



TURN AUTISM AROUND
WITH DR. MARY BARBERA

Transcript for Podcast Episode: 027

Teaching Social Skills with TAGTeach: Interview with Theresa McKeon

Hosted by: Dr. Mary Barbera

Mary: You're listening to another episode of the Turn Autism Around podcast, and today I have a very special guest who is a friend of mine for over a decade. Her name is Theresa McKeon. And today we're talking all about TAGteach and how it works wonders for typically developing children and for children with autism.

Mary: So before we get to that interview, I'd like to give a shout out to someone who gave us a five-star rating and review on iTunes. It's from Tiffany. She said, "so happy she has a podcast because of this woman. I learned exactly what my son needed for him to start talking about potty training, etc. She has an online course and a book as well. Kudos to you, Mary Barbera for your dedication to helping parents and children that are dealing with autism." Thank you so much, Tiffany, for that great rating and review. And if you haven't subscribed and or left me a rating and review, I would love it if you would do that by going to iTunes or wherever you listen to this podcast and giving me a rating and review. So let's get to this very special interview with Theresa McKeon.

Welcome to the Turn Autism Around podcast for both parents and professionals in the autism world who want to turn things around, be less stressed, and lead happier lives. And now your host, autism mom, behavior analyst and bestselling author, Dr. Mary Barbera.

Mary: Welcome back to another episode of the Turn Autism Around podcast. I am so thrilled to welcome a good friend of mine that I met more than a decade ago. Her name is Theresa McKeon, and Theresa spent 30 years as a national gymnastics coach, and she was determined to find a way to speed up skill acquisition for her young gymnast while decreasing stress and fear in the learning environment, and Theresa's search for behaviorally sound techniques, clean instructions and proper timing of feedback and reinforcement led to the development of the TAGteach methodology, which we're going to describe what that is at length. But Theresa now consults and designs skill acquisition programs

in multiple fields. She's a sought after speaker in the United States and around the world and recently published her first book: Don't Nag... Tag! Success the First Time with TAGteach. So thanks for joining us, Theresa.

Theresa: Good morning and thank you for having me. It's good to see you again.

Mary: I know it's been too long, that's for sure. And we did meet in person a few times, I believe it was 2009 so we're talking a decade ago. So before we get into of how we met and everything, can you describe your, your fall into the autism world, or pretty much probably starts with your fall into learning about Karen Pryor clicker training, I would assume.

Theresa: Yeah, it's a... Well, it's an interesting story to me. As a gymnastics coach and they were pretty high-level kids, I could, I don't want to say bullying... I could adult to them. Right. I would tell them they paid a lot of money to be there. They wanted to be great athletes. I would tell them to do something, they did it. I didn't have any discipline problems.

Theresa: And then, I got a horse. And you cannot tell a horse what to do if it doesn't want to be told what to do. And he had a very strong personality and was dangerous, and I tried everything. I tried running him ragged, I tried bullying him, I tried yelling. I even tried being nice all, come on, look my cute horse, come on. And none of those things worked. So I went online and found an article... it was just when the online search came out, by Alexander Kurland and she was just starting to do clicker training with horses.

Theresa: I went out, I tried it, and about within 10 minutes it was like my horse turned to me and said, well, why didn't you just say so? And I thought, ah, it's about communication and finding common ground between the learner and the teacher, which we did not have. I was just always telling, my learner was always just doing. So anyway, I looked into it more and found out that Alexandra had learned from Karen Pryor... Ended up contacting, or she contacted me after an article I wrote. She put me together with Joan Orr who was also working in some... had gymnast, daughters who are a gymnast. And she was also had been into clicker training and said, wow, why are these teachers and these coaches not using positive reinforcement? So Karen put us together. Joan was a scientist, helped us do a study and that's kinda how it started. And then we found the groups who are interested we're not always athletes, but that people who worked with children with autism, were also interested. And then we worked with them, as people like you. So I am not an expert. I would go and speak with people who were experts.

Mary: So you're not an expert at autism, but you're an expert at TAGteach because you helped to create the TAGteach methodology from clicker training. So can you,

can you describe what TAGteach is, what it stands for, and how it's used? Tell me how it was used for the gymnast first because I think that's really interesting.

Theresa: Yeah, so TAGteach stands for, it's an acronym, the tag is an acronym for teaching with acoustic guidance. And one of the things that I used with the gymnast's was the clicker, and in the beginning, it was just this fun toy. They all wanted to use it. They all wanted to, what we call tag, put that acoustic mark to the other person and then one day one of the kids said, hey, my mom uses that with our dog, and she said, you can't train us like a dog. And I said, well, I am actually training you like a respectful teacher, because all we were doing was deciding as teachers what we wanted, and then letting in a very quick, nonemotional way, letting the student know that they had performed the skill and then said, yes, that's what we want.

Theresa: At the time, I had originally tried to give them little chocolates or something, but what I found was they'd say, wait, wait, wait. Hold on, let me just do this again. And I went, ah, success was what is reinforcing, right? The the success when you want to do something at the moment is the most reinforcing thing. You want to do it again. Now, if you're teaching people who don't want to learn, that's a little different scenario. You have to work with different reinforcers. But I was really lucky because the one thing they wanted to do succeed, and it's as if I could tell them the instant they succeeded, that was just amazingly reinforcing, they wanted to do it again and again.

Mary: So one of the things that stick out for me when, when I heard your story of buying the horse and then creating TAGteach to work with humans, so teaching with acoustic guidance, is when you explained it somewhere, whether that was in person or online, I'm not sure. But when they went to do a handstand and when they got their legs completely up to the right position, that's when someone, you or another child could be watching them and they would get up to the exact spot and then the click would happen. The audible click so that they knew, yes, I got up to the very right position. Because otherwise if you don't have that click, it's a very, you know, instant response. You could only be there for a split second, or if you're trying to do a trick like a roundoff or a cartwheel or whatever, you're marking or clicking for one behavior that is really good. So that was a good, you know, for our listeners out there and it would probably be better with a video and showing them clicks and everything, which there's plenty of YouTube examples of TAGteach and there's...

Theresa: And if they go, if they go to TAGteach.com so that they can see the videos that are... There are some videos out there that we did not put out, but people said they were TAGteach videos, go to the website, the TAGteach website and get the good videos. Sorry, just wanted to say that.

Mary: Yeah, no that's a good idea. So you know, basically the power of, you know, just like you worked with your horse to mark or to click one good behavior, it was, it was really breaking it down for the gymnasts and they were able to even click each other, um, give, give feedback to each other instead of just, I think you mentioned this too, instead of just, I don't know how old they were, say 10 years old, 10-year-old girls watching or really just chatting with their neighbor while they're waiting for their turn. They were actually focused on, this is my, my learner pair. I need to watch Suzy and give her the click when it when it's at the appropriate time.

Theresa: Yeah. We call it peer tagging. So they, you know, the peers are tagging each other and what we found was not only are they not out bouncing off walls or trampolines or not paying attention, you know, I'm air quoting not paying attention, but they were focused on the very thing that they were then going to have to do. So they were mentally practicing it by watching and saying, yes, that was it. And I knew that they could understand what they, what was going to be expected of them. Because if they clicked at the wrong moment, the wrong skill, I went, they don't know what I've asked them to do, even visually to see it. So how can I ask them to do it physically? So it was a great skill for me to monitor whether the athletes knew what they were supposed to do and what position, what is vertical, right. You know, or what is the 90% angle that I wanted, and if they marked at the right time or clicked at the right time, I knew that at least intellectually they knew or visually they knew what the trick was. I got double learning double practice.

Mary: I really... Those are some of the things that stuck in my mind about the gymnasts. And I know we're here to talk about autism, but you know, it was really stuck in my mind, that visual of the girls chatting with each other versus really on point and, and marketing each other's behaviors.

Theresa: And I think there are a few studies, gosh I have to go back and look, but I believe there are at least two studies were with children with ASD, did peer tagging studies for social skills, when they would see somebody smile, they would tag, with each other, with peers. So I think there has been some work with, with people with autism.

Mary: Well if you find that, if you send it to me, we'll put it in the show notes for this, and people can find it, which would be excellent. So let's transition. How has TAGteach then been used to help kids with autism?

Theresa: Well, I'm going to veer off just slightly and say what's interesting to me personally, and I'm not sure this would be what other people would say was, it has helped people with autism by helping parents or people who work with them to more clearly define what it is they're looking for and to, uh, because it is

that one mark, if you're going to click it as a single instant that is that you're looking for. So it helps the teachers say, okay, I'm only looking for one thing and I've already decided what that is, so it's a little calming. To me, that's the most important part. And then on the other side, the children are not getting mixed messages. You're very clear about what it, what you're looking for and what's acceptable and what is going to be reinforced.

Mary: So, some of the things I know that I've used TAGteach with kids with autism, including my son, is articulation, eye contact, handwriting, really any skill. And I did a study and I presented at the ABA conference with you and it was so funny because I had taken the online course, the TAGteach online course back in 2009. And this is, you know, a couple of years after I wrote my book, I had been a behavior analyst for five years. And I had taken the online course because it seemed, once I heard your story about the gymnast and, and a lot of my clients at the time were completely nonvocal, and not understanding directions. And I was just like, how do I breach those kids quicker, more effectively, more efficiently. And so I took the online course and I really, I really loved it back then, it was 10 years ago.

Mary: And I remember it was just very laid out. It was not for behavior analysts, but it's really general, basic and general. But it was so like, oh wow. You know, cause sometimes we get a little too far ahead of ourselves. I remember, you know, one of the activities was like, teach a child or teach someone, it doesn't have to be a child, doesn't have to be a child. You know, they don't talk about autism and the, in the basic course I don't think, but, you know, teach someone how to do a new skill. So Spencer at the time was probably around 10 years old. My typically developing child. And I was just like, all right, Spence, I'm going to teach you how to tie a man's tie. You know, I'm going to use this TAGteach, I wanna teach you this. And he goes, I'm not your lab rat. And he walked away. I'm like, are you serious?

Mary: He can go all the way back to Skinner then!

New Speaker: So I didn't have a willing participant and then years later he learned on it YouTube, so, you know. So I took the online course and then I remember you calling me and saying, Hey Mary, you know I had like very little information about TAGteach. I mean I did take the TAGteach course online, I did all the activities and everything. And but I was going to the ABA conference, I was presenting and you knew I was going and you had submitted a proposal with three other people and you said, hey, I know you're going to the ABA conference. I think it was in Texas and 2009. And I was, you know... Somebody, somebody that was on the symposium proposal got ill, maybe she was pregnant or having difficulty or whatever. And so she needed to drop out. So you're like, can you do a presentation on TAGteach and autism because that's what her

thing was going to be. I mean, you don't have to do the same presentation obviously. Cause I don't know. And you know, can you, since you're going to be there, could you come up with something? This is back in January so I had until May. So I'm like, you know, I don't know very much about TAGteach, but yeah, that'll give me something to do. I'll create some kind of little study and everything. And then you're like, oh, by the way, BF Skinner's daughter Julie Vargas [inaudible]. I'm like, how do I get myself into these messes? No pressure, no pressure.

Mary: I was like, okay, now I know this much about TAGteach and now I'm going to be present. Now I'm going to create a study. You know, cause you can't go to the ABA conference and present without data. And I just so happen to take Lucas to special Olympics swimming like right around that time and the coach is like, tie your bathing suit, Lucas. And I was just like, yeah, that's not gonna happen. So I'm like, he's, you know, 13 or 12 or whatever he was back then and I'm tying his bathing suit and I'm like, I could teach him to tie his shoes, potentially teach him, you know, because it's not, you know, it's not just tying shoes, it's tying trash bags and tying your bathing suit and, and he has decent fine motor skills. And I was actually interested in teaching my other kids that were, had higher language and cognitive ability to tie their shoes. So I'm like, that's what I'll do. I'll teach him to tie his shoes.

Mary: And so that is pretty well documented in a video blog and YouTube clip that I'll link to the show notes and it was very successful. I did five minute sessions a day. It took me, I think total less than an hour and a half. And I documented everything with graphs and everything. And also with videos, some of the early videos were like, oh man, this is not going to go well. We have a lot of work to do. But he did learn to tie his shoes and I created the procedure that helped him. So it really worked well and you were kind enough to give me feedback on my study as I created it and as I was doing it. So we got to be friends than by presenting together in front of Julie Vargas and then, and then you ended up coming to my home too, you were on another trip on the East coast, then you decided to make a couple of days at my house and, and to give me feedback about TAGteach in, in the natural environments with clients and with my son.

Theresa: Yeah that was so nice. I think we had like five different environments. So it was wonderful.

Mary: So we were able to really apply that and I know that TAGteach you still use some of those videos. I still have a couple of those videos in my, I have a bonus for my current active members of my online course and community on TAGteach and autism. And I include some of those videos. So it's a great technology of, you know, one of the things that stick out to me when I remember back to when you

were giving me feedback is, you know, I had been like I said, a BCBA for a number of years and you are not a BCBA.

Theresa: No.

Mary: And, but you were like reminding me, Hey Mary, there's too many stimuli in the field. There's too much going on in that book. You need like two pictures on that page, not 25. Um, bringing it back. You know, kind of peeling the onion. Like if a child or adult that you're using TAGteach with gets three errors, we need to, we need to peel the onion back. We need to think about how we can prompt them or... I remember the shoe tying, for instance, there was a difficult part with making a bow. Like Lucas would make it too big or too small. And so we decided to put a little piece of masking tape to mark the spot. So like there is an example where that's not in my ABA training. That's it's just a part of like, let's step back. Let's add a prompt, let's add a bar. Yeah.

Theresa: It's adding tools to your toolkit, right. They're just if one thing doesn't work, you need another tool. So give me some ideas.

Mary: Yeah, yeah. And you were really, really great at helping me become a better teacher and become a behavior analyst. So what are the the mistakes you see when you do work with, not just behavior analysts, but you work with a lot of teachers, a lot of trainers and what, what do you think are like a couple of the mistakes you see most commonly?

Theresa: Funny. When the teacher has a picture in their mind of what they're seeing. Especially if something's on the table and you're doing writing or you're doing, you know, pick up a pencil. You know, in your mind what you're looking for. They don't. And so when they don't do all of those things that you're looking for, you go, that's wrong. And it's hard for you to break down wrong because it is just second nature. All the movements that you do to pick up a pencil and move it into your fingers and get it in the right spot, or pick up a glass or tie your shoes or any of these things, there's this picture that's so in your mind, it's hard to break down.

Theresa: So I, I think that is the hardest things is if we are teaching, we are probably pretty good at what we do to be the teacher, right? The very fact that you're teaching someone else means that you probably do it really well, and have forgotten the steps that lead up to doing it. And even when you do think you can break it down, it's still too big. And that's frustrating to go, but I just told you, or I just showed you, or how come you couldn't take your finger and touch that dot. It's just so easy. It gets frustrating. And that goes across whether I'm teaching factory workers or organizational business or kids with autism or sports people. The teacher gets frustrated cause I already know what it is. The other day,

yesterday I was clicker training my new horse and I wanted him to touch something and he wouldn't. And I thought, well, why won't he touch this? I'm putting it right up in front of his face and I just went, ah, it's too much for what reason?

Theresa: Now my job is to figure out why is it too much? Is it too much stimuli? Is it I don't understand what you're doing? Do I need to make the skill smaller or do I need to make the environment quieter? Or maybe both. But that's what I want teachers to remember. No matter where you're using, whatever technology, where they're using your technology or TAGteach or fluency or whatever you're looking at is, look at the, look at the learner. If they're learning great, keep going what you're doing. But is it the skill that needs to be broken down? Is it the environment that needs to quiet? And that might include you. You might be too much in the environment for them to, to practice or feel confident.

Theresa: And with adults who don't have special needs that I've found, I am the stimulus that's too much. Right? So if I'm looking at you, giving you instructions, all you're doing is thinking, am I nodding my head right? Am I blinking the amount of times? Is my, you know, my eyebrow the right way. But if I can turn around and talk to you without looking at you, I've quieted the environment enough and basically told my learner, I'm going to give you a time to think about what I'm actually saying. Am I going too deep?

Mary: No, no. I do think that when kids don't make progress on anything or when I don't make progress on anything, most of the time it's that I don't have the prerequisite skill, uh, the skills needed. You know, people are working on, you know, single addition math or double addition math. And I'm like, how fluid are they with number identification? Where are they with one to one correspondence or, or whatever? Or if they're working on two digits, can they, you know, how fluid are they with one digit? Well, they're not, but it's ready to move on. They're in third grade, like get with the program. It's like you can't just pull somebody into Spanish four when they haven't mastered Spanish one, two, and three. You know, it's like it's not going to work.

Mary: So when people are struggling, you know, even in my business, if there is a struggle, it's a systems issue. It's something that isn't, you know, there's somebody who's not fluent with something. There's, there's an issue, there's a breakdown somewhere. So I think a lot of times I just really tell people like you need to bring it back. But I think TAGteach also with that kind of... And I don't know if this is an actual rule with TAGteach, I kind of remember it as such, but I could be wrong. But like three attempts to do something and it's not working. You've got to add a prompt or is that, is that kind of a rule?

Theresa: Yeah, the three try to rule, you're exactly right. Three tries depending on your learner. I know with your son three was too many, right? I don't want him to get to the point where he throws that down and goes, I don't want to do it anymore. Right. So can I catch it on the first try? Can I catch it on the second try? So depending, the gymnasts were pretty good. They could go to three most of the time. So just depends on your learner. Me, if I failed three times in front of somebody that I respect, I'm going to be horrified. So don't let me fail three times, please!

Mary: Yeah. Yeah. So I know one of the main challenges of spreading the TAGteach technology is that people like your gymnast's parents say, I don't want the same thing clicker training used for animals and their... You know, even a lot of people have problems with ABA in general and they're like, you know, ABA is dog training and this is inhumane. It's like, no, it's the most evidence based treatment for autism. And if you're seeing not good procedures being done, that doesn't, that doesn't represent what I would consider good ABA or good TAGteach or whatever. So how do you, how do you respond to people that say that TAGteach is just clicker training in disguise and that we shouldn't be using it for humans if we're using it for animals?

Theresa: Yeah. Boy, I used to battle with this a lot of, mostly in my mind I won't battle with, with, with somebody because if they don't like it, that's fine. You can explain to them the science, but at this point, they probably don't want to hear anything about that. I simply can go in without the audible marker and use something that they are familiar with, use an audible marker that they use every day, which is, yes, or good, or something that that is typically acceptable. And then you can say you do see the same, right? Or you know, in a nice way you could say, yes is my marker. This is a little faster, little cleaner and has less stress involved with it. I'm not putting as much pressure on you. I won't have a tendency to go "yeesss" and do all these weird things that we do with our words.

Theresa: But if they're not accepting of that and I can't get them to learn, then I won't use that marker. So I won't fight them on that. There is nothing about saying do this good job that is any different than, that's not dog training. I'm using air quotes for those of you who are listening. To them, that's normal training. And that's what we've always tried to say, that being clear about what we want and putting parameters around success and then saying, yes, you've done it. What is dog training about that?

Mary: Right. I remember one time you, you did training and you said, I agree. I think, you know, using yes or using, um, you know, I use a little plastic bear in a see-through cup for kids because that's just... it provides both the visual and the auditory cues. And I've found that to be a really good marker both visually and auditorily. But one of the things you said one time during our training was like,

okay, if I tell all six of you to do this task, you know, just make, make the number five sign or give me a high five or whatever. Something silly. Yeah. And then, you know, for person number one, I'm like, Oh, good job. And then for person number two, excellent. And person number three, perfect. That was so awesome. And then, you know, your person number one is like, I just got a good job.

Mary: Like there's a lot of emotion. Yeah, there's a lot of emotion with that. And then it's constantly, you know, the good job actually can slow down intensive teaching, and I recommend not saying a good job. Really just getting to the next task is, you know, for intensive teaching, touch your nose, say hi, wave. You know, it basically, the next demand is the reinforcement for the first demand. And then you're getting the reinforcement at the end. So actually a good job is really annoying, and can really slow you down. So yeah, but with the clicker, like for the shoe tying, if you watch that video, that's part of my blog that I'm gonna put in the show notes, you know the clicker is very neutral. It's not this, you know, any expression on your face as needed. You know, if Theresa is working with my son or I'm working with my son, it's the same marker. So it's not like I only get excited if Theresa's here doing cartwheels and saying...

Theresa: I'll be really clear because some people have misinterpreted this: while we're acquiring a skill while we're practicing a piece. It is great to use this mark that does not bring emotion because what I want them to do is stay, yes, I heard I did this correct. What did I just do? I want them to stay in that learning bubble for a moment longer. I just heard that moment is actually a bit of time, it's 2.2 seconds. So I want them to stay for a moment to go, oh that was right. And then if they, when they're done processing it, then we can talk about that was, I'm so glad you, you know, engaged with me and the emotion, the emotion is great. I'm very emotional. I really want you to win. I want you to have fun. But at the moment of learning, at the moment of instruction, if I can keep this stimulus down so that you can think about what just happened and what you did, then maybe next time it's, it's uh, your memory's a little clearer and it's a little easier to grasp again. So I'm not saying don't be emotional. I love emotion. Just not at that moment to say yes, that was correct, for 2.2 seconds.

Theresa: [Inaudible] and that's why we say, let's do this three times with people who have, you know, accessible to verbal directions. I'll say, let's do this three times so that I don't interrupt them in those three times and then they can try it, click, try it, click try it, click, excellent. Wow. That was fantastic! But you had those three moments of just focus. And have you found that with the children, even with profound autism, right, that they kind of have had some of the same reaction to that?

Mary: Yeah. Yeah. And you know, we do use edibles and we do use praise and we do use other things but you know, in general, but like when you're teaching Lucas to tie his shoes and he's in the middle of making a bow, that's not the time to be delivering an edible. Though for him, and he has, you know, pretty severe autism. You know, when I taught him to tie his shoes, it was like set a timer for five minutes, deliver the tags, the clicks, work on things. As you know, for Lucas it might be three times too, even though he has severe autism, I might have to tell him not like three times in a row, but okay, let's do it. Okay, click, okay, let's do that again. Click, click, you know, build that... Because shoe tying is not just one skill. It's building the sequence. So we had to get step one done and, and fluent and good. And then we built on step two. So then we had to kind of chain them together. So it was a lot of work during those five minutes. And then at the end, he got an edible reinforcement. Lots of praise. Lots of, that was excellent.

Theresa: Well, and if he kept up for those five minutes, it's apparent that there was some reinforcement going on as he would have stopped. Right. So we're not... the edible, that's why I think some people unless they're really into behavior analysis, they may not understand what we mean by reinforcement. And you know, there was something in his environment that was keeping him going. So it wasn't like you would hold the reinforcement after each click, there was something reinforcing that behavior, then you reinforce the whole session at the end.

Mary: Yeah. And he really enjoyed... He was working with, I was his only instructor for it. You know, I'm very well paired. I have very good instructional control. And if you watch the video as you can see that, like I'm kind of helping him and he's kind of laying his head on my, my arm and stuff. And so, you know, we don't want to make it like look like TAGteach is like very neutral and not, you know, pairing with the child. It is very positive and if it's not positive than something's wrong.

Theresa: Exactly. Exactly.

Mary: So one more thing. As a, as a registered nurse and I'm married to a position, they have a residency program and they're starting a med school and so I was interested in a couple of years ago, there is a, an orthopedic surgeon who taken TAGteach and is researching it now more so. But you also talked about there some research on it. So can you tell me about the orthopedic surgeon and what he's doing briefly, and then also some of the research that is either in the works already or already published on TAGteach?

Theresa: Yeah. Already published, two studies, already published a journal... I'll have to give them to you.

Mary: Yeah, yeah. I mean if they're on the TAGteach website too, we can put them in the show notes too.

Theresa: There's at least two. He's always calling me and going, hey, we just submitted for another one. So they're continuing to do research on it. Dr. Marty Levy, or Dr. Martin Levy out of Montefiore hospital in New York, in the Bronx. And he was a clicker trainer of a dog. He did disc dog. Yeah, the frisbee with a dog. And he was trying, he taught classes to people to do this and he found that when you're teaching people how to throw a disc, there are certain things they need to know. He found a mirror was helpful until people released the discs and they all went into the mirrors and he thought, and I need something else.

Theresa: He found TAGteach, he went this is fantastic. And then he said, oh no, this is fantastic. I might be able to use this. He's also the director of the residency program. He teaches all the residents. And what he found...

Mary: In orthopedic surgery.

Theresa: Yes. Well, they were coming in because kids don't do what they used to do. Now they play games, uh, on video instead of going out and hammering and sawing and nailing your, you know, your go-carts. So they were having kids come in, never having held a drill, never having held a saw or a hammer. And so they had a lot of training in the entire industry. And he was chosen and given grants to do research with TAGteach, develop these small modules that included using markers, peer tagging, actual clickers and all of this and this reinforcement protocol. And boy they're, the research was great and fantastic. He's been, you know, on NPR and everybody's looking at it and still getting grants and he's just done a great job with this. And it's been very helpful. It's been very helpful.

Mary: Yeah, that's exciting. And I can see that as a, as a trainer, I did my dissertation on training. I don't know if you know that, but my Ph.D. dissertation is on training. And I trained college students to name the verbal operants and incorporated fluency and retention and, and so, yeah. So I'm very interested in training and, and especially in the medical field, I can see all kinds of wide open spaces for TAGteach to train.

Theresa: They were doing a lot with EMS work, like an intubating. Um, they're doing some with... I just went back down to them to do work with emergency obstetrics, because boy, you got to know what you need to do really fast because they go downhill so fast you can lose a patient. So we went in and basically reworked the emergency instructions and what you should be calling out and what you should be asking for. I don't know. I think they're planning to do research with that. They wanted to because it's grant work. They obviously need to come back and

say how things are going. So I'll talk to them in a month or so? We'll have to get some information.

Mary: Is that the kind of thing you, you do is you go to places like hospitals and give training on this or how does that work? If, if you know, I'm even thinking of my local hospital where, you know, as I said, there are residency programs, there's a new medical school starting. Like how would, how would somebody, you know, start this if they knew nothing about TAGteach?

Theresa: So I think the best thing to do is have an introductory course. Or what they have done, is they came and asked me to come in and just look at their work and say, this is what we're doing now. How would you suggest training it? And then there's train the trainers, right? Because you want, because of TAGteach and the way it works, you can learn to teach something with TAGteach and the person who learned should be able to turn around and teach it exactly the same way. In fact, one of the studies he did was secondary teaching of TAGteach. Like when they learned with TAGteach, could they turn around and teach the exact same way? Because that's important. You need to expand your base of teachers.

Mary: Yeah, I mean the areas... So how about research outside of the surgical field. There have been other published researches in what area with TAGteach? There's been a research study on golf instruction.

Theresa: Oh my gosh. I think something like 60 papers now. They had been done on everything from karate or, I'm sorry, I think it was judo, Yoga, autism. Gosh, I can't even think of them all. It's just so wide-ranging, which I love because most of them have been being done by behavior... BCBAs? Or I'm sorry, students getting their BCBA and going through that training and getting their master's or their doctorates and then doing research. So there's data that comes with this and it's a great to research. If you go to the website, there is a link for research.

Mary: Okay, great.

Theresa: Yeah, definitely. And Joan is pretty good about keeping it updated. And if anybody knows of any that we don't know about cause people sometimes do research without us knowing it. We're like, wait a minute, were you trained in it? Which is always interesting. But anyway, it's all up there.

Mary: Cool. So, as we wrap up, part of my podcast goals is to help parents and professionals be less stressed and be happier and live happier lives. Do you have any advice or practices or activities that you use or you know of that can create less stress and a happier...

Theresa: Well, this sounds terrible and I almost never do this, but I, I do want to say in my book there's, there's a bunch of things and examples that they might go, oh, I know this. I could do that. That's simple. I could start there.

Mary: Okay. So that's, Don't Nag... Tag! Success the First Time with TAGteach, is the name of your book. We'll link that in the show notes as well.

Theresa: Because it's just online at Amazon.

Mary: Yeah. Yeah. Excellent. So if someone wants to learn more about TAGteach, they just go to TAGteach.com. And where can they find you if you know, cause you also do a lot speaking around the world and other types of presentations?

Theresa: Yeah, other kinds of training. It's not other than TAGteach, but it's distinct from that. So they can go to Theresamckeeon.com, they can go to TAGteach.com, go to the website because there Martha Gabler has some great free introductory online courses for parents with autism. Very simple. It's very... not a lot of difficult dialogue or words. So, and it's free so you can get a shot there.

Mary: And there is also a basic TAGteach course that's for free. So there's an autism tactics course for free as well as a general TAGteach course for free. Very, you know, very, and, but there's also some paid online training and some lectures as well.

Theresa: Yeah, absolutely. You can go as far as you want, there's up to level three and you can get really into it if you enjoy it. Or you can just go ahead and take the free course and go as far as you'd like.

Mary: Yeah. Yeah. And I think TAGteach is just one of those like you said, a tool in the toolbox. Learn more about, I think you become a better teacher of anyone. You'll become a better behavior analyst, speech pathologist or parent. And I do, I know a little bit about Martha Gabler is... is it Gabler?

Theresa: Gabler.

Mary: Martha Gabler is a parent of a son with autism and she developed the autism TAGteach course and she had a lot of success with her son using TAGteach. So definitely check out those resources. I think you've been a wealth of information today Theresa and I'm so excited to catch up with you. And for more information about my online courses, which I do have a bonus video on TAGteach and we do incorporate a lot of the tools of TAGtech, you can go to marybarbera.com/workshop and I hope you guys all tune in next week for another episode of the Turn Autism Around podcast. Thanks so much, Theresa, for joining us.

Theresa: Thank you, Mary, for all you do too.

Mary: Thank you.

Thanks for listening to the Turn Autism Around podcast with Dr. Mary Barbera.
For more information, visit Marybarbera.com.