SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION OF FUNCTIONAL SKILLS FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

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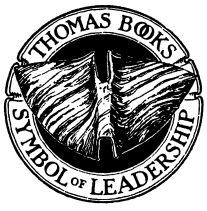

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To Paul Bates for his teaching, research, mentoring, and friendship.

K.S.
C.M.

To Evan and Anna. Though their instruction of their father has not always been systematic, it has nevertheless been quite educative!

K.S.

To my beautiful wife, Shari for keeping me focused on what's important in every aspect of life.

C.M.

FOREWORD

Even before passage of the 1975 Education of the Handicapped Act (renamed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]) which mandated educational services for all students with disabilities (Federal Register, 1977), some school districts were already educating these students. For example, the Madison (Wisconsin) Metropolitan Schools' stated goal for students with severe disabilities was to maximize their independent functioning in the community where people without disabilities lived, worked, and spent time (Van Deventer et al., 1981). When follow-up studies showed that, after exiting school, only 2 percent of these students spent their days in integrated settings, the district changed the curriculum of students with severe disabilities to focus on naturally-occurring (i.e., functional) activities in naturally-occurring contexts, including general education and the community (Alper, Ryndak, Hughes, & McDonnell, 2010). The change to a functional curriculum resulted in 91 percent of new graduates spending their work day hours in integrated settings with co-workers without disabilities. Similarly, Benz, Lindstrom, and Yanvanoff (2000) demonstrated that a functional skills curriculum (Youth Transition Program) was associated with improved post-school outcomes for participating students, including higher rates of graduation, employment, and participation in postsecondary education.

More than 30 years after the first of these early demonstrations of the effectiveness of a functional curriculum for students with disabilities, the field of special education appears to be in a quandary about what composes an appropriate curriculum for these students. On the one hand, federal legislation (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] of 2002) calls for an increased access to general education curricula and focus on academic outcomes and standardized testing. On the other hand, special education is not producing the positive postschool outcomes nationwide demonstrated in the early studies. Having a disability is persistently associated with poor postschool outcomes, such as low graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates and increased unengagement, unemployment, and underemployment (Newman,

Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009). For example, Newman and colleagues (2009) reported that, after leaving high school, only 33 percent of youth with intellectual disabilities are employed (primarily part-time), only 7 percent attend postsecondary school as a sole postschool activity, only 14 percent live independently or semi-independently, only 26 percent have a checking account, and only 11 percent participate in a community group, such as a sports team or church club. One factor related to such poor post-school outcomes may be the inappropriateness of the prevailing special education curriculum, instructional strategies, and service delivery model.

To illustrate, employment and follow-up studies have indicated that since the 1980s that the primary reason people with disabilities lose their jobs is not because they cannot perform required tasks, but because of difficulty fitting in socially in the workplace (e.g., Brickey, Campbell, & Browning, 1985; Chadsey, 2007; Greenspan & Shoultz, 1981). Social validation studies conducted in employment settings indicate that employers of people with disabilities have expectations for their employees on the job (e.g., interacting with coworkers at breaks, requesting and providing assistance, responding appropriately to constructive criticism) and that little tolerance exists for behaviors such as yelling, complaining, assaulting others, invading privacy, or interrupting meetings unannounced (e.g., Agran, Salzberg, & Martella, 1991; McConaughy, Stowitschek, Salzberg, & Peatross, 1989). At the same time, employers do not believe it is their job to teach expected social skills; rather, employers typically hold that employees with or without disabilities should enter employment with "job-ready" social skill repertoires in order that supervisors can focus on training requisite skills to maximize job performance (Butterworth & Strauch, 1994). If employers' perspectives were heeded, a critical component of special education programs for students with disabilities should be teaching socially validated social skills. That is, we should be teaching skills that are considered valuable to and functional for participating stakeholders. However, doing so does not appear to be the case. Those who have the most at stake with respect to the postschool outcomes of special education (e.g., parents, students, employers) often have little or no input into curriculum goals, instructional procedures, or educational outcomes (e.g., Kolb & Hanley-Maxwell, 2003). For example, Guy, Sitlington, Larsen, and Frank's (2009) statewide study revealed that employment training, in general, is limited in special education programs. Even when employment training is implemented, its main focus is teaching technical skills versus job-related social skills.

Keith Storey's and Craig Miner's text *Systematic Instruction of Functional Skills for Students and Adults with Disabilities* comes at a time when increasing numbers of special educators are beginning to question the relevance of a curriculum strictly focused on achieving grade-level general education stan-

dards versus functional skills (e.g., Bouck, 2009; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000; Wehman, 2009). Storey and Miner remind us that "although specific curriculum content decisions must be based on standards and benchmarks as well as more individualized preferences and interests, the general goal of all instruction must be to enhance a person's capacity to function successfully in the community" (*see* Chapter 1). Therefore, the curriculum should comprise skills that teach a person to function in employment, residential, community living, and recreational/leisure domains and that are personally meaningful and valuable to the individual (Storey & Miner, 2010). Similarly, the authors argue that the curriculum should consist of skills that are useful in an immediate (e.g., learning to operate a microwave in order to cook and eat breakfast) or future environment (e.g., learning to ride the bus to get to work). Although the authors acknowledge the importance of grade-level academic standards and skills, their focus on *skills that are functional for the individual* is refreshing, timely, and critical. When we consider the poor adult outcomes generally experienced by individuals with disabilities (e.g., Newman et al., 2009), an renewed emphasis in the curriculum on the "criterion of ultimate functioning"–the skills a person must possess "to function as productively and independently as possible in socially, vocationally, and domestically integrated adult community environments" (Brown et al., 1976, p. 8)–is invaluable as we enter an era of "curriculum wars" in special education.

Storey and Miner also fill a critical gap in the literature on "how to teach." Those of us who teach pre-service teachers know how often we are asked, "But how do I *teach* everything we've been talking about in class?" The authors argue that this is "where the rubber meets the road. . . . How to teach individuals with disabilities is the foundation on which special education provides services" (*see* Preface). Their book provides both pre- and in-service practitioners with an evidence-based instructional methodology–*systematic instruction*–that has been proven to be effective in teaching a gamut of skills to students and adults with disabilities across multiple settings, ages, disability labels, and skill levels. As described by the authors, a systematic instruction approach to education begins with curriculum decisions on what to teach as well as provides the means to address the scope, sequence, and context of instruction–issues that practitioners often struggle with in providing educational services. Thankfully, Storey and Miner have addressed their book to the *practitioner*. The writing is accessible, user-friendly, and well-illustrated with case studies and realistic examples. Future research issues, discussion questions, activity suggestions, and consistency in format make the book a given for college instructors and others who are educating teachers and direct service providers.

I've been waiting for a book like this for a long time. It took Keith Storey and Craig Miner, two educators who have their feet in both the world of

research and that of practice, to compile a solid text, accessible to the practitioner, on not just *how* to teach but *what* to teach. At a time when we desperately need to examine the special education curriculum in relation to adult outcomes of students with disabilities, you can bet that *Systematic Instruction of Functional Skills for Students and Adults with Disabilities* will be a book both on my shelf and in my college classes.

CAROLYN HUGHES

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PREFACE

Scope

The scope of the book is to provide an overview of systematic instructional strategies that is written in a format so that teachers and other service providers can immediately put the information to use. We have tried to write specifically regarding general systematic instruction components such as task analysis, prompts, error correction, and so one, as well as specifically for different instructional domains such as employment, community, and residential. This book is specifically focused on systematic instruction for individuals with disabilities (school age and adults). It is generic across age groups as well as disability labels and should be of interest to those working in the schools as well as those in transition and adult service settings.

Plan

In this book each chapter follows the sequence of Key Point Questions, Window to the World Case Studies, Best Practice Recommendations, Future Research Issues, Discussion Questions, and School and Community-Based Activity Suggestions.

This book is focused on improving instructional practices for students and adults with disabilities. All too often the assumption is that students and adults have reached their "potential," and they become stuck in a place or setting because of a lack of skills on their part due to the poor instruction that they have received. Practitioners may understand the importance of placing individuals in different settings (e.g., inclusive classrooms, supported employment sites) but not how to improve their skills once they are in that setting. This book is intended to give teachers and other service providers the instructional skills for improving the skills of the individuals that they are serving.

Purpose

The rubber meets the road in how to teach. Although issues such as inclusion are certainly extremely important, how to teach individuals with disabilities is the foundation on which special education provides services. The most unique feature of the text is that it is written specifically for practitioners in the field (teachers and adult service providers) as well as those in training rather than being written for other academics. An advantage of this book is that those preparing teachers and others can easily use it in methods courses because it covers instructional methodology that is seldom covered in detail in most texts.

College instructors are likely to choose our book based on

1. the consistent format throughout the book
2. the "readability" of the book for students
3. the comprehensive coverage of systematic instruction
4. the direct applicability to applied settings

In addition to college instructors, we hope that others providing instruction, supervision, and training to direct service providers will find this book useful.

CONTENTS

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION OF FUNCTIONAL SKILLS FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Chapter 1

COMMUNITY-REFERENCED FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM

Keypoint Questions

1. What to teach?
2. What are functional skills?
3. What are scope and sequence considerations?
4. What are lifestyle routines, functional skill sequences, and skill specific analyses?
5. What is the relationship between systematic instruction of functional skills and integration/inclusion?
6. What is the criterion of ultimate functioning?
7. What is age appropriateness?
8. What is the competence-deviance hypothesis?
9. What is partial participation?
10. What are simulation and in vivo instruction?
11. What is normalization?
12. What are quality of life outcomes?

Window to the World Case Study One

Anna is a seventeen-year-old student who has been identified as having a learning disability. Her passion in life is horses, and her goal is a career working with horses in some capacity. She currently takes riding lessons at a stable. In school, Anna has an individualized education program (IEP) and is in general education classes except for English, for which she goes to a resource center for small group and

individualized instruction. Her special education coordinator, Ms. Rowland, coordinates instruction and support with her general education teachers and helps to focus assignments on horses as much as possible because Anna is very motivated when this is a topic and much less so when it is not.

Anna has a transition specialist, Ms. Forte, who is working with her on employment skills. Ms. Forte has developed a variety of instructional and support opportunities for Anna. First, she has had Anna enroll in the "Horse Club" at her school, which helps to integrate her with her peers and develop social supports and networks. Because Anna has difficulty in reading, Ms. Forte and Ms. Rowland have focused parts of her English resource time on vocabulary and reading related to horses so that Anna has a better understanding of more advanced and technical terminology. Finally, Ms. Forte has developed a position for Anna as an assistant with a local veterinarian who works with horses as well as other animals. Anna works one afternoon and every other Saturday with the veterinarian.

Window to the World Case Study Two

Salomea is a twelve-year-old who has been diagnosed as having autism. Her teachers and parents are looking to the future, when all presume that she will have a full time job and live in an apartment in a supported living situation where she will be independent in some activities such as cooking and need help in others (such as paying her bills). Currently, Salomea is in seventh grade and divides her time between general and special education classes. Her special education teacher, Mr. Ziegler, has her for classes each afternoon.

Three times a week Salomea goes into the community with Mr. Ziegler and two other students. They take the bus to a variety of places, such as the local grocery and retail stores, where Salomea and the other students purchase groceries and other home living items from lists provided by their parents. On the afternoons when they are not in the community, Mr. Ziegler works with Salomea on important social skills (e.g., greeting others and asking for help to find an item), using money to make purchases, recognizing words, and other skills that she will need for employment and to live in an apartment.

Key Point Question 1: What to Teach

Independence, productivity, and integration are valued outcomes for all individuals with disabilities. The opportunity to live, be educated, and participate in normalized settings contributes to the development of skills that enhance community functioning and attainment of these outcomes. However, beyond opportunity, it is important to recognize the critical importance of effective instruction and the difference that it can make in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Without effective instruction, it is doubtful that individuals will develop their ultimate functioning potential for successful community living. Modifications (changes in the delivery, content, or instructional level of subject matter or tests) and accommodations (provide different ways for students to take in information or communicate their knowledge back to the teacher) are important, especially in inclusive educational settings. However, even with appropriate modifications and accommodations, learners need to acquire skills that will be useful in their immediate and future environments. As noted by Downing and Demchak (2002), all students can benefit from direct and systematic instruction and, for some students, this type of instruction is essential. No matter how many accommodations or modifications are made, without systematic or direct instruction of skills, some learners may be unable to acquire new skills and information. By systematic instruction we mean instructional procedures that involve antecedent and consequence manipulations, frequent assistance to the learner (e.g., cues), immediate correction procedures, and direct and ongoing measurements that are designed to increase specific skills (e.g., behaviors) for the learner. There are certainly many other instructional and academic issues that are important for learners with disabilities, and there are a variety of instructional methodologies (Browder & Spooner, 2006; Wood, 2002), and we do not mean to marginalize or trivialize their importance. The focus of this book, however, is on directly teaching functional skills through systematic instruction procedures. We would also like to emphasize here that systematic instruction is "evidence based" and there is an extensive empirical base for the effectiveness of these procedures for teaching new skills (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, & Kincaid, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2003).

Independence, productivity, and integration are all based upon individuals having skills necessary to be competent in specific situa-