

HE'S JUST A GOOFY GUY

TOPICS

Accommodations: Inclusion
Behavior: Behavior management
Collaboration: Communication

SCENARIO

Jake is an energetic third grader with a learning disability. Although he is considered one of the gang by his classmates and is excelling academically during the two hours he is included in a general education class, Betty, his general education teacher, feels he just “wouldn’t fit in” a general education classroom full time. On the other hand, Sharon, his resource teacher, sees no reason why he would not be successful.

Betty Armstrong’s classroom is meticulously organized. There are 20 desks, exactly four rows of five, and not one even an inch out of place. In the back of the room is the small-group reading table with two neat stacks of readers and workbooks beside a precisely-covered box of pencils, erasers, and crayons. A few examples of students’ work, each matted in coordinating colors, are displayed in the room. Also prominently displayed is a job-board listing students’ names and the classroom chores for which they are responsible. Everything has its place and everything is always in its place—well, almost always.

It was 10:00 a.m., time for reading. Jake and David came into the room as they did every day. They went directly to their desks as Ms. Armstrong had always insisted. Jake bumped his desk out of place as he sat down. He cocked his head to the side, put his feet up on the wire rack under his friend Amy’s desk, and gave her a big, lopsided grin.

“Okay, class, it is time to work on your story projects,” Ms. Armstrong announced to her third graders, who looked at her enthusiastically. Jake fidgeted in his seat. “We just have two more days to get them done before open house,” the teacher continued.

Jake excitedly shuffled through the papers inside his desk. “Ah! There they are—my crayons,” he said as he grabbed them and put them on top of his desk, while still holding his desk top up with his other hand. “I will put an octopus on...”

Just then his left hand let go of his desktop, and down it came! BANG! His crayons fell all over the floor.

“Uh oh!” Jake hurried to pick up his crayons, hoping that Ms. Armstrong wouldn’t notice. As he bent down, his glasses slid off his face.

As all this was going on, Ms. Armstrong was watching Jake out of the corner of her eye. “That young man sure has a difficult time with organization,” she thought. She sighed as she considered the amount of energy it took to try to get him to fit in.

Betty Armstrong had been a teacher for six years. Her colleagues considered her to be a competent teacher committed to literacy and on top of things concerning curriculum and instruction. Betty often said that it was her goal to make kids feel good about being in school and especially about being a part of her class. She had high expectations for her students and required them to work hard to meet those expectations.

This year, Betty had Jake and David, two students from a special education class. They came to Betty's class two hours a day for math and reading. Both students had a learning disability, but Jake also had some fine motor problems and behaviors typical of students labeled attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD)—although he had never been diagnosed.

Sharon Moss, the special education teacher in the early education class, checked regularly with Betty to see how the two students were doing. Sharon had been a special education teacher for six years and had built a good rapport with the general education teachers. Sharon decided it was time to discuss with Betty the integration of both boys in general education full time. She sat down with Betty and asked her how things were going.

“Oh, both kids are doing great academically. David is often the first to raise his hand with the correct answers when I verbally quiz the class, and Jake reads so well! But, Jake's behavior—it's just not typical. He's a goofy little guy, you know,” she said with a smile.

“Well, maybe we should consider extending their time in general education,” Sharon suggested.

“I could see David being successful in general education full-time, but I don't know about Jake. His behavior is really not appropriate for a general education classroom,” responded Betty.

“But you are always talking about how well Jake does in the classroom. You say he gets along with the other students and he really excels in math. What exactly does he do that makes you think he could not be successful if included full-time?” Sharon pushed.

“Well, during seat work, he never gets started on time. He's constantly shuffling through the papers in his desk. He always needs to sharpen his pencil or something. He just can't keep himself organized like the other kids. Sometimes he'll even play the class clown and fall out of his desk,” she explained.

“Do you think that those reasons are enough to keep him out of the general education classroom?” Sharon asked gently. “I would appreciate it if you gave the idea some more thought.”

Betty shrugged her shoulders and gave a questioning look, “Okay, I'll think about it.” Betty patted Sharon on the shoulder before leaving. She felt she had failed to convince Betty. How was she going to persuade Betty that Jake deserved a chance to be included in the general education class full time? “Betty has always been one of the best teachers for welcoming students with disabilities into her classroom. Some teachers don't even want our kids in their rooms. I have got to work this out,” Sharon said to herself with determination.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Betty is resistant to having Jake in her class? Do you think Jake is ready to be placed in a general education classroom full-time? Why or why not?
2. How can Sharon and Betty work together to best serve Jake's needs? What types of services or support would help Betty be more comfortable with having Jake in her classroom full-time?
3. Should Jake's parents and other education professionals be involved in the decision process?
4. What types of services and/ or support would help Jake make a successful transition to a full-time general education classroom? What strategies can be implemented to address Jake's behavior and improve his organizational skills?

**HE'S JUST A GOOFY GUY
CASE BASED ACTIVITY****★ WHAT A STAR SHEET IS...**

A STAR (S**T**rat**E**gies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Fears general education teachers have of inclusion
- Ingredients for successful inclusion (help alleviate fears of inclusion)
- Accommodations that help facilitate successful inclusion
- Teaching strategies that help students succeed
- Helpful organizational and study skills

WHAT THE RESEARCH AND RESOURCES SAY...

- General education teachers often feel unsure of how to provide modifications and strategies for students with special needs and are thus apprehensive about inclusion (Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2004).
- Both administrators and teachers frequently have concerns about inclusion. Some of the more common concerns include an uncertainty as to the nature of their role in inclusion, the effect of inclusion on the progress of students with and without disabilities, whether students with disabilities will have a negative impact on the regular classroom, the additional time needed for planning, and whether they will be given the resources needed for success (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000).
- Ingredients necessary for successful inclusion programs include the following:
 - Responsibility for learning outcomes is shared by general education and special education teachers
 - The classroom teacher is involved in setting IEP goals and provides instruction to help meet those goals
 - The classroom teacher is concerned about the student's strengths and needs
 - Administrators create time for teachers to prepare necessary activities and materials
 - Collaboration is valued and time is provided for collaboration between teachers
 - Expectations for students with special needs are not based on their disability
 - A variety of effective instructional practices are used
 - Accountability is viewed as a challenge instead of a threat
 - Parents are included in the inclusion process (Beckman, 2001)
- Using various teaching strategies can help students be successful in an inclusion setting. They include:
 - Providing needed accommodations and modifications
 - Using multiple methods of providing instruction (audio, visuals, multi-sensory)
 - Using grouping variations (cooperative grouping, etc.)
 - Teaching students about their own learning styles
 - Teaching students to use both cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Beckman, 2001)

- Students with ADHD often need help with organizational and study skills. Some useful strategies are:
 - Using color-coded folders for different subjects
 - Using assignment notebooks
 - Assigning homework partner to help file papers and record homework correctly
 - Asking the student clean out the desk, bookbag, and other places where assignments are stored
 - Providing visual aids as reminders of what is being studied
 - Creating a daily activity schedule for the student to follow
 - Providing a checklist of needed supplies
 - Teaching the student how to keep an uncluttered workspace (U.S. Department of Education, 2004)

KEEP IN MIND...

- Time should be set aside for collaboration between teachers.
- The teacher should consider a student’s strengths and teach to them.
- The teacher should evaluate and make needed changes to adaptations and accommodations.
- Teacher concerns regarding inclusion should be addressed because their support is very important.

RESOURCES

Beckman, P. (2001). *Access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities*. ERIC Digest #E615. ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. Retrieved December 10, 2004, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov>

Keefe, E. B., Moore, V., & Duff, F. (2004). The four “knows” of collaborative teaching. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 36(5), 36–42.

McLeskey, J., & Waldron, N. L. (2000). *Inclusive schools in action: Making differences ordinary*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, *Teaching children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: Instructional strategies and practices*, Washington, D.C., 2004. Retrieved on December 6, 2004, from <http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/index.html>