

Using Activity Schedules to Increase Independence for Individuals with Autism

Victoria Knight, Ph. D.
Amy Spriggs, Ph. D.
Emily Sartini

Learning Objectives

- In this session, you can expect to:
 - gain understanding of current research involving the use of activity schedules for promoting independence by individuals with autism in regard to quantity, quality, and future possibilities
 - learn various uses of activity schedules to promote independence for individuals with autism during transitions and task analytic skills
 - explore various activity schedules and determine appropriate options based on individual needs (object vs. picture vs. written; high tech vs. low tech; etc.)

Activity Schedules

- What are they?
- Why are they used?
- Where do we use them?
- Who should use them?

Review of the Literature

- 27 articles
 - Used SSR design
 - Publication in peer reviewed journal
 - At least one participant with ASD
 - Investigated effects of VAS on on-task, on-schedule, and/or transition performance
 - Evaluated against Horner et al. (2005) criteria

Review of the Literature, cont.

- 12 qualified as either “high quality” or “acceptable”
 - 3 qualified as “high quality” meeting 100% of the Horner et al. (2005) criteria
 - Bryan & Gast (2000)
 - Chuhador & Diken (2011)
 - Morrison, Sainato, Benchaaban, & Endo (2002)
 - 9 qualified as acceptable

Review of the Literature, cont.

- 44 Participants
 - 38 male; 6 female
 - Age range: 3-21 years
- Settings
 - Majority in general education
 - Others: special education, therapy room, community, home

Review of the Literature, cont.

- Target Skills
 - Play/Leisure
 - Academic Centers/Tasks
 - Transitioning Between Classroom Activities
 - Cooking
 - Daily Living Skills

Review of the Literature, cont.

- Dependent Variables
 - On-task, On-schedule, Engagement, Independent transitions
- Schedule Type/Mode of Presentation
 - Pictures/Line Drawings
 - Videos
- Results
 - All 12 reported positive findings

Review of Literature - Discussion

- Preliminary findings
 - Results of the review suggest that there is a “moderate level” of evidence for using activity schedules to teach on-task, on-schedule, and transition behaviors
- Limitations to the studies
 - More than half of the original 27 studies included for analysis did not meet criteria for “acceptable” or “quality” studies.
 - The main reason was the lack of replication to establish external validity

Review of Literature - Discussion

- Directions for future research
 - Address the overall limitations to the participants and settings of the studies
 - Address students across the spectrum (e.g., Asperger's, severe, Rett syndrome)
 - **Address** high school, preschool, community, and home settings
 - Explore the use of VAS for academic and daily living activities

Review of Literature - Discussion

- Implications for Practice
 - VAS have been used to teach a range of skills (e.g., on-task, on-schedule, transition) in a variety of environments. Increasingly, activity schedules are being used in general education settings as well as resource, community and home settings.
 - Systematic instruction may promote the success of VAS
 - Both picture and video activity schedules were effective for teaching a range of behaviors. In comparison studies, video activity schedules were more effective for most students than picture activity schedules
 - Overall, results from the social validity measures were positive
 - Evaluate efficacy of the practice for individual students by collecting data

Variations

- Objects
- Line drawings
- Pictures
- Lists
- Embedding Videos
- Stationary vs. Mobile
- Static vs. Video

Assessing Effectiveness

- Assessing Appropriate Form
- Progress Monitoring
 - Desired behavior
 - Level of independence

Creating Schedules

- Age appropriateness
- Knowing where/when/how they will be used
- Setting up the environment
- Object/Picture
 - Choice
- Written List
 - Clear
 - Concise

Creating Schedules, cont.

- Using available materials
- Left to Right vs. Top to Bottom
- Number Activities to Display
- Consistency of Routine
 - Crossing pictures/words off
 - Taking pictures and transitioning
 - Designating place for pictures
 - Arrow moving to next activity
 - Other

Contact Information

- Victoria Knight
– v.knight@uky.edu
- Amy Spriggs
– amy.spriggs@uky.edu
- Emily Sartini
– emily.sartini@uky.edu
