Resource Manual for Teachers of Students with Exceptionalities

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This manual was developed as a guide and source of reference for resource teachers, school administrators, education officers and teachers receiving in-service training. As a consequence, the Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education and Youth has outlined a number of procedures and practices that are in accordance with strategic objective two in the White Paper Policy document which seeks 'To secure teaching and learning opportunities that will optimise access, equity and relevance throughout the education system.'

Currently the concept of the Resource Room Programme is one that has gained widespread acceptance as an innovation that caters to students with sensory, learning and behavioural problems. In order to ensure quality delivery of these services this manual seeks to:

1. Highlight the concept of the resource room.
2. Delineate the process involved in establishing resource services.
3. Identify appropriate instructional strategies for various individuals.
4. Provide direction for the assessment of students and monitoring/evaluation of the programme.

It was with these thoughts in mind that this manual was developed.

Introduction

For a number of years, and even more recently, the quality and equity of the Jamaican education system has been put under the microscope. Parents, teachers, students, educators and the general public have been questioning the returns from the investments in education. The results from state diagnostic tools and examinations (Grade 1 Inventory, Grade 3 Diagnostic Test, Grade 4 Literacy Test, Grade 6 Achievement Test) and more recently the Grade 9 Achievement Test and the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate have all pointed to a downward trend in the academic achievements of our students.

The Ministry of Education and Youth (MOE& Y) has over the years implemented a number of intervention programmes designed to meet the needs of students who appear to be underachieving when compared with their age and grade cohorts. These programmes include the Primary Education Support Project (PESP) 1 & 2, New Horizon Project, Jamaica All-Age Schools Project (JAASP), Grade 4 Competency Shelter, and more recently the Student Empowerment Programme. Most of these programmes have focused on literacy and numeracy.

The Resource Room Concept

The Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education and Youth, in its response to the overwhelming demand to address the needs of children with learning difficulties, introduced the Resource Room Programme at the primary, junior high, and high school levels. The decision to implement the resource room programme was based on the commitment made in the 1990 - 1995 Five Year Education Plan (M.O.E.& Y.) to provide one Special Educator to every 480 students in the mainstream. In addition, the 2001 White Paper (p.27) outlined the provision for teachers of special education to be appointed to primary and all-age schools until all students have access to the service. The Corporate Plan also speaks to the continued provision of special education teachers on a phased basis. It must be noted that unlike other interventions initiated by the Ministry, this programme is designed to address the needs of students whose academic under-achievements are assumed to be due to a neurological disorder.

Goals of the Resource Room

The operation of a resource room programme in any school seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide students with specific resource support while remaining integrated with their peers in the mainstream.

2. To allow resource personnel to serve a wider cross section of students in the regular school system who require special support.

3. To provide a system of early intervention in order to alleviate the development of secondary conditions.

4. To provide learning opportunities for students with special needs in a flexible manner.

5. To serve as a source of expertise in supporting teachers in the mainstream.

6. To minimise the stigma associated with student receiving special support in a non-categorical setting.

The resource room concept has its historical roots in both special education and remedial education for students with learning difficulties. This is a pullout programme, serving students with mild learning disabilities drawn from the mainstream. Once selected, these students go to the resource room on a scheduled basis to receive tutorial help from a special education teacher.

Ideally, students should be scheduled for thirty minutes to one-hour sessions at least three times weekly. Typically, resource room teachers teach fundamental skills and/or tutor students in the academic subjects that were the source of the referral. (Henley, Ramsey, & Algozzine, 2006). There are different types of resource rooms and these are listed below:

- **Categorical Resource Room:** This serves only students who have one particular disability, which is usually a learning disability. Students identified as mentally retarded would go to another resource room.

- **Cross-Categorical Resource Room:** This type of placement serves several students with different disabilities functioning at about the same gross achievement levels. Students who are learning disabled, mild mentally retarded, and behaviourally disturbed are often placed together in this type of resource room. This is the most common type of resource room.

- **Non-categorical Resource Room:** This serves as the resource room for all children with disabilities in places where categorical distinctions are not recognised.

- **Specific-skills Resource Room:** This type of resource room aims its curricular content at one basic skill area usually reading or mathematics.

- **Itinerant Resource Programmes:** These are programmes where student's visits to the resource room are not scheduled on a daily basis. Rural areas with very small schools in difficult-to-reach locations may provide one resource teacher for several schools, which are visited every other day.

General Information

Resource Room Information

The Resource Room is designed to meet the individual learning needs of students having difficulties in one or more areas of learning. In order to determine the functioning levels and/or learning needs of students, qualified personnel must conduct an assessment. These include the resource teacher, who is usually trained to conduct educational assessments, an assessment clinician, or educational and clinical psychologist.

Procedures for Placing Students in the Resource Room

While anyone can refer a child for assessment, the class teacher or principal of the school usually refers students for initial screening. Screening results determine the direction for assessment. Resource room placement should be done on the advice of the psychologist or assessment clinician.   The resource room teacher must interpret the results and conduct his/her evaluation before beginning a programme of intervention.

In cases where there is no psychologist or assessment clinician, referrals can be made to the resource room teacher who conducts an assessment and may refer the child for further assessment. Such referrals should be made in time for the beginning of the school year, so that individualised plans can be made on time. It is important that referrals are made with the least disruption to the child's programme and schedule of the resource room.

Assessment Instruments

Schools establishing resource rooms should be advised by the Special Education Unit on the procurement of instruments. It is also important that the instruments used by psychologists and assessment clinicians, with Jamaican students, are culturally appropriate and that teachers serving in the resource rooms be trained where necessary to interpret and administer academic instruments. Assessment results must be used to inform planning and instruction.

Programme Design

A team of persons including, but not restricted to, the principal, resource teacher, class teacher, and parent should evaluate each case, and set guidelines for an individualised

programme, based on the student's learning needs. In addition, teaching strategies are to be based on assessment information, teacher tests, observations, school records and any other relevant information.

Having received assessment report, the resource teacher will administer teacher-made tests and conduct his/her own observations on students' performance and behaviour as they affect learning. It is also important to examine recent school reports and any other relevant document pertaining to learning outcome.

Important points to consider

- It is the responsibility of the resource teacher, after determining students' functioning levels to state in writing individual goals and objectives that should include specific timeframe for accomplishment.

- The resource teacher should continuously analyse students' performance and modify instructions where necessary and decide on new instructional objectives and goals.

- Parents should play a part in the decisions taken by the teacher.

- The principal must be knowledgeable on each case and should help in decision-making where necessary.

- Records of students' performance must be kept for analysis and to help determine progress.

- The resource teacher must ensure that teaching strategies are geared to students' needs and for success. Instructions should begin at or below students' functioning level initially, to ensure a measure of success and to develop confidence.

- The environment must be relaxing, comfortable and non-distracting where students can express themselves freely and work comfortably.

- Lessons must be prepared ahead of time to prevent time wasting and to maximise time spent in the teaching/learning process.

- Students should be aware of their individual goals and the timeframe for accomplishment.

- Counseling where necessary is important for students and parents to understand the implications of their learning needs.

- Each student must be assigned individual tasks and specified learning areas.

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- Individual student portfolios must be kept.

Steps to be followed in establishing the resource room

In establishing the Resource Room in schools, the following steps need to be observed:

A.   Prepare the school staff
B.   Prepare the parents
C.   Outfit the Resource Room
D.   Secure the equipment and materials
E.   Assess students who have been referred
F.   Prepare an Individual Education Programme (IEP)
G.   Implement the Programme

A.   Preparing the School Staff

Discuss:
- The need for the resource programme.
- The resource model to be used.
- The roles of the resource teacher.
- The responsibility of the regular teachers.
- Referral and pupil selection.
- Management practices in the programmes operation.

B.   Preparing the Parents

- Inform parents about the Resource Room programme and the benefits to the student.
- Inform parents whose children will be part of the programme.
- Share goals of the programme.
- Encourage parental involvement.

C.   Outfitting the Resource Room

- Select the room.
- Select equipment and materials required.
- Assign area for small group.
- Assign area for individual work.
- Storage space for files and materials.

D.   Securing the equipment and materials

- Prepare a list of materials needed.
- Prioritise the items.
- Compare prices on materials.
- Evaluate and compare educational materials.
- Explore the possibility of making cheaper materials.
- Make final selection and purchase.
  NB. Materials must be culturally appropriate.

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E.   Assessing students who have been referred

- Administer selected tests.
- Score and interpret test(s).
- Interview parents/guardian.
- Interview teacher (s) and/or students.
- Observe students in normal school situations.

F.   Preparing an Individual Education Programme (IEP)

- Plan specifics that the student will be taught.
- Delineate the specific information, skill or behaviours to be taught at each step.
- Specify the methods and materials to be used to teach the information or skill.
- Specify the motivational component of the instruction.

G.   Implementing the Programme

- Start up procedures.
- Schedule students selected.
- Monitor movement between classes.
- Grade, monitor students' achievements.
- Implement instructional plans.
- Involve parents/guardians.
- Evaluate the programme.

Stages of the Assessment Process

What is Assessment?

Assessment is the gathering of information to make critical decisions.

Methods of Assessment

- Observations of the child
- Interview with the family
- Checklists and rating scales
- Informal tests
- Standardised tests

Use of assessment information

- To identify the child's eligibility for special services, planning instruction, and measuring progress.

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Steps in Assessment

1. Child-find/Case Finding
2. Developmental Screening
3. Diagnosis
4. Individualised Planning of Programmes and Interventions
5. Performance Monitoring
6. Programme Evaluation

Stage 1. Child-Find/Case Finding

This refers to procedures designed to locate those young children who might need early intervention services and programmes. This stage is required because many parents do not know that services are available for young children. Some parents may not realise that the child has a developmental problem, or the family may deny that a problem exists because of strong cultural beliefs and traditions.

Strategies for finding young children

- Building community awareness through public agencies and organisations.
- Setting up a system for referrals.
- Canvassing the community for the young children who need screening.
- Maintaining contracts with sources of referral.

Stage 2. Developmental Screening

This is a cursory method for obtaining general information about a child's development and detecting any potential problems. The screening is not intended to be a comprehensive diagnosis, but rather provides a first quick look at a child. Screening procedures are typically used with large groups of children. Screening tests should be brief, inexpensive, have objective scoring systems that are valid and reliable.

When the screening indicates that a young child has potential problems, it is critical that the child receives more comprehensive diagnoses.

Stage 3. Diagnoses

This is a more intensive evaluation than screening.

Methodology

- Observation
- Interviews
- Case history
- Informal tests
- Standardised tests

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Information Gathered

- The nature of the child's difficulties.
- The severity of the problem.
- The child's strengths and weaknesses.

The above information is used to determine eligibility for special education services.

Members of a multidisciplinary team conduct the diagnosis. For example, if the screening indicated that the child has language difficulties, members of the multidisciplinary team could include a speech/language pathologist; a specialist in hearing, such as an audiologist or otologist, to evaluate hearing loss; and a psychologist to determine how the child's development is related to language acquisition. A family interview would provide additional information about the case history, language performance at home, and the primary language of the family. Information collected through the diagnosis leads to decisions about the nature and severity of the problem and assists in planning intervention.

Stage 4. Individual Planning of Programmes and Interventions

If the diagnosis indicates there is a need for early intervention, the next stages involve assessment for the planning of programmes and intervention. To closely link this stage of the assessment to the actual curricula of the child's early intervention programme, curriculum-based or criterion-referenced instruments and procedures are used. The areas considered in the planning process for early preschool children include:

- Sensory/physical development.
- Language and communication abilities.
- Fine and gross motor development.
- Cognitive abilities.
- Adaptive or self-help skills.
- Social-emotional development.

Stage 5. Programme Monitoring

After the child is placed in an intervention programme, it is important that the child's progress is monitored frequently. Multiple checks include:

- Observations
- Developmental checklists
- Rating scales
- Data collection on a regular basis and analysis to determine mastery of target skills.
- Progress recorded in meeting goals and objectives on the child's Individualised Education Programme (I.E.P)
- Determining the effectiveness of the intervention and changes that are needed in the intervention plan.

Stage 6. Programme Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the intervention programme itself. Programme evaluation is an objective, systematic procedure for determining progress of children and the effectiveness of the total intervention programme. It may be necessary to make needed changes and modifications in the intervention programme (Lerner, 1998).

The Physical Environment

For resource programmes physical environmental issues are important.

It has been suggested that the room should never be less than half the size of a regular classroom. However, size needs should be determined only after considering the following:

- The predominant activities that will take place in the resource room (e.g. instruction, assessment, consultation).

- The nature of resource room activities and whether they will occur simultaneously (e.g. social skills training would interfere with teaching cognitive strategies for reading comprehension).

- The number of students and adults who will be in the resource room at the same time.

- The needs of teachers for storage of equipment and material and for material preparation.

- The needs of students with physically disabling conditions that require wheelchairs or walkers.

Generally the resource room should be able to comfortably accommodate a maximum of ten (10) students. There must be provisions for Learning Centres within the room, as well as space for individual work by students.

Study carrels

A study carrel is essentially a place for independent, individual work. Carrels or cubicles have two main purposes:

- to limit outside stimuli and
- to provide a specific place for concentrated study.

A study carrel should be designed to minimise the distraction of various classroom activities hence it should be placed in a quiet area.

Cubicles may be elaborate, commercially made frames or others are cardboard refrigerator cartons; still others are little more than a small table and chair placed in the back corner of the classroom, where the child sits facing the corner.

Use of carrels should emphasize the positive features of cubicles rather than their association with punishment or inappropriate behaviour.

Learning Centres

Learning centres are basically an outgrowth of independent seatwork activities and are an attempt to take the monotony out of seatwork and put more variety into classroom instruction. Learning centres can be used for:

1.	Instruction in which a student works at the centre to review something previously learned.

2.	Promotion of social interaction for two or three students who are working together.

3.	Development of independent work skills and self-direction.

When erecting centres, teachers should consider several key components of learning centres:

● 	the user
● 	the objectives
● 	rules for use
● 	directions, and
● 	materials or equipment needed.

Learning Centres should not be complicated or intricate so that students are able to use them effectively without the teacher's help. Some easy centres to establish include a magazine corner where children can lounge, looking at or cutting out pictures; a number centre for matching numerals with pictures counting the correct number of objects; a listening centre equipped with headphones so that students can listen to recordings; an area with a Language Master accessible for reviewing previously learned vocabulary and a library. A computer centre is also another important option.

There should be no stigma attached to students attending the resource room, but rather that they are in an environment in which they can achieve most successfully   without frustration.

The resource room should be attractive, stimulating, comfortable, non-distracting, and conducive to learning.

Instruction should NOT be a repeat of what obtains in the regular classroom. Where possible the teacher should endeavour to acquire a television, VCR, tape-recorder and computers to enhance the teaching/learning process. The use of drama, music and other aesthetic modes should be employed as much as possible. Students should:

- feel a sense of belonging;
- be made to feel special;
- be active participants in their learning.

The classroom must be made 'psychologically' safe by:

- Using objectives that are challenging but achievable.
- Allowing opportunities for error analysis.
- Being enthusiastic about students' learning.

Staffing

The resource room should ideally have a teacher with at least one teacher's aide.

The resource teacher should ideally be:

- A special educator with a focus on learning difficulties.
- A teacher with skills in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy or specialisation in Corrective Reading in the Content Area.

Support Personnel

Persons to assist with the resource room programme are the Principal, the Special Needs Coordinator, a regular classroom teacher, the guidance counselor and a parent.

Budget

The Budget for the Resource Room should include funds for:

- Interactive Software
- Books
- Games
- Computer

- Tape Recorder
- Video
- Standardised Tests
- In-service Training
- Other Equipment and Materials

In-Service Training

Persons working in resource rooms shall participate in in-service training activities to support the various tasks, duties and responsibilities undertaken in such facilities. Resource room training will be organized to include individual and cluster training, done on request or on the recommendation of a supervising officer.

Training will be scheduled for convenient times and during the summer break. Resource Room Teachers will be evaluated by supervising officers to determine the quality of the returns on the training investment as they impact on teacher effectiveness in the teaching learning situation.

Areas to be covered will be determined by need and may include:

- Resource Room Management
- Record Management
- Assessment
- Behaviour Management
- Classroom Management
- Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Grouping
- Material Development and teaching strategies among others.

Equipment and Material

Resource Rooms should be organised and equipped to create a conducive, stimulating learning environment. They should be equipped with instructional technologies and other materials inclusive of tape recorders, computers with appropriate software, assessment tools, reading labs or substitutes, cassettes, audio taped programmes, CDs, support materials for mathematics, educational games, portfolios, student files, text materials, centers of interest, television and video equipment where possible. Teachers are expected to utilize available materials in innovative ways to enhance the teaching learning process (Weiderholt, Hammill, & Brown, 1978).

Students with Behavioural Disorders

Behavioural disorders also known as conduct disorders are the most common forms of psychopathology among children and young adults. In our classrooms, they have severely constrained the ability of the school systems to educate students effectively.

Behavioural disorders are repetitive persistent patterns of behaviour that result in significant disruption to other students. These disturbances may cause significant impairments in academic, social, and or occupational functioning, and is consistent throughout the individual's life.

Characteristics

● Initiation of aggressive behaviour and reacting aggressively towards others.

● A display of bullying, threatening, or intimidating behaviour.

● Physically abusive of others.

● Deliberate destruction of other's property.

● Little empathy and concern for the feelings, wishes, and well being of others.

● Callous behaviour towards others and lack of feelings of guilt or remorse.

● A tendency to inform on their companions and to blame others for their own misdeeds.

Strategies for Teaching Students with Behavioural Disorders

● Collaborate with teachers about interactive techniques that have been effective with the student in the past.

● Expose students with behavioural disorders to other students who demonstrate the appropriate behaviours.

● Use direct instruction to teach the target behaviour.

● Have pre-established consequences for misbehaviour.

- Determine whether the student is on medication, what the schedule is, and what the medication effects may be on his or her in class demeanor with and without medication. Then adjust teaching strategies accordingly.

- Use time-out sessions to cool off disruptive behaviour and as a break if student needs one for a disability-related reason.

- In group activities, acknowledge the contributions of the student with a behavioural disorder.

- Devise a contingency plan with the student in which inappropriate forms of response are replaced by appropriate ones.

- Treat the student with the behavioural disorder as an individual who is deserving of respect and consideration.

- Seek input from the student about their strengths, weakness, and goals. Use this information to plan appropriate academic, social, and or occupational experiences.

- Be consistent in the enforcement of classroom rules.

- Ensure the discipline fits the 'crime' without harshness.

- Provide encouragement.

- Reward more than you punish, in order to build self-esteem.

- Praise immediately at all good behaviour and performance.

- Change rewards if they are not effective for motivating behavioural change.

- Develop a schedule for applying positive reinforcement in all educational environments.

- Encourage others to be friendly with students who have emotional disorders.

- Monitor the student's self-esteem. Assist in modification, as needed.

- Build self-esteem and develop interpersonal skills for all students with emotional disorders.

- As a teacher, you should be patient, sensitive, a good listener, fair and consistent in your treatment of students with behavioural disorders.

- Promote a sense of positiveness in the classroom environment.

Teacher Responsibilities

- After a week, or so, of observation, try to anticipate classroom situations where the student's emotional state will be vulnerable and be prepared to apply the appropriate mitigating strategies.

- Use a wide variety of instructional equipment that can be displayed for the students to look at and handle.

- Instructions should be simple and very structured.

- Group participation in activities is highly desirable because it makes social contacts possible.

- Monitor the student carefully to ensure that students without disabilities do not dominate the activity or detract in any way from the successful performance of the student with the behavioural disorder.

- Reward students for good behaviour and withhold reinforcement for inappropriate behaviour.

- Have the individual with the behavioural disorder be in charge of an activity that can often reduce the aggressiveness.

- Make special effort to encourage and easily facilitate students with behavioural disorders to interact.

- Structure the environment so that it is sensitive to the needs of these youth with behavioural disorders.

- Expose students with behavioural disorders to other students who demonstrate the appropriate behaviours.

- Direct instruction on target behaviours are often required to help students master them.

- Keep an organised classroom-learning environment.

- Devise a structured behavioural management programme.

- Model appropriate behaviour for the students experiencing behaviour disorders. Be consistent, mature, and controlled. Behavioural outburst/or angry shouting at students inhibits rather than enhance a classroom.

- Provide a carefully structured learning environment with regard to physical features of the room, scheduling, routines, and rules of conduct.

- If unstructured activities must occur, you must clearly distinguish them from structured activities in terms of time, place, and expectations.

- Let your students know the expectations you have, the objectives that have been established for the activity, and the help you will give them in achieving objectives.

- When appropriate, seek input from the students about their strengths, weaknesses and goals.

- Do not expect students with behavioural disorders to have immediate success; work for improvement on an overall basis.

- Be fair and consistent, but temper your consistency with flexibility.

- Refer the students to visual aids and reading materials that may be used to learn more about the techniques of skill performance.

- Present a sense of positive ness in the learning environment.

- Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the student with a behavioural disorder.

- Have pre-established consequences immediately, then monitor proper behaviour frequently.

- Administer consequences immediately, and then monitor proper behaviour frequently.

- Enforce classroom rules consistently.

- Make sure the discipline fits the 'crime,' without harshness.

- Praise immediately for all good behaviour and performance.

- Change rewards if they are not effective for motivating behavioural change.

- Develop a schedule for applying positive reinforcement in all educational environments.

Group Interaction and Discussion

- Acknowledge the contributions of the student with an emotional disorder.

- Call for responses and participation commensurate with the student's socialisation skills.

- As the student's comfort levels rise and when a safe topic is available, encourage the student to be a group spokesperson.

- Along with the student, devise a contingency plan in which inappropriate forms of response are replaced by appropriate ones.

Reading

It is necessary to target specific prosocial behaviour for appropriate instruction and assessment to occur such as:

a) Taking turns, working with partner, following directions.
b) Reading in groups or with others.
c) Increasing positive relationships by means of awards when they read appropriately.
d) Demonstrating appropriate reading.

Instructional strategies involving self-control, self-reinforcement, self-monitoring, self-management, problem solving, cognitive behaviour modification, and metacognitive skills should be focused on teaching students reading skills.

Testing

- Be sensitive to the student's reactions to the various aspects of assessment.

- Accumulate in each students' portfolio several examples of work (quizzes, assignments, projects) that demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter or the unit of study.

- Make special arrangement for the students with emotional disorders according to their special needs so that the integrity of the testing situation is not compromised.

Source: Strategies for Teaching Students with Behavioral Disorders. Retrieved July 20, 2007 from http://www.as.wvu.edu/~scidis/behavior.html.

Attention Deficit Disorders

Attention deficit disorders are characterised by serious and persistent difficulties in attention span, impulse control, and hyperactivity. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is a chronic disorder that can begin in infancy and extend through adulthood. It can have significantly negative effect on an individual's life at home, in school, or in the community.

Types of Attention Deficit Disorders

1. Undifferenticated Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
3. Subtypes

Undifferentiated Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Principle Characteristics

- Inattentiveness without hyperactivity.
- Difficulties with organisation and distractibility.
- Quiet and passive. May be overlooked in the classroom.
- At higher risk for academic failure than those with ADHD.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Principle Characteristics

- Inattentiveness
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity

Subtypes

- Predominantly hyperactive/impulsive type (that does not show significant inattention).
- Predominantly inattentive type (that does not show significant hyperactive-impulsive behaviour) also called ADD.
- Combined type (that displays both inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive symptoms).

To be diagnosed as having ADHD a student must display for six months or more, at least eight of the following characteristics prior to the age of seven:

1. Fidgets, squirms, or is restless.
2. Has difficulty remaining seated.
3. Is easily distracted.
4. Has difficulty waiting for his/her turn.

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5. Blurts out answers.
6. Has difficulty following instructions.
7. Has difficulty sustaining attention.
8. Shifts from one uncompleted task to another.
9. Has difficulty playing quietly.
10. Talks excessively.
11. Interrupts or is rude to others.
12. Does not appear to listen.
13. Often loses things necessary for tasks.
14. Frequently engages in dangerous actions.

Other disorders that may accompany ADHD

- Tourette Syndrome (affects a very small proportion of people with ADHD).

- Oppositional defiant disorder (affecting as many as one-third to one half of all children with ADHD.

- Conduct disorder (about 20 to 40% of ADHD children).

- Anxiety and depression.

- Bipolar disorder.

Strategies

- Allow a child to change work sites frequently while completing homework or studying.

- Assign tasks involving movement such as passing out papers, running errands, watering plants.

- Use music as a tool for transitioning, song or task.

- Vary tone of voice: loud, soft, whisper.

- Stage assignments and divide work into smaller chunks with frequent breaks.

- Teach students to verbalise a plan before solving problems or undertaking a task.

- Permit a child to do something with hands while engaged in sustained listening: stress ball, worry stone, paper folding, clay.

- Use inconspicuous methods such as a physical cue to signal a child when she or he tunes out.

- Provide opportunities for student to show divergent, creative, imaginary thinking and get peer recognition for originality.

- Employ multi-sensory strategies when directions are given and lessons presented.

- Self-monitoring, self-management, discipline, and encouragement can be a very important aspect for academic success.

Self-monitoring techniques can be very effective in the school setting. Self-monitoring of attention involves cueing the student so that he/she can determine how well he/she is attending to the task at hand. Cueing is often done by providing an audio tone such as a random beep, timer, or the teacher can give the cue. The student then notes whether he/she was on or off task on a simple recording sheet. Self-monitoring techniques are more likely to be effective when tied to rewards and accuracy checks.

Behaviour Management Techniques

These must often be used in the learning environment. By examining a student's specific problem behaviour, understanding its antecedents and consequences, teachers can help students with ADHD to develop behaviours that lead to academic and social successes.

Provide supervision and discipline

- Monitor proper behaviour frequently and immediately direct the student to an appropriate behaviour.

- Enforce classroom rules consistently.

- Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember that students with AD/HD have difficulty staying in control.

Provide encouragement

- Reward more than punish.

- Immediately praise any and all good behaviour and performance.

- Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioural change.

- Find alternate ways to encourage the AD/HD students.

- Teach the student to reward himself or herself. Encourage positive self-talk. This encourages the student to think positively about him or herself.

- Reduce the amount of materials present during activities by having the student put away unnecessary items. Have a special place for tools, materials, and books.

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- Seat students with AD/HD in the front near the teacher with their backs to the rest of the class. Be sure to include them as part of the regular class seating.

- Avoid transitions, physical relocation, changes in schedule, and disruptions.

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instructions.

- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with all daily instructions.

- When you ask an AD/HD student a question, first say the student's name and then pause for a few seconds as a signal for him/her to pay attention.

- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner.

Learning Disabilities

Most people know, or are taught, at an early age, how to process information and develop an organised plan or strategy when confronted with a problem, whether that problem is social, academic, or job related. Others find such cognitive processes quite difficult.

This neurological disorder causes difficulty in organising information received, remembering them, and expressing information and therefore affects a person's basic function such as reading, writing, comprehension, and reasoning. However, these students with learning disabilities can be taught effective learning strategies that will help them approach tasks more effectively.

Types of Learning Disabilities

- Dyslexia (inability to read).

- Dyscalcula (inability in math reasoning).

- Dysgraphia (difficulty with syntax that is arrangement of words in sentences).

- Visual and audio difficulties.

People with learning disabilities will generally experiences difficulties, in study skills, writing skills, oral skills, reading skills, math skills, and social skills.

When studying, these students may have difficulties organising their time and hence are unable to finish assignments on time, taking notes and following instructions. They often have difficulty spelling correctly and have frequent grammatically errors, which results in

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poor sentence structure and poor penmanship. If the teacher speaks too fast, they will have difficulty understanding the lesson and recalling the words. They are usually slow readers and sometimes have incorrect comprehension and poor retention. They sometimes confuse math symbols, as well as, have difficulty with concepts of time and money. Realising their inabilities result in low self-esteem, which greatly affects their social skills. Impulsive behaviour and disorientation in time may also accompany this disability.

Strategies

The following suggestions are given for working with students with learning disabilities:

- Always ask questions in a clarifying manner, and then have the students with learning disabilities describe his or her understanding of the questions.

- Use an overhead projector with an outline of the lesson or unit of the day.

- Reduce course load for student with learning disabilities.

- Provide clear photocopies of your notes and overhead transparencies, if the student benefits from such strategies.

- Provide students with chapter outlines or study guides that cue them to key points in their readings.

- Provide a detailed course syllabus before class begins.

- Ask questions in a way that helps the student gain confidence.

- Keep oral instructions logical and concise. Reinforce them with brief cue words. Repeat or re-word complicated directions.

- Frequently verbalise what is being written on the chalkboard.

- Eliminate classroom distractions such as, excessive noise, flickering lights, etc.

- Outline class presentations on the chalkboard or on an overhead transparency.

- Outline material to be covered during each class period.
(At the end of class, summarise the important segments of each presentation.)

- Establish the clarity of understanding that the student has about class assignments.

- Give assignments both in written and oral forms.

- Have more complex lessons recorded and available to the students with learning disabilities.

- Have practice exercises available for lessons, in case the student has problems.

- Have students with learning disabilities underline key words or directions on activity sheets (then review the sheets with them).

- Have complex homework assignments due in two or three days rather than on the next day.

- Pace instruction carefully to ensure clarity.

- Present new and or technical vocabulary on the chalkboard or overhead.

- Provide and teach memory associations (mnemonic strategies).

- Support one modality of presentation by following it with instruction and then use another modality.

- Talk distinctly and at a rate that the student with a learning disability can follow.

- Technical content should be presented in small incremental steps.

- Use plenty of examples, oral or otherwise, in order to make topics more relevant.

- Use straightforward instructions with step-by-step unambiguous terms. (Preferably, presented one at a time).

- Write legibly, use large type; do not clutter the chalkboard with non-current/non-relevant information.

- Use props to make narrative situations more vivid and clear.

- Assist the student, if necessary, in borrowing classmates' notes.

- Consider cross-age or peer tutoring if the student appears unable to keep up with the class pace or with complex subject matter. The more capable reader can help in summarising the essential points of the reading or in establishing the main idea of the reading.

Laboratory

- Clearly label equipment, tools, and materials. Colour code them for enhanced visual recognition.

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- Consider alternate activities/exercises that can be utilised with less difficulty for the student, but has the same or similar learning objectives.

- Make available cue cards or labels designating the steps of a procedure to expedite the mastering.

- Allow extended time for responses and the preparation and delivery of reports.

- In dealing with abstract concepts, use visual tools such as charts and graphs. Also, paraphrase and present them in specific terms, and sequence and illustrate them with concrete examples, personal experiences, or hands-on exercises.

- To minimise student anxiety, provide an individual orientation to the laboratory and equipment and give extra practice with tasks and equipment.

- Find areas of strength in the student's lab experiences and emphasize those as much as possible.

- Allow the students with learning disabilities the use of computers and spell checking programmes on assignments.

Reading

- Announce reading as well as assignments well in advance.

- Find materials paralleling the textbook, but written at a lower reading level. (Also, include activities that make the reading assignment more relevant.)

- Introduce simulations to make abstract content more concrete.

- Make lists of required readings available early and arrange to obtain texts on tape.

- Offer to read written material aloud, when necessary.

- Read aloud material that is written on the chalkboard and on the overhead transparencies.

- Review relevant material, preview the material to be presented, present the new material then summarise the material just presented.

- Suggest that the students use both visual and auditory senses when reading the text.

- Rely less on textbooks. Reading for students with learning disabilities may be slow and deliberate, and comprehension may be impaired for the student, particularly when dealing with large qualities of material. Comprehension and speed usually dramatically increase with the addition of auditory input.

- Spend more time on building background for the reading selections and creating a mental scheme for the organization of the text.

- Encourage students to practice using technical words in exchanges among peers.

- Choose books with a reduced number of difficult words, direct non-convoluted syntax, and passages that deliver clear meaning. Also, select readings that are organised by subheadings because this aids in the flow of ideas.

Group Interaction and Discussion

- Always ask questions in a clarifying manner, and then have the students with learning disabilities describe his or her understanding of the questions.

- Encourage questions during or after class to ensure that students with learning disabilities understand materials.

- Give individual conference to guide students with learning disabilities, to monitor progress and understanding of the assignment and of the course content.

- Give plenty of reinforcement when it is evident that the student with a learning disability is trying things that are made difficult by the disability.

- Have frequent question-and-answer sessions for students with learning disabilities.

Testing

- Avoid overly complicated language in examination questions and clearly separate items when spacing them on the exam sheet.

- Consider other forms of testing (oral, hands-on demonstration, open book etc). Some students with learning disabilities find that large print helps their processing ability.

- Consider the use of illustrations by the students with learning disabilities as an acceptable form of response to questions in lieu of written responses.

- Eliminate distractions while students are taking examinations.

- For students with perceptual problem, for whom transferring answers is especially difficult, avoid answer sheets, especially computer forms. Allow them to write answers (check or circle) on the test (or try to have them dictate their responses on a tape recorder).

- For students who have reading difficulties, have a proctor read the test to the student.

- For students with writing difficulties, have someone write the answers for them or use a tape recorder to take down the answers.

- Grant time extensions on examinations and written assignments when there are significant demands on reading and writing skills.

- If distractions are excessive, permit the students with learning disabilities to take examinations in a separate quiet room with a proctor.

- Provide study questions for exams that demonstrate the format along with the content of the exam.

- Review with the student how to proof read assignments and tests.

- Do not test material just presented or outcomes just produced, since for the student with learning disabilities, additional time is generally required to assimilate new knowledge and concepts.

- Permit the students with learning disabilities the use of a dictionary, thesaurus, or a calculator during tests.

- Provide computer with spell check/grammar/cut and paste features.

Source: Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities. Retrieved July 20, 2007 from http://www.as.wvu.edu/~scidis/learning.html.

Definition

Giftedness in young children refers to "precocity" a rapid rate of development in one or more realms. To some people, giftedness is purely academic and means earning all A's on report cards. But giftedness is more than developing skills faster or going through the developmental milestones earlier. Young gifted children are intensely curious, produce a constant stream of questions, learn quickly and remember easily, and think about the world differently than their age mates.

Heward and Orlansky (2000) defines Giftedness as cognitive (intellectual) superiority, creativity and motivation of sufficient magnitude to set the child apart from the vast majority of age-mates and make it possible for him or her to contribute something of particular value to society. It appears to involve both quantitative and qualitative differences in thinking.

Other terms used:

Precocity: Remarkable early development in specific areas, such as language, music or mathematical ability.

Insight: The ability to separate and or combine various pieces of information in new, creative and useful ways.

Genius: A word sometimes used to indicate a particular aptitude or capacity in any area; rare intellectual powers.

Creativity: The ability to express novel and useful ideas, to sense and elucidate new and important relationships, and to ask previously unthought of but crucial questions.

Methods of identifying the gifted

1.   Consulting with parents - Often parents are the first to notice their child's giftedness as they spend most time observing and interacting with them in a variety of contexts.

2.   Portfolios - represent a collection of products (e.g. assignments, paintings, drawings, stories, observations) from home, school or community.

3.   I.Q. testing - Administering intelligence test to determine a child's superior intelligence is one way of determining if a child is gifted.

Identifying Giftedness

Recognising giftedness is important because to persist, giftedness needs nurturing. One way of identifying gifted children is to focus on a range of behaviours that occur in daily conversation, activities and responses to learning opportunities in and around the classroom.

Characteristics common in gifted 4 - 6 year olds

- Express curiosity about many things.
- Ask thoughtful questions.
- Have extensive vocabularies and use complex sentence structure.
- Are able to express themselves well.
- Solve problems in unique ways.
- Have good memories.
- Exhibit unusual talent in art, music, or creative dramatics.
- Exhibit especially original imaginations.
- Use previously learned things in new contexts.
- Are usually able to order things in logical sequence.
- Discuss and elaborate on ideas.
- Are fast learners.
- Desire to work independently and take initiative.
- Exhibit wit and humour.
- Have sustained attention spans and are willing to persist on challenging tasks.
- Are very observant.
- Show talent in making up stories and telling them.
- Are interested in reading.

Educational Considerations

I.   Enrichment

Enrichment is an approach in which additional learning experiences are provided for students with special gifts or talents while they remain in the grade levels appropriate for their chronological ages. Administrative plans to modify the curriculum include:

- Enrichment in the classroom
- Use of consultant teachers
- Resource rooms
- Community mentors
- Independent study
- Special classes
- Special schools

II.   **Acceleration**

Acceleration is an approach in which students with special gifts or talents are placed in grade levels ahead of their age peers in one or more academic subjects.

Strategies

I.   **Creating a Learning Environment**

- Create a room that invites inquiry (pictures, books, areas for music, art, and a variety of materials).
- Use thematic instruction to connect content areas.
- Make a wide range of materials available.
- Arrange for activity centres for self-initiated projects.
- Have flexible seating arrangements.
- Offer attractive, lesson-related activity options for students who finish work early.
- Vary the atmosphere of the classroom through music, movement, mime, dance and singing.

II.   **Allow for flexible grouping. For gifted students, cluster groups where four or five gifted children work together, provide the most productive situation for learning.**

Guidelines for organising small groups:

- Provide variety in grouping (interests, complexity level of assignments, motivation).
- Offer choices of mates, topics and format of presentation.
- Create ground rules for operation of the group.
- Evaluate students individually, focus should be on individual learning rather than contribution to the group.
- Compact the curriculum, allow the students to choose activities or design activities related to current lesson that challenges their talents.
- Incorporate creative thinking and activities into daily lessons.

Source

Heward & Orlansky (2000) and Smutny (2000)

Recommended Instructional Strategies for Resource Room

The following are some recommended instructional strategies that can be used in the resource room programme.

1. Phonetic Instruction
2. Rebus Approach
3. Direct Instruction
4. Language Experience Approach
5. Self-Monitoring Strategies
6. Co-operative Learning
7. Study Skills
8. Behaviour Modification
9. Educational Games
10. Grouping

Rebus Approach

The rebus approach to reading and word recognition involves substitution of pictures for words in sentences to be read. Eventually, the word will be placed in the sentence in addition to the picture, and the picture dropped.

Direct Instruction

This is an instructional model in which the teacher transmits information directly to the students in a structured class time to attain clearly defined sets of objectives as efficiently as possible (Slavin, 2006). The following steps in a direct instruction lesson are suggested by Slavin (2006, p. 210):

1. **State learning objectives and orient students to the lesson:** Tell students what they will be learning and what performance will be expected of them. Whet students' appetites for the lesson by informing them how interesting, important, or personally relevant it will be to them.

2. **Review prerequisites:** Go over any skills or concepts students need in order to understand today's lesson.

3. **Present new material:** Teach the lesson, presenting information, giving examples, demonstrating concepts, and so on.

4. **Conduct learning probes**: Pose questions to students to assess their level of understanding and correct their misconceptions.

5. **Provide independent practice:** Give students an opportunity to practice new skills or use new information on their own.

6. **Assess performance and provide feedback:** Review independent practice work or give a quiz. Give feedback on correct answers, and reteach skills if necessary.

7. **Provide distributed practice and review:** Assign homework to provide distribution practice on the new material. In later lessons, review material and provide practice opportunities to increase the chances that students will remember what they learned and will be ready to apply it in different circumstances.

Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach is a method of reading instruction based on activities and stories developed from personal experiences of a learner. The steps involved in this approach are:

1. Student tells a story about a topic he/she is interesting in.   A story starter (pictures, a story title, or a story line) may be used as a motivator.

2. Student tells a brief story, and then writes it down. The story is not graded.

3. Teacher notes errors, and returns to student for correction.

4. Teacher reviews story with student assisting with spelling, looking up new words, capitalization and punctuation.

5. Student rewrites story until error free.

6. Student produces a neat copy to be added to his/her storybook.

Self-Monitoring Strategies

This strategy is used to improve on-task behaviour. It is designed for students who demonstrate attention problems, such as poor task orientation and an inability to complete worksheets. This strategy should not be used when a new topic is being introduced. Instead, it should be applied when the student is at the independent, drill-and-practice stage of learning. The following steps are applied.

1. The student is trained to ask him/herself the question, 'Was I paying attention?'

2. A recording instrument is designed, on which the student, indicates his/her response.

3. A timer, set at pre-set intervals, is used to alert student when he/she is to check his/her on task behaviour.

Co-operative Learning

Co-operative learning is a method of structuring small groups of non-disabled and disabled students so that the individuals achieve a learning goal through mutual planning and decision-making (Henley et al, 2006). The four steps to establishing co-operative learning groups are:

1.   The teacher selects members of each learning group. A typical group includes three to six students with no more that one student with a mild disability.

2.   The teacher directly teaches cooperative group skills. The teacher using this strategy must teach students how to work together as a team rather than as competitors. The following skills have to be taught and developed:

    ●   The ability to trust and work with others;
    ●   Good listening skills;
    ●   Acceptance and support of others;
    ●   The ability to resolve conflicts constructively (Henley et al, 2006).

3.   The teacher assigns cooperative group activities. This can be done using the following approaches:

    ●   The' Jigsaw' approach - the group is given an assignment, and each member has part of the materials needed to complete the task.

    ●   Each member of the group is assigned a role of responsibility in the group. For example, record keeper, reporter, and facilitator.

    ●   Roles should be rotated, allowing each student the opportunity to develop and acquire new leadership skills and self-confidence.

4.   The teacher evaluates group efforts. In cooperative groups, students learn that they sink or swim together. There are two levels of group assessment:

    ●   Did the group accomplish its goal?

    ●   How well did the group work together?

These can be done through averaging group scores on presentation, and tests. Other assessment strategies are, self-reporting by groups, and observer feedback on group dynamics.

Study Skills

The SQ3R Method - Reading Comprehension

    ●   Survey or scan the material: read the title, first paragraph, subheadings, last paragraph;

- Develop questions: change the title and subheadings into questions;
- Read the material: find answers to the questions;
- Recite both the questions and answers;
- Review the material: recite questions and answers daily.

The SQ3R Method - Math Problems

- Survey or scan the whole problem to determine what needs to be done
- Change the math problem into a series of questions;
- Determine the facts that need to be answered;
- Determine processes needed to answer the facts;
- Perform computation to solve the problem;
- Question the answer by checking the computation.

Glossary

Assessment refers to all activities that resource teachers use to obtain information about children's instructional needs. These include: administering, scoring and interpreting both norm- and criterion-referenced tests.

Behaviour management refers to a systematic approach to increase or decrease behaviours by a system of rewards and or punishment.

Budget refers to prudent planning and monitoring of funds allotted to the resource programme.

Contracts refer to a signed agreement between teacher and student to perform certain tasks assigned or behave in an appropriate manner.

Conference with parents refers to meetings held with parents to discuss students' progress and future plans for remediation.

Curriculum adaptation refers to changes that are made to the curriculum in order to facilitate a particular student, depending on their strengths and weaknesses.

Cursive is a form of handwriting that is characterized by the joining of letters.

Diagnostic teaching refers to a clinical approach to teaching individual students based on an assessment of the student.

Error analysis is the method of evaluating any deviation from the response expected to determine how the student may have arrived at the response given.

Evaluation is the process of appraising the resource room teacher and the programmes over a period of time.

Frustration level refers to the level at which a student makes more than the allowed errors for the particular level.

Goals refer to the general instructional tasks that are set for students to attain to over a specified period of time.

Grouping refers to the placing of a number of students together for the purpose of instruction; the students should have things in common or are functioning at the same level.

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Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written statement for a student with exceptionality that is developed, reviewed and revised on a regular basis.

In-Service training refers to training that is done while you are on the job.

Informal assessment refers to the assessment procedures without rigid administration, scoring and interpretation rules; includes criterion-referenced tests, task analysis, inventories and others.

Intelligence refers to the ability of an individual to understand and cope with the environment; generally assessed with intelligence or "IQ" tests that are measures of academic aptitude.

Learning centres are areas in the classroom that are arranged so that student/s can work independently on skills or tasks as they utilize pre-prepared packages or games that reinforce concepts previously taught.

Mainstreaming is the placing of students with disabilities within the regular education system of the school, particularly in the regular classroom.

Objectives are aims set by the teacher in planning instruction for students; they should be specific to the needs of the students.

Placement refers to the educational setting in which students who have been assessed are placed.

Remediation is the special teaching of students who have learning difficulties.

Resource teacher is usually a specialist teacher who works with students with learning difficulties and acts as a consultant to other teachers, providing materials and methods to help students experiencing difficulties in the regular classroom. The resource teacher works from a centralized resource room within a school where appropriate materials are housed.

Scheduling refers to the task of time-tabling designated times for students to attend the resource room for instruction in small groups or individually; it also includes set times for planning, assessment and consultation.

Screening is the process of testing or checking students to determine if they have a disorder.

Self-concept refers to the perceptions and feelings that students/persons have about themselves, self-concept is either positive or negative.

Standardised test is a test in which the administration, scoring and interpretation are standard or set; usually norm-referenced.

Task analysis is an informal assessment technique in which a task is broken into its essential components or sub-tasks.

Test refers to a sample of student behaviour collected under standard conditions.

Writing is expressive written language; it includes spelling, handwriting, usage and composition.

Written language includes the receptive skill - reading, and the expressive skill - writing.

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APPENDICES

Referral Agencies

- **Mico Child Assessment and Research in Education (C.A.R.E) Centre**

  5 Manhattan Road
  Kingston 5

  Telephone: 929-7720/754-4757

- **Jamaica Association for Children with Learning Disabilities**

  7 Leinster Road
  Kingston 5

  Telephone: 929-4341/929-4348/960-7314

- **Jamaica Association for the Deaf**

  Hope Estate
  Kingston 6

  Telephone: 927-1098

- **Jamaica Association on Mental Retardation**

  7 Golding Avenue
  Kingston 7

  Telephone: 977-0134

- **Dedicated to the Development of the Disabled (3D Projects)**

  14 Monk Street
  Spanish Town
  St. Catherine

  Telephone: 984-2840

- **Jamaica Society for the Blind**

  111 1/2 Old Hope Road
  Kingston 6

  Telephone: 927-3760/927-6757/927-6759/927-5269

Checklist for Social and Emotional Development

	Frequently	Not Frequently

I. Self Image
 	
A.   Makes "I can't" statements
B.   Reacts negatively to correction
C.   Gets frustrated easily
D.   Makes self-critical statements
E.   Integrity:
 	
      1.   Cheats
      2.   Tattles
      3.   Steals
      4.   Destroys property
 	
F.   Makes excessive physical complaints
G.   Takes responsibility for actions
H. Reacts appropriately to praise		

II. Social Interaction A. Seeks attention by acting immaturely: thumb sucking, baby talking, etc. B. Interacts negatively C. Fails to interact D. Initiates positive interaction E. Initiates negative interaction F. Reacts with anger, verbally G. Reacts with anger, physically III. Adult/Teacher Relationships A. Seeks attention by acting immaturely B. Excessively demands attention C. Reacts appropriately to teacher request D. Inappropriately reacts to authority figures IV. School Related Activities A. Attends to task B. Exhibits off-task behavior C. Interferes with the other students' learning D. Shows inflexibility to routine changes		

Note to teacher: This measure was designed to be used by teachers in any classroom to make them more aware of their students' behaviour. This list might help identify behaviours that otherwise might be overlooked or misunderstood. From here the teacher needs to take frequency count of identified behaviour, or in some other way further analyze the situation.

Individual Education Plan

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Age: _____

Class Teacher's Name: _____

Present Fuctioning Level	General Objectives	Special Objectives	Method of Evaluation	Date Achieved
Strengths				
Weaknesses				
Behavioural Observation				

N.B. Present levels of functioning should be stated for each subject/area targeted for remediation. For example: Reading, Mathematics, Writing, etc.

Lesson Plan Format

Subject

Level

Topic

Date

Duration

Aim

Objectives

Material

Activities

    1

    2

Evaluation (i)

    (ii)

Notes

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37 Arnold Road
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