



Teachers' Corner



Angie Stone-McDonald
University of Massachusetts–Boston

Incorporating Functional Skills into Classroom Routines

When I was teaching middle school students with developmental and learning disabilities, I frequently worried that not enough time was spent teaching daily life skills when we were spending so much time on math and literacy. I had heard my friends who were teaching first and second grades complain about the loss of time for science and social studies. They decided to find creative ways to incorporate science and social studies lessons into interdisciplinary units that addressed multiple subjects. This prompted me to think more creatively about how I could incorporate more daily life, social, and vocational skills instruction and practice into my classroom. As a special educator, I wanted my students to have the skills they needed to be academically successful but also successful in their daily lives during and beyond their school years.

Students with developmental disabilities participate in a variety of educational settings in the schools. As a special educator, I taught students in self-contained classrooms at preschool, elementary, and middle school levels. All of my students worked on some aspect of the functional curriculum to improve their social skills and participation in daily life. Emphasis on the functional curriculum focuses on students' learning skills to improve life quality. In this case, *functional* is a term used to describe activities in which people without disabilities would participate independently in natural settings; for example, shopping at a grocery store or riding a bus are considered functional (Dymond & Orelve, 2001). The content of the functional curriculum reflects the existing academic curriculum as well as skills and knowledge necessary for life and work in an inclusive community (Brown et al., 1979; Schmalle & Retish, 1989). Several researchers have emphasized the need to use functional curricula in recognition that students with disabilities are not well prepared for adult life (Bouck, 2004; Cronin, 1996; Denver & Knapezyk, 1997; Polloway, Patton, Smith, & Roderique, 1991). Functional skills can be taught in a variety of settings, including general education classrooms.

Most special educators already incorporate routines and activities into their daily classroom schedules to manage student behavior and improve classroom climate. Teachers also probably work on different functional skills with students as part of their IEP goals or alternative assessments. Functional and daily life skills can be easily addressed and incorporated in daily routines to teach students life skills they will need in a natural way. For example, it is natural to work on hand washing after using the bathroom. Depending on the student, a teacher may work with the student using hand-over-hand support to show the student that this is an appropriate time to wash his or her hands, even if the student cannot perform the task independently. The teacher may also use visual supports or prompts to support the student in washing his or her hands. Many skills that are important to work on throughout the day can occur at natural times, but it requires planning and preparation on the part of the teacher to take advantage of these teachable moments.

Students can work on receptive and expressive communication throughout the day while making choices, expressing their wishes, and interacting with peers. Students can also learn social skills such as how to start a conversation or what roles they can do in a group activity. Work skills are also easy to learn and practice in a school setting. Students participate with others in doing jobs that occur already in a school or work setting. For example, students can file, sort, run errands, collect and deliver lunch money, care for animals in the classroom, or deliver mail. Students may role-play or work on these skills in a natural setting. Natural or logical settings allow the students to practice skills in an authentic manner and increase the chance the skill will be maintained and generalized across time and multiple settings (Renzaglia, Karvonen, Drasgow, & Stoxen, 2003).

Peer role models can serve as valuable supports for teaching and modeling functional skills in natural school environments. The models may support students with disabilities by demonstrating appropriate social skills to follow or as models and teachers themselves in a school store. Peer models can be typically developing students or students with disabilities who have demonstrated skill competence. For example, a student with a disability may be an excellent model for his or her peers in showing them how to stock shelves in a school store or take money. In some cases, peers respond better to each other than to teachers (Stone-MacDonald, 2010).

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President's Message

Emily Bouck

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome you back to the start of a new school year. Although summer offers wonderful opportunities, it is always nice to get back to working with students—whether they be school-age students with disabilities or teacher candidates. As we begin to look ahead to the new academic year, we can also reflect back on our summer experiences and what we learned.



I always enjoy catching up on some book reading and movie watching over the summer. I typically try to catch up on new media but have also used the time to revisit some movies and books that I utilized as part of my course instruction. This May I co-led a study-abroad experience in India for 21 undergraduate teacher education students (elementary and secondary) from my university. The experience focused on two required courses all teacher education students must take to graduate: The Inclusive Classroom (students' one formal class exposure to students with disabilities and issues of special education [e.g., co-teaching, IDEA, IEPs], which I taught), and Introduction to Educational Psychology. For the course, I required students to not only read an introductory textbook but also watch a Hollywood film depicting an individual with a disability (e.g., *Forrest Gump*, *Rain Man*, *Radio*, *I Am Sam*); read *One Child* by Torey Hayden; and watch documentaries in class (e.g., *Autism: The Musical*, *Educating Peter*, *I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me*).

I found that watching a Hollywood portrayal of an individual with disabilities created a starting point for talking with my undergraduate students—most of whom have had little-to-no contact with individuals with disabilities. We were able to discuss the strengths individuals with disabilities possess and deconstruct the stereotypes and negative impressions. For example, when discussing *Rain Man*, we noted reservations because not everyone with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is like Raymond, the character with disabilities in the movie, particularly with regard to his counting skills. We were also able to discuss aspects of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and how schools educated (or failed to educate) students with disabilities prior to IDEA and even soon after it became law. When asked how the messages in the movie might apply to their classrooms, many of the students noted the value of patience when working with students with disabilities.

We also viewed documentaries, which proved to be very powerful experiences for the students. It was clearly one thing for me to discuss the umbrella term of ASD and the individual-

ity of these students and another for the students to watch a film such as the HBO documentary *Autism: The Musical* (2005; <http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/autism-the-musical/index.html>). I had purposefully acquired the film for this class but had done so without any recommendations. *Autism* proved to be one of the most powerful “lessons” of the course. The students actually came early and stayed late to watch the entire 93 minutes. This film depicts the Miracle Project, which was started by one mother to involve students with ASD in expression (through music and acting) as well as work in socialization. The documentary chronicles the lives of five students with ASD and their families. My students felt this movie allowed them to better understand ASD, the strengths that individuals with ASD possess, and the challenges they and their families may face inside and outside of education.

The other documentary that spoke to the students was older (1992) but still carried an important message. *Educating Peter* won the 1992 Academy Award for best documentary short subject and portrayed the inclusion of an elementary student with Down syndrome in a general education class (the first such case in that particular school). The movie follows Peter, his teacher, his classmates, and his parents throughout the school year. For my students who admitted to not “seeing” students with disabilities included in general education classes in their own K–12 education and having had limited experience of working in classes with students with disabilities, *Educating Peter* highlighted the potential for inclusive education for a student with intellectual disabilities and the positive experiences it brought for the student, his classmates, and his teacher.

The documentaries' value became even clearer in the post-reflections students created as part of the course. As one student stated,

I believe each student must be viewed individually. Even though students with disabilities are labeled a certain way with an IEP, as a teacher you get to see the students for their unique capabilities and personalities. From the movies we have watched about Autism and other disabilities, they showed how each person should not be underestimated and is capable of surprising everyone with what they [sic] can accomplish.

Another student indicated,

As we saw in the video about autism, each student had different levels and different things that worked and didn't work for them [sic]. Just because they have a disability does not mean that they are not unique. It is the job of the teacher to find out certain learning strategies that work for the student.

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2010 CEC-DADD Award Recipients

Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award

DADD was proud to present **Dr. Nikki Murdick** with the 2010 Burton Blatt Award. Some of Nikki's many accomplishments can be summarized in some statements from her letters of nomination:

"Her dedication to individuals with disabilities is evident in her research, publications and service to professional organizations that serve individuals with disabilities." ... "Nikki has received several awards from AAIDD (when it was AAMR) and was elected as a fellow in 2003. She has had many service activities for DDD (now DADD) and was a co-author of the Prism Book on Differentiation of Instruction. She has served as a member of the Missouri Protection and Advocacy Board and on the Board of the Solomon Schechter Day School of St. Louis for 10 years." ... "In her career she has demonstrated her commitment to furthering the cause of persons with disabilities in classrooms (public school, special research classrooms, and university classrooms) in both the United States and in Cyprus and as a leader in professional organizations."

Recently, Nikki summed up her beliefs as follows: "My central belief on which I based my work is that we should all work toward a more open and diverse society; that is, one in which persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities have available to them the same opportunities as those who do not have a disability. This belief has led me to work in the schools and community to support and enhance those methods and ideas that support persons with disabilities to have productive and happy lives within society."



Nikki Murdick accepts the **Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award** from **Toni Merfeld**

DADD was pleased to award Alicia Saunders and Candice Southall the Practitioner Award and Herbert Prehm Award, respectively, at the 2010 CEC Convention. A brief synopsis of their presentations follows. We look forward to future contributions to the field by both Alicia and Candice.

Practitioner Presentation Award

Using Video Modeling to Improve Social Skill Acquisitions of Adolescents with Autism

Alicia Saunders, *University of North Carolina, Charlotte*

Video modeling, in which targeted behaviors are demonstrated on videotape, has been shown to be effective in increasing appropriate social behaviors in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of video modeling, using same-age, unfamiliar peers as models, on the social interactions of three middle-school students with moderate to severe ASD in general education settings. Results were evaluated using a multiple-baseline-across-subjects design and indicated that (a) all three students increased the number of unprompted social initiations and responses displayed in the general education settings, and (b) the students generalized appropriate social initiations and responses in nontraining settings. These findings suggest that video modeling may be useful when including individuals with ASD in general education settings.



Alicia Saunders (right) with **Toni Merfeld**

Herbert J. Prehm Student Presentation Award

Self-Management Across The Autism Spectrum: How Can I Use It With My Student?

Candice Southall, *University of Georgia*

Evidence-based practice describing self-management for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) supports its effectiveness as an intervention. Parents and families benefited from training for implementation of self-management procedures for use in the community and home. My poster session translated into improved options for applied behavior change tactics for families and special educators of individuals with ASD across all grade levels and abilities.



Candice Southall accepts her award from **Toni Merfeld**



CEC NASHVILLE

Conference Highlights

The beautiful and very large Gaylord Opryland Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee, served as the site for this year's CEC Convention and Expo, where more than 90 sessions focused on issues related to educating and supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), intellectual disabilities, and other developmental disabilities. Members attended sessions on such topics as teaching literacy, preparing youth for postsecondary education and employment, inclusion, functional content, video modeling, ABA therapy, paraprofessional training, and using evidence-based practices to teach academic skills, to name a few.



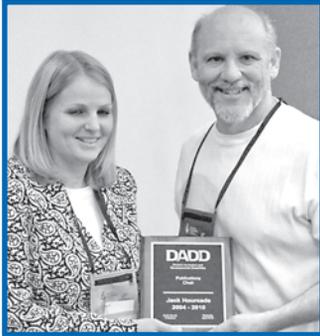
The DADD Showcase Session, presented by **Robert Stodden**, **Dianne Zager**, and **Debra Hart**, was one of the highlights of the conference. Audience members learned about the history of transition legislation as well as two exciting transition programs in which young adults with autism and developmental disabilities are successfully matriculating to 2- and 4-year college programs in New York and Massachusetts.

Please visit the DADD website conference page (www.dddcec.org/conferences.htm) to view the PowerPoint presentations from the Showcase Session.



Showcase Panel Members
*Bob Stodden,
Dianne Zager,
and Debra Hart*

A Special THANK YOU to Dr. Jack Hourcade

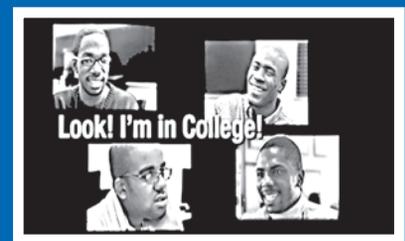


Jack Hourcade, DADD Publications Chair, with Emily Bouck

The Board of Directors owes a great deal of gratitude to Dr. Jack Hourcade. A professor of special education at Boise State University, he has served on the DADD board as Publications Committee Chairperson for the past six years. His position on the DADD Board will end this year. Prior to serving as Publications Committee Chairperson, Jack was the Far West member, serving in this role for six years. Jack has been an outstanding board member. He has always been conscientious and has presented many creative solutions that have helped DADD move forward, especially in the area of publications. DADD depends on its publications for a significant portion of our revenue. Without Jack's leadership it is unlikely that our publications program would be as strong as it is. He not only provides oversight of our two journals but also coordinates the division's special publications and videos. While Jack will be greatly missed, we know that he will continue to be a strong supporter of DADD. Thanks, Jack, for a tremendous job.

Look! I'm in College! DVD

Look, I'm in College! is a half-hour documentary that follows four students through an extraordinary time in their lives. Terence, Benny, Rayquan, and Donald are New York City public school students from high-need communities. They all have autism and intellectual disabilities, and they are the charter class in a college-based inclusion program. Through collaborative efforts of the New York City District 75 and Pace University, these four young men from challenging socio-economic backgrounds met with success as they participated in a college community among their age-appropriate peers.



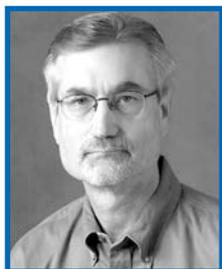
Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD). 2008. 31 minutes.

Member Price: \$ 34.95

Non-Member Price: \$ 39.95

<http://www.cec.sped.org/ScriptContent/orders/ProductDetail.cfm?pc=D5890>

Newly Appointed DADD Publications Chairperson: Dr. Michael Wehmeyer



DADD is pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Michael Wehmeyer** as Publications Chairperson. Mike first joined CEC in 1978 and became a member of the division in 1984. He is presently a professor of special education at the University of Kansas, where he coordinates the teacher preparation programs in the area of low-incidence

disabilities and serves as director of the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities. He was previously an associate director in the Department of Research and Program Services for The Arc of the United States at the association's national headquarters office.

Mike brings to the position an extensive background in publications in the field of developmental disabilities, and he is uniquely qualified to lead DADD's print and video publications, which include the following:

- ❖ our flagship journal, *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*
- ❖ the bonus journal given to members, *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities* (published by the Hammill Institute on Disabilities and Sage)

- ❖ The *Prism* series of practitioner-oriented monographs (presently at *Prism* 6)
- ❖ Other books, including
 - *Social Skills in School and Community* (2nd ed.)
 - *Research-Based Practices in Developmental Disabilities* (2nd ed.)
 - DADD/ETDD monograph series:
 - Social and Communication Skills in Developmental Disabilities*
 - Assessment and Instruction in Developmental Disabilities*
 - Foundations, Teachers, and Families in Developmental Disabilities*
 - Inclusion and Employment in Developmental Disabilities*
 - *James Castle: His Life and Art*
- ❖ Videos, including
 - *James Castle: Dream House.*
 - *Look: I'm In College!*
 - *Taylor Crowe: Growing Up With Autism*

Mike's three-year term begins January 1, 2011. He follows long-time DADD Publications Chairperson Jack Hourcade, who is completing his final year of service in that role.



Rosa Lockwood (right) with Emily Bouck

Thank You, Rosa

During the DADD Business Meeting held during the 2010 CEC Convention in Nashville, **Rosa Lockwood** was honored for her many years of service to the division. Since 2005, Rosa has served as the DADD Diversity Chair. Through Rosa's leadership, DADD and CEC worked collaboratively with other CEC divisions to form the Diversity Shared Agenda. This group has met yearly to reflect on the diversity efforts of individual divisions and to develop action plans to strengthen diversity throughout the CEC divisions. Rosa's expertise comes from her wealth of experiences in special education, including positions as an education consultant for the Ohio Department of Education and as a teacher and consultant in various cities and countries.

Rosa, we thank you for sharing your expertise, leading the way with developing the Diversity Shared Agenda action plans, and your strong commitment to DADD.

Diversity Committee News

A Summary of the 2010 Shared Agenda Diversity Meeting

Elizabeth A. West
Chairperson



DADD and the Diversity Committee hosted the fourth Shared Agenda breakfast meeting on April 22, during the 2010 CEC Convention in Nashville. The meeting's purposes are to interface with other division Diversity Committees through their representatives and address diversity/diversity issues within the field of special education and the individual divisions. This venue offers an opportunity to showcase the diversity work of the CEC divisions, and to identify and share commonalities and concerns. All divisions were invited; attending participants represented TAG, CEC-Pioneers, CCBD, DADD, DVI, and CASE.

We reviewed shared needs generated in 2008–2009, focusing on the desire to develop a diversity statement that demonstrates a shared vision to provide consistent language and meaning across the organization. In addition, we wanted to determine if the diversity intent of CEC is evident and visible in the three areas of policy, procedure, and program review across the organization and to recommend additional action. Division

participants were encouraged to perform a review in one area with the goal of ultimately enhancing that area through additional diversity language, if needed.

Moving forward requires participants to engage in these endeavors, prepare/share summaries of completed reviews, and decide actions to be taken. Ultimately, this feedback will help determine recommendations to be outlined in an executive summary. This summary would be distributed to all participating boards for review and comments.

New Directions. An intent of the Shared Agenda is deepening relationships with all divisions in addressing diversity and building a mechanism for collaborative problem-solving on diversity issues that affect all divisions and the organization. We are soliciting input to generate ideas on the most effective, efficient ways to accomplish these tasks. Technology use will also be explored as a tool to facilitate communication and problem solving among constituents.

In addition to the Shared Agenda, DADD Diversity Committee members will engage in several activities throughout the upcoming year: recruiting and retaining committee members and ensuring that content related to diversity is infused in all aspects of the Division. Further, we will target issues related to evidence-based practices and cultural linguistic diversity.

Executive Director's Corner

Tom E. C. Smith

I am pleased that three new DADD subdivisions became active in the past few weeks. Idaho, South Carolina, and North Carolina have submitted the necessary paperwork to establish an active DADD subdivision. In addition, DADD members in Oklahoma have expressed an interest in establishing one. Subdivisions assist DADD in recruiting and retaining members and are therefore an important asset. If you are interested in starting or rejuvenating a subdivision in your state, please contact me (tecsmith@uark.edu). The DADD board will provide assistance in completing the necessary paperwork and seed money for new subdivisions.



During the meeting in Nashville, the Board of Directors agreed that the role of regional members on the board should be changed. As a result, an amendment to the constitution will be voted on in National Harbor, Maryland, at our next annual business meeting. The title of these board members will change from *regional members* to *regional representatives*. Regional representatives will have responsibility for working with states within their region to develop subdivisions and serve as the conduit between states and the DADD board. Specific wording for the proposed amendment will be posted on the DADD website in the near future.

Membership and Unit Development Committee News



Debora Wichmanowski
Chairperson

Congratulations to our two newest subdivisions, Utah and North Carolina. We are very happy to have these two states on board with us. For more information about these subdivisions, please contact: **Linda Laz** (Idaho; plpaddy2@gmail.com) and **Bree Jimenez** (North Carolina; bjimenez@umcc.edu). If you are interested in starting a subdivision in your state or renewing

one that is currently inactive, please contact me (dwichman@pasco.k12.fl.us).

I am very excited to report that things are really looking up for DADD. Over the past few months, we have seen an increase in our membership, and I am confident that this trend will continue. Don't forget: You can make your CEC and DADD dues payment in 3 easy installments.

Watch for future e-mails from your regional members. You will soon be receiving quarterly e-mails highlighting current information on upcoming events. As always, if I can be of more assistance or if you have any questions, please let me know. Looking forward to more good things to come!

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I have provided some examples of a few areas during the day where students can practice social skills. I encourage teachers to look at their students' IEP goals and a recent assessment of their functional or adaptive skills to see what skills individual students need to work on for greater independence at school, at home, or in the workplace. Teachers can then look at their daily or weekly schedules to see how they can incorporate natural opportunities to work on these skills. Classroom jobs are a great way to get more students involved in working on skills for independence. Various websites offer lists of possible jobs for students at the elementary and middle school levels. Students of all ages can work on functional skills in natural settings in the classroom. You may find that your students have interests or talents you did not know about.

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("President's Message" continued from page 2)

These documentaries may not have started out as "must-sees" for my undergraduate students, but in the end they were considered to be of great value.

One thing I also enjoy about this time of year is looking ahead and imagining the possibilities. While we are excited about what is to come in our own professional and personal lives, the Division is also enthused about forthcoming events. For example, we are redoing our website, focusing on modernization, quicker provision of information, and greater commu-

nication between our members and the board as well as among our members. We also look forward to utilizing Facebook more this academic year, so please consider becoming a member of our group. Finally, we are planning the developmental disabilities and ASD strands for the 2011 CEC Annual Conference in National Harbor at the end of April 2011. We thank those who submitted proposals and look forward to seeing our members there!