

Loving the Exceptional Learner

From the *Why We Learn* Educators' Course

Review Questions

Instructor's Key

1. This session offered input about how to meet the varied cognitive, physical and socio-emotional needs of students in your classroom. Check the response below that **best** applies:

A new teacher can find career-long fulfillment by:

- a. Expecting challenges
- b. Seeing, first and foremost, the potential of every learner**
- c. Anticipating that every learner is either depressed, anxious or traumatized
- d. Keeping lots of extra materials on hand for bored students
- e. Working with a more experienced teaching team

2. A teacher may have a brilliant lesson plan, and still, learning inconsistencies arise. These inconsistencies have underlying causes, whether a learner is gifted or brings a cognitive or physical challenge to the classroom, but they all present the teacher with the need to vary the response. If an engaging learning plan is in place, the teacher looks at the underlying cause for these challenges.

Which item does not belong on the following list?

Effective teachers soon learn to recognize the deeper issues behind student challenges such as:

- a. Athletic aspirations**
- b. Boredom or distraction
- c. Emotion expressed or unexpressed
- d. Not turning in work or hyperfocus on only one topic

3. After learning how to recognize the issue, the teacher moves on to possible solutions. Which item does not belong on this list?

To successfully engage the apathic student, a teacher can:

- a. Seek to know the root of the problem through observations and breaktime discussions
- b. Link personal incentives to benchmarks that make learning purposeful
- c. Institute more punishments and trips to the principal's office
- d. Provide extra leadership opportunities that build accountability
- e. Help the learner experience a new identity as a contributor to the community

4. Some learners may present physical limitations, even though they feel alert and want to come to school. Which item does not belong on this list? For learners with physical challenges, the teacher can:

- a. Allow extra time to get to class
- b. Challenge other students a chance to accompany them on campus until they feel safe
- c. Simplify the carrying of books and materials
- d. Allow the learner to skip learning activities altogether, for the convenience of the class
- e. Remove safety hazards and create even walkways in the school

5. Some special needs may be more difficult to recognize until the activities begin and may be mistaken as “naughtiness” at first. After becoming familiar with the cognitive challenges, teachers learn strategies for including these learners in classroom activities. Which item does not belong on the following list?

For learners with Attention Deficit, effective teachers:

- a. Give fewer numbers of assigned questions to complete in the same amount of time

- b. Hum or provide soothing music to work by
 - c. Use the student's name when speaking to them, and call attention to their progress rather than their disturbances
 - d. Repeat directions and color-code them if needed
 - e. Give separate grades for spelling and content rather than mark up a paper for errors
 - f. Refer such students to a younger classroom
6. Similarly, some conditions are often appear in sets. You may not fully understand a child's diagnosis, but you can respond with kindness to a general set of circumstances. Which item does not belong on the following list?

For sensitive or emotionally charged students, teachers can:

- a. Learn about their condition and speak calmly to such a learner
 - b. Give time, space, and something soothing to hold if needed
 - c. Allow the learner to move to more than one place in the room
 - d. Give instructions quietly and write out a daily schedule
 - e. Not allow others to interact with the student
 - f. Role play with classmates ways to interact supportively
 - g. Include art, music, and meditation interspersed with study
7. A whole school can make a difference in the quality of education for an exceptional learner. The gifted student can work at their own pace and the challenged learner can feel accepted as an equal contributor. Which item does not belong on the list below?

To involve the whole class, the teacher can:

- a. Plan group projects that offer variable options for engagement among learners with unique capacities
- b. List negative behaviors of students on the board and threaten classmates not to follow their example
- c. Plan a unit that helps the class teach and model "appreciation of diversity" in the classroom and community

- d. Offer opportunities for classmates to give extra support to exceptional learners and to see each peer as a family member and valuable and unique classroom contributor
8. Giving the students tools to help themselves also makes the teacher's job easier. Guided imagery is one of those tools. Some schools apply it as an additional behavior management strategy, to prepare students for the conflict bridge or for the restorative justice pledge. Which item does **not** belong on the following list?
- Guided Imagery can:
- a. Combine breathing and inner narratives to strengthen self-control, build resilience, and reduce anxiety (if used twice weekly until the learners can repeat it in their heads)
 - b. Deepen understanding and subconscious awareness of the habit-of-heart
 - c. Reinforce prosocial identity by placing the learner as the character in the story
 - d. Be used only for students with a formal diagnosis

Practicum Challenge: With your cohort, demonstrate one strategy related to each of the eight questions above.