Old School

Kids at desks

In what environment does instructional time occur?

- Kids choose between desk or assigned rug spot
- Kids choose between desk or wherever in room they can hear you
- Kids can choose where to sit and have access to flexible seating supports: yoga ball, beanbag, wobble stool, laundry basket, cube chair, office chair, etc
- Kids can be outside in nature, or in a natural learning environment that pertains to the content of the lesson (i.e., field trip, etc)

sit silently

What is expected of students' bodies during instructional time?

- Involves concepts such as "whole body listening", criss-cross applesauce, hands in lap, etc
- Kids can sit silently in one of 3-5 assigned body positions (feet on floor, mermaid, kneeling, mountain, etc)
- Kids' bodies free to sit however they like, butts on seat or ground. Hands can fidget. Mouth may be asking questions, echoing/ whispering to self, or sharing thoughts.
- Bodies can lay down (+ all of the above)
- Kids can move around room while listening, bounce, flap, or stim. May have movement equipment such as balance board or small trampoline.

(without sensory supports)

What environmental supports exist for students during instructional time?

- Kids can use designated tools for fidgeting or moving at their desk
  - Hand tools (pop-its, doodling, etc)
  - Body tools (wiggle cushion, wobble stool, etc)
  - Foot tools (Theraband, kickbar desk, etc)
- Fidget tools have a list of their own rules & expectations (e.g., time limit, # of tools allowed)
- Fidget tools are explained to kids & kids trusted to use them according to their needs
- Sensory space available in room for calming, soothing, settling
- Separate sensory spaces available in room for moving/ fidgeting + calming

while adult teaches

How is instruction delivered?

- Adult lectures, occasionally pausing to ask questions with "right" answers
- Adult leads group discussion, Q&A from students and adult
- Group discusses a topic with adult facilitating
- Group explores a material or an idea with sensory and motor/kinesthetic components to learning

on adult's directed topic

What source decides what information will be presented?

- Adult allows children to comment on how their interests relate to adult topic
- Adult relates known interests of children to main topic
- Children explore topics they're interested in, guided by an involved adult
- "Living curriculum" where interest drives information learned

until adult is done.

How and when do transitions occur from instructional to independent work time?

- Adult-directed breaks are allowed when children tire
- Adult preemptively anticipates when children will need breaks
- Kids can advocate for own breaks
- Kids can take a break, move to new topic, or continue work on a topic they care about

Then, kids work seated at desks

In what environment does independent work occur?

- Kids can work sitting at desk or standing beside desk
- Kids can work at desk or alternate designated places in room
- Kids can work anywhere in room, with clipboards
- Kids can work/learn outdoors, or in nature

silently

What is expected of students' bodies during independent work time?

- With partner, can whisper
- With group, can discuss
- With soft music or white noise in room
- With headphones/ earplugs available

on written work

How is independent work demonstrated?

- Writing tools like speech-to-text or typing are available
- "Writing" is more broadly interpreted as "telling" or "explaining"; telling can be oral (to a scribe, to a video/audio recording) to demonstrate knowledge
- Other creative ways of demonstrating knowledge are incorporated
  - Drawing
  - AAC
  - Make a diorama
  - Make a slideshow
  - Pointing/ choosing from options
  - Presentation
  - ...etc.

that the adult chose

What source decides what the independent work will be?

- Kids can choose between 2 topics or assignment options
- Kids can choose between multiple options
- Kids can work with teacher to relate teaching topic to personal passions

& assigned verbally.

What supports exist to explain expectations to students?

- Verbal & visual instructions given
- Adult models what is expected, i.e. write a sentence
- A visual model of what "finished" looks like exists in the learning space
- Enough adults are available to work as support and discussion partners with any learner who needs it

Or else be punished - recess removed, writing assigned, etc.

What is done if something isn't working as expected?

- Resolve never to take away recess as punishment. Resolve never to associate writing/ work with punishment
- Let go of punishment framework (even when framed as "consequences")
- Research alternate frameworks - collaborative/ proactive solutions
- See a struggling child as needing support and behavior as communicating that need
- Believe that even the "difficult" children want to be doing well
- Prioritize relationship with all children

Baby Steps by The Occuplaytional Therapist
@occuplaytional