Shhh...Less Talking!
Teaching Functional Skills to High School Students with Autism

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Rationale

► Teaching functional skills promotes greater independence.
  ► Students need less staff/family assistance.
  ► Students can access a greater variety of environments.
► When?
  ► Now! Start young.
Beginning Functional Skills Programming

- Choose targets
- Create a task analysis
- Identify instructional technique
- Set mastery criteria
- Plan for maintenance and generalization
- Train the team and work together!

Choosing Targets

- What skills should we teach?
  - Transition plans
  - Home-school connection
- What does the student need to know first?
  - Pre-requisite language skills
  - Pre-requisite motor skills
Writing a Task Analysis (TA)

- Do the skill yourself or watch someone else do it
- Choose the level of detail based on your learner
- Identify the discriminative stimuli and reinforcers
- Try it out, get input, and modify as needed
- Choose what data to collect
- Review and Share!!!
Teaching Procedures

- Setting up tasks
- Chaining
  - Total Task Chaining
  - Forward Chaining
  - Backward Chaining
- Don’t teach undoing the tasks
Prompting

► What is a prompt?
► Types of Prompts
  ► Physical Prompting for Independence
► Fading prompts
  ► Most to Least
► Counting
Reinforcing

- Reinforce without interrupting the chain
  - Token economies
  - Direct reinforcement
    - Edibles “popped in”
    - Music
  
  Figure it out!

- Differentially Reinforce
  
  New levels of independence contact immediate high level reinforcement
Mastery & Generalization

- Identify Mastery Criteria
- Promote Increased Distance from Staff
  - Next to Staff, Across the Room, and Outside the Room
- Generalize to New Environments
  - School Building
  - Outside of the School Building
  - Home
One Story

- Section from notes after Day 1: “When putting up chairs on the small tables near the walls he consistently started with chair farthest from the wall and then had trouble fitting the other chair between the first chair and the wall. Other staff told him repeatedly to put up the chair “next to the wall first.” Cash explained that he has not yet learned the preposition “next to” and when probed further he also could not tact “wall.”

- Future Listener Responding Skills and Tacts (Labels) to Target Identified During Task:
  - Wall
  - Bench
  - Table (NET only)
  - Prep.- On for On the table
  - Prep.- Next to for Next to the Wall
  - Sections of the Cafeteria- ARCH
  - Action- “Putting up” the chairs

- Reinforcers: verbal praise, skittles, iPad break upon completion
Staff Training

- Review the information
- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Model
- And....

Role Play - Practice Makes Perfect and It’s Great for Morale Too!!
Data Based Decision Making

► Use your data!

► Make sure to have a target step and a plan to teach it

► If you aren’t seeing progress, ask yourself why not and make changes.

► PaTTAN Teaching ADL Skills Fidelity Checklist
References
