

Showcasing Evidence Based Practices (EBP) in maaps member schools Interview Questions

The **maaps** EBP Committee is looking to learn about the EBPs that you use at your school. The EBP can be clinical or education based. Please answer the questions below regarding the EBP you wish to highlight.

Name of Person Interviewed: Christine A. Lenahan, Associate Vice President for Curriculum and Program Development
Date: 2/27/15
School: Cardinal Cushing Centers, Inc. **EBP Showcased:** PCI Reading Program and Anaphoric Cueing
Type of EBP (clinical, educational, etc.): Educational

1. What issue or circumstances initially made you look for an EBP to better serve your student population?

IDEA and NCLB require the use of research based interventions or EBP. We have implemented EBP programs and instructional strategies across all of our programs. Two such interventions are the PCI Reading Program (PRO-ED) and the use of anaphoric cueing; an instructional strategy for answering who, what, when and where questions.

2. Why did you choose this EBP?

PCI Reading Program

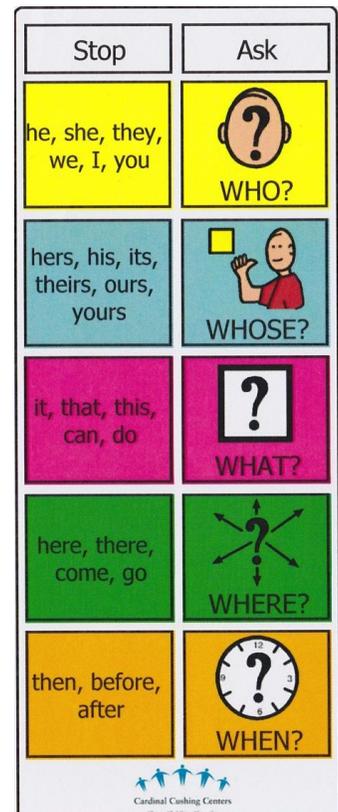
Many of our students enter Cardinal Cushing as non – readers or with fragmented skills as a result of varied instructional programs. We chose PCI as it is a whole-word visual discrimination program using repetition and review; a format that matches the learning styles of our students. The PCI program incorporates a sight word approach of building a base of high-frequency words and using those words to teach phonemic patterns and decoding strategies (PCI Reading Program Research and References Summary, PRO-ED).

Anaphoric Cueing

“W” questions are problematic for students on the spectrum and those with intellectual disabilities. Research (O’Connor & Klein, 2004) has shown that by learning a list of related words, anaphora, and answering questions, students can make significant improvement in their comprehension of text; particularly narrative text, often the most challenging.

Taking it a step further, pairing the word with an icon and color coding each of the “W” questions and related anaphora, a visual is created for text to cue card. With this additional step we are tapping into the student’s visual strengths to generate questions using the visual connection between icon and text.

<i>Stop and Ask</i>	
<i>When we read:</i>	<i>We ask:</i>
<i>He, She, They, We, I, You</i>	<i>Who?</i>
<i>Hers, His, Its, Theirs, Ours, Yours</i>	<i>Whose?</i>
<i>It, That, This, Can, Do</i>	<i>What?</i>
<i>Here, There, Come, Go</i>	<i>Where?</i>
<i>Then, Before, After</i>	<i>When?</i>



3. What made you choose this EBP instead of another one? Were you strongly considering another EBP?

Some of our classes were using the EDMARK Program. While EDMARK is effective in teaching a prescribed list of vocabulary words (350), phonemic awareness or phonics is not part of the program. This missing component impacts the ability to read text beyond those words contained in the EDMARK series. The PCI program uses a base of high-frequency words, which are used to teach phonemic patterns and decoding strategies; all recommendations of the National Reading Panel.

With regards to reading comprehension, PCI does provide comprehension activities. The introduction of anaphoric cueing was to give teachers a strategy to use across reading activities and texts.

4. How was or is the implementation process?

Implementation of the anaphoric cueing system required one in-service block and the provision of the cue cards. It is a straight forward strategy and requires little training.

The PCI Reading program was introduced as a three month pilot program in two classes; a high school class and post-secondary class. Students were identified for participation using the PCI placement assessments. Ongoing data collection measured progress. Both teachers saw significant growth as well as a high level of interest in the texts and materials. Using a teach-to-teacher model, staff in the pilot program gave an in-service to staff on the use, materials, and student data. The program is currently used in all classrooms.

5. Did you run into any challenges implementing this EBP?

Anything “new” is always a challenge. By having colleagues share their experiences, the ease in using the program and the success with their students, the question was no longer “do I have to use this program?” but, “when are my kits arriving?”

We did recognize that for some students, Level 1 was challenge. For those students we implemented PCI Environmental Print; a curriculum for students who are non-verbal or who have been unsuccessful with sight-word based reading programs. After completing the Environmental Print several of these students are transitioning to PCI Level 1.

6. How did you learn about this EBP?

In my previous role as special education director, I implemented the PCI program with students on the spectrum, those with intellectual disabilities and with students with significant learning disabilities. The data from our implementation of the program showed success for these specific populations of students. That experience led me to adopt the program at Cardinal Cushing.

As a professor at Salem State University in the Autism Certificate program, I am always researching interventions for students on the spectrum; particularly those interventions that address academic needs. In a review of reading strategies, anaphoric cueing was cited as a EBP for students on the spectrum. After further review, I incorporated it into my course; Autism Interventions in School and Home. The response has been positive from my students, many of whom have tried it with their own students – including general education students!

7. Do you have any advice for another school potentially looking into this EBP or another one?

There are a lot of programs that claim to be research-based or claim to be specific to one population or another. Identifying a program that incorporates the learning style of students and not solely designed to address deficit areas should be a strong consideration of any adoption. In addition, establishing a pilot program to introduce a

new program can create greater staff “buy in” to whatever change is decided. Giving staff the opportunity to take a leadership role in implementation also supports a successful adoption of the program or strategy.

If you have additional questions, please contact Theresa Melito, M.Ed. Director of Member Assistance and Development at tmelito@maaps.org or by phone at 781-909-5308.