

Beattie - Mental Retardation (Continued) – Transcript

The best way to treat any disability is to find ways to prevent that disability from occurring, and to some degree technology has had a major impact on the prevention on some of the factors that identify the kid as having disabilities. So, technology has benefited us in many many ways, and this is one way where there is a positive potential of its impact

In 1962...

(Refer to slide)

Up to that point there was a dramatic relationship between maternal rubella and kids being born with mental retardation kind of things. (Refer to slide).

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One of the disadvantages of being in this profession for a long time is that I am not as optimistic as I once was. Education and training can make all the difference in the world in terms of working with the people are in a position to abuse whatever the substance might be, unfortunately it seems like the people who need the training are either not aware of the education and training or for whatever reason does not take advantage of it. We see the impact that education training has on kids and their use of drugs and alcohol, we are not going to effect everyone, but the frustration is when the people who need it do not get it.

What can we do with these students?

So we have looked at the characteristics, definition, and the causes for mental retardation. Now we will look at the things that can be done with these kids in whatever settings they may be served in an academic since. The biggest piece that I want everybody to understand is if you are a regular education major, probably the only kid you will see in your classroom situation who fits in this mental disability category are the ones who are mild and they are higher functioning, the state calls them educably mentally disabled. As we go through some of these to do things, I really hope that you will start to see there are an awful lot of things that are appropriate for this population that are also appropriate for anyone in your classroom population.

Remember these are kids who by definition have IQ's of 70 or below. To use language that is at a higher level will have a dramatically negative impact on what happens to the kids. It is a balance that has to be struck in every classroom. So, have language that hits with the general population but then have an alternative language or materials that is more appropriate for the lower functioning kids.

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One skill builds upon a previous skill that has been learned. Before No Child Left Behind this was a standard procedure, but now people are bouncing all over the place. For kids with any special need that sequential presentation helps them make sense of what is going on.

Instruction that is functional relates to what kids realistically need to know on a day-to-day bases and increases the likely hood that kids will remember.

(Refer to slide) So as kids learn addition and subtraction, using a checkbook is a very valuable skill and it also used addition and subtraction skills in that process. The more real life it can be the better it is and the more hands on the better. Using check books, and counting change and money. One additional piece is that as educators we need to make sure students are actively engaged as much as possible. If they are not focused and with you then you will not get far.

(Refer to slide)

We identified this as incorrect or correct we just need to ask the kid what is going on and we find out what it is instead of saying that is not right we have to give them feedback before moving on.

Always focus on the generalization and maintenance of the skill. I want you guys to generalize and maintain something from this class. Generalization means that you take the information here and use it in different settings. So when we talk about kids with disabilities are not that much different then the rest of us that you take it to your classroom and you maintain it by paying attention to it over a period of time. The more that happens the better. One very big frustration for kids with mental disabilities, is that they are chronologically at a certain age but academically at a level much lower than what there chronological age is. They see things over and over again it gets aggravating, so it is really important to find stuff at the appropriate level but of high interest. If a kid is reading at the 1st or 2nd grade level instead of having them read the 3 or 4 word sentences, you try and find the material that has higher interest.

Another universal thing is being realistic but challenging. These are kids with limited cognitive ability, but they are capable of doing an awful lot of stuff if given the opportunity, so challenge but be realistic. Kids are going to get better as the practice, the more that practice exist the more likely they are to master the skill they are working on.

We take an awful lot for granted. We do not think about what and how we do things, when you work with kids who struggle like these kids sometimes do, it is necessary to look back and analyze very specifically the steps that are involved in completing that task. Tell my the steps to tying a shoe? Loops, swoop, pull. That may make sense to some people in this room, but to others they have no clue. With kids with mental disabilities it is very important to go through all of the specific steps. Just understand the importance of analyzing that task.

Academically/Intellectually Gifted

Now we will look at a very different portion of the population. We will look at kids who are looked at kids who are academically or intellectually gifted.

The bottom line is programs for this population deal with kids who are bright, in relation to kid their own chronological age so certain things or exhibit certain behaviors. The first thing this population looks like or does is they exhibit high performance capability. Outstanding artistic and intellectual and creative achievement most of what happens in our schools involves ability and academic achievement, but it is important for us to not lose track of the kids who are gifted can also be creative or artistic, that is Gardner's different types of intelligence. That's when not all kids but some have unusual leadership capacity, they tend to be kids that do not seek to be

leaders but people seem to follow because they understand this kid is on top of things. Not always but in most circumstances kids who are gifted excel academically. They work hard at being successful academically.

(See characteristics slides)

Remember whenever we look at these characteristics not all kids considered AIG will portray all these characteristics. Above average ability will most likely be there. There will be some sense of creativity. Developing, inventing, etc. Students who are gifted have above average task commitment, if whatever they are doing interests them.

Kids who are gifted often exhibit a unique learning style like learning everything at one time. This can be very apparent with mathematics.

They can also learn faster and can get bored in class because of this.

Complicated, detailed, explanations. They will see many solutions to a problem. "Yeah, but." And "Why?" particularly coming from gifted kids can sometimes drive you crazy as teachers. These kids can give you several answers to questions and several questions to answers. Then you will do something you likely vowed to never do in either your personal, parental, or professional career, and that is say "Because I said so." I hate it, but after 45 minutes, that's what it has to be.

These are kids with large vocabularies, because it interests them. They pick up words and their meaning much faster than most people.

Varied interest indicated a well-rounded person. This is someone who plays sports and a musical instrument and does well in school. These varied interests set these people apart from everyone else.

As they grow up these are kids that like to be around older people.

Not always, but be aware of those kids that display perfectionist behaviors. Perfectionistic not meaning that a kid is upset they got a B on a test, but instead upset they got a 98 instead of a 100. Perfectionism is a disorder. It can be a very significant disorder for some kids. Sadly, every year there are kids that will commit suicide upon receiving their first B in academics. That perfectionism is dangerous.

There's a long attention span if the kid is interested. However, there may be no attention span if the kid is not interested at all.

(See identification of gifted students slides)

In the identification process there are several tactics used. The first is intelligence scores. Kids who are considered gifted generally have an IQ of 120 or above. They are also administered academic achievement tests. Those scores also tend to be high. At the elementary school level kids are identified as AIG if they have high IQ scores and all academic scores are at a specified

level. In high school you can take AP classes in math without taking one for reading or visa versa. However, achievement is across the board.

There are test that measure creativity. Kids can be identified AIG by incorporating these measures as well. Teachers can nominate kids for the AIG program. They would still go through this process. Teachers know more about these kids than anyone else and they tend to be right about who is gifted and who is not.

Now we run into highly suspect nominations, parent nominations. Every parent thinks their kid is the best and smartest. The next is self-nomination. They kid has an inflated perspective of themselves. Peer nomination. This doesn't happen much, but I think this is a pretty reliable measure. You all knew who were the gifted kids in the class.

(See teacher to do's slides)

Working with kids with special needs can be challenging. Working with kids that are considered gifted can be challenging as well. One of the things that teachers need to do is be willing to accept unusual and diverse information. These are students that are not going to give you what you expect from an assignment. They may go off on a tangent. Ultimately it will be appropriate to the task but it may look different by the nature of the way these kids are coming from.

Education is important to students who are gifted. It's almost like a business to them. The more systematic and businesslike the approach you use with these kids the more effective you'll be with these kids.

I don't agree with this one completely. I don't think it's necessary for the teacher to have numerous interests as much as it is for the teacher to recognize that students have varied interests and accept diverse information.

Every time I see this as something teachers are suppose to do with kids who are gifted I shutter a little bit. If you're in education and you don't appreciate achievement I don't know why you are here. That's what we are all about. The reason it's listed here is because achievement to gifted students is what it is all about. We need to be aware of that and work with students in that regard.

Be well prepared in the content area. I taught biology to kids with MD. I don't know a whole lot about biology, but I felt comfortable knowing that I knew much more than the kids I was teaching. In contrast when you are working with kids that are gifted they know the content. In many cases they may know it before you even present it. So you need to be really prepared to respond to questions and issue that present themselves in that setting.

You also need to want to teach students in this setting.