THE T/TAC TELEGRAM

Facilitating Social-Emotional Development

Calling on ALL Students: Set the Stage for Academic and Behavioral Success

I Need Help Now!! “Go To” Websites for Early Childhood Behavior

“What’s Good is Good”
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“What’s Good is Good”

VDOE Region IV T/TAC at George Mason University

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Northwestern Consortium T/TAC
This newsletter is a collaborative effort by the Northwestern Consortium of the T/TACs, which includes James Madison University, co-directed by Cheryl Henderson and Melinda Bright, and George Mason University, directed by Lynn Wiley.
Ms. Shwaery is currently a facilitator of the Effective Schoolwide Discipline/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (ESD/PBIS) state initiative through Old Dominion University. She was previously a division coordinator for Positive Behavioral Supports (PBIS) in Loudoun and Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools. She has worked with over 100 schools and their teams to implement PBIS throughout their school communities. For the past thirty years, Ms. Shwaery has served as both a teacher and special education administrator, focusing on students needing behavioral support from preschool through high school.

“My mind is spinning today,” uttered my colleague, Brian, the day before Labor Day weekend.

Intrigued, I asked him to continue. “Last year I had a student, Adam, who interrupted instruction constantly by blurting out; I used the three “question cards” strategy. When the cards were spent, so were his questions. Unfortunately, he became very anxious and never spoke again in class. There were also students who came to class continuously unprepared and one who made loud noises whenever I gave him a direction. Several of these students brought their electronic devices and food to class, creating distraction during instruction. I teach mostly in lecture format because small cooperative groups were a disaster! A few minutes ago I received my class list and it looks like I’ll have all these students in my 8th grade math class this year. I would like this year to be more socially and academically successful for all of them, but I’m not sure what to do differently.”

Does this classroom scenario sound familiar? When considering next steps, George Sugai maintains that we need to “invest in prevention first” (Sugai, 2011). Are expectations identified? Are consistent rules, routines and procedures in place throughout the school, as well as the classroom? Before we address targeted interventions for some students or individual interventions for a few students, preventative practices are identified, taught, modeled, practiced and recognized throughout all environments in the school and by all staff members. Teachers who establish and maintain norms for an effective learning environment spend more time teaching because less time is usurped by discipline (Brophy, 2000).

The school-wide expectations at Brian’s school are ‘Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Safe’. Reviewing the information Brian shared, as well as the data he collected during the previous year, these expectations represent his requirements precisely. The teaching matrix on page 5 reflects how the school-wide expectations will be applied and taught in his classroom.

Competence at managing the social situations that arise in the classroom is often a prerequisite, and a critical ingredient, for making academic progress (Leffert, et al, 2009). While teachers’ schedules are packed with more and more requirements, they often wonder, “How can I squeeze in one more thing?” Lefert, et al, suggest that in addition to sharing class rules, routines and procedures with students at the beginning of the school year, teachers can seize the opportunity to infuse social skills regularly during instruction. Students can be taught the subtle and oftentimes hidden behavioral norms for each class, cooperative group setting or individual learning experience within the existing instructional activities rather than treating social skills as an add-on to the curriculum.

ENGAGE: A Blueprint for Incorporating Social Skills Training into Daily Academic Instruction (Schoenfeld, et al. 2008) provides a framework for incorporating practical social skills guidelines for all teachers. The acronym, ENGAGE, refers to:

Exam ine the demands of the curriculum & instruction
N ote essential social skills needed for the lesson
G o forward and teach
A ctively monitor
G auge progress
E xchange reflections with students

While my colleague, Brian requested and received assistance in “getting his student to stop blurting out and constantly asking questions,” it’s possible that teaching the student how and when to ask questions would have contributed to a more successful
implementation. Maybe ENGAGE would provide the guidance he needed for this student and several others this year.

**Examine the demands of the curriculum and instruction.** Consider whether students have sufficient math skills to be successful in class. For those students exhibiting unacceptable behavior, ask yourself the following questions: Are they trying to escape or avoid your class because they don’t have the prerequisite skills or know how to use them? Would they prefer to get attention from their peers inappropriately rather than appear unintelligent?

**Note what social skills are most relevant in the classroom.** What will students need to actively participate in the whole class, small group, or individual learning activity? Which skills will generate some positive momentum? (Schoenfield et al, 2008).

“I told my students at the beginning of the year to always feel free to ask questions when they don’t understand something. They should never be afraid to ask a question.”

“Is it possible that Adam understood that to be the ‘rule?’ I wondered. “How can we replace ‘blurtling out’ with something more acceptable?”

“I want him to raise his hand and wait for me to call on him when I am finished. He was in seventh grade. Surely, he should know how to raise his hand to ask a question.”

Although Adam was in the seventh grade and more than likely knows how to raise his hand, he may not automatically know *when* to raise it and *how* to ask an acceptable question. While Brian encouraged his students to feel comfortable asking questions, modeling and practicing when, how, and even how often to ask a question, would produce the most success for Adam and all students.

Using small increments of time before and within the lesson to go forward and teach sets the stage for success. Students are quickly reminded how to be respectful, responsible, and safe. Now that Brian has a teaching matrix, which explicitly explains what ‘respect, responsibility and safety’ look like for students entering the class, in whole class and small group instruction as well as individual assignments, he can use that as a tool for teaching/reminding/reinforcing social skills before and during each lesson. Recognizing whether it’s a new academic or behavioral skill, teachers actively monitor for success, while prompting students to engage in the newly acquired skill. Although hand-raising is a social skill that is expected to be achieved early in a child’s education, many students need modeling, practice and reinforcement in acquiring, maintaining and generalizing this and other expected social skills. Harry Wong (2009) maintains that for a child to learn a new behavior, it needs to be repeated at least eight times. However, to unlearn an old behavior and replace it with a new behavior, the new behavior must be repeated on an average of 28 times. Recognizing and acknowledging these appropriate behaviors increases the likelihood that they will be repeated. George Sugai (2011) specifies that reinforcement of desired behaviors needs to be specific, informative, frequent, effective, contextually relevant and sincere. The teacher gauges progress to ensure continuous student success both academically and socially. Are Adam and the other students in the class asking questions when they need assistance, contributing to a class discussion, coming prepared to class, and responding to teacher’s directions with respect? Frequent checking determines when it is necessary to reteach and/or move forward with new skills.

Summarizing content information at the end of a lesson is considered effective teaching. Consider exchanging reflections with students on the climate and level of cooperation at the end of a lesson. With a focus on “raising hands,” “showing respect when listening without interrupting” or “being responsible by completing assignments on time”, teachers could pose the following guided questions: “What skills did we use well today?” “What social skills did we not use well?” “What should our primary social skills goal be for the next class period?” (Schoenfeld, et al. 2008). When students are included in the decision making and evaluation, their participation and involvement often leads to a productive learning environment.

Several weeks have passed since our conversation. Desired classroom behavior has improved, negative behavior decreased. Procedures and routines have been developed, practiced and reinforced. Brian recently reported that providing the students with additional opportunities to respond and a risk-free method for asking for help has greatly improved the climate and academic success for his students. Students have their own set of green, yellow, and red flash cards. When they need to signal that they don’t understand a problem or that they need help, they just casually flash
a yellow card. Red means no clue, while green indicates that they are able to work independently.

"THEY have ME trained, now. They know I come trotting over as soon as I see their cards! We use them to vote on things as well, such as what they believe to be the correct solution to a problem, i.e., “Who thinks THIS is the correct answer?” (red/green). It is just unbelievable the difference these cards have made.”

Brian taught all his students classroom rules, procedures and routines within the school-wide culture. When he realized that some of his students still needed strategies for requesting assistance, he provided the color cards. Not only did this benefit all his learners, he also demonstrated respect for individual’s learning styles and need for privacy. As a classroom teacher, he was able to teach targeted social skills within his academic lessons, while teaching all students and individualizing for non-responsive behavior of a few. It appears that Brian’s students will experience more academic and social this year.

References


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Teaching Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering Classroom</th>
<th>Whole Class Instruction</th>
<th>Small Cooperative Groups</th>
<th>Individual/Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am respectful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use acceptable language</td>
<td>• Raise hand to ask question or share</td>
<td>• Talk at appropriate times to appropriate people</td>
<td>• Use quiet voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enter class quietly</td>
<td>• Wait to be called upon</td>
<td>• Stay on topic</td>
<td>• Raise hand to ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greet teacher</td>
<td>• Talk at appropriate times</td>
<td>• Listen while others are talking</td>
<td>• Stay on task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listen to teacher’s directions without interruption</td>
<td>• Use appropriate language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arrive on time</td>
<td>• Bring materials to class (2 inch Binder, graph paper, calculator, pencils, ruler, eraser and sharpener)</td>
<td>• Complete and turn in work on time</td>
<td>• Have all needed materials at seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bring needed materials</td>
<td>• Have assignments ready</td>
<td>• Contribute to your team appropriately</td>
<td>• Complete assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be ready to work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Work the entire class period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Turn in missing work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use agenda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Store backpacks and electronic devices in locker</td>
<td>• Use math tools appropriately</td>
<td>• Keep supplies in space</td>
<td>• Stay in area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food and drink in cafeteria only</td>
<td>• Keep materials off the floor</td>
<td>• Keep space clear</td>
<td>• Keep hands and feet to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep materials off the floor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since 2009, VDOE T/TACs and selected Virginia school divisions have been participating in a grant through the National Professional Development Center (NPDC) on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) to implement evidenced based practices (EBPs) in classrooms involved in the education of students with ASD. One comprehensive resource developed by NPDC and utilized throughout the grant implementation is a listing of EBPs in autism, with corresponding briefs and implementation checklists. These resources are available at http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/ and are in the public domain.

The purpose of this article is to introduce readers to this information resource by highlighting one of the EBPs listed: peer-mediated instruction. The information that follows is an abridged version of the full brief found at http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/. After reading this article, those wishing to learn more about peer-mediated instruction can also visit the Autism Internet Modules (AIM) at http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/ to complete the online module on this topic. AIM modules are listed and linked to many of the EBPs listed on the NPDC website and serve as a means to expand upon the information outlined in the EBP briefs. Readers are encouraged to bookmark the NPDC website and consider how the tools found there could be utilized for personal, team, or school-wide professional development opportunities.

Overview of Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII)

Peer-mediated instruction is used to teach typically developing peers ways to interact with and help learners with ASD acquire new social skills by increasing social opportunities within natural environments. With PMII, peers are systematically taught ways of engaging learners with ASD in social interactions in both teacher-directed and learner-initiated activities (English et al., 1997; Odom et al., 1999; Strain & Odom, 1986). PMII can be implemented with pairs or small groups of learners across the age range. With young children (i.e., 3 to 8 years of age), practitioners can use peer-initiation training to help learners with ASD acquire communication/language and social skills. Social networking strategies are more appropriate for older learners (i.e., 9 to 18 years of age). PMII has been shown to have positive effects on academic, interpersonal, and personal-social development, and may be the largest and most empirically supported type of social intervention for learners with ASD (Bass & Mulick, 2007). Among the social skills targeted for PMII are: responding to others, reciprocity, understanding others, and interacting with others or in groups. PMII has been used effectively in clinical and school-based settings across preschool to high school age groups. PMII is intended to be used as part of the daily curriculum through a balance of teacher-directed and learner-initiated interactions and activities.

Excerpts and Summary of Steps for Implementing PMII

Step 1. Selecting Peers
The first step in implementing peer social networks is to select peers who will provide social support to the focal student. Research suggests selected peers should: exhibit good social skills, language, and be well-liked by peers, have similar schedules or academic groupings as the focal child, and express a willingness to participate. It is suggested that six peers be selected by teachers to participate so that peer/focal student dyads can be rotated. Teachers plan to include one to two peers in the peer social network activities for a minimum of three to
Training middle and high school students may involve less direct instruction of peers by the special educator but more active participation in the development of peer network interventions. Similar to elementary students, peers are provided with the goals and rationale, an overview of what is expected of them, and information about how students with ASD communicate, interact with their environment, and learn (Carter & Kennedy, 2006). The special educator also may provide descriptions of the focal student’s likes and dislikes.

Step 3. Supporting Peers
Another important step in the implementation process is to provide ongoing support and feedback to peers. Weekly problem-solving meetings are the primary ways in which special educators provide ongoing support and feedback to peers. The purpose of these meetings is to encourage peer involvement and input as well as minimize the special educator’s role in the scheduling and identification of interaction strategies. Special educators conduct the sessions; however, peers are actively involved through open discussion, problem-solving, and sharing of anecdotal information from their notebooks. As peers become more proficient at supporting the focal student during daily activities, teachers decrease their level of involvement. This allows peers to assume the primary role of providing social support to the focal student (e.g., clarifying instructions, offering choices, supporting participation at lunch or recess). Peers may continue to need occasional prompting, however, to interact with the focal student during peer social network activities (Carter & Hughes, 2007).

Step 4. Implementing in Classroom Settings and Throughout the Day
Several factors should be addressed to promote the success of peer social networks, including:

- Creating a supportive social environment
  - When implementing a peer social network approach in classrooms, a social environment that supports peer to peer interactions must be maintained. For example, teachers should keep peer social groups small (e.g., one to two peers), but continually rotate the peers included in the activities to promote generalization of skills. Seating trained peers next to the focal student during whole-class and small group activities increases the likelihood that interactions with peers will occur.

- Providing learning opportunities
  - Some school activities are more likely to support positive social interactions than others. For example, small academic groups such as math and reading; class centers such as calendar and money activities, computers, puzzles; special areas such as physical education and library; or card games such as memory and matching games lend themselves to more social interaction opportunities. Lunch also is an appropriate time to incorporate peer social networks. However, specific materials and supports must be provided to the focal student and peers in order to successfully facilitate interactions. Materials that
can be used during lunch time to increase peer social interactions might include open-ended topic starters, funny photos or pictures, magazines, restaurant guides, photos taken by peers to use as topic starters, and school subject/events topic cards (Thiemann, 2007). Peer social networks also can be used to promote social interactions at recess with similar types of supports.

- Monitoring social interactions
  - As peers assume the responsibility of providing ongoing support to the focal student, teachers should frequently monitor interactions and provide periodic feedback and assistance. This support will ensure that the adaptations, assistance, and interactions taking place are appropriate and relevant for the focal student.

- Use of prompts and reinforcement
  - The use of prompts and reinforcement is integral to the success of peer social networks and promotes sustained social interactions across time. Teachers must focus on how and when to deliver specific prompts and reinforcement to the focal student when they are needed. During peer social network activities, prompting may involve cueing the focal student with general verbal prompts while pointing to a written-text or picture cue. The cue cards are functional, age-appropriate, and directly related to target skill for each activity.

**Step 5. Extending Initiations across the Day**

The final phase of the implementation process is to extend peer social networks across the day so that students with ASD can begin to generalize skills. Teachers should focus on extending peer social network activities across the day in activities that occur in natural settings (e.g., recess, lunch, centers, games), occur in a minimum of two to three different routines each day, contain a choice of two activities during each session (both peers and the learners with ASD should be given opportunities to choose an activity each day), use five to eight games rotated every three to four months to promote generalization, keep the same group of four to six trained peers to promote interpersonal connections and friendships, are social in nature, and last a minimum of 10 minutes (Kamps et al., 1997; Thiemann, 2007).

**References:**


Homegrown Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Videos  
http://vimeo.com/groups/pbisvideos
What do “Dancing 1, 2, 3”, “Hallway-To the Left” and “Rewind” have in common? They are all titles of videos written and produced by schools across the globe to teach students, staff and families about school-wide behavioral and academic expectations under the umbrella of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative. Michael Kennedy, Assistant Professor at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, manages the site and awards school special recognition at the Association of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Annual Spring Conference.

Academic and Behavioral Response to Intervention (ABIR) Instructional Videos  http://louisville.edu/education/srp/abri/training.html
Academic and Behavioral Response to Intervention (ABIR) is structured to provide state-wide access to support with the emphasis on creating an infrastructure toward sustainability and capacity building within schools and educational cooperatives. Located at the University of Louisville, ABIR created a series of training video vignettes demonstrating instructional strategies in a variety of K-12 classroom contexts in order to provide guidance to educators and administrators. These videos present the Primary Level strategies within the following contexts: Elementary School and Secondary School; Reading, Math, and Behavior; Group and Individual Instruction; and Student (including General Education, Learning and Behavior Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Intellectual Disabilities). The videos demonstrate the following strategies in both elementary and secondary settings:

- Structure and Consistency
- Communicating High Expectations
- Modeling
- Pre-correction/Prompting
- Opportunities to Respond
- Practice
- Specific Praise
- Correction
- Formative Assessment
- Active Supervision
I Need Help Now!!  
“Go To” Websites for Early Childhood Behavior

Kris Ganley, M.Ed., VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University

Whether young children have big challenges or little ones, early childhood educators want accurate help quickly. There are several excellent sites on the web that provide help at the educator’s convenience. One such site is: The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). CSEFEL is “focused on promoting the social-emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5” and provides a wealth of information to assist early childhood educators meet the needs of children with challenging behaviors. The website provides information for teachers and caregivers, families, and trainers and coaches. Located at Vanderbilt University, CSEFEL is a national resource center funded by the Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country. The center is a collaborative project of Vanderbilt University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of South Florida, Georgetown University, University of Colorado at Denver and ZERO TO THREE.

CSEFEL notes that “the term social emotional development refers to the developing capacity of the child from birth through five years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture” (Infant/Toddler Training Module 1, Handout 1.2). The website offers extensive, user-friendly information on these topics.

Resources include chat sessions, decision making guidelines, family tools, research, practical strategies, training kits, training modules, videos and What Works briefs. “The Briefs describe practical strategies, provide references to more information and include a one-page handouts that highlights the major points of the Briefs” (CSEFEL). Currently there are over 20 Briefs in English and Spanish.

On the next page is an example of a one-page handout from a four page brief.

Other helpful sites include:

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI). This site “takes the research that shows which practices improve the social-emotional outcomes for young children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities and creates FREE products and resources to help decision-makers, caregivers, and service providers apply these best practices in the work they do every day.” [http://www.challengingbehavior.org/](http://www.challengingbehavior.org/)

The Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation was created through a grant from the Office of Head Start. The Center translates research in healthy mental development into materials tailored to the needs of mental health consultants, Head Start staff and program administrators, training and technical assistance providers and families. [http://www.ecmhc.org/](http://www.ecmhc.org/)

References and Resources:

Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html)


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Assess the child’s current level of self-management skills by asking questions such as the following to see how accurately a child is able to assess his or her own behavior.

⇒ Raise your hand if you put your lunch box away this morning.
⇒ Put your thumbs up if you are sitting.
⇒ Raise your hand if you played at the block center today.

Identify what behaviors you want the child to learn to self-manage. Each step should clearly describe what you want children to do.

⇒ When told to clean up, the child should stop playing, pick up toys, place them on the shelf, and take a seat in the circle area.
⇒ When told to sit quietly, the child should stop talking, sit with her hands in her lap, and look at the teacher.

Visually display behaviors for the child using photographs or drawings on a poster, on a sheet of paper, or in a booklet.

⇒ When teaching a child to use the bathroom independently, you might draw each step on a poster or in the form of a book depicting steps such as pulling pants down, sitting on the toilet, wiping with toilet paper, pulling pants up, and washing hands.

Guide the child to learn the desired behaviors and to use the self-management system (e.g., checklist, chart) to assess his performance of the behaviors.

⇒ When teaching a child to put away the art supplies and go to the rug, you might review all the steps with the child and give him or her a chart showing each step of the process, including putting the crayons and markers in the bin, putting drawings in a cubby, walking over to the rug, choosing a book, and sitting quietly looking at the book. The child could then circle or make a check mark next to the pictures that show what steps were completed. For a long process, teach the first step or two, and you finish the job the first time. As the child masters the first few steps, add new ones, one at a time.

Provide positive attention to the child when she correctly completes the steps and uses the self-monitoring system accurately.

⇒ Melissa, good job cleaning up and marking the steps you did by yourself!
⇒ Sally, I see that you have your hands in your lap, thank you for sitting so quietly.
⇒ Kara, nice job remembering what you did and marking the steps on your chart!
Imagine yourself in a meeting or a class. You discover that instead of concise direct instruction in the critical skills needed for your job the focus is on learning irrelevant material. Additionally, the instructor is a robo-lecturer and you learn best from visuals or demonstrations. Finally, the content is beyond your ability to connect to any prior knowledge. What do you do? Many adults will disengage subtly via what I call ‘situational attention deficit’ and may quietly check their email, shop online, chat with a neighbor and/or leave at the break. Adults are unlikely to throw a book, cry, rip up the work sheet or make animal noises with the intent of getting removed from the boring or frustrating situation.

Kauffman and Landrum (2009) identify 7 ways school or classroom environments contribute to emotional and behavior disorders. They are:

- Insensitivity to student individuality
- Inappropriate expectations for students
- Inconsistent management of behavior
- Instruction in non-functional and irrelevant skills
- Ineffective instruction in critical skills
- Destructive contingencies of reinforcement
- Undesirable models of school conduct

(Kauffman and Landrum, 2009, p. 209)

The remainder of this article will focus on addressing inappropriate expectations for students in conjunction with the need for sensitivity to individuals and planning to avoid ineffective instruction of critical skills. Within the section headed *Appropriate Expectations* there is a brief look at research on student responses to instruction. *Learning about Students* addresses using assessments to guide instruction. The section on *Avoiding Ineffective Instruction of Critical Skills* discusses aligning standards and instruction while referring back to student differences and how to address them in the light of challenging content.

*Inappropriate Expectations and Sensitivity to Individuals*

Foundational to the precepts of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is that diversity is the norm in today’s classrooms (National Center for Universal Design, 2010). Academic diversity impacts the variability of student performance (Lenz, Deshler and Kissam, 2004). To avoid inappropriate expectations and be sensitive to individuals, teachers must accommodate their instruction and tasks to meet the needs of the students.

*Appropriate Expectations and Behavior*

The concept of instructional level
was identified by Betts (1946) and operationalized in reading by Gickling and Armstrong (1978). Instructional level is described as the text in which the student knows 93-97% of the words. To explore for connections between the learning challenges and student behavior Gickling and Armstrong (1978) manipulated the difficulty of assignments for first and second grade students. They reported that students working at their instructional level were more on task, completed more work and demonstrated better understanding than when assignments were above their instructional level (too difficult) or below their instructional level (too easy). This was most apparent in off task behaviors. They also noted a relationship between academic success and appropriate classroom behavior.

Treptow, Burns and McComas (2007) replicated Gickling and Armstrong (1978) with similar, if less robust, results. They reported that students demonstrated improved time on task and completion rates when working at their instructional level. Comprehension was highest at the instructional level and lowest at the frustration level. These findings suggest that if there is an instructional match the likelihood of inappropriate behaviors should be lessened. To provide this environment we need to learn about the students.

**Learning about Students**

The big picture begins with an analysis of the data that is available in your school. For an overview, look at class data. This will provide a global sense of the skill and knowledge base the students as a group bring to the situation. Next, determine individual student readiness for the upcoming content. Use curriculum materials to deepen your understanding of each student’s level of prior knowledge and prerequisite skills specific to the next unit or lesson. Consider using instructional activities that survey vocabulary, skills and perceptions of the impending unit or lesson. Brainstorming using a Know, Want to Know, Learned (KWL) chart is a common informal activity that activates and assesses prior knowledge.

Survey student knowledge of critical vocabulary, terms and concepts. There are many variations of vocabulary sorts that can be used to inform instruction. (See resources at the end of this article) One of the simplest to use begins with a list provided by the teacher. Students are asked to sort words into a table with column headings such as Known, Not sure, and Don’t know. Terms designated as Known are then defined or explained by the student to confirm their self-assessment (See Figure 1 on page 14).

Look for general areas of strengths by focusing on what students know and can do. Look for patterns of knowledge. Decide how you will provide instruction. Can you create collaborative vocabulary study groups? Are there terms that none of the students know? Will you provide direct instruction in those terms? How?

**Avoiding Ineffective Instruction of Critical Skills**

Be familiar with standards and the level of understanding or application expected on the assessments. Be prepared to prioritize in order to use instructional time on critical concepts and skills.

**What are the Critical Skills and Knowledge?**

Selecting what to focus on challenges teachers to be familiar with standards and to have an in-depth knowledge of their content. To align instruction with standards, look at the language. Are students asked to identify facts or apply critical skills? The latter will require awareness, conceptual understanding and fluent use of said skills.

Within their course content teachers must determine what knowledge and skills are critical to future learning and skill development (Lenz, Deshler and Kissam, 2004). Keeping in mind that some students will have the prior knowledge to assimilate additional content and others will be able to work independently to expand their knowledge. Class-wide instruction must first address what every student needs to know.

**Planning for Effective Instruction**

After determining what every student needs to know, consider:

- What challenges does this content have for some or most of your students?

- How will I teach the content in spite of the challenges?

Consider what you have learned about your students’ academic diversity and readiness for your critical content. Next analyze the content for learning challenges specific to individuals and/or groups of students. Common challenges are the quantity of new information, content specific vocabulary, level of abstractness, complexity, relevance, interest of the students and the organization of the content (Lenz, Bulgren, Schumaker and Boudah, 1994).
Explain the concept of formative assessments to your students. Encourage them to become your partner by revealing what they already know or do not know. As demonstrated earlier, use student information and your content analysis to plan for instruction. What skills, vocabulary or concepts will require explicit direct instruction, more time, additional practice, graphics or mnemonics for individuals, small groups or class wide? Use your experience and knowledge to select methods, strategies, or materials you will use to provide instruction. Monitor student engagement and understanding as you teach.

Strategic instruction requires us to analyze content and student factors so that we may provide appropriate, meaningful and successful learning experiences for all of our students. Strategic instruction enhances the likelihood of student engagement thus lessening our contribution to inappropriate student behaviors.

References


For additional information about Universal Design for Learning (UDL):
Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST): Transforming Education through Universal Design for Learning http://www.cast.org/index.html

Resources:
The following books contain a variety of instructional activities that can be adapted to formative assessment.


For additional information about Universal Design for Learning (UDL):


Figure 1. Table for Student self-assessment for vocabulary (abridged)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Known</th>
<th>Not sure but...</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Define or explain “Knowns” “Not sure”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Everyone Can Do Something -
Using Service Learning to Differentiate Instruction
©2011 Paula Kluth, Ph.D.

This article is from the website of Dr. Paula Kluth. It, along with many others on inclusive schooling, differentiated instruction, and literacy can be found at www.PaulaKluth.com. Visit now to read her Tip of the Day, read dozens of free articles, and learn more about supporting diverse learners in K-12 classrooms.

Service learning—instruction that involves helping, contributing, or volunteering in the school or community—seems to be gaining in popularity for students of all ages…and for good reason! According to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, service learning aims to change or help both the recipient and the provider of the service. Further, it provides students “structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content www.servicelearning.org.”

Why Use Service Learning?
Service then, has affective and cognitive benefits. For this reason, researchers and educators alike are recommending it, using it, and studying it for every population from students with learning disabilities to English language learners to students who need enrichment. Yoder et al. (1996), for instance, found that students with learning disabilities who participated in service learning acquired increased self-knowledge and improved communication, problem solving and social skills. And Terry (2000) has noted that students who are labeled as gifted in certain areas gain confidence and learn perseverance, responsibility, and new perspectives on relationships from service projects.

Clearly, service is an effective teaching tool. It is an especially effective teaching tool for the inclusive classroom as it allows educators to easily differentiate instruction. There are opportunities for different students to engage in different tasks, strive for different goals, address different skills, and pursue individual passions. In addition, a service learning curriculum allows different teachers to work together toward common goals. Special and general educators can co-plan and collaborate on lessons and work together to teach communication skills (e.g., writing letters, holding meetings, giving a speech); functional or life skills (e.g., taking the subway, making a phone call, asking for directions, making change); social skills (e.g., working as part of a team), and standards-based academic skills (e.g., learning about government, reading different types of text) to all students (not just those with disabilities). And teachers across subject areas will find natural opportunities for collaboration as service learning projects almost always address standards and objectives from a range of content areas.

Inclusive Service Learning: An Example
When I was working as a second-grade teacher, I planned several service learning units with my colleagues that successfully met the needs of all of our students— including two learners with the label of autism, Luis and Katie. One such unit was designed with the needs of all students in mind. We knew that Luis and Katie would need lessons that incorporated movement. We also wanted both students to have a lot of opportunities to interact with peers, since they seemed to learn best in social situations. We were also cognizant of the students’ individual goals when planning this unit; both learners were learning new communication systems and needed opportunities to practice using these systems.

We combined two traditional second-grade units (animals and communities) and designed a new unit titled “How can we support wildlife in our community?” We talked to students about the unit and asked them to think about what we might do to better support wildlife in our community. Together, the group decided we would build birdhouses and donate them to places in our neighborhood. The birdhouse building was the highlight and culminating activity of the unit. In the weeks leading up to the building, students also had opportunities to:

- create “facts about birds” pamphlets using a new software program (the pamphlets themselves became a service project and were distributed to libraries and animal supply stores in our area);
- write letters to local businesses asking for materials or funding for bird house building;
- engage in authentic mathematics exercises related to the bird houses (e.g., how many nails would we need, how much...
would it cost to make each bird feeder);
• listen to bird calls and create paintings based on this music; and
• learn about birds from a visiting expert who brought a slide show and gave a mini-lecture.

On the building day, we invited parents, teachers (e.g., the art teacher used her planning hour to work with us) and other community members (e.g., local college students) to contribute to the bird feeder project. The response was incredible. We had so much support that students were able to work in pairs with one adult assisting each pair. Students needed assistance with tools, but were able to do a lot of the work independently. For many learners, this building experience was their first time using a hammer or screwdriver. They learned new skills and gained confidence, as well.

After the feeders were built and painted, students voted as a class on where we would deliver our gifts. After a long discussion about helping our community and what types of businesses and services exist in our area, students decided to donate the feeders to a father of one of the students in our class who had helped our class get supplies, an area hospital, a senior center, the specialty shop that had helped us learn about birds, a local library, the town’s domestic violence center, the YMCA, and a community center. Students with strong communication skills made arrangements over the phone for the deliveries.

Finally, we took small groups of students into the community to deliver the bird feeders. Students were required to use community maps to find buildings and were asked to give a short dedication speech when presenting the feeders to the organizations. Both students with autism were able to participate in this unit with a few adaptations:

• While every student with a signed permission slip got to visit at least one community site, Luis and Katie each went on several trips. The outings gave both learners opportunities to practice communication and social skills and to learn new skills related to the community (e.g., riding the bus).
• For the bird feeder building, Luis and Katie were paired with familiar and trusted peers.
• Katie was allowed to work on a cooperative art project while others did individual pictures of birds. Instead of spending class time listening to the bird calls and developing a picture, Katie drew a small bird (with the help of a friend) and then wandered around the room, handing her picture to classmates, and getting them to add something to her collective picture.
• Luis’s physical therapist worked with his group during building and showed many students the best (and most comfortable) way to use the screwdriver.
• When students wrote letters to local businesses, Katie worked on the computer with a friend to compose a letter and Luis participated by stamping the school’s address on the top left-hand corner of every envelope.

We also made many adjustments for students needing more enrichment. Some students were targeted to engage in more complex tasks than others. Some had more involvement in calculating the amount of money we were collecting from donations and others were charged with researching the needs of the community on the internet and by contacting community leaders.

All students made contributions and all received—to some extent—personalized instruction through the service learning unit. Differentiation occurred daily as we assigned tasks, designed lessons, and created daily instruction. Since we were engaged in “real work”, there were many different jobs to do and as many different learners to do those jobs. Unlike many other types of instruction, service truly offers “something for everyone.”

As a wise person once said, “Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something.” Service learning has the potential to not only help students grow academically but to work together as members of a shared community and to see and value what each individual can get from a project and, of course, what he or she can give.

References


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Bell-ringers, Dings, and Bumps: What Every Educator Should Know About Concussions

Bonnie W. Bell, Ph.D., VDOE T/TAC @ GMU

A concussion is a brain injury. All concussions are serious. (Centers for Disease Control, 2011)

These simple facts are often either unknown or misunderstood. With the increase in students participating in varsity and community sports, as well as in non-traditional sports such as biking, skateboarding, snowboarding, roller blading, etc., youths are increasingly more susceptible to concussion (Moser, 2007).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children and adolescents have a higher risk for concussion compared to the rest of our society (2011). Naturally, the potential for a concussion is greater during activities that expose youth to collisions, i.e., physical education class, playground time, or school sports. However, concussions can occur whenever the head hits a hard object e.g., floor, ground, desk, wall, chair, chalk ledge, or another head or body (CDC, 2011).

What is a concussion? A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. It results from a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, but it can occur from a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly within the skull.

Contrary to common belief, a diagnosis of concussion does not have to include a loss of consciousness. Nor does it have to include visual disturbance or pupil dilation. Moreover, any symptom may last for less than 15 minutes, and there can still be a concussion (American Academy of Neurology, 1997).

Even a mild bump to the head can be serious. Recent research tells us that the severity of a concussion is not well understood. For example, one student can suffer a concussion with a loss of consciousness and his or her symptoms can resolve more quickly than a student who did not lose consciousness. While headache and loss of consciousness were typically viewed as indicators of severity, now amnesia is considered a better predictor of severity and recovery (Cantu, 2001). This includes either amnesia before (retrograde) or after (anterograde) the event.

Virginia passed a state law that went into effect on July 1, 2011 known as the Student-Athlete Protection Act (SB 652). The law does not allow a student to return to play or practice, following a concussion, until they receive medical clearance from a designated professional. Shane Caswell, Director of the Sports Medicine Assessment, Research and Testing Laboratory at George Mason University explained in a recent Fairfax Times article that if a student returns to participation too soon, he or she can be at risk for more serious damage (Hobbs, 2011).

The most crucial pieces in reducing the recovery time from a concussion appear to be immediate physical and mental rest and increased sleep to allow the brain to heal (Moser, 2007). For educators, this understanding is vital to facilitate our students’ quick recovery and return to class. A brain compromised by concussion affects learning. Students will need to stay at home with no homework or tests. Cognitive activity during a recovery from a concussion can not only delay healing, but it is often counter-productive. Students cannot remember information or think as clearly as they did prior to the injury. Thus, testing during this recovery phase does not assess how much the student actually knows. Also, the brain injury interferes with the learning of new material, so attempting to attend class, learn, or study is often ineffective or impossible. For educators and families, it is imperative for them to know that many common activities can be harmful to the recovery process. Texting, playing video...
games, talking on the phone, and watching television may seem restful, but actually involve cognition. Therefore, they should be prohibited during the early phase of recovery.

Because physical and mental activity may actually aggravate symptoms, educators and families will need to work together. Clear communication during the recovery is imperative. Often athletes minimize or do not even report concussion symptoms because they want “to tough it out” or they do not know what a concussion is nor do they know what its inherent dangers are. Often, students do not want to miss class or fall behind. However, playing with a concussion does not show courage or strength, and it is not smart to risk brain health by participating in sports or education too soon after a concussion (CDC, 2010).

To complicate the concussive experience, signs and symptoms may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury (CDC, 2011). Therefore, it is important for educators to watch for changes in how students act, learn, perform, or feel. If an educator has concerns, he or she should report them to all interested parties associated with the student (parents, coaches, school nurse, counselor, administrators, etc.). Important indicators are listed below:

Signs Observed by Educators
• Answers questions slowly
• Repeats questions
• Forgets (information, assignments, schedule, etc.)
• Has more difficulty concentrating or attending
• Shows behavior or personality changes
• Has difficulty remembering or learning new information
• Shows difficulty organizing tasks
• Has less ability to cope with stress
• Is more irritable or emotional
• Appears dazed or stunned
• Is confused about events
• Can’t recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall
• Can’t recall events after the hit, bump, or fall
• Loses consciousness (even briefly)

Symptoms Reported by the Student

Thinking/Remembering
• Difficulty thinking clearly
• Difficulty concentrating or remembering
• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, groggy, or ‘slowed down’

Physical:
• Headache or ‘pressure’ in head
• Nausea or vomiting
• Balance problems or dizziness
• Fatigue or feeling tired
• Blurry or double vision
• Sensitivity to light or noise
• Numbness or tingling
• Does not ‘feel right’

Emotional
• Irritable
• Sad
• More emotional than usual
• Nervous

Sleep
• Drowsy
• Sleeps less than usual
• Sleeps more than usual
• Has trouble falling asleep

Identifying a concussion and initiating an appropriate response to a concussion can prevent further injury and future academic difficulties. When not managed properly, repetitive concussions may cause permanent brain damage or even death. Therefore, it is imperative for all of Virginia’s educators to become knowledgeable about this important health risk.

For more information, consult:
The Virginia Department of Education website dedicated to traumatic brain injury

The Virginia Board of Education Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes

www.cdc.gov/Concussion The CDC website for information and resources regarding concussions

www.biav.net The website for the Brain Injury Association of Virginia, a statewide non-profit organization devoted to serving individuals with brain injury

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/concussion/DS00320 This Mayo Clinic website contains information and resources regarding concussions
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/concussion.html The concussion website from MedlinePlus, the National Institutes of Health’s website for patients and their families; Produced by the National Library of Medicine, it offers information and resources on concussions.

http://www.sportsmed.org/uploadedFiles/Content/Patient/Sports_Tips/ST%20Concussion.pdf Produced by the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, this site offers tips on concussions in sports.

www.projectlearnet.org This site was designed to help identify useful procedures to help students with brain injuries at school and at home. Dr. Mark Ylvisaker, a nationally known researcher in traumatic brain injury (TBI), was the visionary behind this website.

References


“…A Philosophy of Teaching” that Extends to General Education

At school sites active with the I’m Determined Project for several years, Self-Determination is becoming an ingrained educational philosophy. Kendal Swartzentruber, a special educator at Montevideo Middle School in Rockingham County, thinks that “Self-Determination has almost become a philosophy of teaching in the way that we ask questions and the way that we open up kids being able to say what they want and what they need and having their own voice.”

In addition to the benefits to special education students, the pluses to general education students and teachers have not been overlooked. At Christiansburg High School in Montgomery County, special educators starting the project invited their general education colleagues to join. According to special educator Gayle Schlosser, the general educators asked, “Why are you doing it for special ed students? Why can’t we do it for everyone?...They felt like so many students in high school were really unfocused...they were just going through the paces of high school...So, we thought...we can expand this...and instead of just encouraging special ed students, we can talk about goal setting (for all students). We gave them all copies of the Self-Determination posters...The posters were in general ed classes and just put all over the building.”

The I’m Determined project posters prompted general education teachers at Franklin County High School to ask special education teacher, Janet Osborne, to promote disability awareness at her school. “The choir teacher wanted me to give a presentation on people... (with) musical ability, as well as disability ...The general ed kids are becoming interested.” Likewise, a physical education teacher at the high school, who is a member of the I’m Determined team, has drawn from self-determination lesson plans. The lessons teach students how to recognize their strengths, how to speak up for themselves, how to be polite, and how to treat others. Students in English classes at the high school have read novels with self-determination themes and teachers have adapted lessons developed through the I’m Determined project for use in the English curriculum. Osborne reflects, “For the most part, our administrators back us and are understanding how this information can be used in the different curricula without compromising preparation for SOLs.” Franklin County High School will offer a new course on Self-Determination skills, which will be open to all students at the high school. Osborne continues, “I feel that everybody has strengths and weaknesses. Some are struggling, they may not have a whole lot of guidance, and their social skills aren’t very strong, yet they don’t have what we would classify a disability.”

Susan Spaulding, Language Arts Department Chair at Bailey Bridge Middle School in Chesterfield County, calls self-determination a metacognitive tool: “I don’t believe that self determination...is a separate entity...It’s a metacognitive tool as students do what they do in English, in science, in social studies, in life.”

When this general education teacher learned of the I’m Determined project, she thought, “What’s good is good; it doesn’t matter if they’re special ed or not.” So now, in her 7th grade English classes, she employs both the philosophy of self-determination, as well as tools developed through the project. Her general education students assemble portfolios from all their subjects and invite their parents to student-led conferences. They have created Good Day Plans, and then used personal details for content as they learned to write expository essays. Her
students watched *Gifted Hands: The Story of Ben Carson* and “talked about what a self-determined person he was and the obstacles he overcame… And what’s amazing is when we discover it in literature or we discover it in writing and they say, ‘Oh, Mrs. Spaulding, this is just like our Self-Determination’ or ‘This is just like a Good Day’…(or) ‘Boy, that’s not a Good Day for him.’ …It’s wonderful when the kids make the connection … it’s becoming a way of life for them.”

“…I don’t think they feel in control of much of anything of their lives before they get their license…but we talk about how they are in control of the choices that they make, that every choice has a consequence and sometimes it’s a good consequence. “Spaulding cautions students against developing feelings of entitlement, but instead advocates for a sense of accountability.” (Self-Determination) has worked really, really well here with me.”

Teachers at some schools have expressed reluctance to join the *I’m Determined* Project on the assumption that it would mean more work on top of an already full curriculum. But Spaulding doesn’t regard the *I’m Determined* content as yet another thing to do: “It wasn’t something additional on our plate. It was how we could get them to eat what was on their plate.”

**Goal-Setting Glamour**

A few schools are using Self-Determination tools to get a jump on newly required academic and career plans for all middle and high school students. Mary Jane King of Christiansburg Middle School in Montgomery County has been approached by a guidance counselor at her school about how she has accomplished this for students with disabilities. King says the counselor is aware that the *I’m Determined* project may have developed practices that will be useful for the development of academic and career plans for all students.

Montevideo Middle School has begun the process of developing academic and career plans for all its students by using tools from the *I’m Determined* project. Staff made goal cards with the *I’m Determined* logo. They presented a goal-setting lesson, discussed goals of students and teachers, and then had seventh graders complete goal cards on iPads.

At Montevideo, staff took the *I’m Determined* tools and made them their own by putting the Mustang school logo on the *Good Day Plan* template and tweaking the template to increase its appeal to seventh graders. They did the same for the *One-Pager*, making it into what they saw as a more fun version of the standard template. They plan to use the new version for the students in their school, placing videos in the center. Staff say that the students enjoy the goal-setting activities so much that they ask to meet to discuss it more frequently than the planned once-a-month meetings.

Further glamorizing the activity of goal-setting, Montevideo invited a sports hero to appear on their morning news to discuss how he set and achieved his goals. The quarterback at James Madison University, fresh from victory over a rival school, was a very big hit among the middle school students.

Kasey Shane, Principal of O. B. Gates Elementary School in Chesterfield County, states that in formulating the school’s own goals for the next three years through their strategic management plan, there has been discussion of expanding use of the *I’m Determined* tools to the general education population. The *One-Pagers* and the student-led conferences are practices under particular consideration for all students.

**Braids are Chic**

“Braiding” initiatives together where there is conceptual overlap may help when schools adopt several promising initiatives. Dr. Michael Gill, Principal of Bailey Bridge Middle School in Chesterfield County, says of *I’m Determined* and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, “…I do think (PBIS) marries very well with… Self-Determination because it speaks to consistency and speaks to students being accountable for their own actions…We absolutely have seen positive progress and I will tell you that our failure rate…may have been under one percent. So is this the only thing contributing to that? No, I don’t think it is, but I certainly do believe that it’s a factor.”

The PBIS team at Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County uses the *One-Pager* for new students entering the school. The student makes a *One-Pager* during that first week, and it gets sent to all the new student’s teachers. Bailey Bridge Middle School has used the *Good Day Plan* and goal-setting as school-wide resources for their PBIS program.
Gill continues, “I think sometimes there’s the feeling of ‘Oh, it’s just one more thing, oh, it’s just one more thing.’ But if you can show that there is an interrelation, that’s what we try to do.”

**Girls, Brains, and Wednesday Warriors**

The *I’m Determined* project has inspired new organizations and creative new projects and activities that promote self-determination for all students. At Burnt Chimney Elementary School in Franklin County, special educator Julie Realmuto is enthusiastic about *Girls On The Go*, an afterschool program that grew out of the *I’m Determined* project. Girls who are identified as at risk for bullying or poor decision-making later in middle school are taught how to become more positively self-determined.

Susan Spaulding has started *Wednesday Warriors* at Bailey Bridge Middle School. The Warriors meet every Wednesday morning to fight the “battle of the binder.” Students bring in everything from their lockers, including all of their binders. The teachers provide resources to help students organize. The students make friends, sometimes they bring doughnuts, and they have fun. Spaulding recalls, “I had one boy who came every Wednesday...The next year when he moved to the 8th grade, he said ‘I still need to do this. I still need to be self-determined.’”

Dr. Liliane Burns, psychologist at O.B. Gates Elementary School, draws from the *I’m Determined* tools and its philosophy of empowerment when she explains test scores to her young charges. Rather than point to deficits, she emphasizes strengths that emerge from testing. Students leave sessions with her with greater self-awareness about how they can use their unique abilities to grow as self-determined young people. “I can tell you that every child walks away from my testing requesting to come back because...they feel good about it...Every child who walks into my room is proved smart. Every child has an ability to show.”

Burns and Assistant Principal Giuliana Brink have created *Brain Week* at Gates for all students. Burns explains, “Brain Week is about...teaching kids the basic neurology of learning...and what you can do to grow new branches on your nerves...You can shape your brain to be the way you want it to be...And it’s not just a special education kind of intervention; it’s an intervention for all students. But what’s nice is that the kids who are in special education become the ambassadors. They become the ones (who) specifically have most information about the brain.”

The ideas of self-determination may even find their way outside of schools. Franklin County Special Education Director, Gwen Adkins, remembers a mother whose son graduated from high school where self-determination was taught. He blossomed in high school and did so well at college that the mother asked Adkins for information about the *I’m Determined* project. The mother felt it could be useful in the community, in particular with the young people at her church.

In the words of Gates Elementary general educator, Samantha McMillian, “…I would love to see...more training with general ed teachers. I think that’s probably where we’re very much lacking. This works and it works both for the general ed teacher and for the special ed teacher. It works for both sets of students. But I think that because of...SOLs and the various demands from the county...you’re hesitant to try something like that in your room...I would love to see more videotaping of classrooms...where children are able to help set their own goals, where they are working with their peers in general ed classrooms. I think it’s important that the teachers who are coming out of college now have that mindset...It needs to be the direction in which we’re going.”

(For more information about *I’m Determined*, VDOE’s Self-Determination project, go to www.imdetermined.org.)
Focus on Social-Emotional Development in Students with Disabilities

This T/TAC Telegram focuses on supporting students with disabilities in their social-emotional development. The articles in this issue contain strategies and resources for educators, many that are easily accessible on the web. A great place to locate a variety of information is T/TAC Online (www.ttaonline.org). Visit this site and search All Disabilities using the keyword Behavior. The search will bring up organizations and web sites, as well as tools like print and assessment materials. Many of the professional organizations listed, such as the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (TACSEI), offer their own resources and links to additional tools that can be used to facilitate your work in the classroom with your students. If you want to target your search on materials for the social-emotional development in young children, you can also search the presentations from the 2011 Shining Stars conference. On T/TAC Online, select early childhood from the left side menu and search within the category for Shining Stars conference.

A number of schools in Region 4 are using iPads in the classroom for a variety of purposes. Did you know that there are a variety of apps that can be used to help students understand emotions and behaviors in everyday situations? Some of the Free apps that you can review to see if they are appropriate for use with your students are: the Functional Skills System – the Social Skills Sampler, Model Me Kids – Videos for Modeling Social Skills, Touch and Learn – Emotions, and an interactive book, “Dusty D. Dawg Has Feelings, Too!” The videos that model social skills in different situations may be helpful in working with students who interact in a workplace or social setting where they have to make decisions on their own. Visit the App store to download these apps. Of course, your educational expertise must be used to decide if any app is appropriate for use within your curriculum and is in accordance with school policies.

And….an important event will be happening soon!

Pass the word about FUTURE QUEST – a free college and career forum – that will be held on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University on November 19th from 8:00 am – 2:40 pm. The forum is geared for students with disabilities, parents, and professionals. The keynote speakers will be Danielle Fortney, MAT Elementary Special Education Teacher in Loudoun County Public Schools and Joshua Anton, Student Leader at Northern Virginia Community College. There will be sessions that will focus on topics such as career planning, the college application process, and supports and resources in college. Visit www.vacollegequest.org/FQ2011/FutureQuest2011program.pdf for more information.
Paraprofessionals are often asked to facilitate social interactions for students, providing opportunities for positive social emotional interactions throughout the day. What is social-emotional development? According to the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), it is the “developing capacity of the child from birth through five years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn - all in the context of family, community, and culture” (CSEFEL, http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/trainings/1.2.pdf).

CSEFEL has many tools that encourage young children’s social-emotional development. You’ll find scripted stories for social situations, an extensive list of children’s books that can help young children understand their emotions and a variety of activities and materials to help children promote self-regulation or problem solving. One example is the handout here. This handout and numerous other tools are available for FREE from the CSEFEL website at www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/.

Look for opportunities throughout the day to prompt children to engage in positive social interactions. Specific prompting strategies include:

- **Behavioral Momentum** — Using several easy requests or tasks followed by a more difficult request to build the child’s confidence and increase the likelihood that he or she will respond to the more difficult task.
  
  For example: If a child is willing to share with a teacher but has difficulty sharing with a peer, you could take turns with the child using a preferred toy for several exchanges before requesting that the child share the toy with a peer.

- **Priming** — Giving a child an idea of what to do or how to participate (in this case, regarding a social interaction) before the child begins the play situation.
  
  For example: Before the child goes to the housekeeping area, you suggest to the child that he or she ask the children already in the housekeeping area if they want to have a birthday party. Meanwhile, you get out the box of birthday party materials.

- **Correspondence Training** — Asking a child what he will do (regarding a social skill or behavior) before he enters into a play situation and then following up with the child to see whether he did in fact do what he said he would.
  
  For example: As a child transitions to the messy table where another child is already playing, you stop him and ask him what he is going to do with the other child when he gets there. You then go with the child to the messy table and wait to see whether the child follows through with what he told you.

Use acknowledgment or positive feedback after positive social interactions to increase the likelihood that they will happen again.

- Once targeted behaviors are learned, you can fade to intermittent reinforcement, only reinforcing the behavior occasionally.

- Types of reinforcement or acknowledgment should be individualized for each child to ensure that it is meaningful for the child.

When reinforcing interactions, be sure not to interrupt the children while the interaction is taking place.

- Adults should wait until interactions between children have completed before providing praise or acknowledgment.

Greatest intervention benefits will be realized by combining prompting and acknowledgment strategies with the strategies outlined in the other What Works Briefs on social interactions:

- Using Classroom Activities and Routines as Opportunities to Support Peer Interaction
- Environmental Strategies to Promote Positive Social Interactions
- Promoting Positive Peer Social Interactions
What's in YOUR library at VDOE's T/TAC at GMU?

November/December 2011

Featuring some of our Most Wanted resources . . .

Asperger's on the Job: Must-Have Advice for People with Asperger's or High Functioning Autism and their Employers, Educators, and Advocates by Rudy Simone; Foreword by Dr. Temple Grandin; Call number: 331.595 SIM 2010

This resource is full of advice on how to find employment, including tips on social blunders, sensory issues, bullying by co-workers, interview tips and personal job map tools.

Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism by Temple Grandin, Temple & Kate Duffy; Call number: 331.702 GRA 2008

This book provides advice on career planning, jobs, and employment to people with autism or Asperger Syndrome from people with autism or Asperger Syndrome who have also achieved lucrative and enjoyable careers.

Disability and Business: Best Practices and Strategies for Inclusion by Charles A. Riley II; Call number: 658.300 RIL 2006

A practical guide for managers, recruiters, job seekers, and placement counselors, this book provides resources and strategies for inclusion in the workplace.

This is a comprehensive guide for anyone with a learning disability, attention deficit disorder, or dyslexia in planning for a career or finding a job.

Real Work for Real Pay: Inclusive Employment for People with Disabilities by Paul Wehman, Katherine J. Inge, W. Grant Revell, Jr. & Valerie A. Brooke; Call number: 331.595 WEH 2007

In this book, you’ll find a collection of current best practices, employment theories and policies, and specific tools that support inclusive employment.

Job Success for Persons with Developmental Disabilities by David B. Wiegan; Call number: 658.300 WIE 2009

This book provides a reality-based and commonsense approach to developing and maintaining meaningful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

The Job Developer’s Handbook: Practical Tactics for Customized Employment by Cary Griffin, David Hammis & Tammara Geary; Call number: 362.404 GRI 2007

This book walks employment specialists step by step through customized job development for people with disabilities. It includes guidelines, checklists of critical questions, success stories, sample scenarios, dialogues, and interview questions.


The author discusses his own experiences at work and highlights challenges common among employees with Asperger Syndrome (AS). The DVD also includes interviews with Nick’s former employers who assess his strengths and weaknesses, as well as commentary from Gail Hawkins who relates Nick’s experiences to those she sees in her work with people with AS. It is a valuable source of information and inspiration for teenagers with AS, as well as anyone working with someone with AS.

New hours for the Kellar Library!

Now open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 9:30 PM and Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

If you like these, search our catalog for more @ http://kihd.gmu.edu/library

No time to come to the library? No problem!
Most items can be mailed to your school or home address.

To request one of the items above or any other materials available for checkout, please contact Region 4 T/TAC Librarian Jackie Petersen, jpetersk@gmu.edu or 703.993.3672

New library location: Finley Hall, Room 116, GMU Fairfax Campus
**NOVEMBER**

**November 17-19, 2011: 27th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs & Their Families**

**Location:** Gaylord National Resort and Conference Center, National Harbor, Maryland (Washington, DC, Metro Area)

**Sponsored By:** Council for Exceptional Children/Division of Early Childhood (CEC/DEC)

**Information:** Join colleagues from around the world to explore the evidence, present practical strategies, and engage in discussions that will change the way you think. Join the Division of Early Childhood and over 300 outstanding presenters who will inspire your work with transformative approaches. This comprehensive professional development experience offers sessions on topics such as: policy, autism, recommended practices, tiered interventions, challenging behavior, personnel development, research, assessment, cultural diversity, and more! Begin this year’s conference with a very special story of transformation. This year’s keynote presentation will focus on the Kondrich family’s journey. Learn how Chloe, who was born with Down syndrome, initiated a family transformation that is a lesson for us all. Find out how early intervention services and supports created a solid foundation for Chloe and her family.


**November 19th: Future Quest: A Free Career and College Forum**

**Location:** Johnson Center, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

**Sponsored By:** VDOE’s Training and Technical Assistance Center at GMU, and the Northern Virginia Transition Coalition

**Information:** Future Quest is a free biennial career and college forum for students with disabilities, parents and professionals, where you can learn about: Options after High School, Career Planning, Career/Technical Schools, Employment Strategies, College Application Process and Supports and Resources in College. The Keynote Speakers are: Danielle Fortney, MAT Elementary Special Education Teacher, Loudoun County Public Schools and Joshua Anton, Student Leader, Northern Virginia Community College, Business Administration. Pre-registration is highly recommended, but on-site registration will be available.


**November 28th: Webinar: Social Competence Webinar Series - Part 1: Overview**

**Sponsored by:** Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)

**Information:** What is social competence? How does it differ from social skills? Why is social competence important for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)? This overview webinar will answer these questions and delve into how the characteristics of ASD affect the ability to acquire social competence.

November 29th: ABA in the Classroom for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Using the Verbal Behavior Approach, Part 2

Location: Marriott Williamsburg, 50 Kingsmill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188

Sponsored By: VDOE T/TAC at VC U

Information: Target Audience: This workshop is appropriate for educators and related service providers serving students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and/or Intellectual Disabilities who want to learn more about the methods of Applied Behavior Analysis for teaching students in their classrooms. Although this workshop is part two of a two-day series, all participants will be provided a review of part one (held April 6, 2011); thus, first time registrants are welcome to attend. Description: TTAC ODU and TTAC VCU are excited to bring back Robert Schramm, MA, BCBA, to elaborate on his unique take on the Verbal Behavior Approach to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Robert will share practical strategies to teach language to a variety of learners from those who are non-verbal to highly verbal. This video filled workshop will provide examples of how to implement these important teaching techniques. Topics Covered will include: Teaching Language (from non-verbal to highly verbal), Prompting and Prompt Fading, Levels of Manding, Augmentative Communication, Social Skills, and Token Economies


November 30th: Webinar- Social Competence Webinar Series - Part 2: Assessment

Sponsored by: Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)

Information: This webinar will help participants learn about the importance of assessment as it relates to social competence. Three methods of assessment and examples of each will be discussed. Many rating scales will be reviewed.


December 11th: Webinar: Reach and Teach All Students Webinar Series – Part 3

Sponsored by: Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)

Information: In this webinar session, participants will learn about methods and materials used to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Additionally, participants will learn about assistive technologies (AT) and how the use of UDL strategies may help to minimize the use of AT among some students with disabilities.


Sponsored by: Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)

Information: Good play skills are connected to better cognitive, social, language, and emotional development. For individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), play can be a challenge. This webinar shares how ASD affects play and the formation of friendships, while giving supports to help develop play and friendship skills.


Sponsored by: Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)

Information: What can you do to support individuals who struggle with social situations and interactions? This webinar will share strategies to help build social competence and strategies to use after a situation goes wrong to help the individual identify what happened and how to approach the situation differently next time. Also participants will learn about relationship building keys for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their parents, siblings, and possible romantic relationships.


2012 EVENTS

March 7 & 8, 2012: 11th Annual Autism Conference: Autism - Imagine the Possibilities

Location: The Westin, 6631 West Broad St., Richmond, VA 23230

Sponsored By: Commonwealth Autism Service


March 12 – 14, 2012: Technology for Transition; Making the Connection. Virginia Transition Forum

Location: The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center, Roanoke

Supported By contributions from: Virginia Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Student Services and Division of Technology and Career Education; Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center; Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired; Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education - Special Needs Division; Virginia Division on Career Development and Transition; Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Information: The Virginia Transition Forum brings together students, parents, educators, rehabilitation professionals, and others to guide youth with disabilities to achieve successful employment and life outcomes.

For More Information and Registration: Visit www.virginiatransitionforum.org

Sign-Up Today

The T/TAC Telegram has gone electronic. If you would like to receive our quarterly newsletter, please sign up on our website at: http://www.regonline.com/ttac_newsletter. You will receive each new issue of our newsletter delivered right to your inbox.
ESEA Flexibility
The U.S. Department of Education is inviting each State educational agency (SEA) to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies, and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2011; September 23, 2011).

New Regulations on IDEA Infants and Toddlers Program Released. Focus on Quality Services and Outcomes (From the US Department of Education)


IDEA Part B Notice of Proposed Rule published in Federal Register
(From the US Department of Education)
In the September 28, 2011 Federal Register, the Secretary proposes to amend regulations under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These regulations govern the Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities program, including the Preschool Grants program. The Secretary seeks public comment on these proposed amendments regarding the use of public benefits or insurance in which a child participates to provide or pay for services required under Part B of IDEA.

References


