

Success Education:

Differentiated Curriculum Strategies
for ESL and Learning Disabled Students

Steve P. Jefferson and Bettye Sweet

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FOREWORD

Many educators have experienced problems teaching second language learners and learning disabled students. Schools have struggled to provide an adequate curriculum that can address the needs of these students. In addition, today's students are identified as having difficult learning under the traditional school system. Research has demonstrated that second language learners and learning disabled students perform better when visual aides and differentiated instruction models are provided. As we move into the new millennium educators must learn how to teacher children that have a variety of learning and language barriers. The current traditional school textbooks and curriculum is obsolete and have been used by many schools to meet the needs of these students.

One concept of educational reform has been differentiated instruction. This type of instruction addresses the problem with a "one-size-fit-all" school system that has been around for almost four decades. Most educators are finding themselves waiving in their efforts to provide a curriculum that is differentiated but also meets district and state standards. This problem has created a classroom atmosphere that is not beneficial to both the students and the teacher.

Many of today's school textbooks have been formatted the same way for the last two decades. The publishers of these books have pages enriched with dialogue and few visual aides. The students that do well with these books normally have a good understanding of the English language and no learning disabilities. But what happens when students with learning and language barriers are introducing to these textbooks? Learning is difficult and the teaching process is not successful. Many times, the students

and teachers are both searching for viable answers that make this process more “realistic” and profitable.

Another problem encountered by teachers and students is can learning become fun again. In the past, school and learning was not viewed as a boring task that created conflict in the classroom. Teachers enjoyed teaching and students were engaged in activities that made learning fun. However, back then school was viewed as an institution that provided the student an opportunity to explore the unknown world.

As we reflect on schools four decades ago, students were able to take field trips to unfamiliar locations, films were shown about different places in the world, and teachers were excited about the art of teaching. School was an exciting place to go and teachers were proud to promote learning. In addition, the world was less complicated and complex. The family structure and how people engaged in entertainment did not offer as many diverse options as today. It is not uncommon to find elementary children interacting with portable video games on their way to school only to be greeted with an outdated texts and lesson written on an obsolete chalk board. It is no wonder why many of our today’s children find school boring and irrelevant.

Educators are finding themselves in situations that are hard to grasp. How can I make my lessons exciting and yet meet the vigorous standards required by the district and state? How can I engage all students, no matter what their abilities to learn, in daily classroom lessons and meet each student’s needs? These are questions that every teacher who encounters problems with second language and learning disabled students may contemplate.

Successful classrooms are full of energy and excitement. Teachers are entertaining and challenge students on a daily basis. In addition, students are held accountable for their own learning and the teacher empowers them to become avid learners. These classrooms produce a positive environment that keep students focused on the process of learning. But how can students with language and learning barriers become a part of this scenario? The answer to this question is in curriculum choices. Most educators are not supported with adequate resources to address the needs of these students. It is almost impossible to teach language barriers and learning disabled students without the proper resources. The curriculum choices of many educators have not identified that all students do not meet the “one-size-fit-all” standard and need additional resources. This material will assist these students in comprehension and make assignments more relevant.

Today’s educators must become aware that the learning disabled and second language learner student population is growing. This population can no longer stay segregated on the school’s campus. Our society more than ever must find viable ways to address the academic endeavors of this population. This problem is only the tip of the iceberg when we think of the diversity in our current workforce. But before we can fix this problem, educators must have access to resources that can create a more “real world setting” and teach all students no matter the preferred learning modality.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Steve Jefferson, Ed.D. has served the Los Angeles School District in the capacity of a Special Education Teacher and Department Chairman at Centennial High School and as a Resource Specialist/Coordinator in the Special Education Department at Jefferson High School.

His responsibilities in special education involved developing teacher training programs and training teachers on behavior intervention strategies for students labeled emotionally disturbed. He also instructed teachers on the techniques of writing IEP's (Individualized Educational Plans) and writing behavioral plans.

He made a great impact in creating networks of community organizations for behavioral support services and coordinated community projects for improving the behavior of children with learning disabilities. After extension research in the area of differentiates instruction, Dr. Jefferson has written a book entitled, *Charter Schools: A Descriptive Study of Empowerment within the Operation of Charter Schools*. This is a comprehensive guide for parents, teachers, and community leaders interested in educational reform.

Dr. Jefferson received his bachelor of arts degree in liberal studies from San Diego State University, his masters of arts degree in special education from National University, and his doctorate in organization leadership from the University of La Verne.

Additional accomplishments include guest lecturing at National University on Special Education in Secondary Schools and as a presenter of behavioral intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities. Dr. Jefferson has also taught and developed teacher training programs on behavior intervention strategies for students labeled emotionally disturbed in the Los Angeles Unified School District. He has been a guest lecturer on differentiated instruction and learning styles at secondary schools and has conducted workshops on brain research at various school districts and colleges in Los Angeles.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Betty Sweet, M.S. background is as colorful as the myriad of characters that she writes about in *Growing Up LA Style: Byron*, the first of her 5 multi-cultural book series. She was motivated to write these books based on research that showed that inner-city youth needed reading material that was relevant to them and their life experiences. At the end of each chapter are thought and discussion provoking questions that reinforces comprehension and extends the learning experience. The Teacher's Manual is used as the base for the Success Ed Program.

Sweet received her bachelor of arts degree in business from the University of Redlands, her bachelor of science degree in psychology from the Union Institute, and her master of science degree in curriculum and instruction from National University.

Sweet began her teaching career at 49th Street Elementary School and after three years, went to Jefferson High School, where she taught English and ESL for five years. When she was off-track, she did long-term substituting with children with behavioral problems and learning disabilities. Through her experience with working with this student population, she learned techniques of teaching that were engaging and meaningful. Students demonstrated higher test scores after being with her for only three weeks. Sweet contends that her use of the three f's (being fair, fun, and firm) is the major source of her success.

During her teaching career she has won numerous awards and honors. In 1991, the Steve Harvey Morning Show at 100.3 FM, The Beat Radio, nominated her as a finalist for the Best High School Teacher in Los Angeles Award. The following year she was nominated for The Walt Disney Teacher Award. In addition, the LA Times have covered her outstanding developmental writing program for inner-city youths. This media coverage highlighted the problems encountered by inner city with the lack of resources to enter their work in the publishing field.

Ms. Sweet has also appeared on CBS Evening News about her Book Writing Club and has been chosen as one of CBS Television's Hometown Hero. Sweet's Publishing Company publishes student's works and uses the proceeds to generate additional money for them to attend college.

THOUGHTS THAT MAKE ONE SAY, “HMMM”

“In a way, differentiated instruction is just shaking up the classroom so it’s a better fit for more kids. But to be a little bit more precise, it means that the teacher anticipates the differences in students’ readiness, interests, and learning profiles; and, as a result of that, creates different learning options or different paths to learning so that students have the opportunity to learn as much as they can, as deeply as they can, but without experiencing anxiety because the assignments are too taxing, or boredom because they are not challenging enough.”
Carol Ann Tomlinson

“The more we define ‘raising standards’ as raising scores on norm-referenced, skills-based, multiple choice tests, the more we try to fill passive vessels full of facts instead of helping kids engage with ideas.”
Alfie Kahn

“The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”
Alvin Toffler

“We cannot teach children well if we do not know them well. At its heart, personalized learning requires profound shifts in our thinking about education and schooling.”
TheodoreSizer

“The aim is clear. Each child – each of the young – should be able to advance to full capacity in accordance with general and specific ability and aptitude.”

Paul Brandwein

“There are three types of knowledge. Knowledge that students should find worth being familiar with, important knowledge and skills, and enduring understandings that will anchor the course or unit.”
Wiggins and McTighe

PHILOSOPHY

The *Success Ed Intercession/Summer Program* is Socratic in its philosophy. Our ultimate goal is not just to educate children, but rather to impart wisdom by demanding critical thinking. One goal of an educator is to teach wisdom, which is applied knowledge. *Success Ed* accomplishes this by incorporating life skills and the students' prior knowledge within the curriculum.

Our present education system is failing because we are not preparing our children to become analytic thinkers. We teach our students how to pass standardized tests rather than how to pass life. *Success Ed* scaffolds learning based on individual experiences and learning styles.

The *Success Ed Intercession/Summer Program* does not focus on behavioral problems and class-management strategies because when a child is adequately engaged in the learning process, **you have minimal behavioral problems.** *Success Ed's* endeavor is for all students to learn logic, concepts, and critical thinking and problem solving skills, using the tools of their own creativity and intuition, rather than the rules and the memorized systems and conclusions of an already failing system.

Children usually respond to teachers in one of two ways: either they praise them with admiration or seek admiration from them. How? When they are preparing class assignments and homework and without behavior problems, children express admiration. When students are misbehaving, they are seeking attention because they may not understand the lesson or they might be having personal problems. A proper way to address these concerns is to pull them aside and talk to them – give them the love and attention that they are seeking.

In order for educators to gain the trust that is necessary to achieve this end, students must be provided an atmosphere that nurtures low affective filters. When students are in an environment where they speak their minds freely without fear of reprisal or judgment, they open up their minds and are encouraged to explore many opportunities.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the *Success Ed Intercession/Summer Program* to bring fun, innovative learning experiences to English as a Second Language learners and special education students, and to families in their community. Furthermore, our mission is to provide multiple modalities within all of our lessons. With the help of strategies from Gardener’s theory on Multiple Intelligences, this program provides opportunities for students to showcase their talents and to demonstrate proficiency using musical, interpersonal, spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, logical/mathematical, and linguistic means.

Our mission is rooted in the vision of the purposes of public schooling in a political and social democracy. One such purpose, for example, is what Benjamin Barber has called “civic literacy”:

This is the fundamental literacy by which we live in a civil society. It encompasses the competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act with deliberation in a pluralistic world, and the empathy to identify sufficiently with others to live with them despite conflicts of interests and differences in character.

Thus, we believe public education should be a moral endeavor that shapes every aspect of living in this democratic, capitalistic existence. It is a fact that we are educating future minds of this nation. The survival of a political democracy depends on a participating and educated citizenry. Teachers, parents, welfare workers, children, and other community agencies must seek to develop, cooperatively, viable plans of action.

The schools, community, and family are not as connected as they should be. Improving all of these areas requires the will and the work to make them all better. *Success Ed*’s mission is to tap into the individual talents of each student and connect the talents and the skills with viable dreams, vocations, and careers. As we all know, a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Another charge of the *Success Ed* program is to include families and the community in the assessment of the Finals Exhibitions, in which students design and present their final projects.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY - NO CHILD CAN SUCCEED WITHOUT THEM

It takes a village to raise a child is a true statement. In order for a child to be successful, he needs the support of his family, community, and school. This program concentrates on providing innovative, quality education to students; it also provides a vehicle for students to showcase their work to their parents and the community – not only during Parent Conference, but also monthly Show and Tell performances for the parents' involvement.

There have been many programs and workshops targeting the special education sector and the second language learners of our educational system. Research has shown that these students are still falling far below proficiency. Why are so many of these programs failing?

FAMILY

The answer is simple. *There are no family ties!* In order for a child to be successful, it is imperative that she has the support of her family, school, and the community. We have found that behavioral problems are one of the biggest concerns within the Special Ed system. In many cases, the same student who demonstrates inappropriate behavior in class can be silenced by a chilling stare from his mother. It is important that you have a strong rapport with the child's guardian so that she can be silenced by the simple gesture of your picking up the cell phone and calling the home. They'll get the message and you can continue teaching your class.

This program offers strategies for establishing relationships with the family. At our model school, we started off the year with a five-hour retreat and barbecue. As in the business and political world, most decisions are made around meals. Eating together is a very social occasion that brings people together in an amiable setting

We called parents and asked them to donate a dish, dessert, or drinks and to bring the entire family. We had an overwhelming response because the parents were made to feel like they were important and a part of something special and exciting. There was a castle jumper for the small children and game booths were set up. There was a lip-sync contest with cash prizes in which the parents, students, teachers, and administrators all competed.

The event included four workshops. A team of parents, teachers, and students facilitated the workshops. Parents and students alike were able to air their grievances, ask questions, and get answers. Events such as this will help to get you on the road to *Success Ed*.

Monthly field trips can be planned by students to include the staff and family. Most students have working parents and because of the district's limited budget, a social gathering should be planned once a month in celebration of birthdays (including parents and staff), or an educational field trip can be held.

A PTA-type of program should be implemented. In addition, parents could become an integral part of the decision-making practices for curriculum and event planning and for fund-raising through elected positions.

As a part of event planning, students are able to work with a purpose and become proficient in many of the standards by designing invitations, thank-you cards, programs, and so on.

COMMUNITY

It is important that students are involved in their community. As a result, the community will be asked to donate food and so forth to affairs. Consequently, students will get experience in writing invitations, donation letters and designing cards for community businesses.

The community will be invited to Finals Exhibitions, art shows, productions, and sales. In addition, students will market their computer expertise and showcase their skills in website set-up and design.

SCHOOL

Once the family and the community are involved, the next step is to get the students involved in learning. This is where the *Success Ed* program *really* begins.

The *Success Ed Intercession/Summer Program* offers four weeks (eighty hours) of pre-planned lessons that are aligned with the District and State Standards. Research and experience show that unless a subject is relevant, it is hard to engage the student.

The program begins with Sweet's book, *Growing Up L.A. Style: Byron*. The teachers who have used the book in their classrooms have had nothing but rave reviews about how it stimulated animated discussions in

their classes. They even reported how the essay writing improved because of the relevancy of the topics. At the end of the book, students were asked to write a letter to “Byron,” thereby incorporating letter-writing skills. Plus, they have the added incentive that the incarcerated protagonist will answer their letter. Studies have shown that when students do something with a purpose in mind, they are better able to achieve academic success.

Success Ed's curriculum also includes an illustrated classic, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antigone*, Edgar Allen Poe's *Annabelle Lee*, *Animal Farm*, *The Color Purple*, and *King Tutankhamun*.

The *Success Ed Intercession/Summer Program* offers many hours of learning games, honing computer skills, creative writing activities, and fun and innovative family activities.

CURRICULUM KIT INCLUDES:

Instructional Manual
20 copies of *Byron*
20 copies of *Julius Caesar Illustrated Classics*
The Color Purple video
Poster Sheets for Cooperative Group Sharing
Poster Boards (white) for Movie Posters
20 Journal Booklets
Colored Markers
2 boxes of Crayons
10 pairs of Scissors
1 box Transparencies
Antonym Card Set
Synonym Card Set
Homonym Card Set
Rhyming Card Set
Catch Phrase Game
Sight Word Bingo
Junior Monopoly
Laminated Standards Wheel
20 Student Standards Charts
Laminated Grading Poster
20 Student Copies of all Handouts and Quizzes
Candy/Popcorn/Cheetos

STANDARDS 4 GAMES

The games in the Curriculum Kit offer not only hours of fun, but excellent “hands-on” learning experiences; therefore students will be anxiously awaiting **Beat the Gamesters Fridays**.

Most students love competition. Some of the games pit one group against the other and others pit student against student. Through the excitement of competing, students forget that they are actually learning. Below are the standards that are covered as students have the time of their lives.

CATCH PHRASE

Second language learners especially enjoy the Pyramid version of **Catch Phrase**. The game offers flexibility so that all students can participate because clues can be given in Spanish that elicit English answers. Watch out because the competition can get exciting and loud when the battle is between the sexes.

- Standard:** 1.3 – Clarify word meanings through the use of definition, example, restatement, or contrast.
- Standard:** E6b – Student exhibits an awareness of precise word choice and the power of imagery.
- Standard:** E5a – Student interprets the effect of literary devices such as figurative language, allusion, diction, dialogue, description, or dialogue.
- Standard:** E3b – The student participates in group meetings in which the student
- ◆ displays appropriate turn-taking behavior
 - ◆ actively solicits another person’s comments
 - ◆ divides labor so as to achieve the overall group goal.
- Standard:** E3c – Student engages the audience with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact.
- Standard:** E4-3c – Student observes the conventions of language during oral presentations.

SIGHT WORD BINGO

This game is great for quiet fun for the entire class. Prizes such as candy or quarters make this game exciting with its extrinsic rewards.

Standard: 1.0 – Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Students can relate to this game because they watch it on television, both in English and in Spanish. Students are each given a role and the fake money awards add excitement to this game.

Standard: 1.0 – Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development.

HOMONYM CARDS

This card game for 4-6 players matches homonyms. Vocabulary is extended by students adding new homonym word pairs.

Standard: 1.0 – Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development.

Standard: 1.3 – Clarify word meanings through the use of definition, example, restatement, or contrast.

Standard: 1.9 – Analyze the occasion and the interest of the audience and choose effective verbal and nonverbal techniques such as eye contact, gestures, and voice for presentations.

SYNONYM CARDS

This game for 4-6 players gives students practice with words that have similar meanings. Extended activities build vocabulary even further.

Standard: 1.0 – Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development.

Standard: 1.3 – Clarify word meanings through the use of definition, example, restatement, or contrast.

Standard: 1.9 – Analyze the occasion and the interest of the audience and choose effective verbal and nonverbal techniques such as eye contact, gestures, and voice for presentations.

ANTONYM CARDS

This card game with 4-6 players teaches words with opposite meanings. There are also extended vocabulary activities.

- Standard:** 1.0 – Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development.
- Standard:** 1.3 – Clarify word meanings through the use of definition, example, restatement, or contrast.
- Standard:** 1.9 – Analyze the occasion and the interest of the audience and choose effective verbal and nonverbal techniques such as eye contact, gestures, and voice for presentations.

RHYMING CARDS

This card game is great for second language students because of the pictures behind the words. Students practice rhyming words for poetry writing.

- Standard:** 1.0 – Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development.

MONOPOLY JUNIOR

Students will have fun playing this all-American game. This game gives students practice with life decisions.

- Standard:** E3b – The student participates in group meetings in which the student
- displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors
 - actively solicits another person's input
 - offers own opinion forcefully without dominating
 - responds appropriately to comments and questions
 - clarifies, illustrates, or expands on response when asked to do so
 - employs problem-solving techniques and strategies
 - divides labor so as to achieve the overall group goal efficiently.

THE GAME OF LIFE

This game for 4-8 players also offers fun-filled learning experiences where students' decisions imitate life.

- Standard:** **E3b** – The student participates in group meetings in which the student
- displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors
 - actively solicits another person's input
 - offers own opinion forcefully without dominating
 - responds appropriately to comments and questions
 - clarifies, illustrates, or expands on response when asked to do so
 - employs problem-solving techniques and strategies
 - divides labor so as to achieve the overall group goal efficiently.

CRANIUM CADOO

This is the all-new, outrageously fun game for 2 or more players designed especially for kids. With a variety of hilarious activities, Cranium Cadoo gets kids thinking, creating, giggling, and grinning as they try to get four tokens in a row to win. Whether they love to act, do puzzles, sketch, sculpt, or even crack secret codes, this game has something for everyone.

- Standard:** **E3b** – The student participates in group meetings in which the student
- displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors
 - actively solicits another person's input
 - offers own opinion forcefully without dominating
 - responds appropriately to comments and questions
 - clarifies, illustrates, or expands on response when asked to do so
 - employs problem-solving techniques and strategies
 - divides labor so as to achieve the overall group goal efficiently.
 -

TECHNOLOGY

Planning and accountability are priorities for most of today's U.S. educational technology leaders. In part, this is due to the No Child Left Behind Act signed into law by President Bush January 8, 2002. Under that legislation, districts and schools are required to track, evaluate, and increase student achievement.

In order for students to get the optimum results from this program, it is recommended that each classroom have at least **five computers in working condition.**

All final products must include the use of at least one form of technology. All essays and reports must be typed in order for student to receive optimum points.

Technology plays an important role in meeting and demonstrating competence and accountability. Districts can utilize online data management systems, for example, that not only display student test scores, but also link those scores to content standards and specific learning objectives. By analyzing results of assessments, teachers and administrators can pinpoint subjects that students are struggling to learn and teachers are struggling to teach.

If technology can contribute so much to student achievement, why do so many teachers fail to see the value? Part of the reason is that most teachers are not involved in technology planning, and simply are unaware of what the planning process involves. Technology leaders have been lax in communicating with teachers and teachers have been lax in trying to find out why district administrators and technology leaders put so much emphasis on technology planning.

The *Success Ed* program recognizes that this is the information age of technology. Technology permeates almost every aspect in the life of today's youth. From computer games to the Internet and everything in between, this is what the now generation is all about. The *Success Ed Intercession/Summer Program* weaves various components of the vast field of technology into its daily curriculum.

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING STYLES

Unlike a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum where all students are expected to learn the same material in the same way in the same amount of time, differentiated instruction provides options. This program uses an array of instructional strategies, including multiple texts and supplementary material, reality learning games, group investigations, and flexible evaluations.

The move toward differentiated teaching may appear to be a little overwhelming at first, but with the day-to-day lesson plans that even prep the next day’s lessons you can relax and engage students in learning. At times the noise volume may elevate, but you will get used to it, especially when you see and feel the excitement in the room.

Standard-driven districts are aware of differentiated instruction. As with standards that describe conceptual understanding, it is most unlikely that any single piece of work will demonstrate all parts of the standards. In fact, it is common for a single piece of work to relate to some aspects of one part of the standard. Thus, the standard can only be addressed by multiple pieces of evidence.

Even though the majority of students targeted by the *Success Ed* program are second language learners and students with learning and social disabilities, they possess a myriad of talents – from drawing to creating a musical masterpiece. Whatever their talent, *Success Ed* seeks to develop and nurture it. Many of the standards taught in this program address student accomplishments based on effort. The underlying message is if you invest the effort, you will meet the requirement.

Although much emphasis is based on the accomplishment of reading twenty-five books per year (which this program also promotes), *Success Ed* contends that development of personal talents must be construed broadly to encompass the character and competencies of fully educated human beings, capable of filling multiple roles in our society. Solely utilitarian or economic narratives should not control the purpose of learning. There is no

better preparation for the future than to cultivate the strengths and the talents of lifelong learning in the present.

TEACHING TO THE BEAT

Most teachers hope to find the perfect medium whereby their pedagogic tidbits are not only received by attentive, happy students, but are also constantly remembered and practiced in a non-English environment. On top of that, add subliminal reminders, which push teaching points deep into the subconscious so that students cannot actively dismiss them from their minds. It sounds too good to be true.

Whenever my students have free time, they always want to listen to music. Music videos amass billions of dollars because of the love people have for music. One of the most heartbreaking cuts in the public schools' curriculum has been in the music department.

It has been said that music soothes the savage beast. In India, the sweet notes from a flute mesmerize even the lowly snake and have him writhing to the music. Music stirs emotions – some good and some bad. Music has a sense all of its own. Just as the intoxicating aroma of an apple pie can conjure up pleasant memories of a happy childhood, so can the musical notes of a favorite tune.

Why is it that students who cannot remember three instructions in a row can remember all of the lyrics to a multitude of songs? Is it because music is the universal language? If so, then commercial songs could be that effective teaching medium we all have been searching for. The only problem is the copyright issue.

Reciting lyrics involves active listening skills and memorization skills. I would often ask students how many parts of speech there are. Out of twelve middle and high school classes questioned, only once did I get the desired answer of eight. I would then ask the students if they had ever heard of a singing group called the Beatles. Some would, and I would give a short history lesson about the Beatles.

I would ask them if they had ever heard of a song called *Eight Days a Week*. Then I'd ask them to tell me how many days are in a week. Of course the number is seven. I would tell them that the writer loved his girl so much that he needed another day in the week – thus the song, *Eight Days a Week*.

I would then sing the first two verses of the song:

Ooh I need your love girl,
Guess you know it's true
There's one thing I can say girl
Is that I need you.

Chorus
Oh, hold me, love me,
Hold me, love me
I ain't got nuthin' but love girl,
Eight days a day.

Eight days a week
I loveeee love you
Eight days a week
Is not enough to show I care.

Love you every day, girl
Always on my mind
One thing I can say, girl
Love you all the time

Chorus
Oh, hold me, love, me
Hold me, love me
Ain't got nuthin' but love girl

Ask the class to join in the refrain:

Eight days a week
Eight days a week

Ask the class, "How many parts of speech are there? After that, they never forget the answer to the question: How many parts of speech are there?"

Musical repetition provides an unexpected jolt to the memory, reawakening emotions and various linguistic concepts. How does it work? Teachers sow their pedagogic seeds, and DJs unwittingly nourish them, enabling them to embed themselves deeper and deeper into students' memories.

Every time a chosen song is heard, it has a gentle brainwashing effect, reminding the listener of the relevant teaching

points, regardless of time and place. This melodic nudge to the memory could be consolidated further if the listener sings in accompaniment, thereby practicing the relevant points of the lesson time and time again (Boarder, 2002). Repetition cannot be ignored as a viable learning tool for second language learners and students with learning disabilities because it hammers knowledge in!

Learning a musical instrument requires regular practice on a “little-and-often” basis. Language learning, too, would benefit from a similar approach, but this is not always possible. The English language is so vast that the chances of regularly hearing and practicing specific vocabulary and/or grammatical points once lessons have finished can be remote.

Commercial music not only reminds the listener of certain teaching points, but also permanently links those same points with any place where the songs are heard, whether at home, work, or play. Hence, places themselves become subliminal reminders of the song and the original lesson. That is why it is a good idea to play softly the music that students enjoy during their silent reading time. Listening to music provides a sense of well-being and happiness. When a student is happy, he or she is more receptive to anything, including learning.

The following songs and music help the learning process of the subjects that most students find boring. I have used these songs in my classroom and it was exciting to see the students come alive as they sang and clapped their hands to the beat of learning.

The following pages will provide hours of fun and song for your students. They include: *Comma Conjunction*, *Contractions*, *Double Trouble Teddy*, *Preposition Position*, *English Without Pronouns*, *All About Nouns*, and *Just Verb It*.