More Strategies For Reporting Progress For Students With Severe Multiple Disabilities

It is important to make the reporting procedure "user-friendly" for parents, providing personal anecdotal information and measurable objectives which indicate progress and identify new directions for the next term.

Identifying Short Term Objectives

The entire team needs to have input in developing and reviewing the objectives as they relate to the student's long term goals. These will become the basis for the student's curriculum.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

When collecting periodic data throughout the term, measurement of progress needs to occur within the meaningful routines in which the student's skills are learned. It is often challenging to sort out subjective versus objective observations regarding behaviours. Some of the criteria used to assist in evaluation, may include the following.

• Degree Of Active Participation From The Student.
How much assistance or prompting (physical and/or verbal) does the student require overall? Has the prompt level changed? (e.g., physical cue paired with verbal cue, to just the visual cue)

• Frequency Of The Behaviour
How often does the student perform the activity as desired? (e.g., How many times does the student request "more" for an interrupted favorite activity?)

• Accuracy Of The Behaviour
How precisely does the student perform the behaviour? (e.g., during switch work, how many "false hits" (hitting the switch involuntarily) occurred? Did the student point/gaze accurately at the picture choice?)

• Appropriateness Of The Behaviour
Does the student demonstrate the desired behaviour in appropriate situations? (e.g., the student vocalizes when requesting attention, but is quiet during designated times within the classroom.)

• Duration Of The Behaviour
How long does the student engage appropriately in the desired behaviour? (e.g., Does the student hold onto the spoon during mealtime for the desired length of time?)

Recognizing Progress

The student, staff and parents all need to recognize improvement. When evaluating long range and even short term objectives for students with severe multiple disabilities, areas of growth are sometimes difficult to see. Sometimes due to increasing health or physical challenges, just maintaining the student's level of ability may be considered a valid short term objective. By monitoring progress on short-term objectives through specific tasks, we can note achievement in the accomplishment of that skill in that situation and through the generalization of that skill.

Some examples of these smaller increments could include:
• Generalizing the same skill to new people (e.g., from assistant, to peers)
• Generalizing the same skill to new situations (e.g., from using a switch to sharpen pencils with an electric pencil sharpener, to accessing a blender)
• Decreasing the physical and/or verbal prompting (e.g., from hand over hand, to starting the hand movement while the student finishes, to touching the elbow, to tapping the switch, etc.)
• Changing the object involved in the activity (e.g., grasping a fork for short periods of time, to grasping a felt or paintbrush)

Additional components can be varied to assist the student in generalizing new skills to new areas. Therapists should be asked to provide assistance in developing these measurable objectives. Data collection can occur periodically.

Providing Anecdotal Feedback

The update on objectives can be followed with short anecdotal comments that can be relayed to parents through parent conferences and/or in written form. This provides a combination of measurable objectives and more personal anecdotal information for parents.

Summary Of Reporting Process

1. With your team, identify an objective or skill, which the student is currently working on. (Start by drawing from one of the student's long term goals (e.g., MAPS) and identify a particular skill under that heading.)
2. With your team, take the above objectives and build in a measurable increment or change to generalize this skill as indicated above.
3. Identify the areas that you changed in some way to change the objective, (e.g., generalized to new people, situations, objects; increased the expectation for frequency or lessened the prompt, etc.)
4. What are some of the areas you might include in your anecdotal section whether through parent interview or as part of your written feedback?
(e.g., interactions with other classmates, favorite classroom activity, etc.)
5. Determine how and when measurement will take place and who will monitor that skill.

Review: How Do We Measure Progress For The Student When The Skills Appear To Remain The Same Over Time?

We can anticipate that the student will most likely be working on similar skills throughout his school career. It is important to be able to recognize for the student, ourselves as educators and

caregivers and for the student's family, where he is making progress. This will likely occur in very small increments.

The following are some areas where the student may experience growth and change:
• through increasing levels of partial participation in activities
• through less prompting or facilitation required over time
• through generalization of the same skills to new people
• through generalization of the same skills to new activities
• through fewer false hits for some responses such as switch work
• the amount of time it takes the student to accomplish the task, may decrease
(e.g., moving his head to mid-line to look at someone)
• the amount of time the student engages in the activity may increase (e.g., holding up his head)

All of these areas denote progress and all of us need to recognize and celebrate these increments of progress!

*(*Refer to the sample report cards developed by teachers at the end of this section for more information.*)

SAMPLE REPORT CARD

Name: School: Grade:
Date: Term: Teacher:
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The Student's Long Range Goals:
1. The student will continue to have and develop friendships with his peers.
2. The student will further develop his interactive communication skills.
3. The student will become more independent in his activities and controlling his environment.
4. The student will continue to develop his voluntary physical control, alertness, and relaxation in activities of daily life.

The Student's Skills:
1. The student will hit and release a switch with his hand(s) to have more control over his environment and provide service to himself and others.
2. The student will use his gaze and position his head to indicate that he is attending, interact with others and improve the volitional use of his eyes.
3. The student will look at objects and his hands, when feeling them before and during activities.
4. The student will indicate a desire to continue a motivating activity when stopped periodically, with the use of the Big Mack or gestures.

The Student's Objectives:
<u>This term the student has learned to ...</u>
• access the BIGmack on command with verbal prompting and hand over hand physical prompting when requested by his T.A.
• use his gaze (for at least 2 seconds) and position his head to look at a motivating activity placed 12" at eye level.
• access the Leaf Switch with verbal and physical prompting at the elbow when requested by the T.A.

<u>Next term the student will be working on...</u>
• accessing a BIGmack with verbal only when requested by his T.A.
• use his gaze (for at least 5 seconds) and position his head to look at a motivating activity placed 12" at eye level.
• access the Leaf Switch with verbal and physical prompting at the elbow when requested by a peer.
• use his arms (rotated inward) to gesture "more" with verbal prompting when his favorite music is stopped.

Additional Comments:
The student's favorite subject continues to be music class where he is most attentive. The class has enjoyed guessing some of his "brown bag" clues. The student has been learning about sea animals and working with related concepts this term. He will continue to explore using his switch in a variety of classroom activities this term.

Sample Instructional Plan For Modified Program

Name:	School:	Grade:
Date:	Term:	Teacher:

LA/Resource Teacher Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____Principal'sSignature_____

Current Level of Performance:

Goals

1. The student will continue to develop her social skills and expand her experiences and relationships.
2. The student will continue to develop her communication skills.
3. The student will reach her cognitive potential to participate meaningfully in life.
4. The student will increase her participation in functional independent skills at home, school and in the community.
5. The student will increase her mobility to participate in activities of daily living.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

1. The student will touch a switch with her hand to participate in activities.
2. The student will use gaze and/or touch to make choices with objects or pictures.
3. The student will look at objects and touch them with her hands before and during activities.
4. The student will indicate a desire for "more" of a motivating activity when stopped periodically, with the use of the BIGmack, gestures, facial expressions or vocalizations.
5. The student will use her BIGmack or Step by Step Communicator to participate with a voice.
6. The student will walk to routine activities, with picture cues, and less verbal and physical prompting.

Resource/Materials

- regular planning meetings between teachers & assistants to create learning centre activities
- involve peers in brainstorming opportunities for The student to use her BIGmack, switch & Step by Step
- utilize other motivating classrooms and the school at large for meaningful activities
- consult with SLP to slowly build picture cue vocabulary and pocket charts

Criteria For Success

This term the student has learned to ...

- The student touches a switch with her hand without physical or verbal prompting for a familiar and motivating story.
- The student uses her gaze to choose appropriately between two pictures for favorite routines.
- The student touches the vibrating switch without prompting for longer periods of time.
- The student uses the BIGmack to indicate she wants "more" during snack time.
- The student uses her Step by Step in a centre activity with peers throughout the week.
- The student walks to the office to collect and deliver the attendance form to the secretary with her picture cue and no physical prompting.

Review Date _____