



A publication of the DIVISION ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, a unit of the Council for Exceptional Children

Focusing on individuals with cognitive disabilities/mental retardation, autism, and related disabilities

Teachers' Corner

Behavioral Support Strategies for Learners With Developmental Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders

John J. Wheeler,
Tennessee Tech University



Having served in the field of special education for over 20 years as a teacher and university educator, I have been committed to providing children and youth with developmental disabilities (DD) and autism spectrum disorders (ASD) with the skills and supports necessary to foster their growth and development across school and community domains. An important key to success as a teacher in my view has always been the development of individualized behavior supports that will result in greater degrees of personal freedom and dignity through their skill development. The greatest challenge to this ideal has been ensuring that education professionals understand the importance of this philosophy of practice and acquire the knowledge and skills to implement evidence-based practices in the delivery of behavioral supports. Perhaps the most exciting development in recent years along these lines has been the advent of positive behavior supports (PBS) within school and learning environments among learners with DD and ASD.

Where Are We and Where Are We Going?

Positive behavior supports has been an inroad in the development of effective behavioral supports for learners with DD and ASD across school and community settings. Horner and colleagues (1990) advocated for the use of nonaversive behavior supports for persons with severe disabilities as a mechanism for promoting the increased integration of persons with severe dis-

abilities in community and employment settings. This movement served to enhance the further development of PBS and broaden its applications to include school-age populations.

PBS represents an emerging technology that offers us a broader context for understanding challenging behaviors in terms of the function or purpose such behaviors serve for individuals and also a better comprehension of the environmental determinants for these responses. PBS emphasizes a values base that places high regard on the overall quality-of-life of the individual and utilizes behaviorally based interventions aimed at the ultimate well-being and the unique needs of the individual learner.

Growing evidence for the application of PBS has rapidly emerged since the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997. We have borne witness to the application of PBS across individual,

(continued on p. 8)

Inside this issue . . .

President's Message	2
Great Attendance at DDD Showcase Session	2
2006 CEC-DDD Award Recipients	3
2006 Election Results	3
Call for Papers 10th International DDD Conference	4
10th International DDD Conference	5
Summary of CEC-DDD Issue Brief on Diversity	6
Membership Committee News	6
Students' Corner	6
Professional Standards	7



Call for Papers & Announcement

10th International DDD
Conference
Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2007
Kona, Hawaii
(see pages 4 and 5)

President's Message

Dagny Fidler

It has been my honor to serve as your DDD president over the past year and be part of an organization that contributes so much to the field. As I reflect on the year, I know that we have accomplished much. The Board has done an outstanding job of moving us forward on our strategic plan. For the details of the plan, you can go to our Web site (www.dddcec.org).

The publications committee under the leadership of **Jack Hourcade** continues to provide us with quality publications. Plans for the next Prism book are underway. This volume will focus on math instruction and should be out sometime in the fall. The revision of our best practices book, entitled *Emerging and Research-based Practices in Developmental Disabilities*, will be out in the fall as well. One of our most popular books, *Social Skills for School and Community*, will be updated in the next year.

Some new items on the strategic plan include a *mini-grant program* that is being started. When that is finalized, information will be on our Web site and available in this newsletter. We are also going to pilot a *speaker's bureau* for members. The pilot will allow you to review information about Board members if you are looking for someone to present at a conference. We have also reinstated the ad hoc committee on *professional standards*. **Scott Sparks** will be working on this task on behalf of DDD. Look for more information in this newsletter.

In Salt Lake City, the Board accepted the resignation of Brenda Smith-Myles, our current vice president. Her resignation has meant that **Polly Parrish**, newly elected VP, will move directly into the president-elect position. The Board took immediate action at our business meeting to approve the appointment of a new vice president. We are all very pleased that **David Smith** will be assuming that position in July.



One of the important tasks we have as the DDD Board is to maintain a vital organization. One of the ways we do this is by offering two journals and this newsletter as part of the membership. The current professional dues cover the expenses for these journals. However, the student dues do not. Although we have been able to keep our student membership dues at the same rate for many years, it has become necessary to increase these dues to \$13.00, effective January 1, 2007.

Finally, I want to thank every member of the Board for all of the outstanding work they have done over the past year to make DDD one of the best CEC divisions. It is exciting to be part of such a dedicated and enthusiastic group of people. I am looking forward to my final year on the Board and all of the work we will be doing. If you also would like to be part of the efforts, please contact any Board member. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in Hawaii and Louisville.

Great Attendance at DDD Showcase Session

More than 200 conference attendees were present for the DDD Showcase presentation, titled "**Research-Based and Emerging Best Practices in Developmental Disabilities/Autism: Where Are We Going?**" Moderated by **Phil Parette**, DDD President Elect, six expert presenters provided summaries of research on topical areas affecting our field and shared implications for current and future practitioners. Presenters included **Mike Wehmeyer**, University of Kansas [Issues in Self-Determination and Transition Planning for Persons with DD/Autism]; **George Peterson-Karlan**, Illinois State University [Issues in Integrating Assistive Technology into the Curriculum]; **Brenda Smith Myles**, University of Kansas [Autism: A Rapidly Changing Field for Practitioners]; **John Wheeler**, Tennessee Tech University [Behavioral Support Strategies for Learners with DD]; **Toni Van Laarhoven**, Northern Illinois University [Curricula Issues and Students with DD/Autism]; and **Dianne Berkell Zager**, Pace University [Transition Issues for Persons with DD/ASD]. Attendees had the opportunity to pose questions to the presenters. In addition, DDD had a total of 44 formal sessions,

and 29 posters representing both autism and developmental disabilities.



DDD Showcase Panel (l-r): Phil Parette, Dianne Zager, Mike Wehmeyer, Brenda Myles, George Peterson-Karlan, John Wheeler, & Toni Van Laarhoven

2006 CEC-DDD AWARD RECIPIENTS

BURTON BLATT HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Ann & Rud
Turnbull



*Rud Turnbull accepting the
Burton Blatt Humanitarian
Award on his and Ann's behalf.*

RESEARCH AWARD

"Promoting Access to the General Curriculum by Teaching Self-Determination Skills"

Michael
Wehmeyer,
Susan
Palmer,
Martin
Agran,
& Krista
Gipson



Michael Wehmeyer pictured with Dagny Fidler and Cindy Perras

HERBERT J. PREHM STUDENT PRESENTATION AWARD

"The Effects of
Self-Management
for Students With
Autism: From
Meta-Analysis to
Practice"

Presenters:
Suk-Hyang Lee
& Denise Jensen
Poston



*Michael Wehmeyer, pictured with
Cindy Perras, accepting for
Suk-Hyang Lee and Denise
Jensen Poston*

PRACTITIONER PRESENTATION AWARD

"Aligning Curriculum to Meet Standards:
Getting Started"

Presenters:
Polly
Parrish &
Darlene
Perner



*Polly Parrish and
Darlene Perner
pictured with
Cindy Perras*

2006 Election Results

Barbara C. Gartin, Nominations Chair

I wish to thank all the membership who took time to vote in the 2006 election. The results of the election have provided the division with a strong and dedicated leadership for upcoming years. The DDD Board is pleased to announce this year's elected Board members as follows. **Polly Parrish** will begin a

three-year commitment to serve in the presidential chain, beginning with the role of **President Elect** for the 2006–2007 year. **Nikki Murdick** and **Dianne Zager** will serve, over the course of the next three years, as **Midwest Member** and **North-east Member**, respectively.

Congratulations to the elected members and to **David Smith**, who was recently appointed to serve as **Vice President**. Welcome to the DDD Board!



Call for Papers

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Developmental Disabilities (CEC-DDD) is hosting its 10th International Conference on Cognitive Disabilities/Mental Retardation, Autism, & Other Developmental Disabilities:

Research to Practice

January 31 – February 2, 2007
Kona, Hawaii

The 10th International Conference is both research-based and practitioner-focused; CEC-DDD welcomes the submission of innovative, creative proposals within the following strands:

- ◆ Assistive Technology
- ◆ Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- ◆ Cognitive Disability – Evidence-based Practices
- ◆ Multiple Disabilities
- ◆ Transition
- ◆ Self-Determination
- ◆ Paraprofessionals

Proposals should include the following information:

- ◆ Presenter name(s), affiliation, contact information (including e-mail)
- ◆ Session title, abstract (50 word maximum), and summary (300 word maximum), including information as to how the proposal addresses diversity
- ◆ Session format – poster session or lecture

Proposals may be submitted electronically to Cindy Perras, Program Chair cindy.perras@cogeco.ca or by fax to 905.844.4806.

Deadline: July 1, 2006

For additional conference information, please contact:
Tom Smith – tecsmith@uark.edu





10th International Conference on
Cognitive Disabilities/
Mental Retardation, Autism, &
Other Developmental Disabilities

Research to Practice

Council for Exceptional Children
Division on Developmental Disabilities

January 30 – February 2, 2007



Keauhou-Kona, Hawaii

Conference Registration:
\$225.00, by December 31, 2006;
\$250.00 after

Pre-conference Training
Institutes:
\$100.00, by December 31, 2006;
\$125.00 after

Package price for Conference & Training Institutes:
\$300.00 by December 31, 2006; \$325.00 after
Student Rate (advisor signature) – 20% discount

For further information, please contact:

Tom Smith
tecsmith@uark.edu

Cindy Perras
cindy.perras@cogeco.ca

This paper was developed by the DDD Diversity Committee, Rosa Lockwood, Chairperson, and has been approved by the DDD Board as an issue brief to be made available to its members.

Summary of CEC–DDD Issue Brief on Diversity

The Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Board recognizes the importance of addressing diversity issues with its membership. This recognition includes the following perspectives: (1) diversity of families can impact potential responses to the educational system, as well as, the educational system's response to that diversity; (2) different views that diverse families may hold about mental retardation and other developmental disabilities; (3) necessity to meet ongoing needs of the changing and growing diversity within the Division membership itself; and (4) responsibility of the Division to assist its membership in meeting the needs of diverse students and their families.

During the past year, the Diversity Committee of the DDD Board has worked with Board members and the Critical Issues Chairperson in the development of an **Issue Brief** that speaks to the concept of diversity, its impact on the membership and the wider community that is served by the work of DDD, and

the identification of important recommendations that will influence policy, program, and initiative changes within DDD. (Look for policy, program, and initiative changes from the Board/Diversity Committee in another format at a future time.)

The membership of the DDD is diverse, and is made up of administrators, school-level educators, and students, as well as faculty and students in higher education. This membership is comprised of individuals who implement best and promising practices. This brief is designed to give the membership opportunities to engage in structured and facilitated conversations about diversity issues that impact them professionally. All have a shared role in the identification and implementation of services that reflect best and promising practices for individuals with developmental disabilities, especially those who are from diverse cultures.

The following topics, with linked resources, are discussed in the Committee's **Issue Brief on Diversity**:

1. Expanded language in the mission statement,
2. Diversity definition,
3. Board leadership on issues of diversity.

The full **Issues Brief on Diversity** can be found posted at the DDD Web site (<http://www.dddcec.org>).

Membership and Unit Development Committee News

Joyce Agness & Jim Forristal, Co-Chairs

Thanks to all those that stopped by the DDD booth at the CEC convention in Salt Lake City. It was great to see so many old friends and to make many new ones. If you have friends who are members of CEC, share with them the benefits of becoming a member of DDD. Students with developmental disabilities are in all of our classrooms. DDD provides a great resource to educators by sharing the most current information in the field on developmental disabilities through the journals and the PRISM Series you receive with your membership. Networking among educators and between educators and parents is a critical component for providing the best for our students. If anyone would like to start a DDD Chapter in your area, please contact us. We would love to support you financially, with ideas of how to, and by connecting you to other chapters if possible. This is a great way to provide networking for educators and parents in your area. Let us know how we can help (Joyce_agness@hcpss.org and jimfortpa@aol.com). Help us spread the word!

Student Recruitment Grant Award Recipient and 2006–2007 Announcement

This year the 2005–2006 Student Recruitment Grant Award recipient was the Student Unit #1050 from The University

of Central Florida, Brevard Campus. Congratulations to this energetic group of students who recruited nine new student members to the Division. Those student units wishing to participate in the **2006–2007 Student Recruitment Grant** may do so by completing the application that can be found on our DDD Web site (www.dddcec.org).



Tori Williamson, Vice President of **Student Unit #1050** receives **Student Recruitment Grant**. Pictured: (Front row) Tori Williamson, Julia Kasica, Suzanne Bula, Emily Eslinger, Jacquelyn Zimpfe and (Back Row) Jessica Eazsol, Shawn McMahon, Jay Freeman with advisors, Dan Ezell and Colleen Klein-Ezell

Students' Corner

Kara Hume, *Student Governor*

It was a pleasure to meet a number of students at the annual conference in Salt Lake City. The CEC Student Forum was a terrific venue for both undergraduate and graduate students to discuss career paths, meet representatives from each CEC division, and explore leadership positions within CEC. I would highly recommend attending this session next year.

Several issues relevant to students were discussed at the DDD Board meetings in Salt Lake City, and it is important that I pass this information on to you:

- **Student dues:** There is going to be an increase in student dues (beginning in January) from the current rate of \$8 to a new rate of \$13. Though this is a change, the new rate is similar to those of other divisions and includes a subscription to **two** excellent journals—*Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities* and *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. Individual subscriptions to both journals would cost \$76 (\$46 for a subscription to *Focus* and \$30 for *ETDD*), so the student membership still offers quite a savings. If you aren't yet a member, consider joining before the increase takes place next year. If you have any questions about this change, please feel free to contact me.
- **Book reviews:** The division is gauging membership interest in conducting book reviews for publication on the DDD Web site or in the *DDD Express* newsletter.

Often authors of books related to autism or other developmental disabilities are interested in having their book reviewed by members of the DDD community. If a brief book review is something you would be interested in doing to gain experience (consider your resume or vita) and provide service to the organization, please e-mail me (kahume@indiana.edu). We would love to have students involved in this way!

- **Student chapters of DDD:** We are still actively working on increasing DDD membership in student chapters. If you are a member of an SCEC chapter, consider membership in DDD as well. DDD will support the membership with recruitment grants up to \$75 for student chapters. Again, please contact me for further information and assistance.
- **Call for papers:** Finally, I would encourage all students to consider submitting a proposal for DDD's 10th International Conference in Hawaii. Presenting your experiences and/or research to the broader special education community (through a lecture, demonstration, or poster session) is an excellent opportunity and your role as a student provides a unique perspective. Many university education programs provide travel grants that may assist you with the expense. For further information on the call for proposals and conference, see the DDD Web site (<http://www.dddcec.org/conferences.htm>).

Looking forward to hearing from the student membership—and to seeing you in Hawaii!

Professional Development and Standards Ad Hoc Committee Report

Scott Sparks, *Chair*

This committee was re-activated by the DDD Board of Directors during their meeting in Salt Lake City in April, 2006. The ad hoc committee will develop Advanced Standards in Developmental Disabilities (DD) that will expand upon the recently developed CEC Advanced Common Core. The standards to be developed by DDD will address knowledge and skill statements that are crucial to **experienced** professionals in the field of DD. These standards will impact advanced programs in DD, including graduate teacher training programs through the NCATE

approval process. NCATE will incorporate the CEC Advanced Common Core and the DDD Specialty Set into their assessment of advanced teacher training programs. Of course, our advanced standards will also be used throughout the field and will serve as a guide to what experienced professionals should know and be able to accomplish. When the DD standards are finally approved, they will be published/posted with the CEC standards. Tremendous appreciation goes out to our hard-working committee; their expertise and effort will help develop our field! If anyone has comments or questions, please contact me (sparks@ohio.edu).

Coming Soon...

Call for Proposals • The DDD PRISM Monograph Series • PRISM 8

For immediate information, go to <http://www.dddcec.org/>

(“Teachers’ Corner” continued from p. 1)

classroom, and school settings, yet acceptance of this methodology has been erratic among practitioners. In part, this could be explained by several factors but perhaps the two that I have observed most consistently are related to the development of professional competencies in the area of PBS and the functional utility of PBS within classroom and school environments. In spite of the increased emphasis on standards-based instruction within teacher training programs, we witness the inconsistency found among such programs in how teachers are trained in the area of behavior supports. The range of possibilities includes behavior management practices, applied behavior analysis, classroom management and discipline approaches, and PBS. In order to ensure uniformity and to better approximate the use of evidence-based practices, we need to seek consistency and a common language among teacher education programs. Within educational settings, I have also witnessed the continued reliance on consequence-based approaches designed to suppress challenging behaviors due in part to the perception that they are quick and effective. The need for further research on the use of PBS within schools across individual learners, in classrooms, and schoolwide with a focus on how to enhance the portability or utility of these practices continues to be evident.

One area worthy of further investigation is the use of antecedent management strategies applied to individual, classroom, and school levels. Antecedent management approaches aim to better understand the relationship between distant setting events and antecedents that serve to precipitate or trigger challenging behaviors in learners. One example is the relationship of challenging behaviors to curriculum and instruction. Dunlap and colleagues (1991) demonstrated the relationship between instructional variables and their influence on learner behavior. Often challenging behaviors encountered during the school day are influenced by instructional antecedents, not to mention school climate and the presence or absence of a meaningful connection for the learner with his or her educational surroundings. Teachers can better understand the role of instructional antecedents and their influence on challenging behavior by considering how tasks are designed and how tasks are presented to the learner.

Wheeler and Richey (2005) provide some helpful hints along these lines:

Task Design

- Make learning and the tasks associated with it relevant to the learner.

- Match tasks to the learner’s ability levels.
- Build in opportunities for choice.
- Determine the appropriate length of activities given the age and ability levels of the learner.
- Vary activities within the classroom schedule to provide variety.
- Use individual and classroom schedules to more effectively communicate task and performance expectations.

Task Presentation

- Use clear and consistent cues geared to the learner’s needs.
- Use embedded cues within the task if possible to serve as a visual stimulus aimed at promoting correct responding, such as color-coding tasks, providing completed examples, and highlighting instruction within written tasks.
- Intersperse requesting or the use of high probability requests throughout a task to ensure task engagement and task completion, such as embedding math problems that are easy for the learner to complete amid more challenging problems as a means for promoting behavioral momentum and ultimately completion.
- Use systematic instruction, including error correction procedures and prompt hierarchies, to promote skill acquisition and fluency for learners.

These are some very fundamental instructional practices that teachers can be sensitive to and employ as a means for promoting optimal learner performance and preventing challenging behaviors that interfere with learning.

References

- Dunlap, G, Kern-Dunlap, L., Clarke, S., & Robbins, F.R. (1991). Functional assessment, curricular revision, and severe behavior problems. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 24, 387–397.
- Horner, R.H., Dunlap, G., Koegel, R.L., Carr, E.G., Sailor, W., Anderson, J, Albin, R.W., & O’Neill, R.E. (1990). Toward a technology of nonaversive behavioral support. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 15, 125–132.
- Wheeler, J.J., & Richey, D.D. (2005) *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Search the Entire Archives

of *Education and Training in Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities* at
www.dddcec.org/search.htm