Welcome back and Happy New School Year! The start of each school year brings opportunities for new beginnings for both students and teachers, and, yes, new school initiatives. This newsletter provides a peek into the latest “Ins” for educators this year. Many of these “Ins” may seem familiar. Have you heard of: (a) early intervening services? (b) progress monitoring? (c) response to intervention? (d) evidence-based practices? or (e) collaborative problem solving? Even if you answered “yes,” this year these concepts take on new importance! Preventing children’s learning struggles and meeting students’ individual education needs through collaborative efforts now requires attention more than ever (see Table 1).

Early intervening services [EIS]. Teachers, have you ever wished that students could receive assistance at the first sign of a problem, or that there would be another way to help a struggling student before you referred him for special education? The good news is that local school divisions can now use some special education resources to provide intervention before referral to special education. For example, schools can provide teachers with professional development to enhance their skills in specific instructional and behavioral practices (VDOE Guidance Document, 2006). The message is to act early. Don’t wait for children to experience repeated failure!

Progress monitoring. Data tell the story of teaching and learning. Being data-based decision makers and collaborative problem solvers is part of educators’ new or renewed roles. Progress monitoring and documentation of instructional efforts are now expected for all students whether they have disabilities or not who are not meeting instructional expectations. Monitoring relates directly to the No Child Left Behind benchmarks of state approved grade-level assessments of achievement (Zirkel, 2007). For more information on progress monitoring, go to www.studentprogress.org or to www.wm.edu/ttac (go to T/TAC library to check out A...
Guide to Using Curriculum-Based Assessment in the Classroom: Do you know what your students know?) (TT23).

**Response to intervention [RtI]**. RtI, a proactive intervention approach, systematically provides and evaluates the impact of high-quality, carefully individualized instruction. Using progress monitoring, instructional decisions are made about the intensity (and the degree of individualization) of instruction for the student who is having difficulty (Batsche et al., 2006).

This coming school year, educators will read about “tiers” of interventions. These tiers refer to a continuum of evidence-based instructional interventions that range from strategies employed as part of whole-classroom teaching to those using small-group or individual instruction. Interventions might reflect a simple change, such as increasing the use of graphic organizers as part of general classroom routines. More involved interventions may incorporate specialized small-group instruction for the child who continues to experience academic challenges. Sources of general education data to document the effectiveness of instructional interventions include progress monitoring of grades, homework, class participation, benchmark assessments, or other curriculum-based measures. Look for upcoming information about RtI from the Virginia Department of Education.

**Evidence-based practices (EBP)**. Policy makers, parents, and students expect teachers to use effective instructional practices. Research offers a shortcut to trial-and-error methods of determining effective interventions. To stay informed about instructional practices that are supported by the research, go to the What Works Clearinghouse (www.whatworks.ed.gov/). This center rates instructional interventions as those that (a) meet evidence standards, (b) meet with reservations, or (c) do not meet standards. Another resource is the Access Center (www.k8accesscenter.org) which provides information to help students with disabilities access the general education curriculum. T/TAC online (www.ttaconline.org) as well as the W&M T/TAC resources and programs are also available. Seek to be a lifelong learner of these tools – share what you learn with one another.

**Collaborative problem solving**. More than ever, students need general and special educators to be collaborative service providers and problem solvers. Creating environments that employ inclusive practices will help achieve the results we know are possible for students with disabilities. Check out the following videos from the T/TAC library: The Complexities of Collaboration (CC61) or The Power of 2: Making a Difference Through Co-Teaching (CC56.1).

For more information about “What’s “In” for School Year 2007-08”, download the podcast with Sharon deFur at www.wm.edu/ttac.

**References**


### Table1: What’s “In” for 2007-08 and the Future?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EARLY INTERVENING SERVICES [EIS]</strong></td>
<td>a prevention option for K-12 students; assistance at the first sign of a problem</td>
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<td><strong>PROGRESS MONITORING [PM]</strong></td>
<td>collecting ongoing data to determine needs of students and the effectiveness of interventions</td>
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<td><strong>RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION [RtI]</strong></td>
<td>multi-tiered levels of support, where general education intervention is the starting point; responsive instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE [EBP]</strong></td>
<td>the use of researched, effective instructional or behavioral interventions</td>
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<td><strong>COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING</strong></td>
<td>promoting inclusive practices; using shared expertise to ensure student success; a systematic process of assessing and responding to student needs</td>
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Note. These terms can be found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Regulations. The Virginia Regulations Governing Special Education, currently being revised, are expected to be finalized by Spring 2008. Follow the progress of these revisions at: [http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html)

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**A NEW ADDITION TO OUR T/TAC SERVICES!**

**TTACasts**

Want to know more? We are excited to include podcasts with our newsletters this year. Listen to discussions with leading professionals as they go into greater detail about specific topics addressed in the newsletter. In our first TTACast, Sharon DeFur goes inside the reauthorization of IDEA and talks about the implications for teachers, schools, and administrators. For directions on accessing the podcast, go to [www.wm.edu/ttac](http://www.wm.edu/ttac) and click on “Directions for downloading podcasts,” or email fdgeis@wm.edu.
Collaborative Leadership
Collaboration Is In!
By Fritz Geissler, M.Ed., and Lee Anne Sulzberger, M.Ed.

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What's hot in education today? Collaboration is IN! Inclusive schools need all members of the school community working together to ensure the success of all students.

Friend and Cook (2007), define interpersonal collaboration as "a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (p. 7). Collaboration is characterized by:

- equal contributions and decision-making power
- a shared goal or problem
- shared responsibility for the problem-solving process
- shared accountability for the outcome
- shared resources (Friend & Cook, 2007)

One resource that teachers can share is their professional expertise and knowledge. Teachers learn daily from their individual experiences. These experiences become powerful resources in schools where teacher collaboration is valued. In fact, "professional development is accelerated in contexts where teachers work as teams and engage in reflective collegial patterns of work focused on the development of new learning tasks, situations, interactions, tools, and assessments for their own classrooms" (Sanholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer, 1997, p. 184).

Both Professional Learning Communities and Communities of Practice emphasize the importance of engaging in collective learning for two goals: becoming better professionals and helping all students succeed. As schools seek consistent improvement, their greatest resources are right before their eyes. According to Wilson and Berne (1999), successful projects involve “the privileging of teachers’ interactions with one another … aiming for the development of something akin to … ‘critical colleagueship’” (pp. 193-195).

Collaboration is the building block for creating and supporting inclusive schools. Administrators can support a culture of collaboration by scheduling time for teachers to work in collaborative teams. School leaders can also encourage and provide opportunities for teachers to openly reflect on their practice. Such reflection and opportunities for feedback increase the collective knowledge of everyone involved, and enhance the likelihood of improved outcomes for students.
For more information on collaboration, visit http://www.urbancollaborative.org/ or http://www.ideapartnership.org/. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) also just published “Stepping Stones to Success II,” a comprehensive resource on collaborating for the success of all students. This free document may be downloaded from the Related Documents and Reports section of the VDOE website at http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/SchoolImprovement/

References

Goodbye and Hello
What a busy summer we’ve had at T/TAC W&M! We moved our office off campus to gain much-needed space. Although we miss being on campus, we can look forward to observing the construction of the new School of Education as our office is across the street from the building site. Just as teachers, administrators, families, and students prepare for the upcoming school year, T/TAC W&M is gearing up for an exciting year of support to school divisions in Regions 2 and 3.

With every new year, change is inevitable. T/TAC W&M must say goodbye to four wonderful individuals: Louise Lebron, Donna Bayly, Cindy Catlett, and Catherine Triplett. Louise and Donna supported school teams implementing the Instructional Support Team Model, the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM), and effective inclusive education practices. Louise now works for Mathews County Public Schools as the special education and federal programs director, and Donna has taken a position at Longwood University. Cindy and Catherine provided support to our T/TAC office. Cindy managed the office, arranged workshops and institutes, entered state data, updated our website, and formatted our newsletter. Catherine managed our library and kept us abreast of incoming journals and books. We will miss them all, and wish them luck in their new homes and positions.

We are happy to welcome Butler Knight, Scott Bray, Liz Gentry, and Max Maxwell. Butler is now fulltime, and continues to support schools as they implement effective schoolwide discipline practices. Contact Butler for information and assistance on schoolwide behavior strategies. Scott, a secondary education specialist, joined the T/TAC staff in August of 2007. He has experience at the high school level as a general educator and administrator. Most recently, he worked as an assessment specialist with the Virginia Department of Education. Contact Scott for inclusive education practices, instructional strategies, and data analysis, particularly at the high school level. Liz Gentry joined the T/TAC staff in April 2007, taking over Cindy Catlett’s office responsibilities. She brings over fourteen years of administrative assistant experience in the public and private sector. Max Maxwell assumed the library duties in August. We are fortunate to have these talented individuals, and welcome them to our T/TAC W&M team.
Three decades of research provide convincing evidence that parents are an important influence in helping their children achieve high academic standards. When schools collaborate with parents to help their children learn, and when parents participate in school activities and decision-making about their children’s education, children achieve at higher levels. (United States Department of Education. 2004, p. 1)

“…The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act (IDEA) has, in essence, made collaboration a required part of special education services” (Friend & Cook, 2007, p. 21). In order to collaborate effectively as members of individualized education program (IEP) teams, parents must be empowered with knowledge of the IEP development process. Thus, educational professionals can and should provide families with the information to advocate for the educational needs of their children (Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, & Soodak, 2006).

One Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) initiative to empower parents of students with disabilities is the establishment of the Parent Involvement Priority Project (PIPP). The purpose of PIPP is to provide increased opportunities for special education training and technical assistance for parents and local Parent Resource Centers. PIPP membership includes representatives from Virginia’s:

- Parent Resource Centers (PRC)
- Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC)
- Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC)
- Parent Educational Advocacy Training Centers (PEATC)
- Partnership for People with Disabilities (PPD)
- Parents

When all members of a collaborating team—families and professionals—are able to become personally and individually more empowered and more able to reach a common goal, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts (Turnbull et al., 2006). To this end, PIPP coordinates a variety of initiatives that encourage collaboration between schools and families.

In coming issues of Link Lines …

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<td>Using the Results of PIPP’s Parent Survey to Respond to Federal Monitoring Requirements</td>
<td>PIPP’s Training for Parents—“Collaborative, Standards-Driven IEP Development”</td>
<td>PIPP’s Response to Parental Interest in Secondary Transition Planning</td>
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SOL Enhanced PLUS—Lesson Differentiation at Your Fingertips!

Judy Stockton, M.A.  VDOE T/TAC @ GMU
Clare Talbert, M.Ed.  VDOE T/TAC @ GMU

Looking for sample content lesson plans that are aligned with the essential knowledge and skills in the Curriculum Framework? Interested in ways to differentiate instruction for all students, grades K through 12? Check out the SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS, an invaluable resource available on the T/TAC Online website (www.ttaconline.org).

What is it?

SOL Enhanced PLUS is a searchable database of the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS lesson plans. The lessons are the result of a collaborative effort between general and special educators, along with Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff. This resource has been created to provide Virginia teachers with a tool to deliver SOL-based instruction to a diverse population of learners. Currently, curricular and instructional information is available for mathematics, English, history/social studies, and science. Grades 7 and 8 science lessons and earth science lessons will be available later this school year.

The lesson plans and activities are not only aligned with the SOL, they feature strategies to facilitate differentiated instruction in the following areas:

- Technology use
- Multisensory options
- Community connections
- Small-group learning
- Vocabulary strategies
- Student organization of content

How do I find SOL PLUS lessons?

- Go to T/TAC Online: www.ttaconline.org and click on your region on the Virginia map
- Click on SOL Enhanced (at the top)
- Click on Search SOL+ Lessons (left margin)
- At Option 1—choose a subject area and choose a grade/course — click Go
- Click on any SOL standard and click Submit (at bottom of page)
- Choose from the lessons listed for the standard
- Click on Word or PDF format to download the lesson

You will have a complete lesson plan that includes:

- An objective
- Prerequisite understanding/knowledge/skills
- Materials needed
- Procedures to follow
- Specific options for differentiation

Please see the insert for a sample of a sixth-grade differentiated math lesson plan, Triangle Sort, addressing SOL 6.14.
The teaching profession is part art and part science. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of student motivation. The science is found in the work of researchers such as Sprick, Garrison, and Howard (1998), who identified student behavior, intrinsic versus extrinsic factors, and task mastery as three underlying concepts that should guide teachers when motivating students. The art comes into play when implementing this research in a real classroom with real students to gain the highest levels of achievement and success, while fostering a love of learning within each student. A piece of cake, right? Well, luckily there is choice.

The idea of choice as an instructional strategy is often dismissed as too obvious or too simplistic. However, when utilized correctly, choice can be an extremely effective, powerful tool for motivating students. Consider the growth of choice in our culture. Cell phone companies, fast food restaurants, the entertainment industry, the Internet — all are geared toward giving people what they want, when they want it, and how they like it. Why? People are motivated by choice, by options. Even educators are more motivated to participate in professional development when they control which sessions they attend. Educators express concerns that control over what, when, and how they teach is being eroded by standardization. How can we expect our students to feel any differently about what and how they must learn? That is where the power of choice comes. When students are given meaningful choices regarding ways to achieve mastery over the required curricula, a positive cycle of student choice, increased motivation, and subject mastery begins.

Any student with low levels of engagement or motivation is a great candidate for a choice-making strategy, whether or not he or she has a disability. Choice-making, put simply, provides students with opportunities to make decisions that affect their daily lives (Jolivette, Stichter, & McCormick, 2002). This ability to choose increases task engagement (Dunlap et al., 1994), the accuracy of assignment completion (Cosden, Gannon, & Haring, 1995), and students’ quality of life (Shogren, Fagella-Luby, Bae, & Wehmeyer, 2004). Choices that students may be offered may range from where they want to sit to complete tasks, to the sequence in which they complete tasks, to the materials the students use, to the peers with whom they would like to work.

No matter what choices are provided it is critical to ensure the objective of the lesson is still reached. Jolivette et al. (2002) offer some guidance when infusing choice-making into the curriculum:

♦ Start with small, manageable choices, such as what to do with free time.
♦ Infuse opportunities for making choices within the curricular area where the student is struggling and will experience the most gain.
♦ View opportunities to make choices along a continuum. Even small choices in class provide practice for when students will need to make larger decisions about what career to pursue, where to live, etc.
♦ Offer the same number of choices in an area each time and always see a student’s choice through to completion. Consistency and follow-through are paramount.

So the balance between the science of research and the art of implementation continues. Student behavior, motivation, and task mastery thrive when students are given choices. Educators must structure these choices and help students maintain a cycle of success. Dwight D. Eisenhower may have put it best when he said, “Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.” Amen, Mr. President, amen.
References

T/TAC WILLIAM AND MARY CONSIDERATIONS PACKETS

The following information packets provide a brief overview of current topics and best practices for serving students with mild/moderate disabilities. These packets are available from T/TAC William & Mary free of charge upon request. Visit our website at [www.wm.edu/ttac](http://www.wm.edu/ttac).

- An Administrative Guide to Creating Inclusive Elementary Schools
- Algebra Strategies for Middle School
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Collaborative Secondary Transition Planning*
- Co-Teaching
- Designing Effective Professional Development
- Differentiating for Success in Inclusive Classrooms
- Geometry Strategies for Middle School
- Grading in Inclusive Classrooms*
- Graphic Organizers: Guiding Principles and Effective Practices
- Helping All Students Meet the Standards with Technology and Project-Based Learning
- Inclusive Practices for Speech/Language Pathologists
- Inferential Reading Comprehension
- Instructional Assessment
- Paraeducators’ Tools for Supporting the Instructional Process
- Planning for a Brighter Future: Infusing Secondary IEPs with the Results of Comprehensive Transition Planning*
- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Practice and Homework – Effective Teaching Strategies
- Reasonable and Effective Accommodations*
- Science Strategies
- Strategies for Creating Inclusive Schools
- The Bilingual Special Education Crossroad: Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Special Needs
- Taking the Mystery out of Software Selection*
- Teachers’ Tools for Building Productive Relationships with Paraeducators
- Techniques for Active Learners
- Unlocking Reading Comprehension: Writing Is the Key
- A “Word” About Vocabulary
- The Write Tools Can Make a Difference! Technology Supports for Students Who Struggle with the Task of Writing*
- The Writing Process: A Scaffolding Approach

* Under revision, not available at this time.
Transition Time
The Requirement to Conduct Transition Assessment
By Debbie Grosser, M.Ed., and Dale Pennell, C.A.S.

"Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 and then updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, where appropriate.” (boldface for emphasis) (IDEA 2004)

What is transition assessment?
Clark (1998) defines transition assessment as a “planned, continuous process” through which information is gathered and organized to support students with disabilities in achieving success in their transitions to adult life. Further, it is a structured, coordinated effort that begins in middle school and involves the collection of data related to a student’s strengths, needs, preferences, and interests relative to his/her postsecondary goals (Sitlington, Neubert, Begun, Lombard, & Leconte, 2007).

What is the scope of the transition data to be collected?
Part A of the IDEA 2004 definition of transition services identifies seven domains of adult life for which secondary schools must prepare students. It follows that current transition assessment data must be available that reflects these domains, which include:

- Postsecondary Education
- Vocational Education
- Integrated Employment
- Continuing/Adult Education
- Adult Services
- Independent Living
- Community Participation

Clark and Patton (2006) note that IDEA 2004 requires assessment in both academic and functional areas to support success in the transition domains.

What is the purpose of transition assessment?
IDEA 2004 now requires individualized education program (IEP) teams to use the transition assessment data to develop postsecondary goals that reflect students’ strengths, interests, and preferences. Additionally, transition assessment data inform the development of appropriate transition services (Clark, Patton, & Moulton, 2000).

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<td>Using Transition Assessment Data to Develop Postsecondary Goals</td>
<td>Using Transition Assessment Data to Design Transition Services</td>
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Annual Symposium on Professional Collaboration and Inclusive Education

“Collaborating for Quality Instruction: Meeting the Needs of All!”

Monday and Tuesday, October 29-30, 2007
Williamsburg Marriott Hotel in Williamsburg, Virginia

Keynote Speakers

Dr. James Stronge, Heritage Professor and author, College of William and Mary
Dr. Crystal Kuykendall, Speaker, educator, and legal analyst

The 2007 Symposium will provide participants with an exciting array of professional development opportunities in beautiful Williamsburg. This year’s program addresses highly relevant topics for school teams engaged in promoting the academic and behavioral success of students with disabilities and other subgroups at risk for school failure. A special strand has been added to address math instruction and collaboration. Motivating keynote presentations, skill-building workshops, and practical concurrent sessions offer research-based strategies and tools to ensure effective instruction, successful collaboration, and productive inclusive learning for all students.

Topics:

★ Effective Inclusive Programs ★ Access & Success in the General Curriculum
★ Co-Teaching & Co-Planning ★ Student Motivation
★ Teaming & Communication ★ Closing the Achievement Gap
★ Positive Behavior Management ★ Improving Test Scores
★ Leadership for Collaboration ★ Content Area Strategies
★ Updates from the VDOE AND MANY MORE!

Target Audience: The Symposium is designed for general & special educators, building & division administrators, related service professionals, families, university students, and others interested in effective instruction and support for students with disabilities and others at risk within the context of general education. Schools are encouraged to send teams of educators to share this professional development experience. The Symposium is co-sponsored by the College of William and Mary School of Education and the VDOE W&M Training and Technical Assistance Center.

Registration Deadline: October 19, 2007
Please share this newsletter with others. It may be copied. Call 1-800-323-4489 to be added to our mailing list or visit our website.