Supporting Paraprofessionals to Implement FCT to Address Challenging Behavior

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Agenda

• Evidence-based practices for challenging behavior
• Evidence-based practices implementation
• Our research
• Implications
• Q&A
Challenging Behavior

• Percentage of students eligible for special education services under ASD category has continued to increase (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2020)

• Many students with ASD engage in challenging behavior (Mason et al., 2008)
Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

• The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice: https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/

• 26 EBPs for challenging behavior
Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

• Functional Behavior Assessment

A systematic way of determining the underlying **function or purpose** of a behavior so that an effective intervention plan can be developed – National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice
Functional Behavior Assessment

- **Functional behavior assessment** (FBA) information is used to develop the behavior intervention plan.

- The primary objective of conducting an FBA is to understand the function(s) of challenging behavior.
Challenging Behavior and Communication

• Challenging behavior is a form of **communication**

• Challenging behavior has a **function** (i.e., “purpose”)

- Escape
- Attention
- Tangible
- Sensory
Functional Behavior Assessment

• FBA results:

- Setting Event: Tired
- Antecedent: Teacher attention elsewhere
- Problem Behavior: Nonparticipation; loud vocalizations
- Consequence: Teacher talking to student
- Function: Attention
How can we address challenging behavior once we understand the function?
Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

- Behavior Intervention Plan
- Includes one or more category of strategies
  - Preventing
  - Teaching
  - Responding
Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

• FBA results:

- **Setting Event**: Tired
- **Antecedent**: Teacher attention elsewhere
- **Problem Behavior**: Nonparticipation; loud vocalizations
- **Consequence**: Teacher talking to student
- **Function**: Attention
Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

• Functional Communication Training (Carr & Durand, 1985)

A set of practices that replace a challenging behavior that has a communication function with more appropriate and effective communication behaviors or skills – National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice
Functional Communication Training

• **Functional communication training** (FCT) is an evidence-based practice

• The purpose of FCT is teach a communication response that replaces challenging behavior

• This communication response is called a **functionally-equivalent communication response**
Functional Communication Training

Antecedent
Peers are eating preferred snacks

Problem Behavior
Steals snacks from peers

Consequence
Obtains preferred snacks

Function
Access to tangible (preferred snack)

Replacement Behavior
Says, “I want a snack.”

functionally-equivalent communication response
Functional Communication Training

Antecedent
Loud noises

Problem Behavior
Runs out of the classroom to a quiet area

Consequence
No longer around loud noises

Function
Escape from loud noises

Replacement Behavior
Signs, “Break.”

functionally-equivalent communication response
Functional Communication Training

Antecedent: Presented with difficult math task

Problem Behavior: Cries

Consequence: Avoids completing difficult math task

Function: Escape math task

Replacement Behavior: Touches picture symbol that represents “help.”

functionally-equivalent communication response
Functional Communication Training

**Antecedent**
Teacher is working with other students

**Problem Behavior**
Screams and bangs table

**Consequence**
Teacher walks over to student and delivers reprimands

**Function**
Attention from teacher

**Replacement Behavior**
Presses SGD that says, “I need to talk to you, Ms. Walker”

functionally-equivalent communication response
EBP Implementation In Schools

• EBPs can be implemented with fidelity in schools to address the social, academic, and behavioral needs of students with ASD (deBruin et al., 2013; Lory et al., 2020; Martinez et al., 2016).
Barriers to EBP Implementation in Schools

• **Training is often cited as a barrier** to effective EBP implementation
  (Knight et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2020)
Paraprofessionals

• Assist educators and other professionals in the provision of special education and other related services for students with ASD (Carter et al., 2009; Rispoli et al., 2011)

• Often address challenging behavior (Carter et al., 2009)

• Identify training in behavioral intervention as a high-priority area (e.g., Mason et al., 2020; Sobeck & Robertson, 2019)
Research Study #1

Research Questions

1. Are paraprofessionals able to implement FCT with high levels of **fidelity** after receiving training?

2. Do paraprofessionals and special educators find the initial training and follow-up coaching sessions to be **practical and effective**?

3. Do paraprofessionals and special educators find training based on behavioral skills training to be **socially valid**?
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraprofessionals</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide support to the student participant within the identified setting in which challenging behavior occurred</td>
<td>• Have an autism diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have no prior training in FCT</td>
<td>• Have complex communication needs that necessitated AAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consent to participate in the study</td>
<td>• Engage in persistent challenging behavior that caused harm to the student or others, interfered with learning and/or socially isolated the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Receive guardian permission to participate in the study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes

• Paraprofessional implementation fidelity
  • Accuracy with which the paraprofessional implemented FCT

• Student behavior
  • Occurrence of challenging behavior
  • Replacement behavior
Procedures

- FBA
- FCT intervention development
- Baseline
- Paraprofessional training intervention
**FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW (FAI)**

**Person with challenging behavior(s):**
- Age
- Sex: M F

**Interviewer:**
- Respondent(s):

**Date of interview:**

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### A. DESCRIBE THE BEHAVIOR(S)

1. For each of the behaviors of concern, define the topography (how it is performed), frequency (how often it occurs per day, week, or month), duration (how long it lasts when it occurs), and intensity (how damaging or destructive the behaviors are when they occur).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. Engages in the behavior to escape aavers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. Engages in the behavior to escape work or learning situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. Engages in the behavior as a form of “self-stimulation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4. Engages in the behavior because he/she is in pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5. Engages in the behavior to get access to items, such as food, drinks,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6. Engages in the behavior because he/she wants it for recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7. Engages in the behavior when asked to do something (get dressed, feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8. Engages in the behavior when he/she is fatigued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9. Engages in the behavior because the setup is non-preferred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10. Engages in the behavior when he/she is hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11. Engages in the behavior to keep something away from him/herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12. Engages in the behavior when he/she does not want to do something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13. Engages in the behavior because there is nothing else to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14. Engages in the behavior when he/she sees something that he/she wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15. Engages in the behavior when he/she is tired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16. Engages in the behavior to try to get someone to leave him/her alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>17. Engages in the behavior to try to get people to leave him/her alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18. Engages in the behavior because he/she is physically uncomfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19. Engages in the behavior when he/she has something that he/she wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20. Engages in the behavior when he/she has something that he/she wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>21. Engages in the behavior when he/she sees something that he/she wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>22. Engages in the behavior when he/she is tired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>23. Engages in the behavior when he/she is feeling well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>24. Engages in the behavior when he/she is not feeling well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. Which of the behaviors described above are likely to occur together in some way? Do they occur about the same time? In some kind of predictable sequence or chain? In response to the same type of situation?

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**O’Neill et al., 2015**
Procedures

FBA

FCT intervention development

Baseline

Paraprofessional training intervention
Planning

• FCT Planning Guide
System of Least Prompts

Prompt Hierarchy

- Gestural
- Verbal
- Visual
- Model
- Physical
Constant Time Delay

- 1 prompt delivered at a set interval
Baseline

- FBA
- FCT intervention development
- Baseline
- Paraprofessional training intervention
Baseline

Video 1
Intervention

- FBA
- FCT intervention development
- Baseline
- Paraprofessional training intervention
### FCT COACHING GUIDE

**Directions:** Follow the coaching procedures for each coaching session. Be sure to audio record the entire session. At the end of the session, complete the coaching fidelity checklist by indicating whether you implemented the coaching procedure (yes), did not implement the coaching procedure (no), or had no opportunity to implement the coaching procedure (no opportunity).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Paraprofessional:</th>
<th>Coach:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Coaching session #:</td>
<td>Start/end time:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaching procedures:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video review</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach shares a video clip(s) of instructional elements implemented correctly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach shares a video clip(s) of instructional elements implemented incorrectly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach identifies focus of coaching session (i.e., instructional elements not implemented correctly)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach provides a description of the instructional procedure(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach provides a description of why the instructional procedure(s) is important.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach provides a description of when and when not to use the instructional procedure(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modeling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach demonstrates how to perform the instructional procedure(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rehearsal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Coach facilitates a role-play in which the paraprofessional practices performing the instructional procedure(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· During or after rehearsal, coach provides positive praise for correct implementation and corrective feedback for incorrect implementation.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes from coaching session:**
Behavior skills training

Instructions  Modeling  Rehearsal  Feedback
Intervention

Video 2
Results
## Social Validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Acceptability:</strong> This approach to training teaching assistants would be appropriate for a variety of staff.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness:</strong> The initial training and follow-up coaching sessions will probably not result in FCT implementation that leads to harm to students.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Negative Side Effects:</strong> The initial training and follow-up coaching sessions provided an appropriate approach to FCT implementation.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Study #2

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of special educator-delivered training consisting of an initial training session and follow-up coaching on paraprofessional implementation of FCT?

2. Do special educators and paraprofessionals find the paraprofessional training intervention to be effective and feasible?
Behavior skills training

Instructions  Modeling  Rehearsal  Feedback
Results
Implications

• **Behavioral skills training** as an approach for paraprofessional training

• **Special education teachers**, as opposed to external experts, can be effective trainers

• A need for more **research** to explore effectiveness and feasibility across different students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and school settings
Q&A

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