



Why Data?

April 2015

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"How often do you collect data?"

*"Not that often - **it's time consuming and it's hard to take data on some of my student's objectives.**"*

*"I agree - **taking data interferes with my ability to provide effective instruction.**"*

*That's how I feel - **I can remember how students performed; so, I document at the end of the day (session).**"*

These challenges have been identified as some of the barriers to taking data in educational environments (Ikkanda, 2009). In fact, it has been reported that while special education teachers and related service providers believe in data collection and recognize its value, several admit that they rarely use data collection strategies (Sandall et al., 2004).

The role data plays in the educational process should not be overlooked. Informed instructional decision making is guided by on-going collection, analysis, and use of data. Data provide professionals with (1) the opportunity to focus on the student and his or her responses within instruction; (2) a clear picture of what the student is doing while completing specific tasks in various settings; that is, an accurate record of

progress overtime; (3) instructional effectiveness; and (4) evidence for performance trends, thus, support for instructional decisions (Bowen, 2010). It is essential, therefore, that teachers and service providers collect data and analyze it to gauge the academic, social, and behavior progress of their students.

Instructors and therapists have acknowledged that they resist collecting data and/or analyzing it because they don't feel confident in the process due to a lack of pre-professional instruction in this area (Hojnoski et al., 2009). Given the increased focus on the collection, analysis, and use of data to guide informed decision making within the three-tiered intervention model at the federal, state, and local levels, it is important these professionals be given the necessary knowledge and skills to implement these practices (Brawley & Stormont, 2014).

Getting started with data collection involves three basic steps. First, a target behavior is selected. This behavior should be meaningful and relevant to the student's ability to function in his or her environment

and/or enhance participation in activities and interactions. Second, an operational definition is formed, thereby specifying the important elements of the behavior so that accurate data can be collected. Finally, a measurement system is selected that will reveal pertinent information about the student's performance. It is important to remember that data can be collected on any behavior, at any time, in any setting; the key is selecting targets that are appropriate and a strategy by which they can be measured (Hojnoski et al., 2009).

It is not enough, however, to merely "collect data" – as data without subsequent analysis does little to assist with instructional decision making. Therefore, two additional processes need to be completed: (1) graphing the data; and (2) interpreting and using the data to guide programming decisions. At this point, it can be determined whether students are progressing and if the selected interventions have been effective.

In summary, the collection, analysis, and use of data to make instructional decisions are important practices in the field of education. Professionals can use these strategies to communicate findings with family and other team members so that students' needs and next steps can be agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders. Professionals who systematically collect and use data not only improve their planning processes, but also the instruction they offer students.

Direct link to our website:
www.KansasASD.com
www.TASNBehaviorSupports.com

APRIL TRAININGS

Tri-State ASD Webinar Series: Four Part Series on Data Collection (Each Webinar is available for participants from 3:00-3:45 and 4:00-4:45 on the date listed.)

April 1: Part 1: Selecting & Defining Behavior(s)

Link to register for Part 1: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N7GF878>

April 2: Part 2: Obtaining a Baseline Measure

Link to register for Part 2: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N7BXPQRQ>

April 8: Part 3: Evaluating Data

Link to register for Part 3: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N7HWDNJ>

April 9: Part 4: Continuing to Gather Data

Link to register for Part 4: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N9NG953>

April 16-17: Autism Specialist Summit

*Registration by invitation only

April 28-29: TEAACH Transition Assessment Profile Training

Link to register: http://www.kansasasd.com/news_attach/RegistrationFormFinal.pdf

The Pilot Club of Manhattan's 10th Annual Autism Spectrum Disorders Workshop will be held on Saturday, June 20th, 2015 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan KS. Brenda Smith Myles, Ph.D., addressing behavior issues and Liane Holliday Willey, Ed.D., who will share her experiences as a professional and someone on the spectrum are the featured keynote speakers.

Registration and specific information about the keynote and break out sessions can be found at: www.pilotclubofmanhattan.org.



Pilot Club of Manhattan
Serving the Manhattan, Kansas, community and those affected by Autism