### Characteristics of Programs Used in Autism Program Classrooms

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<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
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<td>1. Students with autism appear to respond better when presented information visually</td>
<td>1. Developed by Lori Frost and Dr. Andy Bondy as Picture Exchange Communication System</td>
<td>1. This program was developed by Eric Schopler in N. Carolina in the early 70s</td>
<td>1. Modified for individuals who have autism by Dr. Ivor Lovaas at UCLA</td>
<td>1. Methodology incorporates strategies of several programs, TEKS-based curriculum</td>
<td>2. The rationale for providing visual structure is to allow the student to be successful without direct interaction</td>
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<td>2. The rationale for providing visual structure is to allow the student to be successful without direct interaction</td>
<td>2. Augmentative/alternative communication system in which pictures are changed for objects</td>
<td>2. Based upon structured teaching method, broadly based, building on existing skills and interests</td>
<td>2. Highly structured, using a discrete trial format, 1:1 instruction, in a five step program</td>
<td>2. Communication curriculum utilizes the initial phases of the PECS program, but allows for visual strategies that are naturally occurring in the learning environment</td>
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<td>3. The student should be able to put parts or details of a task together in a meaningful way by using visual instructions</td>
<td>3. Students are taught to initiate communication interactions with others without cueing</td>
<td>3. The main goal is to help children develop maximum autonomy by adult age</td>
<td>3. Uses prompting, shaping, fading, positive reinforcement, and discrimination training</td>
<td>3. Visual strategies are used throughout the day to increase understanding of information &amp; promote communication</td>
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<td>4. Visual methods of instruction capitalize on the visual aptitude and strengths and minimize deficits in auditory processing while helping the student process information</td>
<td>4. Training uses functional acts that may bring the student into contact with tangible rewards paired with social reinforcement (tangibles are gradually faded)</td>
<td>4. Educational strategies are individually based on the basis of assessment of learning abilities-identifying potential for acquisition rather than deficits</td>
<td>4. Focus on promoting cooperative play, social behavior, language, and decreasing excessive rituals, tantrums, and aggressive behavior</td>
<td>4. Communication curriculum utilizes the initial phases of the PECS program, but allows for visual strategies that are naturally occurring in the learning environment</td>
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<td>5. Visual instructions tell the student the order to complete tasks, yet teach flexibility &amp; generalization</td>
<td>5. Uses prompting, cueing, shaping, fading, discrimination training, backwards chaining</td>
<td>5. Visually clear physical environment, clear expectations to decrease adult prompting</td>
<td>5. Inappropriate behaviors are reduced by ignoring, and teaching more social forms of behaviors</td>
<td>5. Variety of learning groups - 1:1, small group or large group, independent practice, or visual supervision</td>
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<td>6. Visuals minimize verbal output yet allow the student &amp; communicative partner to provide information during a communication exchange</td>
<td>6. Discrete trial format combining an in-depth knowledge of speech therapy and communication in a six step format</td>
<td>6. Strategies do not work on behavior directly, but on underlying conditions that will foster learning experiences</td>
<td>6. Progresses from teaching self-help and receptive language skills to nonverbal students, verbal imitation skills &amp; the beginnings of appropriate play</td>
<td>6. The principles of structured teaching (visual &amp; physical structure) are used emphasis on generalization and vocational skills</td>
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<td>7. Visuals can make activities and information more meaningful to the student</td>
<td>7. Students are taught the function of communication</td>
<td>7. Works on improving communication skills</td>
<td>7. Step 2 emphasizes expressive, early abstract language, interaction, and play with peers</td>
<td>7. Behavior is supported through social skills instruction and behavior intervention plans</td>
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<td>8. Visuals can be used across settings to make information consistent throughout the student’s day</td>
<td>8. Addresses both the communicative and social deficits of autism well-suited for preverbal and nonverbal children</td>
<td>8. Educational programs are revised frequently, according to the child’s maturation and progress</td>
<td>8. Advanced stage- child is taught early academic skills, socialization, cause-effect, and learning through observation</td>
<td>8. Prompting, fading, shaping positive reinforcement, may be used, especially when teaching new skills, communication, attending skills, or toileting</td>
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Visual Strategies (continued)

9. Visual clarity is used to highlight the relevant information, important concepts, specific instruction, and key material
10. Visuals can be modified to address students of all ages and cognitive skill levels

Target Population

Individuals who have autism spectrum disorders or strengths in visual perception

Staff
Teachers & other school staff, and family members

Equipment/Space
Markers and paper, photographs or line drawings, a computer with printer, camera, laminator, and Velcro

Time
Varies - depends upon the student or the amount of visuals needed to support the student

Goal
To provide enough support to promote independence, and to provide a method for communication exchange

Errors to Avoid
Students becoming too dependent upon visuals; prompts must be faded to teach the student to use the prompts independently

Error to Avoid
Failing to strictly adhere to the teaching principles (especially in Phase 1), lack of teacher support/training to implement training, inconsistent implementation

PECS (continued)

9. Effective if the full range of strategies associated with ABA following imitation, comprehensive behavioral management system & functional activities are incorporated
10. Reduces behavior management concerns

Target Population

Individuals who have autism and who have little/no functional or socially acceptable speech or do not routinely initiate communication

Staff
Requires 2 trainers initially, school staff or family members

Equipment/Space
Community/home/school environment initially requires pictures/line drawings, Velcro, tangible reinforcement

Time
30 trial per day, with 20 of the 30 being incidentally integrated throughout the daily activities

Goal
Spontaneous initiation of communication interaction, understanding of the function of communication, communicative competency

Error to Avoid
Failing to offer sufficient training, treating TEACCH as a single classroom approach rather than a comprehensive continuum of supports and strategies

TEACCH (continued)

9. Gives the person a means to better understand his environment, making it more predictable (causing less anxiety & decreasing behavior problems)
10. Continuity in approach, integrating new ideas slowly and only after proven effective

Staff
General and special education staff, family members

Equipment/Space
Special education to general education classrooms or in home. Materials include organizing bins, shelves, Velcro, visual cues

Time
Individually based, varies No age limit

Goal
Provide strategies to support the individual throughout the lifespan, facilitate autonomy at all levels of functioning

Error to Avoid
Failure to understand life skills, medication, reinforcement, and consequences

Applied Behavior Analysis (continued)

9. Teaches attending, following directives, and imitation (pre-requisites for learning), emphasizing generalization
10. Uses precision commands, cueing, modeling, fading, reinforcement, and consequences

Staff
Majority of training done by trained college students

Equipment / Space
Individual setting, gradually generalizing to the school setting, tangible rewards, distraction-free setting, data collection sheets

Time
6-12 months home-based 1:1 training, 30-40 hrs week for 2 yrs, (5-7 hrs day, 5-7 days week)

Goal
To teach a child to learn by focusing on developing skills in attending, imitation, receptive/expressive language, pre-academics, and self-help

Error to Avoid
Failing to understand the individual's strengths and weaknesses

Sensory Integration (continued)

9. The therapist focuses on bringing out the child's strengths while improving his/her weaknesses. The sensory diet fulfills the physical and emotional needs of the child.
10. Therapy is a team approach between the child, parent, and therapist

Staff
Trained staff member (usually an occupational therapist)

Equipment/Space
Depending upon the student's needs

Time
Varies, depending upon individual needs

Goal
Focusing on bringing out the child's strengths and providing an appropriate sensory diet to help the child excel

Error to Avoid
Failing to understand the child's strengths and weaknesses

Autism Program (continued)

9. Weekly data collection
10. Parent support is encouraged, in-home and/or parent training may be offered
11. Music therapy and sensory strategies are used to support classroom instruction as appropriate to the student’s needs

Staff
Trained teachers and teacher assistants, parents, support staff

Equipment/Space
Curriculum materials to support individualized plans and the visual learning style of the students, community based instruction (middle and high school levels)

Time
TC Program serves students age 3-21, full-day preschool is recommended, least restrictive setting is recommended

Goal
Program goals are to promote independence and competence, develop vocational academic, social, and leisure skills in the least restrictive setting

Error to Avoid
The TC Program supports students who have autism or communication based disorders in the least restrictive setting. Placement in TC classrooms should be dependent upon the individualized needs of the student