Creating Effective Visual Supports

Thursday, September 8\textsuperscript{th} 2011

1:00-2:00 p.m.
Workgroup Objectives

- Review basics of visual supports
- Describe common uses of visual supports with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and related disabilities
- Learn the process of creating effective visual supports
- Observe the use of visual supports in a high school classroom
Visual Supports in Everyday Life...

- Maps
- Schematics
- Visual assembly directions
- Calendars
- Street signs
- Agendas
- Written rules
- Exit signs
- Bathroom signs
- More???
Visual Supports Can Be...

- Photographs
- Video/Animated (e.g., SMART board, iPrompts)
- Written words
- Labels
- Symbols (e.g., arrow)
- Picture Symbols
- Drawings
- Objects
- Timers/Clocks
- Others??
What types of visual supports do you currently use with students with ASD in your classroom or home?

How do you determine the most effective way present material visually to these students?
Children with ASD typically respond to visual input as their primary source of information. (Quill, 1995 in Banda, Grimmett, & Hart, 2009)

The use of visual support systems can
- Supplement verbal directions when students have deficits in auditory processing.
- Decrease dependence and overreliance on adults and human resources. (Banda, Grimmett, & Hart, 2009)
Research on Visual Supports

- **Transition within an activity** (Dauphin, Kinney, & Stromer, 2004; Morrison, Sainato, Benchaaban, & Endo, 2002)
- **Transition between activities** (Bryan & Gast, 2000; Dooley, Wilczenski, & Torem, 2001; Hall, McClannahan, & Krantz, 1995; MacDuff, Krantz, & McClannahan, 1993; Massey & Wheeler, 2000)
- **Social interactions** (Krantz & McClannahan, 1998)
- **Choice making** (Watanabe & Sturmey, 2003)
- **Self management in daily living skills** (Pierce & Schriebman, 1994)
- **On-task behavior** (Bryan & Gast, 2000; Massey & Wheeler, 2000; Morrison et al., 2002)
- **Reducing tantrums** (Dooley et al., 2001; MacDuff et al., 1993; Krantz & McClannahan, 1993)
- **Increasing compliance** (Dettmer, Simpson, Myles, & Ganz, 2000)
Possible Uses for Visual Supports

- Get Organized
- Task Engagement
- Give/Follow Directions
- Understand Information
- Support Behavior
- Express Information
- Transition
- Comprehend
  - Rules
  - Expectations
  - Conventions
    - (Banda, Grimmett, & Hart, 2009).

Hume, K (2008)
Visual Supports can be used across all Key Areas as identified in the Louisiana Autism Quality Indicators (LAQI):

- Collaboration
- Inclusive Practices
- Environment
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Communication
- Behavior
- Social Interaction
- Transition
Examples of Visual Supports
• Getting ready for school
• Getting dressed
• Cooking/preparing a snack
• House rules
• “House chore” tasks
• Toileting/self-care
• Other?
• Do all of your students respond to picture symbols?
• Do symbols meet the comprehension level for all students in your class?
• What are some drawbacks to using a “one size fits all” approach when designing visual supports?
Systematic Design of Visual Support

Identify a need → Assess → Design → Organize
Step 1: Developing Visual Supports for all learners:

Determine what information should be presented to the learner (e.g., upcoming events, expectations, location of materials).

Consider the following questions:

- Does the activity, event, or concept cause frustration or anxiety for the student?
- Does the student currently require significant adult support with this activity/event/concept?
- Is this activity/event/concept difficult for the student to understand given only verbal directions?

Adapted from Hume, K., & Smith, S (2009)
If YES...

- Then student could probably benefit from the use of visual supports

Once the activities, events, and concepts are determined, the team should assess the student’s skills and match with a “best fit” visual format.
Conduct individualized assessment of the student’s comprehension skills to select one of the following forms of representation:

- **Objects** (a spoon to represent lunchtime)
- **Photographs** (a photo of an art teacher to represent that activity during the day)
- **Drawing or Picture Symbols** (a symbol of the library to represent that activity during the day)
- **Words** (e.g., “Name _______”)
- **Phrases or Sentences** (a written task list for packing up to go home)
- **A combination of any of the above**

Adapted from Hume, K., & Smith, S (2009)
• **Strategies for Assessment:**
  - Present a known, preferred item to a student and have them request the item or execute the task in a probe using a hierarchy of presentation formats:
    - Concrete object
    - Photograph
    - Symbol
    - Word
    - Phrase
  - Move through the hierarchy in a series of probes to determine the student’s skill level in understanding a representation of the item.
  - The highest level form that the student can currently understand/use, or a combination of forms, should be utilized in the creation of the visual support.
• Determining visual support formats based on student need.
• Socially valid systems and presentation of visual supports
Create the Visual Support
Organize the Visual Support for the Student

- The team organizes the visual support and related elements (e.g., communication devices, reinforcements)
- Ensure that the visual supports are arranged prior to the activity or event.
  - Calendars are available on the desk
  - Visual schedule is in proximity to the student
  - Timer is situated in the student’s view

Adapted from Hume, K., & Smith, S (2009)
A teacher discusses...

- Arrangement of visual supports in her classroom, at work sites, in general education classrooms.
Next Steps for Implementation

- Systematically teach the student to use the visual support
- Increase student independence in using the support by fading prompts
- Use the visual supports consistently throughout the day
- Prepare the student for changes in the activity using a visual strategy
- Ensure that the visual support is available to the student in all settings throughout the day
- Collect on-going progress monitoring data on the independent use of the visual support and the student’s performance during the activity/event or with a concept.
  - Data can also be collected on the student’s progress through the various levels/forms of visual supports,

Adapted from Hume, K., & Smith, S (2009)
Important Considerations

- Social Validity
- Intrusiveness
- Portability
- Generalization

Train for family/peers/other staff at the school
Other Applications for Visual Supports in the Classroom

- Video Modeling/Self-Modeling
- Social Stories
- Assistive Technology
  - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Curriculum and Instruction (Universal Design for Learning)
Visual supports are commonly used by people with and without disabilities to stay organized and anticipate upcoming events and activities.

People with ASD often respond to visual input to receive, express, and understand information.

- Using visual supports is an effective educational intervention for many individuals with ASD across content areas and settings.

Visual supports should be created systematically to address the needs of individual students.
For More Information

- **Human Development Center Website:**
  - [http://www.hdc.lsuhsc.edu/](http://www.hdc.lsuhsc.edu/)

- **National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders**
  - [http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/](http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/)

- **Social Stories:**
  - [www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org)

- **PECS:**
  - [www.pecs.com](http://www.pecs.com)

- **LA DOE Significant Disabilities Access:**
  - [https://sda.doe.louisiana.gov](https://sda.doe.louisiana.gov)
Questions?

- Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities Project

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Thank you!!!!


