EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT
FOR EAs

BUILDING STUDENT INDEPENDENCE

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The development of this curriculum package was completed by Susan Powell, PhD, Learning and Education Consultant, with support from SSEAC. It is part of an educational initiative developed in 2014 by SSEAC and offered to Education Assistants in BC. All materials are the property of SSEAC.

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Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Outlines

This learning option will focus on key strategies for facilitating student independence. Participants will examine the significance of student independence, the role of the education assistant in building student independence, as well as effective practices and strategies that support the development of student independence.

This learning option is designed for delivery over four sessions. Each session can be delivered in 3 hours. There are many opportunities for participants to actively engage in their learning with in class activities as well as activities for participants to take away and try in their classroom. This approach is in keeping with Best Practices for Professional Development (see Appendix B in the Instructor’s Handbook). The instructor will schedule breaks at appropriate times in the session.

A district may decide to deliver the sessions over a different time frame. As stated in Appendix B in the Handbook for Instructors, professional development has the best chance to be successful when presenters keep the participants actively engaged and involved with experiential and follow up activities. Therefore, should districts schedule learning options to be delivered in different time frames, instructors will need to consider the most appropriate way for participants to complete the applied and follow up activities, so that these principles of quality professional development are maintained.

All learning options in the SSEAC Education and Skills Development for Education Assistants Initiative have been developed using a Backward Planning Design adapted from the work of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Please see the next page for an overview of the curriculum design for Building Student Independence.

**Pre-reading for Participants:** none

**General Resources/Supplies:**
- Laptop / LCD projector / screen / internet connection
- Black board / chalk or whiteboard / nontoxic markers
- Felt pens
- Flip chart paper and painter’s tape
- Name tag / badges or tent cards
**Building Student Independence (12 hours)**

This learning option will focus on key strategies for facilitating student independence. Participants will examine the significance of student independence, the role of the education assistant in building student independence, as well as effective practices and strategies that support the development of student independence.

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**Summative Assessment:** Write a brief strength-based description of a student you are supporting. Outline an activity and the goals for greater independence. Describe and explain, in detail, approaches and strategies you would recommend an Education Assistant employ to intentionally support the student’s independence in this activity.
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session One

Required Teaching Resources:
- Tent Cards or Card Stock (one sheet for each person)
- Crayons or coloured pencils / felts
- Power Point: Building Student Independence
- “My name is” activity
- Word Splash list and definitions (for presenter only)
- Handouts:
  - Overview for Participants
  - Summative Assessment and Rubric
  - Power Point handout
  - Word Splash 3-2-1
  - The Golden Rule article
  - The Golden Rule reading response sheet
  - Asking Leading Questions for Building Student Independence

Administrative Materials:
- Attendance and Assessment Form
- Handbook for Instructor – become familiar with how participants might use the summative assessment
- Certificate of Completion
- Evaluation Forms

Have the words from the Word Splash document on the board or flip chart.

Begin PowerPoint (do not pass out ppt. handout yet. Let participants know you will do this later in the session).

Slides #2 and #3: Description and Outcomes
Key points:
- Purpose of the course
- This learning option is one of fourteen available to education assistants. Each school district determined which options should be delivered in their school district.
- Pathways to Post Secondary – critical to maintain a professional development portfolio (completion of summative assessment)
- Review attendance policy and relation to certificate of completion

Slide #4: Getting Connected / Introductions: have crayons on table and pass out the tent cards / card stock. Conduct the “My name is” activity.

Remember to create a name card for yourself and to introduce yourself. You may want to give a few brief biographical points about yourself at this time and how you are connected to the topic of the learning option.

Also let people know about refreshments and where the washrooms are located.
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session One

Slide #5: Activity: Word Splash
- Hand out: Word Splash 3-2-1
- Tell participants all the words have something to do with Building Student Independence
- Ask for a sampling from the “List 1 one word” statement and add to Word Splash
- Tell participants they will be re-looking at this list later in the session.

Slide #6: Social – ecological model of disability
- Contemporary view on disability
  - The field of disability has undergone significant changes in perceptions of, and supports of, individuals with disabilities. Several paradigm shifts have taken places as individuals with disabilities take their place in society. This evolution can be characterized as moving from isolation/segregation to integration to inclusion and now to empowerment and self-determination. Each shift has resulted in changes to language, supports and services, roles, options and possibilities. However, remnants of the past still influence the present – in our own thinking and in how supports and services are developed.
  - The isolation and segregation decades are predicated in the beliefs that people with disabilities are defined by their impairments or medical conditions. They are disempowered, dependent and need to be cured or fixed, controlled and looked after. Individuals are known as patients, cases or clients. The professional or helping expert is in charge. Individuals with disabilities vigorously reject this medical model, though that mindset and system still pervades today.
  - Perceptions influence how we think and approach the concept of Building Student Independence.

Slide #7: definition of disability
- The designation system in education is a categorical structure for funding purposes only – not a singular way to think about a person
- An impairment or condition is seen as only an attribute not the definition of a person
- People First language is best practice.

Slide #8: role of person with disability
- These are contemporary roles occupied by people with a range of disabilities, including intellectual disabilities.
- Building independence supports children/youth as they move into adulthood to occupy these roles and be more successful in their lives
- What is happening in school impacts a student’s future
Slide #9: Support Strategies
- Go back to the Word Splash activity and relate words to the information on social-ecological model of disability

Slide #10: 3 outcomes for all students in inclusive education
- Students with disabilities are attending school to learn, to make friends and to be part of the class and school. These outcomes are the reason why all students come to school. A disability does not change that desire and purpose.
- Ask participants to define student independence and record ideas on board

Slide #11: Student Independence
- Discuss their ideas in relation to this list

Slide #12: Student Independence
- Distribute ppt. hand out
- Building independence applies to all students and all contexts

Slide #13: Student Independence
- Independence impacts what future opportunities (next grade, jobs, extra curricular events, etc.) will be available to students

Slide #14: Student Independence
- Ask participants for more ideas

Slide #15: Student Independence
- Educators need to think about how their actions are impacting the development of student independence.
- Educators need to plan for independence – not just hope for!

Slide #16: Activity – The Golden Rule
- Handout article and reading response sheet. Have participants read and complete reading response sheet. Ask them to pay particular attention to those aspects that deal with student independence. Monitor time – may need to stop before every participant has completed the reading/writing.
- Remind students that from the late 1990s to date there has been a significant increase in the number of Education Assistants supporting students with disabilities in classrooms. There has now been some research on what is effective and what hinders students’ learning as a result of having an education assistant work with them. The research being referenced in this article is considered critical to understanding best practices for Education Assistants.
- The research outlines 8 key areas in which an education assistant is seen as negatively impacting a student’s learning, membership and participation.
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session One

- Discuss
  - Particular student situations described in the article: Jamie, Adam, Kirsten and Michael
  - The alternatives to side-to-side
  - Talking to a student and seeking their suggestions about support
  - Range of supports

Slide #17: Word Splash
- Return to Word Splash and discuss remaining words / ideas

Slide #18: Leading Questions
- Best practice for Building Student Independence includes the actions educators take
- Video will show an education assistant (paraprofessional) using questions as a way for students to think for themselves. Show: Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Classrooms – increasing student learning and independence (found on you tube; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMwaruBi3M4; 1:18 minutes)
- Hand out: Asking Leading Questions for Building Student Independence. Have participants think of times they were supporting students using questions and what happened. How could they use asking questions more effectively? (If time does not permit have participants complete this activity for homework.)

Next session will focus on a selection of best practices to support student independence.
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Two

Required Teaching Resources:
- Tent Cards or Card Stock (one sheet for each person)
- Crayons or coloured pencils / felts
- Internet connection
- Scissors and glue sticks
- PowerPoint: Building Student Independence: Best Practices
- “Would you rather…?” activity
- Handouts:
  - Power Point handout
  - Best Practices web and definitions (each participant needs one set of definitions) – presenter will need to cut the definitions into small strips or have participants do this for the cut and paste activity
  - Application of Best Practices
  - Choice Making at School
  - Self determination at School
  - Think of a student (profile and chart)
  - Student observation

Begin PowerPoint (do not pass out ppt. handout yet. Let participants know you will do this later in the session).

Slides #2: Getting re-connected
- Conduct the “Would you rather…?” activity.

Slide #3: The Goal!
- Briefly review content from session one
- Show the 2 minute you tube video: Cheryl & Morgan – Learning Independence (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyRQJBBVl7g; approximately 2 minutes)
- Remind participants that what actions/supports they are using with students today in activities, classes, grades impact future contemporary opportunities

Slide #4: Building on what we know and do already…
- This learning option is building on what education assistants may already be doing to support a student developing independence
- There is no one way to support student independence
- Intentional and systematic approaches, along with appropriate strategies are known to make a difference, and therefore are important for Educations Assistants to employ
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Two

- Pass out: Best Practice Web and direct participants to label each box with the words: other, EA proximity, self-monitoring, visual supports, self determination, embedded instruction, partial participation, adaptations, active engagement, strength based and least dangerous assumption.
- Pass out: Definitions and have participants place a definition with each word.
  - Put participants in pairs to discuss their placement of the definitions
  - Discuss the correct answers and have participants move their definitions around if necessary. Glue down.
  - Discuss “other” best practices that support student independence. Answers might include: instructional strategies, graphic organizers, assistive technology, devices, peer support, work systems, well designed, organized and labeled learning environments, reinforcers, etc.
- Pass out: Application of Best Practices - have participants write down a few examples of how the approach looks when it is being using appropriately to support student independence. Discuss as a group.
- Pass out: PowerPoint handout.
- Let participants know that this option will not focus on those best practices (they can been found in the other options). But will briefly discuss one best practice: Self Determination.

Slide #5: What is self-determination

- In 2009, the Waisman Center in the US conducted a study with Education Assistants and their understanding and use of self-determination strategies
- Michael Wehmeyer is the main thinker in this area
- There are many projects in schools (in US and Canada) with students with disabilities to support them developing this aspect of themselves as it has been shown to contribute to their independence

Slide #6: Self determination is …

- Is a concept that can be addressed with K students all the way to those students in high school and into adulthood
- Can be addressed with students of all abilities

Slide #7: Why is self-determination important?

- It fundamentally makes a difference to an individual’s life!
- Can be learned and there are opportunities that can be facilitated by educators
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Two

Slide #8: Self determination components
- All can be supported in all grades and across a range of disabilities
- May need to be adapted because of the age and ability of a student

Slides # 9 to #15 (brief descriptions of each of the components)

Slide #16 to #21 (strategies)
- Ask participants what they can add to these charts

Slide #22: Self-determination Opportunities from Environments
- EAs can work with teachers to create an environment that supports self-determination and thus student independence

Slide #23: Self determination in school
- Pass out: Choice Making at School. Discuss with the group.
- Pass out: Self determination at school.
  - Have participants complete – noting that they are only looking at the areas of choice making, decision making, problem solving and self management.
  - Have participants share with one or two others, or have a large group discussion about what they have noticed about self determination in schools.

Slide #24: Think of a student
- Pass out: Think of a student (profile and chart)
- Have participants complete
- Have participants share their chart with one other person
- Discuss as a group what people learned or will change based on the ideas column of the chart

For next session: Handout student observation sheet. Ask participants to fill it out and bring it to the next session. Observe the same student doing a few different activities. Check off the type of supports you are providing. If giving verbals, give a few examples of what you say. Describe the physical, visuals or any demonstrations you give. Record how the student responds in terms of independence – do they begin to do the task? Do they do they task? Do you have to keep repeating the type of help you are given? Do they do some of the task; if so, what do you do to keep them working? What could you try next time to support the student’s independence?
Required Teaching Resources:
- Tent Cards or Card Stock (one sheet for each person)
- Crayons or coloured pencils / felts
- Internet connection
- Power Point: Building Student Independence - Instruction Zone
- “Word Association” activity
- Handouts:
  - Power Point handout
  - Education Assistant Actions
  - Prompting Tips

Slides #2: Getting re-connected
- Conduct the “Word Association” activity.
- Hand out Power Point

Slide #3: Reflection
- “yes” responses will indicate that the student needs supports to develop independence
- strategies for the first 2 bullets will be part of this session (also remember the best practices from the previous session that also support independence in students)
- the last 2 bullets will be addressed in the last session

Slide #4: Working definition of independence
- student engages in the learning activity – instruction, support and adaptations may be needed
- student responds to teacher, cues in the environment, shape of the day, etc. with no or little involvement of education assistant

Slide #5: Find the mistake
- mistake: student begins work after the EA gives a direct verbal cue
- Cue: teacher is pointing / speaking to the class
- Cue: visual list on board
- What would have been better instructional support from the teacher? (might use student’s name, check-in with students) from the EA? (waiting for student to respond, get student’s attention and refer to the visual list, asks, “What’s next?”)

Slide #6: The Lesson to be Learned
- The teacher is a natural cue
- The education assistant is “an accommodation”; additional personnel brought into to provide support – it is key for education assistant to support students to respond, on their own, to natural cues
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Three

Slides #7 to #9: Natural Cues
- Ask participants for other examples from school and the community

Slide #10: Cues
- Ask participants for examples

Slide #11: Verbal Cues
- Ask participants for examples

Slide #12: Non-verbal cues
- Seek responses from the whole group

Slide #13: Principles of Effective Instructional Cues
- Key is that the instruction is given once, and with wait time, that the student will respond
- Constant and repeated use of instructions is now about prompting not an instructional cue

Slide #14: Principles of Effective Instructional Cues
- Be directive – state what you want a student to do
- The phrase: Do you want to get out your math text? Is not appropriate. Why not? (gives students a choice when there isn’t really one. If they say “no” then what?; unclear to student what is expected…)
- Educators often talk too much or give rambling instructions – work on be precise and succinct

Slide #15: Principles of Effective Cues
- Follow MISGO: move in, squat, and get out

Slide #16: What are prompts?
- Not intended that the same type of prompt will be used constantly to support a student
- Need to observe our own actions and words, along with what is happening with a student, to determine how to proceed with prompting

Slide #17: When do you prompt?
- The instruction = natural cue
- Wait for response
- Prompt (only to the degree needed)
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Three

Slide #18: Many varieties of prompts
- Clarify any type that needs additional info
- Ask participants for examples or provide examples

Slide #19: Physical Prompts

Slide #20: Hand washing with prompts

Slide #21: Gestural prompts

Slide #22: Visual Prompts

Slide #24: Verbal Prompts

Slide #24: Modeling

Slide #25: Physical Prompts

Slide #26: Education Assistant Actions #1
- Hand out: Education Assistant Actions
- Ask participants to use the student observation sheet they completed after the last session.
- Briefly describe the activity in the first column.
- Based on what they have heard so far in the session, what could they do to support increased independence in the student they observed? Record their ideas in the first column that says, “I will…”

Slide #27: Types of Prompts
- Arranged in this order or hierarchy for a purpose
- Working from the bottom to the top is about going from the most help to the least help
- Working from the top to the bottom is about going from the least help to more help
- Within each prompt there are gradients (to be discussed in the last session)

Slide #28: When do you prompt?
- Once the natural cue, usually given by the teacher, but sometimes by the EA, wait for the student to respond
- Then determine what type of prompt to give (this should change and fade over time)
- The student’s response will help you decide on what to do next to support the student – more time, a different prompt, or the same type of prompt but more intensive or direct version

**Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Three**

**Slide #29: Prompting**
- Used appropriately, prompts should change as the student develops
- Being intentional about the use of prompts will guide the EA and support the development of independence in a student

**Slide #30: Prompting**
- Many purposes
- Ask participants: In your student observations what is the goal for the student?

**Slide #31: Prompting**

**Slide #32: Prompt Hierarchy**

**Slide #33: Most-to-least prompts**

**Slide #34: Least-to-most prompts**

**Slide #35: Video (time permitting or use as a review in the next session)**
- Watch Introduction to Prompting (SAAC Media; 6 ½ minutes; [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq3j8zIzRD8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq3j8zIzRD8)) or
- ABA Autism Training Ch.3 Prompting (14 minutes; [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDijJfKHMvQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDijJfKHMvQ))
- Discuss videos

**Slide #36: Education Assistant Actions #2**
- Based on what they have heard so far in the session, what could they do to support increased independence in the student they observed? Record their ideas in the second column that says, “I will…”

**Slide #37: Keys to Success**

**Slide #38: The Downside of Prompts**
- Prompts are very effective in supporting students, HOWEVER, as stated in the previous slide there are issues and key actions Education Assistants need to engage in as to prevent prompt dependency or learned helplessness

**Slide #39: Prompt dependency**

**Slide #40: What is prompt dependency?**
Slide #41: The student is thinking:

**Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Three**

Slide #42: Prompt dependency examples

Slide #43: Prompt dependency examples

Slide #44: Fading prompts
- 4 key ways to fade
- need to be intentional
- listen and observe your own actions, and the student’s responses, as both will guide you about the type of prompt needed

Slide #45: Graduated Guidance
- often effective with physical tasks

Slide #46: Time Delay (aka Wait Time)

Slide #47: Wait Time / Time Delay
- the amount of time to wait is based on the student and observations you have made in terms of student responses

Slide #48: Time Delay / Wait Time

Slide #49: Education Assistant Actions #3
- Based on what they have heard so far in the session, what could they do to support increased independence in the student they observed? Record their ideas in the third column that says, “I will…”

Slides #50 and #51: 10 Ways to Prompt without talking
- Along with waiting is the practice of working / supporting a student without talking…This increases independence: student has to do their own thinking; student learns to respond to the natural cues, etc.

Hand out: Prompting Tips (summary of session)

Remind participants about their summative assessment and when its due.
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Four

Required Teaching Resources:
- Tent Cards or Card Stock (one sheet for each person)
- Crayons or coloured pencils / felts
- Internet connection
- Power Point: Building Student Independence - Strategies that work
- “School” activity and alphabet tiles
- Handouts:
  - Power point handout
  - Concept chart (graphic organizer)
  - Evaluation form

Collect summative assessment. Conduct any administrative tasks related to returning the assessments.

Slides #2: Staying connected
- Conduct the “School Activity” activity
- Hand out PowerPoint

Slide #3: Working definition of independence
- Review

Slide #4: Types of Prompts
- Review

Slide #5: Video
- Introduction to Prompting (SAAC Media; 6 ½ minutes; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq3j8zIZRD8) or
- ABA Autism Training Ch.3 Prompting (14 minutes; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDiJjKHMVQ ) or
- Strategies for Success – prompt hierarchy (http://www.bridgeschool.org/transition/strategies_success/prompt_hier.php); a series of small segments that can be shown separately or as one video
- Discuss videos

Slide #6: Prompting Hierarchy
- Review

Slide #7: What prompts is the adult demonstrating?
- Possible responses: partial physical, visual

Slide #8: Prompt dependency
- Review
Slide #9: How can this visual prompt systematically be faded?
- Visuals = procedural script and outline on placemat
- Fading = making visuals smaller and words on script larger; reducing what is outlined on the placemat. Where would you start – why?

Slide #10: Fading Prompts
- Key to minimizing prompt dependency
- One way is to use a prompt in a less intensive way: shadowing, gentle touch rather than a firm grip

Slide #11: Gradients within a prompt
- What are examples of high, moderate and low gestures?
- May wish to demonstrate the following:
  - High = point directly to the answer
  - Moderate = point in the general direction where an answer can be found or where you want a person to do
  - Low = point from afar (your physical proximity is distant from the student or response)
- Other examples?

Slide #12: Gradients within a prompt
- What are examples of high, moderate and low verbal prompts?
- May wish to demonstrate the following:
  - High = direct “Pick up the brush.”
  - Moderate = “What do you do once you have finished your journal?”
  - Low = indirect “What’s next.”
- Other examples?

Slide #13: Gradients within a prompt
- What are examples of high, moderate and low Visuals?
- May wish to demonstrate the following:
  - High = objects or photos of steps; large size of visual with small print
  - Moderate = drawing of steps; print is getting larger and image/drawing getting smaller
  - Low = several steps chunked together; one main symbol to represent a step
- Other examples?
Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Four

Slide #14: Gradients within a prompt
- What are examples of high, moderate and low Modeling?
- May wish to demonstrate the following:
  - High = full demonstration of step(s)
  - Moderate = partial demonstration
  - Low = small portion of demonstration
- Other examples?

Slide #15: Gradients within a prompt
- What are examples of high, moderate and low Physical Prompts?
- May wish to demonstrate the following:
  - High = full physical guidance with firm hold (intensity); hand over hand
  - Moderate = medium intensity with hold / touch; prompt from wrist or forearm area
  - Low = tap on shoulder; minimal touch
- Other examples?

Slide #16: Top 10 tips
- Review

Slide #17: Only prompt when …
- Review

Slide #18: And finally, don’t forget to …
- Will spend some more time on self-monitoring

Slide #19: What type of prompt is this educator demonstrating?
- Gesture – high to moderate
- Knowing that this student usually gets the correct information when she prompts to this degree, how could this educator begin to fade her gestures?

Slide #20: What type of prompt is this educator demonstrating?
- Non verbal
  - Checking without talking = pat on the back, thumbs up, check mark on paper, mark on a reinforcement chart

Slide #21: How can these prompts be faded?
- Physical proximity = gradually create most distance (work from the side, work at the next desk, etc.)
• Verbal prompts = indirect, models, have student explain and insert correction when necessary

**Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Four**

**Slide #22: Reflection**
- The last two bullets refer to the idea of self-monitoring; or a student managing, observing and commenting about their own learning / behaviour

**Slide #23: Self Management**
- 3 components
- will look at self monitoring

**Slide #24: Self management vs. Educator Control**
- ask participants to connect this to the broader concept: Building Student Independence

**Slide #25: Steps to Teaching Self Monitoring**
- note it is important to fade, remembering this is a process and may take time. The goal is to have the student follow the natural cue: teacher instructions, a class chart, etc....

**Slide #26: Student …**
- has an active role
- Education Assistant may create self-monitoring chart and will instruct student to learn how to use it. All levels of prompts / fading fit here as student is taught to use the system.

**Slide #27: Self-monitoring**
- Can be used by K students
- Can be adapted for the particular needs of a student

**Slide #28: Self-monitoring**
- Engage participants in discussing adaptations
- Engage participants in describing any self-monitoring examples they are using

**Slide #29: Self monitoring examples**

**Slide #30: Self monitoring examples**

**Slide #31: Activity**

**Slide #32: Bringing it all together**
- Hand out Concept Map
- Have participants put a main idea in each of the boxes with 1-3 supporting details / strategies for that idea (think about all the sessions)
- Can do as a class, small group or individually

**Building Student Independence (12 hours) - Session Four**

**Slide #33: Evaluation**
- Pass out and collect
- Mail evaluation form and instructor feedback form to: John Malcolmson, CUPE, B.C. Regional Office, #500-4940 Canada Way, Burnaby BC V5G 4T3

Collect summative assignments and ensure arrangements have been made to return them to participants, as they will need it for possible Prior Learning Assessments at public post-secondary training programs for Education Assistants. Once summative assessments have been evaluated then those participants who are eligible for a Certificate of Completion will have it sent to them (by the instructor).