



THE UTAH SPECIAL

# EDUCATOR

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## Educating the Whole Child

Special Feature: USDB p.24

All Students Can Learn to Read: p.12

Small Group Instruction—Bonus DVD—Inside Back Cover



## ON THE COVER:

In this issue we are highlighting the students and educators who are part of Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

Pictured on the front and back covers are students Ronald Gonzales and Naomi Carver from Gerald Wright Elementary in Granite School District.

## Call For Articles & Artwork

**Celebrate What Works—Deadline April 11, 2007**

*The Utah Special Educator* accepts manuscripts, artwork and photographs on topics related to improving educational outcomes for school-age individuals with disabilities and learning challenges.

Submission guidelines and checklists for contributors are available online at <http://www.updc.org/specialeducator/index.html>. The editorial staff is dedicated to assisting contributors in the successful completion of manuscripts.

Please contact either Michael Herbert, Editor, [michaelh@updc.org](mailto:michaelh@updc.org), or Ginny Eggen, Co-Editor [ginnye@updc.org](mailto:ginnye@updc.org) for consultation and assistance. Phone 801-272-3431, or 800-662-6624 (in Utah)

*The Utah Special Educator* is a symbol of the leadership of Dr. R. Elwood Pace whose vision made the Consortium, the UPDC and this journal possible.



## Utah Personnel Development Center

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## Utah Professional Development 2006-2007 Calendar

### Stay Informed: Access the Web-based Calendar

- Get up-to-date information on all CSPD activities and conferences
  - Link directly to on-line web sites for details and registration
  - Subscribe to a calendar and receive email reminders of events
  - Submit events to be posted on the calendar(s)



### Instructions for getting there

- Enter <http://www.updc.hosted.webevent.com/cgi-bin/webevent.cgi>
- For quick reference to the calendar you'll want to save/bookmark this page!

# All Students Can Learn to Read



pr

# Classroom Tools for Increasing Access to the General Curriculum

Alan Hofmeister

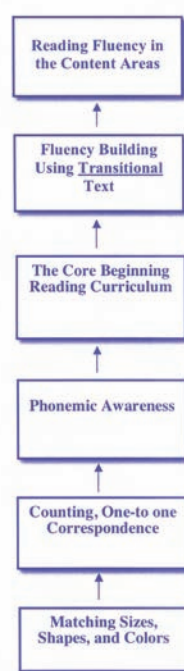
In this article we will discuss two instructional programs that address the prerequisite academic skills needed to access the general curriculum in reading instruction. Examples of these two programs, a matching program and a counting program, can be downloaded at no charge from: [www.updc.org/library/speducator/](http://www.updc.org/library/speducator/) These programs and similar programs are increasing in importance with the increased prevalence of autism and the growing diversity among students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

To implement tools such as the matching and counting programs and the associated interventions, we must first discriminate between instructionally relevant and instructionally irrelevant student descriptions. Describing a student as a person with Down syndrome, while appropriate in many contexts, is not an instructionally relevant description. To describe a student as an individual lacking selected academic preskills is an instructionally relevant description in that such a description can lead to meaningful and individualized instructional interventions. Using general descriptors, such as disability labels, I.Q. scores, and pseudo-instructional terms such as “functional curriculum,” provide little practical direction for instruction and may do more harm than good by limiting the search for instructionally meaningful descriptors.

Valid instructional prescriptions should increase access, with dignity, to the general curriculum. A starting point to instructional planning would be the conceptualization of a hierarchy of skills that links present student skills with future goals. Figure 1 provides an example of a hierarchy. Given the richness and range of individual differences, no single hierarchy can represent the qualities that make up the human condition. This is a start that addresses a federal and state mandate requiring “access to the general curriculum.” The hierarchy will have value if it helps us to select among a range of

instructional programs and materials. Instructional programs with a place in the hierarchy will be more defensible than those programs not directly linked to the general curriculum.

General Curriculum Milestones from  
Preschool to Reading Independence



The hierarchy in *Figure 1* starts with the *Matching Sizes, Shapes, and Colors Program*. This program can be downloaded from the previously listed web site. In the spirit of supporting progress in the hierarchy, the **Matching Program** identifies prerequisite, or gateway skills, and provides a clear definition of what the student outcome should be and should not be. In the case of the matching program, the objective is defined as follows:

The purpose of this package is to teach the child to match objects that are alike in size, color, or shape, such as putting squares with squares. This package is *not* designed to teach the child to *name* colors, sizes or shapes.

This statement of purpose is carefully worded so that student oral responses are not required as evidence of understanding. In the matching program, the concept of “same” is taught, and understanding of this concept can be demonstrated by motor responses rather than oral responses. It would be difficult to identify an instructional activity that did not require the concept “same” as an entry skill.

## Instructional Quality and Instructional Time

If there is a large gap between a student’s present skill level and the skills of peers, then both instructional quality and instructional time must be substantively increased. An increase in instructional time requires extensive, consistent instructional planning across home and school settings. This consistency requires the implementation of effective and replicable instructional programs.

*Continued on page 14*

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**MATCHING**

**Lesson 1** PUTTING OBJECTS TOGETHER IN A CONTAINER

Work lesson 1 15 minutes *each day* until the child completes part B.

**getting ready**  
Place ten (10) blue pencils on a table, next to a container (for example: a coffee can). Sit next to the child. (See picture below.)

**part A**

P. WATCH ME.  
(Pick up a pencil and place it in container.)  
I'M GOING TO PUT THESE PENCILS TOGETHER.  
(Place all pencils, one at a time, in container.)  
THERE! I PUT ALL THESE PENCILS TOGETHER.  
(Remove all pencils.)



**part B**

P. WATCH.  
(Pick up a pencil and put it in the container.)

P. PUT THE PENCILS TOGETHER.  
(Point to container.)

C. (Puts the pencils in the container *one at a time, not as a bunch.*)



TO CORRECT: PUT THE PENCILS TOGETHER.  
I'LL HELP.  
(Take child's hand; help him pick up the pencils and put them in the container.)  
NOW YOU DO IT BY YOURSELF.  
PUT THE PENCILS TOGETHER.

P. YOU DID IT! YOU PUT THE PENCILS **TOGETHER**.  
(Repeat Part B until the child can put the pencils in the container 3 times in a row, without help. Then go to Lesson 2.)

The **Matching Program** and the **Counting Program** were both designed and field tested to move easily between home and school. Typically, the home setting provides for the practice and application of skills *first* taught in the school setting. To the extent that the home setting provides needed practice, the school has more instructional time to introduce new skills. To reduce confusion and increase generalization of skills across settings, both the curriculum content and the instructional methods should be replicable across settings. *Figure 2* exemplifies the program scripting that facilitates replication across home and school settings. This program scripting allows all members of the instructional team at school and home to work together to substantively increase the quality and quantity of the available instructional time. The scripting in *Figure 2* provides an on-the-job training vehicle for teachers, aides, volunteers, and family members. Notice the instructional practices built into the scripting including: (a) physical, and language prompting, (b) correction procedures, (c) specific praise procedures and (d) careful and consistent use of instructional vocabulary. In this program the owl serves as the correction prompt. Most of the correction procedures involve the “My Turn, Our Turn, Your Turn” sequence.

In *Figure 3* we see an example of an instructional sequence near the end of the program. Notice that the student with limited expressive oral language can be successful in demonstrating an understanding of the concept “same.” Effective instructional sequences have clear curriculum-embedded assessments ensuring that timely reteaching is done and that preskills are mastered before more complex tasks are initiated. In this case, the students must, *do this step two times in a row without help* before moving to the next task. Instructional programs must also

supply the data collection and monitoring tools to ensure that all members of the school and home team are kept informed. Perhaps the most common instructional error made in teaching at-risk students is a failure to conduct timely curriculum-embedded assessments and the associated reteaching. These curriculum-embedded assessments serve two very important purposes. First, instruction can be immediately adjusted to meet individual student needs. Second, the teacher can systematically and progressively improve instructional practices so that future students will be more successful.

## The Fading of Physical and Verbal Prompts

The **Counting Program** requires oral responses from the students. To teach this more complex skill the instructor uses both oral and physical prompting as shown in Figure 3. As the student becomes more confident in the physical and oral behavior associated with the act of

counting, the instructor slowly withdraws the oral and physical prompting. This gradual withdrawal of prompts requires careful monitoring of student behavior and concurrent, carefully targeted praise. This careful fading of physical and verbal prompting is one of the most important instructional skills needed for teaching the student with a range of communication and physical disabilities. These instructional skills involving the systematic fading of physical and verbal prompts will generalize to instruction in a wide range of academic and self-care skills.

A review of the hierarchy in Figure 1 shows that counting competency provides the gateway to phonemic awareness. This gateway occurs because phonemic awareness requires an understanding of the role of individual phonemes in words. To do this, one must have the one-to-one correspondence skills concerned with individual phonemes and groups of phonemes, namely, words. Unit 1 of the counting program teaches these one-to-one correspondence skills. The other units in the counting program will provide the gateway skills to numeracy.

## The Two Curricula

For the student at-risk of academic failure, the curriculum must address both the academic gateway skills to the general curriculum listed in Figure 1 and the social and instructional participation skills needed to increase the student outcomes from every minute of instruction. This instructional participation curriculum includes learning to: (a) stay in a seat, (b) focus on the instructor, (c) respond to instructor models, (d) respond to requests for verbal and motor responses, and (e) interact with peers e.g. taking turns. These skills are all taught in the counting and matching programs. The more severe and complex the students' disabilities, the more we should stress concurrent instruction in academic, social, and instructional participation skills. Examples of small group reading instruction which incorporate these principals can be found in the DVD, attached to the inside back cover of this issue of the *Educator*.

## Conclusion: The Teacher as Executive

The increasing severity and diversity of disabilities prevalent in special education clients require a reconceptualization of the role of the special educator. Managing the teaching of hosts of small target student behaviors across regular education, special education, and home and community settings requires an executive role for the teacher. The use of instructional hierarchies and access to intervention tools, such as those exemplified in the matching and counting programs discussed in this article, will allow the teacher to manage and support all members of the instructional team. The use of hierarchies and the associated sequence of instructional tools will limit the loss of intensity and focus as students transition across classrooms at the end of a school year.

We need to increase the availability of programs that are research-based, replicable across home and school, and designed to deliver both student intervention and on-the-job staff development. With such programs we can progressively improve the quality of instruction and support the teacher as an executive with a demanding and important instructional and management role. ■

**Step A (Physical and Verbal Assistance)**


**I:**(Place two sheets of paper on the table in front of the learner. Place four pencils on the sheet of paper to the left.)

**We are going to count the pencils together.**  
(Touch one of the pencils.)

**Hold the end of this pencil and I will hold the other end. We will lift the pencil together and move it to the other sheet of paper. When we put it down, we will count together. Ready.**

(Help the learner lift and move one pencil to the other sheet of paper. As the pencil touches the paper, say the number one with the learner.)

**One.**



**L:**(Lifts and moves one pencil to the other sheet of paper with the instructor's help. Says the number one with the instructor as the pencil touches the paper.)

**I:**Good! You counted with me. Let's count the next pencil.

Figure 3

# All Students Can Learn to Read

## The Importance of Small Group Instruction

Highly skilled teachers know how to use small group instruction effectively. They realize that grouping in homogenous groups is significantly more effective for struggling readers than whole class instruction alone. Research indicates that the highest reading intervention effect sizes are produced by small group instruction. Small group instruction:

- Allows for collaborative teaching arrangements
- Decreases behavior/management problems
- Allows for more differentiation
- Has built in ongoing, formative assessment that is directly linked to instruction

Utah's 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction (2006, USOE, <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/sars/3-tierread.pdf>), lists small group instruction as a recommended effective instructional practice. It suggests that practitioners provide **explicit and systematic lessons, which should include:**

- Forming flexible groups to meet the needs of individual students (e.g., one-on-one, pairs, small groups, whole group)
- Create multiple opportunities for students to engage in sustained reading opportunities in a variety of authentic and isolated contexts (e.g. individual, partner, small group, whole group)

- Managing student activity and behavior
  - Utilizing instructional resources to engage parental support
  - Practicing direct explanation of strategies to students
  - Teacher modeling
  - Guided Practice
  - Independent practice
  - Progress monitoring

### About This DVD

This DVD is provided free of charge through the *Utah Special Educator* as examples of evidenced based, scientifically validated reading instruction utilizing small group instruction as identified by the

National Reading Panel (2000), and reaffirmed by Utah's 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction (2006). The reading program demonstrated in this video is the *Academic Success for All Learners* program ([www.iseesam.com](http://www.iseesam.com)) originally published through Utah State University. This program is one of many programs of recommended instructional materials as identified by the Utah State Office of Education. For a complete listing of recommended instructional materials in Utah, visit: [www.usoe.org/rims](http://www.usoe.org/rims). The small group instruction, teacher/student interactions illustrated in this DVD are not specific to any one program, but are generalizable to multiple curricula and subjects.