

Classroom Structure

- Structure to promote attention to task
 - Dividers
 - Minimal decorations
 - Desk cleared of erroneous materials
 - Windows covered
 - Solid colored background for assignments

(Schopler, Mesibov, & Hearsey, 1995)

Classroom Structure: Possible Learning Areas

Preschool:

- * Art
- * Books
- * Listening
- * Gross motor
- * One-to-one lessons
- * Independent work
- * Group activities (snack, social skills)
- * Circle
- * Toileting/hygiene

Elementary:

- * One-to-one lessons
- * Independent work
- * Group activities
- * Prevocational skills
- * Self-help/hygiene
- * Leisure

Secondary:

- * One-to-one lessons
- * Independent work
- * Group activities
- * Vocational skills
- * Self-help/hygiene
- * Leisure

Schopler, Mesibov, & Hearsey, 1995

Classroom Structure: Hints

- Separate “independent work” and “one-to-one” areas because teacher expectations are different
- When child has difficulty with distractions or understanding barriers, consider reorganizing the environment
- Reorganize students’ work areas as they become more capable (keep an eye towards what the typical classroom looks like)
 - Decrease barriers
 - Move closer to peers
 - Require students to travel across the room for materials

Visual Schedules: Benefits

- Compensate for difficulties with receptive language, attention, organization, and memory
- Help students predict events, which lessens anxiety – shows “what’s next”
- Can increase motivation – indicate that more preferred activities will follow less preferred ones
- Encourage independence

(Schopler, Mesibov, & Hearshey, 1995)

Visual Schedules: Individualize

- Left-to right and/or top-to-bottom
- All day or part day
- Coded for each student (name, color, photograph)

Schopler, Mesibov, & Hearshey, 1995

Visual Schedules: Type/Level of Abstraction

- Object schedule (full sized or miniature)
- Photo schedule
- Line drawing schedule (color or B&W)
- Written word schedule / notebooks / day planners

More concrete



More abstract

Visual Schedules: Hints

- Over-teach at first
 - Physical prompts and gestures are easier to fade than verbal prompts
- Use a “natural” signal to indicate it’s time to check the schedule
 - Tell the child “time’s up” or “finished”
 - Use a timer
 - Teach the student to use a clock. . .

Visual Schedules: Hints

- If the student isn’t “getting it,” make changes
 - Shorten the schedule (one picture at a time to full day)
 - Make the pictures bigger
 - Back off to a more concrete system
- Change the schedule often
- Visual Schedules

Mini Schedules

- Provide detailed instructions for activities
- Teaches about sequence of steps
- Useful for “task analysis” of activities

Hodgdon (1996)

Visual Organization of Tasks

- Clear, visual directions for each task
- Defines how much work is to be done for each task
- Clear indication of “finished” for each task

Task Organization: Visual Instruction

- Materials define the task
- Jigs
 - Cut-out jig
 - Repetitive jig
 - Picture jig (life-sized or referral)
- Written instructions
- Product samples

TEACCH, 1996

Task Organization: Visual Organization of Materials

- Self-contained tasks
 - Shoebox tasks
- Separate containers
- Check list
- Child collects necessary materials (possibly with written directions)

TEACCH, 1996

Task Organization Hints

- Put masking tape on the back of each task to write the initials of each child who achieves mastery
- Make matching tasks in a way that allows you to change the placements of pieces
- You should be able to tell if the student completed the task correctly by looking at it after they are finished

Hints for Teacher Organization

- Does your desk look like this???
- Use tackle boxes to organize pictures and keep them from being dumped over
- Store teaching materials on one shelving unit, marked with student names, for quick retrieval
- Use a daily schedule for the adults to know what they should do and when

Online Resources

- Blue Ridge Bags website: <http://www.blueridgebagsandmore.com/index.html> Folder tasks available for purchase.
- Division TEACCH website: <http://www.teacch.com> Provides information on Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children.
- Shoeboxtasks® website: www.shoeboxtasks.com. Visually-organized manipulative/three dimensional tasks available for purchase.
- Tasks Galore Publishing, Inc. website: <http://www.tasksgalore.com/index.html> Books providing suggestions for creating visually-organized tasks available for purchase.
- Article on Apps for Autism: <http://www.gadgetsdna.com/10-revolutionary-ipad-apps-to-help-autistic-children/5522/>
- Autism Internet Modules: <http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/> (Modules for Structured Teaching, Structured work systems, Visual supports)

Books and Chapters

- Earles-Vollrath, T. L., Cook, K. T., & Ganz, J. B., (2006). *How to develop and implement visual supports*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, Inc.
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