

# News Notes

A Newsletter for Teachers of Students with Significant  
Cognitive Disabilities  
Educational Equity for All



November 2017



## Readtopia is Live — Ready for Your Classroom!

### We Make Learning to Read *an Experience*

Readtopia™ is a comprehensive reading curriculum for middle and high school students with autism and other complex needs. It brings first-hand experiential learning into the classroom—teaching students standards-aligned social studies, ELA, and science content.

Our purpose is to bring first-hand **experiential learning** into the classroom, so students can *bridge the gap between learning through reading, and learning through experiencing*.

In so doing we tap students' natural learning capabilities, and channel them into reading capabilities so students can begin to more fully participate both in school and in life.

We take students down 1,000 feet in a submarine as we learn about oceanography.

We hear from Sacagawea to understand the journey Lewis and Clark faced heading west.

We bring students into a volcano in Iceland as a way to introduce them to the book *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

All of this is supported by authentic literature, phonics/early reading instruction, and informational text that builds foundational reading skills. Readtopia delivers the curriculum through thematic units that will help you transform classrooms into laboratories of experiential learning.

<http://donjohnston.com/readtopia/>

## Tips for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences

### Parent Teacher Conference Strategies

- Communicate With Parents Before a Conference Is Necessary
- Come to the Conference Prepared With Documentation
- Start the Conference With a Warm Greeting and an Agenda
- Begin and End on a Positive Note
- Dress and Act Professionally
- Include Someone Else in the Conference
- Be Attentive
- Avoid Eduspeak and Stay out of That Ivory Tower
- Think About Your Room Setup
- Be Prepared for Upset Parents

<https://goo.gl/Lw2adT>

Use parent conferences to discuss progress on IEP goals. This can help your annual IEP run much smoother. Maintain discussion about progress throughout year and in person at every progress reporting period.



## Instructional Management Tips for Teachers of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Tips for Highlighting the Most Important Concepts
- Tips for Providing Alternate Modes for Completing Assignments
- Tips for Preparing the Student
- Tips for Using Graphic and Visual Organizers
- Tips for Using Mnemonic Devices
- Tips for Increasing Time On Task
- Tips for Maximizing Attending During Whole-Class Instruction
- Tips for Preparing for Instructional and Classroom Transitions

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/004005990303500408?journalCode=txa>

EDUCATIONAL  
EQUITY FOR ALL  
..... Giving kids what they need to succeed.

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## FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH

# SensoryEdge



Gonge Tactile Discs - Set 1  
The **Tactile Discs** are an excellent choice for teachers and therapists. These discs help kids learn to discriminate between different

textures. The tactile discs, made of nice-to-touch rubber, contain five different tactile structures, each with its own color. At the same time, you're helping children develop the ability to describe sense impressions verbally.

Each of the five tactile structures can be found on a large disc for positioning on the floor, as well as on a small disc that the child will be able to hold in his or her hands.

<https://goo.gl/gGLaAi>

# Flocabulary

We help students master academic content while building core literacy skills through engagement, mastery and student creativity.

**Engage:** Educational hip-hop videos teach standards-based skills and content

**Master:** Activities, assessments and analytics develop skills and provide valuable learning insights for teachers

**Create:** Interactive tools get creative juices flowing as students write and perform their own educational raps

## Flocabulary 101

Tips & Tricks for Getting Started with Flocab

Join us for this 45-minute webinar as we share **best practices for using Flocabulary in your classroom.**

We'll cover everything from account activation to student data analysis.



<https://goo.gl/WoFXz8>

## ALTERNATIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION



Free Everyone Communicates Kit!

This is a challenge for parents, teachers and therapists who have children with the most significant disabilities and want them to get started communicating or need help getting kids started with communication. Your kit will include start up pages and step by step instruction for getting started with communication.

I want a **Free Everyone Communicates Kit!**

This kit comes with sample communication pages and step by step instructions to get started with communication today.

<http://creativecommunicating.com/creative-communicating/index.php/everyone-communicates/>

## WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<https://goo.gl/qyAZe4>

<https://goo.gl/Tk92pF>

<https://goo.gl/zLbHFc>



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# TeachTechTopia

Innovative teaching and learning solutions

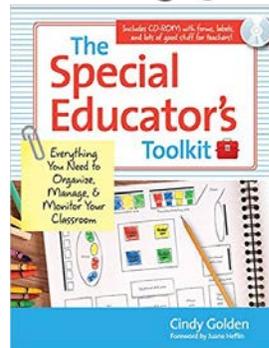
Teaching is an art, as is technology. Here

at [TeachTechTopia](#) we strive to combine both of them in an informational blog form, with tips, tricks, and news.

## 50 Free Open Courseware Classes for Special Education Teachers

- Mental Needs
- Physical Needs
- Using the Arts
- Child Development
- General Teaching

<http://mastersinspecialeducation.net/2010/50-free-open-courseware-classes-for-special-education-teachers/>



**The Special Educator's Toolkit: Everything You Need to Organize, Manage, and Monitor Your Classroom 1st Edition**

by [Cindy Golden Ed.D](#), [Juane Heflin](#)

Overwhelmed special educators: Reduce your stress and support student success with this practical toolkit for whole-classroom organization. A lifesaver for special educators in any K-12 setting, this book-and-CD set will help teachers expertly manage everything, from schedules and paperwork to student supports and behavior plans.