

# Promoting Access, Engagement and Learning Success for Students with Severe Disabilities

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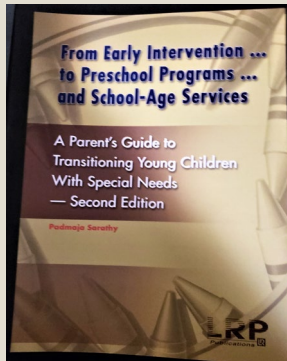
**AbleNet University**

**October 7, 2020**

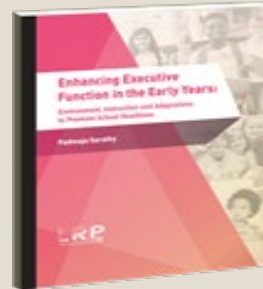
# Learning Objectives

- **Address the educational needs of students with severe disabilities to attain meaningful academic outcomes and functional life skills.**
- **Minimize the impact of the barriers imposed by communication, cognition, motor and behavioral difficulties.**
- **Share virtual and in-person activity tools**
- **Adapt and Transform instructional content to meet learner needs**
- **Be creative with instructional delivery to engage learner attention and participation**
- **Enable learner response**
- **Enable student to gain increased competence towards self-dependence.**

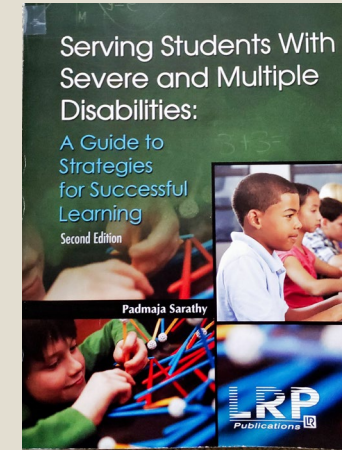
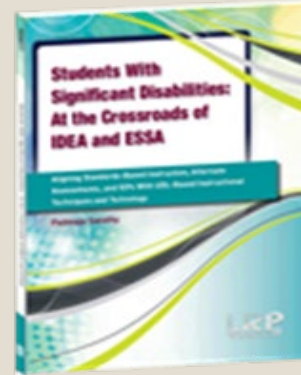
# Padmaja's Publications



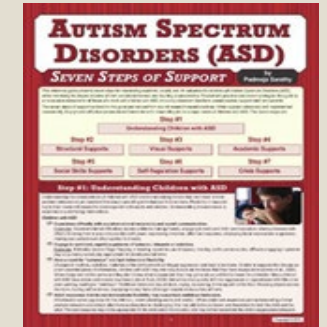
Parenting Book



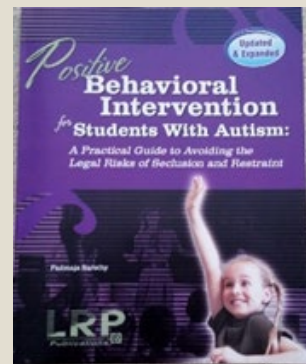
Executive Function



Severe & Multiple Disabilities



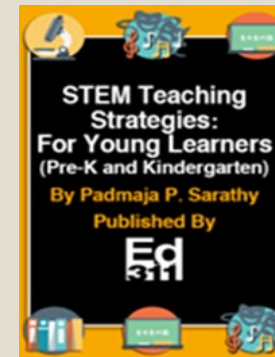
- Autism: Support Strategies & Intervention
- Behavior Guide (Preventive and Positive Approaches)
- Executive Function - Early Years
- Paraeducator Training Guide and DVD
- Severe and Multiple Disabilities, & Significant Disabilities and ESSA
- Mindfulness-based Practices
- Music CD – Transitions



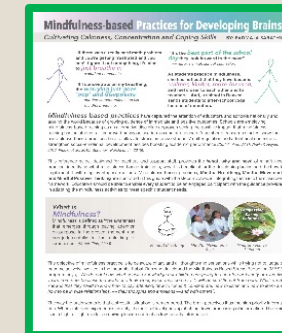
Autism Spectrum Disorders



Behavior Guide



Mindfulness Guide



# Rethink, Reimagine and Retool Instructional Delivery.

- **Tools and Techniques You May Need for Virtual Teaching and Learning**
  - **And Use Them During In-person Classroom Instruction and Learning**
- **A Magnetic Mini White Board Paired with Teaching-Learning Tools**
- **Attach a variety of instructional props on the board representing the concepts linked to the lesson:**
  - **Graphic Organizers, Concept Maps, Time Lines, Selection Charts, Venn Diagrams, Word Wall, etc.**
  - **Objects, photos, picture icons, vocabulary items, math manipulatives, number cards, etc.**

# Tools and Techniques for Virtual and In-person Teaching and Learning

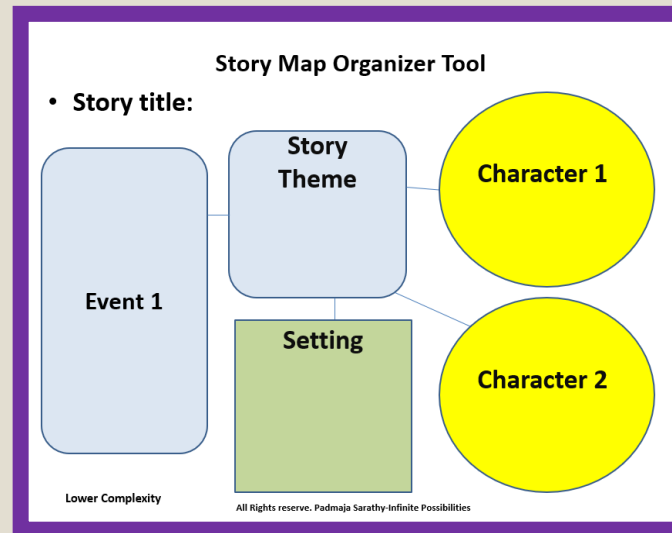
- *Have students interact with items on the board.*
- *Get them to actively engage in learning and to show their understanding and communicate their response.*



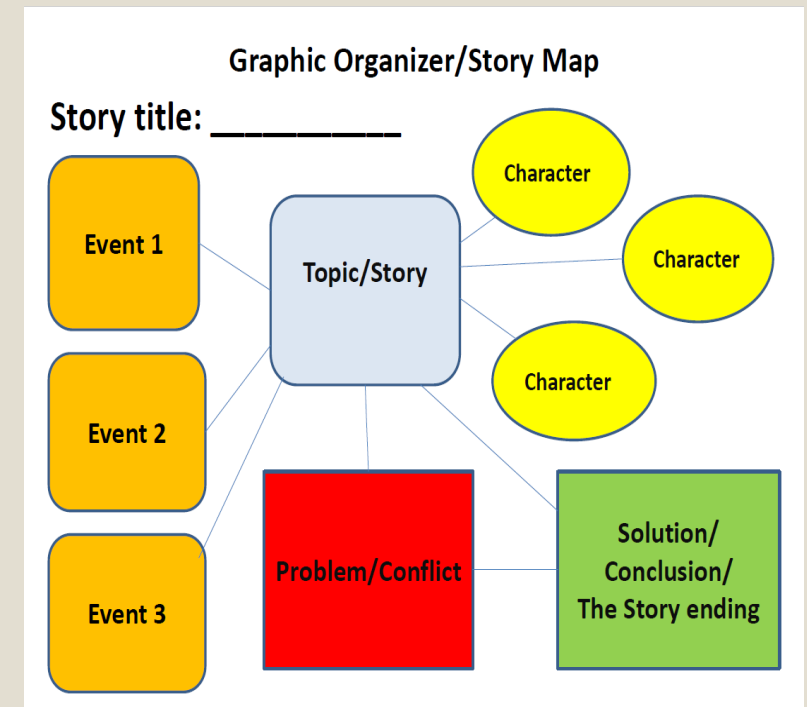
**Objects/pictures to  
manipulate**

## Story-Comprehension -Tools

### A Story Organizer at a lower complexity level

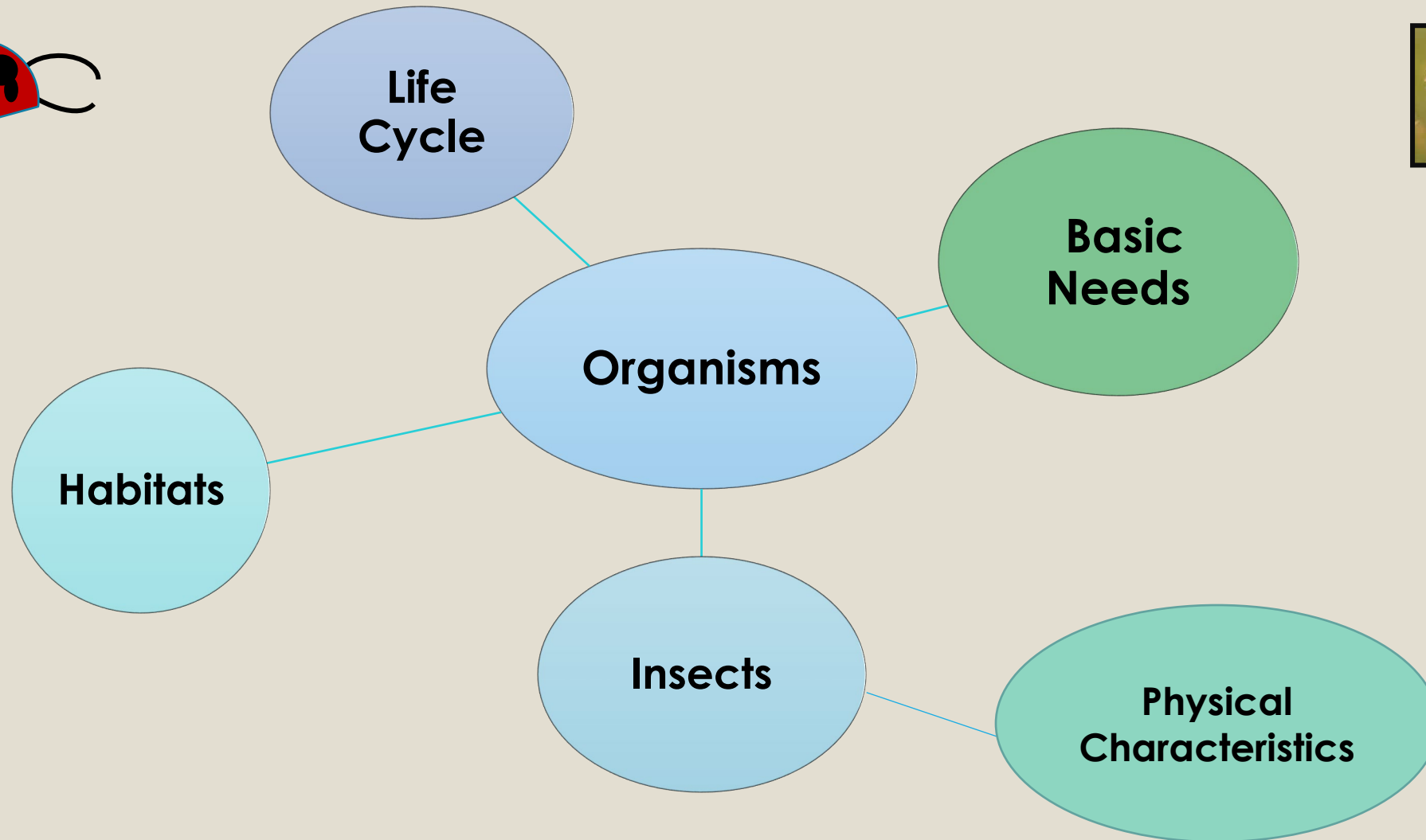
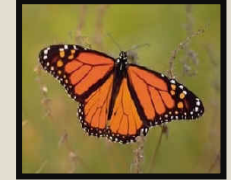
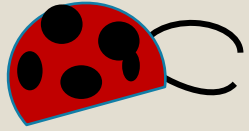


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### A Story Organizer at a higher complexity level

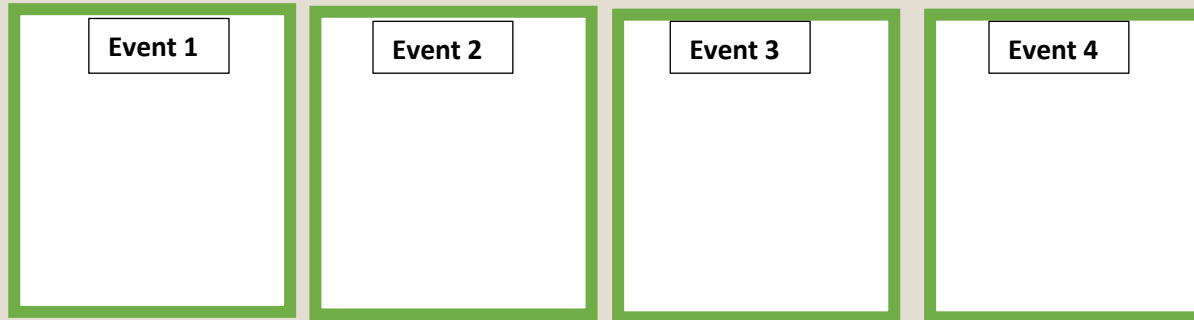
# Concept Map



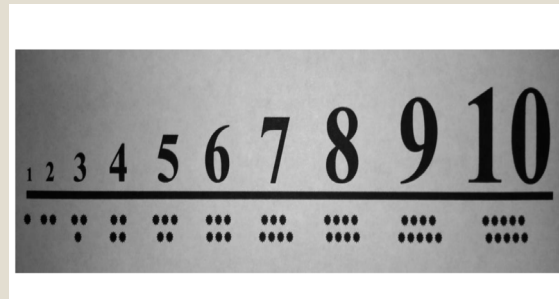


# Tools and Techniques for Virtual Teaching

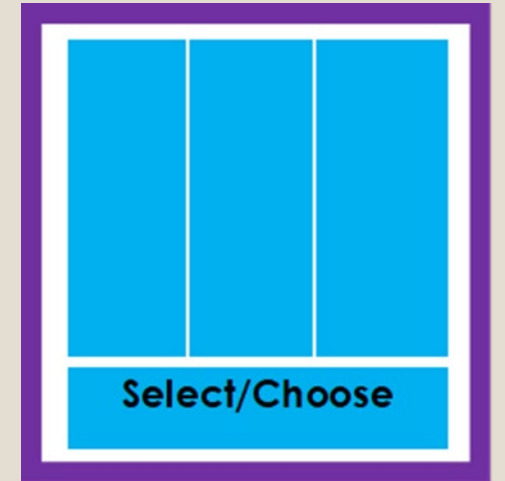
- A Timeline
- A Venn Diagram
- Both a 3-Option and a 2-Option Selection Chart (to make response choices)
- A Graduate Number Line
- Vocabulary Word-Wall (mini versions with no more than 8-12 words)



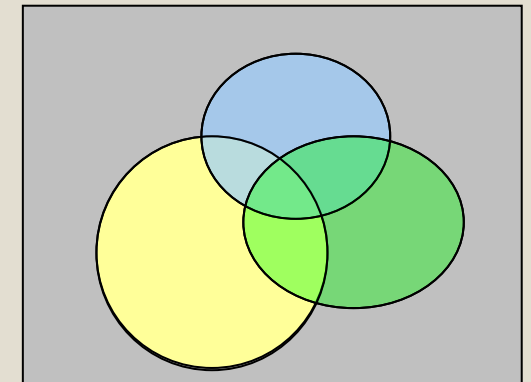
**A Timeline**



**A graduated number line**



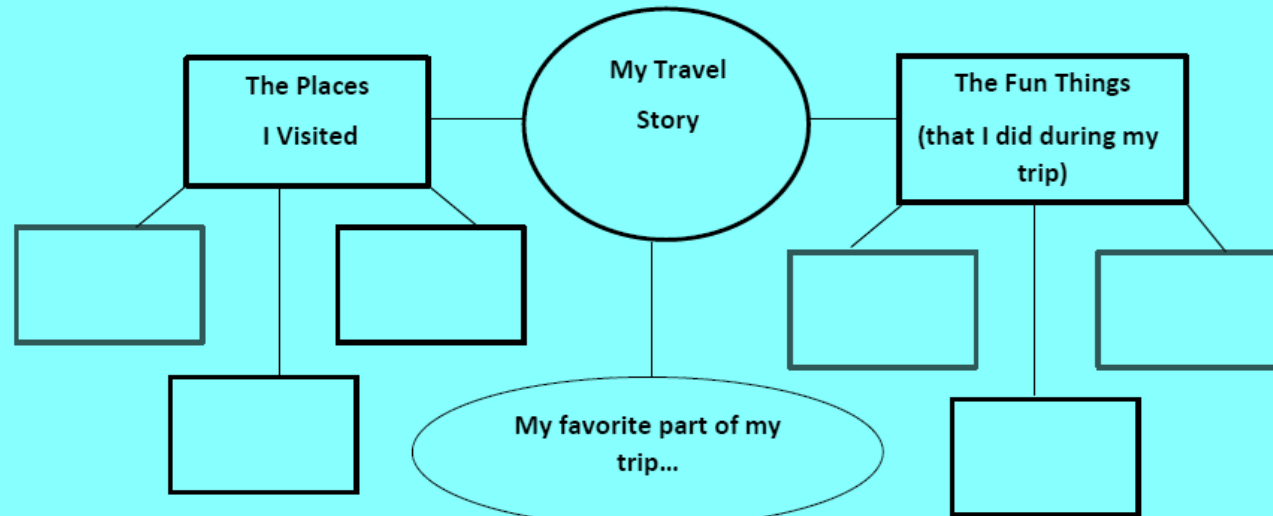
**A choice chart**



**A Venn Diagram to compare and contrast**

# A Writing Frame Paired with a Word Bank

Using A Concept Map Graphic Organizer as a template for writing



Word bank


On the left is a writing frame tool to assist with writing activities. The students will select words from the word bank paired with pictures associated with the topic to complete the story.

Assisted with the writing map organizer tool and the words from the word bank, students will compose sentences and write their story.



# An Activity Schedule with Concrete Representational Items



**An Object-based Daily Activity  
Schedule for students with  
Significant Communication &  
Cognitive Needs**

# Activity Folders



## **Rethink, Reimagine and Retool Instructional Delivery** (continued)

- **Share a set of tools – an activity toolkit - with your students(with parents).**
- **Have students interact with the items during a virtual session.**
- **Have them practice with the tools on the mini board.**
- **Get them to actively engage and to show their understanding and communicate their response.**
- **Additional Options: Zoom white board and breakout rooms.**

# **Strengthen Academic and Functional Growth in Learners with Significant and Complex Needs**

**Understand Learner Characteristics**

**Apply Universal Design for Learning Framework**

**Promote Active Learner Engagement and Response**

**Modify Task Characteristics**

**Deliver Systematic Instruction**

**Provide Student-specific Adaptations & Supports**

**Make Effective Use of Prompts**

# Understanding Learner Characteristics: Students with Significant Needs

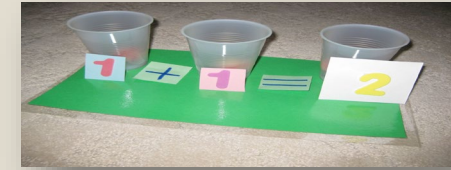
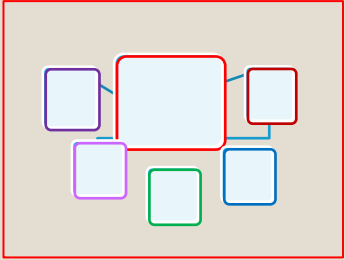
Consider your student's strengths, needs and functioning level.

◦ What can the student do currently?

- Makes a choice between 2 items given representational objects related to activity.
- Reach for an object with hand or eye gaze or body movement or body orientation.
- Shows increased vocalization in response to person or activity or object.
- Smiles in response to social, visual, auditory, and/or tactile input.
- Shows change in affect.
- Activates an AT device to obtain something or to respond to questions.
- Orients towards sound through head turn.

# Applying Universal Design for Learning Framework

- Provide multiple, flexible options for engagement. [The Why of Learning](#)



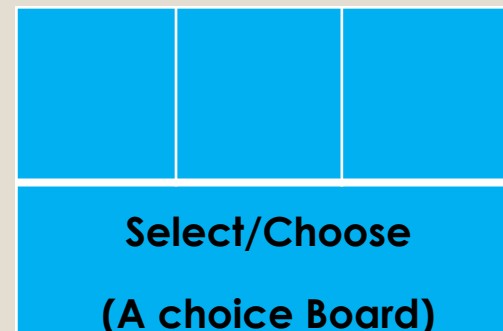
- Provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation. [The What of Learning](#)



Power Point presentation

- Provide multiple, flexible methods of action and expression. [The How of Learning](#)

Foods	
I Like	I Dislike



# Supportive Learning Environment

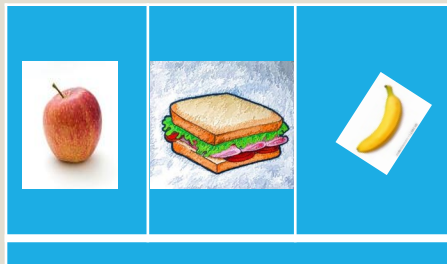
- Incorporate UDL at the initial phase of planning your design of the environment and instructional delivery.
- Ensure the physical environment of the classroom is organized, visually appealing and inviting.
- Offer structure and predictability with consistent routines to reduce stress and anxiety levels.
- Have available and use varied materials to address diverse needs, skill levels and preferences.
- Appropriate supports are routinely implemented to increase students' active participation –Visual supports, Individual Activity Schedule, etc.
- Provide a designated calming space for children to take a break to calm down when feeling restless or agitated.



# Student-specific Adaptations

- **Familiarize students with the materials.** (touch, look, listen and smell)
- **Position students appropriately** to suit the specific activity.
- **Stabilize materials:** Objects/book/card, etc. on the table surface or on a mini-white board or in a tray attached with Velcro/ tape.
- Attach objects/pictures on eye-gaze board if appropriate.
- **Use an adaptive grip to grasp/hold objects** with a Velcroed glove or Velcro wrist band (for students with limited motor control).
- **Provide tactile, visual and verbal** supports that are student-specific.

Choice Board



**Adapted Response Tool**



**Assistive Technology**



**Adapted Cuff**



# Engage Learners

- **Draw student's attention with hands-on activities with multi-sensory features.**
- **Use of real life activities** (From research on personal aspects of science found for students with significant cognitive disabilities)
- **Engage student's attention** by tapping on the picture and/or object associated with the lesson/concept/story (attached to a mini white board).
- **Maintain attention** by illuminating the pictures and key words in the adapted book with shining a light from behind (Downing, 2005).



# Engage Learners

- **Maintain attention** by illuminating the pictures and key words in the adapted book with shining a light from behind (Downing, 2005).
- **Play games to make learning joyful** (Ex. Throwing a specified # of bean bags into basket; Bingo game to practice vocabulary words)
- **Note all initiations by the student** – how the student initiates through sounds, movements and changes in state and affect.
- **Use systematic prompting and fading where applicable** (From overall research on mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities) Browder, 2008)



# A Vocabulary Word Wall with Object Representations

- Teach a few vocabulary words, creating an object or picture 'Word Wall' paired with text.

*Use real leaves.*

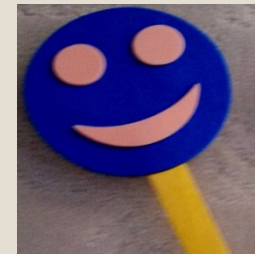


**leaves**

*Use real wooden block.*



**wood**



**happy**



Use Talking Brix  
for labeling.

*Use a real apple.*



**apple**

*Use a mini tree.*



**tree**



**boy**



**money**

- **Adaptation: Students can name the object by activating an Talking Brix Communicator. Place the brick next to each object programmed with the name of the object. Alternatively, they can touch/eye gaze the objects on the wall or on mini white board.**

# Deliver Systematic Instruction with Effective Use of Prompts

- When information is presented, make effective use of prompts.

## Prompting Strategies:

- Be alert to the prompts provided through:
  - Body language.
  - Facial expressions.
  - The way the questions are phrased.
  - The tone of voice.
- Do not inadvertently communicate to the student that his/her response is a correct/incorrect response.
- The student needs to develop confidence in his own ability and to think for himself, instead of watching adult reactions to shape his responses.

**Target: Independent Performance**

**Fade assistance gradually.**

**Move from least to most intrusive.**

**Modeling**



**Verbal/Gestural Cues**



**Verbal Prompt**



**Physical Prompt**



**Total Assistance**



# Paraeducator Support – A delicate dance



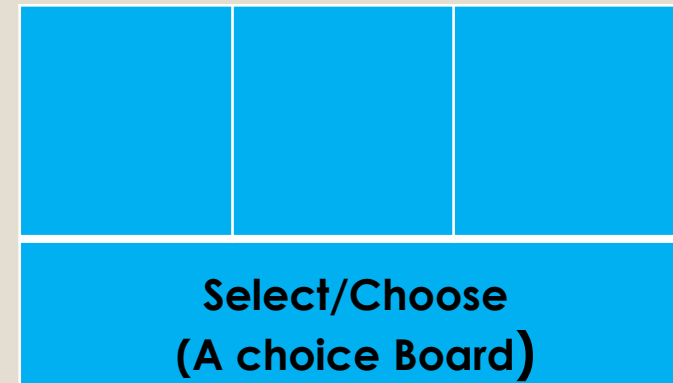
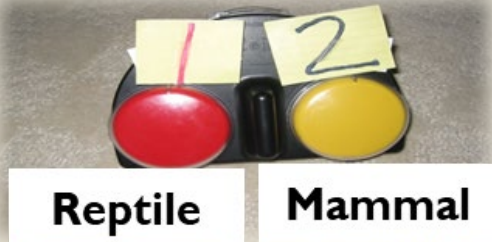
- Paraeducator support to student needs to be **discreet and unobtrusive**.
- **Ensure that para support is not stigmatizing to the student. Avoid/ minimize side-by-side support.** For example:
  - **Sitting next to or behind the student**
  - **Para should avoid carrying the materials for the student or hold student's hands as they transition from one location to another.**
- **Prevent 'Learned Helplessness' from setting in. Para should step back and fade prompts and cues gradually.**
- **Get teacher's help to modify the work to allow the student to complete it as independently as possible.**
- **Provide encouraging feedback.**

(Adapted from Sarathy, 2012)



# Personalized Supports: Choice-Making

- Offer **choice-making opportunities** throughout the day on a consistent basis:
  - To increase motivation to participate in self-selected activities.
  - To become more self-determining by exerting control over daily activities.
  - To positively impact how others perceive them.
- Choice-making teaches children that they can exercise control over their environment by using communicative behavior to indicate choice or behavior.
  - Help to make concepts personal, relating them to the student's own life.

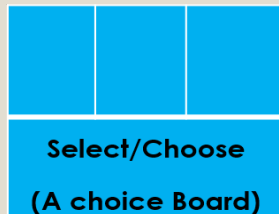


A 3-column chart



# Student Response

- Present multiple ways for student to actively respond during the activity/lesson:
  - Respond in complete sentences/phrases.
  - Use Yes/No Participation cards.
  - Read the text with the aid of the picture cues.
  - Point to pictures or objects related to story as story or text passage is read.
  - Make a choice between 2-3 options given with or without the aid of AT.
  - Touch and manipulate the item.
  - Reach for the target item with eye-gaze or body orientation or facial expression.
  - Activate an AT device to respond (gain a voice).



# Use Technology to Reduce Frustrations in Communicating Needs and Thoughts.

Support with  
Regular  
Technology and  
Assistive  
Technology



Use Technology Applications (Apps)

Use PowerPoint® Presentations

Assistive Technology Devices

Voice Output Devices

Quick Talker



Talking Brix  
Communicator



BIG Step-by-Step  
with Levels



iTalk2 Communicator



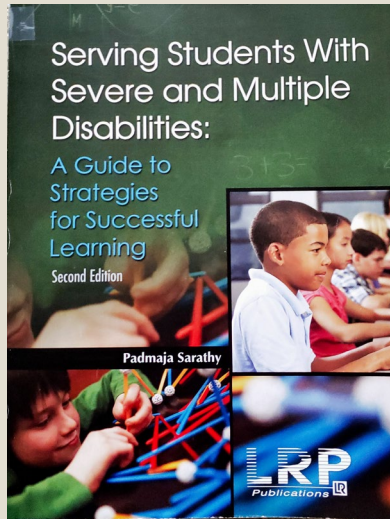
Super Talker  
To promote  
group  
participation and  
response

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# The Main Sources

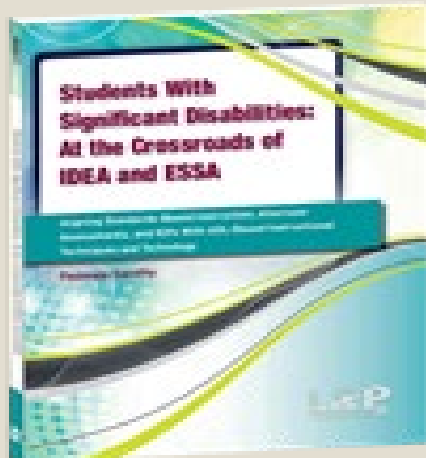
The material for this presentation is mainly drawn from my books published by LRP Publications:



## **The book focusing on Severe and Multiple Disabilities:**

***Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities: A Guide to Strategies for Successful Learning.***

(Second Edition, 2014). ([www.lrp.com](http://www.lrp.com))



## **The book focusing on Significant Disabilities**

***Students With Significant Disabilities: At the Crossroads of IDEA and ESSA: Aligning Standards-based Instruction, Alternate Assessments, and IEPs with UDL-based Instructional Techniques and Technology.***

Sarathy, P. (2017). LRP Publications. ([www.lrp.com](http://www.lrp.com))

# Resources

- Browder, D. M., Wood, L., Thompson, J., & Ribuffo, C. (2014). **Evidence-based practices for students with severe disabilities** (Document No. IC-3). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>
- Downing, J.E. (2005). **Teaching Literacy to Students with Significant Disabilities**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin,
- Downing, J.E. (2010). **Academic instruction for students with moderate and severe disabilities in inclusive classrooms**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, CA
- Sarathy, P., (2017). [Students With Significant Disabilities: At the Crossroads of IDEA and ESSA](https://www.shoplrp.com) Horsham, PA: LRP Publications. (<https://www.shoplrp.com>)
- Sarathy, P., (Second Edition, 2014). [Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities: A Guide to Strategies for Successful Learning](https://www.shoplrp.com). LRP Publications, PA. (<https://www.shoplrp.com>)
- Sarathy, P., (2012). [Paraeducator Power Training for Supporting Students with Disabilities. Trainer's Guide](https://ed311.com/) (CD and Trainee Manual). Austin, TX: Ed 311. (<https://ed311.com/>)
- Zeph, L. (1994). Creating Environments that support and enhance the lives of all individuals. In L. Sternberg (Ed.) *Individuals with Profound Disabilities: instructional and assistive strategies*. (pp. 21-39). Austin: Pro-ed.



# **Thank You Everyone.**

**A special thanks to AbleNet University  
for hosting the webinar**

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**Be Safe and Well!**

