Guidelines for Community-Based Instruction

Baltimore County Public Schools
Department of Instruction and Learning
Office of Special Education

DRAFT
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Guidelines for Community-Based Instruction

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Overview

This instructional guide was developed for use by educators who serve students ages five through 21 years, who have been identified as having significant cognitive disabilities, and who are following a Functional Academic Learning Support (FALS) or Communication and Learning Support (CALS) curriculum.

Community-Based Instruction (CBI) is a critical component of the education program for these students, primarily because, as adults, the community is where they will need to use the skills they acquire during their school years. The expectation is that our students will live, work, shop, and play in integrated environments in the community, and that they will participate, either independently or with accommodations and supports, in typical activities across a variety of settings. Therefore, these guidelines are premised upon the following principles and best practices among students with cognitive disabilities:

Instruction should occur in “natural environments” and at naturally occurring times of the school day whenever possible: e.g. teach money use in setting and situation where money is naturally used such as grocery stores, cafeteria, school store, shops, etc.

Repeated practice in isolated skills in classroom settings without connections to students’ lives will not be motivating and will not help them to generalize to real life situations.

Instructional priorities for each student should be based on the real world needs of the individual students, and should lead toward increased independence and autonomy in his or her home and community.

Parents and professional from different disciplines should collaborate in addressing the learning needs of students in multiple school and community settings.

Students should learn skills that are referenced to performance demands of real world environments, and which are critical to maintain meaningful participation in the least restrictive environment.

The movement toward increased integration of students with severe disabilities in school and community settings stems from the Principles of Normalization (Wolfensberger, 1967): People with disabilities have a right to a range of typical experiences and activities.

Research indicates that individuals with mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities benefit from functional, hands-on instruction in meaningful life skills in the natural setting where those skills are typically used. Learning takes place across a variety of environments if our students are to generalize what they learn. So, particularly for older elementary and secondary students, instruction takes place not only in school settings, but also in the community.

CBI has been identified as an approach for teaching functional life-skills to persons who exhibit a wide variety of learning characteristics and abilities. Instruction in community settings addresses issues common among students with cognitive disabilities, including difficulty
generalizing skills learned in one setting to a new setting or situation, coupled with a relatively slow rate of acquisition of new skills. Additionally, CBI allows students to have more opportunities to interact with typical members of the community; and the Maryland State Department of Education now defines the community as a least restrictive environment for educational purposes. Due to the success of teaching students with severe disabilities in community settings, effective techniques that were first documented in the 1980s and 1990s continue to be used today.

Definition of Terms

**Community-Based Instruction (CBI)** = *Regular and systematic* instruction in meaningful, functional, age-appropriate skills in integrated community settings, using naturally occurring materials and situations, designed to help the student to acquire and generalize life-skills that enhance his/her opportunities for meaningful experiences and relationships within the general community. Instruction is driven by individual strengths and needs, using consistent teaching strategies, as well as accommodations designed to enhance the student’s participation in typical activities. Home settings or area surroundings such as shopping centers, convenience stores and/or grocery stores, as well as community resources such as public libraries and post offices; take on importance as potential instructional settings. Also, students may learn important skills such as travel training, pedestrian skills, money use and management, leisure skills, and restaurant use. For older students, the community also includes vocational settings.

Community-Based Instruction differs from the traditional field trip in that instruction is cumulative, and usually the same skills are instructed and assessed from week to week. The emphasis is on acquisition and application of functional and age-appropriate skills in a naturalistic context.

**Field Trips** = Field trips are **NOT** Community-Based Instruction, and are **NOT** a legitimate substitute for systematic instruction in functional, age-appropriate skills in natural settings. Because they tend to be episodic, one-time activities, student needs for consistency, repeated practice, and systematic generalization are difficult to address in the context of a field trip.

Students with developmental disabilities should participate in field trips with grade-level age-peers in the context of a mainstreaming activity; presumably, if this is the case, specific IEP goals relating to socialization and communication and academic skills are addressed. However, activities of this sort do **NOT** constitute, nor are they a substitute for, Community-Based Instruction (see Figs. 1 & 2).

**Preliminary Program Planning**

Because CBI is designed to increase independent living and social interactions for students with cognitive disabilities, careful planning must take place prior to beginning instruction. Educational staff are charged with determining the student’s needs and matching these needs with the proper instructional setting. Educators must take into account what family members view as important skills for both current and future environments.
Fig. 1

Community-Based Instruction versus Field Trip

CBI
- Ongoing instruction with activity reinforcement
- Individual skills
- Vocational & pre-vocational skills
- Guided & Independent practice for transfer & generalization
- Pre-teach skills
- Part of instruction

Field Trip
- Isolated experience
- Supplements curriculum
- Not directly related to goals and objectives, but affords opportunity for “hidden curriculum.”
- Voluntary

Fig. 2

Examples & Non-Examples of CBI Type Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Non-Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a purchase at a store when child is practicing money skills</td>
<td>Being present while staff makes the purchase (even if item is for child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering an item from a menu when child is practicing functional reading skills</td>
<td>Just eating at the food court of the mall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to a job site to practice vocational skills</td>
<td>Touring a job site/location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is also crucial to align community instruction to age-appropriate goals and objectives from the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) which includes Alt-MSA for students grades 3-8 & 10, skills from the domains of community, independent living, communication, decision making, interpersonal skills, career/vocational training, personal management, and recreation/leisure, as well as typical life skills needed to access the community in the same fashion as the general public.

Parent/Guardian Input:
Information should be solicited from the students’ families regarding: places and types of recreation the family/students enjoys, where the family shops for food and/or clothing, where they are likely to dine when they go out to eat, and other services the family routinely accesses in the community (e.g. post office, coin laundry, public library, etc.). The purpose of gathering this information is to help in identifying meaningful sites and activities for CBI. Teachers and transition facilitators may send home a parent inventory or questionnaire for the parents or caregivers to complete (See Sample 1), or may pose questions directly, by phone, or during formal IEP or informal parent conferences.

Ecological Inventory:
An ecological inventory of each community instruction site should be conducted. Among the factors to take into consideration are: General layout of the facility and accessibility for individuals with limited mobility; proximity to public transportation; ease of access via school-bus; location and accessibility of bathrooms; location of pay-phones, location of emergency exits; times/days of operation; potential opportunities for interactions; “slack” times when the facility may be less crowded, have reduced costs for admission, food, or services; types of skill applications the site affords the student, as well as additional environmental factors such as noise-level, amount of clutter, potential for over-crowding, etc. Such surveys can be conducted by either the teacher or the transition facilitator and decisions to pursue a site should follow a dialogue between these professionals.

In addition, the ecological inventory should yield information regarding the skills needed to access and function independently in the environment and in any of the sub-environments identified. Once this information has been identified the special educator should determine which skills the students currently demonstrates that are relevant to accessing the target environment and which skills he/she still needs to learn. The special educator/transition facilitator should work with the parent/guardian to prioritize and select skills that the student needs to acquire.

Task Analysis and Baseline Assessment:
A task analysis should be developed in which the planned activity is broken down into its component steps, as these might be performed by a person without a disability. Each student’s current abilities should be assessed in the context of this task analysis. In some cases, a modified task analysis may be developed for this purpose, which accounts for physical or sensory limitations. In cases where a students needs to use an accommodation or assistive technology in order to assess a community site or perform a functional task within the site, the task analysis should include use of that accommodation or assistive technology. However, if a modified task
analysis is used, it should still follow the same general sequences as the typical activity, and no segments of the activity should be omitted during the baseline assessment.

Baseline assessment is conducted in the natural setting and situation in which the task will be taught. There are two methods of baseline assessment using a task analytical approach:

**Discontinued Probe:** The student is given an initial cue (e.g. “Order your lunch”). Data is collected on the steps the student performs without any additional instruction. If the student fails to perform a component step of the task, or performs it incorrectly, the probe is discontinued. (Obviously this method will not be very practical for most students with severe disabilities);

**Reposition Probe:** The student is given an initial cue (e.g. “Order your lunch”), and no further direct instruction is provided. Data is collected on the steps the student performs without additional instruction. If the student fails to perform a component step of the task, or performs it incorrectly, the teacher or para-educator performs the step and positions the student for the next step in the task. This procedure is repeated each time the student performs incorrectly or fails to perform, until the entire task/activity has been completed. On the data sheet, a minus (“-“) is recorded for any steps the student did not perform correctly. This method is preferable because it allows the educator to identify the specific parts of given activity with which the student is having the most difficulty, and provides information which may be helpful in determining appropriate modifications and accommodations.

Baseline assessment usually continues for at least three sessions; it is only discontinued after three sessions in which the student shows no progress, or during which the student’s performance actually declines. In some cases, it may be very clear after the initial session that the student is not likely to make further progress without direct instruction, however these cases should be more the exception that the norm. On the other hand, if a student is actually making progress without receiving direct instruction, there is no reason to provide instruction (e.g. to discontinue baseline). However, in such a case, that task or activity itself may need to be re-visited and redesigned so that is more instructionally challenging for that particular student.

Once a decision to discontinue baseline is made, the formal systematic instruction may begin. As suggested above, it may be advisable to modify the task, design, material or procedural accommodations, or otherwise differentiate instruction, to best meet the student’s needs as indicated by the results of the baseline assessment. When this id one, the task analysis should also be modified, as it will form the basis for ongoing assessment.

**Implementing Community-Based Instruction**

**Sequence of Community-Based Instruction**
CBI should be based on individualized programs that are developed as a result of objectives that are part of the student’s IEP. The number of hours that as student needs to receive CBI will vary based on the goals and objectives specified on his/her IEP and upon his/her ability level. Also as students grow older, more and more time should be dedicated to CBI. The proportion of time
spent in the community to time in school should always be abased on individual student needs, however as a general rule-of-thumb, we suggest the following ranges per grade/age-group:

Fig. 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Range of Hours/Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>one to five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>8-10 years</td>
<td>one to ten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>11-14 years</td>
<td>five to ten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>15-18 years</td>
<td>ten to twelve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary</td>
<td>19-21 years</td>
<td>fifteen to twenty-five</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elementary students spend the majority of the time in the school building. Inclusion or integration with age-peers is a critical component of their school days. They may go out for CBI once or twice a week, or even less often. Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) cautions that doing community outings is an “unnatural event” at the elementary school level. This caution should not deter us from providing early intervention to our students in addressing deficits that might be addressed through CBI, but it serves as a reminder that the instructional focus at the elementary level needs to be on school-based activities and not an overwhelming amount of CBI excursions. Typical elementary CBI include: shopping/making a purchase, using a restaurant, accessing recreational facilities and community resources (parks, libraries, etc.), and community safety (stranger danger, community workers, how to seek help, etc.). The classroom instructional components should be things like social/behavioral skills, communication, and functional academics with an emphasis on improving reading and math skills.

Older elementary students may receive an increasing amount of CBI instruction in order to prepare them for articulation from elementary to secondary level. Settings and activities are similar to those noted above for primary aged-students, but there is greater instructional emphasis on applied academics in the context of shopping/making purchases, an on early transitional skills such as acquiring information from signs and community markers.

As the student articulates to middle school and then to high school, the proportion of time in the community typically increases; concurrently, the range and variety of community settings is increased. While the essential goals of instruction are similar to those addressed during the elementary years, there is greater emphasis on generalization of skills across a range of settings and situations, and on problem-solving, in order to facilitate greater independence.

At about age 15-16, students being vocational training in integrated community work settings. Typically, the high school student will begin with 1-2 days/week of vocational training, which increases over time, such that most students 19 or older are spending 3-4 hours per day, 4-5 days per week in on-the-job training.

Some students may spend the majority of their day integrated in mainstream classes; others may only be included with their general education peers for specials, lunch, and recess. Some students may start vocational training as early as age 14, while some students, even at age 20 may benefit from less emphasis on vocational training more on self-help, domestic, and daily
living skills. Moreover, there may be some students for whom intensive instruction in academics for social/communication skills, provided in a school-based setting, continues to be warranted. The critical variable here is the individual need of the student!

Aligning IEP Objectives with Curricula, Assessment, and Family Needs:
CBI should integrate the student’s needs as stated on his/her IEP, the appropriate learning domains and indicators typical of a “Life Skills” curriculum (IMAP Domains) and the general education curriculum, and to the family’s priorities. It should be kept in mind that CBI is aligned with the Alt-MSA as specific skills are referenced to the VSC, so that documentation relating to attainment of skills during CBI can and should be utilized as artifacts for the Alt-MSA.

Example of typical “Life Skills” Learning Domains addressed during CBI include:

- **Community** (Purchasing/Stores & Services, Travel Training including Pedestrian and Bike Safety, Community Resources such as the Post Office & Library, Stranger Danger, Banking and Money Management, etc.)
- **Communication/Decision making/Interpersonal Skills** (Public Greetings, Personal Space, Impulse Control, Seeking Help, Requesting Information/Services, Feeling Upset/Frustrated in Public)
- **Personal Management** (Mobility, Domestic Skills such as Grocery Lists/Shopping, Finding Laundry Services, Housing, & Budgeting, Hygiene)
- **Career/Vocational** (Includes Pre-Vocational Readiness Skills, How to Interact with Co-workers/superiors on Job Site in Addition to How to Complete Task, Should Expose to Multiple Job Types to Facilitate Student’s Interest)

Academics (reading, writing, and math) can be addressed in the community in various ways. For example, before going into the community, the teacher could have students practice the sequence for the purchasing routine. This could be accomplished by making a sequential book for the sequence of a familiar purchasing routine such as in the cafeteria. Students would review the book before following the purchasing routine in the community. In the context of this learning experience, reading, listening, and speaking indicators are addressed. See Below:

**Reading Indicators Addresses:**
- Respond orally to questions
- Respond to questions (who, what, and where) and verify answers using illustrations/text
- Identify pictures, shapes, letters, and numerals
- Identify some signs, labels, and environmental print
- Read signs, labels, and environmental print
- Acquire new vocabulary through listening to a variety of texts on a daily basis
- Listen to models of fluent reading
- Make connections to the text using illustrations, photographs, and prior knowledge

**Speaking Indicators Addressed:**
Speak clearly enough to be heard and understood in a variety of settings

**Listening Indicators Addressed:**
- Attend to the speaker
- Follow a set of multi-step directions

**Math Indicators Addressed**
- Use money to make purchases
- Calculate different sums of money

Another example of addressing academics in the community is:

Students practice matching the photo to the object to prep for the community. Provide students with the picture of an item they are buying (e.g. photo of the hamburger from McDonald’s, photo of bananas from the grocery store).

**Speaking Indicators Addressed:**
- Speak clearly enough to be heard and understood in a variety of settings
- Speak clearly enough to be heard and understood in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes

**Listening Indicators Addressed:**
- Attend to the speaker
- Ask appropriate questions

The following learning experience utilizes the community as the environment in which students learn about the various chores people do and then have to think about the steps needed to complete a given chore:

Have students take a walk in the school and/or community and look for people completing chores, such as taking out trash, cleaning, putting items away. Have students cut out pictures/PCS to create a book that shows the steps for each chore.

**Reading Indicators Addressed:**
- Listen to model of fluent reading. Acquire new vocabulary through listening to a variety of texts on a daily basis
- Respond to questions (who, what, and where) and verify answers using illustrations/text
- Engage in conversations to understand what has been read
- Make connections to prior knowledge and new vocabulary by listening, reading, and responding to a variety of texts.

**Math Indicators Addressed**
- Sort a collection of objects according to a rule
- Match, sort, and regroup objects according to attributes

**Speaking Indicators Addressed**
- Speak clearly enough to be heard and understood in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes
- Speak in a variety of situations to inform and/or relate experiences, including retelling stories

**Listening Indicators Addressed**
Attend to the speaker  
Follow a set of multi-step directions  
Ask appropriate questions

The following chart details common skills needed by students in CALS and FALS programs and a few examples of CBI activities to address those skills.

**Fig. 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Domain/Content</th>
<th>Pre-Taught Skills</th>
<th>CBI Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reading community signs</td>
<td>Reading/Community Personal Management</td>
<td>sight word/picture ID, vocabulary, words in context, synonyms/antonyms, finding an exit</td>
<td>✓ Go to library and identify 5 exits out of building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Given an antonym or synonym for Boys and Girls room, student will locate the correct facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Student will navigate around neighborhood based on sign directions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Driving down highway and given prompts to find a restaurant, or gas station, or lodging, student will indicate an exit to take based on a road sign that offers the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>making purchases</td>
<td>money, personal management, interpersonal/decision making, reading,</td>
<td>value of money, role-play purchases, speaking to clerks, budgeting/selecting items based on cost, reading menus/price tags</td>
<td>✓ Given a certain amount of money and a minimum and maximum amount to spend, student must purchase item(s) that meet the qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Given a purchase, student must request appropriate change from clerk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Given multiple items costing the same amount and a fixed amount of spending money, student must select 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Given items on a menu, student must select and order meal that does not exceed his/her total funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving directions to a place</td>
<td>Math, Reading, Interpersonal Skills, Community, Communication, Personal Management, Career/Vocational</td>
<td>ordinal directions, left/right, prepositional descriptors and use of language to convey meaning, knowing addresses, sequencing</td>
<td>▪ Student must give and follow directions from one point to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Student must give directions to house from school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Student must know address and describe environment to emergency workers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig. 4 continued:*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Domain/Content</th>
<th>Pre-Taught Skills</th>
<th>CBI Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Following a schedule              | Math, Personal Management, Career/Vocational, Rec/Leisure                      | Identifying time, calculating elapsed time, following a schedule, reading bus schedule, locating movie times in newspaper, identifying running time of video rental | ✓ Student must make a purchase/use a service and return to a designated point at a specific time or after an elapsed time.  
   ✓ Student must look at bus schedule and determine when the next desired bus will arrive or how long until that happens.  
   ✓ Student must determine a playing time of a desired movie and then purchase the correct tickets for the time from a theatre.  
   ✓ Given a maximum amount of available time, student must select a rental video with a running time that does not exceed total time. |
| Open a bank account               | math, reading, social studies/history, writing, personal management           | completing required forms, pertinent vocabulary, minimum balance, purpose & history of banks | ✓ Given a yellow pages, student will identify banks in his/her community  
   ✓ Given a starting sum of money and a minimum balance requirement, student will identify banks that will accept his deposit.  
   ✓ Student will complete required forms at the bank.  
   ✓ Student will follow the procedures for customer service. |
Site selection should take parental input into account, as discussed above, and should reflect typical activities in which the students’ age-peers would be engaged. For example, many elementary-ages students visit the library, or go to restaurants with their families, while few children of elementary age actually go comparison shopping. Typical high school students may visit the local shopping mall, or may hang out in a video arcade, but they are not likely to be found at a playground designed for small children.

Specific locations should be identified within the students’ communities, or within the school neighborhood. Types of community sties include the following:

- **Shopping:** Supermarkets, drug stores/pharmacies, convenience stores, dollar stores, music/video stores
- **Dining:** fast food restaurants, family-style restaurants, cafeterias, pizzerias, food courts
- **Services:** Public libraries, banks, post offices
- **Recreational Facilities:** Parks, public swimming pools, video arcades

**CBI Transportation**

Baltimore County Public Schools allocates school busses to provide access to community sites for those schools/classes implementing Community-Based Instruction. The number of hours allocated to any given school is based primarily on the age-range of the students and the number of hours used the previous years. Most high school programs start with 300 CBI Bus Hours for the year. This means that CBI can occur through other means of transportation (public, walking), but the school will have 300 hours of school-bus service. Transportation has its own rules governing times the busses are accessible, but generally bus service is only available between 9:30 AM and 1:45 PM. Transportation requires at least 2-week advance notice of CBI requests or changes to established CBI routines, and they must be informed of any special needs (lift bus, extra attendants, harness, etc.) that your students may require. Typically time used is counted from when the driver leaves the point of driver origin and returns the students to the school. Specific school CBI allotment is distributed by the Programs for FALS & CALS within the Office of Special Education each fall. Requests for additional CBI hours or for a reduction of hours should be directed to the transition facilitator servicing your area or your geographic-area transportation office contact.

When appropriate, schools may also choose to access public transportation. This is particularly appropriate when students are in need of travel training – a necessary requirement for successful Post-secondary students. See: [http://www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/community/commission_on_disabilities/disabtrans.html](http://www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/community/commission_on_disabilities/disabtrans.html) for further information regarding routes, schedules, accommodations and options for individuals with disabilities including the reduced fare program. A link to that specific information is listed below: [http://www.mtamaryland.com/disability/disability_sub.cfm](http://www.mtamaryland.com/disability/disability_sub.cfm)
DRAFT 10/14/2005

In an effort to create greater awareness in CBI programs and the goals and objectives of such programs as well as to provide for management and allocation of bus hours, instructional hours, and CBI purposes, it is expected that each teacher will complete a CBI Travel Log and submit it to the Office of Special Education on a monthly basis. The form for the previous month should arrive in the Office of Special Education by the fifth of the next month. The form requires the signature of a school-based administrator, and a record should be maintained by the school in the event of an audit. A copy of this form is included in the back of this manual.

In the event of any questions or concerns regarding specific destinations or whether a trip qualifies as CBI, a member of the Office of Special Education or Transportation Office will contact you or your site administrator for clarification.

Supporting Activities & Pre-Instruction:
CBI cannot stand alone. It must be linked to ongoing classroom instruction and vice versa. For example, prior to community instruction in shopping at a supermarket, each student will prepare a shopping list (written or pictorial) and determine the estimated cost of items to be purchased at the supermarket. After returning from the community, each student will also be instructed in related functional skills such as putting away items that have been purchased at a store, or brushing his/her teeth following a meal at a restaurant. In addition, journal writing or language experience activities may be used to reinforce the concepts and skills addressed during community instruction.

All students, regardless of level of ability, should be involved in supporting community preparation activities. For example, a student with a mild or moderate cognitive disability might use a newspaper advertising inserts to identify items to be purchased at a supermarket, and the prices, and might make a written list and use a calculator to figure total costs. Students with more severe disabilities can use picture symbols, photographs, or actual labels to construct his/her lists, and might use “next dollar” strategy to estimate the cost. Students with significant motor impairments can dictate their shopping list (if verbal), or use an adapted keyboard, or dictate their choices using eye-gaze. Some students might learn to use a calculator in conjunction with the next-dollar strategy, by first being taught to enter “1 +” for each dollar bill. Others may use a number line to calculate costs. Students with profound cognitive disabilities might make limited choices as to the item(s) they will purchase, and may be working on basic money concepts, (e.g. that one exchanges money in order to get something) by grasping, holding, and securing a money-clip containing a predetermined amount, to be given to the cashier in the store.

Similar strategies should be used to involve all students in preparation for restaurant use. It is important that all students have the opportunity to express the preferences, in terms of meals to be ordered, not only during the context of a preparation activity, but also in placing their own orders at the restaurant. Staff should never be placing orders for students; this defeats the purpose of the instructional activity. Students, who have limited verbal skills, or no verbal skills, can use a variety of low-tech and high-tech devices to place their own orders. Students who are on special diets, or who have difficulty with solid foods, might order from a limited menu, or might order only an appropriate beverage at the restaurant (consuming the rest of their meal back at the school).
Staff Responsibilities:
Teachers should strive to make maximum use of staff resources at all times. Para-educators are crucial members of the classroom team who should be given responsibility for providing instruction in specified individual skills, implementing behavioral strategies and communication protocols, and collecting ongoing data, both in the community and in the classroom. Professional staff are responsible for analyzing data and making judgments about the students’ progress and any modifications in instruction, materials, or the skill-sequence needed to facilitate skill acquisition.

During community instruction, specific staff should be assigned to specific students. Student groupings should be planned to be as heterogeneous as possible, mixing students of various ability-levels. Strong consideration should be given to splitting classes into smaller groups (two to four students per adult), so that no community site is disproportionately overloaded. Administrators are encouraged to be creative in their staffing for CBI outings. In order to promote smaller group sizes and the ability to have multiple students participating in simultaneous but different job experiences, job coaches are required. This might be the designation of other staff members from outside the CALS/FALS program who are able to assist exclusively for CBI trips, the use of parent volunteers, or the use of high achieving and responsible students from the regular program. All auxiliary job coaches should receive training and instruction from the classroom teacher, and it is ultimately the classroom teacher’s responsibility to ensure the child’s educational goals are being met.

Staff are responsible for insuring the safety of the student at all times. While in the community, all staff should carry relevant emergency contact information; if a student has a written health-care plan, staff should be familiar with the procedures and precautions outlined therein. No child should participate in CBI until their parents have returned a completed insurance form. These forms are obtained through your Transition Facilitator. Staff are encouraged but not required to carry a cell phone with them for emergency use. If you do not have a personal phone, discuss the need for communication with your site principal. Finally, it is the teacher’s responsibility to notify the site if the school will not be able to keep their CBI appointment.

Naturalistic Instruction:
Although at some times it is necessary to enhance instruction that would occur in the community by using simulated activities that do not occur in the natural setting, this is less desirable than naturalistic instruction. As educators, we recognize that providing instruction in the naturally occurring situation greatly enhances the student’s ability to generalize skills and appropriately demonstrate these skills post-instruction. Simulated activities should always be tied to regularly scheduled opportunities to practice the skills addressed in the natural setting such as the community.

Communication Programs & Integration:
Once programming has begun, staff should make certain that each student’s individual communication program is an integral part of their instruction in the community. Programming for communication in the community can be supported during functional skills and routines. In restaurants and similar facilities, students should be expressing their preferences and provided
with instruction in placing their own order, using whatever communication strategies are in place. Students should receive instruction in the use of appropriate verbal or non-verbal skills to greet and interact with store/restaurant personnel. When staff act as “voices” for their students, this leads to over-dependency of the part of the students, and perpetuates stereotypes among the general community.

One of the primary goals of CBI is to ensure that students will be prepared to live, work, and play in integrated settings as adults, alongside their non-disabled peers. Thus, social skills are a critical focus of community instruction for students with severe disabilities. Practicing eye contact, communication exchanges, and body awareness are useful skills in the integrated setting.

As noted elsewhere, it is important to keep numbers of students with severe disabilities to a minimum when doing community instruction at a particular site. That is, if students need to work on purchasing skills, use several different stores and try not to take more than two or three students into a store at any one time. It should be kept in mind that the larger the group, the fewer natural opportunities there will be for students to interact with non-disabled people; moreover, large groups are likely to engender negative perceptions and stereotypes among bystanders. Again, this is an area where creative staffing and student assistance can greatly improve the quality of your CBI.

**Generalization:**
As stated earlier, teaching in the naturally occurring conditions helps to facilitate generalization. However, for many students, generalization needs to by systematically planned. Simply exposing students to a variety of environments does not ensure competency in any of them. Repeated opportunities to practice skills in a specific setting, a well as instructional strategies that are designed to meet the needs of the individual learner, are needed in order to attain mastery.

When teaching in the community, a common practice entails using one facility to provide instruction in a particular set of skills until the student demonstrates or approaches mastery before moving on to another facility to continue to assess and/or program for generalization. For example, if the student has been working on ordering from a menu in a fast-food restaurant, the next step may be to have him/her demonstrate the same skills and behavior in a different type of establishment, such as a food court.

**Date Collection, graphing, and analysis:**
Data collection should be ongoing and specific to the IEP and/or VSC or Learning Domain goals. Data should be gathered each time the student receives instruction in the task or skill; typically, this collection will take the form of teacher-made checklists or task analyses. Data should then be graphed and visually analyzed for student progress. Modifications to teaching methodology should be based on visual inspection of graphs and documented.

There are five basic types of data collection instruments with each suited to a particular purpose:
a. CHECKLIST: Used to evaluate behaviors that have a clear start and end (e.g. asking for help appropriately, touching a picture of an apple, making eye-contact) or that entail repeated trials. You can record one or several related behaviors on a single checklist. Simply record whether or not the student performed correctly (+ or -), or encode the level of prompt he/she required in order to perform the skill or task component, (e.g. V= verbal, PP= partial physical, etc.).
b. TASK ANALYSIS: For complex tasks, in which multiple behaviors form a chain of components of the whole, e.g. shopping in a supermarket, brushing teeth, etc. The task or activity is broken down into its component steps. If task analyses are used, it is recommended that you focus only on the most critical components of the task. Record student performance on each step of the task as for a checklist.
c. ANECDOTAL DATA/LOGS: Used for behaviors which may not always occur in the same way, or under the same conditions. These are skills which may require alternative responses, e.g. making choices, interacting with peers, communication, etc. Anecdotal data is also used to record incidents of challenging behavior, especially when the function/cause is unknown, or when function/cause seem to vary.
d. TALLIES: (Includes rate, interval recording, frequency, duration, latency, etc.) Used to record how often, or for how long, a behavior has occurred. The behavior being measured MUST be discrete (e.g. have a clear start and finish).
e. PERMANENT PRODUCT: This is simply a sample of the student’s performance, and is used most often with vocational or academic tasks. Permanent products usually yield either a frequency/rate measure or a qualitative appraisal.

Samples of the data charts (a-d) can be found at the back of this manual.

Documentation
You must be able to document which IEP goals are being addressed during CBI activities, and how they are being addressed.

This documentation should include:

- **Written Lesson Plans** which describe objectives and activities for the class as a group, and should include curricular and/or IEP objectives being addressed, as well as a description of the activities.
- **Daily/Weekly Classroom Schedules** that reflect groupings, locations, and objectives for CBI, and indicate where each student is and what each student is doing and with which staff he/she is working with at a given time.
- **Instructional Programs** developed for individual students, which include specific instructional strategies (prompt hierarchies, reinforcement schedules, etc.) as well as specific objectives addressed during community instruction.
- **Teacher-Made Data Sheets** such as checklists or task analyses, that are used to monitor and assess individual student performance on IEP related skills; such data is also evidence of the frequency and regularity with which instruction has been provided on a specific task, activity, routine, or skill.
Instructional Funds
BCPS allocates instructional material funds for each self-contained special education classroom for the school year in the form of “ADD ON MONEY” to the principal’s overall budget. The purpose of this money is to implement IEP goals and address students’ educational needs. It is expected that a portion of those funds be used to support CBI. In each school, the business office should have the exact amount available for special education use. Any expenditure in the name of CBI must have an accompanying receipt that is turned in to the business office for either reimbursement or as a record of expenditure. Care must be taken that students and staff collect receipts while on CBI, and these receipts need to be immediately turned in to the teacher who in turn will submit them to the school’s business department.

In addition to school allocated funds, there are other sources of funding available to defray the costs of CBI:

- **Third-Party Billing Money**: These funds, largely generated by students in FALS and CALS programs, can be accessed for various CBI needs. Contact the Office of Third Party Billing, X 4130 or TBP@bcps.org for more information regarding current acceptable uses of third party billing money.

- **Fundraising**: There are a variety of ways to raise money for your program from traditional selling of gift wrap or pizzas of similar items to using CBI as a means of generating money itself. Consider the following:
  1. Starting a dry cleaning service where for a charge and the cost of service, students collect items from staff and deliver and pick-up from a local dry cleaning service accessed while on CBI.
  2. A shopping service where for a charge, students follow a list and make purchases for staff from local stores.
  3. Dog walking service where students travel to various residents in the community and walk the dog around the neighborhood for a charge. (Also good with local staff that can’t get to their pet during the day to go outside).
  4. In-School Jobs such as Recycling, photocopying, mailings, cleaning, or filing where for a select fee, the service is rendered.
  5. Community-Based Car Washes where students go to the residents’ houses and wash the cars on site.

- **Donations**: Donations can be solicited from staff, businesses, and families, but all proceeds must be reported to the school and given to the business office to establish an account. Donations are tax deductible, but a “donation” cannot be a required act on the part of a parent because their child is enrolled in or benefiting from the program.

All monies collected must be immediately given to the school’s business office and should then be placed into a separate account for CBI purposes only. Teachers should work closely with the accounting office to monitor funds.
In planning CBI lessons, a direct link must be made to the students’ IEP objectives and/or selected curriculum or learning domains, and costs should be taken into consideration when looking for appropriate ways to practice a natural application of the skills. To the greatest extent possible, costs should be minimized to ensure sustained CBI opportunities throughout the year for all students. Some suggested ways to do this follow.

If supermarket shopping is a priority goal for a student, this goal can be addressed just as effectively by buying generic store brands when possible rather than more expensive items. The opportunity to provide instruction in comparison-shopping should not be discounted; many students’ families operate on tight budgets, and it is likely that some, if not most of our students will be living on fixed incomes as adults.

Identify activities that are a natural situation, e.g. purchasing school supplies or household staples at the market, and incorporate these into the context of regularly scheduled community instruction. The advantages of this approach may be self-evident. The instructional activity is functional and meaningful for the student, and because the items purchased are needed and used by the family, the student is making a valued contribution to his/her household. In addition, the items are things the family would have purchased anyway, so sending in money to defray the cost should not impose a financial burden.

If practicing ordering food items and eating them, consider buying one item as a snack or supplement to the child’s regular lunch. The child is still practicing the skill of selecting an item and making a purchase; it does not necessarily have to be an entire meal.

Many CBI skills can be accomplished in a variety of settings including those that are free. Figure 5 depicts a few examples of free CBI sites and suggested skills to target.

The following should be kept in mind:

Items purchased for use in the student’s home or for the student’s sole personal use OUTSIDE OF BEING AN INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL OR PURPOSE must be purchased with the family’s money and not with BCPS funds. This includes gifts for other people.

Parents are expected to defray the cost of lunches purchased in the course of CBI up to the maximum cost of a typical school-cafeteria lunch unless the child qualifies for Free and Reduced Lunch, at which point the family has no financial obligation. Costs that exceed the maximum amount paid by the parent must be paid for by the school if buying or eating lunch is considered part of the instructional objective. A bag lunch can always be provided by the parent or through the cafeteria for those children receiving Free and Reduced Lunches, but a child cannot be denied participation in an instructional goal such as “the students will select and independently buy a lunch” just because the parent did not send in money. The school would be obligated to provide the child with lunch in order for the student to access the educational goal. Carefully consider what goals you are going to assess and the types of CBI activities that will be used to reinforce the skill. There are many ways to address the same skills that are often times more cost effective.
Receipts for items purchased with funds sent in by the family should be collected and sent to the family along with any unspent change. The teacher should document the amount sent home and maintain a copy of the receipt.

**Fig. 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Office</td>
<td>Inquire about rate of postage, seek zip code information, complete Selective Service forms, Change of Address Forms</td>
<td>Museums (Most offer a day of the week that is free to students – inquire with the Tour Board)</td>
<td>art identification, storytelling/creative fiction inspired by piece of art, navigation based on a map of the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Store</td>
<td>Do comparison weight shopping with produce scales, price shop for items found in a circular, vocational experience</td>
<td>Nearby School</td>
<td>Socialization and interpersonal skills, reading to younger students, being “upper grade liaisons” to discuss what the next school level will be like, math skills by performing census surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Parks</td>
<td>Beautification projects, volunteerism, look up specific sponsored organization information</td>
<td>Walking the Neighborhood</td>
<td>Personal Management &amp; Community Management, Decision Making – identify community workers, cause and effect relationships of calling 911, predictive responses – why would police or fire respond?, students can get ID cards,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>interpersonal socialization, volunteerism, household chores, number correspondence by calling BINGO game, lead an arts and crafts project, read to the residents, act out a play</td>
<td>Local Fire and Police Departments</td>
<td>Community, Personal Management, Decision Making – identify community workers, cause and effect relationships of calling 911, predictive responses – why would police or fire respond?, students can get ID cards,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Contributions:**
Instructional materials funds may be supplemented through parent/guardian donations to defray the cost of some CBI activities. These funds should be treated as any other donation and given
directly to the accounting office. A tax deduction credit should then be issued to the family. There are several other significant considerations with regards to family contributions:

Contributions are requested, not required. It should be made clear that the donation is made to the entire program and not just the family’s specific child, and funds will be shared in an equitable manner among all students in the program.

A family may send money designated specifically for their child’s use while on CBI. Parents should be encouraged to keep this money to a minimum to prevent a disproportionate amount of spending by some students compared to others. A good rule of thumb is no more than five dollars per child per trip. This designated money cannot be used to pay for the child’s access to instructional purposes.

CBI is an extension of the curriculum. It is a necessary component of the educational programs of students in FALS and CALS classes, and as such, students cannot be made to pay for access to instruction. This is why teachers need to carefully consider what skills are being addressed during CBI and what are the most appropriate ways to apply that skill. Can it be applied in a community setting through an activity that is less expensive or free?

Students from families with limited incomes are not excluded from any instructional activities. Instructional materials funds and other school accounts (such as PTA) can also be used to cover the costs of instructional activities.

A field trip is not CBI. Students can be charged a designated price for a field trip, but they cannot be charged or denied participation in a CBI trip due to a lack of funds.

Other Considerations:
CBI is an instructional component of FALS and CALS programs. A student cannot be denied access to CBI except for any reason that would warrant exclusion from any other academic class such as immediate and presently occurring misbehavior that warrants an office referral, posing an immediate and serious threat of injury to self or others, etc. As noted earlier, may not be the most appropriate choice for all students, but it is for the IEP team to decide the nature and extent of participation in CBI by virtue of the goals and objectives designed for a given child. Denying a child access to instruction aimed at IEP goals addressed through CBI is the same denial of a free and appropriate public education for a child who is not allowed to attend English class.

Conclusion

Community-Based Instruction is an integral part of the curriculum for students with cognitive delays, and it is crucial to achieving the long-term outcomes of preparing each student for life as an adult in which he/she is a full participant in society. The community is where our students will use their skills they learn in school once they have matriculated; instruction that is designed to help them apply those skills in the real world must be carefully planned, systematic in design, and rigorous in terms of expectations. Properly implemented, CBI will make the difference for our students between a rich, meaningful and fulfilling life and an adulthood of isolation, boredom, and utter dependence.
References:


Community-Based Instruction Travel Log

Teacher Name: ______________________ School: __________________ Month: __________

Program: ______________________ Grade/Age Range: _______ Page ___ of ___

Signature of Teacher: ________________________________

Signature of Site Administrator: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Life Skills Learning Domains</th>
<th># of Hours Used =</th>
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Pre-Taught Skills:

Indicator/IEP Goal:

Objective (VSC or IEP):

Student Performance Outcome

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Pre-Taught Skills:

Indicator/IEP Goal:

Objective (VSC or IEP):

Student Performance Outcome

Key
PM = Personal Management
COM = Community
C/V = Career/Vocational
CDI = Communication, Decision Making, Interpersonal
VSC = Voluntary State Curriculum (academic goals)
IEP = IEP Goals

Total Hours: ______

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