



Teachers' Corner



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Self-Management Across the Autism Spectrum: How Can I Use It with My Student?

This article is based on a presentation at the 2010 CEC Convention in which Candace Southall was the recipient of the DADD Herbert J. Prehm Student Presentation Award.

Self-management has a number of advantages over other behavioral interventions. For individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), these include minimal teacher management and greater generality of behavior change and application in varied environments (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). Although general education teachers report high acceptability of self-management procedures, and a preference for student monitoring over teacher monitoring (Prater & Hogan, 1992), Agran, Snow, and Swanner (1999) reported that self-monitoring instruction is limited in applied settings. With direct increases in access to the general education curriculum through inclusion, attention should be drawn to the fact that self-management is an empirically based intervention relevant to learners across the autism spectrum and useful to families and educators of diverse groups. The intervention lends itself to independence and inclusion within school and community settings.

After an exhaustive review of the literature on self-management procedures for individuals with ASD, I was able to make a direct comparison of procedure implementations and their effectiveness for students with classic autistic disorder (AD) as well as those with high-functioning autism or Asperger syndrome (HFASD). An examination of the methodological adequacy, demographics, procedures, and outcomes found in 24 single-subject studies over the past 15 years indicated that self-management procedures are an effective intervention for individuals ages 3 to 25 years with ASD. Across participants, settings, and particular conditions, self-management interventions generally resulted in improvements in desired behaviors. I presented these findings at the Council for Exceptional Children 2010 Annual Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

Sharing the self-management research base, components, and individualized instructional program design benefited families and educators of a diverse group of individuals with ASD.

My presentation goals were to discuss the self-management evidence base that relates directly to the core characteristics of autism while also identifying the components and materials of self-management programs based on specific individual characteristics. Practitioners and parents of individuals with ASD were provided empirical evidence of the range of skills being addressed across the autism spectrum through self-management procedures.

Self-Management Procedures

Common components of most self-management packages included (a) a timer to alert a student to self-assess, (b) a self-recording form for a student to document the assessment, and (c) a desired reward as reinforcement to maintain the behavior. For individuals with AD, 43% of studies also indicated use of a token economy, whereas only 12.5% of studies for individuals with HFASD included a token economy component. Students with HFASD were more likely to have a contract within the intervention. Peer training and use of pictures/video were also found to be effective within a self-management program for individuals with ASD.

Restricted interests, social skills, communication skills, and academic/vocational skills were the four behavior categories targeted for intervention. The dependent variable for half of the studies for individuals with HFASD was a focus on social skills. For individuals with AD, the dependent measures were more evenly evaluated, with vocational and social skills each accounting for 31% of the studies.

Every study incorporated self-monitoring into the program. Individuals with HFASD were much more likely to use self-monitoring plus self-recording, as well as self-reinforcing/self-punishing. Many students with AD skipped the self-recording piece while still self-reinforcing or self-punishing. When implementing self-management, practitioners' dependent-variable measurement systems were typically different from those of the students. The majority of self-management programs incorpo-

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**CALL for NOMINATIONS
for DADD AWARDS**
Nominations due: February 1, 2011
(see p. 4 for list and criteria)

President's Message

Emily Bouck

It is hard to believe that 2010 is almost over. I wanted to take a moment here to thank you for the opportunity to serve as President of the Division. It has been an honor, and I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. This has been a good year for the Division. We officially changed our name from the Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) to more accurately reflect the educators and students we serve. In January, we held our successful 12th International Conference in Maui, Hawaii, and we presented an excellent program at the 2010 CEC Annual Convention. Finally, we have spent the second half of 2010 significantly redeveloping our website to better serve our members and be more responsive to your needs. 2010 also saw notable events for our field; for example, March 3 was the second "Day to End the Word" in recognition of eliminating the r-word from our vocabulary. Since then we have seen increased attention to occurrences of the r-word and appropriate backlash against it.



In this, my last President's message, I also want to thank board members whose terms are ending in December. First, I would like to thank **Toni Merfeld**, who for the past 3 years served as the Division's Secretary, an often thankless job. Toni has been excellent at taking detailed notes at our board and business meetings. Next is **Debbie Wichmanowski**, who was the Southeast Regional Member for the Division for the past 3 years. Debbie also served as Membership Chair, during which time the number of our members has increased while those of other divisions have decreased. Thank you, Debbie, for your hard work. **Linda Laz**, our Far West Regional Member, is also ending her 3-year term. Linda worked hard in developing an Idaho subdivision and assisting Debbie with membership. Thank you, Linda. Our Student Representative, **Nicole Mucherino**, accepted a full-time job and is ending her term. Congratulations, Nicole, and the best of luck! I would also like to extend thanks to current Past President **Dave Smith**, who provided wonderful leadership during his time on the board. We are grateful for his work on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities throughout his career and on behalf of the Division. Finally, we are also saying goodbye to our long-time Publications Chair, **Jack Hourcade**. His expertise will be greatly missed on the board.

As we look forward to 2011, predictions are difficult to make. Certainly, we hope our members get more involved with the third annual Day to End the Word. We also must pay attention to what the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will look like and what it will

mean for our students with disabilities. Of course, further down the road will be the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. As researchers, teacher educators, educators, support personnel, parents, and individuals with disabilities, it is our right and responsibility to stay informed regarding these critical pieces of legislation. On a lighter note, we hope to see all our members on April 25th–28th at the 2011 Annual CEC Convention and Expo at National Harbor.

I hope you have had a good year and have a happy holiday season, a restful break—if you get one—and a wonderful start to the 2011 calendar year.

Coming Soon! A New Edition of DADD's Social Skills for School and Community

The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce that the long-anticipated revision of the division's classic publication, *Social Skills for School and Community*, by Larry Sargent is now in production and should be available in late 2010. This new edition will feature substantial additional coverage specific to students with autism spectrum disorders, with greater emphasis on teaching these skills in inclusive environments. A highlight of the new edition will be the accompanying CD with a variety of documents and illustrations that teachers will be able to print out to use during instruction.

What Can You Expect from DADD at the 2011 CEC Convention?

On the banks of the Potomac River, only a short water taxi ride away from Old Town Alexandria and 15 minutes south of our nation's capital, sits **National Harbor, Maryland**, the site of the CEC 2011 Convention and Expo. At this gorgeous convention location, DADD members can attend over 85 lectures, demonstrations, panels, and poster presentations featuring topics related to autism or developmental disabilities. The **DADD Showcase** session will feature **Drs. Michael Wehmeyer, James Patton, Richard Simpson, and Juane Heflin** discussing critical issues and future directions in autism and developmental disabilities. Members are invited to get involved and participate in the various DADD committee meetings as well as attend the general business meeting and DADD President's Reception. The next *DADD Express* will provide more in-depth information.

New DADD Critical Issue Paper Summary:

Beyond Time Out and Table Time: Today's Applied Behavior Analysis for Students with Autism

Amanda Boutot and Kara Hume

Recent mandates concerning the implementation of evidence-based practices for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) require that professionals and practitioners understand, and are able to implement, practices based on the science of applied behavior analysis (ABA). The use of the term *applied behavior analysis* and its related concepts continues to generate debate and confusion for professionals, practitioners, and family members in the autism field. A general lack of understanding, or misunderstanding, of the science and practice of ABA is pervasive in the field of special education and has contributed to an often-contentious dialogue among stakeholders as well as limited implementation in many public school settings. This critical issue paper provides a review of the history of ABA and its applications for individuals with ASD, as well as a discussion of practices that are/are not based on the science of ABA. Common myths related to ABA and ASD, as well as challenges professionals and practitioners face when implementing strategies based ABA in public school settings are also described.

This paper is an outcome of the DADD Critical Issues Committee. The full paper, as well as other papers, can be viewed at our website. If you have questions or would like to provide input on a critical issue of interest to Division membership, please e-mail **Bob Stodden**, Chairperson, Critical Issues Committee (stodden@hawaii.edu).

Think College: College Options for Students with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities

Debra Hart

Colleges across the country are beginning to support students with autism and intellectual disabilities (ID) in inclusive academic courses and all other aspects of college life. For students seeking a degree, a traditional path to college (e.g., entrance exams, placement tests, various criteria) may be a good fit, while other students not seeking a degree are taking an alternate path that waives many entrance criteria and may include auditing courses. Both kinds of students need a wide range of supports and accommodations to be successful.

Approximately 250 known 2-year colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, and career and technical schools across 41 states offer students with autism and ID access to higher education. Some options are dual enrollment initiatives that support high school students to attend college as part of transition,

Update on the NEW DADD Website!



DADD is happy to announce the redevelopment of our website. In addition to a massive overhaul — contracted to Find 8 (<http://www.findeight.com>) — we also have a new domain: <http://www.dadd-cec.org>. The website was redesigned to incorporate our new name and focus into our online presence as well as to be more responsive to members' needs. It includes facets from the previous site (e.g., members' only section, online access to newsletters, conference information) as well as new features to allow more contact among members and with the board leadership. In addition, we hope you note the new color focus of the website — we specifically decided to have red be our main access color to connect back to our signature journal, *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*. We are very excited about the new website and invite you to take a look! The new site will be ready at the end of October.

Editor's Note: DADD President Emily Bouck worked endless hours on the redevelopment of our DADD website. Thank you, Emily, for your outstanding contributions to DADD!

other programs support adults with autism and ID to attend college, and some programs serve both students and adults. Part of the impetus for this growth in postsecondary education options is the result of recent changes to the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), which was enacted August 14, 2008, and reauthorized the 1965 Higher Education Act (HEA). Several important new provisions in the law will improve access to postsecondary education by creating access to federal financial aid (e.g., Pell Grants, Work-Study) and a new model demonstration program and coordinating center for students with ID. Congress has appropriated \$11 million in funding, with a grant competition for these funds starting October 1, 2010.

For more information, contact Think College, Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston (www.thinkcollege.net) and/or **Debra Hart** (debra.hart@umb.edu; ph: 617.590.8082).

rated interval recording for instructor data while students used event recording.

Outcomes

All 35 individuals with AD successfully increased skill levels under self-management. Although only 25% of the studies for individuals with AD reported social validity of the intervention outcomes, both peers and teachers confirmed that they enjoyed being with the student with AD after the positive effects of self-management. Self-management procedures resulted in increased improvement for target behaviors and independence in treatment for 88% ($n = 26$) of the participants with HFASD. In contrast, for studies of individuals with AD, 63% of the researchers reported social validity of self-management interventions. One study found that using self-management to replace the aggressive behavior of a child with ASD toward an infant sibling changed potentially dangerous behaviors and improved sibling relationships (Barry & Singer, 2001). Wehmeyer, Yeager, Bolding, Agran, and Hughes (2003) found greater than expected increases in teacher perceptions of student progress when using self-management.

Conclusion

Research across the autism spectrum shows that self-management, regardless of individualized components, is effective in teaching social, vocational, and communication skills, or decreasing restrictive patterns of behaviors. Students with HFASD can effectively use self-management procedures to address deficits related to the core characteristics of ASD. Additional technologies such as tokens, pictures, and video were helpful adaptations to typical self-management, making the interventions more practical for students with AD. It was a privilege to provide parents and practitioners an opportunity to examine and apply effective self-management programs at the CEC's 2010 Annual Convention.

References

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- Barry, L., & Singer, G. (2001). A family in crisis: Replacing the aggressive behavior of a child with autism toward an infant sibling. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 3*, 28–38. doi: 10.1177/109830070103000105
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Criteria for DADD Awards and CALL for Nominations

The John W. Kidd Subdivision Award: This award may be presented annually to a subdivision that has shown exceptional performance during the past year. Criteria for the award include that the subdivision:

- a. maintains membership integrity during the previous fiscal year;
- b. engages in innovative programming, evidenced by plans and performance presented at time of application for award;
- c. participates actively in DADD activities beyond the subdivision level.

The Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award: This award may be presented annually to an individual who reflects the ideals of the Division and who has made significant contributions to the field of intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism. Selection criteria include the following:

- a. exceptional effort exerted and involvement in furthering the cause of persons with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism;
- b. membership in DADD.

The Legislative Award: This award may be presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated leadership in the area of legislation. The criterion for this award is that the individual has been involved in the development, support, and/or enactment of legislation designed to meet the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism.

The Research Award: The Research Award may be presented annually to an individual who (a) reflects the ideals of the Division and (b) has made significant contributions to the field of autism and developmental disabilities through research. Selection criteria include the following:

- a. exceptional effort exerted and involvement in furthering the cause of persons with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism through research;
- b. membership in DADD.

All nominations for the DADD Awards must be made in writing to the DADD Awards Committee Chairperson by FEBRUARY 1, 2011.

Toni Fuller Merfeld
Awards Committee Chairperson
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