



# DIRECTIONS

## *Technology in Special Education*

Vol. 8 , No. 10

June 2002

## Strategies to Work with Students with Oppositional Defiant Disorder

By Wendy Woolsey-Terrazas and Janice A. Chavez

*Source: The Council for Exceptional Children, CEC Today, Vol. 8 No 7  
February/March 2002*

Many teachers are “pulling their hair out” wondering if they will survive another day with a student with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). These students can be confrontational, disruptive, vindictive, and irritate the nerves of teachers who already encounter numerous challenges in the classroom. Unfortunately, teachers will face an increasing number of students with ODD and conduct disorders in our schools. Following are suggestions to assist teachers and parents in dealing with students who demonstrate oppositional defiant behaviors.

The most important point to remember is that the basic drive of a student with ODD is to resist control and manipulation from any adult. The more controlling an adult appears to be, the more oppositional the student becomes. Therefore, developing a behavior plan that considers these points will de-escalate the problem behaviors. Another point to remember is that these students need structure: rules, laws, rewards, punishment, love, guidance, and a sense of safety. A structured environment may be visualized as a corral that encircles the student, reminding him or her on an ongoing basis of acceptable behavior limits. The boundaries can be extended in time, but the gate should not be opened to total freedom without supervision until the student is ready.

In *Creative Strategies for Working with ODD Children and Adolescents*, Frank, Paget, and Bowm suggest several “Houdini techniques” to escape from situations teachers may encounter with students with ODD.

Happy Fathers  
Day !!!



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Some teacher behaviors that may add to power struggles in the classroom are:

- \*Threatening the student.
- \*Responding emotionally (i.e. getting angry or sarcastic).
- \*Confronting the student near their peers.
- \*Responding quickly.
- \*Remaining in the interaction too long.
- \*Bribes.
- \*Trying to “convince.”
- \*“Putting down” the student

### Diminish Power Struggles

Other strategies that may diminish power struggles include:

- \*Provide the student with simple directives and choices.
- \*State pre-determined consequences clearly before problems occur.
- \*Listen to the student before reacting.
- \*Give brief and direct instructions in a calm tone.
- \*Discuss the problem privately with the student.
- \*Walk away before the situation gets too “hot.”

### The Power Struggle Reduction Plan

The authors also propose a Power Struggle Reduction Plan to prevent confrontations with students with ODD. These strategies include:

- \*Talk and work with another teacher. Agree to take over for each other.
- \*Pre-determine your consequences and then follow through.
- \*Decide which rules are negotiable and which are non-negotiable.

\*When away from an incident, list all the things that hooked you into the power struggle.

\*“Walk-by” reinforcements should be brief, even non-verbal, and minimal attention should be drawn.

\*Whisper praises without bringing attention to the student.

\*Leave a positive note for the student to discover.

It is critical that the team approach be used in developing an intervention plan to be implemented in the school, home, and community. The team should be composed of not only teachers and other school professionals but also psychologists, psychiatrists, and other medical professionals who work together to insure the success of the student in a variety of settings. Listed below are strategies that have worked for us as parents, teachers, and team members. These strategies, when implemented in a consistent manner, have proven effective in teaching and parenting roles.

\*Don’t threaten unless you are willing to carry the threats out. Threatening students with ODD allows them to test your ability to follow through.

\*Clearly define the behaviors you expect. Students with ODD search for the “gray area” to justify their actions.

\*Clearly define the consequences of compliant and non-compliant behavior. This provides a direct relationship between the desired or undesired behavior and the respective consequence and prevents “fueling” an argument.

\*Always be firm and consistent. Students with ODD are constantly looking for an “open gate” and an

# DIRECTIONS

*Technology in Special Education*

ISSN: 1079-607X

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*DIRECTIONS: Technology in Special Education* is published 11 times per year by DREAMMS for Kids, Inc., (Developmental Research for the Effective Advancement of Memory and Motor Skills), a non-profit service agency and AT information clearinghouse. Annual home delivery subscription rate is \$14.95 U.S., \$17.95 Canadian, and \$29.95 Int'l. (U.S.\$). Single copies are available in the U.S. for \$2.50. Add \$1.00 for postage outside U.S.

Authors - We welcome editorial submissions. Please include name, address and phone. Submission will be returned with self addressed stamped envelope, if desired.

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opportunity to challenge your directives or justify their position.

\*During confrontations, do not allow your emotions to rule. With students with ODD, your anger demonstrates that they are in control. Behave like Clint Eastwood in *Dirty Harry*-stay cool, calm, and collected under the most challenging situation.

Although students with ODD can challenge teachers and parents, they can be our leaders of tomorrow. If directed in a positive manner, they are able to take control of a situation and make things happen. By building on the students' strengths and allowing them to achieve success, students with ODD will feel good about their capabilities and become productive members of society. .

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**Our new  
format is  
almost here!!!**

**Details in  
next month's  
issue!!!**

# New Center To Support Technology Innovation

**Maurice McInerney, Director and Stephanie Jackson, Deputy Director**

*Source: TAM CONNECTOR Volume 13, Number 5, December 2001*

Technology can support learning, independence, and high achievement for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. For example, technology can help students with disabilities gain access to the general education classroom, master basic academic skills, increase their personal independence and self-determination, and participate as active and engaged members of their classrooms, families, and communities. Moreover, special education technology benefits not only students with disabilities but also their non-disabled classmates, friends, and neighbors.

There are, unfortunately, several national challenges that limit families and educators in accessing information about proven technology practices. Students with disabilities need a wide range of different tools, but a thin commercial market limits research, development, and marketing investments by private companies. In addition, state and local systems, that could help families and educators find out about and use technology, are fragmented and underutilized. As a result, many students and families do not benefit from available technology.

To address such continuing challenges, the American Institutes for Research has been awarded \$4.75 million to establish a National Center to Support Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities. The Center's mission will be to support communities of technology practice that help families and educators to access and use technology to improve results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

The Center will provide the target audiences with nine integrated services. These include the development and maintenance of a Center web site with searchable databases, mailing lists, electronic consumer forums, and access to a newsletter, synthesis reports, streaming videos and other training applications. In addition, the Center will host an Annual Conference of Technology Grantees, including a demonstration of technology advances on Capitol Hill.

The Center will benefit from a consortium of nine partnering organizations and national experts who are knowledgeable about technology research and development, state and local systems, and training and technical assistance to families and educators. Conceptual support and feedback will be provided by a distinguished, 10 member Advisory Board. Contractual partners include the University of Kentucky, University of Delaware, and SUNY-Buffalo.

In addition, Johns Hopkins University, Michigan State University, and University of Utah will provide access to a Resource Bank that includes renowned technology researchers who will support the development of the Center's products. As strategic partners, the Council for Exceptional Children, National Association for State Directors of Special Education, and PACER Center will help establish communities of technology practice that will network and disseminate Center products nationally.

For more information, contact Stephanie Jackson at [sjackson@air.org](mailto:sjackson@air.org). §

# Increasing Independence in Inclusive Settings

By Subhashini Balagopal and Patti Young

Source: *Closing the Gap*, December 2001/January 2002, Volume 20 - Number 5

Picture a child with orthopedic impairments in a classroom, struggling to turn pages in a book, working hard to complete pencil/paper tasks, dictating to an adult aide, wishing he/she could do the work independently. Picture a child with low vision, struggling to see and complete a worksheet...having difficulty reading his/her own handwriting. Now picture these students completing these tasks independently on the computer. Do you need to purchase special software to increase their independence? Not necessarily if you have access to Windows software and Microsoft Office. A scanner in the building would also help.

Educators are struggling these days to find assistive technology options that are viable for students with disabilities, and often the options available are fairly expensive. In this article we will focus on utilizing Microsoft Office and Windows features to provide adaptations and increase our students' independence in school activities.

We have used these programs for students with orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, and learning disabilities to customize computer access and increase student participation and efficiency in completing school based tasks. The biggest advantage has been the cost efficiency of using software that is on every computer in our school buildings. We are able to utilize something that is readily available on all school computers, which means that our

students have access to what they need throughout the district. This software is also age-appropriate, utilized by a number of their peers as well as adults, and teaches them skills that will be beneficial as they get older. These tools are useful not just for students with special needs, but can be utilized by all students. Hence, this supports inclusion. Our presentation focused on giving professionals ideas for enhancing student participation in the general education classroom, by using technology that is already on most Windows compatible computers.

Here are some ideas for utilizing Microsoft Office and Windows. Simple, clear, step-by-step instructions are available at our Web site <[www.rcs.k12.in.us/eses/closing\\_the\\_gap.htm](http://www.rcs.k12.in.us/eses/closing_the_gap.htm)>.

## Windows accessibility features

These features are available on every computer using Microsoft Windows and make computer access easier for individuals with disabilities. A magnifier is available to enlarge what is viewed on the monitor. Font size, titles, menus, buttons, icons, scroll bars, mouse cursors, etc. can be adjusted for optimal viewing and efficient access. High-contrast options, captions with sounds/warnings, and special keyboard options are available.

## Form filling using Imaging for Windows

This is available on all Windows

computers and allows the user to scan in a document and mark annotations on it. We use this with students who have orthopedic impairments, so that they can scan in a worksheet, and use the annotation tools to complete their work independently. It allows the user to add, highlight and underline text. There is a rubber stamp feature, which enables the user to set as a rubber stamp, frequently used items such as name, date, subjects, etc. that a student might use for every paper he/she types. This gives a new level of independence to an individual who would otherwise dictate worksheet information to an adult. The Zoom options allow the user to view the worksheet in an enlarged format.

## Keyboard shortcuts

Shortcuts increase efficiency and decrease the need for mouse access to commonly used buttons and icons. Web sites for additional keyboard shortcut information are: [www.obs.org/cheatsheet/ieshortcut.htm](http://www.obs.org/cheatsheet/ieshortcut.htm) and [www.obs.org/cheatsheet/MSWord%20shortcutkeys.htm](http://www.obs.org/cheatsheet/MSWord%20shortcutkeys.htm).

## Creating Forms

The Forms toolbar in Microsoft Word helps the user to create a form that allows a student to easily tab through the fields to complete the document. Text fields, check box fields and drop down lists (to specify choices for the user to select) are inserted. It is possible to lock, or protect, the form so

that it cannot be modified. This is a useful tool for setting up worksheets, tests, multiple choice questions, letters, reports, etc. A number of general education teachers who have been shown this feature have started using it in their classrooms as well.

### Creating customized ruled paper

We use the Tables and Borders toolbar in Microsoft Word to set up ruled paper customized to the needs of specific students. The lines can be in different colors and thickness; grids are created to help with lining up numbers for math activities; and enlarged graph paper is produced effortlessly for students who need them. Samples of ruled paper that we have created are available to download from our Web site.

### Using Print Screen

This enables the user to take snapshots of images on the computer monitor. We have used this to set up simple instructions for students and staff for using new software. It is also useful for importing pictures into communication books/overlays.

### Creating clickable PowerPoint lessons

For teachers who are always looking for interesting cause and effect software, and other software for teaching various skills, PowerPoint is a very simple and effective means of creating computer activities. Graphics, sound, and animation can be added to make learning fun for students. Our students use these activities with a mouse, touch windows, trackballs, etc. The biggest advantage of this is that

any activity created by teachers can be copied and shared with colleagues, parents, and others who can use them by saving the activity as a show. The 'Pack and Go' feature on this program also makes it easy to save the activity on a disk to use on a computer (perhaps in the student's house) that does not have PowerPoint installed on it. Older students who are learning to use PowerPoint in computer education classes can work on setting up activities on different topics for teachers to use in their classrooms.

All the ideas listed above evolved from evaluating the needs of our students and attempting to use existing software to meet these needs. We saw the potential of using word processing and presentation software programs for adapting activities to help students with disabilities feel successful at school and increase their independence. The use of these powerful tools is limited only by your creativity. Some students may need additional hardware such as trackballs, touch windows, expanded keyboards, switches, and scanners to utilize the software.

For more information, contact Subhashini Balagopal, Teacher for Students with Orthopedic and Visual Impairments, Richmond Community Schools, Special Services Office, 707 Crestdale Dr., Richmond, IN 47374; Phone 765-973-3496; E-mail <subhab@rcs.k12.in.us>; or Patti Young, Exceptional Student Education Support, Richmond Community Schools, 300 Hub Etchison Parkway, Richmond, IN 47374; Phone: 765-973-3300; E-mail <pattiy@rcs.k12.in.us>. §

Closing The Gap, *Computer Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation*, is published bi-monthly. For more information concerning this exceptional publication go to: [www.closingthegap.com](http://www.closingthegap.com).

## HalfthePlanet News

### HalfthePlanet Foundation Releases TechAccess Resource Directory

HalfthePlanet Foundation today released a new *TechAccess Resource Directory*, the result of a survey (conducted over the past year by the group) of national level programs to identify existing projects working to ensure that information and electronic technology is accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. The survey also aimed to identify current gaps and overlaps in programming and federal funding.

### ADVANCING INDEPENDENCE: MODERNIZING MEDICARE AND MEDICAID (AIMMM)

The mission of AIMMM is to advocate aggressively for Medicare, Medicaid and related reforms that enhance the health, independence and productivity of Americans with disabilities. For more information concerning AIMMM, visit our website at <http://halftheplanet.com>.

### SOURCEABILITY CD-ROM - A "MUST HAVE" ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE!

SourceAbility is the most comprehensive collection of accessibility resources available with Fair Housing, ADA and Section 504 resources all on one easy-to-navigate CD-ROM. For a free demonstration go to <http://www.sourceability.org/htppreview.htm>. *HalfthePlanet Foundation will receive a portion of the proceeds from your sale.*

For more on the above stories, visit <http://www.halfthplanet.com> §

# Traveling Buddies

## Linking Elementary Classrooms to the Internet

by Tammy Payton

Source: *The Catalyst*, Winter 2001, Volume 18 #2

Child-to-child projects have assumed tremendous new significance since September 11, promising long-term benefits for everyone involved. So we are delighted to present a step-by-step account of how to set up a travel buddy project, by educator Tammy Payton. Travel buddies are not new to *The Catalyst*, as we have enjoyed following Cheryl Vitali's international adventurers to many countries, most recently Australia, Ecuador, Holland, Japan, and South Africa.

We found this article on the Classroom Connect website, with many Internet references. Vigilant editors at Classroom Connect noted recently that some links were no longer functioning, and they asked the author to prepare a revision, (as yet unfinished). We felt that, even with fewer links, the article would enable teachers to get a good start on a project of their own. Since the revision will be published online, this article is a teaser. Check out "Travel Buddies" and more on the Classroom Connect website and discover the wealth of material available at this resource: <http://connectedteacher.classroom.com> newsletter [travbuds.as](http://travbuds.as)

*The following information is taken from the December '98/January '99 issue of the Classroom Connect Newsletter and is reprinted with permission of Classroom Connect. <http://www.classroom.com>*

From the Classroom Connect Newsletter.

Find out how to kick off a Traveling Buddy project. You'll learn how to choose a traveling buddy to represent your students, compose a project timeline, choose activities that you can complete with participating schools, plus post a successful online call for participation. Educator Tammy Payton is your guide.

Looking for a fun and easy collaborative project that your entire elementary school can participate in? Traveling Buddies have the power to link primary-level classrooms together using the power of the Internet and postal mail.

Traveling Buddies are stuffed animals that are sent via postal mail to participating schools or individual classrooms. While the buddy is visiting the school, the host students communicate with the original sender via the Internet. Students take their new buddy on field trips around their region, take photographs, and share artwork and writings about their buddy's experiences. These materials can be mounted on a project Web site or sent via email. Finally, the buddy is packed up again and sent on its way to the next classroom on its itinerary!

### Choosing Your Traveling Buddy

The first step in creating this project is to decide what kind of stuffed animal you want to represent your school or classroom. Choose your school mascot or some endangered animal and compare what endangered animals are

indigenous to the areas that they'll be visiting.

You should choose an animal that represents something special about your class or school. Your class or school may be focused on a particular theme for that school year, such as dinosaurs or bears. You may have had a special visitor or well-known person that visited your school. Choose a traveling buddy that showcases this special event. For example, you may have had an Australian visitor and you want to share that experience with others, so you may choose a koala or kangaroo.

### Ideas for Collaborative Activities

It's easy to turn your Traveling Buddies project into a set of multidisciplinary classroom units. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

1. *Geography*: Have all participating schools post a wall map and track the Traveling Buddy as it goes from place to place.
2. *Social Studies*: What is special about your community? What is the size of your community? What is your community known for? Suggest to participating schools that they include travel brochures or something published by their local Chamber of Commerce.
3. *Communication Skills*: Consider setting up a time to meet each other online. There are a variety of

Web-based chat rooms and video - and audioconferencing tools at your disposal.

4. *Exchange Memorabilia:* Many buddies accumulate memorabilia as they travel, including pencils, school pins/badges, key chains, cup holders, and more. As your buddy visits other schools and collects memorabilia, why not include your own memorabilia package? Pack and label a little thank-you package that depicts the traveling buddy's home base, including area postcards, travel brochures, local rocks, school badges, and state/national flags.

5. *Include a Journal:* If you're planning to communicate through email, this activity is optional. Begin the journal yourself so that participating schools can see a suggested format they can use. Begin

your journal by telling about the farewell party your class or school had when your traveling buddy was first mailed.

6. *Compare and Contrast Activities:* As your traveling buddy visits classrooms, you can do many creative activities that will engage all groups of students.

a. Create graphs where data is compared and contrasted between both schools. Post these graphs next to the wall map that shows the students where the data is coming from. This data can be between only the host school and the current school of the Traveling Buddy, or, it can be a comparative study of all of the schools that are participating. If you are collecting data that would be of interest to all participating schools, this information can be forwarded to

everyone by email or posted on a Web page. Some comparative ideas include:

- \*What is your favorite school subject?
- \*What is your favorite snack?
- \*How do you go to school?
- \*What is your favorite TV program?
- \*How are your communities different or similar?

b. Conduct simple research projects that are determined by the nature or kind of traveling buddy you chose to send. If your traveling buddy is an endangered animal, both classes can research what endangered animal is indigenous to the area that it is visiting.

c. If your traveling buddy reflects a specific theme for your class or school that year, have each participating school develop a lesson on that theme and share it the week that the buddy arrives. All participating schools can

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receive and use that lesson for that week.

d. If your traveling buddy is a result of a special visitor or you are studying a special author, all participating schools can develop an activity that is centered around a book written by that author and shared with each other.

7. *Exchange Photographs of Your Schools:* There are two ways that photographs can be exchanged. If participating schools have cameras that can digitize pictures or if they can scan pictures, they can send them as attachments with an email message to the host school. Sending pictures in GIF or JPG is the best format. Or you can include a disposable camera.

8. *Exchange Postcards:* When the traveling buddy arrives at the participating schools, have them send your class at postcard that depicts their local area. Be sure to include your postal mail address in your packet. §

*Look for Part 2 next month!!*

## RJ Cooper

Are you looking for special software and hardware products that are geared to individuals with special needs? A great place to begin your quest is with RJ Cooper!

He has traveled to three continents and given over 1,000 lectures with one goal in mind: *'to have the learner do something new and exciting that he/she has not done before'*. He continues to travel and speak, doing free 'Road Trips', enhancing the lives of those persons who benefit from his talent, commitment, and products.

A visit to his site is pure pleasure! You are first met with an entertaining logo, and if you look very close, the top of the screen takes you to a page that gives you the ability to have the entire website translated into other languages!!!

It gets even easier!!

To make sure that you don't miss any of his fantastic products, he provides a free CD that lists all his 'stuff'.

After that you will find pictures and descriptions of some of the products. Some examples are:



**Switcheroo - inexpensive button/interface**



**Bigkeys-plus-lx - LARGE, over-size, alternative keyboards.**

There's even a section of 'Free Stuff'!!!

We urge you to visit RJ Cooper and Associates and check out the products and services provided at <http://rjcooper.com>. You can even sign up for E-News, and he will keep you posted on all his latest products as they become available. §



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