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UPCOMING CONFERENCES and EVENTS

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
 SYMPOSIUM 2014
 April 11, 2014

Manoir des Sables, Orford
centreofexcellence@etsb.qc.ca

39TH ANNUAL CONGRESS
 AQETA

Learning: When a gesture
 can make all the
 difference
 March 26 to 28th, 2014
 Westin Montreal Hotel

McGill
 FACULTY OF EDUCATION
 Distinguished Educators
 Seminar Series

Using the web to teach
 problem-solving in math
 December 10, 2013

The school office at the
 front lines: Tips for
 managing difficult
 interactions
 January 24, 2014

ADHD and oppositional
 defiant students:
 Classroom management
 in inclusive classrooms
 January 28th, 2014

donna.wilkinson@mcgill.ca

Our New Coordinator!

We are happy to announce that the Centre of Excellence PIM has a new coordinator. Ms. Kymberley Morin joins our team from Kahnawake Survival School, bringing with her a wide range of experience in the field of Special Education. We would like to thank both Ms. Diana Poot and Ms. Manon Lessard for their valuable contribution to the Centre and wish them well in their future endeavors.

Keep the date for our 2014 Symposium!

The Centre of Excellence will be holding its 11th Symposium on April 11, 2014 at the Manoir des Sables Hotel in Orford, Quebec. This promises to be a very dynamic event, with workshops ranging from "Smart Inclusions" and "Smart Technologies" to a NFB presentation on animation as communication to a workshop on Universal Design.

It will be launched by our keynote speaker, Luca "LazyLegz" Patuelli, creator of the "ILL-abilities" concept, that became an international crew consisting of the world's best "ill-abled" dancers from Canada, USA, Chile, and Holland. The goal of the team is to show the world that as long as you are positive, creative, and willing to adapt yourself to any situation, anything is possible. Together, they continue to perform all over the world and spread the message "No Excuses, No Limits".

Luca was born with [Arthrogryposis](#) (multiplex congenita), a rare disorder that is explained by limited joint movement and poor muscle growth. At the age of 15 he discovered break-dancing. Although quite challenging at first, he began to learn moves and modified them to create his own unique style that incorporates both extreme upper body strength and the use of crutches. "Lazylegz" was born. Since graduating with a Marketing degree from Concordia University in 2009, he uses his degree to promote himself as a professional international motivational speaker, and as a result, has spoken and inspired thousands of audiences of all ages and all abilities around the world, promoting his motto that "It's about taking the bad and making it good".

Stay tuned for a complete list of workshops and details on registration!



INCLUSION: TWO REALITIES, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

THE NEW school year excitement is long over and students have settled in. School anxieties have, for the most part, been taken care of by students, teachers and parents. As the middle of the year approaches a new excitement comes into play, the prospect of going to High School! It is the time of year when many high schools proudly announce their open houses, allowing future students and parents a chance to get a feel of the school, a chance to make a choice.

When it comes to students with exceptionalities the prospect of going to high school can be quite worrisome and become the source of anxiety for both child and parent. High school becomes a serious matter considering that the child may require specific resources. For 6 years or more, parents have come to appreciate what the school has provided for their child. For them, elementary school has become the ideal place for their child to progress and succeed. Small building, small classes, and a one classroom teacher are some of the factors that have contributed to the success of their child. But what about high school? Can high school be as accommodating?

Common questions students with exceptionalities might have.

Do I have to use a locker?

What happens if I forget my combination?

Who will be my teacher?

How many teachers do I have?

Where will I eat?

Where will my school bus be?

Will I have friends?

A starting point is for teachers to provide parents with a better understanding of some of the differences between the elementary and secondary school setting. Taking into account these differences can better prepare students with exceptionalities for the transition from Elementary to Middle or High School. Here are a few.

CLASSES

Students may have difficulty making friends and feeling part of the community. This is certainly true for children with exceptionalities. In most elementary schools, students have one classroom teacher which can greatly facilitate social interaction in the classroom and create a safe environment for all students. In middle and high school, students generally have different teachers for different subjects. Students with exceptionalities can experience difficulties adapting to the different teaching styles, student groups, and the various classrooms.

SUPPLIES

Having school supplies in the classroom help students struggling with organizational skills. At the elementary level, most students keep their supplies in a cubby or in their desk. In middle school and high school, students have one locker somewhere in the school. Although most students can organize themselves, for many students the locker can become a nightmare. Students with exceptionalities can experience difficulties remembering their lock combination.

ORGANIZATION

A homeroom teacher can easily assist her students with organization in general. At the high school level most teachers expect students to be responsible for organizing themselves. Students with exceptionalities experience difficulties organizing their agenda or their daily planner. If the school has a 6-day or 9-day schedule, this can have a serious impact on their school life.

TRANSITIONS

Elementary teachers escort students to other classes, the cafeteria and the schoolyard. In high school, students must find their own way. When a student knows that someone will escort them from place to place, this can reduce their feeling of anxiety.

Although *children with exceptionalities* is the most encompassing term, individuals who have differences in the way they learn, respond, or behave are described in many ways.

Precise definitions and classification systems remain elusive. There is relatively little standardization in the field of **special education**; a single consistent and universally accepted method for describing the different kinds of children does not currently exist. Children with exceptionalities are constantly being re-conceptualized, reconsidered, and renamed because:

- many disciplines contribute to research and **intervention**;
- each discipline tends to employ its own terminology and definitions;
- children with exceptionalities do not form a homogeneous population;
- a specific disability may produce quite different behaviour in different children. At the same time, children categorized as having different **disabilities** may manifest similar behaviours;
- there is considerable overlap among exceptional conditions;
- many children who are exceptional have more than one disabling condition.

Taken from "Children with exceptionalities in the Canadian Classroom" by Margaret Winzer

The following strategies are taken from Niesen & Wise, 2004

To prepare students with exceptionalities at the Elementary level...

Talk about the positive aspects of middle school and encourage students to think of the transition as a challenge and an opportunity for growth (e.g., "In middle school you'll be able to learn more about the things you're interested in and there will be more possibilities for friends with common interests.") Highlight the clubs, after school activities, and sport teams. Talk about the support staff and their roles within the school.

GRADUALLY PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL by slowly increasing the students' autonomy: encouraging them to ask questions, ask for help, and follow a clear daily schedule. Placing a daily schedule on the board and encouraging them to refer to it during the school day can teach them to refer to visuals as guides.

INCLUDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATIVE LEARNING by teaching the students to work in groups and support each other. Since students have less contact with and support from a single teacher in middle school, they need to learn strategies for coping with increased academic demands from multiple teachers. During class activities assign roles and tasks to individual students within a group. Remind students to ask their partners within the group or classroom for help before asking the teacher.

ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES such as student councils, focus groups or small groups to discuss real problems and generate solutions. This would allow students to recognize the needs of the whole school student body. Teachers or technicians can accompany students with exceptionalities to student group meetings and encourage them to participate.

Teach study and organizational skills by providing students with assignment books preferably with a middle school logo and teach them how to use this tool to organize their assignments and other obligations. Teach students how to use a daily planner.

...at the Secondary level

SCHEDULE TOURS OF THE STUDENTS' NEW SCHOOL by inviting students and their families to tour the school during the summer before entering. Provide information about the school, maps and class schedules. Address specific concerns that students and parents may have. Highlight the locations designated for students with exceptionalities such as the resource room, nurse's office and school psychologist's office. Provide examples of adaptations provided such as locks with a one number combination.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES by having an activity day the first week of school so that parents may familiarize themselves with their children's teachers, support staff and other students with exceptionalities already attending school. Highlight the many opportunities to become involved in school life.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO MEET EACH OTHER by getting the entire school body involved in service activities such as beautifying the school, conducting a car wash to raise money for a school-wide social activity, etc. Teaming up a new student with an older student like a buddy system, can provide students with exceptionalities with an extra 'go to person' when they need help. Students can assist them with their schedule as well as helping them find their classroom.

ENCOURAGE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT by communicating with parents in meetings, through the Internet, in notes or postcards from school to home, in phone calls, and in periodic newsletters.

ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO BE GUEST SPEAKERS AT PARENT NIGHT IN YOUR SCHOOL. Many parents have a wealth of experience, especially parents with children with exceptionalities. Having parents share their experiences can help reduce new parents' concerns and anxieties about high school and inclusion.

MAKE THE SCHOOL A COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER by offering evening classes for parents on a wide range of topics such as assistive technology or parenting tips.

Transition from elementary school to high school is an important moment in a student's life. Teachers can address many of his/her concerns, and make their new school life a positive experience. Providing a learning environment that is accessible to students with exceptionalities by considering their strengths and individual needs remains at the heart of good planning and benefits all students.

Written by Kymberley Morin

References

Shippen, Margaret E., Flores, Margaret M., et Al. "CLASSROOM STRUCTURE AND TEACHER EFFICACY IN SERVING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: DIFFERENCES IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS." International Journal of Special Education Vo. 26, No. 3, (2011)

"Children with Exceptionalities in the Canadian Classroom." by Margaret Winzer, Chapter 1. Pearson, 8th edition, 1995 - 2010

"Elementary school to middle school what moms need to know." Sheknows.com. Steinke, Lisa, Web. 30 Oct. 2013

"TRANSITION FROM ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL: STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS." by Valerie Niesen & Paula Wise. National Association of School Psychologists, 2004

For more discussion on inclusive education, please visit:

<http://morinformed.wordpress.com/>

The Stone Soup Harvest Celebrating the Community Garden Project

On October 29th, the Community Garden Project at Princess Elizabeth Elementary School in Magog celebrated the closing of the garden season with "The Stone Soup Harvest Celebration." Students entertained guests with a small play based on a old folk story "Stone Soup." Afterwards, donors, volunteers and guests were invited for lunch and enjoyed a delicious bowl of vegetable soup prepared by students and staff under the culinary guidance of volunteer chef Didier Desjardins. Soup was accompanied by sandwiches, dessert and all the trimmings.



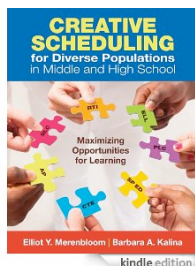
Thanks to the hard work of Ms. Pervana Mladenof, coordinator of the Memphremagog Community Learning Centre, students extended the classroom to the schoolyard. The garden allowed students to reconnect with the natural world and understand the true source of food. The possibility of integrating gardening concepts and skills with several subjects provided valuable learning experiences to all that participated. Pervana reminds us that a community garden brings a sense of belonging to a community and makes working together for a common goal enjoyable.



Thanks to the generous financial support from Québec en Forme of over \$3000, students learned valuable lessons from Ms. Marianne Guilmette, horticulturalist and educator. Her dynamic and remarkable approach with students made learning an unforgettable experience.

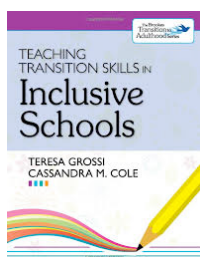
BOOKS OF INTEREST

This complete resource shows how to create an inclusive schedule that promotes achievement, supports diverse programs, and makes the most of limited time resources.



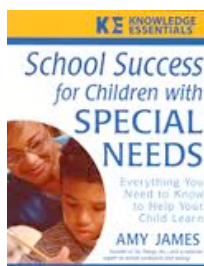
[Creative Scheduling for Diverse Populations in Middle and High School](#)

How can high schools teach academic content *and* the critical skills students need to navigate life beyond the classroom? Fitting it all into one curriculum can be a challenge-and this book helps you juggle it all, ensuring personalized, student-centered instruction that prepares students with and without disabilities for success.



[Teaching Transition Skills in Inclusive Schools](#)

This book offers parents a guide for understanding and navigating the often-confusing special education system to ensure that your child gets the best education possible.



[School Success for Children with Special Needs](#)

Organization of Note!

Adaptive Sports Foundation

formerly - Eastern Townships Disabled Skiers Foundation

The Foundation provides trained volunteers who assist physically disabled children and adults to become as independent as possible in their chosen sport, fostering the development of self-confidence, self-motivation, increased physical strength and improved self-image while learning a lifelong sport/skill to be enjoyed with family and friends.

<http://www.adaptivesports.ca/en>

Have you heard of *Making Waves Canada?*

A non-profit organization that offers individual swimming lessons to children with developmental disabilities. Nine private lessons for \$20.00.

To learn more visit their website:

www.makingwavesmontreal.org/home

Who are we?

Our Centre is one of 6 Centres of Excellence mandated by MELS to provide support, professional development, research activities and provincial expertise to the English sector. We service students who are physically, intellectually or multi-challenged in a school setting. Our team consists of our coordinator, Kymberley Morin and our secretary, Robin Colyer collaborating with Peter Hamilton, Director of Complementary Services and Manon Lessard, Special Needs & French consultant for the ETSB.

Centre of Excellence for the Physically, Intellectually and Multi-Challenged

Kymberley Morin , Coordinator

Robin Colyer, Secretary

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