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## Mission statement

The VDOE T/TAC at VCU is a grant-funded program of the Virginia Department of Education and the Partnership for People with Disabilities. VCU is an equal opportunity, affirmative action university providing access to education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's status, political affiliation or disability. The primary purpose of the T/TAC system is to provide improved educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities from birth to 22 years of age, and young children who have disadvantages or are at risk for school failure, birth to 9 years of age.

# VCU Innovations & Perspectives

## Virginia Department of Education's Training & Technical Assistance Center

Summer 2003

### Inside this issue

2  
Working with  
challenging behavior

5  
Helping T/TAC

8  
Coming this fall:  
new courses

## Training highly qualified paraprofessionals

by Alan M. McLeod, Ph.D., Head, Division of Teacher Education,  
VCU School of Education

Helping paraprofessionals meet the No Child Left Behind legislation's definition of "highly qualified" was a major topic of discussion in the summer and fall at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Education. Such discussions involved colleagues in the Metropolitan Educational Training Alliance (META) — consisting of VCU, the school divisions of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico counties, the city of Richmond, and two community colleges, John Tyler (JTCC) and J. Sargeant Reynolds (JSRCC). META is chaired by Dr. Terry Dozier, VCU's National Teacher-in-Residence, who was an advisor to former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley.

Highly qualified paraprofessionals are defined in the legislation as individuals who have completed one of the following requirements\*:

- at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- an associate degree or higher degree; or
- have met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a local or formal state academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness) [Section 1119(c)(1)(A)(B)(C)].

These requirements must be met within four years for paraprofessionals employed before January 8, 2002, in an instructional capacity in a program supported with Title I funds. (The requirements do not apply, for instance, to paraprofessionals serving as translators, "those whose duties consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities" or those in non-instructional roles such as food service workers and playground supervisors). All paraprofessionals (regardless of their hiring date) in a program supported by Title I funds must have a secondary school diploma or equivalent.

Our discussions focused primarily on helping paraprofessionals without academic degrees, particularly those unlikely to have the time or finances to complete an associate degree or at least 60 college credits. A committee was established to explore ways to help these paraprofessionals. That committee, chaired by Dr. Gayle Childers at JSRCC, thought initially

about developing a local test that would focus on the SOLs. Further examination of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) test ParaPro showed it to be minimally different from a test on the SOLs; therefore, it was determined that a group — led by Dr. Childers and including representatives from the school divisions, JSRCC, JTCC and VCU — would develop a META pretest. We anticipate administration of a pilot of the pretest before the end of April and that the pretest will be available to the school divisions in early May.

The plan is still unfolding, and the information that follows is current as of the end of January. The intent is to provide several options for paraprofessionals in the META school divisions. The paraprofessionals may choose to take:

- ParaPro on their own immediately;
- the pretest in May and, on the basis of their scores, the ParaPro; or
- one of the modules or the full course to be developed by JSRCC and JTCC: a preparation course in reading, writing and mathematics to address the ETS objectives.

The course to be developed will likely have three modules:

- mathematics, applications in mathematics, and classroom instruction and testing strategies.
- reading, applications in reading, and classroom instruction and testing strategies.
- writing, applications in writing, and classroom instruction and testing.

The course or modules will likely begin in late June. It is expected that the localities will either pay some or all of the tuition for these paraprofessionals. Human resource departments in the school divisions will make arrangements for test administration. They also will distribute information to their individual school division's paraprofessionals explaining the options and the procedures. The META committee is considering developing an informational brochure that the school divisions could use to explain to paraprofessionals career pathways available to them.

The goal is to help as many paraprofessionals as possible meet the standard to be determined highly qualified.

\* Source: Virginia Department of Education, Implementing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Questions and Answers briefing paper (2002).



### There are no IEPs in college

by Howard Kallem, J.D., Chief Regional Attorney, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education; Selena Samm, J.D., Attorney-Advisor, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education; and Katherine M. Wittig, M.Ed., VCU T/TAC

You are familiar with the procedures under the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the ADA. You have worked hard and succeeded, and you have your Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. You are now off to college.

You are about to find out, however, that there are no IEPs in college. Colleges must comply with Section 504 and Title II, but they do not have to provide you a "Free Appropriate Public Education" (FAPE). You must notify the college that you are a student with a disability and work with the college if you want to obtain appropriate academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services.

One important difference between a school district's and a college's responsibilities to a student with disabilities is that a school district has to locate, identify, evaluate and provide FAPE to each student in its jurisdiction, while a college does not. At the college level:

- The student has to disclose his or her disability if the student is requesting academic adjustments.
- The student may need to provide documentation of his or her disability and the need for academic adjustments.

continued on Page 2



VCU T/TAC



Linking People and Resources

# Young children with challenging behavior: a synthesis of knowledge

by Sandy Wilberger, M.Ed., and Linda Ingleson, Ed.S.

In December 2002 more than 2,000 early childhood teachers, professors and other professionals learned about the latest evidence-based practices for children with challenging behavior at the conference of the Division for Early Childhood's Council for Exceptional Children in San Diego. We attended the session "Evidence-Based Practice for Young Children with Challenging Behavior: Syntheses of Literature," presented by Glen Dunlap, Barbara Smith and Phil Strain. In this issue, we review their discussion of two national centers that are researching critical issues for families and young children affected by challenging behaviors: the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning and the Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior.\*

The presenters focused on three areas: service utilization, systems of service delivery and interventions as they relate to challenging behavior. In the first area, service utilization, the presenters reported that there is virtually no experimental research and that more research into screening and identification related to problems in early childhood and later behavioral health is needed. Referral systems attuned to family needs also need to be developed as well as evidence-based practices that can be made available to all professionals working in early childhood education.

The second focus area, systems of service delivery and interventions, has much the same story to tell. Children with challenging behaviors may be in these systems, but approaches to their needs may not be identified. The presenters recommended that such systems must provide a comprehensive array of services and be family-centered. Personnel also need the resources and working conditions in which to provide evidence-based services.

Good intervention programs, discussed in the third area, included Healthy Families America, Early Head Start, Starting Early, Starting Smart, the Hawaii Healthy Start Program, Early Childhood Education and Assistance (State of Washington) and the Chicago Title 1 Child Parent Program and Regional Intervention Program. Good prevention programs included prenatal and nursing home visitation by nurses' programs, the Perry Preschool Project, Dare to be You, the Yale Child Welfare Project, the Houston Parent Child Development Center, the

Chicago Child-Parent Project and the Syracuse Family Development Research Program.

## Strategies for effective intervention

The researchers reviewed a variety of interventions related to supporting young children with challenging behaviors. To determine their effectiveness, they applied the "Level of Confidence" indicators of fidelity, generalization, maintenance, social validity of outcomes, acceptability of intervention, replication across investigators, clinical groups, ethnic/racial groups and settings. Based on these indicators, they assigned the ratings of high confidence (meets seven or more indicators), medium confidence (meets four to six indicators) and low confidence (meets fewer than four indicators) to each strategy as follows:

1. Stimulant medication use with preschoolers. Rating: low confidence.
  - None of the 16 studies reviewed met the criteria for high confidence.
  - No study showed behavioral effects in typical preschool settings.
  - Effects were limited to sustained attention and compliance with requests.
  - Overall response rate was 50 percent.
  - Physiological side effects were more prevalent in African-American boys, although it is not clear why.
  - There were no long-term efficacy or risk data available.
2. Applied behavior analysis (ABA) to increase pro-social behaviors. Five categories of intervention were identified and assigned different confidence levels:
  - Teacher prompting and praise (medium confidence).
  - Peer-mediated intervention (high confidence).
  - Group contingencies (medium confidence).
  - Correspondence training (medium confidence).
  - Affection training (medium confidence).

The major findings of ABA to increase pro-social behaviors included the following:

- Individualization (such as reinforcement, appropriate language levels and the use of toys) is critical.
- The long-term efficacy is known only for peer-mediated strategies.
- There are no reported side effects.
- Effects are not dependent on the child's skill level or disability status.

3. Social/emotional learning programs. Two of the 12 programs identified received high-confidence ratings: First Steps and Incredible Years. Al's Pals received a medium-confidence rating, but continuing research on this program may move it to the high-confidence level. The major findings of the programs showed that there is great variability in intervention intensity but not enough data to determine if more is better. The programs also have evidence for long-term efficacy.

4. PBS strategies.

- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) (high confidence): good deal of data with children three years of age and older, and clear, concise results.
- Functional communication training (medium confidence): strong data and effects replicated but few studies of children under six years of age.
- Self-management (medium confidence): data with children over the age of three (most are four) but little data on reliability or application across different groups.
- Choice-making (low confidence): strong data and clear rationale but few studies on children under six years of age; little evidence of social validity, fidelity or use with diverse populations.
- Classroom prevention practices (low confidence).
- Environmental arrangements (medium confidence): some research includes these as part of a broader study but does not examine individual intervention effectiveness.

\*For more information on these centers, visit their Web sites at <http://csefel.uiuc.edu> and <http://www.challengingbehavior.org>. See also "What Works" in this issue for additional information about these resources, contact the VDOE T/TAC at VCU office at (804) 828-6947 or visit <http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac>.

related story on Page 3

## No IEPs in college

continued from Page 1

- The college must work collaboratively with the student to determine and provide effective and appropriate academic adjustments in a timely manner.
- The college does not have to alter the fundamental nature of the program or make modifications that result in an undue administrative or financial burden, but must ensure that the program requirements do not discriminate against students with disabilities.
- The college must have a coordinator whom people can contact on issues related to Section 504 and the ADA.
- The college must have an internal grievance process for use by students with disabilities to raise concerns about the services offered.

### Tips for transition coordinators

- Encourage your students to use their self-determination skills while still in high school. They may use their skills to request academic adjustments when they take SOLs, SATs or ACTs, for example.
- Encourage your students to call their assigned Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) counselor to discuss academic adjustments needed in college and how or if DRS will help them.
- Encourage your students to meet with personnel from student support services at their selected colleges before they graduate from high school. Remember: student support services personnel will not seek out the students with disabilities.
- Make sure that students with IEPs have updated evaluations.
- Students may want to read this article as part of their preparation for college.

Two brochures providing information on the transition from high school to college also are available from the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education: "Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education" and "Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities." These may be obtained online at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/publications.html>, or by calling (800) 421-3481 or TDD (877) 421-2172.

## Moving soon? Changing schools? Want to be on the VCU T/TAC mailing list?

To receive our "Innovations & Perspectives," please complete the form below and mail it to:

Virginia Department of Education's  
Training and Technical Assistance Center at VCU  
P.O. Box 842020  
Richmond, VA 23284-2020

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Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Age group served \_\_\_\_\_

School/organization name \_\_\_\_\_ County/city school system \_\_\_\_\_

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Our experience has been that "Innovations and Perspectives" sent to home addresses arrives in a more timely manner. If you would like to receive our publications at your home, please provide the following information:

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Thank you for your interest in the VDOE T/TAC at VCU.

# Assistive technology never takes a summer vacation

by Fran Smith, Ed.S., C.V.E., and Katherine M. Wittig, M.Ed.

As summer vacation draws near, the inventory lists magically appear on school personnel's desks. But before you collect all the assistive technology from your special education students, stop and consider the fact that your students need their technology all year long.

Assistive technologies are critical to the success of many individuals as they negotiate their environments at home, school and work as well as in the community. Persons with no means of verbal communication rely on the "voice" of their augmentative communication device. Many individuals with physical disabilities are unable to access the computer without the aid of their Intellikeys keyboard.

We are fortunate to witness the emergence of technologies that increasingly contain a number of assistive features. For example, recent versions of Windows operating systems include screen magnifiers, on-screen keyboards and large screen displays. Not all the assistive features that many consumers require are available, but this trend is very encouraging.

Here are some ideas to help you prepare your students for the summer break:

- Meet with the families of the students you serve to consider creative ways assistive technology might enhance their summer activities or allow for the practice of skills learned during the school year.
- Discuss with your local IEP teams ways that students might continue using existing assistive technologies throughout the summer break. A loan agreement between the family and school system may be feasible.
- If existing technologies are not available for loan, look for loaner materials through the Virginia

Assistive Technology System, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, assistive technology vendors or online loan programs.

- Never send a student who relies on an augmentative communication device, such as the Tech/Speak or Dynavox, home for the summer without the device or another means of communication.
- Before students leave school for the summer, make sure they have vocabularies appropriate for summer

activities available on their communication devices.

- Educate others on the ways that technology can open doors for those requiring this daily assistance.

The VDOE T/TAC at VCU Web site (<http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac>) is an excellent place to begin your research. This Web site includes a comprehensive list of Web resources in assistive and instructional technologies. Online training opportunities also are available and can be acquired from this list.

## Check out these new resources

If you are looking for resources to help your students with time management, organization and writing, check out these resources. If you need further information, contact the T/TAC at VCU.

### Time Timer CD

Have you used the standard "Time Timer"? Now available on CD, use the on-screen "Time Timer" to help your students understand elapsed time. This time measurement tool can be used to time homework, speed drills and help students understand when "computer time" is over. This CD is Macintosh and Windows compatible and comes with on-screen help.

<http://www.timetimer.com>

### Read and Write (v6) GOLD

This new version of "Read and Write" by Text Help provides a fully comprehensive application toolbar. It provides literacy support in most Windows applications. Features include speech, spelling, homophone support, scanning, word prediction, dictionary, speech maker, fact finder, speech input, simple and scientific calculators, word wizard, pronunciation tutor and a teacher's toolkit.

<http://www.texthelp.com>

### UsableNet's Accessibility Suite

Is your Web site accessible? Does it provide easy access for individuals with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities? UsableNet's Accessibility Suite checks for ease of access and helps designers modify their Web sites to comply with accessibility standards.

<http://www.usablenet.com>

### Dana

"Dana" by AlphaSmart is a Palm™ powered alternative to the laptop. Dana features Palm™ OS handheld operating system, allowing access to more than 10,000 Palm applications. It includes a full-size keyboard and a screen that's three and a half times wider than the typical handheld screen. You can type or enter data using the keyboard or by writing with the Dana stylus directly onto the screen. Virtually all Palm™ applications are compatible with Dana and many are ready to take advantage of wide screens.

<http://www.alphasmart.com>

### Buildability

"Buildability" is an easy-to-use authoring tool for making single switch early literacy activities and lessons. First draw or choose a picture, add text, add sound and then advance the page. Stories are created in minutes and easily edited.

<http://www.donjohnston.com>

### Draft: Builder

"Draft: Builder" leads students through the three key steps in creating a first draft: organizing ideas, taking notes and writing the draft. It models the logical, progressive steps of draft writing and displays a visual representation of the process. The display gives students a framework to generate, manipulate and connect ideas and information. Students are less overwhelmed, more organized and able to produce a high quality first draft.

<http://www.donjohnston.com>

## Remember to return materials



**Please don't forget to return T/TAC library and technology lab materials for the summer.**

While you are cleaning off your desk and classroom shelves for the summer months, please keep your eyes out for books, videos, assessment kits and assistive technology materials you may have borrowed from T/TAC. Please return all materials by June 10, 2003, so we may

begin our summer inventory. If you need assistance returning materials to our offices, please call Erik Froehlich in Richmond (804) 827-1412 or Rose Eanes in Blackstone (434) 298-0427.

## What works? A new resource for practitioners working with children with challenging behavior

by Linda Ingleson, Ed.S.

A new resource has been developed to help child-care and Head Start programs (and others) improve social and emotional outcomes and prevent challenging behaviors: the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. Head Start and the Child Care Bureau under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has funded the five-year project.

The center is charged with developing and disseminating evidence-based and user-friendly information to help practitioners meet the needs of children with challenging behaviors and mental health needs.

Currently the center has five "What Works" briefs on its Web site (<http://csefel.uiuc.edu>). These briefs are short "how-to" packets on the following topics:

- Introduction to the "What Works" briefs
- Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior
- Helping Children Understand Routines and Classroom Schedules
- Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities
- Using Classroom Activities and Routines as Opportunities to Support Peer Interaction

The briefs include prevention and intervention practices as well as policies and procedural and administrative practices needed to support the use of the evidence-based practice. There also are examples about how specific practices might be used. Handouts that can be printed for use with practitioners and families also are available.

# New directions in social stories

by Tracy Landon, Ed.D.

Since 1991 Carol Gray has been writing, using and promoting the use of social stories for children who struggle with social behavior. These simple stories, written from the student's perspective, are designed to guide students toward interacting appropriately with others in a wide variety of circumstances. For example, they can be used to help children learn how to obtain attention from teachers, initiate play or cope during anxiety-producing situations. Given that children who isolate themselves are more likely to be bullied by their peers, social stories also offer a simple way to deal with this occurrence (Gray, 2002). A small but growing research base supports their use.

As a practicing speech and language pathologist, Gray constantly refines and shares her ideas. What follows are her current and newest recommendations.

## Social Story Guidelines

1. Write in the first and/or third person. Examples: My name is \_\_\_\_\_, My mother \_\_\_\_\_, I will try to \_\_\_\_\_, Many people \_\_\_\_\_, Some people \_\_\_\_\_, Amy and John \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Use specific sentence types: descriptive, perspective, affirmative, directive and praise sentences.

- Descriptive sentences are factual and accurate. The following "do's" and "don'ts" show the difference between descriptive and non-descriptive sentences:

DO	DON'T
My name is ...	Science class is interesting.
We usually have spelling tests on Fridays.	I go to the dentist's office every six months.
My teacher usually stands in front of the class to talk to the whole class.	My teacher stands in front of the class to talk to the whole class.

- Perspective sentences almost always describe the thoughts and feelings of other people as in these examples: "the teacher will like it if I am listening to her"; "Amy enjoys playing Connect Four"; "my parents will be happy when my homework is done" (versus "everyone will be happy about this"). These thoughts are positive. They also may describe the thoughts of the students as in: "I need to look away to help me concentrate on my answer to your question" or "I am the sort of person who . . ."
- Affirmative sentences enhance the meaning of the surrounding statements and may express a commonly shared opinion: "this is a smart thing to do"; "this is a safe thing to do" (versus "you should do this" or "think safety first") (Gray, 2000).
- Directive sentences identify a possible student response or gently direct the student's behavior. Directives are most likely to be inaccurate in a social story. Here are some comparisons:

DO	DON'T
I will try to ...	I will ...
I could possibly ...	I must ...
I will work on ...	I should ...
I could ask ...	I have to ...
I could decide to ...	I cannot ...
I might ...	I will not ...

- A new emphasis for Gray is the praise sentence. These sentences motivate students to work toward the desired behavior: "my teacher will be proud of me"; "my parents will be happy about this"; "my classmates will like this." Gray recommends that each social story include five praise statements or that half of all social stories for an individual applaud what the child does well. This builds on Latham's research (1992) suggesting that children improve academically when teachers use eight praise statements for every one neutral or corrective statement and Hart and Risley's research (1995) suggesting that children are more successful



across their lives when they come from homes where parents gave six positive comments for every negative comment.

3. Focus on behaviors that result in friendships (another new emphasis for Gray). Examples include describing ways to help young children enter an ongoing interaction, such as how others merge into an existing activity by watching, listening, moving closer and easing in (Rubin, 2002). Another example is describing how others offer assistance, give compliments, accept suggestions and reciprocate, including sharing and writing directives that guide the student in these interactions (Gray, 2002). Research is still needed to identify the skills that adolescents use in friendships. It might be helpful to observe the students at your school to identify the skills they use in their interactions.

4. Use a ratio of sentences. For example, use five praise statements and two to five descriptive and/or affirmative sentences for every directive sentence. Gray says that stories will vary depending on the abilities of the students. A few words paired with pictures may suffice or several sentences without pictures may be needed. Her main point is "to go easy on the directives and avoid sentences that do not fit the above definitions."

5. Be literally accurate to avoid confusion with students who tend to take things literally. Here are some comparisons:

DO	DON'T
Usually school is closed on snow days.	School is closed on snow days.
P.E. usually begins at 2 o'clock.	P.E. begins at 2 o'clock.
When the teacher talks to the whole class, she usually stands in front of the class.	When the teacher talks to the whole class, she stands in the front of the class.
The teacher knows you are listening when you look at her and write down what she says.	The teacher needs your listening ears.

6. Include visual cues. This may simply be the written story, or words may be interspersed with or paired with pictures. When using pictures make sure they literally convey the desired behavior.

7. Answer the "WH" questions: Where is the social situation happening? What is the social situation about? Who is there? Why are they there? What are the various perspectives of the other people there? What is the child going to do in the social situation? What are some common responses others will have when the child does it?

8. Clearly title the story, such as stating the main goal of the story to emphasize the most important information.

This could be a statement such as "Going to the grocery store" or a question such as "What may we do when the babysitter is here?" (Gray 2000).

Common mistakes people make when writing social stories include using too many directives, being too dictatorial and including what the child should not do. Another potential problem is using anxiety-producing words such as "new," "change" or "different." Alternative words are "better," "replace" or "another." Here is an example of social story:

Taking Turns	
Taking turns can be hard for everyone.	
Sometimes I want a toy that my friend has.	
I can ask my friend for a turn to play with the toy.	
I am good at asking for turns.	
I also could ask my friend to trade toys.	
I am good at trading toys.	
This is a smart thing to do.	
My friend might trade with me.	
My friend might say no.	
If my friend says no, I might ask my teacher for help.	
I also could find another toy to play with.	
If I find another toy, my teacher and friend will be very happy.	

For more examples of and information on social stories, visit the Gray Center at <http://www.thegraycenter.org>. Also check these T/TAC resources:

- Writing Social Stories with Carol Gray (2002) by Carol Gray.
- Social Skills Stories: Functional Picture Stories for Readers and Nonreaders K-12 by Anne Marie Johnson.
- The Original Social Story Book by Erica Broek.

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# Road trip through the VAAP

by Kelly E. Ligon, M.Ed.

Congratulations! Many of you and your students have finished the Collection of Evidence (COE) for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). We are certain that you enjoyed this trip and hope you are planning for another adventure next year.

As you reflect on the places you would like to visit and the activities you would like to undertake on your next trip, the "Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) Implementation Manual" can be helpful to you. The VAAP manual clarifies the purpose of VAAP and defines best practices for working with children with disabilities. According to VAAP, Individual Education Plan (IEP) team members should strive to create IEPs for students that incorporate the Standards of Learning (SOLs); student performance and involvement; a variety of settings and social interactions; contexts and age-appropriate materials used to perform meaningful tasks; and support for independence. IEP teams also should collect "types of evidence" to make informed decisions about students' educational needs.

The current VAAP process recommends that teams continue to:

- develop communication systems for every student,
- provide opportunities for students to communicate and make choices throughout the day,
- record data to demonstrate progress toward IEP goals,

- include peer input about their experiences interacting with students,
- take photos and record videos (with parental permission) of students involved in meaningful activities, involve family members by asking for their input about their children's abilities at home and in the community,
- practice goals across a variety of settings as well as with children without disabilities, and
- consider how they can use assistive technology to encourage independence for their students.

These objectives will help participants score well on VAAP as well as other assessments and contribute to a valuable and meaningful education for their students.

## Other considerations

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the current reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) may affect your road trip through the VAAP. We encourage you to keep abreast of the latest changes to these policies by visiting the following Web sites:

- Virginia Department of Education, <http://www.pen.k12.va.us>: see the assessment page and New Superintendent's Memos.
- No Child Left Behind, <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov>: see latest changes in policy.
- Council for Exceptional Children, <http://www.cec.sped.org>: see legislative updates and best practices in education.



## Helping T/TAC help you

by Phyllis M. Haynes, M.S.Ed., Kathy Lynch, Ph.D., and Sarah Wright

The Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC) at Virginia Commonwealth University is dedicated to helping children and youth with disabilities (birth to 22 years), and children who have disadvantages or who are at risk for school failure (birth to 9 years), learn to lead successful adult lives. We work to improve students' performance and school success; to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of educators, service providers and families; and to increase meaningful parent and student involvement in the educational process.

For you, the consumer, it is vitally important that we target our array of services to your requirements. These fall into four categories:

1. Training: T/TAC-developed workshops, multi-regional conferences (often organized in collaboration with other groups), site-specific professional development and presentations to a wide variety of audiences.
2. Technical assistance: on-site consultations, long-term technical assistance projects lasting three to five years, linkages with other services, work groups and special interest areas (e.g., autism, alternate assessment, early intervention, technology and transition) that examine specific topics in depth over a period of a year or more.
3. Information services: VCU T/TAC Web site, publications, information packets, library materials, electronic information, referrals and connection to Virginia's T/TAC online.
4. Materials, products and equipment: assistive technology, instructional technology, curricula and videos.

So, what do you need?

Assessing your needs occurs in several ways. A major source of your input is the training session. We ask participants not only to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, but also to provide input about additional information or assistance they might need. We ask for

suggested topics for future training, and we probe for preferences in how or when training sessions and other services should be offered. Typically, we receive several hundred needs assessments annually using this approach.

Another source is the report from members of our planning and management teams, special education directors and staff development councils in Regions 1 and 8 on the "Top Ten Professional Development Needs" of their regions, based on a review of their local improvement plans, Department of Education monitoring reports or other planning documents or processes. This year we also undertook an additional needs assessment study by mailing surveys to faculty and staff of a representative sample of all schools, local interagency coordinating councils, early intervention programs and state-operated programs in our two regions.

We want to hear from you

Of course, we all receive a lot of surveys, and it is tempting to ignore them. But T/TAC's services are only as good as their benefit to you. You are our direct link to what goes on in the classroom. You help us understand the issues facing educators, families and students. The data you provide — along with input from the Virginia Department of Education, our review of current research and our experience in the field — guide us in making decisions about what we should offer.

If you have not had the opportunity recently to provide us needs assessment information, visit our Web site at <http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac>. There you will see a link to the "Needs Assessment Form." Just click on it and fill it out. Your input will be automatically recorded.

You also can contact us directly for more information:

Kathy Lynch  
[kblynch@vcu.edu](mailto:kblynch@vcu.edu), (804) 828-9580  
 Phyllis Haynes  
[plhaynes@vcu.edu](mailto:plhaynes@vcu.edu), (804) 827-1408  
 Sarah Wright  
[sswright@vcu.edu](mailto:sswright@vcu.edu), (866) 465-0412



## Your feedback helps us help you

by Sandy Wilberger and Linda Oggel, Co-directors

Thank you for taking the time to provide information to us this year regarding training and technical assistance so that the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center at VCU can provide assistance to you in working with students throughout our regions. The T/TAC staff always welcomes your feedback and looks forward to working with you to meet the needs of all of our students.

As we all prepare to meet the NCLB legislation requirements for students with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged, VCU T/TAC requests your assistance. We need to know the topics and service delivery models that will best meet your needs in working toward the goals of NCLB and adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all students. If you have not provided feedback to us regarding your needs, please contact the VCU T/TAC office at (800) 426-1595 and we will send you an assessment form.



# Upcoming Conferences

## T/TAC Workshops available for professional development

The VDOE T/TAC at VCU is offering site-requested workshops to assist with professional development. These workshops provide effective methods and instructional strategies that are supported by scientifically based research. Sessions are practical, activity-based and typically last one to three hours. Follow-up to support the application and implementation of the training is available. These workshops are held in schools or at programs and can be scheduled year around (including summer months). To arrange a workshop, please contact Linda Oggel, (804) 827-1400, or Sandy Wilberger, (804) 827-1405. The following is a menu of workshops:

### At-risk Topics

#### Math

- Problem-solving in the primary classroom
- Understanding and utilizing graphs in the classroom

#### Reading

- Early literacy
- Guided reading
- Phonics instruction
- Reading comprehension
- Reading fluency

#### Writing

- Writing in the primary classroom

### General and Special Education Topics

#### Assistive Technology

- Accessing the general curriculum using assistive technology to support students with significant disabilities
- An introduction to assistive technology for students of all ages
- Got AAC? A beginner's guide for developing augmentative and alternative communication systems for early childhood, elementary and secondary students

#### Autism

- Introduction to autism
- An overview of Asperger Syndrome
- Structured teaching: A strategy for working with students with autism
- Using social stories with students with autism

#### Behavior

- Classroom positive behavioral supports for school-aged students
- Creating win-win outcomes with families of children and youth with challenging behavior
- Learning by conducting a functional behavioral assessment and developing a Positive Behavioral Support Plan

#### Collaboration

- Collaborative teaming: What it takes to make it work
- Planning for the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education class
- A process for developing collaborative IEPs

#### Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education

- English as a Second Language in the primary grades: What teachers need to know about children and learning
- Fostering self-control in young children
- Integrated placement options for preschoolers: Getting started
- Integrating the arts in the primary curriculum
- Working with families in and out of the classroom

#### Mild/Moderate Disabilities

- Creating instructional matches for primary students with learning disabilities
- Supporting adolescents with mild-moderate disabilities in SOL testing
- Transition from elementary to middle school: What every teacher should know

#### Significant Disabilities

- How to develop a successful Collection of Evidence (COE) for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)

#### Transition

- Secondary transition 101
- Writing individual transition plans that drive IEP goals (secondary)

## Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Better Understanding

James Madison University, in collaboration with the Virginia Autism Resource Center, is offering a three-hour graduate or undergraduate level class.

Location and Dates  
Moody Hall, Room 201  
James Madison University  
Harrisonburg, VA  
July 7 - 11; 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Instructor  
Sally Chappel, M.Ed.  
(540) 568-8095  
chappesl@jmu.edu

Course Name, Number/Section  
(Grad) SPED 501 WKSP in SPED: Aut Spectrum Dis, (Sec 6201) Class# 31933  
(UGrad) SPED 401 Probs in SPED: Aut Spectrum Dis, (Sec 4201) Class# 30461

Grades  
Undergraduates will receive course grade in December.

Tuition  
Virginia resident three-hour course tuition rates:  
Graduate: \$459/ Undergraduate: \$219

### Course Description

This course is designed to provide an overview of the current issues involved in working with children who have been identified as having an autism spectrum disorder. Areas addressed will include learning characteristics, current research and factors involved with causation, assessment and diagnosis; communication and language development; sensory processing, motor planning and sensory integration; social skills development; and positive behavioral supports. A range of instructional methodologies and techniques will be emphasized throughout the course.

Materials fee will be approximately \$35. Follow-up assignment will be due by July 25, 2003. Evening assignments, including one evening meeting. Meals and lodging are to be provided by the individual. A parking pass is required and can be obtained at the parking deck office near Godwin Field. The office is open from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The cost for the pass is \$5 for the week.

Registration and payment for the class must be accomplished through the James Madison University registration process. Follow these steps to begin the process to register online: special students (those not enrolled as a student at JMU) can go to <http://www.jmu.edu/professionalprograms>, link to "special student application" and follow the steps beginning with "create your account." Complete the special student application and the Virginia in-state form (for residents of Virginia) and charge the \$15 application fee on a major credit card, or pay by check. If you charge the fee, then the application will be processed sooner. Once the application is processed, an email will be sent to you. You can then register for the class.

To register via the Web, students will need to go to the <http://www.jmu.edu/accounts> home page to activate an account. Those students not wishing to register online may register in person in Warren Hall from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 16 for undergraduates and June 30 for graduates. The special student application will still need to be completed, including a \$15 registration fee prior to walk-in registration. To receive the forms or if you have any questions, contact Sally Chappel (see above information). Register early, limited space!

## Mark your calendars TechKnowledge 2003

Friday, November 7, 2003

Holiday Inn South Conference Center  
Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about using assistive technology in your curriculum!

## S. Gail Mayfield Training Institute

The S. Gail Mayfield Training Institute is a four-day intensive institute designed to train professionals and parents who serve individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Location and Dates  
Shenandoah University in Winchester Virginia  
July 28 - 31, 2003

Sponsored by  
Grafton School and The Virginia Autism Resource Center

Cost  
To Be Determined

### Speakers

- Dr. Luke Tsai - Author of "Taking the Mystery Out of Medications for Autism Spectrum Disorder"
- Dr. Amy Wetherby - Co-author of "Autism Spectrum Disorders, A Transactional Approach"
- Rebecca Moyes - Author of "Incorporating Social Goals in the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Parents of Children with High-Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome" and "Addressing the Challenging Behavior of Children with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome in the Classroom Setting"
- Dr. Jeannette McAfee - Author of "Navigating the Social World: A Curriculum for Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, High Functioning Autism and Related Disorders"

### Topics include

- Characteristics of Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, High Functioning Autism, and Asperger's Syndrome
- Communication Intervention for People with Autism Across the Age Range
- Social Skills Curriculum for People with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
- Managing Challenging Behavior for People with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Update on the Latest Research in Autism

### Credits

Three graduate credits or continuing education credit offered.

Call (877) 667-7771 or e-mail [info@varc.org](mailto:info@varc.org) for more information. Don't miss Virginia's premier autism training event!

## T/TAC Library and Technology Lab summer hours

Richmond office:

VCU, Oliver Hall, Room 1038

Blackstone office: Pickett Park

Monday through Friday

8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Closed Saturday and Sunday

Please call (804) 828-6947 or (800) 426-1595 to make other arrangements.

Visit the VCU T/TAC Web site for additional information about T/TAC services, resources and more:  
<http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac>

# Upcoming Conferences

## Stuttering therapy: practical ideas for the school

Clinician

**June 6 – 7, 2003, Philadelphia, PA**

With Bary Guitar, Ph.D., E. Charles Healey, Ph.D., Peter Ramig, Ph.D., Patricia Zebrowski, Ph.D., Bill Murphy, M.A., and Kristin Chmela, M.A. Contact: The Stuttering Foundation, (800) 992-9392; <http://www.stutteringhelp.org>

Diagnosis and Treatment of Children Who Stutter: Practical Strategies

**June 18 – 22, 2003, Boston, MA**

With Sheryl Gottwald, Ph.D. and Susan Dietrich, Ph.D. The Stuttering Foundation, (800) 992-9392; <http://www.stutteringhelp.org>

## New three-credit graduate courses at VCU

TEDU 500.C96

### Workshop in Education: Current Issues in Early Childhood Special Education

This course is a collaborative distance education project developed by faculty from Old Dominion University, Radford University and Virginia Commonwealth University. The seven-week online course can be self-paced and completed in fewer weeks at your own convenience. It is designed for practicing professionals in early intervention, early childhood special education and related disciplines. It will offer a unique opportunity to earn credits for professional development or recertification, update knowledge and network with other professionals and faculty.

Course topics: Early development and resilience, self-regulation, temperament and sensory processing, routine-based instruction, natural environments and inclusion, and assistive technology. Course requirements: Participation in this course will include the use of e-mail and the Internet. You will need access to a computer and assignments must be posted in Microsoft Word.

Technology requirements: Active e-mail account, Internet access through an Internet Service Provider (ISP), and access to a computer with at least the following: Windows 95/98/NT, Pentium 75, 16 MB RAM, 28.8k bps modem, and Internet browser software (Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or better, or Netscape Navigator 4.0 or better).

Technology support: Optional orientation sessions will be held in several Virginia locations and additional support will be available via phone and e-mail.

Faculty

### Virginia Commonwealth University

- Dr. Evelyn Reed-Victor, [ereedvic@vcu.edu](mailto:ereedvic@vcu.edu), (804) 828-1305
- Dr. Dianne Koontz Lowman, [dlowman@mail2.vcu.edu](mailto:dlowman@mail2.vcu.edu), (804) 828-2219

### Radford University

- Dr. Jaye Harvey, [jharvey@radford.edu](mailto:jharvey@radford.edu), (540) 831-5313

### Old Dominion University

- Dr. Kerry Lambert, [klambert@ttac.odu.edu](mailto:klambert@ttac.odu.edu), (757) 683-4332
- Dr. Sharon Raver-Lampman, [sraverla@odu.edu](mailto:sraverla@odu.edu), (757) 683-3226/4877
- Ms. Mary Wilds, [mwilds1968@aol.com](mailto:mwilds1968@aol.com), (757) 683-5067

Dates

June 16 – Aug. 1, 2003

Credit

Three hours of graduate credit

Tuition

\$575; additional costs may include course books and CDs available through VCU bookstores. Tuition assistance may be available for ECSE teachers from VDOE. Go online to <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/suptsmemos/2002/inf104.html>.

For registration information, please e-mail your full name and mailing address to [braycock@vcu.edu](mailto:braycock@vcu.edu) and reference this course.

TEDU 500.C93

### Workshop in Education: An Introduction to Universal Design for Learning

This will be a blended course of seven face-to-face meetings

with the remainder online. The course is designed to acquaint any educator with the principles and philosophies of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This new paradigm for teaching draws upon the research from the Center of Applied Special Technology (CAST) and teaches individuals how to maximize the instructional environment for all learners. The premise of UDL highlights an educational approach for teaching all learners, regardless of diversity, through designing flexible applications of technology tools, networks and digital content. This course will provide participants with an introduction to the principles of UDL, technologies that support UDL in the classroom and how to apply UDL to classroom practice. Participants should have basic computer literacy, familiarity with the Internet and a desire to maximize student learning in the classroom with technology. Anticipated start date for this course will be mid-September, 2003 with seven face-to-face meetings and the remainder online. Day and off-campus locations TBA. For more details, contact Fran G. Smith, [fgsmith@vcu.edu](mailto:fgsmith@vcu.edu)

TEDU 500

### Workshop in Education: An Introduction to Designing Accessible Media

This course will combine face-to-face meetings with online interaction and will help educators understand the legislative policies related to making electronic media accessible for all users. Participants will acquire skills in learning how to evaluate and make Web sites that meet the criteria for accessibility. Principles from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and other nationally respected resources will be taught. This course also will provide participants with an introduction to the principles of designing accessible media and Web-based tools for evaluating accessibility as well as how to make Web-based technologies accessible. Anticipated start date will be in mid-May and run through the first of July with one face-to-face meeting and one online meeting per week. For more information, contact Fran G. Smith, [fgsmith@vcu.edu](mailto:fgsmith@vcu.edu).

## A Tapestry for Learning Conference 2003: Inclusion in the Age of Accountability

by Phyllis L. M. Haynes, M.S. Ed., Program Specialist

"The learning was motivating," "the presenters exceptional" and "the vendors provided a wealth of information" were typical comments heard from some of the 160 participants attending the sixth annual "A Tapestry for Learning Conference: Inclusion in the Age of Accountability" held in Williamsburg, Va. on Jan. 9, 2003.

Dr. Mara Sapon-Shevin, professor of inclusive education at Syracuse University, gave the keynote address, which focused on teaching social justice and inclusion. Dr. Shevin also presented information on building inclusive classrooms as a breakout session. She challenged attendees to examine how

they can build inclusive classroom communities. Her thought-provoking and motivating interactive sessions included singing, playing games and participant sharing.

Other Tapestry sessions included presentations on instructional strategies for students with ADD, methods for assisting children to develop self-control, teaching reading and math, paraprofessional qualifications and the latest developments related to the NCLB legislation.

All in all the day was filled with learning, networking with others and celebrating success. For those of you who attended, thank you for your support. If you missed this year's conference, look for announcements for Tapestry 2004 in future issues of "Innovations & Perspectives."

## Access for all Supporting Students with Significant Disabilities 2nd Annual Conference

June 23-25, 2003

Sheraton Park South  
Richmond, VA

Sponsored by

The Virginia Department of Education's  
Training and Technical Assistance

Centers Across Virginia

The Virginia Deaf-Blind

Project Registration Fee:

\$95 for participants and \$75 for students

For additional information about  
the conference contact:

Beth Schroder at [eschrode@vt.edu](mailto:eschrode@vt.edu)

## Council for Exceptional Children Division on Career Development and Transition International Conference

October 23 – 25, 2003

"A Season of Change for Transition"

For registration information go to <http://www.radford.edu/~conf-serv> or contact Kathe Wittig at: [kmwittig@vcu.edu](mailto:kmwittig@vcu.edu). If you are interested in serving as a volunteer for this event, please fax the completed form below to (804) 828-7495.

Attention: Kathe Wittig, DCDT Chair, Volunteers

### DCDT Conference Volunteer Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Summer address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate below your top two choices for volunteer opportunities:

Hosting sessions       Social event setup       Social event cleanup

Registration       Special needs       Anything