



## **Using Peer-Directed Novel Question Training to Teach Conversation Skills**

**Objective:** To teach students communication books to ask novel peer-directed questions not found in the books.

### **Setting and Materials:**

**Settings:** School (i.e., general education academic classes and various locations during lunch)

### **Materials:**

- Communication books
  - Students have been taught to use the books to initiate conversation with general education peers prior to implementing this intervention
  - The communication books are composed of 3 x 4 inch laminated pages, which are hole-punched and bound
  - Each page contains a printed conversational “opener” identified by culturally diverse groups of general education high school students as questions they used to start conversations with their peers at school
  - All examples are “peer-directed” by showing interest in the peer, such as “What class do you have next?” and “What did you do last night?”
  - The communication books contain 12-15 pages, organizes to provide a variety of topics (e.g., sports, school events, recreational interests) and are varied across sessions and participants

### **Content Taught**

Teach the skills needed to identify peer-directed communication topics using communication books.

### **Teaching Procedures**

#### **Novel Peer-Directed Question Training (Training 1)**

1. Training sessions averaged 13 min (range= 5 to 38 min).
2. The teacher explains to students that by asking questions, they can show interest in talking to another person and it will help them get to know people.
3. Students are asked if they are interested in learning to ask new questions.
4. The teacher models asking a question from the communication book, waiting for a response from a partner, and following up with a novel peer-directed question.
5. For example, the teacher could model asking “What class did you have last period?” from the communication book followed by “Do you like it?” or “Do you like the teacher?” Next, the teacher and students role-played having the students use the communication book to ask novel peer-directed questions. If the students do not ask a novel question or skip a card, the teacher provides a verbal prompt (e.g., “Ask me another question about that.”).



6. The teacher provides verbal praise for novel peer-directed questions and reminds students to ask novel peer-directed questions during conversations with peers.

### **Novel Question Training with Peer Trainers (Training 2)**

1. The teacher provides the peer with a rationale for training and instructs each peer by modeling student training procedures and providing a written prompt to deliver a verbal directive (e.g., "Ask me another question") to students if they failed to ask a novel peer-directed question.
2. The teacher models praising students for correct performance after which the teacher and peer trainer role-played procedures.
3. The teacher informs peer trainers that she/he would remind them to prompt or praise students if they did not.
4. Peer trainers and students are seated together during training sessions.
5. The peer trainer hands the students the communication book.
6. The peer trainer gives students verbal direction to ask novel questions.

### **Evaluation**

- Keep a frequency count of occurrences in which a participant initiated and a partner responded; or if a partner initiated and a participant responded.
- Mastery is considered 80% accuracy or more independent participant initiation/responses.
- Two categories of initiation:
  - (a) Novel peer-directed questions: Any question directs toward and showing interest in a partner that is not on the displayed card.
  - (b) Non-novel questions or self-directed statement: Asking the question displays on the current card or making a statement about the participant him- or herself

### **Lesson Plan Based on:**

Reilly, C., Hughes, C., Harvey, M., Brigham, N., Cosgriff, J., Lauren, K., & Bernstein, R. (2014). "Let's talk": Increasing novel peer-directed questions by high school students with autism to their general education peers. *Education and training in autism and developmental disabilities, 49*, 214-331.



# NTACT

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

## Research to Practice Lesson Plan Starter

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