Effectively Embedding IEP Objectives into the Project Approach

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Objectives
Participants will be able to:

- Discuss the three phases of a project.
- Identify opportunities for embedding IEP learning objectives into project work.
- Develop a list of visual supports to accommodate and modify projects conducted in the classroom.

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Borrowing from Early Childhood Education
Grisham Brown et al. (2005) said:
“We know from ECE that all children learn best when they are learning about things that are interesting to them, when they have opportunities for hands-on learning, and when they have opportunities to interact with and learn from their peers, regardless of ability levels.”

(p. xv)
The Project Approach

• “The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teacher working with the children” (Katz, 1994, p. 1).

What is a project?

• In-depth study
• Real-life topic
• Worthy of students’ attention and effort
(Chard, 2012)

Projects allow Children to:

• Apply skills
• Participate at an independent level
• Make choices
• Be intrinsically motivated
(Chard, 2012)
Teacher role

• Give guidance
• Suggest alternatives
• Observe, listen, and question
• Encourage ideas (Chard, 2012)
• Document (Helm, et al., 1998)

Three Phases of Projects

• Phase I
  – Beginning the Project
  • Determining the Child’s Interest and Selecting a Topic
• Phase II
  – Developing the Project
  • Preparing for Investigations
  • Planning for Field-Site Visits
• Phase III
  – Concluding the Project
  • Sharing with Others What Was Learned

Child-Centered

• Children make decisions about:
  – Topic Selection
  – Ways to Investigate
  – How to Culminate the Project

(Helm & Katz, 2001).
Projects are beneficial because they address many of the needs of early childhood.

Developmentally Appropriate
Project work is individually based on each child’s development.

Social-Emotional Development
• Self-regulation
• Decision Making
• Opportunities to work cooperatively with peers/adults
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**Academic Skills**

Provides a framework for learning that allows for academic skills to be intertwined throughout the children's topic of interest (Helm & Katz, 2001).

Can be used in conjunction with systematic teaching of skills (Chard, 2012).

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**Family Connections**

- Creates home-school connections
- Family members can be visiting experts
- Assist in documentation
- May create higher expectations for children (Helm & Beneke, 2003)

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**Project Approach in Inclusive Classrooms**

- Because the project approach focuses on the child's interest, it is "particularly important in engaging some children with special needs in cognitive learning experiences" (Helm & Beneke, 2003, p. 54).

- "It is important to remember that one of the most powerful interest motivators is the relevance the concept has to the child's personal life" (Bertling, Darrah, Lyon, & Jackson, p. 6).
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Projects are beneficial to all students

• Collaborative
• Focus on children’s interests
• Allow for children to each do different things
• Utilize small group work
• Document children’s strengths

(Edmiaston, 1998)

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Embedding Learning Objectives

“A procedure in which children are given opportunities to practice individual goals and objectives that are included within an activity or event in a manner that expands, modifies, or adapts the activity/event while remaining meaningful and interesting to children.”


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Many Opportunities

• Field work, classroom visitors, and hands-on constructions provide students with authentic opportunities to practice communication, cognitive, social, and motor skills.
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The Transportation Project

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Supporting Communication Skills

- Increasing vocabulary
- Initiating conversations

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Supporting Fine Motor Skills

- Developing prewriting skills
- Opportunities for sensory experiences
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Supporting Social Emotional Skills

• Completing activities from start to finish
• Following 1-2 step directions
• Working cooperatively with peers

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PHASE ONE

Beginning the project

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Identifying the Child’s Interest

• Parent Interviews
• Anecdotal Records
• Reinforcer Assessments
• Documentation of Free Choice Activities
Reinforcer Assessment

- Activity Reinforcers
  - Preferred music, pets, puzzles, books, etc.
- Social and Sensory Reinforcers
  - Adult attention, preferred peers, motor lab, etc.
- Tangible Items
  - Snacks, stickers, games, etc.

Time Sampling to Document Free Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>Student 2</th>
<th>Student 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:05</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:10</td>
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<td>8:15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not at a center
M (math center)
D (dramatic play)
B (blocks)
R (reading center)
A (art center)
S (science center)
W (writing center)
LT (light table)
T (With teacher at small group)

KWL Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Do We Know about Cars and Trucks?</th>
<th>What Do We Want to Learn?</th>
<th>What Do We Learn to Learn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Webbing

• “Classification is a basic mental process that underlies vocabulary knowledge as well as other cognitive processes,” (Dougherty Stahl & Stahl, 2012, p. 83).
• Children can be taught to classify as early as preschool.

Communication

Increasing Vocabulary
• Webbing
  – Supplementing Web with pictures
  – Priming the child

Initiating Conversation
• Have child facilitate webbing
  – Tell who is next
  – Ask questions

Fine Motor Skills

Pre-Writing Skills
• Help to draw and write the web
  • Draw what they know about transportation vehicles

Sensory Experiences
• Use multiple mediums for expression
Social Emotional Skills

Completing Activities
• Discussing the amount of time you would like the child to brainstorm.

Follow directions
• Using visual schedules to let the child know where to be and what to be doing.

Social Emotional Skills

Work cooperatively
• Taking turns during webbing

PHASE TWO
### Slide 34

**Communication**

**Increasing Vocabulary**
- New terminology
  - Visiting Experts
  - Video tape
  - Books
  - Create adapted books

**Initiating Conversation**
- Have child ask questions
  - Social stories
  - Visual Prompts
  - Assistive technology devices

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**Fine Motor Skills**

**Pre-Writing Skills**
- Field notes
  - Surveys
  - Sketchings

**Adaptations**
- Allow students to use the digital camera to take photographs if sketching is too difficult

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**Social Emotional Skills**

**Completing Activities**
- First/Then Boards

**Follow directions**
- Task Analysis
Social Emotional Skills

Work cooperatively
- Peer instruction cards

(Ganz & Flores, 2010)

What is our job today?
They need dirt!
Your turn
Time to deliver it!

PHASE THREE

concluding the project
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**Sharing What was Learned**

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**Organization of Embedded Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example for Phase 2:</th>
<th>Embedded Work</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication: Increase vocabulary</td>
<td>Label/Match:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blades, wheels, steering wheel, door, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Motor: Tripod grasp</td>
<td>Sketches of school bus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clay art:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Emotional: Engage cooperatively</td>
<td>Pretend play with the cardboard bus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give student a ride with a script:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social stories about riding on a bus:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Documentation**

Photographic and written wall panels placed at both adult and child height, is a prominent feature of the schools and centers

* Takes place *during* a child’s learning process
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Process vs. Product

Often the process is the important aspect, not the product. Therefore, documentation is extremely important!

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Our Basement by: Kinsley

“We had lots of things in our basement. We had a cradle, an exercise bike, and a Christmas tree. Oh, remember that castle we had out of cardboard, too!”

“The water started to cover up our stuff.”

“It got all our stuff wet, even our stairs!”

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Purpose of Documentation

• Teachers make “it possible for others to ‘see’ the learning that takes place (Helm, Beneke, & Steinheimer, 1998, p.15)

• Evidence needed for
  − Assessing children’s progress
  − Meeting accountability requirements
  − Monitoring students’ growth and development
  − Program evaluation

(Helm, et. al, 1998)
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Documentation

- Documentation panels
- Portfolios
- Work samples
- Photographs
- Video clips

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Types of Documentation

- Project narratives
- Products
  - Written
  - Diaries
  - Books
- Verbal
  - Questions
  - Hypotheses
- Data
  - Pictures
  - Words
  - Constructions
  - Play environments
  - Soundscapes
  - Blocks
- Individual Portfolios
- Observations of child development
  - Developmental Checklists
  - anecdotal records
- Child self-reflections
  - Webbing
  - Tape recordings
  - Statements on dispositions
(Helm, et al., 1998, p. 36).

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Using a matrix to organize

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receptively select pictures for web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce nonfiction books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make labels for map</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Conclusion

- The project approach creates a community of learners which is particularly important in inclusive classrooms.

- "Children are more likely to risk trying something new or to stick with a difficult task when they feel safe and accepted." (Helm & Beneke, 2003, p. 51).

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Conclusion

- How will I identify my student’s interests?
- What visual accommodations can I provide students with in order to guide them through the three phases of project work?
- How can you encourage peer cooperation during project work?

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References


