Social Communication + Emotional Regulation: An Environment for School Success

Introduction to the SCERTS® Model

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Fall 2015 Webinar Series: Real School Climate Change

Dr. Joe Ryan
Beyond Behavior: Creating a Culture for Data-Driven Behavioral Interventions

Dr. Daniel Crimmins & Dr. Michael Gamel-McCormick
Positive Behavior Strategies: The Real Road to School Climate Change

Dr. Barry Prizant, Amy Laurent & Emily Rubin
Social Communication + Emotional Regulation: An Environment for School Success

www.scerts.com
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PhD, CCC-SLP  
- 2014 Recipient of ASHA Honors of the Association, the highest recognition given by ASHA for its 150,000 members  
- Adjunct Professor at Brown University  
- International consultant, author, researcher and private practice director of Childhood Communication Services  

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- Specializes in Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome  
- Co-Author of the SCERTS Assessment Process  

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- Co-Author of the SCERTS Model  
- Specializes in Autism and related developmental disabilities
PART ONE
The SCERTS Model: An Overview
Barry M. Prizant, PhD, CCC-SLP

The SCERTS Model

Collaborators
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Today's Program
Part One: Overview
Barry Prizant

Part Two: Priority Domains – SC & ER
Amy Laurent

Part Three: Transactional Support & Implementation
Emily Rubin

Wrap Up: Barry Prizant

Q&A: Moderated by Clay Whitehead
The SCERTS Domains

- SOCIAL
- COMMUNICATION
- EMOTIONAL
- REGULATION
- TRANSACTIONAL
- SUPPORT

Social Communication (SC)
How Students Engage & Interact With Others

Emotional Regulation (ER)
Capacity to Be Available for Learning & Engaging
Transactional Support (ER)
Support for Communicating, Learning & Regulation, Support for Families & Among Service Providers

Example: Social Communication (SC)

Example: Emotional Regulation (ER)
Example:
Transactional Support (TS)

Research Basis of SCERTS Model
- Primary challenges in ASD
- Neurological differences in ASD
- Learning strengths in ASD
- Child and human development
- Impact of ASD on families
- Effective interventions
- Reports by people with ASD

Full Range of Ages, Disabilities & Abilities
Three Partner Stages
1. Social Partner
2. Language Partner
3. Conversational Partner
Social Partner Stage

Pre-symbolic:
Communication is through gestures and vocalizations

Language Partner Stage

Symbolic:
Communication with speech, photos, pictures, sign language, speech-generating devices

Conversational Partner Stage

Sophisticated Language and Reciprocal Communication:
Sentence and discourse through speech or augmentative communication (AAC)
The SCERTS Framework Embraces Focused, Evidence-Based Approaches

- AAC
- PECS
- TEACCH & Visual Supports
- Social Stories
- Hanen Approach

Transactional Supports for SC and ER

Selection of evidence-based approaches must ...
- Address a range of intervention priorities
- Be matched to a child’s most critical priorities

SCERTS addresses these needs


The Need for a Comprehensive Approach

Core Values & Guiding Principles

The importance of fidelity of practice
Core Values & Guiding Principles

#1 Social communication and emotional regulation

Multimodal Strategies for Teaching & Communications

Many forms of communication are valued:

✓ Gestures
✓ Pictures/Picture Symbols
✓ Sign Language
✓ Speech (Natural or Speech Generating Device (SGD))
✓ Written Language

Core Values & Guiding Principles

#2 Goals and activities are developmentally appropriate and functional
#3 Multiple objectives address interrelatedness of abilities

#4 All behavior serves social communication (SC) and/or emotional regulation (ER) functions

#5 Utilize unique strengths, interests and motivations
# Contexts for learning: routines at school, home, and in community

# Core Values & Guiding Principles

#6
Parents and students are treated with dignity and respect

# Parent-professional collaboration
PART TWO
Priority Domains in SCERTS
Amy C. Laurent, EdM, OTR/L

Many Factors Underlie Behavioral Challenges Seen in Students
✓ Social connectedness difficulties
✓ Language difficulties
✓ Regulatory challenges
✓ Environmental attributes
Social Connections Provide Fuel for the Brain to Grow

Social & Emotional Development

How SCERTS Best Supports a Foundation of Social Connectedness

- Builds capacity to utilize and demonstrate social skills
- Provides a framework for selecting goals and objectives for active engagement and interaction
- Prevents and reduces problem behaviors
Social Communication (SC) Domain

Curriculum in social communication focuses on goals to help a child be increasingly competent, confident, and an active participant in social activities.

SCERTS Curriculum: Scope & Sequence of Goals & Objectives

Used for both assessment and intervention.

Assessment results lead to goals and objectives to include in educational plan.

Social Communication Components

Joint Attention

Social reciprocity and motivation to communicate for a range of purposes.
Social Communication Components

Symbol Use
How a child communicates and plays with others – developmental sophistication

Application of the SCERTS Framework to Identify Intervention Priorities: Partner Stages

Before Words/Pre Symbolic  Emerging Language  Conversational/More Sophisticated Language

- Spontaneous preverbal communication
- Combining symbols, people’s names, verbs, and nouns to share intentions
- Building self-efficacy and social conventions

The Neurology of Social Competence Before Words

Write goals focused on a high rate of nonverbal spontaneous communication

Shift priorities from “following directions” to “initiating interaction”
The Neurology of Social Competence at Emerging Language Stage

Write goals focused on social stimuli:
- Acquiring socially-directed vocabulary
- Acquiring nouns like names of teachers and peers help make connections to people and actions

Example of How Language Fuels Social Connectedness

The Neurology of Social Competence at Conversational Stage

Priority is to increase child’s success in social interactions
Goal is to build social understanding so child is able to modify behavior based on the environment
**Emotional Regulation (ER) Domain**

Supports a child’s ability to regulate emotional arousal to meet the demands of the environment through:
- Self regulation
- Mutual regulation

**Self Regulation**

Strategies a child has at his/her disposal to independently shift arousal and emotional state

**Mutual Regulation**

How a child requests and responds to regulatory assistance offered by others
Emotional Regulation Linked to Problem Behavior

- Difficulty with emotional regulation and use of regulatory strategies underlie problem behavior
- Regulatory abilities develop simultaneously and are interconnected
- Partners play a critical role in influencing achievement

Emotional Regulation
Applying the SCERTS Framework to Identify Priorities

- Before Words/Presymbolic
  - Sensory motor behaviors to soothe and alert
  - Respond to partner assist

- Emerging Language
  - Language used for engagement and soothing
  - Conventional sensory motor strategies

- Conversation/More Sophisticated Language
  - Metacognitive executive functioning
  - Language to request assist
  - Conventional sensory motor

Social Partners

Shift priorities from “managing behavior” to “regulating emotion and arousal”

Write goals focused on learning to use effective sensory motor strategies
Language Partners

Shift priorities from “following directions” to “active engagement and self-guided behavior”

Write goals focused on using language and symbols to help engage and soothe.

Conversational Partners

Shift priorities from “managing behavior” to “expanding repertoire of regulatory strategies”

Write goals focused on helping individuals reflect on and make better decisions to guide their behavior.

“Behavior” is not the issue in autism. It is a by-product, the end result of autism. - Ros Blackburn

Supporting emotional regulation is a critical strategy for preventing problem behavior.
PART THREE
Transactional Support & Implementation
Emily Rubin, MS, CCC-SLP

The SCERTS Model: Transactional Support
The Transactional Support domain of the SCERTS Model refers to:
Interpersonal and learning supports implemented to support a child’s learning and development
Plans to support families and professionals

The SCERTS Model: Interpersonal Supports
Communicative style adjustments to:
Encourage initiation
Model more conventional language
Teach children coping skills
The SCERTS Model: Learning Supports

Environmental arrangements to:

- Entice children to engage in the social world
- Remind children what to say
- Help children understand expectations

Have high expectations for people with ASD, but with appropriate, and when necessary, high levels of support.

- Ros Blackburn

Essential Transactional Supports

- Infusing motivating materials and topics in activities
- Using stage-specific support to enhance smooth transitions
- Using support to define the steps within activities
- Modeling stage-specific strategy to self-regulate
- Ensuring proactive accommodations
Infusing Motivating Materials & Topics in Activities
Turning math into a fishing game
Turning reading into social requests

Using Stage-Specific Support to Enhance Smooth Transitions Between Activities
Using an object to help a child who is before words make a transition

Using Stage-Specific Support to Enhance Smooth Transitions Between Activities
Using pictures to help a child with early language make a transition
Using Stage-Specific Support to Enhance Smooth Transitions Between Activities

Using a written agenda to help a child with conversational language plan ahead for transitions.

Using Support to Define the Steps Within Activities

Picture Sequence

Modeling Stage-Specific Strategies to Self-Regulate

Providing a space to self-soothe or “take a break” from social demands.
Modeling Stage-Specific Strategies to Self-Regulate

Coping Strategies

Ensuring Proactive Accommodations: Identifying “What's Working” & “Next Steps”

Applying the SCERTS Practice Principles
Assessing Impact: Increased Social Engagement & Universal Impact on Learning for All Students

Applying the SCERTS Practice Principles

Assessing Impact: Increased Student Social Engagement & Independence
SCERTS – An Environment for School Success

Progress in Social Communication and Emotional Regulation

- Is an important predictor of school success
- Prevents the development of problem behavior
- Supports positive relationships with peers/adults
- Progress in SC and ER is dependent on the systematic implementation of TS
- SCERTS provides the framework and guidelines to maximize success in school

Q & A

How is it possible to focus on Social Communication and Emotional Regulation with all the pressure for teachers to focus on academic performance?
How is SCERTS different from approaches that rely on behavior management strategies?

How do you convince colleagues that focusing on emotional regulation is not simply letting students get away with “bad behavior” without strict consequences?

Are the SCERTS strategies easily applied in a regular classroom setting? For example, can transactional support strategies be utilized in a general education environment with 24 kids?
Do you feel it is better to implement the SCERTS program in a few classes before introducing to the entire school to gauge success within the population?

How do you measure progress in Social Communication and Emotional Regulation?

How do you involve families? How do you help parents understand SCERTS?
SCERTS seems very detailed and comprehensive. How would you suggest that a school moves into adopting SCERTS?

What type of training is needed for SCERTS to be implemented by a school-based team?

How can the SCERTS Model be applied to children in virtual (online) schools?
How easily could these strategies be taught to and implemented by a general education teacher within a mainstream classroom?

How would SCERTS be implemented during a group session? What would this look like?

How would you incorporate SCERTS with Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS?)
Is the SCERTS Model something that the entire school community can use, or is it better used for individual students as part of their IEPs?

Interested In Becoming An Online Provider?

FT and PT opportunities for:
- SLPs
- OTs
- School Social Workers
- School Psychologists

Refer your colleagues to plearn.co/apply-to-pl

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In the next few days, watch your email for:
- Certificate of Attendance for all attendees
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Dr. Ed Dunkelblau
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April 2016
Dr. Ross Greene
Director of Lives in the Balance, Assoc. Professor of Psychology at Virginia Tech, author of Lost at School, and originator of the Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) model.

Thank You!

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