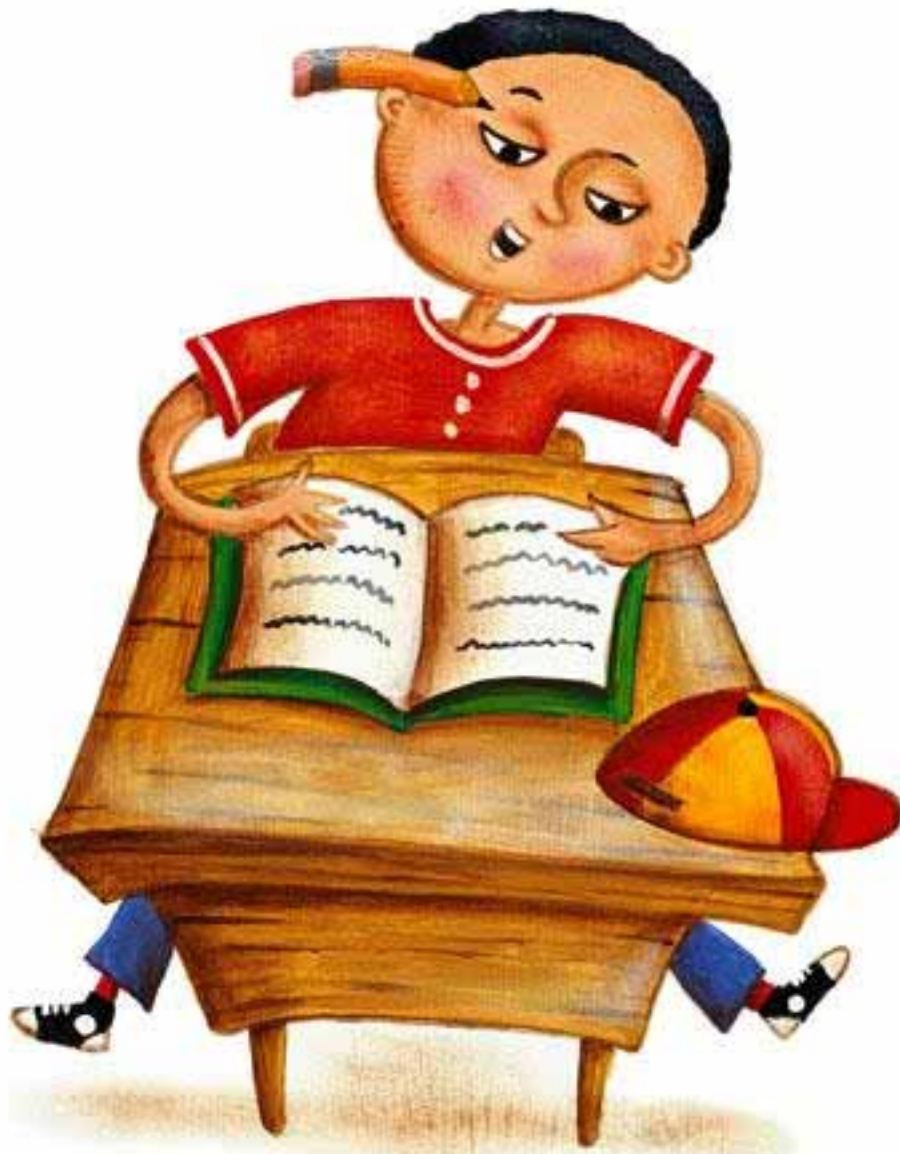


2005
Fellowship Program
in Inclusive Education



Presented by the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities

Preface

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, Education Task Force is pleased to announce its fourth group of Fellowship Award Winners for 2005. The goal of this program is to recognize and honor individuals who proactively embrace the principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and implement them in every aspect of their practices.

Fellowships of \$1,000 have been awarded to the successful nominees described here who have excelled in encouraging the inclusion of students with disabilities in all areas of school life, including academic and non-academic activities. Awards will be used to promote and expand their efforts.

These educators have fully embraced the concept that children with disabilities have the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment and have shown a commitment to making that concept a reality for their students. They have done this not in response to pressure from federal monitors or advocates for students with disabilities, but because they believe that this philosophy is the best way to educate all their students.

The Council's review committee — Orah Raia, Karen Melzer, Michele Ragunan and Donna Bogart — was impressed by the level of creativity and inspiration found in the winners. These educators show a deep understanding of what it means to provide a complete, well-rounded educational experience for all students. They speak best for themselves in these profiles and on their job everyday. They give us hope for the future of our children.

The Council is proud to present this fourth year of its Fellowship Awards by honoring these educators.

Dedication

This year's Fellowship Awards are dedicated to Margaret "Peggy" Daly, who passed away on July 21, 2005. A teacher for 25 years, Peggy was also the mother of two wonderful children, Kathleen and Danny, who has agenesis of the corpus callosum (ACC). Peggy, along with her husband Dan, was a devoted advocate, not only for her son, but for all children. She worked tirelessly in promoting inclusive education. She was always eager to help parents wherever she went, whether it was at a baseball game or a board of education meeting. The Council on Developmental Disabilities, Education Task Force is honored to dedicate these awards to Peggy, who will be missed.

2005 Fellowship Awards

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Candace Coccaro and Paul Sosnowski

Special Education Supervisors / Special Education Department
Jersey City Public Schools

Practice: Providing inclusive fitness program for preschoolers in the school district

The Fundamentals Fitness Four Program was designed in collaboration with the Early Childhood Development Department to promote and develop basic motor skills and movement concepts to assist in a child's psychological, intellectual and social development. The program has at its very foundation the belief that students with disabilities can be included in all aspects of public school education beginning with preschool experiences and continuing through life. It is an inclusive program, which services pre-kindergarten classes comprised of general and special education students, and provides all students with an opportunity to participate in non-academic activities that are specially designed to promote socialization with peers.

The program consists of four qualified Adaptive Physical Education teachers who have strong physical education training, adaptive training and knowledge of motor development in children. The program also includes parents and the community through a series of scheduled activities throughout the year. Children in the program learn through active involvement with peers, teachers, parents and the community.

This program is based on a three-step approach to help students attain their age-appropriate fitness levels. Step 1 is the Fundamentals Fitness Four Program (FFFP). In this phase, all children participate in a large group physical education class, with 30 minute long sessions. Step 2 is called Project Friends in Training (FIT) and this phase identifies any child who seems to be having difficulty in a motor area. These children then meet in additional small groups of 2-3 students to develop the area of weakness. Step 3 is called Project Child and Parent (CAP). This phase supports those children who are identified as needing significant reinforcement in a target area. The parents are provided with workout activities designed by the adapted physical education teacher. To date, the Fundamentals Fitness Four program is operational in 20 schools and services 90 classes in the Jersey City District. Parents and teachers report that participants in the program exhibit more advanced skills relative to their peers who did not participate in the program. These results demonstrate that the program is contributing to students' motor development and self-esteem, which carry over into the academic setting.

For more information on providing inclusive physical education programs, see these resources:

A Teacher's Guide to Including Students with Disabilities in General Physical Education, Second Edition, by Martin E. Block, Ph.D.—This text provides state-of-the-art strategies and ideas on how to include students of all ages with disabilities in general physical education classes.

Strategies for Inclusion: A Handbook for Physical Educators, by Lauren Lieberman, Ph.D., and Cathy Houston-Wilson, Ph.D.—*Strategies for Inclusion* dispels myths about instructing children with disabilities and provides guidelines for appropriate inclusion in the least restrictive environment, and sets the stage with a clear discussion of current disabilities legislation and its impact on K-12 teachers.

Inclusive Games, by Susan L. Kasser—This book provides strategies which can be applied to teaching physical education to all children, including those with disabilities. The book also shows you how to adapt almost any game so that children of all capabilities can practice, play, and improve their physical activity skills.

Candace Coccaro

Special Education Supervisor/Special Education Department
Jersey City Public Schools

Practice: Providing ongoing cross training for general and special education teachers, students and administrators

A key ingredient to successful inclusion is support. This includes support, not only for the students, but also for the teachers in the building. The All Inclusive Mentoring Synergy Sessions (A.I.M.S.S.) is a district wide support service for inclusion. The program has provided support to 35 public schools through the use of Inclusion Specialists, one in each school. These specialists come with a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds including special education, general education, early childhood education, bilingual education, guidance and crisis intervention. These Inclusion Specialists are responsible for facilitating inclusion within their school by supporting students and staff and providing professional development. They encourage inclusive practices which are personalized, child-centered, and promote mutual respect among students, staff and families.

The inclusion specialists receive training within the district. They meet once a week and participate in professional development activities designed to enhance their own knowledge of inclusive practices. In addition, they form partnerships among the schools, families and community to help them understand, support and encourage inclusion. By being present in the individual schools, they can support staff in planning and setting up an inclusive environment. Teachers are more comfortable knowing there is a trained inclusion specialist in their building. In addition, they are responsible for record keeping and reporting.

The Inclusion Specialists have a yearly “Show and tell” gathering where they share the strategies and tools they have found to be successful over the course of the school year.

For more information on facilitating inclusion see these resources:

The Inclusion Facilitator’s Guide, by Cheryl M. Jorgensen, Ph.D., Mary C. Schuh, Ph.D., & Jan Nisbet, Ph.D.—This guide prepares staff for the challenges of facilitating full inclusion.

Walter Oberwanowicz

Director of Special Services, Branchburg Township Public Schools

Practice: Administrative Leadership for Inclusion

Perhaps the important element in developing an inclusive environment is the visionary leadership and support of the administrator. In his fifth year as Director of Student Services for the Branchburg School District, Walter Oberwanowicz has adamantly worked to initiate and develop programs designed to maximize the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education environment. He has carried out several important initiatives including:

- 1) Providing in-class support through co-teaching so that the majority of students are receiving supports in the general education classroom rather than being pulled out.
- 2) Focused on providing integrated related services, such as speech, occupational and physical therapy to minimize the amount of pullout for students. All staff members focus on integrating the student's goals in the natural environment, the classroom. Teachers meet with the related services staff and case managers every week to discuss mutual cases and align therapeutic goals with academic goals. Every K-2 classroom has a speech therapist assigned, and they provide resources for a language rich environment, conducting weekly language lessons for all students, observing targeted students, collecting data and implementing intervention strategies for indirect services to extend the benefits of treatment in the daily classroom routines and settings.
- 3) Providing continuous staff training through in-services and workshops which focus on techniques and strategies which will enable them to provide services in the least restrictive environment. This helps to ensure that sending children to out-of-district placements is the last option available.
- 4) Initiating an Adaptive Physical Education program, a Social Skills program for students with autism, and a program for students with multiple disabilities, which includes an aquatic therapy program in conjunction with Hunterdon Medical Center.
- 5) Enlisting the assistance of outside consultants to work in the district with staff members in areas that are needed, such as behavior, hearing and autism.

Mr. Oberwanowicz understands the importance of getting everyone in the district invested, from parents to school board members, so that if any one person in leadership leaves, there is ongoing support to maintain the foundation for inclusive schools. He understands the need for bringing in support services as needed, as in his words, “Bombard the school with resources.”

For more information on facilitating inclusion see these resources:

Collaborative Teams for Students with Severe Disabilities: Integrating Therapy and Educational Services, Second Edition, by Beverly Rainforth, Ph.D., PT, & Jennifer York-Barr, Ph.D., PT—This book provides detailed case studies illustrate how to integrate therapy into educational programming and create a working team framework in daily collaborative efforts.

Collaborative Teaming: Teachers' Guides to Inclusive Practices, Second Edition, By Martha E. Snell, Ph.D., and Rachel Janney, Ph.D.—This book provides an easy-to-use guide to forming effective collaborative teams that help stimulate students' academic progress and social behavior in general education.

Creating Successful Inclusion Programs: Guidelines for Teachers and Administrators, by Martin Henley, — This resource provides specific strategies for creating and managing inclusive classrooms where students with disabilities learn side-by-side with their nondisabled peers.

Julie Campanella

First Grade General Education Teacher

Hamilton Terrace School, Berkeley Heights Public School District

Practice: Building inclusive classroom environments through partnerships, strategic planning and differentiated instruction

For the past four years, Julie Campanella, a first grade general education teacher in the Berkeley Heights Public School system, has worked in partnership with special education teachers, basic skills instructors, reading specialists, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, and parents to build an inclusive classroom environment where instruction is differentiated and excellence is defined by individual growth. Julie embraces the philosophy that “every student has the potential to learn and be successful”. She believes that an inclusive classroom thrives on the collaborative expertise of teachers, specialists, and support staff, and that optimal learning opportunities are created through strategic and collaborative planning, with differentiated instruction as the foundation. Recognizing that a key component in the success of her general and special education students is connecting the gaps between home and school, Julie welcomes parents as partners in the educational process. She maintains open lines of communication with families and provides frequent opportunities for parents to participate in classroom experiences.

Julie highlights “classroom meetings” as an essential component of her program. “It is here that many community building activities take place, and the routines and rules of the classroom are established”. During the classroom meetings, Julie models important problem solving techniques and teaches pro-social behaviors and anger management skills. Students learn to compliment one another and work through their differences, using words rather than inappropriate or explosive actions to express themselves.

In Julie’s inclusive first grade classroom, students work across the curriculum in varied instructional arrangements (e.g., cooperative groups, small groups, pairs) and are exposed to a variety of lesson formats and teaching strategies. Hands-on materials, project-based learning, and technology are integral components of Julie’s program. *Readers’ Workshop* is one example of how students in Julie’s classroom learn at their own levels and pace. “Everyday during *Readers’ Workshop* students choose just the right books from the classroom library, which is arranged according to reading levels, authors, and genre”. Through whole group mini-lessons, the students in Julie’s class are taught to self-select their reading materials and are supported through individual conferences, guided reading, and partnership reading with peers. Julie collaborates with teaching and support staff, as well as parents and senior volunteers to support and monitor each student’s reading progress according to his/her own unique abilities and individual learning styles.

Julie utilizes a variety of methods to assess the personal progress of each child. These include teachers’ observations, successful completion of classroom assignments, individual reading and writing conferences, unit assessments, running records, and benchmark books. In addition, she regularly consults with child study team members, the behavioral consultant, and related service personnel to enhance her own skills and ability to support the varying needs of the learners in her classroom.

For more information about differentiated instruction, log onto: www.frsd.k12.nj.us/rfmslibrarylab/

Karen Heaphy and Richard Reduzzi

Technology Coordinator and Computer Teacher / Science Teacher
Franklin Township School, Washington, New Jersey

Practice: Providing motivating science lessons supported by technology ranging from no-tech to high tech

Karen Heaphy, a technology/computer teacher and Richard Reduzzi, a 5th and 6th grade science teacher, collaborate as a seamless team, working with the students enrolled in Richard's general education science classes. They adapt their lessons by differentiating instruction and designing activities that meet the learning objectives for all students in their classes, including those with IEPs, Section 504 plans, and/or other specifications such as gifted and talented.

Depending upon the lesson, classes may take place in Richard's classroom, in the computer technology lab or elsewhere in the school environment. Within one science class it is typical to have a few students engaged in extended learning activities where they may be designing a PowerPoint presentation or a brochure to demonstrate their learning. Other students may be working individually to gather facts and illustrations about the solar system. Other students may be working in small groups. Some of these small groups are "uneven" academic partnerships, where one student may be mentoring another in order to "ramp up" the learning and skills achieved. An observer walking into the computer lab might see two classes working collaboratively. Students are stretched just a little bit further than their ability level, with the opportunity to shine at activities that they do best.

In addition, Karen and Richard are intent upon providing opportunities for students to apply scientific concepts they are learning in class to real life situations. They believe in learning by doing. Their science curriculum does not use textbooks; it uses everyday life, including online experiences, video discs, video clips, and other sources. They note that during an annual roller coaster model building activity that takes place in the school hallways, you will see students perched on step stools. At the end of several loops, a finish line will be established with a closing point to collect a marble, such as a cup, or a scaled-down goalpost. Students will have duct tape, tubing, marbles, and exhibit "boundless creativity" as they work together to build model roller coasters. Through this activity they are applying what they are learning about physics, the forces of gravity, and Newton's law. As noted by Karen and Richard, "many of them don't even realize what they learned until they are provided the stimulating questions later that help them to guide their analysis of their roller coasters, including a rubric where they assess themselves and their peers."

For more information on assistive technology, see these resources:

Useful Assistive Technology Sites, New Jersey Educational Technology Training Centers—county-based resource centers that offer educators professional development opportunities: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/techno/ettc/>

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA—a not-for-profit membership organization of manufacturers, sellers or providers of technology-based assistive devices and/or services: <http://www.atia.org/index.html>

The Assistive Technology Training Online Project (ATTO)—provides information on Assistive Technology applications that help students with disabilities learn in elementary classrooms. Tutorials on specific software programs are available at <http://atto.buffalo.edu/>

Shawn David Dey

Teacher of Music

Northeast Elementary School, Montclair Public Schools

Practice: Providing a music program which reaches every student with a disability or special learning need

Having moved from Hawaii, the 2004-2005 school year was Shawn Dey's first year teaching music in New Jersey. Shawn's philosophy is to enable every child, regardless of a disability or learning need, to participate in some form in the music program. To ensure an inclusive music program, he instituted several new practices.

Shawn expanded the General Music Program. He has all students perform in some way in grade level productions which include oratory, vocal, instrumental and movement skills. Shawn also added to the types of instruments used in the program to ensure a selection suitable for children with varied abilities. For example, rather than just having recorders, as in past years, which are difficult for children with hearing loss to hear or for children with motor difficulties to play, he added drums, ukuleles and xylophones.

Shawn made the Choral Music Program an inclusive experience by including all students in grades three to five, rather than having them audition as in years past. All chorus members participate in a vocal concert. The Winter Concert, the first performance staged since the inception of the new program, was so popular that it had to be moved to the high school to accommodate the performers and audience.

Shawn instituted an Instrumental Music/Band Program for the first time. The program is open to all fourth and fifth graders. Lessons are held during the school day on a rotating basis. Instruments available include the flute, clarinet, alto and tenor sax, trumpet, French horn, trombone, tuba, electric bass and guitar and a variety of percussion instruments. Since instruments for home practice must be rented, a scholarship program was set up to rent instruments for students who could not afford the fee to ensure that no one who wants the joy of playing an instrument is left out. Shawn offers several of his lunch periods for supervised practice. Students are encouraged to help others practice and this "peer tutoring" has become a model for other classes in the school.

For resources and additional information on supporting students with disabilities in music classes, check out: <http://ericec.org/faq/music.html>

Ila Lewis

World Language Coordinator
Seneca High School, Mt. Holly, New Jersey

Practice: Using a variety of non-traditional methods and strategies to ensure that all students can be successful in general education world language classrooms

Ila Lewis's award is based up a conglomeration of practices over the last 5 years which focused primarily upon providing herself and other educators with the necessary "tools" to diversify learning opportunities for all students. These tools, all focused on increasing students' opportunities for success, may be knowledge enhancements ("teacher tricks"), practical applications, new materials, or support strategies. The foundation for these differentiated practices is Ila's belief that it is important for teachers to seek out new challenges.

Before the World Language Core Curriculum Content Standards came out a few years ago mandating that schools provide some form of World Language instruction for all students, Ila had little awareness of students with disabilities. They were not routinely scheduled into her foreign language classes. Bothered by the attitude among some that it would be enough to "just teach a few dialogues, some essential words and sprinkle it with the culture," to "non-academic, nontraditional students", she set out to find ways to help them learn as much as possible. After realizing that merely moving more slowly was not the answer, she searched the internet, sought out training, learned to collaborate with team teachers and to ask for advice when she was lost. Over time she learned to use visuals, graphic organizers, scaffolding activities, kinesthetic mnemonics, accommodations, and other strategies. As her teaching changed, she found ways to engage more and more students.

Since becoming the Coordinator of World Languages at Seneca High School, Ila has worked to change attitudes and pass her knowledge on to her staff. In her first year, she set up a collegial, collaborative environment where *all* world language department members worked with *all* students. Teachers were encouraged to share common concerns and collaborated frequently on interdisciplinary topics. She led numerous training sessions on topics such as team teaching, working with non traditional language learners, and using technology. She began mentoring teachers in similar situations throughout her district on an on-going basis. When the district hired 40+ inexperienced teachers in Ila's second year as Coordinator, she developed and led a beginning team teaching workshop for these new educators.

As a next step, Ila plans to compile and print a "best practices" manual for world language and special education team teachers. This manual would discuss underlying beliefs, detail specific strategies and team teaching techniques, caveats and other general information. It would include thematic units with easy to implement activities in Spanish (Ila's area of expertise), Internet links to cultural topics, mnemonic strategies, sample grading rubrics, alternative assessments, and other useful materials and strategies for teachers.

For more information for addressing the needs of diverse learners in world languages, check out:

www.fln.vcu.edu/ld/ld.html

www.interdys.org/fact%20sheets/foreign.doc