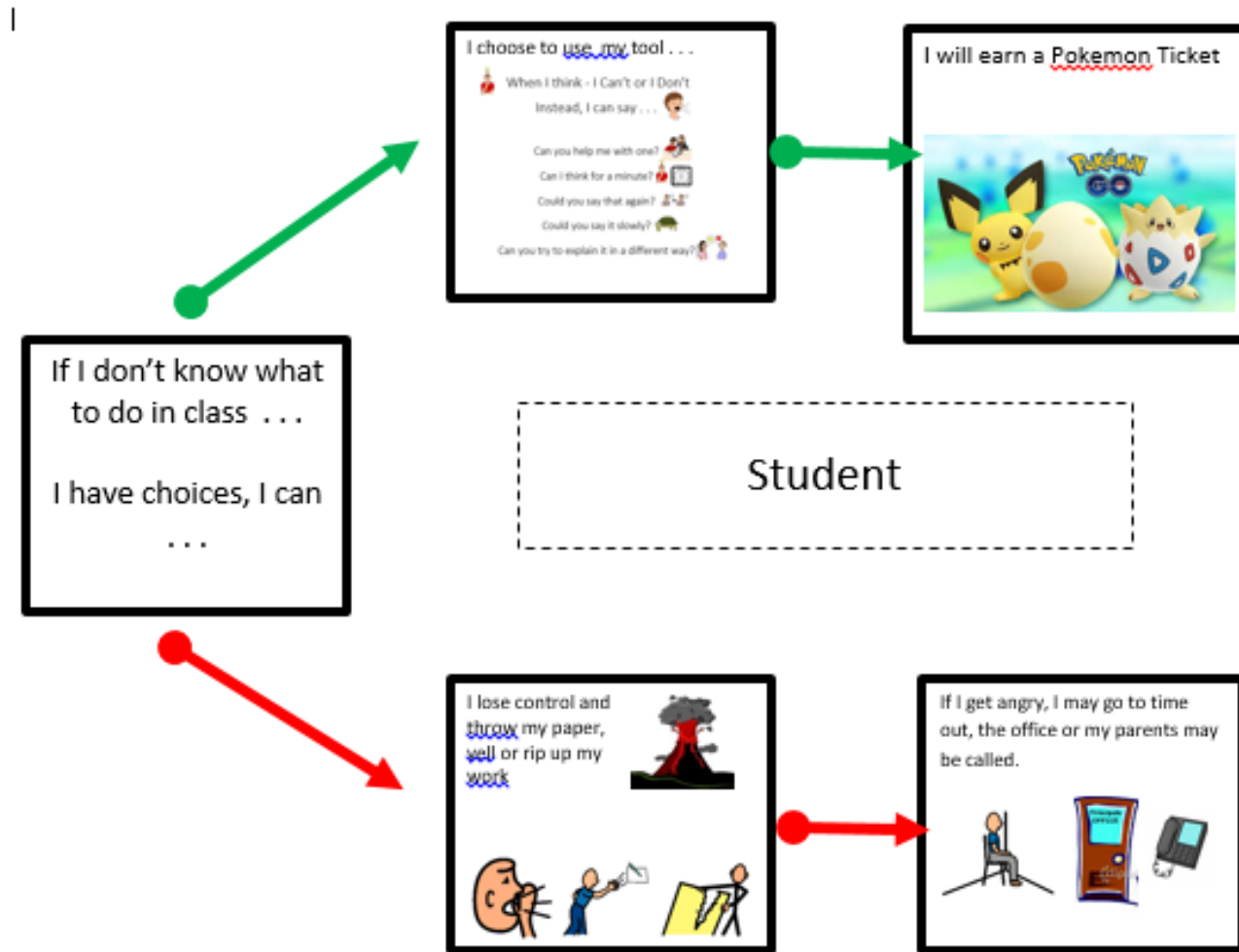


Growth Mindset The Force	Fixed Mindset The Dark Side
Because you are eager to learn you are happy to have a go and...	Because you are afraid of looking silly and getting things wrong you...
Embrace challenges	Avoid challenges
Keep going even when it's hard	Give up easily when it's hard
See effort as the journey to success	See effort as a waste of your time
Learn from criticism	Ignore useful feedback
Are inspired by the success of others	Feel threatened by other people's success

WHAT CAN I SAY TO MYSELF?	WHAT CAN I SAY TO MYSELF?
INSTEAD OF...	TRY THINKING...
-I'M NOT GOOD AT THIS	-WHAT AM I MISSING?
-I'M AWESOME AT THIS	-I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK
-I GIVE UP!	-I'LL USE SOME OF THE STRATEGIES I'VE LEARNED
-THIS IS TOO HARD	-THIS MAY TAKE SOME TIME AND EFFORT
-I CAN'T MAKE THIS ANY BETTER	-I CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE; I'LL KEEP TRYING
-I CAN'T DO MATH	-I'M GOING TO TRAIN MY BRAIN IN MATH
-I MADE A MISTAKE	-MISTAKES HELP ME IMPROVE
-I'LL NEVER BE AS SMART AS HER	-I'M GOING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT SHE DOES AND TRY IT
-IT'S GOOD ENOUGH	-IS THIS REALLY MY BEST WORK?



# Pair with consequence map AND reinforcement!

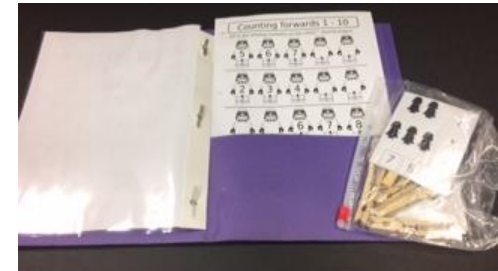
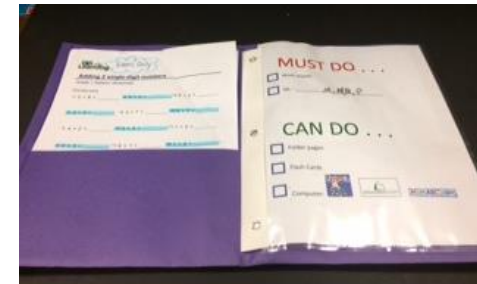
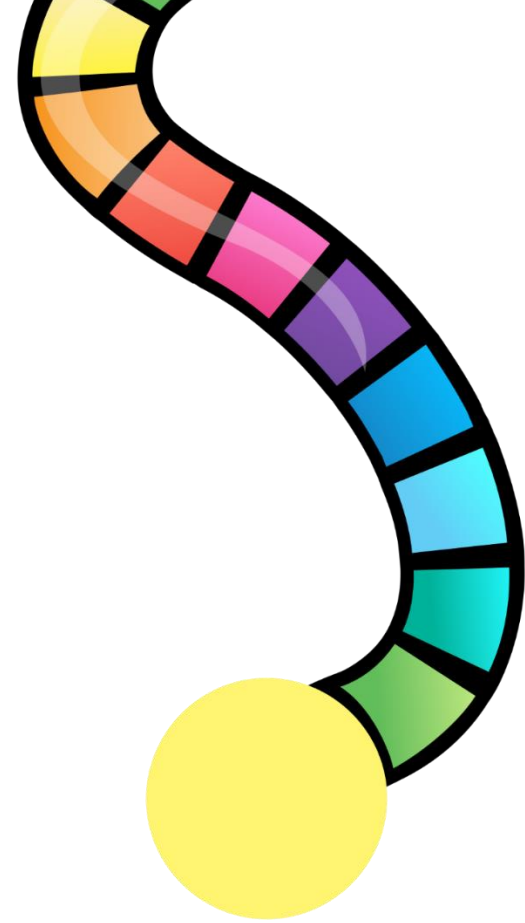


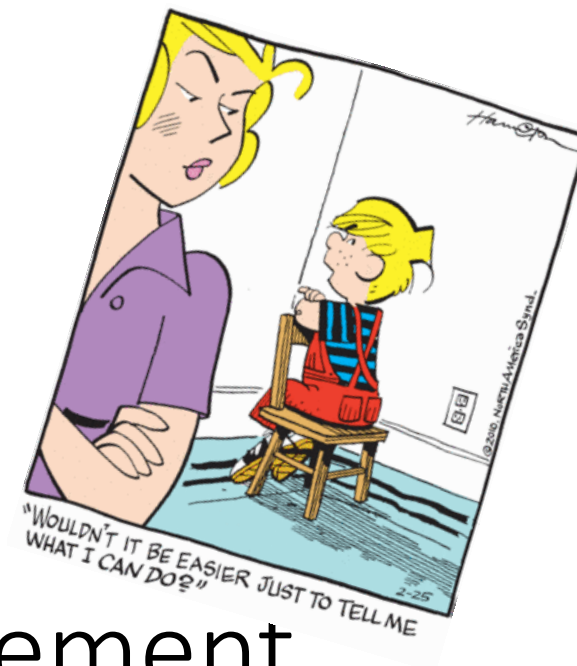


# Initiation and Activation – ending the previous activity

## Visual cue of upcoming transition. –

- Visual count down
  - Visual timer
  - Clock technique
  - First / Then Schedule
- 
- To Do Later Folder
    - Items that aren't finished are placed in the folder
    - A time is set aside for the student to do this work later
    - If no work in the folder = preferred time
- 
- Must Do Can Do Folder
    - Must Do work completed first
    - Then Can do (more preferred) work





# Pair Intervention with Reinforcement





# Reinforcement



# Consequences

- Study after study, reinforcement outperforms punishment.
- Reinforcement allows students to be held accountable to the school staff because we have what they desire
- People are more likely to perform desirable behavior even in secret when they are reinforced by teachers

- Works for about 80% of children.
- Mild forms of punishment like detention, suspension, phone calls home, staying in from recess, etc. have an impact on some.
- But for our children that need help the most, the traditional forms of punishment that we think about are often reinforcing

Improving Classroom Management Skills with Staff Matthew McNiff, Ph.D

Improving Classroom Management Skills with Staff Matthew McNiff, Ph.D

Students who are regularly the object of punishment may over time show a drop in positive attitudes toward school (resulting in poor attendance and work performance), have a more negative perception of teachers, and adopt a more punitive manner in interacting with peers and adults (Cited on Intervention Central: Martens & Meller, 1990).

# Reinforcement: Ratios of Interaction

- White & Wills (2008) conducted research and found that with a **1:3 ratio** of approval to reprimands the classes were about **56% on task throughout the day**.
- They made one change in the teacher's behavior:
  - They had the teacher increase the ratio of interactions to **12:1** and the class on task behavior increased to **85%** for EVERY STUDENT.
- Beaman & Wheldall (2000) showed that even though there is ample evidence that positive praise is extremely effective, teachers **do not use a systematic approach to consistently use verbal praise**.

# Questions and Validation

## Question

- How can I help you?
- What do you need?
- How can we make this better?
- Do you have a plan?
- What is the first step in improving this situation?
- What would be the best outcome?
- What feels difficult?
- How can we handle this together?

## Validation

- That must have made you feel \_\_\_\_\_
- That must be hard
- What a \_\_\_\_\_ situation to be in
- What a horrible feeling
- I hear you
- Boy, you must be \_\_\_\_\_
- It must make you feel \_\_\_\_\_ for someone to do that.
- What a tough spot

# Mind Shift - calming activities must be taught and reinforced

- Em Wave - \$129.00, matching app monitors heart rate in relation to breathing with visual
- eSense Temperature - \$129.00 – hand warming training for calming, self-regulation and stress reduction.
- Mind UP Curriculum - \$25.00 a book - 3 books total





# Calming Apps -

Stop Think Breathe – Free –

Breathing Bubbles: Free – gauge emotion, release a worry or receive a joy  
Calm -

Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street –

Breath Pacer- Free

Guided Breathing with Jacob the Frog - \$.99

Relax Melodies – Free

Sand Draw – Free

## Other Apps –

Yoga Apps -

Coloring apps

Puzzle apps



# Resources and Links

[Long Division Paper](#)

[First, Next, Then with Highlighter](#)

[Elementary Reinforcement form](#)

[Secondary Reinforcement Form](#)

[Tons of free behavior charts and token systems](#)

[SSJCSS Website links for reinforcement](#)

[Online Visual Timers](#)

[SSJCSS sensory resources](#)

[PBIS World – Breaking Down assignments](#)

[PBIS World – Reinforcement/Reward Systems](#)

[PBIS World – Data tracking resources](#)

[Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey](#)



# References

Distractor Types from Jill Kuzma

YESNet - [http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/staffroom/selfreg/task\\_initiation.pdf](http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/staffroom/selfreg/task_initiation.pdf)

Ward, Sarah. (2016) Executive Function Skills in the Classroom. [training handout]. *Indiana Department of Education, Indiana IEP Resource Center. Indianapolis, IN.*

