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- Email customerservice@OccupationalTherapy.com
Collaborative Consultation: Supporting Students with Autism in the Classroom

Tara Warwick, MS, OTR/L

Learning Outcomes

- Summarize Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Identify three strategies for implementing UDL
- Identify five characteristics of quality classrooms for students with autism.
What is collaborative consulting?

- Problem-centered approach in which two or more professional teams work together to create a solution.
- Team support that is emerging as a best practice standard for school-based occupational therapy.
- Different from “expert” model.

(Morris, 2013)

Components

- Active listening
- Shared goals
- Mutual decision making
- Effective communication
- Learning from each other
- Mutual response

(Morris, 2013)
Universal Design for Learning

“Approach to curriculum design that can help teachers customize curriculum to serve all learners, regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background. UDL provides a blueprint for designing strategies, materials, assessments, and tools to reach and teach students with diverse needs”

https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2_TEAL_ULDL.pdf

Universal Design for Learning

- Multiple means of engagement (the hooks that draw students in)
- Representation (alternative ways to present information)
- Expression (alternative ways students can express their knowledge)
Multiple means of engagement

- Schedules
- Routines & procedures
- Priming
- Special interests/reinforcement

Schedules

- Plan for day’s events
- Visual warning for transitions
- Improve understanding of expectations
- Reduce anxiety = increase student’s attention to classroom activities
- Teach independence
- Reduce amount of verbal instruction
Schedule examples

- Object, photo, or symbol of daily activities – listed sequentially
- Highlight changes
- Mini schedules
- Schedules for routines

Routines & Procedures

- Procedures – how teachers want things done in the classroom
- Routines – what students should do without prompting or supervision
- Can improve task completion and behavior by providing consistency and clarity for classroom expectations
- Must teach the routines and procedures (similar to academic content)
**Priming**

Exposing students to school assignments or activities before their presentation in class

- Short, concise
- Not meant to teach the material – only familiarize
- Helps students create connections with new class content
- Increase comfort level and familiarity with new content
- Access to textbooks, handouts, and materials sent home

**Priming example**

- Bryan has difficulty paying attention during circle time in preschool. He often disrupts other children, particularly when the teacher is reading the daily story. During a parent conference, Bryan’s teacher and mother decided to use priming at home to help reduce his off-task behavior in circle time.

  Bryan’s teacher gave his mother the book they were going to read the next day in circle time. Bryan’s mother read the book to Bryan as part of his bedtime ritual that evening. She asked him general questions along the way but did not interrupt the story. Bryan’s mother praised him when he sat and listened to the story. Through this process, Bryan became familiar with the pictures and the text in a comfortable setting.

  Because Bryan had heard the story the night before and knew what to expect, he was able to focus on the book during circle time the following day. By being familiar with the book, Bryan attended to the story without disrupting the teacher or his peers.
Special Interests

- Increased motivation =
  - increased engagement
  - increased interest
  - starting assignments more quickly
  - increased writing and/or math work completion
- Build into lesson (example: essays, projects)
- Allow students to access after completion of assignments

Special Interests Example

- Michael has a special interest in water. His teacher decides to use the special interest for water to teach various skills including self-help, reading, and math. For example, Michael learned to recognize words and icons using stories about water, weather, oceans, and fire engines (water was used to put out fires). Ms. Taylor also wrote a Social Story™ about hygiene for Michael emphasizing all the hygiene activities that involved water.
Multiple means of representation

- Visuals & organizational tools
- Strategy instruction

Visuals and organizational tools

- Tools are used:
  - to organize information for process and recall,
  - to understand how concepts relate,
  - infused into classroom instruction.

Examples: Graphic organizers, semantic maps, web-based tools
Strategy Instruction

- **Strategy instruction** is an approach that teaches the tools and techniques necessary for understanding, learning, and retaining new content and skills.

- Involves teaching strategies that are:
  - **effective** in assisting learners with acquiring, retaining, and generalizing information, and
  - **efficient**: helping them acquire the information in the least amount of time  
    (Lenz, Ellis, & Scanlon, 1996).

- Examples: RAP – Read, Ask, Paraphrase  
  SCORE – Social Skills

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Multiple means of expression

- Structured assignments & task analysis

- Choice

- 5-point scale
Structured assignments and task analysis

- Explicit directions and procedures
- Large assignments broken down into smaller part
- Present instructions in multiple format (e.g. written, auditory)
- Clear performance rubrics

Choice

- Helps give student feeling of “control”
- Alleviates power struggle
- Encourages communication

Assists students with understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses.

www.5pointscale.com

5-Point Scale (continued)

- Many social concepts and social behaviors can be visually seen with scales
- Reduces abstract ideas to simple numbers
- Allows you to break down social situations
5-Point Scale Examples

- Stress/Anxiety Scale
- Talking & Touching Scale
- Obsessional Scale
- Problem Scale
- Voice Volume Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Used for a 3rd grader who loved football</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1. Feel hot, hands to mouth sensation Can't control myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Talking nonstop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. I am probably saying something, or saying hurtful words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feeling mad, you could try to calm me down but it probably won't work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am making threats, punching head and pummeling knuckles, or nightbit</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feeling mad, might be-crying, might be running, kicking, or hitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being weird,town, doing things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Might chew food but not hurting anyone physically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Might be crying, might be making faces, saying unkind words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feel good and relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not hitting, kicking, or calling anyone names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting rewards and praise</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Classroom Observations

Tools for Observation

- Classroom Observation Tool (Carnahan & Lowery, 2018)
- Observation Instrument for Autism Classroom
  - [https://cfl.ucf-card.org/media/56731d2ab333b.pdf](https://cfl.ucf-card.org/media/56731d2ab333b.pdf)
- Autism and Low Incidence Classroom Observation Tool
Physical environment

- Clear boundaries
- Safe, clean, organized
- Variety of work areas
  - Independent
  - Large group
  - Small group
  - Break
  - Independent
Visual Schedules

- Classroom schedules
- Schedules match the instruction
- Staff schedule
- Individualized schedules as needed
- Instruction on using schedules

Behavioral supports

- Rules/expectations are posted
- Reinforcement used across environments
- Choices
- Transitions are quick
- Transition supports available as needed
Instruction considerations

- Variety of instructional methods (large group, small group, 1:1 with teacher)
- Goals are clearly defined
- Activity schedules used as needed
- Additional supports used as needed:
  - Timers, token economy, first/then, organizers, visual directions, video models

Instructional considerations, cont’d.

- Systematic instruction for gaining attention
- Staff interact and participate with students
- Data collection
- Limited conversation amongst adults
Communication

- Communication systems used
- Staff members do not speak on behalf of students
- Communication instruction is embedded throughout classroom activities
- Instruction in social skills
- Students have opportunity to communicate with peers and adults

Strategies for implementing

- Ask permission
- Develop rapport, respect the classroom environment
- Use open ended questions
- Reflective listening (listen to understand, not to respond)
- Identify next steps
- Consistent follow-through
- Maintaining productive communication
References

- https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/administrators_h02

Questions?

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