Providing High Quality Instructional Support to Promote Optimal School Readiness

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Objectives

• Understand the components of Instructional Support
• Increase knowledge of the implementation of each component
• Develop methods to ensure maximum use of the components
• Determine appropriate strategies to utilize in classroom and home based settings

Agenda

• Review School Readiness
• Background on Instructional Support
• Three Components of Instructional Support
• Video Based Activities
• Teaching Strategies to Improve Instructional Support
• Resources
What do we mean by School Readiness?

- Ready Children, Ready Families, Ready Schools, Ready Communities
- Incorporates all domains from the Head Start Early Learning Framework
- How young children begin school is a major national issue. Specifically, it is an objective of this nation that young children are ready to learn when they begin school. (S. Meisels)
- Teachers indicated that the following characteristics were essential: a child should be physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished; able to communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally; and enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities (NCES, 1993)

Children learn what we teach

Exposed to a language and content rich setting, children begin to acquire the broad array of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that serve as a foundation for literacy learning. Exposed to a literacy curriculum that is reduced to a set of narrow, largely procedural skills, they learn the skills of pleasing others through mimicking, reciting, and repeating. Simply put, they learn how to react, not how to think. The most unfortunate consequence is that not only does this waste precious time, it overlooks what high poverty children need the most—key material resources and interpersonal experiences that engage their minds. Experiences that help them learn how things work, how to form patterns and relationships, how to solve real problems, and engage in higher-order thinking skills. It is these key experiences that they lack—vital background knowledge for developing concepts and schema—that has put these children at great jeopardy, and not their ability to learn. (Neuman, 2006)

Defining Instructional Support

- Interactions that teach students to think, provide ongoing feedback and support, and facilitate the development of language and vocabulary
- How teachers help children learn to solve problems, reason, think, and develop more complex language skills (Copeland et al., 2006)
- Opportunities adults provide children to express existing skills and scaffold more complex ones (Ginsburg & Philpott, 2003, Ginsburg & Stylianou, 1991)
2 Kinds of Instructional Support

- General Instructional Support: support that is relevant and observable across content areas.
- Content-specific Instructional Support: strategies for teaching students specific skills and knowledge such as reading, math, or science.

What do we know from research?

- Observed adult-child high-quality interactions were positively associated with gains in academic skills and social/emotional development. Program structural features were not associated with gains. Whether children develop important cognitive and emotional abilities that prepare them for later school success depends heavily on the quality of interactions in the preschool classroom. B.K. Hamre, 2008

Why the Focus on Instructional Support in Preschool?

- Increasing evidence of the significance and malleability of children’s early learning
- Efforts on the translation of cognitive science, learning, and development to educational environments (New Students Learn, NRC 2005)
- Shift in expectations for the academic outputs of early education classrooms (Neuman & Kaderka, 2010)
“In everything teachers plan and do in the Head Start education program, they need to be highly intentional. That is, they need to work with the outcomes for children in mind and consciously seek out every opportunity to help children achieve these outcomes through the learning experiences they plan, the ways they interact with children, and the ways they create and regularly modify the environment.”


The developmental appropriateness of an early childhood program is most apparent in the interaction between adults and children.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children

Three Dimensions of Instructional Support
- Concept Development: describes the instructional behaviors, conversations, and activities that teachers use to help stimulate students’ higher order thinking skills
- Quality of Feedback: is about how teachers extend students’ learning through their responses to students’ ideas, comments, and work
- Language Modeling: describe the extent to which teachers facilitate, increase, and encourage students’ language.
CLASS Concept Development Indicators

- Analysis and Reasoning
  - Why and How questions
  - Problem Solving
  - Prediction/experimentation
  - Classification/comparison
  - Evaluation
- Creating
  - Brainstorming, Planning, Producing
- Integration
  - Connects Concepts
  - Integrates with previous knowledge
- Connections to the Real World
  - Real-world applications
  - Related to students’ lives

Activity

- What do you see and hear?
  - Take notes as you watch portions of choice time in a preschool classroom. Look for examples of
    1. Why/how questions
    2. Prediction
    3. Integration
    4. Connections to the real world

Concept Development Helps to

- Increase the ability to access and apply knowledge in new situations (transfer of knowledge)
- Build connections between new and previous knowledge (understand)
- Use knowledge to help solve new problems (apply)
- Put pieces of knowledge together to produce new ideas (create)
Activity

• For each of the Scenarios, create at least 1 question or statement for each strategy
• Share your questions and statements with at least 2 others
• Record their questions and statements on your sheet

You will have 15 minutes to complete this activity!

What is educational feedback?

• Provision of some information to a student about their performance or effort.
• Generally includes praise, behavioral feedback, or attributes (ability or effort)
• Instructional feedback provides students with specific information about the content or process of learning.

CLASS Quality of Feedback

• Includes praise, behavioral feedback and attributes feedback
• Focus is on high quality instructional feedback that provides students with specific information about the content or process of learning
• About quality of feedback, not quantity (Howes, et al, 2006)
CLASS Quality of Feedback Indicators

- Scaffolding
  - Hints and Assistance
- Feedback loops
  - Back & forth exchanges
  - Persistence by teacher to dig deeper
  - Follow up questions
- Prompting thought processes
  - Asks student to explain thinking and query responses and actions
- Providing information
  - Expansion, clarification and specific feedback
- Encouragement and Affirmation
  - Recognition and reinforcement of student persistence

Activity

- What does Quality of Feedback look and sound like in a classroom?
  1. Scaffolding
  2. Follow up questions
  3. Providing additional information
  4. Asking child to explain thinking
  5. Affirming effort and persistence

Importance of Language Modeling

- Language skills are needed to navigate the instructional and social opportunities in classrooms.
- Language development is associated with more positive social adjustment and greater reading abilities (Catts, et al, 1999)
CLASS Language Modeling Indicators

• Frequent conversations
• Open ended questions
• Repetition and extension
• Self-and parallel talk
• Advanced language

Activity – What do you hear?

• Take notes of what you hear, looking for examples of the following indicators:

  1. Back and forth conversations
  2. Open ended questions
  3. Repetition and extension
  4. Advanced Language

It’s not just about new words

• Advanced language (new words) does increase vocabulary (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005)

  BUT only if . . .

  ➢ New word is accompanied by a definition – a marsh is a very wet place
  ➢ The word is used in a supportive context – we took a boat through a marsh and saw lots of birds and alligators.
Activity

• For each child’s statement, provide at least one expansion or extension
• Share with your elbow partner

You will have 10 minutes to complete this activity

Nondirective Teaching Behaviors

CONTINUUM OF TEACHING BEHAVIORS (Based on Broderick and Rosegrant, 1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nondirective</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge</td>
<td>Give attention and positive encouragement to keep a child engaged in an activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Display for children a skill or desirable way of behaving in the classroom, through actions only or with cues, prompts, or other forms of coaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mediating Teacher Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediating</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate</td>
<td>Offer short-term assistance to help a child practice in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>developing a skill (as an adult does in holding the back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of a bicycle while a child pedals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Provide a fixed form of assistance, such as displaying</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>the alphabet near a writing center for children to refer to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffold</td>
<td>Support children to work “on the edge” of their current</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competence; set up challenges or assist.</td>
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Directive Teaching Behaviors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Directive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-construct</td>
<td>Learn or work collaboratively with children on a problem or task,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>such as building a model or block structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Actively display a behavior or engage in an activity while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>children observe the outcome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Provide specific directions or instructions for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>children’s behavior within narrowly defined dimensions of error.</td>
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“It is time to realize that how we encourage children to discover and how we provide information are key. Both should make children feel as if they are being offered a meal at a good restaurant – they want to “dig in” to what is being offered.”

Robert Pianta, 2010
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ULgpa-MNKw

Resources

- Maximizing Classroom Time to Promote Learning  
  (NCRECE Vol.1 Issue 3)
- Understanding and Using the CLASS for Program Improvement  
  http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/
- Domain 7: Approaches to Learning  
  http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/

Achieve

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller