

# **The Pyramid Approach for Parents and Professionals**

Lori Frost, MS, CCC-SLP  
Andy Bondy, PhD

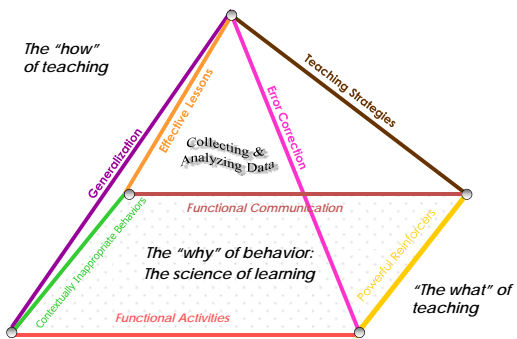


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## The Pyramid Approach for Parents and Professionals

Andy Bondy, PhD  
Pyramid Educational Consultants

### The Pyramid Approach to Education



## Summary of Presentation

### Purpose: Design effective educational environments

- **The Base**
  - Why learn?
  - What to teach
- **The Body**
  - How to teach
- **Central is Collecting and Analyzing Data**

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## Functional Activities

### Functional Orientation

- **Why do we have schools?**
  - To teach skills to get a job and move away from home
- **Where do we teach?**
  - School Based
  - Home Related
  - Community (including services and vocational)
- **If the child doesn't finish the task independently, who will?**

### Functional materials

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## Reinforcement Systems

### Powerful Reinforcers

- Student defined
- 1/2 second rule
- Grandma's secret (non-contingent R+)
- Differential Reinforcement
- "Let's make a deal" using visual support!
- Setting the minimum rate of R+ via ARRT (Audio Reinforcer Reminder Tone)

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## Functional Communication

- Not all behaviors are communicative
- Must occur between two people
- Communicator directs behavior to communicative partner
- Communicative partner **mediates** access to reinforcer



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## Functional Communication

### Where do we start?

What communication skill?

- Request - direct/tangible consequences
- Comment - social consequences

Spontaneity?

- Initiate
- Respond
- Imitate

Is modality important to defining communication?— **NO!**

- Speech, PECS, sign, SDGs, etc.

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## Picture Exchange Communication System™ (PECS)

- No prerequisite training
- First step: teach spontaneous request  
Impact: Learner approaches communicative partner to initiate social interaction
- Gradual change to sentence structure
- Functions added (comments, attributes, etc.)
- No evidence of speech inhibition
- Greatly reduces “prompt dependency”
- Evidence-based practice

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## Effective Lessons

### Lesson Format

- **Discrete Trial format (DT)**
  - Short, simple, distinct
  - Repeatable - but how many in a row?
- **Sequential tasks**
  - Chains: Forward vs. Backward
- **Who Initiates**
  - Teacher initiation
  - Learner-initiated interest
    - Often with teacher expansions

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## Prompting as a Teaching Tool

- Prompts are a teacher's way to *help* a learner behave in a new way
  - Many types

### #1 Rule of Prompting

♦ *If you put it in, you take it out!*

- Teaching without prompting?
  - Shaping

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## Minimizing and Correcting Errors

### Error Correction Strategies

- **Correct it, don't just FIX it!!**
- **4 Step Error Corrections**
  - Within discrete lesson - re-establish stimulus control
- **Backstep**
  - Find error in sequence - re-establish routine with prompt to prevent error
- **Anticipatory Prompt**
  - Known error pattern - change prompt on next trial

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## Collecting and Analyzing Data

- **We take data to answer:**
  - “Is this a good lesson plan?”
    - Take as little as needed to reliably answer question
- **Take lots of data early and thin slowly**
- **Types of data**
  - Behavior: Frequency, intensity, duration
  - Product: Outcome of actions
  - Support level: Prompt type, supervision
- **Summarize data for trends**
- **When problems appear, go through the Pyramid!**

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## Why use the Pyramid Approach to Education™?

- Fits broad educational goals
- It works for
  - Learners - all ages, all disabilities
  - Staff - less turn-over
  - Parents
  - Administrators - cost effective!

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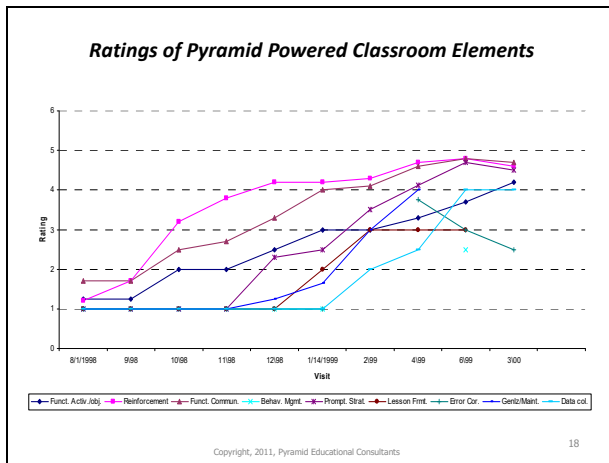
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## How can the Pyramid Approach be implemented?

- Training and workshops
- Consultation
- Feedback from administrators, colleagues and parents

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## Pyramid Workshops

- Pyramid Approach Training
- Pyramid Topics including
  - Critical communication skills, behavior intervention, Asperger syndrome, language of emotions, parent training, analyzing language (using Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*), organizing and managing classrooms, and more
- PECS Level 1 Training (2-day)
- PECS Level 2 Training (2-day)
- PECS Implementer Certification™



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