Embedding Social Instruction Throughout the Curriculum: Moving Beyond Lunch Bunch, Recess and Specials

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Social Skills Topics for Today

• Challenges for students with autism

• Challenges for interventions in an academic setting

• Answers?

• Questions and more answers
Social Skills

• Overt skills
  ▫ Greetings
  ▫ Termination
  ▫ Conversation
  ▫ Gestures and facial expressions

• Commonly included in IEP objectives
  ▫ Logical progression?

• Secondary deficit to underlying challenges facing students with autism
Social Skills

• Covert Skills
  ▫ Perspective taking
  ▫ Attending to salient features of interaction
    • Watching eyes and facial expressions
    • Listening for tone of voice
  ▫ Motivation
    • What desired outcomes do students have for social interaction
    • Can they identify social contingencies?

• Rarely seen in IEP objectives
Social Skills

- Core deficit in diagnosis of ASD
- Goes hand in hand with communication along the triad of impairments
- There are a LOT of programs to teach social skills
- There are a LOT of programs to teach perspective taking
- There is little research to support what is out there
  - Evidence-based practices are limited
  - Why they work is even less well articulated
Social Intervention

- Intervention typically occurs for a set period of time
- Intervention typically occurs for a set time of the week
- Intervention typically occurs with a set person
- Intervention typically occurs within a set setting
- Intervention typically occurs within a set framework
  - Curriculum
  - Tasks
- Any problems?
Problems with Current Approach to Social Instruction

- Poor assessment of skills
  - Joint attention
  - Motivation
  - Perspective Taking
- Focus on overt skills
- Instructional approaches
  - Verbal
  - Little history of success
  - Overuse of prompting
- Structure of teaching does not lead to success in generalized settings
Tip of the Iceberg
Purpose of Ecological Assessment

- Level of validity for assessment
  - Measure social contexts for behavioral performance
  - Content validity – The degree to which something measures an agreed upon social construct (e.g., social skills)

- Foundation for evidence-based practice
  - Delineates expected outcomes for intervention

- Provides a link between assessment, goals and teaching content (Haney & Cavallaro, 1996)

- Used as part of a multi-dimensional assessment
Purpose of Ecological Assessment

• **Scientific Characteristics**
  ▫ **Description**
  • Collection of facts about observed events that can be quantified, classified, & examined for possible relations with other known facts
  • Ecological Assessment helps us to develop a picture of environmental variables that may effect performance in a given setting for a particular individual
Purpose of Ecological Assessment

- **Scientific Characteristics**
  - **Prediction**
    - Relative probability that when one event occurs, another event will or will not occur
    - Based on repeated observation revealing relationships between various events
    - Evaluating the individual’s performance within the environment allows use to make predictions of future performance
    - Knowledge of the individual’s abilities can also be used to support predictions of given a set of environmental variables
Purpose of Ecological Assessment

• Evaluate socially significant behavior
• Social Validity (Wolf, 1978)
  ▫ Social significance of the goals
    • Goals are needed and valued by society
  ▫ Social importance of the effects
    • Are consumers satisfied with results
• Ecological assessment provides information on behaviors required to participate in a given environment.
• Environmental variables and levels of performance of nondisabled individuals are measured in an ecological assessment.
• High level of social validity as the goal is to define optimal performance in a “traditional” environment
Ecological Assessment

- Obtain Normative Data on performance of individuals in a common setting
  - How do others perform the behavior we are looking to teach (topography)?
    - e.g., What do greetings look like in 1st grade? How do children respond to feedback from a teacher?
  - How often do they perform this behavior (frequency or duration)
    - e.g., How often do children extend greetings to others? What is the typical length of conversation for a 13 year-old boy?
Ecological Assessment

• Ecological Inventory
  ▫ Task analyze the behaviors involved in performing the behaviors associated with the particular environment
  ▫ It is important to analyze the behavior in great detail to support the evaluation of the individual’s performance
Example

• Evaluating Morning Meeting in a 3\textsuperscript{rd} Grade Classroom:

1. Evaluate the expectations of the meeting

   a) Academic
      i. Describe previous night’s activity
      ii. Identify errors in the morning message

   b) Behavioral
      i. Sitting for 15 minutes
      ii. Raising hand to respond to questions

   c) Motor
      i. Maintaining postural stability
      ii. Writing corrections on morning message

   d) Social
      a) Greeting peers in circle
      b) Attending to teacher and peers while they are speaking
      c) Asking questions about peers previous night activities

   e) Transitions
      a) Desk to carpet area
      b) Greeting activity to calendar
      c) Calendar to morning message
Analysis of Academic Content

- Standards provide structure for looking at higher order thinking
- Social skills require higher order thinking/cognitive skills
- If they are in the standards they must be able to be taught
- Should include them in our academic programs!
Sample standards and Expectations

- ELA Frameworks
  - **Reading and Responding**
    - 1.1 Students use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning.
      - **Pre-K** - make and verify predications about what will occur
  - **Communicating with Others**
    - 3.1 - Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.
      - **Gr 5** – Plan, Draft, Revise and Edit
Sample Standards

- **Science**
  - K.2 - Many different kinds of living things inhabit the Earth.
    - Describe the similarities and differences in the appearance and behaviors of adults and their offspring.
  - Gr 3 – 5 - Scientific inquiry is a thoughtful and coordinated attempt to search out, describe, explain and predict natural phenomena.
    - Design and conduct simple investigations.
    - Use data to construct reasonable explanations.
  - Middle School
    - Scientific inquiry progresses through a continuous process of questioning, data collection, analysis and interpretation.
      - Read, interpret and examine the credibility of scientific claims in different sources of information.
Sample Standards

• Social Studies

○ 1.5 – Describe the interaction of humans and the environment.
  • Pre-K - Investigate one’s impact on the immediate environment (e.g., why we need to pick up toys).

○ 1.9 – Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
  • K - Discuss responsibilities students have to classmates and school community.
  • Gr 1 - Give examples of an individual’s responsibilities as a citizen in the school.
  • Gr 4 - Explain significant characteristics of an effective and responsible resident in one’s state (e.g., voting, participating in government).

○ 3.2 – Analyze and evaluate human action in historical and/or contemporary contexts from alternative points of view.
  • Gr 2 - Predict how another person might feel in a historical and/or contemporary situation.
Sample Standards

• Mathematics
  ▫ 1.1 Understand and describe patterns and functional relationships.
    • Gr 5 - Identify trends and make predictions based upon patterns and data displayed in different formats.
  ▫ 4.2 Analyze data sets to form hypotheses and make predictions.
    • Pre-K - Extend different types of patterns and make predictions.
    • Gr 4 - Analyze data to identify a typical element or event.
Common Themes

• Analyze/Investigate
  ▫ Take data and review it

• Predict
  ▫ Based on what data shows

• Discuss
  ▫ Roles and responsibilities

• Demonstration
  ▫ Act in accordance with certain roles (e.g., student, citizen, family member, friend)
Intervention
Problem Solving/Critical Thinking

• Central concept to be used across interventions

• Why?
  ▫ Provides the foundation for future discussions in academic and social tasks
  ▫ Linked to core challenges with autism
  ▫ Can be taught in a sequential manner with support to carry over to other tasks
  ▫ Common language to be used by all interventionists
  ▫ For more analytical individuals, plays to their strengths
Step to Problem Solving (Task Analysis)

- Identify the problem
  - Addresses – Identifying salient features of the environment
- Provide a hypothesis about what will next step/outcome be
  - Takes into account the perspective of the student
    - If I do this then this will happen
- Find evidence to confirm or disconfirm your position
  - Addresses perspective taking
  - Requires evaluation of the interaction/event
- Did the outcome you predicted occur
  - If not, what would have worked better
  - Allows for feedback to come from the individual as well as the others
Skills to be addressed

Common themes

- Perspective taking
- Problem solving/Critical Thinking
- Prediction and inference
Intervention considerations

- Address MOTIVATION!
- Make the implicit explicit
- Develop flexibility
  - Others do not have the same information
- Practice is critical
  - Skills practiced frequently become fluent
  - Skills practice frequently in different contexts generalize
    - People, materials, settings
Motivation

• Why do we interact with others?
  ▫ Think payoff

• Establish people as conditioned reinforcers
  ▫ Pair preferred items with others
  ▫ This must include peers at times
Example – Kindergarten Reading


• Read aloud of book – Corduroy
  ▫ Introduce strategy – Prediction
    • After you make a prediction, pay very close attention to what really does happen next so you can see if your prediction was right.
  ▫ Model and Practice strategy
    • Specific to certain pages in the book
    • Correct and incorrect prediction modeled
      • Reinforce effort
    • Multiple opportunities to practice
Strategies to support our lesson

- Small group read aloud
  - Visuals more easily accessible for strategy
  - More frequent opportunities to assess student
  - If fluent reader, can have read certain pages
- Rehearsal of strategy with related services personnel
- Visual organizers for support
  - Schedule for problem solving/utilizing the strategy
  - Rubric for responding
Example – 3rd Grade Writing

- Inference:

- **Objective:** “Show,” don’t “tell” using specific details.

- Use details to describe an event that is not explicit
  - Make the implicit explicit

- Uses a model from literature and models examples

- Uses explicit sentences to provide starting point for developing own sentences
  - Practice

- Requires perspective taking – What would it take to convince someone without telling them?
Example - Writing

• Provide a scenario for a student to write about using a visual support
  ▫ Writing prompts alone may be challenging for visual learners
  ▫ Scaffold writing with word list of emotion words, detail words and descriptive words

• Reverse process from reading and content areas, need to provide the evidence for their writing
  ▫ As opposed to finding the evidence
Behavioral Skills Training

- Model for instruction in these sample lesson plans
  - Instruction
  - Modeling
  - Practice
  - Feedback

- High levels of motivation with feedback on positive steps taken
- Quick error correction
- Must reinforce steps of the process, not overall outcome!
# Educational Matrix

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Perspective Taking</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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The Role of the Team

- Team should support overarching aims of social instruction
- Utilize explicit instructional practices across providers
- Increase overlap in objectives to promote practice opportunities
- Review pre and post instruction
- Rehearsal of strategies
- Expansion of strategies to other domains
We have a lot of work to do!