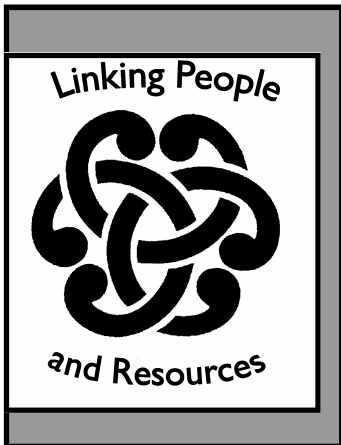


Regional Wrap-Up

Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU

A New Year, Some New Faces



Inside this issue:

What's New with VAAP	2
Program Choreography	3
T/TAC Online	3
Training for Autism Educators and Service Providers	4
Hurricane Katrina	5
Goodbye Brenda	6
VAAP eNews	6
On the Net....	6

As we begin a new school year, we would like to introduce you to some new faces in the Region 5 T/TAC. Dr. Dianne Koontz Lowman, John McNaught, Carol Wiegler, and Kandy Grant are new employees in our office.

Dr. Dianne Koontz Lowman, most recently an associate professor and director of distance education and academic performance in the department of occupational therapy at Medical College of Virginia at VCU in Richmond, is a familiar face to many T/TAC consumers. Dianne holds a bachelor's degree in speech and dramatics from JMU, a master's degree in special education from JMU, and a doctorate in special education from UVA. Dianne has worked as a teacher and educational diagnostician in several local school systems. From 1985 to 1991, she was the coordinator for the early childhood special education TAC 2. Since then, she has spent a number of years teaching university courses for VCU, UVA, GMU, and JMU and providing training for the Part C Office of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services. Dianne has been a consultant & trainer for the national Head Start program and for the VA Department of Education T/TAC network. In addition, Dianne is a member of numerous professional societies and community organiza-



tions and has been the recipient of several special awards, fellowships, and honors. Grant activities, research reports, reviews, presentations at the regional, national, and international levels, and numerous publications fill the pages of her vita. Dianne will work primarily in the areas of early childhood and autism. Dianne may be contacted at (540) 568-7051 or lowmandk@jmu.edu.

John T. McNaught, most recently the special education job coordinator for Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County, will focus his efforts at T/TAC on providing training and technical assistance to school personnel to improve the quality of IEPs and transition services. John also brings experience as a teacher of students with emotional disturbance at Turner Ashby as well as other work experiences that involved planning and implementing strategies and training staff to address the needs of youth who are at-risk in the area of emotional development. One notable experience that John enjoys sharing is the work he did for New Dominion School in Dillwyn as a group leader, which involved living in a wilderness setting with twelve boys with emotional disturbance. John has a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond



in business administration/finance and a master's degree from JMU in special education. He was recognized as the Outstanding Graduate Student in Special Education in 2002 while pursuing this degree. You may reach John at (540) 568-2641 or mcnaugjt@jmu.edu.

Carol Wiegler brings knowledge and experience accumulated over a number of years as she has served the field of special education in a variety of capacities.



Most recently, Carol held the position of Parent Infant Specialist at Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Staunton, providing direct service in the area of communication skills, overall developmental skills, and technology related to hearing loss.

Other experiences include teaching students with hearing impairments in public and private school settings, a six-year tenure as speech-language pathologist and teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing in several locations in Germany, directing the LIFT program, and directing a deaf-blind project in Pennsylvania. Awards bestowed upon Carol include Teacher of the Year by Nuernburg Schools in Germany and Person of the Year by Northern Virginia Regional Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Carol holds a bachelor's degree from Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania and a master's degree in speech and language from the College of New Jersey Trenton. Carol will provide training and consultative services in the areas of communication and assistive technology. She may be reached at (540) 568-8812 or wiegleca@jmu.edu.

When the Instructional Support Team initiative expanded to include Region 5 in 2003, **Kandy Grant** ventured from the classroom to serve as the IST facilitator at Concord Elementary School in Campbell County. In this capacity,



Kandy experienced extensive training and coaching in collaborative and reflective communication, systematic problem-solving, and instructional assessment and strategies. She initiated the IST process in her school, provided support to students and staff, trained and developed a team, and provided staff development on an on-going basis. Kandy led her team through a successful validation process. Now she has the opportunity to use the experience and expertise

she has gained to impact a larger audience serving as an IST coordinator for Region 5 T/TAC. Her responsibilities will be focused on supporting current model sites and facilitating expansion of the project. Twenty-one years as a classroom teacher at the elementary and middle school levels have also proffered knowledge and experience in the teaching and learning connection for Kandy. Other than the first five years in Upshur County, West Virginia, this tenure has been in Campbell County. Kandy holds a bachelor's degree from Westminster College in Pennsylvania. Kandy may be reached at 540-568-2608 or grantkb@jmu.edu.

Please join us in welcoming these new coordinators!

WHAT'S NEW WITH VAAP

Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

Have you heard there are changes to the VAAP?

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Training and Technical Assistance Centers have been working diligently on revising the VAAP for some time now. There are changes, and the changes that have been made are GOOD changes!

One major change regards teaching **content** subjects more effectively to the population of students taking the VAAP. Because this change affects direct instruction, VDOE and T/TACs have scheduled trainings to address best practices for instruction in the content areas of reading and math.

In **Region 5**, these trainings are scheduled as follows:

October 19 – Doubletree Hotel, Charlottesville

October 27 – Holiday Inn, Lynchburg

The target audience for these trainings is teachers and paraprofessionals who teach students taking the VAAP. These trainings will be from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day. Come prepared to roll up your sleeves and practice some GREAT activities directly related to instructional strategies for teaching content to students with significant cognitive impairments.

Registration information will be forthcoming.

And, as always, there is ALWAYS technical assistance available from your Region 5 T/TAC. The contact person is Debbie Yancey at (540) 568-7924 or yanceydm@jmu.edu

Program Choreography: The Fine Dance of Individualized Teaching and Learning

Brenda E. Fogus, M.T., Department of Exceptional Education, James Madison University

There has been growing awareness, acceptance, and training regarding the use of structured teaching strategies as developed and presented by the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As I work with professionals in the field trying to improve their skills in working with those with a disability on the autism continuum, I am often asked questions about the implementation of programming ideas I present. One question rarely asked until teachers get into the process, but a problem that almost invariably comes up, is how to coordinate all of the schedules in one classroom where a number of students have individual programs. Putting into action a system for working through this process can make this type of classroom run smoothly and very effectively meet the needs of each student at his/her level.

First, it is of utmost importance that the classroom be organized based on the basic principles as set forth by TEACCH. These are that the classroom should operate through structure and that the three elements of structure are the physical arrangement, schedules, and teaching methods. As well, TEACCH approaches all recommendations with the following concepts accepted. They are that we need to have a working knowledge of autism, programming should be based on individualization, programming begins with assessment, we should use empirically-based methods, there should be an orientation in our thinking toward independence of the student, and we should work in collaboration with parents.

Physical structure, the environment, should communicate expectations and organization to students. Areas should be clearly defined, even if they are revolving areas that are used for several activities. That is, when an area is designated for a particular purpose, the furniture arrangement, materials, and visuals should indicate to the students the expectations during the time the area is in use. For instance, many classrooms will use one area for small group instruction part of the day, but at one time during the day the same area will be used for snack. At all times this should be clearly indicated for the students such that they do not have to ask, nor be told.

The room should welcome students and convey the message that it is safe and ready for their learning to take place. Having to tell students repeatedly that they shouldn't be in an

area or they shouldn't touch something is a red flag that the room is not student-centered enough. Adjust so this communication can be minimized and the students can work more independently.

The second element of structure is scheduling. This is an important part of the programming aspects of structured teaching. Each student should have a daily schedule that is individualized to his/her communication system and broken into the appropriate blocks of time for each person's needs. This is a major component to the success of the choreography as well. Some students need to monitor parts of their schedule rather than the entire thing at once, while others have the skill to support their independence with their schedule for complete days. For the best choreography, individual schedules should be complete prior to whole group planning so that programming remains individualized.

Finally, the last component of structure that creates the foundation for classrooms operating under this philosophy is teaching methods. These should be based on the individual needs of students to most effectively target their instruction and provide programming wherein their strengths grow and they develop skills to compensate for their weaknesses or to make them disappear entirely.

Once structure is in place in the physical environment and through schedules, then teaching methods that include individual work systems bring the program full-circle to move students steadily toward independence. It is upon this foundation that the specifics of total program choreography are based. Without any one of these components, the plan presented here will be unsuccessful; so it is assumed that all three components are in place in the classroom and that the adults are all very familiar and comfortable with supporting students in such an environment.

T/TAC Online: A Web-based Community!

T/TAC online helps link people and resources serving children and youth with disabilities. T/TAC Online is available to teachers, parents, and professionals who can utilize the services through the convenience of a personal computer. T/TAC Online provides a central location for the community to gather information and share knowledge. Currently the knowledge areas are categorized as SOL Enhanced, Resources, Events, Online Training, and School Improvement. All of these information services and online training opportunities are available 24/7 via the Internet. Users may review the most current items available in the spotlight section or select a specific item by subject and/or disability category. The Virginia Department of Education is the sponsor and funding agent for T/TAC Online. The site is maintained at George Mason University. Visit T/TAC Online at <<http://ttaconline.org>>.

As well, students must know the classroom system and how they move from one activity to another, one area to another, and out of and back into the classroom throughout the day. It will behoove everyone if students receive individual instruction and support in each area of the structured classroom so that plans for the entire classroom can be more effective and successful.

With this base established let us look at what causes us to need a plan for choreography. There are several problems that typically emerge in a classroom utilizing structured teaching strategies, but that are not truly coordinated. These problems include increased stress levels for staff and students. Staff finds themselves feeling pulled and disorganized because students are moving about regularly. This can lead to feelings of not addressing the individual needs of students and making adequate progress toward their goals. For students, the stress tends to be rooted in the fact that the leaders in the room seem to lack a system and that there isn't organization to the entire program. Students, particularly those with a disability on the continuum, seek the comfort of organization; hence the reason structured systems work so well for these students. When students sense that the system isn't organized, they feel elevated stress.

A second problem is really quite common sense in nature and it is that the environment is truly disorganized. Having an entire caseload of students working on individualized pro-

grams and goals is tricky and can be difficult to balance. It is actually quite easy for the system to be cumbersome to the point of disorganization and this can lead to more difficulties that result in frustration for all. I have found that often when this becomes the problem, structured teaching is blamed rather than lack of organization, and the system is typically abandoned.

Finally, and most importantly, when the proper choreography is not in place, there can too often be found activities for students that are not related to their individualized goals. This happens because students are forced into groupings that do not allow for appropriate and/or individualized instruction. Unfortunately, it can also be that students are asked to do things that in fact only equate to busy work rather than that which really supports their programming. And so, choreography attempts to resolve these issues by maximizing efficiency, organization, and productive use of time thus allowing for an appropriate, wide-range curriculum.

With questions or comments feel free to contact the author directly at fogusbe@jmu.edu or (540) 568-2877.



TRAINING FOR AUTISM EDUCATORS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS, 2005-2006

Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP) is pleased to offer training for professionals working with students with autism or related disorders. SECEP has established itself as a regional program in southeastern Virginia, serving students throughout Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Isle of Wight, Franklin, and Southampton County, providing effective assessment and programming for students within the autism spectrum. A registration fee of \$200.00 per participant is required to help support and expand the trainings. The training will be conducted in workshops at the SECEP facility in Norfolk and in related school settings.

Two types of training are being offered:

1) Model Classroom (autism) Training will enable educators and service providers to design effective educational services for students with autism and related disabilities. The SECEP classroom program blends a variety of approaches that have proven to be effective for these students. Content areas include an overview of autism, communication systems, structured teaching methods, social skills development, and behavioral analysis and management. Training will provide classroom staff, including related service providers, with methods for program development and implementation. This workshop is conducted for teams or individuals up to a maximum of twenty persons. Teams may include, but are not limited to, special and general education teachers, teaching assistants, speech/language pathologists, and occupational therapists, and other staff working with students with Asperger's Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The workshop will take place over a three day period, and teams will be exposed to ongoing classroom models and a variety of age ranges.

Training Schedule for 2005-2006:

November 2-4, 2005 (Model Classroom Workshop-Autism);

November 16-18 (Asperger's/HFA Workshop);

February 22-24, 2006 (Model Classroom Training-Autism); and

March 15-17, 2006 (Asperger's/HFA Workshop).

Those interested in receiving additional information should contact Phyllis Kozakiewicz for registration or local area information, Charlene H. Wentland, Assistant Director (wentland.charlene@secep.net), or Dr. Priscilla P. Hawkins, Associate Director, at (757) 892-6100. Or visit us on the Web at www.secep.net.

Hurricane Katrina Information

Displaced Teachers

The Virginia Department of Education is providing assistance in the employment of teachers and other instructional school personnel who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. A one-year provisional license will be issued to displaced teachers and other instructional school personnel for the 2005-06 school year who have been offered employment by a Virginia school division.

The *Special Application for Teachers and School Personnel Displaced by Hurricane Katrina* must be completed by the applicant and division superintendent or designee. No fee is required for the license. Displaced educators must indicate which state department of education (Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana) VDOE's Office of Professional Licensure should contact to obtain teaching credentials. The displaced educator's signature at the bottom of the application authorizes the Office of Professional Licensure to contact the displaced educator's home state to obtain credentials. Once the credentials have been received and reviewed, VDOE will issue a Virginia license to replace the one-year provisional license.

Please send the *Special Application for Teachers and School Personnel Displaced by Hurricane Katrina* to Dr. James Lanham, Senior Licensure Specialist, Virginia Department of Education, Division of Teacher Education and Licensure, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, VA 23218-2120.

Questions may be addressed to Dr. Thomas A. Elliott, assistant superintendent for teacher education and licensure, (Thomas.Elliott@doe.virginia.gov); Patty Pitts, director of licensure, (Patty.Pitts@doe.virginia.gov); or Dr. Lanham (James.Lanham@doe.virginia.gov); at (804) 371-2522.

Grants for Impacted Schools, Teachers, and School Employees

The National Education Association has established a toll-free hotline number, 1-866-247-2239, for public schools, teachers, and school employees impacted by Hurricane Katrina to apply for grants.

Public schools that have enrolled students displaced by the storm can apply for grants to help purchase school supplies, textbooks, and other materials needed to accommodate increased enrollment, as well as to assist displaced children with personal needs such as clothes.

Teachers and other school employees personally impacted by Hurricane Katrina are eligible to apply for grants to meet various needs including housing, food, clothing, and other personal needs.

Additional information is available at www.nea.org/katrina.

Hand to Hand and Heart to Heart: Helping Our Colleagues and the Children and Families of the Gulf

The Southern Early Childhood Association offers three ways to assist with the rebuilding of the early childhood community in the Gulf Coast area.

- 1) Tax-deductible financial donations (that will be held at SECA until the state affiliates can assist in determining the most effective way to distribute those funds) may be sent to:
Hurricane Relief Fund, Southern Early Childhood Association, PO Box 55930, Little Rock, AR 72215
- 2) Donations of books and teacher resources may be sent to: Child Care Hurricane Project, First United Methodist Church, 412 W Main Street, Tupelo, MS 38804
- 3) SECA will work to help individuals, schools, or programs "adopt" a program so that you can work directly with an early childhood program in the Gulf Coast area to assist them in the re-building effort. Support can include fund raising, donations of materials, and anything else that is agreeable to both you and the recipient. Contact SECA at 1-800-305-7322 to get on the list to "adopt a program."

Have questions about No Child Left Behind and Virginia's implementation of the law? Visit www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/nclb for the latest information and guidance.

Goodbye Brenda!

As we welcome our new personnel to Region 5 T/TAC, we also say goodbye to Brenda Brady. Brenda was with the Region 5 office for two years as our assistive technology coordinator. Brenda relocated across the state and is now employed by the T/TAC at Old Dominion University. Brenda is still part of our T/TAC family and we wish her the best in her new position!



<http://world.altavista.com>

Copy, then paste, any Web site address into "translate Web site" on this page and it will translate into a choice of many languages (you pick).

www.sparktop.org

This Web site was designed for 10 -12 year olds with learning difficulties, such as learning disabilities and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Information regarding disabilities, news, and games are all part of this active, fun site. Students can also hear about their favorite stars and music idols with similar disabilities on this page.

www.behaviornotes.com

This secure Web application enables teachers to manage classroom behavior data. Teachers and students can monitor behavioral incidents with just a click from a drop-down menu. Reports and graphs can be generated to illustrate behavior, time of day, student, class, grade level, school, and district. There is a fee per year, but a free trial period gives teachers a good opportunity to check it out before purchasing

www.webmath.com

Stuck on a math problem? This Web site can help in three ways. With a simple click on one of a variety of math tabs, users will find over 100 instant-answer, self-help, and math solvers to help. Categories include Math for Everyone, General Math, K-8 Math, Algebra, Plots & Geometry, Trigonometry & Calculus, and Other Stuff. The second option is to find a problem that is similar to yours by browsing through more than 1,300 completely solved math problems. And finally, if you can't find what you're looking for, you can ask a math expert about your math problem.

www.talkwithpictures.com

This Web site provides users with effective communication hand drawn icons. The icons can be used to instruct, give information, and provide students the opportunity to begin using visual strategies for communication. The products available for purchase are nicely organized and there are links, a newsletter, and resources available for users.

www.neateachertoolkit.com

The National Education Association has created this Web site of tools for managing classroom, curriculum, IEPs, and professional development. Subscription with NEA membership identification required.

VAAP E-News Subscription Available

The VDOE Training and Technical Assistance Centers have an e-newsletter with information on the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program. If you are interested in receiving this T/TAC e-newsletter, subscribe by going to the following site: <www.ttac.odu.edu/esubs/forms/vaap.htm>.

Also on the 'net.....

www.ed.gov/free

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) contains information from more than 35 federal organizations and is updated weekly. Click on "New Resources" for the latest additions.

www.my-spanish-dictionary.com

This archive of 300 high-quality photographs labeled in Spanish and English can be a great tool to use for multilingual students needing vocabulary support. Using the photos is a great way to visually display new words for all students.

www.wordsmith.org/awad

Subscribe to this Web site to receive the word of the day in your E-mail mailbox. The E-mail will contain the daily word, voice pronunciation, sample usage in context, quotation, and more!

<http://answers.com>

Type in a topic of inquiry and receive instant answers from a data-base of more than 100 reference sources not links.