This book chapter provides a checklist of various considerations related to the development and evaluation of community-based instruction for children with disabilities. The checklist is designed to serve as an organizational framework for persons wishing to make systematic decisions regarding the establishment of a community-based instructional program or to guide the evaluation of such a program. The checklist is not designed to be used as a rating instrument, as there are no universally acceptable criteria for evaluating the items on the list. The checklist covers: (1) selection, preparation, and management of instructional environments; (2) environmental inventories; (3) administrative considerations such as legal, financial, policy, type and training of personnel, and personnel roles; (4) transportation; (5) program goals, objectives, and IEPs (individualized education plans); (6) social validation; (7) instructional factors such as delivery, grouping, and scheduling methods; and (8) reinforcement and correction. (11 references) (JDD)
Chapter 4
Guide to the Development and Evaluation of Community-Based Instruction

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The author provides a checklist of various considerations related to the development and evaluation of community-based instruction: selection, preparation and management of instructional environments; environmental inventories; administrative considerations: legal, financial, policy, type and training of personnel, and personnel roles; transportation; program goals, objectives and IEPs; social validation; instructional: delivery, grouping, and scheduling by methods; reinforcement and correction.

Brown et al. (1983), arguing in favor of nonschool instruction, wrote:

Envision someone who can learn, but who cannot learn as much as 99% of his or her age peers; who needs more time and trials to learn and to relearn than almost all other persons; who remembers some things but forgets more than almost all other persons; who has difficulty transferring that learned in one environment to another; and who rarely synthesizes skills acquired from several different experiences so as to function effectively in a novel situation. Then, ask the question: How much instructional time should be spent in the physical space of a school, and how much should be spent providing direct, individualized, longitudinal, comprehensive, and systematic instruction in the actual nonschool environments in which that someone currently functions and those in which s/he is likely to function upon graduation? (p. 74)

The answers to the foregoing questions are obvious. It is also readily apparent that community-based activities should not be merely field trips. Simply exposing students to community environments does not ensure efficient or successful skill acquisition. Thus, the following pages provide a comprehensive checklist of considerations related to the development and evaluation of effective and efficient community-based instruction. To avoid making the checklist unduly awkward and long, sources of information have not been acknowledged in context. The reader is referred to the excellent sources of information in the list of references, particularly the materials written by Sailor, Anderson, Halverson, Doering, Filler, Goetz, Hunt, and Gee.

The reader may initially feel overwhelmed by the length and detail of the checklist. It should be noted, however, that if one were to list all the considerations and decisions required to drive to work each day, the list would be similarly overwhelming; nevertheless, in spite of the number of considerations, most of us have learned to drive to work without undue difficulty.

Several important considerations in the development and implementation of any new program are: (a) identify reasonable goals (partial implementation or small-scale pilot projects), (b) determine priorities, (c) establish reasonable time-lines, (d) insure adequate staff preparation, and (e) be prepared to adjust the program. These considerations apply to the establishment and implementation of a community-based instructional program.

The checklist may be used to establish community-based instruction or to guide the evaluation of such a program. The checklist may be reviewed to identify techniques, materials or other considerations that may be relevant to the establishment or evaluation of particular programs. Users may simply proceed through the list checking each of the instructional considerations thought to be relevant to a particular program being developed or evaluated. It should be noted that the checklist is not designed to be used as a rating instrument. There are no universally acceptable criteria for evaluating the items in the list. Community-based instruction is in its early stages of development, and there is little research to support the various models that have emerged (Sailor, Goetz, Anderson, & Gee, 1988). The perceived value of any instructional feature will reflect the knowledge and judgment of the reviewer, his or her theoretical orientation and expertise, the nature of the learner(s) being instructed, and the particular skills being taught. In essence, the present checklist serves as an organizational framework for persons wishing to make systematic decisions regarding the establishment of a community-based instructional program or to guide to the evaluation of such a program. An asterisk following some terms refers the reader to notes at the end of the chapter.

Note that the items listed in the checklist are not exhaustive. Users may wish to add or delete checklist items depending upon their unique circumstances. Space has been left for the addition of other considerations.

Instructional Environments

(a) Location: indicate percentage of time students spend in each:

- segregated classrooms ___% ; integrated classrooms ___% ;
- school/non-classroom ____% : (kitchen __%, bathroom __%,
- hallways __%, library __%, auditorium __%, bus area __%,
- gym __%, locker room __%, lunch room __% ;
- general community ___% ; recreational ___% , residential ___% ,
- vocational ___% ; specialized instructional environment* ___% ;

Other:
components of naturally occurring routines are identified: natural initiating cues (e.g., dirty teeth following eating); preparatory steps (e.g., go to bathroom; select own toothbrush, etc.); core steps (e.g., brush teeth in circular motion, top, bottom, inside, outside); performance monitoring requirements (e.g., check chin for toothpaste); problem-solving steps (e.g., use facecloth to wipe chin); associated communication and social behaviors (e.g., wait until bathroom is free; request permission to use the bathroom);

- various methods nonhandicapped people use to perform routines are identified; note rate, frequency, and duration of responses; note commonly occurring problems associated with the routine (e.g., clerk temporarily called away; machine malfunction);

- note the number and type of training opportunities in each area; suitability of each area for training (e.g., spatial-temporal and social factors);

- note is made of behaviors that are not tolerated in the environments (e.g., masturbation, self-stimulation, aggressiveness);

- environmental inventory data are collected by: teacher; parent; occupational therapist; speech and/or physical therapists; the inventory is conducted by repeated direct, unobtrusive observation and/or repeated participation; interviews are conducted with on-site personnel and the general public.

Community preparation: meetings are held with representatives of potential community instructional environments; to explain the nature (frequency, duration, times) of the program; to explain the purpose and philosophy of the program; to describe, in positive terms, the nature of the students; to describe amount and type of supervision, liabilities, contact persons and their telephone numbers; where necessary or desirable, permission is sought to use the environment for instruction for limited (specify) or unlimited periods of time; methods and opportunities for community representatives to provide feedback and express concerns are described; printed material describing the foregoing information is left with relevant community representatives.

Other: __________________________________________________________________________
Environmental selection: is based on: environmental inventory (see above); site is not overused as a training facility; natural proportions of handicapped and nonhandicapped people are maintained; objectives specified in students’ IEPs; student skills and experience; student familiarity with the environment; similarity of environments to those that will be frequented by students; parental preferences; safety features; frequent opportunities to interact with a variety of nondisabled people; accessible by normalized transportation; unnecessary time is not wasted in transit to or from the site; acceptable cost factors; availability of site at desired times.

Other:

Administrative Considerations

(a) Legal: legal liabilities are reviewed with legal department regarding: type of coverage and limitations of insurance related to transportation in public and private vehicles; on-site injury (accidental or intentional), involving staff, students and/or the public as well as property damage; use of unaccompanied paraprofessionals in supervision and instruction; need for professional liability insurance.

(b) Financial: staff are reimbursed for additional insurance coverage related to use of private vehicles and professional liability insurance.

(c) Policy: policy statements regarding the school district philosophy and rationale for community-based instruction are prepared.

(d) Personnel employed in community-based instruction: special and regular education teachers; vocational, music, physical education, and art teachers; therapists: occupational, physical, speech; social workers; school nurses; senior citizens; college or secondary school practicum students; parents; volunteers; temporary or permanent collaboration and/or consultation of store clerks, bus drivers, waitresses, cashiers; peers tutors or buddies.
Training:

Teachers
Teaching assists
Therapists
Parents
Others

- trained to teach type of students being taught
- trained to employ specific behavior management techniques being used
- trained to use specific instructional techniques being employed
- trained to collect, plot and interpret data
- trained in record keeping
- trained in philosophy and rationale of community-based instruction
- trained in techniques specific to community-based instruction
- trained in emergency procedures (first-aid, CPR ...)
- trained in district policies
- trained to work with people in other disciplines
- trained in public relations
- trained to supervise students
- trained to work without supervision
- being employed
- trained to teach specific techniques to other personnel

Other:

Roles: therapists work with teachers on assessment ____, goal selection ____, equipment development ____, development of instructional/therapeutic techniques ____, and on-site training and supervision ____;
two or more teachers team-teach to permit flexibility of student grouping and rotating use of community training sites ____;
teachers and other personnel specialize in training students in specific environments ____;
instructional aides are assigned to a particular teacher ____ or training site ____; are trained to conduct hands-on training ____ with ____ or without ____ continuous supervision;
contact is made with teacher ____, paraprofessional ____ and other related unions or associations (occupational ____, physical ____ speech ____ therapists) regarding staff responsibilities ____ and liabilities ____;
job descriptions are written to include off-campus responsibilities ____

Other:

(e) **Transportation** is chosen, wherever possible, that is normalized ____, accessible ____, provided with appropriate safety devices ____; permits in-transit training opportunities ____; least expensive ____; and minimally time-consuming ____;
district school buses are rerouted to deliver students directly to and from the community training site without first going to a school ____;
teacher ____, parent ____ or volunteer ____ private vehicles are used (see section on legal considerations);
residential ____ and community agency ____ vehicles not in use during school hours are employed;
public transportation offers: discount passes ____, free travel during low use times ____, use of training vehicles ____ low cost bus rental ____ and/or volunteer, off-duty bus drivers ____;
consideration is given to the cost ____ convenience ____ and training opportunities ____ of alternative methods of travel, as well as to alternate means of travel in the event of unexpected problems or emergencies ____.

Other:

**Instructional Considerations**

(a) Program goals, objectives and IEPs are selected on the basis of:
- ecological inventory ___ of students' current and future ___,
- residential ____ vocational ____ educational ___ and recreational environments ___ and subenvironments ____;
- students have the opportunity to perform the skills often ____ in their daily lives ____ in many environments ____;
- transdisciplinary decisions of parents ____ guardians ____,
teachers ____; occupational ____ speech ____ and physical ____ therapists; vocational specialists ____ and others ____;
- activities, settings, materials and equipment are chronologically age-appropriate ____;
- environments are least-restrictive ____ and maintain a natural proportion of disabled and nondisabled persons ____;
given the constraints of time, personnel, the instructional situation, the students' entry level skills, and the rate and style of learning, it is likely the students will be able to acquire sufficient skills to achieve independent mastery ____ or participate partially to a satisfactory degree ____.
the skills taught are related to basic health __, safety __, life maintenance __ and quality of life __;
- the skills taught will reduce dependency __, enhance normalization __, increase social acceptability __, increase opportunity to learn additional skills __, increase opportunity to interact with non-disabled people __, increase opportunities to understand and express thoughts and feelings __, increase opportunities to enjoy social-emotional-recreational life __;
- Social validity: the rate __, style of performing and perceived importance ____ of the skills taught ____ and the teaching procedure used ____ are considered to be appropriate by the general public __, people in community environments in which instruction will be conducted __; parents ____ students ____ and non-handicapped peers ____.

(b) Instructional Tasks include mailing letters for family and school ____; dropping-off and picking-up family and staff clothing at a dry cleaners ____; washing family and group home laundry ____; preparing food for peers, staff and group home ____; purchasing food for family, staff, elderly people, and group homes ____; providing household and yard maintenance for group and family homes and the elderly ____.

(c) Instructional Delivery: instruction is individual __, small group ____; concurrent (everyone instructed at same time) ____; sequential (students in group are individually taught in rotating sequence) ____; incremental (group size is slowly increased) ____;
- instruction is consecutive (skills are taught in school before moving to community) ____; concurrent (skills are taught in school and community at the same time) ____; or exclusive (skills are taught only in the community) __;
- instruction is conducted in only one environment of a specific type (e.g., in one grocery store, or using one vending machine) ____ or concurrently ____ or successively ____ in several environments of the same type (e.g., in several grocery stores, or using several vending machines);

where instruction, management, or supervision is provided by someone other than the teacher, written guidelines describe all responsibilities ____; procedures ____; and policies ____; checklists ____ and logbooks ____ are also provided;

where instruction or management is provided by someone other than a teacher, procedural scripts are provided that describe the sequence of steps taken to implement a procedure ____; the scripts include a description of equipment ____; materials ____; physical arrangements ____; sample dialogue ____; prompts ____; reinforcers ____; and correction procedures ___.

(d) Instructional Grouping: grouping is homogeneous ____ or heterogeneous* ____; students differ on: level of intellectual functioning (severe, mild, moderate) ____; physical ability (wheelchair or ambulatory) ____; level of skills related to task ____; behavior management ____ and instructional ____ requirements;
- the ratio of students to instructional personnel is: 1:1 __, 2:1 __, 3:1 __, 4:1 __, or 5:1 __.

(e) Instructional scheduling: staggered schedule: different groups of students from the same ____ or different ____ classrooms are instructed in the community at different times (e.g., a.m. or p.m. M, W, and F) ____; or one group is instructed to criterion on a task before introducing another group ____;

- schedules of therapists: occupational ____; speech ____ and physiotherapist ____ have been changed from short-term, school-based to long-term, community-based treatment ____; involves less ____ same ____ or more ____ direct contact time with students ___; massed practice is scheduled for initial skill acquisition ____; when massed practice is used, the number of consecutive trials is selected to enhance rapid, consistent, and accurate responding ____ while avoiding fatigue and boredom ____; an appropriate frequency of distributed practice is scheduled to enhance skill maintenance ____; a suitable variety of instructional environments (representing the most difficult commonly found conditions ____ and the most common range of conditions ____ are used during instruction to facilitate skill generalization ____; sufficient practice is scheduled to acquire and maintain the ability to perform low frequency tasks of high importance ____;

- a suitable duration and variety of instruction is scheduled to avoid fatigue and boredom ____; a variety of instructors are employed to enhance skill generalization ____ while maintaining essential continuity of instruction ____.

(f) Planning an instructional schedule: instructional schedules are developed following consideration of:
- number and type of staff available ____; frequency ____ and duration ____ of availability ____;
- students' instructional objectives ____; instructional needs: frequency ____; duration ____ and type of instruction required ____;
- environmental availability: times ____; duration ____;
- transportation; normalized ____; special ____; time required ____;
- instructional opportunities during transportation ____;
- time required for: staff breaks ____; preparation and clean-up ____;
- data collection ____; data analysis ____; meetings ____; and training ____.
activities) __; a variety of activities are scheduled __; repeated trial practice to point of boredom and fatigue is avoided __.

Interrupted responding: (e.g., a well established routine is briefly interrupted to teach a language concept; the opportunity to continue the routine may be motivating __).

Reinforcers: extrinsic: type __ amount __ and frequency __ approximates natural reinforcers; extrinsic and natural reinforcers are always paired __; learner attention is always drawn to natural consequences __; extrinsic reinforcers are gradually faded to transfer stimulus control to natural reinforcers __; during initial instruction, 80% or more of responses are reinforced __; reinforcers are dispensed in a nonstigmatizing manner __; extrinsic reinforcers have demonstrated reinforcing value to specific learner being taught __; natural reinforcers are identified through an environmental inventory (see above) __.

Correction procedures: consequence prompting is used (as above) __; the student returns to steps previously performed correctly __; attention is directed to natural cues __ and the desired response is prompted __.

Instruction employs both systematic __ and direct instruction __ as well as incidental instruction (explain) __.

Selection of instruction/behavioral methods: instructional and behavioral management techniques used are: the least intrusive __; demonstrated most effective for the type of task and student involved __; are best suited to the particular student(s) involved __; are age-appropriate __; normalized __; not stigmatizing __; enhance student dignity __; are nonaversive __; and are responsive to the social context in which training is conducted __.

Other: __

Notes

Specialized instructional environment: a controlled environment used for short-term, intensive training (e.g., permits repeated trial practice; more intrusive prompting; greater stimulus control); may also be used to cope with severe behavior disorders, may be located in a disused store or storage area in shopping center; area in church, community, or recreation centers).
Routines: skill sequences that begin with a natural cue and end with the achievement of a critical effect or function of the behavior. Tooth brushing is a routine having several components: initiating cue: when teeth are dirty after eating; preparatory steps: going to the washroom; getting toothpaste and brush; core steps: actually brushing teeth; terminating steps: putting the equipment away; and associated behaviors: social and communication.

Heterogeneous grouping: heterogeneous groups of students are sometimes easier to manage; ambulatory students can often assist students using wheelchairs; it is easier to focus on one student requiring intensive behavior management than if all students in the group require such programming; students requiring little instruction and supervision can practice skills while instruction is focused on students with greater instructional needs; higher level performers may serve as models for other students; students who have acquired a skill may teach other students and thereby enhance generalization.

References


