Incidental Teaching
DTI

- Main instructional intervention for individuals with ASD, especially for young children and for academic skills
- Has been updated to be more naturalistic and functional
  - Interspersal
  - Generalization training
- Still the case that DTI increases only responsivity
  - We need something more
What do we know about limitations of DTI

• Difficult to generalize skills (requires special consideration in planning)
• May lead to overemphasis of the SD-R format of programming
• Learners may not find instruction inherently rewarding
• What does that lead us to?
What is a clinician to do?

• Use the full range of effective instructional procedures
• Apply DTI to the learners and the skills where it makes sense
• Utilize naturalistic procedures to build initiation
Naturalistic approaches

• There are a variety of ABA methods which are naturalistic in approach
  • Naturalistic ABA strategies have been emphasized for many years, and have evolved and become more sophisticated over time
    • Incidental Teaching
    • Natural Language Paradigm
    • Pivotal Response Training
    • Natural Environment Training
Incidental Teaching

• Incidental Teaching has been an ABA method in use for over 35 years
• “Incidental teaching is used to get elaborated language by waiting for a person to initiate a conversation about a topic and then responding in ways that ask for more language from that person” (Hart & Risley, 1982).
What happens?

• A natural environment is arranged to attract the student to desired materials
• The student initiates the teaching by indicating an interest (gesturally or verbally)
• The teacher prompts an elaboration
• The correct response to the prompt provides access
Incidental Teaching

• Part of best practice ABA

• Includes many situations that occur naturally or can be contrived
  • Eating a desired food in front of student
  • Playing with a desired item/activity/leisure interest
  • Putting an object out of reach
  • Set up situations requiring “help”
Advantages

• Makes use of the natural environment
• Capitalizes on periods of high motivation to facilitate learning
• Makes use of naturally occurring reinforcers
• Reinforces an important class of behaviors (initiations)
How to use it

• Identify goals
• Arrange the Environment
• Promote initiations
Data on implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did the instructor prompt, model, or request an elaboration?</th>
<th>Did the child respond with more elaborate language?</th>
<th>Did the instructor provide access to the item or activity for which the child initiated?</th>
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Building on incidental teaching

• Natural Language Paradigm and Pivotal Response Training and Natural Environment Training have emphasized
  • The use of intrinsically motivating materials
  • Teaching in natural contexts
  • Focusing on the learner’s interests to guide language instruction
Application questions

• How do you use naturalistic strategies to teach
  • Asking for help
  • Asking for needed items
    • Blocked response
    • Interrupted chain

• What are the advantages to teaching these skills naturalistically?
  • TEACHING IN CONTEXT
  • Learning opportunities
Good targets for using the procedure of Incidental Teaching

• Manding/REQUESTING
  • Items
  • Activities
  • BREAK
  • HELP
  • Information
  • Shaping length of utterance
  • Shaping quality of manding
Aside from the instructional procedure....

- People also talk about “TEACHING INCIDENTALLY”
- What does this mean?
  - Taking advantage of a naturally occurring teaching opportunity
  - Teaching even though it is not a formal goal
Examples of instructional opportunities
Skills you might address informally/incidentally

• Manners (wiping mouth with napkin, saying thank you)
• Greetings
• Responses to social questions
• Putting things away
• Cleaning up
• Throwing away trash
How to integrate opportunities for instruction

• Select a few goals that are not officially goals but are appropriate
• Create a cover sheet or a section of the sheet to track progress