Teaching Practices

Examples of techniques in use that are ABA-rooted and have good classroom application include peer-mediated instruction, visual schedules, and priming. Each is defined and operationalized for teaching implementation below.

Use Peer-Mediated Instruction (PMI). Using other students as models, or peer-mediated instruction, is a useful strategy. Peer-mediated instruction is an evidence-based practice for teaching social skills to individuals (Reichow & Volkmar, 2010). PMI uses typically developing peers to interact with and help learners with ASD acquire social skills through interaction opportunities within classroom environments. Peers are systematically taught to engage learners with ASD socially in both teacher-directed and learner-initiated activities (Carter, Sisco, & Chung, 2012) and, in turn, peers and individuals with ASD are then given opportunities to engage in social interactions (McConnell, 2002).

Social skills targeted in PMI include the following: responding to others, reciprocity, interacting with others or in groups; organizing play; offering, giving, or accepting a play material to/from focal child; or providing assistance. In practical terms, you may select one of the peers to act as the peer model by giving that peer tasks such as holding all the crayons and waiting for your student to ask for one. Or, if you give an instruction and the student with ASD doesn’t respond, have a peer repeat the instruction and/or get that student instead of the teacher or aide. For a detailed list of steps for developing PMIs, including how to select and train peers, prepare the materials and settings, as well as administer the intervention and collect data, see https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/resources/psiPeermedstrategies.pdf.

Use Visual Cues/Schedules. Visual cues are physical representations of content with concrete characteristics such as pictures to show which activities will occur and in what sequence. Visual schedules are a type of visual prompt used to help individuals on the autism spectrum predict or understand upcoming events (see https://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/images/VisualSupports.pdf). Visual supports help the learner maintain attention to the task, clarify expectations, and encourage participation.

A visual schedule can be created using photographs, pictures, written words, physical objects, or any combination of
President’s Message

Ginevra Courtade

Attention DADD members, we need your help! The DADD board of directors is committed to grow our membership and strengthen our member benefits. Here is what we need from you:

• If you are a current member of DADD, I challenge you to convince one colleague, friend, or family member to join the Division!
• Why should they join DADD? Membership benefits include:
  o Quarterly issues of Education and Training in Autism and Development Disabilities and Focus on Autism and Developmental Disabilities;
  o Quarterly issues of DADD Express with columns specific to teachers, evidence-based practices, and legal issues;
  o A board committed to advocacy for and the success of individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities;
  o and most of all, a professional home.

What do I mean by a professional home? If you are a practitioner working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual disability (ID), we are a home for you. We offer you research-based practices through our journals and conferences, and practitioner-friendly approaches to use these techniques. If you are a therapist, we offer you research-based practices for working with individuals with ASD/ID to provide wrap-around services. If you are an individual with ASD/ID or a family member of an individual with ASD/ID, we need your voice. We support open dialogue around advocacy and the social validity of instructional procedures/techniques/measures that are being used with individuals with ASD/ID. If you are a researcher or a college/university instructor, we offer you a home to publish practical research and share effective practices for training new teachers and support personnel to work with individuals with ASD/ID.

Would you like to work on a DADD committee? We have many committees that serve different needs of the organization. If you are interested in joining a committee or would just like more information, please contact one of the following committee chairs:

Awards Committee – Angi Stone-Macdonald
angela.stone@umb.edu

Critical Issues Committee – Bree Jimenez
drbreejimenez@gmail.com

Communications Committee – Bree Jimenez
drbreejimenez@gmail.com

Conference Committee – Cindy Perras
cindy.perras@gmail.com

Diversity Committee – Liz Harkins
harkinse@wpunj.edu

Membership & Subdivisions Committee – Jenny Root
jrroot@fsu.edu

Publications Committee – Jim Thompson
jrthomp@ku.edu

Student Membership – Megan Carpenter
mgillis7@uncc.edu

Join DADD! We would love for you to be a part of our strong and supportive home. We look forward to working together to make DADD a division that benefits its members. Please let me know if you have any suggestions or issues that you would like to see the board address. Have a great spring!

Executive Director’s Corner

Emily Bouck

The school year is coming to the end, and as executive director, I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss how DADD is focused on supporting our members. At DADD, we are very much aware that our organization is what it is because of our members. As such, we are committed to making sure our members feel supported and valued.

As previously noted in our newsletters, DADD launched a new website (http://www.daddcec.com/). As part of this website, we have an entire section on practitioner resources, in which we pull out the Legal Briefs, Teachers’ Corner articles, and Evidence-based Practice articles from DADD Express. In addition, our DADD Online Journal (DOJ), which is focused on translating research presented at our annual conference into practice, is available on our website.

Other ways we are reaching out and seeking to provide benefits to our members is through our conferences. In addition to our annual conference (to be located in Clearwater, Florida, in January 2021, and then Hawaii in January 2022), DADD is pleased to be offering its third annual mini-conference this summer. Our first was in Arlington, Texas, in 2018, our second in Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 2019, and our third will be in Louisville, Kentucky, in July 2020. DADD views these mini-conferences as a way to provide access to DADD members presenting at regional locations across the country for a low cost.

Finally, DADD works to support our members through publications. We hope all our members are well aware of the (continued on page 6)
Transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are defined as “a coordinated set of activities that are designed for the individual student as a means to improve both academic and functional outcomes and facilitate movement from school to postsecondary life” (IDEA, 2004). The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Taxonomy) is a useful framework of evidence-based practices for educators, teams, and administrators to use to support successful transition (Kohler et al., 2016).

**Taxonomy for Transition Programming**

The Taxonomy guides transition teams in embedding evidence-based interventions into everyday practice, decision making, and program evaluation. Use of the tool helps transition teams to consider the current environment, as well as the future environment in which the student will be living, working, and continuing their education. Figure 1 shows the cyclical nature of transition planning across categories and outlines the evidence-based interventions housed within each category of the Taxonomy: family engagement, program structures, interagency collaboration, student development, and student-focused planning. Evidence-based interventions are aligned within each category.

Implementing the Taxonomy assists teams in building appropriate comprehensive transition-focused planning of supports before the student leaves the K–12 public school system.

**Research Base**

Thirty-two evidence-based practices have been identified in secondary transition (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009). Sixteen evidence-based predictors have been identified that correlate with positive postsecondary outcomes (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009).

(continued on page 4)
2009). Incorporating the predictive activities and implementing EBPs in transition has been shown to increase student outcomes in education, employment, and independent living (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009). The Taxonomy (Kohler et al., 2016) organizes the identified evidence-based practices (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009) and the evidence-based predictors (Test, Mazzotti, et al, 2009) into one tool. Table 1 provides an overview of the Taxonomy aligned with identified evidence-based practices and related predictors of success in transition.

**Utilizing the Taxonomy**

Transition teams can use the Taxonomy in various ways. The following outlines ways in which the Taxonomy can be utilized effectively by special educators, transition teams, and school/district leaders.

**Special Educators**

Teachers should be encouraged to use the Taxonomy to assess the extent to which their approach is comprehensively addressing transition planning. The Taxonomy helps special educators focus on development of student skills, but it is also a reminder of the importance of promoting and assessing family engagement, building collaborative interagency and interdisciplinary partnerships, and advocating for school policies and procedures that support overall student success. Thus, the Taxonomy helps teachers remember to use a variety of tools across the various categories supportive of effective transition.

**Transition Teams**

The role of IEP teams is to make student-focused decisions on educational programs and, at least by student age 16, transition planning based on progress data, and to provide expertise and experience for the student, their family, relevant professionals, and other community partners. The Taxonomy helps to focus teams on the most critical elements of planning for student learning, designing of interventions, supporting student development, involving families and collaborative partners, and building necessary systems and structures. Such focus can help to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Further, having an external framework to guide the process can help a team through difficult or complicated conversations. Finally, a review of the framework can be used as an assessment of the team’s

(continued on page 7)

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**Table 1. Predictors and Evidence-Based Practices Aligned with Taxonomy for Transition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy 2.0 (Kohler et al., 2016)</th>
<th>Predictors of Successful Transition (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009)</th>
<th>Evidence-based practice in Transition (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009)</th>
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<td>Student-focused planning</td>
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<td>Family engagement</td>
<td>Family education on transition</td>
<td>Student support</td>
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<td>Instruction beyond secondary school</td>
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<td>Check and connect</td>
<td>Exit exam/diploma</td>
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<td>Interagency collaboration</td>
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Becoming Leaders in the Field: Models of Language

Special education preparation programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels prepare future teachers, researchers, and support personnel to be leaders in the field. In this role, we provide an example for others to follow. The language we use to refer to children, youth, and adults with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities becomes a model of this leadership.

Recently, I had the privilege of discussing the language we use to describe people with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities with colleagues and mentors. Most leaders in the field of special education generally accept the use of person-first language (i.e., emphasizing the person before the disability; Blaska, 1993). Additionally, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) and the National Center on Disability and Journalism (NCDJ, 2018) both advocate for person-first language. In some teacher preparation programs, students may only learn about person-first language to describe the people we support. However, based on my recent conversations with colleagues and mentors, this topic is more complex than just using person-first language.

First, some self-advocates prefer identity-first language (e.g., “autistic person”; Dunn & Andrews, 2015, p. 257). Although some self-advocates prefer its use, I am not advocating we switch to identity-first language. However, I am advocating that we listen to and learn from people with disabilities who use identity-first language. We do not want to tell a person with a disability that their choice of identifying language is wrong (Dunn & Andrews, 2015). For those of us preparing teachers, we want to help teachers understand the importance of listening and understanding in addition to the importance of person-first language.

In addition to person- and identity-first language, there are many terms to describe people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Common terms include developmental disabilities, significant disabilities, severe disabilities, extensive support needs, and intellectual disability. While the newest phrase in the literature is people with extensive support needs (Kurth et al., 2019), this term is not typically used by self-advocates and may be used to describe people with other disabilities.

Furthermore, the words we use to identify people may carry stigmas. For example, some words (e.g., those, others) can insinuate an outsider status. Other words (e.g., individuals) can ostracize people from the population. Even the terms children or students can be inappropriate to refer to people over the age of 18.

The general public expects that you, as a higher education student, will have up-to-date knowledge and skills to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As current students and future leaders in special education, we must realize that our language sets an example. There is no definitive answer for the best language to use, but some guidelines should be followed.

First, we should listen to people with developmental disabilities. As much as I study and research ways to support students with extensive support needs, I will never know what it is like to personally live with autism, intellectual disability, or a developmental disability. If we can find the time to research ways to improve the quality of life of children, youth, and adults with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities, we should take the time to speak with and learn from those whose identities we are describing.

Second, when in doubt, use person-first language. Many of us work with children, youth, and adults who have complex communication needs or who are very young. In some instances, it may not be possible to discuss preferred identity terminology. In these cases, it is appropriate to default to person-first language. Using person-first language emphasizes the person before the disability (Blaska, 1993). Leaders in our field agree this is the best default option. Additionally, APA suggests person-first language in all publications.

Third, ensure the words you choose accurately, adequately, and respectfully describe the children, youth, and adults with autism, intellectual disability, and/or other developmental disabilities you work to support. Respectful terms include students, people, children, youth, and adults. Respectful terms to describe disability include the specific disability (e.g., autism, Down syndrome), intellectual disability, developmental disability, and extensive support needs (NCDJ, 2018). Because I work primarily in elementary schools, I usually say, “I work to support students with extensive support needs.” Whatever phrase you choose, be prepared to explain your rationale to people inside and outside of our field. More importantly, be ready to listen to others’ perspectives.

In conclusion, part of being a leader in the field of special education is setting an example. One way we set an example is...
these items, which can then enhance comprehension (Miranda & Erickson, 2000). Instead of verbally reminding students, they can be directed back to their schedule, thereby removing the need for constant reminders. A visual schedule can always be adapted to be age- and developmentally appropriate for each student. While a younger student can use pictures, an older student can use a text-based to-do list. Visual schedules can be used to promote transition between routines (such as moving from a classroom to a lunch setting) or within the student’s daily activity routines (such as moving from group discussion to independent work). A variety of behavioral techniques (prompts and/or praise and rewards) can be used to encourage the student to use the schedule. Over time, the support provided can be faded so that students are able to use the schedules independently.

**Use Priming.** Priming is another useful ABA strategy that can be applied in a classroom. Priming permits the student to be exposed to the new content in a context free of the pressure to perform and links individual instruction to the larger group activities typical of the mainstream setting (Hart & Whalon, 2008). If you have a student that has difficulty in a specific content area, request the materials beforehand so that you can pre-teach or prime some of the content. In this way, when the teacher teaches the content during class, it will be easier for the student with ASD to attend to and follow the instructions in a group. This prior exposure promotes engagement while simultaneously decreasing disruptive behavior, and it levels the academic playing field. Priming can even provide the child with ASD an opportunity to assume the expert role when the content is introduced to the class as a whole (Werner et al., 2006).

**Conclusion**

There is growing evidence pointing to the usefulness of ABA-based approaches that serve as educational interventions for ASD and federal mandates (i.e., IDEA) that require educators to use evidence-based practices to improve academic and/or behavioral outcomes. It is hoped that the teaching tips described here can help guide teachers on how to effectively use approaches that reflect evidence-based ABA principles.

**References**


Evidence-based Practices continued from page 3

provide practical, systematic support for building and reinforcing school systems necessary for effective transition.

Conclusion
Given the number of children with autism and developmental disabilities who will exit school-based services, the need for quality transition services focused on positive post-school outcomes is critical. It is essential that special education teachers employ EBPs while teaching transition skills and provide students with the predictive activities that lead to positive post-school outcomes. The Taxonomy offers a framework to connect evidence-based interventions and services for transition into planning and practice.

References

School and District Leaders
The Taxonomy clarifies for school and district leaders the practices, structures, systems, and supports most likely to lead to effective transition planning and the outcomes desired by the student and their family. School and district leaders should consider conducting a school- or district-level needs assessment of transition programming for students with disabilities using a framework so that all students have access to effective planning and teaching. To do so, school and district leaders could gather transition teams to assess their levels of implementation, identify examples of practices being implemented, determine strengths specific to transition as well as areas of need, and develop an action plan for addressing these areas. Of particular salience for school and district leaders are the primary practice categories of program structures and interagency collaboration. While all areas of practice described in the Taxonomy rely on school leader commitment, these two areas offer opportunities for leadership in cultivating community partnerships and ensuring that barriers to effective transition are minimized. Finally, district and school leaders have a needs assessment and planning tool that directly aligns with the Taxonomy available through the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition website (see www.transitionprogramtool.org). This framework and tool provide practical, systematic support for building and reinforcing school systems necessary for effective transition.

Students’ Corner, continued from page 5

by the language we use. Another, but equally important, way we demonstrate leadership is to listen to people with disabilities and advocates about their identities and preferred identity terminology. We must be able to articulate our goals for improving the quality of lives for children, youth, and adults with autism, intellectual disability, or other developmental disabilities in a respectful way that is understood by people both inside and outside our field.

References

2020 DADD Conference Highlights

This past January, more than 350 delegates, presenters, and exhibitors participated in DADD’s 21st International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, & Developmental Disabilities in Sarasota, Florida!

Highlights from the 3-day conference include:

Focused Training: Pre-conference training institutes on (a) Reaching the Hard to Serve: Ethics in School-Based BCBA Services and BCBA Supervision in Rural Areas of Poverty and (b) Using Current and Emerging Technologies to Enhance Outcomes for Students with ASD and/or Intellectual Disability.

Opening General Session: Dr. Jennifer Lesh, president of International CEC, opened the 2020 Conference with her keynote address, High Leverage Practices: Redefining Our Profession, Empowering Teachers.

Closing General Session/Self-Advocate Voice: Sarah Goldman, self-advocate, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council member, and state legislative aide, delivered a powerful and poignant closing keynote, The Road to Becoming an Effective Advocate. Sarah’s keynote addressed her triumphs and challenges, how those challenges fueled her to become an effective advocate, and how educators can be the best advocates for those they serve.

Exhibit Hall: Thank you to all of our exhibitors, many of whom participate year after year—a shout out to TeachTown, Attainment Company, and QBS Inc.! Also, a special note of appreciation to the exhibitors who provided corporate sponsorship this year, including Attainment Company, QBS Inc., and George Miller III (art advocate).

Networking Opportunities: Conference participants enjoyed interacting with educators, researchers, colleagues, and exhibitors at each of the four poster presentation sessions, at the President’s Reception, at lunch on Thursday, and on Thursday and Friday mornings at the Exhibit Hall. Additionally, DADD hosted a well-attended Student Social.

Continuing Education: DADD provides Professional Development Hours (PDHs) and BACB-approved continuing education sessions. BCBA conference participants received BACB CEUs at no additional cost!

DADD Membership Outreach: Division members at the conference participated in the Annual General Business Meeting and DADD Committee Meetings.

Student Poster Presentation Award: Congratulations to Sani-kan Wattanawongwan, doctoral candidate at Texas A&M University, and her poster presentation Parents Coaching in Naturalistic Strategies to Improve Communication Skills for Adolescents and Adults with Autism via Telepractice.

Save the Date! Plan to join us in beautiful Clearwater Beach, Florida, for DADD’s 22nd annual conference, January 20–22, 2021. Call for proposals opens on April 1 and closes on June 1.

For additional information on DADD’s conferences, please contact Cindy Perras, DADD conference coordinator, at cindy.perras@gmail.com.

Editor’s Note

Chris Denning
I hope you enjoyed this issue of DADD Express. Let me know if you’d like copies of recent Teachers’ Corner, Legal Brief, or EBP articles, or look for them on the new DADD website at http://www.daddcec.com/. The website is filled with all things DADD.

Interested in writing for DADD Express? We are always soliciting articles for Teachers’ Corner and for our EBP and Legal Briefs sections. If you would like to contribute, please contact me with ideas or questions (christopher.denning@umb.edu).

Look for the DADD award winners and information on PRISM 12 in the next issue of DADD Express.