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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)

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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_UDL.pdf

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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 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

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

Examples: What order? Which materials? Amount of time? Which method for the activity?

Assists students with in 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

5	KICKED OUT OF GAME!!!!!!!	1. Feel like I want to punch someone! Can't control myself 2. I am probably arguing, hurting someone, or saying bad words 3. I am getting punished
4	PENALTY! FLAG ON THE PLAY	1. Feeling mad, you could try to calm me down but it probably won't work 2. I am making threats, punching hand and popping knuckles, or might hit 3. I am losing rewards
******* 3	PLAYING THE GAME	***REMIND ME HERE "POINTS OR PENALTIES?"*** 1. Feeling ok might be clenching fists but not hurting anyone physically 2. Might be griping about things, threatening but not hitting or kicking 3. Being warned about losing rewards
2	FIELD GOAL	1. Might clench fists but not hurting anyone physically 2. Might call people names and might use sarcasm 3. Still getting my rewards
1	TOUCHDOWN	1. Feel good and relaxed 2. Not hitting, kicking or calling anyone names 3. Getting rewards and praise

Used for a 3rd grader who loved football

Classroom Observations

Tools for Observation

- Classroom Observation Tool (Carnahan & Lowery, 2018)
- Observation Instrument for Autism Classroom
  - https://cfl.ucf-card.org/media/56731d2ab333b.pdf
- Autism and Low Incidence Classroom Observation Tool
  - https://www.attainmentcompany.com/alcot-autism-and-low-incidence-classroom-observation-tool

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Classroom Observation Tool

Date/time: _____ Teacher: _____ Observer: _____

Number of students/grade: _____ Number of staff in classroom: _____ Instructional activity/content: _____

ENVIRONMENTAL	
PHYSICAL ORGANIZATION	
1. Classroom spaces are defined by visual and physical arrangement (e.g., furniture arrangement)	
2. Classroom areas include identifiable spaces for various instructional configurations *(check ✓ any of the following observed)*	
Independent work	
Large group	
Small group	
One-to-one instruction	
Other (please describe):	
3. Instructionally relevant classroom materials are visible and well organized	
VISUAL SCHEDULES	
4a. Overall classroom schedule is posted and easy to read (where every student and every staff member should be at any given time)	
4b. Students receive instruction (in academic, functional, or social-communication skills) that corresponds to the schedule(s)	
5a. Staff schedules posted (may be embedded in master classroom schedule)	
5b. Adults are in assigned areas as indicated on the schedule, or teachers can articulate valid reason for change	
6a. Every student has an individualized schedule (e.g., object, picture based, text based) that he or she can manipulate	
6b. Students' schedules are designed for use across activities and environments	
6c. Systematic instruction is used to teach students to independently use their schedules	
BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS	
7. Visual supports communicate classroom rules and expectations (e.g., text based, pictures)	
8. Reinforcement used across classroom activities	
9. Staff offers choices	
10. Staff honors student choices as earned or requested	

11. Transitions between tasks and activities occur quickly and with minimal disruptions	
12. Individualized transition supports (e.g., wait chairs, transition area) are available for students as they move between activities or environments	
INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	
13. Indicate the type(s) of instruction observed in the classroom during the observation	
Independent work	
Whole group	
Small group	
Individualized instruction with adult or peer	
Other (please describe):	
14. Goals of instructional activities are clearly identifiable to observer without explanation	
15. Activity schedules or work systems are used to communicate expectations including the activity to complete, amount required, and what will occur upon completion during all instructional activities	
16. Individualized work systems are used for independent work tasks to communicate activity to complete, how to complete, amount required, and what will occur upon completion	
17. Additional environmental supports are embedded in classroom instruction *(check ✓ any of the following that were observed during instructional activities; mark any of the following that were observed in the classroom, but not used in instructional activities, with an "x")*	
Visual timers	
Token economy	
First/then instructions	
Graphic organizers	
Templates	
Visual directions	
Choice template (e.g., written list, picture icons)	
Video models	
Other (please describe):	

18. Systematic instruction includes gaining attention, direction (prompting), student response, and feedback–either error correction or reinforcement	
19. Classroom activities include direct instruction in building independence	
Meaningful skill and independence	
Academic independence	
20. Staff actively participate with students in learning or in classroom-related activities (e.g., preparing materials)	
21. Staff are observed collecting data on student performance	
22. Conversation among staff limited to discussion directly related to curriculum, instruction, and classroom activities	
COMMUNICATION	
23. Communication systems (e.g., assistive technology) are utilized in the classroom to support students with communication differences	
24. Staff members do not speak on behalf of students and instead encourage and/or prompt students to use expressive communication	
25. Communication instruction is embedded throughout classroom activities	
26. Direct instruction in social interaction is embedded throughout classroom activities	
27. All students have opportunities to communicate with both peers and adults	
Adults	
Peers	

Scoring Guide

0 = N/A
1 = No or very limited implementation
2 = Partial implementation
3 = Full implementation
*Please review scoring guide for clarity in numerical values, specific examples in each category, and references, citations, and resources.

Facilitating Evidence-Based Practice for Students with ASD: A Classroom Observation Tool for Building Quality Education by Christina R. Camahan and K. Alisa Lowrey.
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Physical environment

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

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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

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Questions?

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