FULL COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS help teachers, parents and therapists apply structured teaching techniques to classroom and home environments, making group learning experiences meaningful for students with autism. Tasks Galore: Making Groups Meaningful, the third book in the Tasks Galore series, offers new ideas on how to create and manage meaningful group activities in a variety of settings.Your professional and personal experience in working with exceptional children and adults in a variety of settings makes activities more meaningful and enjoyable for everyone. The authors have more than 65 years of combined experience.

Parents of children with autism, teachers, therapists and anyone else who supports structured teaching techniques will benefit from the practical ideas found in this book. Whether you are a professional in the field of education, or a parent or caregiver of children with special needs, you can apply the techniques described in the book to make your own world more meaningful and enjoyable for all involved.

Visit our website: www.tasksgalore.com

© Copyright 2005. All rights reserved worldwide.
The photographs used in Tasks Galore—Making Groups Meaningful are for illustration only and, thus, do not necessarily reflect the function level of the students appearing therein.

Copyright 2005, Laurie Eckenrode, Pat Fennell, Kathy Hearsey
Library of Congress Control Number: 2005926210

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Conventions. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Law, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the authors.

All marketing and publishing rights are reserved by:

Now published and distributed by: Outside The Box Learning Resources Ltd.

www.otb.ie/tasks-galore
Acknowledgments

The spirit of the people who work with students with special needs continually rejuvenates us. For this book, it was our
pleasure to work with music teacher Bo Reece, P.E. teacher Lynn Bitting, dance teacher Jennifer Eacret and her teaching
intern April Smith and teaching assistant Heidi Robillard. Their care and talents were ever-present and evident for all to
see. We especially thank Beth Reynolds, Karen Beavers, Catherine Faherty and Jane Mather who generously shared their
ideas so we could learn from them. As the team of people who supports and encourages us grows, we continue to benefit from
the skills of those who were with us from the outset: our teammate Carolyn Perry-Jones, our cheerleaders David and Kat
Moncol, our graphics consultant Michelle Jordy, our editor John Barton and our friends at the TEACCH Autism Program, which
provides commendable services to people with autism spectrum disorders and their families.

Finally, we acknowledge our students. Nothing is more radiant than their smiles when they are having fun in a meaningful
group. We hope the joy of what we do, the respect for those we teach and the desires to help are evident in this book.

About the Authors

Laurie Eckenrode, Pat Fennell and Kathy Hearsey are former teachers of students with special needs. Much of their work
has been serving in different capacities for TEACCH. Laurie taught in an exemplary structured teaching classroom that
she developed. This classroom served as a TEACCH training model. She now uses this expertise in her work as a classroom
consultant. Pat served as a psychoeducational therapist with the Chapel Hill TEACCH Clinic. Kathy continues her work as
a TEACCH therapist and was a former director of TEACCH's supported employment program. The three authors have
extensively trained parents and professionals in structured teaching methodology and have won many awards for their
achievements in the field of special education.
Table of contents

Introduction.................................................................4
Chapter 1: Structured teaching strategies give meaning to group learning..............5
Chapter 2: Visually structured routines make group expectations understandable........13
Chapter 3: Integrating students’ individualized goals makes groups meaningful........25
Chapter 4: Circle time.....................................................30
Chapter 5: Project groups...............................................37
Chapter 6: Movement groups..........................................49
Chapter 7: Music groups................................................58
Chapter 8: Parties............................................................61
Collage............................................................................69
Resources.........................................................................70
INTRODUCTION

To negotiate the world independently, we need to function in situations where there are others. We take our turn in the grocery line, share space in the elevator, sit near others in the theatre, wait to use gym equipment and so our day goes. By the time we enter kindergarten, we have learned many of the rules that govern group interactions. We are ready to be group learners. Playing and working with others have become satisfying parts of our lives.

On the other hand, if we are asked to participate without knowing the purpose of the group, would we be willing to sit still, remain near others and be quiet? What if the rules that govern group interactions do not make sense to us? Would we know what turn-taking is all about? What if we are asked to perform a task that our classmates know how to do, but we do not? Would group participation then be satisfying? We clarify many of these issues for students with special needs, especially those with autism spectrum disorders, by implementing within group settings:

♦ Structured teaching strategies
♦ Individual goals
♦ Consistent visual routines

The purpose of *Tasks Galore Making Groups Meaningful* is to give parents, teachers and therapists the skills and confidence to set up group opportunities for their children. We demonstrate strategies to make groups meaningful to students and to reinforce positive feelings about group learning. The first three chapters describe how structured teaching strategies, consistent routines and individualized educational goals apply to groups. The next four chapters discuss circle time, project-focused, movement and music groups and include pictures of actual tasks used during these types of group activities. The final chapter puts all the ideas together for organizing a successful party. Throughout the book, pictures accompany the text, further illustrating the elements to consider when designing groups.

We believe that including group times for students with special needs is very important. Once students know what their roles are and what to expect in a group setting, they usually adopt the appropriate group behaviors. Making groups understandable to our students means they feel competent. They learn to take pleasure in groups, finding that being around others is enjoyable and fun. Playing and working with others become satisfying parts of their lives.
CHAPTER ONE

Structured teaching strategies give meaning to group learning

Structured teaching strategies have proven helpful to students with autism spectrum disorders in teaching individual skills that they then use independently. When developing group activities, we use these same strategies that draw on the students' strengths of visual understanding and memory for routines. We search for visual and concrete ways to teach subtle and abstract skills associated with group learning. We organize learning situations for students with autism spectrum disorders around four aspects of structure:

1. Physical structure to define the space
2. Schedules to sequence the daily activities
3. Work systems or to-do lists to outline what and how much is to be done, the concept of finished and what comes next
4. Visual structure to clarify how to approach the task

We individualize these parts of structure to fit what each student understands.

Setting up group learning situations in visual ways and with procedures that become routines, help the student understand the purpose of the group. Each type of group situation will be slightly different. Therefore how the teacher, parent or therapist structures the situation will also differ. What guides us in our designs is our ability to take the perspective of these students, who understand best through what their eyes tell them. Whatever the group, we follow these structuring procedures on behalf of our students.

♦ When the students arrive at the place where the group activity takes place, we want the arrangement of the setting to define for them what will happen there (physical structure)
♦ We give them individualized visual information that tells them where to go (schedule cue)
♦ When the students take their places in the group, we want them to know what they are to do, whether they are making progress and when they will be finished (work system)
♦ When the students work on a task, we want them to look at the pieces of the task and have a sense of what they are to do (visual organization), recognize the significant detail (visual clarity) and know how to sequence the steps (visual instructions)

We will illustrate how individualizing these parts of structure look in practice by using the group example of circle time.

CHAPTER ONE

Structured teaching strategies give meaning to group learning

Structured teaching strategies have proven helpful to students with autism spectrum disorders in teaching individual skills that they then use independently. When developing group activities, we use these same strategies that draw on the students' strengths of visual understanding and memory for routines. We search for visual and concrete ways to teach subtle and abstract skills associated with group learning. We organize learning situations for students with autism spectrum disorders around four aspects of structure:

1. Physical structure to define the space
2. Schedules to sequence the daily activities
3. Work systems or to-do lists to outline what and how much is to be done, the concept of finished and what comes next
4. Visual structure to clarify how to approach the task

We individualize these parts of structure to fit what each student understands.

Setting up group learning situations in visual ways and with procedures that become routines, help the student understand the purpose of the group. Each type of group situation will be slightly different. Therefore how the teacher, parent or therapist structures the situation will also differ. What guides us in our designs is our ability to take the perspective of these students, who understand best through what their eyes tell them. Whatever the group, we follow these structuring procedures on behalf of our students.

♦ When the students arrive at the place where the group activity takes place, we want the arrangement of the setting to define for them what will happen there (physical structure)
♦ We give them individualized visual information that tells them where to go (schedule cue)
♦ When the students take their places in the group, we want them to know what they are to do, whether they are making progress and when they will be finished (work system)
♦ When the students work on a task, we want them to look at the pieces of the task and have a sense of what they are to do (visual organization), recognize the significant detail (visual clarity) and know how to sequence the steps (visual instructions)

We will illustrate how individualizing these parts of structure look in practice by using the group example of circle time.
Physical structure

The **physical structure** defines the space for the activity and clarifies where to sit and on what to focus. The students can look at the space and understand what is to happen there. The teacher’s thoughts and planning behind the physical structure minimize distractions.

*Seats face the board and the teacher sits at the top of the conical arrangement so the students’ eyes are drawn to her*

*Bookshelves provide boundaries for the activity space*
Some students might be able to understand taking turns with peers when their teacher posts a turn-taking board. This visually clarifies whose turn it is for each part of an activity. Some students understand the turn-taking concept when each student’s name card is displayed. After each child has his turn, his name card disappears.

Teacher holds name cards that easily become a to-do list of how many have turns. When all cards are gone, turn-taking is finished for that activity. Because there is no set order, there is an element of surprise.

The stick photographs indicate the sequence of the students’ turns. Turning the photograph around indicates that a student’s turn is finished.

Name cards indicate the sequence of the students’ turns and pocket contains whose turns are finished for that activity.

Some students might be able to understand taking turns with peers when their teacher posts a turn-taking board. This visually clarifies whose turn it is for each part of an activity. Some students understand the turn-taking concept when each student’s name card is displayed. After each child has his turn, his name card disappears.

Teacher holds name cards that easily become a to-do list of how many have turns. When all cards are gone, turn-taking is finished for that activity. Because there is no set order, there is an element of surprise.

The stick photographs indicate the sequence of the students’ turns. Turning the photograph around indicates that a student’s turn is finished.

Name cards indicate the sequence of the students’ turns and pocket contains whose turns are finished for that activity.
Some tasks based on a periodic theme use the theme as a means to address other skills.

Fine-motor shoebox task incorporates a transportation theme

Matching colored patterns using airplanes

Matching addition problem cars to the correct answer

Some tasks based on a theme teach skills and concepts directly related to the theme.

In their pretend play, students recognize the function of vehicles as they drive cars around a track

Clips picture of vehicle with its name

Sort vehicles that fly versus those that do not

Some tasks based on a periodic theme use the theme as a means to address other skills.

Fine-motor shoebox task incorporates a transportation theme

Matching colored patterns using airplanes

Matching addition problem cars to the correct answer

Some tasks based on a theme teach skills and concepts directly related to the theme.

In their pretend play, students recognize the function of vehicles as they drive cars around a track

Clips picture of vehicle with its name

Sort vehicles that fly versus those that do not
Physical Education - Scooters

Matching work system: pictured written card matches to can in corresponding scooter area

Visual cue highlights touching purple circle at one end and yellow circle at the other end of the scooter course.

Placing scooter wheels on either side of the rope provides student with boundaries for scooter course.

Hula Hoops™ clarify for students where to wait for their turn.

Student carries scooter and places it next to matching scooter for transition to the activity.

Student places a ring on the cone as a counting system for the number of laps with scooter.

Placing scooter wheels on either side of the rope provides student with boundaries for scooter course.

Student places a ring on the cone as a counting system for the number of laps with scooter.
Tasks Galore
Making Groups Meaningful

FULL COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS help teachers, parents and therapists apply structured teaching techniques to classroom groups and school specialties (music, dance and physical education), as well as to home parties.

Tasks Galore-Making Groups Meaningful, the third book in the Tasks Galore series, again draws on the authors’ experiences as teachers and therapists with Division TEACCH. Wanting to make the lives of people with communication challenges richly rewarding, the authors detail the following:
• Applying structured teaching strategies
• Individualizing skills
• Establishing flow between one-to-one and group learning
• Organizing curricula around themes

All of the above have helped them design successful group activities. Examples illustrate how students learn concepts, construct projects, make music, exercise and simply have fun in group settings.

The authors have more than 65 years of combined experience working with exceptional children and adults in a variety of settings. They have extensively trained professionals and parents around the world in structured teaching.

Visit our website:
www.tasksgalore.com

© Copyright 2005. All rights reserved worldwide