

Effective Literacy Instruction

for Students with Moderate
or Severe Disabilities

by

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The case studies in the book represent real situations, but the names and identifying details of the children and family members have been changed to protect their privacy. Activities involving individuals with disabilities and teachers or therapists are used by permission.

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Kay Osborn, a veteran special education teacher and supervisor for the Albuquerque Public Schools-University of New Mexico Intern Program, modified the “Weekend Report” designed by Mayer-Johnson, Inc. to fit the needs of her students with severe disabilities and their families. She used a checklist sent home each Friday that asked families to mark the activities their child participated in over the weekend. (The checklist and an example of the fill-in-the-blank journal format are included in Figure 8.5. The form uses a menu of choices and takes only a couple of minutes for busy families to complete.) The families returned the form on Mondays, and Kay used the information as a basis for the students’ journals for that day. Some students completed a fill-in-the-blank form, either by tracing the answer after Kay wrote it or by writing it independently or with a model. Other students selected picture symbols from a menu of choices to complete the same questions. The activity was valuable in maintaining home–school communication and allowed students with the most intensive support needs to participate in creating a message using written communication.

Figure 8.4. Description of how one teacher used a fill-in-the-blank journal for students with moderate or severe disabilities.

Family Checklist for Fill-in-the-Blank Journal Writing

Name: _____

Parents: To help your child tell the class what she or he did over the weekend, please check off the child's weekend activities. Additional information can be noted on the back. Please send this to school on Monday morning. Thank you!

This weekend I went to

<input type="checkbox"/> the mall	<input type="checkbox"/> Kmart	<input type="checkbox"/> grocery store	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> toy store	<input type="checkbox"/> church	<input type="checkbox"/> bowling	<input type="checkbox"/> movies
<input type="checkbox"/> grandparents	<input type="checkbox"/> hospital/doctor	<input type="checkbox"/> playground	<input type="checkbox"/> post office
<input type="checkbox"/> lake	<input type="checkbox"/> friend's house	<input type="checkbox"/> party	<input type="checkbox"/> zoo
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____			

I went with

<input type="checkbox"/> mom	<input type="checkbox"/> dad	<input type="checkbox"/> family	<input type="checkbox"/> friend
<input type="checkbox"/> grandmother	<input type="checkbox"/> grandfather	<input type="checkbox"/> brother	<input type="checkbox"/> sister
<input type="checkbox"/> aunt/uncle	<input type="checkbox"/> cousin	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____	

I ate at

<input type="checkbox"/> McDonald's	<input type="checkbox"/> Burger King	<input type="checkbox"/> Wendy's	<input type="checkbox"/> Taco Bell
<input type="checkbox"/> Pizza Hut	<input type="checkbox"/> KFC	<input type="checkbox"/> Denny's	<input type="checkbox"/> Sonic
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____			

Fill-in-the-Blank Journal format (filled in by the student based on the information from the Family Checklist above):

Name: _____ Date: _____

I went to _____

I went with _____

I had a _____

Figure 8.5. Example of family checklist and fill-in-the-blank journal format.

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