

Week 3: Communication & Language Interventions Assignment

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Communication and Language Interventions

Three communication and language interventions were examined which might be implemented during my fieldwork observations.

1. Technology-Aided Instruction and Intervention (TAII). TAII is described by Kim, et al. as being an intervention "... in which technology is the central feature..." (2021). This might include any number of the ubiquitous learning resources and applications available through student laptops, smartphones, smartwatches or through instructor use of smartboards, or similar devices for both learner and instructor. Research has validated TAII as an intervention "to improve academic skills for students with ASD..." and may be particularly useful for improving written communication skills (Kouo and Visco, 2021) or for augmented and alternative communications (Franzone and Collet-Klingenberg, 2008). TAII is an evidence-based practice (EBP) which has been validated as an effective intervention for improving language and communication skills for learners from ages 0 to 22.

2. Social Narratives (SN). Coogle, et al. defines social narratives as "a written story that is created to assist individuals with ASD in understanding a specific social situation" and emphasizes the need for collaboration among teachers, family members and service providers in designing and implementing social stories (2017). Coogle looked at four different ways to use social narratives to improve language and communication skills for learners with ASD: 1) to initiate "play through a verbal request"; 2) to "respond with words to peers when asked to play"; 3) to "use assistive technology to greet a peer"; and 4) to identify "functional words through typical activities and routines." Though Social Narratives are an EBP which has been validated as an effective intervention for improving language and communication skills for learners from ages 0-14, Leaf, et al. caution that a number of activities which have been included under the

umbrella term of “social narratives” do not “demonstrate a convincing functional relationship between the intervention and corresponding change in behavior” (2019).

3. Prompting (PP). Prompting, by itself, is an EBP which is validated as an effective intervention for learners from ages 0 to 14, it is often included as a step in other EBPs such as discrete trial teaching (Aljohani, et al., 2021). Smartwatches can be programmed to provide prompts at a particular time to aid in reminding a learner to engage in an activity or to perform a certain task (Cleary, et al., 2021). A prompt, then, is a signal provided to a learner to do something. As relating to improving language and communication skills, prompts are often helpful in guiding learners with ASD on when it is appropriate to initiate communication with a peer or adult or respond to such a communication.

Implementation of Communication and Language Interventions

Ideally, implementing the EBPs of Technology-Aided Instruction and Intervention, Social Narratives, and Prompting with fidelity in real-world settings would mean closely following the methods used in a research-based study validating the EBP. However, many validation studies are single case studies and when we are implementing an EBP in our classrooms and around our schools we are likely to encounter conditions different from those other researchers have encountered.

I have found that many learners with ASD who have average intelligence are supported in their writing with TAI by drafting essays on their laptops. Doing so increases the ease of editing, leads to more legible writing, and uses the strengths of many learners with ASD in the area of formatting their written work. In the classes where I support learners with ASD, there is often an expectation that learners collaborate with each other. Social narratives is one way that I can help my learners with ASD increase their participation in these collaboration sessions.

Prompting is frequently necessary to provide learners with encouragement to both keep working and to make revisions, when necessary. These examples of how I might implement these EBPs in my field experiences include the use of EBPs for both verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as written communication. To some extent I already use these EBPs. As part of my field experience, I will better record data to see if what I'm doing is actually effective. If an EBP is not accomplishing what is intended I will need to consider if I'm implementing the EBP with fidelity.

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