Transition Essentials for College Bound Students on the Spectrum: Observations from the ODA

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Overview

• Next step College...or so we hope.
• Social, Academic and Independent Living Skills (in brief; materials)
• Admissions
• College Administration
• Familiar Challenges
• Resources
Students at UNT

• Predictive Model:
• 36,000+ students at UNT
• Persons with ASD @ conservative 1% = 360
• Post Secondary participation (all) 40%
• Predicts N=144
• Students with ASD registered at UNT
• Range 29-34 (starting Spring 2011)
• Previously, stable at 15-17 from 2004-2010
Students on the Spectrum at UNT: Support = Success

- 34 students with ASD registered with ODA
- 4 incoming freshman
- 1 registered but not enrolled for Fall 2013
- Retention of students with ASD Registered with the ODA 96.5%
- ODA overall Retention 94.6%
- SAP of students with ASD N= 93.2%
- SAP of sample of 272 (one ODA counselor’s caseload minus students on spectrum) N=89.6%
Students with ASD performing well: Academics are one piece of the puzzle

• Compare Outcomes for students with ASD to UNT Five Year Goals (2011): First-time in College (FTIC) retention rate to at least 85 percent from 77.7 percent by 2016

• Increase transfer retention rate to at least 80 percent from 73.2 percent by 2016

http://www.unt.edu/president/progress-reports-enrollment-council-111213.htm

Students with ASD registered with the ODA are succeeding academically at UNT.
The whole student: Social, Academic and Living Skills

• Overview of Importance
• Brief Skills Lists
• Teaching Strategies List
• Considerations for Sustainability List
Barriers to College: The Practice Provision Gap

• Graduated High School and going to college=discontinuation of services

• “Well we had someone who was great, but she moved on…”

• “The teachers (para-professionals, bx coach) just stopped using the programme…”

• “He charged us [a zillion dollars] and then just left. After that, we did what we could but didn’t really know how to do the program!”
Barriers to College cont.

• Perception that student cannot succeed in college/Student being told college is not an option
• Myth: Student has to pass the social services exam in order to get into college (not if the student has alternate funding streams or demonstrates history of success in college)
• Fear of CHANGE
• Panic in unfamiliar setting (thank you Kevin Stewart for your personal involvement in helping a student in time of crisis)
Barriers to College

• Selecting a school that does not fit with the students needs and preferences
• Selecting a school that has few or no supports for students on the spectrum
• Unfamiliarity with the University system...frustration with procedures leads to “giving up” on college
Selecting the right school

- 2 year community college, 4 year college
- 4 year university
- Before ever applying...
- Establish at least one solid at the college (disability services informational meeting, professor or dean)
- Visit the campus without meeting anyone (take it in)
- Visit the campus to meet with contact/liaison
- Learn the campus buildings, location of dorms, location of buildings for student’s potential major
- Determine if the campus “just feels alright.”
Selecting the right school cont.

• Make an appointment with the ODA for an informational meeting
• Ask about differences in IDEA and Section 504 in Higher Education (understand fundamental alteration and technical specifications)
• Discuss student’s strengths, prior accommodations, challenges
• Ask about ASD specific resources (e.g., UNT KFAC mentoring and Tuesday Night Flights, UNT ABA programme, Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work and Addiction
Barriers: Admission Standards and taking the SAT/ACT

- Research admission standards for each school
- Practice Tests
- Rehearse test-taking tactics
- Self-Calming
- Contact ETS (testing for SAT, GRE et. al.) well in advance (7 week turnaround minimum) to apply for accommodations
Scores on SAT/ACT do not meet standard. What do we do?

• Inquire with University Admissions Office if Individual Review is an option

• HS grades, rank in class, clubs and activities, community service/volunteer work, stand-out items, student narrative, letters from teachers, community members

• Consider contacting a professor from Dept. of Rehabilitation, SW, ABA, Ed. Psych in advance...develop plan for success and share with committee. Get a supporting letter from faculty
I’m In! Now what? University Administration and Student Affairs

- University Administration: Orientation Office
- [http://transition.unt.edu/orientation/index.html](http://transition.unt.edu/orientation/index.html)
- Consider sharing with Orientation “disability status.” (ask ODA for assistance)
- Schedule, Events, Length, Required to stay in dorm? Anticipate triggers...and plan for same
- Parents might not be allowed, who will go with the student?
- Schedule placement exams in ODA if possible
Administration and Student Affairs cont.

- Places to know, Places to Go
- Registrar’s Office
- Advising Office (arrange ahead to meet with specific advisor during Orientation break-out)
- START Office (TX Success Initiative)
- Dean of Students Office
- Student Accounting (as separate from SFA)
Critical

• Registrar and Advising Policies and Procedures
• Degree planning, degree audit, enrollment
• Adding/Dropping a course, withdrawal, withdrawal with F, repeat course polices
• Dean of Students (or possibly counseling centre of college) for support, to liaise and advocate
Interacting with Administration Basics

• Identify location and visit administrative offices (most will have service desks with brochures etc.)
• Get contact cards from...EVERYONE
• Make notes in phone or on contact card with a brief note regarding what the person helped with.
• If generic cards, ask for person’s name and write it down...when speaking to anyone else refer to the other administrator/staff member by name
Communicating with Administration and Faculty: A task analysis

- General greeting (“Hello”), I’m (such and who)
- Status: “I am an incoming freshman for Fall14”
- Statement of Purpose: “I have a question about how to enroll in my classes.”
- Request for assistance/determine if you’re in the right place: “Am I in the right place?”, “Can you help me with that?”
But I don’t know what I don’t know, so what do I ask?

- If the issue is confusing for the student, the student might seek help from a peer, peer mentor, ODA counselor or other

- Do not provide a lengthy narrative without checking with the person first: “I’m not sure what to do about something. Can I just tell you what’s going on?”
Getting off on the right foot: Communicating with Professors 101

Email ahead to inform coming to office hours

• Show up early, Knock quietly on door and wait to be recognised,

• Identify self: “Hi I’m Bob, I am in your [exact name of class, time and location e.g., Biology 101 class at 8 o’clock M,W,F, in Sage Hall]

• Remind professor that you emailed “I emailed you about coming to see you during office hours...and directly state single sentence request
Communication with Professors 101

• But I don’t know what I don’t know, so how do I ask for help?
• Professors triage issues all the time, just give them a clue
• …”I am having a hard time with some of the course material, I was hoping I could discuss with you.
• Expect about 15-20 minutes…if meeting is longer (yes, be aware of time), ask if that’s ok
Administration and Student Affairs: Housing

- Commute, live on campus or off campus
- Live alone or with roommates
- Dorm Selection: Start 6 months before attending, arrange for tours, meet the resident assistants/discuss needs
- Consider location of dorm in relation to academic buildings (centralised location is best)
Ok, now to address the elephant in the room?

• “Meltdowns...” Everything is changing.
• Before college work on:
  • Identifying setting events and arranging situations to reduce aversive events
  • Identifying own feelings
  • Judging the magnitude of a problem. Perspective.
  • Simultaneously experiencing frustration while maintaining intellect to determine course of action: S.O.D.A.S.
Common Situations

• Perseveration in the classroom (bulldogging professors, or too many requests for clarification)
• Bluntness
• Correctly following instructions
• Atypical speech, body movement
• Bob’s tales from the lab...
• Preparing “adults” for adult situations: Willow
Universal Campus Resources

• Math and Writing Labs
• Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction
• UNT example: The Learning Centre
  http://learningcenter.unt.edu/
• TRIO
  http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html
• Psychology Clinic, Counseling Centre
Resources: The Higher Education Opportunities Act 2008

• Reauthorizes the Higher Education act of 1965 as amended (HEA). Comprehensive Transition Program (CPT) and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities Programme (TPSID) may provide for student financial to students with ASD for participating colleges and universities.

• Link to Public Law 110-315-Aug. 14, 2008

A few Participating CPT Programs and schools with tuition-based services

• College of Charleston
• College of New Jersey
• University of South Carolina
• Taft, Clemson, Vanderbilt
• Tuition based:
• Bellevue College, Eastern MI, West VA, Midwestern State (Wichita, TX)
UNT Individualized Services

• Office of Disability Accommodation
• Application, Documents etc. may be found on our website: http://disability.unt.edu
• Use for gauge of what to expect
• Accommodations, Academic Adjustments, and communicating with students and professors
UNT continuum of services

- ODA + Kirsten Farmer Autism Centre (KFAC)
- KFAC “Tuesday Night Flights”
- KFAC Peer Mentoring (other UNT student, recent graduate)
- KFAC Mentoring (graduate student or staff member)
- Contact Kevin Stewart: Kevin.Stewart@unt.edu or
- Executive Director Dr. Kevin Callahan via KFAC
UNT continuum of services...continued

• Universal + ODA + KFAC + Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work and Addictions
• Dr. Linda Holloway Chair
• Contact person on campus
• Assistance selecting academic advisor who will be a good fit
• Liaison with Community Resources
• Future Programming in Development
Acknowledgements

• Thank you to Kirsten Farmer for her vision and tireless efforts to improve our world
• Thanks Dr. Callahan for campus collaboration and personal investment in our students
• Thanks to Kevin Stewart for being the reason one of my students is still at UNT
• Thanks to KFAC for answering the call for Parent Scholarships: I’ll do better getting the word out next time...
Appendix: Social Skills, Social Skills, Social Skills
Social Skills: Body Basics

- Facial Regard
- Eye Contact
- Posture
- Proximity
- Movement
- Tone of Voice
- Understanding body language of others
Social Skills continued

- Following Instructions
- Accepting Feedback
- Giving Constructive Feedback
- Consideration of/Helping Others
Social Skills

• Greeting Skills
• Taking Turns in Conversation
• Adapting to changes in topic of conversation
• Departure Skills
• Recognizing and Acknowledging the feelings of others
• Identification and Expression of own emotions
And MORE Social Skills

• Negotiation
• Problem Solving/Decision Making
• S.O.D.A.S.
• Situation, Options, Advantages, Disadvantages, Solution
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• NOTES:
NOTES
Notes
Brief Social Skills at a Glance

- Facial regard, eye contact, posture, proximity, body movement, tone of voice, understanding body language of others, following instructions, accepting feedback, giving constructive feedback, consideration of others, greeting skills, turn-taking in conversation, adapt to changes in conversation, departure skills, recognition and acknowledgement of feelings of others, identification of own emotions, negotiating, problem solving and decision making (S.O.D.A.S.)
Academic/Life Skills

• Basics: Books, phone, notebook (computer), notebook (paper), pen, highlighters, backpack
• Yes, I’m serious...Bob’s tale (engineering student)
• Organizational and time management
• Asking for clarification of instructions (universal but important in classroom)
• Learning Strategies
Independent Living Skills Basics

• Self-care and Clothing
• Maintaining dorm: Cleaning (triggers from scent?), observing boundaries of roommates space, managing intrusion into own space, managing sleep schedule, keeping appointments
• Laundry
• Groceries or dorm food plan
• Campus Engagement
TEACHING TIPS from Teaching Family Model:

Table 1 Effective praise and the teaching interaction
Procedure Example (names are fictitious)
Effective praise
(1) Opening praise/empathy “Neat Alistair”
(2) Description of appropriate “You told Suzie, I can do it.”
(3) Rationale “She’s letting you find the tricycles on your own.”
(4) Closing praise “Way to go!”
Teaching Interaction: (1) Initial praise/empathy “Alistair, you’re trying to plug in the headphones, great! I can help you, if you want.” [Child agreed.]
(2) Description of inappropriate “You’re trying to plug the headphones into the big hole in front.”
(3) Statement of result of inappropriate “The plug doesn’t fit very well, does it?”
(4) Description of appropriate “Try the small hole on the back of the player [used least intrusive prompt in this case light hand over hand]”
(5) Rationale/result “Now the plug fits just right.”
(6) Request for acknowledgement “Feel.” [That is, “See?” Alistair has a visual impairment. We could now hear the music.]
(7) Practice: repeat steps 4–6 “Let’s plug the headphones in again. You’ll get to hear the music right away.” [Alistair agreed.]
(8) Feedback in form of effective praise “Hey, neat! Now you can listen to the music and the sound of Dante’s snoring won’t bother you. Good job!”
Table 2 Planned and spontaneous teaching continuum (Teaching Family Model procedures developed 1972-1978)

**Planned teaching phase 1**

1. Introduce name of skill Asking permission
2. Rationale for skill Increase chance that other child will share, avoid conflict and improve relationships
3. Introduce skill steps Get person’s attention (e.g., say name), wait for person to respond, make request, accept answer “no”/say o.k. or say “thank you.”
4. State qualitative components Speak loud enough to be heard
5. Identify situations when likely During free play
**Phase 2**: Planned teaching Role-play with prompts in a controlled situation

1. Set up practice Gather item(s), arrange for distraction free area
2. Cue person “Alistair, remember how you wanted to play with Charlie’s cars? We’re going to practice asking permission [emphasize name of skill].”
3. Rationale/acknowledgement “If you ask Charlie permission first, he might let you use his cars.”
4. Review (steps 3–5 phase 1)
5. Test readiness set up practice “Let’s pretend it’s free-play time. I’ll pretend to be Charlie and you can ask to use the cool blue car.”
6. Practice and feedback Use prompts, effective praise for correct and teaching interaction for incorrect
**Phase 3:** Skill role play As phase 2, in a controlled situation omit review of steps and quality components

**Phase 4:** Planned-spontaneous teaching Skill usage in real situation with prompts
(1) Tell the person that the opportunity to use a skill will occur at a specified time
“Alistair, during free play we’ll practice asking Charlie permission to use his cool blue car [voice tone for emphasis].”
(2) Set up a skill opportunity It is free-play time and Charlie not using car
(3) Present the situational cue to child “Alistair, it’s free-play time and Charlie is not using his car. Go ask him if you can use it”
(4) Skill attempt Note: prompt skill steps only if needed
(5) Feedback Use effective praise or teaching interaction
**Phase 5:** Spontaneous teaching Fade advanced prompt (step 1 phase 4)
Use immediate prompts only if needed
Continue to use effective praise for correct or teaching interaction for incorrect

**Phase 6:** Spontaneous teaching Provide no prompts for skill usage
Continue to use effective praise for correct or teaching interaction for incorrect

**Phase 7:** Independence No set-up of environment. No prompts or effective praise.
Use *general praise* for correct or teaching interaction for incorrect

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