Structured Teaching--The TEACCH Method
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Structured teaching via the TEACCH method was developed by Professor Eric Schopler and many of his colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The TEACCH method is not considered an actual therapy but rather a therapeutic tool to help autistic individuals understand their surroundings.

Individuals with autism often have difficulty with receptive and expressive language, sequential memory, and handling changes in their environment. The TEACCH method provides the individual with structure and organization. This method relies on five basic principles; a brief description of each is provided below.

Physical structure
Physical structure refers to the actual layout or surroundings of a person's environment, such as a classroom, home, or group home. The physical boundaries are clearly defined and usually include activities like: work, play, snack, music, and transitioning.

Scheduling
A schedule or planner is set up which indicates what the person is supposed to do and when it is supposed to happen. The person's entire day, week, and possibly month, are clearly shown to the person through words, photographs, drawings, or whatever medium is easiest for the person to comprehend.

Work system
The work system tells the person what is expected of him/her during an activity, how much is supposed to be accomplished, and what happens after the activity is completed. The goal is to teach the person to work independently. The work system is also organized in such a way that the person has little or no difficulty figuring out what to do. For example, the activity or task should be performed from top to bottom and from left to right.

Routine
According to the TEACCH method, the most functional skill for individuals with autism is a routine which involves checking one's schedule and following the established work system. This routine can then be used throughout the person's lifetime and in multiple situations.

Visual structure
Visual structure refers to visually-based cues regarding organization, clarification, and instructions to assist the person in understanding what is expected of him/her. For example, a visual structure may involve using colored containers to assist the person in sorting colored materials into various groups or displaying an example of a stamped envelope when the person is asked to place stamps on envelopes.

The TEACCH method is primarily used to assist the autistic individual in better understanding his/her environment. The techniques described above are not faded out over time; but rather, they are to be consistently used across a variety of environments.