



Teachers' Corner



Takanori Koyama

Doctoral Student, University of Washington

Recipient of the DADD Herbert J. Prehm Student Award

Activity Schedules for Individuals with Autism and Other Intellectual Challenges

There seems to be a widespread notion that individuals with autism spectrum disorders are visual learners. Visual learners are better at processing visual information through such materials as pictures and texts than processing auditory information. Such a conception (whether it is true or not) probably led many researchers to investigate the application of activity schedules to this population. At the 2009 Council for Exceptional Children annual conference in Seattle, Washington, I presented a review of experimental studies that examined the efficacy of activity schedules in which I found that children and adults with a wide range of disabilities can learn to use them. Participant demographics ranged in age from preschool to adulthood and in disability status from Asperger syndrome to Fragile X to severe intellectual disabilities (see Note). Research results have indicated that activity schedules promote independent, autonomous behaviors in persons with disabilities while they are engaging in various activities such as academic tasks in the classroom and daily chores at home. In this article, I will describe a few examples of how activity schedules have been used. As each activity schedule should be individualized, readers are encouraged to make necessary modifications to adjust to the unique needs of their clients.

An *activity schedule* consists of a series of objects, photographs, pictures, or words that cue an individual to engage in activities/tasks (McClannahan & Krantz, 1999). Each photograph or picture card represents an activity (e.g., “brush teeth,” “use computer,” “listen to a tape”), and the learner is taught to complete a series of activities in a predetermined order. According to McClannahan and Krantz, one big reason that activity schedules are promoted for individuals with autism is their ability to facilitate *learner independence*. Once the individuals learn to use an activity schedule, they need not rely on teacher or caregiver supervision to complete activities. Overreliance on

assistance is called *prompt dependency*, which is often a concern regarding children with autism.

Classroom

Activity schedules can be a useful classroom management tool. For example, Bryan and Gast (2000) used picture schedules in a resource-based classroom with four elementary school students who had high-functioning autism. The students were referred because of their dependency on teacher supervision to complete academic tasks. They were taught to use individualized activity schedules during 45-minute language arts periods, in which writing, reading, listening, and art centers were set up as planned activities. Schedules were placed on each student's desk, and the students were instructed to go back to their schedules after completing each activity. In teaching the students to use a schedule, the researchers employed *manual guidance*, an instructional strategy in which each behavioral step that learners are expected to perform (e.g., point at a picture on the schedule, take out an activity box from a shelf, complete an activity) is walked through first. Because the goal of an activity schedule is to facilitate independent behavior, verbal instruction is minimized, except for an initial instruction to begin the schedule (e.g., “Time to check your schedule”) or a prompt to transition to the next activity as necessary (e.g., “Go check your next activity”). Manual guidance is withdrawn as soon as learners begin to perform the targeted behavior independently. Bryan and Gast reported that the students completed more activities independently and increased the percentage of on-task behavior as a result of learning to use activity schedules.

At Home

Caregivers can also use activity schedules to nurture a child's independence at home. Many children with autism demonstrate limited participation in family life, and their lack of independent life skills places undue burdens on parents. Krantz, MacDuff, and McClannahan (1993) helped parents of 6-, 7-, and 8-year old boys with autism learn how to teach photographic activity schedules. After the children were taught how to follow a schedule in a treatment facility, activity schedules were implemented at the children's homes. Photographs of activities were displayed, one per page, in a three-ring binder, and the schedule encompassed activities from after school until after dinner,

(continued on page 2)

President's Message

Emily Bouck

I can't tell you how pleased I, as well as the rest of the board, am regarding the change of our division's name from the Division on Developmental Disabilities to the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities. In fact, I cannot help but make a joke that last year I officially became a member of the mom's club with the birth of my first child and this year I became a member of the DADD's club through my professional affiliation. It is very exciting to all of us on the board and in the field to make our connection to autism spectrum disorders more transparent while simultaneously renewing our commitment to students with other developmental disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities.



But before I continue with ushering in a new era, I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new president of the division. As many of you know, we have recently changed the time when we transition officers from July to January. A little about myself: I am an assistant professor in the Special Education Program at Purdue University and I am honored to be serving on the board. My passion within the field of devel-

opmental disabilities focuses on students with mild intellectual disabilities, particularly at the secondary level, as well as issues regarding functional curricula. I first got into the field of special education, and particularly developmental disabilities, during my college years through a job as an inclusion counselor at a summer day camp, where I helped to include a young girl with autism. This opportunity fueled my passion for the field.

As we look forward to this new era as the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), we reflect on our recent conference in Maui in January and the upcoming CEC conference in Nashville. Both are great opportunities to learn new information, network within the field, and engage in intellectual conversations regarding the education of students with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and other developmental disabilities. With that said, both the DADD and CEC conferences present opportunities for DADD members to get more involved with the organization. We invite all our members to participate in division activities, such as (a) serving on one of the DADD committees and attending the committee meetings in Nashville and (b) attending our division business meeting the Thursday evening of the CEC conference—and of course, the social afterwards. I, and the board, look forward to seeing our DADD friends again soon, as well as meeting new ones.

(*"Teachers' Corner"* continued from page 1)

for a total of 4 to 5 hours. Results included an increase in engagement and a marked decrease in disruptive behavior. These behavior changes were maintained for at least 10 months. Considering that the participant children's developmental ages, as measured on the *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales*, were around two, the results indicate that activity schedules can be an effective teaching strategy/tool even for children with significant developmental delays.

There are number of explanations as to why activity schedules seem to be particularly effective for individuals with autism. As mentioned previously, activity schedules rely on learners' visual processing skills by displaying activities in pictures and texts instead of verbally telling them what to do. The static nature of pictures and texts may allow more time for processing instruction. Other researchers (e.g., Mesibov, Browder, & Kirkland, 2002) noted that the schedule brings structure and predictability to the daily routine. Activity schedules do so by providing a visual overview of forthcoming activities. Regardless of the underlying reasons for their effectiveness, activity schedules are an evidence-based instructional strategy that pro-

notes self-determination and independent skills for individuals with disabilities.

Note

Autism is not the sole disability for which activity schedules are used, although research on schedules has concentrated on this population.

References

- Bryan, L. C., & Gast, D. L. (2000). Teaching on-task and on-schedule behaviors to high-functioning children with autism via picture activity schedules. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 30, 553–567.
- Krantz, P. J., MacDuff, M. T., & McClannahan, L. E. (1993). Programming participation in family activities for children with autism: Parents' use of photographic activity schedules. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 26, 137–138.
- McClannahan, L. E., & Krantz, P. J. (1999). *Activity schedules for children with autism: Teaching independent behavior*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.
- Mesibov, G., Browder, D., & Kirkland, C. (2002). Using individualized schedules as a component of positive behavior support for students with developmental disabilities. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 4, 73–79.

Meet the New DADD Board Members

Congratulations to our recently elected board members. We were pleased to have had such an outstanding slate of nominees for our first election under the new term-of-office rotation. The newly elected officers began their term of service to the board on January 1, 2010. We would like to encourage all members to get to know the DADD board members by joining a committee, attending conferences, and visiting our website to obtain the latest information.

Richard M. Gargiulo, Vice President:

Currently, Richard is a professor in the Department of Leadership, Special Education, and Foundations at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Prior to his present position, he was on the faculty at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Richard also taught young children in both general education and special education settings. A long-time member of the Council for Exceptional Children, he previously served as the president of the Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) and was twice elected president of the Alabama Council for Exceptional Children. Richard enthusiastically looks forward to serving the membership of DADD.



Mark Francis, Midwest Representative:

Mark recently retired as director of special education for Wayne County in Michigan. Prior to this, he served as a local director and principal of Center Programs, where he developed programs for students with dual diagnosis and a Latch-Key program. Mark also secured grants for Summer Respite programs and raised more than \$30,000 for scholarships for students with IEPs. He served as a CEC president in Michigan and helped to raise almost \$25,000 for the state council. Mark was awarded the 2003 Beacon Award from the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education. He has served on various committees at the local, county, and state levels.



Nicole Mucherino, Student Governor:

Nicole Mucherino is a graduate student at Pace University in New York City, where she is working toward a master's degree in education. She coordinates the academic component of the BOSS (Build on Special Strengths) Program at the university, providing instructional support to students with ASD. As a graduate assistant, Nicole is engaged in grants and research projects and has presented at CEC and DDD conferences. Nicole has worked with children and young adults with developmental disabilities in residential and school settings. As the student representative to the DADD Board, she will work to increase the involvement and voice of students in the division.



Dianne Zager, Northeast Representative:

Dianne is the Michael C. Koffler Professor in Autism, director of the Center for Teaching and Research in Autism, and director of the BOSS (Build on Special Strengths) College Support Program for students with autism at Pace University in New York City. She has been a teacher of students with developmental disabilities, an administrator, and a teacher educator. Dianne has served on the DDD Professional Standards and Critical Issues committees and on the CEC Interdivisional Research Group. She has been a member of DDD for more than 25 years and is delighted to begin her second term as the Northeast Member for DADD.



Membership and Unit Development Committee Report

Debora Wichmanowski

Chairperson

Happy New Year to all our members! I hope this year will bring everyone happiness and continued success. Times have taken a toll on everything, including education, but I am very hopeful that we will begin to see changes for the best



during 2010. One of the goals of DADD is to maintain a viable membership and expand it. We will continue our efforts throughout the year, but we welcome any ideas our members may have for helping us attain this goal. Please feel free to contact me (dwichman@pasco.k12.fl.us) with any questions or suggestions you may have on membership development. I look forward to meeting many of our members in Nashville in April!

DADD at 2010 CEC in NASHVILLE



DADD has many great presentations, poster sessions, and demonstrations scheduled for the 2010 CEC Convention in Nashville, covering a range of issues on educating students with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. The **DADD Showcase** session at the 2010 Convention will focus on preparing youth with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities for postsecondary education and employ-

ment. Featured speakers will include **Drs. Robert Stodden, Paul Wehman, David Mank, and Debra Hart**. The DADD will also have another invited session, which will focus on the name change from DDD to DADD and the larger implications for the field of developmental disabilities. Featured speakers for this session include **Drs. Tom E. C. Smith, J. David Smith, and Brenda S. Myles**.

2010 DADD Meetings and Social Events • See You in NASHVILLE!



Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 20, 7:00–9:30 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, April 21, 8:30 am–5:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Divisions' Diversity Chairs: Shared Agenda Meeting

Thursday, April 22, 7:30–8:30 am
DADD Presidential Suite



Critical Issues Meeting

Thursday, April 22, 8:30–9:30 am
DADD Presidential Suite



Subdivisions Meeting

Thursday, April 22, 12:00–1:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Awards Meeting

Thursday, April 22, 1:00–1:30 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Past Presidents' Meeting

Thursday, April 22, 1:30–2:30 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Professional Development and Standards

Thursday, April 22, 2:30–3:30 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Finance

Thursday, April 22, 3:30–4 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



General Business Meeting

Thursday, April 22, 5:00–7:00 pm
Location to be announced



President's Reception

Thursday, April 22, 7:30–10:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Diversity Meeting

Friday, April 23, 8:00–9:00 am
DADD Presidential Suite



Membership Meeting

Friday, April 23, 9:00–10:00 am
DADD Presidential Suite



Conference Meeting

Friday, April 23, 10:00–11:00 am
DADD Presidential Suite



Publications Meeting

Friday, April 23, 11:00 am–12:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Communications Meeting

Friday, April 24, 12:00–1:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



How to Publish in ETDD

Friday, April 24, 1:00–2:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite



Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, April 24, 5:00–7:00 pm
DADD Presidential Suite

Diversity Committee Report

Rosa Lockwood
Chairperson



The following is an update on the status of the **Shared Agenda Initiative**. The DADD Board and other divisions continue their participation and leadership as the initiative moves forward. The initial purpose, creating and maintaining a collaborative relationship across divisions and CEC, is central to a successful outcome: examining common diversity issues across divisions/CEC and developing collaborative responses for the issues identified. The DADD Diversity Committee (DADD/DC) created and disseminated to participants an input form that listed diversity issues identified by the group over time. Completing the form required that divisions review the issues and identify their priority choices for possible group collaboration. A total of 17 issues are listed on the form under three headings: **Specific Actions Needed** (6 issues; divisions and CEC involvement), **Shared Opportunity Possibilities for Cross-Division Collaboration** (7 issues; divisions, with implications for CEC), and **Existing Actions in Place Revisited** (4 issues; divisions and CEC).

The Committee completed an analysis of returned priority choices and sent the results out. In the next step, participants will be making consensus selections from the revised list of priorities. The intent is to narrow the wide range of choices to one major or related issue. The consensus selection will become the initial collaborative work of the participating divisions and the focus of the Nashville meeting.

Write a Proposal for CEC 2011 (Washington, DC, National Harbor)

Proposal deadlines will soon be announced for the 2011 **Annual Convention and Expo of the Council for Exceptional Children** to be held in our nation's capital, Washington, DC (National Harbor), April 25–28. So, mark your calendars and continue to check the CEC and DADD websites for updated information on the due dates. Meanwhile, DADD invites you to consider submitting a proposal to share your innovations and research in the areas of autism and developmental disabilities for the 2011 conference. Encourage your co-workers and graduate students to also submit their proposals. Remember, proposals accepted by DADD for the 2011 CEC Convention may be considered for CEC-DADD Practitioner and Student Awards.

DADD Prism Series Publication



DADD Publications is pleased to report substantial progress on significant projects. First, the long-awaited revision of the division's classic publication *Social Skills in the School and Community* under Larry Sargent is approaching completion. The revision contains substantial updating of target social skills for students with autism and a greater emphasis on teaching social skills for students with developmental disabilities in inclusive settings. The finished book will include a CD with pictures and drawings that teachers can print out and use with their students.

In addition, the sixth publication in the **Prism series of monographs**, on teaching skills in mathematics to students with developmental disabilities, is in the final stages of editing and should appear in early 2010.

Visit the official Web site of the Division
on Autism and Developmental
Disabilities at

<http://www.dddcec.org/>

Search the Entire Archives of
*Education and Training in
Mental Retardation/
Developmental Disabilities*
at

<http://www.dddcec.org/search.htm>

New Way to Search Databases and the Internet for Information on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Robert Sandieson

DADD Canadian Member

You can use the list of search keywords provided here to retrieve a comprehensive number of citations about persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The list was developed through a new method of literature searching called “Pearl Harvesting,” which is documented in two publications listed at the end of this article. Initial research indicated that a systematically collected and validated set of search keywords is capable of producing substantially more citations of published reviews of the literature and meta-analyses than current search methods.

The list can be copied and pasted into a search field for a number of databases. For example, the whole list can be pasted into the keyword search field of the database PsycINFO, for those who have access to a university library. However, because a number of databases have limits as to

the number of keywords that can be entered into a single search field, the list has been broken down. For example, the public Internet version of the ERIC database accommodates most terms, but a few at the end have to be re-entered in a separate search. The ProQuest version of ERIC found within libraries, Google, and Google Scholar is more restrictive regarding the number of terms that can be entered into a search line (*see Note*).

Familiarity with keyword searching is required, and users are advised to consult with academic librarians regarding their particular search. Individuals who have tried to use databases to find information on the topic of intellectual and developmental disabilities will be aware of the confusion involved in possible terms and will appreciate the work done to assemble this comprehensive list of search keywords.

It should be noted that a distinction needs to be made between terms used for searching databases for information on intellectual and developmental disabilities and terms used to denote this population in current social circumstances. For example, the words *mental retardation* and *handicapped* are currently considered outdated, but searchers need to be cognizant of the fact that many articles in databases are indexed using these terms. If anyone should come across other possible term(s), please notify Robert Sandieson (sandie@uwo.ca).

Comprehensive List of Search Keywords

retard* OR mental* disab* OR mild disab* OR moderate* disab* OR severe* disab* OR profound* disab* OR multipl* disab* OR intellectual* disab* OR developmental* disab* OR substantial* disab* OR cognitive disab* OR learning handicap* OR mild* handicap* OR moderate* handicap* OR severe* handicap* OR mental* handicap* OR developmental* handicap* OR multipl* handicap* OR profound handicap* OR intellectual* handicap* OR mental* delay* OR intellectual* delay* OR developmental* delay* OR mental* impair* OR intellectual* impair* OR cognitive impair* OR intellectual* handicap* or “cognitive disabilities” OR “cognitive disability”

Note

Google doesn't use the * in the same way as academic databases, so terms have to be written out in all variations. When * is used in academic databases, any number of letters attached and immediately following the word stem will be accepted in the search. For example *disab** will retrieve articles with the terms *disability*, *disabilities*, and *disabled*.

Articles on Pearl Harvesting

Sandieson, R. (2006). Pathfinding in the research forest: The Pearl Harvesting method for effective information retrieval. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 41, 401–409.

Sandieson, R. W., Kirkpatrick, L. C., Sandieson, R. M., & Zimmerman, W. (2009). Harnessing the power of research databases: The Pearl Harvesting methodological framework for information retrieval. *The Journal of Special Education*. Advanced online publication, doi: 10.1177/0022466909349144

Ad Hoc Professional Standards Committee Report

Scott Sparks
Chairperson



This past year has been very successful for our work on new professional standards that include items specifically related to autism. The standards we developed have been approved and accepted by the CEC Board and are now included in the new CEC “Redbook,” *What Every Special Educator Must Know* (2009, 6th ed., pp. 113–121). CEC members may download the book and our set of standards from the CEC website. The development process was very positive and collaborative, involving our partners, the Autism Society of America (ASA) and the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI). It took a little over two years, but the final product has been well accepted. Many people from our division and the autism community—too numerous to mention—were involved but deserve our appreciation. I want to say a special thank you to the committee members who stuck with this process throughout: **Brenda Myles, Cathy Pratt, Barbara Becker-Cottrill, Polly Parrish, and Diane Zager**. We owe a true debt of gratitude to these wonderful professionals.

The ad hoc committee’s professional standards charge has been completed, but Dave Smith (our past president) and the DADD Board asked that the committee be reactivated to take on a new challenge: to look into what seemed like a simple

thing: the definition of *developmental disabilities* (DD) and how autism or autism spectrum disorders (ASD) fit into that definition. My initial assumptions of simplicity were soon dampened by the sober reality of this task. There are many definitions of DD and ASD, depending on whom you ask! Nevertheless, a committee has been formed and is currently working on providing some guidance in this area for our division and the field in general. I’ve again solicited members from both the DD and ASD communities to help with this very difficult task. The committee consists of the following individuals:

Debbie Wichmanowski, DADD Southeast Member

Lee Grossman, Executive Director of Autism Society of America (ASA)

Polly Parrish, Past President of DADD

Bob Stodden, DADD Critical Issues Chair

Sheila M. Smith, Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI)

Brenda Smith Myles, member DADD, OCALI, and ASA

Two other individuals who represent other national organizations in developmental disabilities have been recommended to me but have not yet confirmed. This is a difficult task, but I’m very excited about what we can accomplish together. If anyone would like to add to this discussion, please email me (sparks@ohio.edu). On something this important, the more input the better. Thank you.

Executive Director’s Corner

Tom E. C. Smith

A new year is here. It is hard to believe that it is 2010; seems like only a few years ago we were worried about Y2K! Time does fly. The division had a very busy 2009. We changed our administrative year to match the calendar year, which required our officers to serve an additional 6 months, but more important, we changed our name to the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) and deleted all references to the term *mental retardation* in our publications. The name change, which went into effect January 1, 2010, provides an opportunity to focus more attention on autism spectrum disorders (ASD). With this dis-



ability category growing so rapidly over the past several years, the board and membership determined that it should be a focus within the division’s advocacy efforts, especially as no other division in CEC has autism as an area of emphasis. The division will definitely continue to include the area of intellectual disabilities, the category that was our only focus for many years. These changes should not only keep our division more current with appropriate labels but also give us a chance to address the growing issues created by the significant increase in the number of students identified as having ASD. If I can assist you in any way—organizing a subdivision, holding a state conference, or answering questions about DADD—please don’t hesitate to ask (tecsmith@uark.edu).

Nicole Mucherino
Student Governor



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the members of DADD, especially the students, as the new Student Governor of the DADD board. I am a graduate of Pace University with a bachelor of arts degree in psychology, and I currently am pursuing my master's degree in education, also at Pace.

In addition to my studies at Pace, I serve as the coordinator of the academic component of the BOSS (Build on Special Strengths) Program, a college support program for students with autism spectrum disorders. In light of the DDD name change to the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), I think it is appropriate to discuss here the BOSS program, its goal in helping students with ASD, and my involvement in the program. BOSS is a fully inclusive college support program for students with high functioning autism, Asperger syndrome, nonverbal learning disabilities, and related learning differences. Our students are enrolled in various undergraduate programs

at Pace University and participate in all aspects of college life, including residing in the dormitories. This year we have 4 students in the program, who are doing well in their coursework and in their social lives as well. Next year, 10 students will participate in the program. BOSS helps these students achieve their goals by providing services such as academic support, campus-life support, social communication facilitation, career development, peer mentoring, and counseling. As the academic coordinator of the program, I meet with students four days a week. At the start of the program, the staff believed that academic support of an hour a day per student would be adequate. Now that the program is a semester into the academic year, however, we have realized that this is not the case because some students needed additional support, including attending classes to take notes, keeping students on task, and providing additional tutoring support. We hope that by disseminating information about BOSS, other universities across the country will develop similar support programs for students with significant disabilities.

I hope our BOSS program begins to raise awareness of the critical need for inclusive postsecondary college opportunities for students on the autism spectrum. For any comments, questions, or concerns that student members may have, please contact me via email (nicole.mucherino1@gmail.com).

Editor's Note . . .



Darlene Perner

On behalf of DADD, I would like to thank all our contributors but also send a special thanks and congratulations to our contributor to the *Teachers' Corner*, **Takanori Koyama**. Takanori was the DDD recipient of the Herbert J. Prehm Student Presentation Award at the 2009 CEC Convention. The DADD board looks forward to meeting our membership at the next CEC convention in Nashville. Please join DADD at committee meetings and the President's Reception.

For more information, check out page 4 of this newsletter and our website (www.dddcec.org).

If you have any questions, please contact me via email (dperner@bloomu.edu) or at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Department of Exceptionality Programs, 400 E. 2nd St., Bloomsburg, PA 17815. (Please notify CEC if you have a change of address.)