

Nicole-Hi, and welcome to the adaptation station podcast. This is your host, Nicole. I'm a former special education teacher and currently an ABA therapist at a private center. This podcast is filled with tips and tricks for not only being the best special education teacher. You can be in the classroom, but living the best life you can live outside of the classroom as well after all, I'm all about balance. Hope you guys are excited. Let's jump on it.

Welcome back to the podcast guys. And I'm super excited to have one of my very good friends, Ashley on the podcast. You've definitely heard her before. She's spectacular days, but I'll let her give you a little bit of her background.

Ashley-Hey everyone. I'm Ashley from spectacular days and I have, um, nine years in education. I had eight years in a self contained ID classroom, and I just completed my first year as an elementary inclusion teacher, primarily working with third grade students.

Nicole- And one of the things I love about Ashley and why I wanted to have her come on the podcast is I feel like she's great with math. If you've ever taken a look at her Instagram, she shares a lot of strategies and math is something that I absolutely love teaching now, but I didn't in the beginning because I struggled with math myself, and I didn't really know how to make it accessible for my students. But once I started using manipulatives and hands on materials, I started reaching my students who are visual learners, my students who were tactile learners, and it just, it became truly one of my favorite things to teach. So our whole podcast, it is going to be giving you some really simple strategies that not only you can use in the classroom, but you can help your parents use in the home if you're entering distance learning. So we'll just launch right into the first one. Ashley, tell us some of your brilliant ideas for making math more hands on.

Ashley- So making math hands-on is relatively easier than people I believe. Um, think it is you can use simple things that you already have in your home. Um, three of my favorite things to teach in a self contained classroom was money time, and then addition and subtraction problems, because you can do such a variety of things with them, especially with money, you getting play money or even real money. If you want to work with that, a lot of times real coins work better because you can see the differences in sizes. And I think kids catch on and can learn the differences between them easier when they can actually physically touch them and see them. Um, so that's one of the ways, um, I love teaching time to Judy clocks are great, but over distance learning, I, we were learning elapsed time in elementary school and I realized my kids didn't have a clock. So with the materials I had my house, which was paper, astrobrights, and a brass fastener. I made them all clocks and then distributed them to their house because I live relatively close. That's not always feasible for people, but a lot of parents probably have paper. If you only have white, you could color in the arrows to make them different. So there's a lot of different ways to make that engaging and learning. You can use paper plates and so many different resources just for time. Um, for addition and subtraction, there are so many different things you can do. You can use if your student loves cars, used cars. If you're a student, loves the color pink by pink cotton balls, um, or borrow them from a friend, or if, you know, a friend that has lots of small children and say, Hey, can I borrow a bunch of your figurines? You have, there are so many different ways to make it fun and engaging for the kids. Um, candy math was one of my favorites. If you don't have any allergies in your classroom, we did like five blue M&Ms minus, you know, two blue M&Ms equals how many. Uh, so it really made it engaging for the student, um, for special.

Nicole And I loved pulling in the target dollar spot erasers. And my students got a big kick out of seeing what new themes I found. Cause you can go to the Target Doller spot and get like a package of like 60 mini erasers. And so one month we'd have mermaids next month we'd have dinosaurs. And that was a really fun, affordable way to change up my manipulatives as well. And something else that I started doing, which maybe is not necessarily a manipulative, but just a strategy is I used a lot of cut and paste math worksheets because one thing I've found with my students with disabilities is sometimes a disability or a issue they had in a different area was impeding their ability to be successful in math was specifically if they were a nonverbal non-vocal student and they were a student that struggled writing. So they couldn't tell me what four plus four is. And they couldn't write the answer to four plus four, but if they had 10 different numbers and they could glue one onto the paper, they were suddenly being really successful. It was just a different component of their disability that was holding them back. So that's a good thing to think about in math because a lot of times math is pretty concrete. And so our students might be able to catch on a little bit easier as long as they have the right supports.

Ashley- Yes. I love that approach with students. We did cut and paste too, and to extend or make their, um, worksheet a little bit more challenging at times I would have been used like bingo dotters or dabbers people call them and have them dab four plus four equals and then eight and either have them count using their AAC device. Um, either putting, um, the mini erasers, like you said, or a small manipulative too, just to add more steps. Once they cut and paste, I wouldn't say became simple, but just an extra challenging step for them.

Nicole-I love that idea. Okay. So if a teacher's listening and she really wants to start using more manipulatives and she wants to set out and make own math manipulatives kit, what are the must haves that she needs to put in there?

Ashley- Okay. So my must haves for more of a self contained life skills approach would be, um, some type of money, um, clocks unifix cubes, because you can use them so many ways. Addition, subtraction patterns, counting, um, a number line, if you want to try a different approach for addition and subtraction. Um, if you're in an elementary setting, I would in a more of inclusive setting or students that are just generally a little bit more advanced in math, fraction bars are great. I really think or pieces because I think they really give the kids the idea of, Oh, if one eighth is this big compared to one half, um, place value blocks were absolutely amazing. Still stick with everything else. Like I said, counting objects and whiteboards and markers, because I know might not be a manipulative, but you can do so much with a whiteboard and a marker.

Nicole- Absolutely. I remember the first time I do equal groups and I grabbed a whiteboard and I was working on multiplication with my students and I just drew the equal groups and it made it so crystal clear for them. So definitely it's an underutilized tip.

Ashley-Yes.

Nicole-So as we head into the fall, we might be going into the classroom. We might be doing distance learning. It might be a combination of both. And we might find that we're moving back and forth between different environments. So some of our parents might want to really work with us to help make a seamless transition, whether you're distance learning or in person learning. So we might want to

give them some tips on math manipulatives that could use in the home, but a parent might not be able to go get a Judy clock and unifix cubes and things like that. So Ashley is a mom of three, so I'm sure she has many more trinkets around her house than I do. So what are the things that parents could probably find in their home and use for these same strategies?

Ashley-Well, yes, we have tons of paw patrol characters. So that would be something, any type of character or figuring your kids are into a matchbox cars. You could use erasers, um, buttons. Uh, like I said, small crackers, like goldfish or M&Ms animal crackers. Those are just small things that you could just have at the home. You could make a paper clock. Like I had suggested there are tons of tutorials on Pinterest. Um, you could make your own fraction bars, print, not visuals. There's tons on TPT that are free. Um, you could make a tens frame for students if they're working on adding or subtracting or number identification. So there are a lot of ways that you can make it more of a seamless transition and also reaching out to the child's case manager and saying, Hey, what do you use for this strategy? I'd love to recreate it at home. I have a million flare pen, so we could do it with flair pens at our house.

Nicole-So as you guys heard, Ashley mentioned a couple of minutes ago, she is a fellow lover of AAC communication, and she did a great job at embedding it into different parts of the day. So Ashley, can you give us some more strategies on how you could take that communication device and start using it during math?

Ashley- Absolutely. So one of the ways I started incorporating a student who had just recently received an AAC device was doing menu math because you can do it in so many different ways. So the student, um, would cut and then paste their number on a worksheet, but they would also have to identify it on the AAC device, whatever the food item was suited have to find that in their AAC device identify the food item. And then when they were adding, they'd have to rote count by touching the numbers in their AAC device to hear the counting order. And then also really working on that fine motor of really going very slowly, touching the numbers one through, let's say eight at the time, um, anything that was on their math worksheet that they could identify with their AAC device. They were asked to do it. Um, we would have them try to going from different parts of their AAC device to find the number. So if we were in food items, I'd be like, okay, now go find number two. And having them work that way, really embedded the skill of navigating, not just from the home screen, but from multiple areas of their device. Um, we took it out a lot in the community as well and had them identify, uh, prices of food items. Um, and then also like using it to ask people questions. Um, it was a slower transition for the student, but once they started navigating, it honestly became like you were having a conversation with them and it just slowly incorporating it everyday. But any opportunity that AAC device never left their desk, that was the most important part. It was always on their desk, always on their person. And if they needed help, the number one thing we taught with them was to use the help item. Um, and that way we would go over as the staff and assist them in finding whatever they were wanting to communicate with us.

Nicole-Perfect. And I will link Ashley has a free menu math in her TpT store. I will link that in the show notes. So if you guys want to download that and try exactly what she just described it to be there for you guys. So thank you for sharing those tips, Ashley.

Ashley-Absolutely. I also have a blog post on how I use menu math in the classroom too. So I'll send you that link so they can read a little bit more about it.

Nicole- Awesome. So all of that will be in the show notes for you guys. Did you have anything else you wanted to share?

Ashley- No. I just really hope everyone has a great school year. And um, I hope you guys enjoy this.

Nicole-Thank you.

Ashley-Thank you.

Nicole-Thank you for listening to this week's episode of the podcast. If you like what you heard, I would greatly appreciate it if you love me some feedback. And if you want to hear more, go ahead and give me a follow while you're at it. Come say hi on social media, you can find me at adaptation station on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, and adaptations station.net. It's taco night in my house. So I'm going to go have a delicious dinner and a margarita. And I will talk to you guys again next Friday.