TRI-STATE WEBINAR SERIES

The Principles of Structured Teaching

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Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder
Webinar Series

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Presenter Information

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Learner Objectives

• Understand the culture of autism
• Understand the importance of individualized support
• Understand the concept of visually based support
• Understand the major components of Structured Teaching: physical organization and visual boundaries, schedules, work systems, routines, and task organization
Summary

This presentation will discuss the culture of autism and the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children) approach to instruction, which was developed by Eric Schopler in the late 1970s. An overview of the basic tenets for using visual supports to structure the environment to promote learning and independence will be presented.

WHERE DID STRUCTURED TEACHING COME FROM?

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
TEACCH

Founded in the early 1970s by the late Eric Schopler, Ph.D.

TEACCH APPROACH

- Treatment and
- Education of
- Autistic and related
- Communication-handicapped
- Children
Culture of Autism

- Relative strength in and preference for processing visual information
  (difficulties with auditory processing, particularly of language)

- Frequent attention to details but difficulty understanding the meaning of how those details fit together

Culture of Autism, continued

- Difficulty combining ideas
- Difficulty with organizing ideas, materials, and activities
- Difficulties with attention—too much or too little
- Communication problems, which vary by developmental level but always include impairments in the social use of language
Culture of Autism, continued

• Difficulty with **concepts of time**
  --moving too quickly or too slowly
  --problems recognizing beginning, middle, or end of an activity

• Tendency to become **attached to routines**
  --activities may be difficult to generalize
  --disruptions can be upsetting, confusing, or uncomfortable

Culture of Autism, continued

• Very strong **interests and impulses** to engage in favored activities, with difficulties disengaging once engaged

• Marked **sensory** preferences and dislikes
What are two challenges for individuals on the autism spectrum as described by the Culture of Autism?

Difficulty with:

- Attention to details
- Combining ideas
- Organization
- Communication
- Concepts of time
- Attachment to routines
- Strong interests and impulses
- Sensory abnormalities
TEACCH

• Developed intervention called ‘Structured Teaching’

• Use of visual supports to promote meaning and independence

• Well organized, highly structured environments

• Notable for flexible and individualized support

Principles of Structured Teaching

• Understanding the culture of autism

• Individualized support

• Structuring the physical environment

• Visual support to make daily activities predictable and understandable

• Visual support to make individual tasks understandable
Myths & Misunderstandings

TEACCH is…
• only for children
• only for individuals with intellectual disabilities
• only for students in self-contained classrooms
• programs do not teach language

So… What is Structured Teaching?
• Visually based
• Highly structured environments
• Clear understanding of:
  -- Schedules
  -- Activities
  -- Routines
  -- Expectations
• Goal is to create environment for independence
Think Time…

If Structured Teaching focuses on independence, would one caution be that it can isolate individuals and cause them to be lonely?

A: True
B: False

FALSE
Structured Environments help individuals…

• Understand and predict what is happening
• Predict expectations of an environment
• Acquire new skills
• Generalize new skills from one setting to another

(Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, & Kincaid, 2003)

Major Components of ST

• Physical organization / visual boundaries
• Schedules
• Works systems
• Routines
• Task organization
Elements of Structure

Think time...

Name at least 3 of the components of Structured Teaching.
Components of Structured Teaching

- Physical organization / visual boundaries
- Schedules
- Works systems
- Routines
- Task organization

Physical Structure
Organizes the Environment
Physical Organization

- Organizes environment
- Clearly indicate the types of activities that occur in each area
- Promote increased understanding and attention to task
- Minimizes visual/auditory distractions

Elements of Structure
Considerations....

- Level of functioning
- Classroom layout
- Teaching areas
- Number of students
- Accessibility of materials

Physical Structure to Give Cues

- Where to:
  - sit
  - stand
  - line up
  - to go next
  - put things
- What to attend to
- Which activities and choices are available
Physical Structure Examples

- Furniture
- Tile vs. carpet
- Tape
- Labels
- Materials

Furniture and Carpet to Define Areas
Independent and Distraction Free Work Areas

Secondary Resource Classrooms
SCHEDULES...

Tell students where to go

Elements of Structure

- Physical Structure
- Individual Schedule
Schedules

• Visual representation
• Planned activities in order they will occur
• Uses symbols, words, pictures, objects
• Promotes independence

Schedules, etc.

• Aid in transitions
• Provides flexibility and predictability
• Teaches concept of discrete events
• Accommodates receptive language difficulties
Schedule: Considerations

- Level of functioning
- Flexibility
- Portable vs. stationary
- Reference vs. locator
- Whole day vs. part day
- Individual vs. group

Whole Class Schedule
Secondary Class Agenda

Object schedule examples
First--Then

Locator Schedule

Reference Schedule
Portable Schedule

Written Schedule for HF Autism
Teaching Change

• Surprise!!
• For unexpected changes, teach a “Change Card”

Think Time…

Name at least one purpose for teaching a student to use a visual schedule.
Purposes for Teaching a Student to Use a Visual Schedule

- Make abstract events more concrete
- Provide flexibility
- Help with transitions
- Make the day predictable
- Help with language difficulties
- Show the beginning and end
- Teach ‘change’

Work Systems

Tell students what to do!
Work Systems

• What work?
• How much work?
• When am I finished?
• What’s next?
  \(\text{(What do I do or what do I get when I am finished?)}\)
Independent Work Systems

- Involve the student in a constructive, independent activity
- Review mastered material
- Provide a calming activity: easy, predictable, familiar
- Practice recently taught materials (e.g., seat work)

Independent Work System Considerations

- Level of functioning
- Sustained attention
- Prompts
- Reinforcement
- Should increase as student develops skills
Think time…

What 4 Questions should be visually answered when developing a work system?
The 4 Questions

• What work?
• How much work?
• When is it finished?
• What’s next?

Individualized Instruction or 1:1 Work

• A teaching period in the learning environment where a teacher works directly with a student.
• Teacher often uses behavioral principles to teach new skills or practice skills.
• Skills can then be made into a structured task for more independent practice
• A teacher can incorporate a work system into the child’s one-on-one.
1-1 Work System

Same Visual System
- What work?
- How much work?
- When am I done?
- What do I do OR what do I get when done?
Can you see the work system in this picture?

Routines and Strategies
Give meaning to the environment…
Teaching Routines

- Goal is to create a framework within the schedule
- Helps individuals become more flexible—change content once routine is established
- Activities within a lesson
- Steps in activity / task analysis
- Job lists
Examples of Routines

- Checking the schedule
- Following a Work System
- What to do with finished work
- Relaxing or calming self
- Entering a room
- Waiting
- Making a choice
- Asking questions

Classroom Routines

- **Reading with Teacher**
  - Sit with group
  - Sit tall--head up!
  - Read when called upon
  - Answer when teacher calls on you!
  - Back to desk at end!
  - Yea!
  - Fill in circle!

- **Math Routines**
  - Sit with group
  - Teacher calls on students
  - Students teach group
  - Code
  - Raise hand to be called on
  - Fill in sheet!

- **Story Routine**
  - Sit on floor or in chair
  - Listen to story
  - Quiet
  - Keep fidgets in hands or wrist.
  - Fill in sheet!
Think time…

Think about a school or home routine that may need to be taught to a student.
Routine Examples

- Getting ready for school
- Riding the bus
- Getting ready for recess
- Making lunch choice
- Entering a room--cafeteria, library, classroom, gym
- Checking out a book from the Media Center
- Using the bathroom
- Gathering materials at end of day

Task Organization

The user knows what to do by looking at the task!
Elements of Structure

Visual Structure of Tasks
Routines and Strategies
Work Systems
Individual Schedules
Physical Structure

Sometimes called…

• Work boxes
• Job boxes
• Structured Tasks
• Jigs
• Structured file folder activities/tasks
Purpose of Tasks

- Teach basic skills
- Develop independent mastery of skills
- Provide predictable cues and structure when learning new skills

Considerations for Task Development

- Level of functioning/skill
- IEP goals
- Prerequisite skills
- Curriculum
- Age and developmentally appropriate
Task Organization

Highly organized and incorporate visual instructions to clearly indicate:

• The activity to be completed
• The steps to completion
• Important or essential features of the task

Effective Tasks

• Solid end product
• Set up and organized for student independence
• Flexible
• Concrete and meaningful
Components of a Structured Task

- Visual organization
- Visual clarity
- Visual instructions

Visual Organization

Reduce stimulation and sensory input
- Containers for organization
- Limit the work area
- Reduces anxiety
Visual Clarity

Highlights important information

• Color coding
• Numbering
• Labeling
• Limiting materials

Visual Instructions

• Sequential
• Defines task
• Jigs
  – Cut out
  – Picture
  – Outline
• Written instructions
• Product sample
Tasks to Teach Play Skills
Structured Teaching Summary

- Pay attention to individual considerations
- Design the physical space and/or develop visual boundaries
- Develop the schedule
- Create the work system
- Teach the routines
- Organize tasks
- Implement and monitor progress

Assess--Restructure--Assess--Restructure--Assess--Restructure
Questions?

References


THANK YOU!

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