Beyond Inclusion: Facilitating the Social Engagement of Individuals with ASD in Naturalistic Social Settings

Tiffany Otero, Ph.D., BCBA
University of New Mexico- Center for Development and Disability
Summer Institute- 2018
Agenda: 90 minutes

- Hook - 3 mins
- Intro and overview - 5 mins
- Define social inclusion - 5 mins
  - Definition
  - Social inclusion and ASD - what does the research say?
- Review literature - 15 minutes
- Model for social competence - 15 minutes
- Generalization strategies - 15 minutes
- Work in small groups - 10 minutes
- Share strategies - 10 minutes
- Closing - 3 minutes
- Questions 10 minutes
VIDEO with CASE STUDY
Overview

• What is social inclusion?
• What does it take to be a socially successful person? What is social competence?
• How effective are current interventions for children with ASD at facilitating social inclusion?
• How can we do better?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Social Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociometric Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Popularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acceptance/ Rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strangers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer Social Network</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality of friendship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Argument for Academic Inclusion

- Placement of children with ASD in general education classrooms may result in:
  - Reduced isolation
  - Reduced stigma
  - Increased teacher expectations
  - Access to a more stimulating environment
  - More behavioral models from typically developing peers

Camargo, Rispoli, Ganz, Hong, Davis & Mason (2014)
Is placement alone enough?

Characteristic deficits of ASD interfere with social, emotional, and cognitive development:

- Difficulty understanding peer models
- Difficulty with imitation
- Difficulty with social problem solving
- Hard to establish meaningful peer relationships
- Academic/cognitive skills sometimes incongruent with social skills

The short answer…. No
Social exclusion persists despite academic inclusion

Strain, 1981; Carter, Hughes, Guth, & Copeland, 2005; Gardner et al., 2014
Despite efforts toward inclusion, children with ASD are at a disadvantage when compared to typically developing peers and children with other special education needs.

- More likely to experience social rejection; less acceptance
- Experience higher levels of bullying
- Reported lower levels of social support from classmates and friends
- Often on periphery of classroom networks
- Smaller social networks
- Identified friendships are less often reciprocated
- Poorer quality friendships

Kasari, Locke, Gulsrud & Rotherham-Fuller (2011); Symes & Humphrey (2010).
Outcomes of poor social integration

- Poor social integration is associated with negative outcomes including:
  - Loneliness (Bauminger & Kasari, Jobe & White, 2007)
  - Social anxiety (Bellini, 2006)
  - Poor academic achievement (Welsh, Parke, Widaman & O’Neil, 2001)
  - Vulnerability to bullying (Cappadocia, Weiss & Pepler, 2012)
  - Unemployment (Shattuck et al., 2012)
Intervention Research

- National Professional Development Center on ASD
- National Autism Center
List of Evidence-Based Interventions That Can Address Social Skills

- Behavioral Interventions (with focus on discrete social skills), including:
  - Differential reinforcement
  - Prompting
  - Reinforcement
  - Task Analysis
- Modeling/Video Modeling
- Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention
- Pivotal Response Training (Focus on
  - Scripting
  - Self-Management
- Social Skills Training/Social Skills Package
- Story-Based Intervention
Limitations of Intervention Research

• Practices based on sound, yet disparate theories.

• Limited generalization (Bellini, Peters, Benner & Hopf 2007; Rao, Biedel & Murray).

• Lacking consensus with regard to critical components of interventions leads to poor intervention fidelity between studies.

• Many implemented in contrived environments that are not sustainable in everyday practice.
If a social skill is not applied:
- in other settings
- with novel people
- in a functional manner

then can we call the intervention effective?
To break the barrier we need to broaden our thinking.
What is ‘Social Competence’?

- Social competence is an interaction between the environment and biologically determined characteristics (Dodge, 1986).

- “The ability to take another’s perspective concerning a situation and to learn from past experience and apply that learning to the ever-changing social landscape” (Semrud-Clikeman, 2007, p.1).

- “One who is able to make use of environments and personal resources to achieve good developmental outcomes” (Waters & Sroufe, 1983, p. 81).

- “The ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across settings” (Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992, p. 285).
A Conceptual Model for Social Competence
Applying the Model: Social competence among colleagues

University clinic in Southwestern US. Majority women, highly diverse. Traditional power structure. Highly educated group. Business casual.

Social Context/ Normative Value System

Values: Respected by colleagues, regarded as knowledgeable, do good work
Goal: Successful case presentation

Social Adapatability

Hidden curriculum in workplace. Nonverbal cues for confusion, agreement. Effectively gauge varying levels of knowledge.

Social Understanding

Social Behavior

- Speak authoritatively, encourage others to speak at appropriate times.
- Use eye contact to direct communication, engage others, and assess understanding.
- Smile, remain seated, keep my fidgeting under the table so others can’t see or use a pen as a fidget.
- Respond to questions, ask for clarification when needed.
Applying the Model: Social competence among family

Hispanic-American, matriarchal, English-Spanish speaking, high school/ trade education, emphasis on family/blood ties.

Values: Family unity, Love and acceptance
Goal: Enjoy Thanksgiving Dinner

Social Context/ Normative Value System

Social Behavior

Social Adaptability

Elder women call the shots and make the food, humor, nonverbal cues for responding to someone needing assistance (elder), children are catered to.

- Prepare food/plates and serve the children and the elders before myself.
- Tell jokes with brother-in-law, sis-in-law, husband. Let my husband and brother-in-law lead conversation. Follow their topics.
- Everyone gets hugged
- Speak in English and can use some slang/Spanish words. Don’t modify accent.
Applying the Model: Social competence during high school lunch

Values/Interests: family, horror movie culture, girls, going out with friends
Goal: Sit and talk with peers during lunch

- Cliques
- Greeting style differences among genders
- Physical boundaries
- Nonverbal communication for willingness to interact

Social Context/Normative Value System

South Valley High School, predominantly Hispanic, several safety precautions, cafeteria seating, sat with peers with ASD

Social Behavior

Social Understanding

Social Adaptability

- Put phone away and "communicate" willingness to engage
- Initiate conversations and respond to comments or questions
- Follow various topics of conversation on interests of group members, look for mutual interests
- Identify familiar females, hold arms out and wait for response to determine "type" of hug.
- Use appropriate greetings with familiar male friends (fist bump, "what's up," "hey").
Teaching to Generalization

• Identify the interests, values, and goals (socially related or not) of the child.

• Engage team members
  • Parents
  • Support staff
  • Other teachers
  • Coaches, club leaders, peers

• Identify social opportunities in child’s day
  • Do they link in some way to the child’s interests, values, and goals?
  • Are there ways that their interests, values and goals can be engaged?
  • Too few? Increase structured opportunities!
Applying the Model: Social competence during high school lunch

South Valley High School, predominantly Hispanic, several safety precautions, cafeteria seating, sat with peers with ASD

Social Context/ Normative Value System

Social Adaptability

Social Understanding

Social Behavior

Values/ Interests: family, horror movie culture, girls, going out with friends

Goal: Sit and talk with peers during lunch

- Cliques
- Greeting style differences among genders
- Physical boundaries
- Nonverbal communication for willingness to interact

- Put phone away and “communicate” willingness to engage
- Initiate conversations and respond to comments or questions
- Follow various topics of conversation on interests of group members, look for mutual interests
- Identify familiar females, hold arms out and wait for response to determine “type” of hug.
- Use appropriate greetings with familiar male friends (fist bump, “what’s up,” “hey”).
Teaching to Generalization, cont.

• Identify social cognitive skills (e.g. social thinking) and social behaviors the child will need to be successful.
• Determine level of support needed to be successful in the interaction
Skill Deficit (child does not have behaviors in repertoire)

- Use targeted intervention to teach skills

Performance Deficit (Child does perform skill appropriately across settings or people)

- Apply skill with supports across settings and with new people, provide feedback.

Fluency Deficit (Child’s execution is not fluid or well-timed)

- Practice, practice, practice

Competence

Functional social interaction and independent application of skills across settings
Skill Deficit: Social Communication Class
• Use targeted intervention to teach skills

Performance Deficit: Self-Management
• Intervention at lunch

Performance Deficit: Self-Management
• Apply skill with supports across settings and with new people, provide feedback

Fluency Deficit: Increased opportunities for social interaction at lunch and after school
• Practice, practice, practice

Fluency Deficit: Increased opportunities for social interaction at lunch and after school
• Functional social interaction and independent application of skills across settings

Intervention Application

Practice

Competence
Eight Strategies to Use When Planning and Teaching for Generalization

• “Train and hope” (not a real strategy!)
  - e.g., teach addition facts and hope John scores well on the timed quiz;
  - practice asking a peer to play during a 30 min teaching session in the classroom and hoping that Mary uses the skill when she is at recess on the playground

• Typically, this approach doesn’t work, so instead... ASSESS for generalization & use some of the following specific teaching strategies:
  - Ask: Is the behavior performed fluently?
  - What are the triggers an individual is responding to?
  - Select a strategy and teach it!
Naturally Maintaining Consequences

• **Process:** Teach skills that can be used to access and natural reinforcer and make that reinforcer explicit to the student.
  • Observe the student’s environment.
  • Choose behaviors that are socially valuable.
  • Teach students to recruit reinforcer from the environment.
  • Teach student to recognize reinforcement. (*Remember to assess what is actually reinforcing to the student first!)

• **Example:** Jenna wants a job to make money. She got a job at the school store. Her teacher sat with her on the first day to observe how other store staff socially interacted with patrons. Jenna and her teacher identified the social skills she would master that would get her the most success at her job. She then utilized these on the job, received peer reinforcement through positive interactions, and kept her job.
Sequential Modification

- **Process:** Apply the same techniques that changed the behavior in one setting to all settings that the behavior is needed or desirable.

- **Example:** Mike’s teacher modeled a greeting for him and then had him greet another student in his class every morning. When Mike seemed familiar with the routine, the teacher started modeling greetings in the cafeteria, and then the playground.
Training Sufficient (Multiple) Exemplars

• **Process:** Understand that there is seldom a single behavior, done in the same way, the same place, every time. Therefore, train multiple ways of doing the behavior.

• **Example:** Train a joining with multiple people, in different settings, with varied topography.
Training Loosely

• **Process:** Training stimuli varied in sessions versus teaching one stimulus and response to master before moving on.

• **Example:** Rather than teaching Grant to respond to one question at a time, he learned responses to multiple questions, and how to ask reciprocal questions simultaneously.
Using Indiscriminable Contingencies

• **Process:** Make it more difficult for the student to determine under what contingency (when) they will receive reinforcement. Intermittent or delayed reinforcement.

• **Example:** Students entered a lottery for when they were “caught” using friendship skills around school. At the end of the week, names were drawn for a prize. Names that were not drawn stayed in the pool until the next lottery drawing.
Programming Common Stimuli

• **Process:** Deliberate intervention/programming of similar stimuli in the training setting and the setting in which generalization is desired. Can be done by increasing similarity of training setting to natural environment, or by bringing elements of the training setting to the natural environment.

• **Example:** Mrs. H taught her students conversation skills in the classroom. To get students to use skills at lunch, Mrs. H. started to “bring in” more elements from the lunch setting, including snacks, typically developing peers, and outdoor seating.
Training to Generalize

- **Process:** Reinforce students for displaying target behavior, or novel variations, in the generalized setting.

- **Example:** Joe was working on using nonverbal communication skills. He was reinforced when he used nods, gestures, pointing, or facial expressions during his time with peers at lunch. After some time, and it was apparent that he would only nod with peers, his teacher only reinforced him for using nonverbal communication different from the time before.
Mediating Generalization

• **Process:** Teaching students to self-manage (i.e. self-observe, self-report) their own behavior.

• **Example:** Every Monday, students reported on the social activities they engaged in during the weekend. Marcos reported that he went to the movies with friends. He discussed calling friends, using greetings, paying for movies, and having conversation.
Select References
