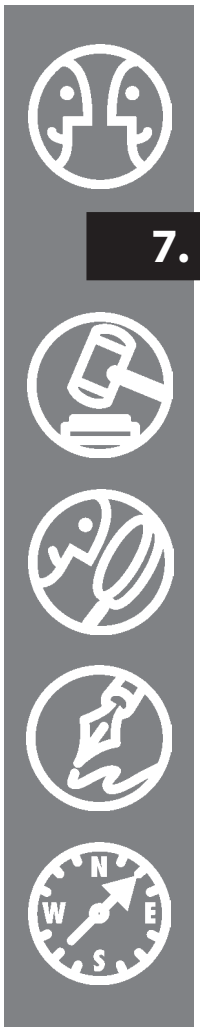


Student Resource Guide

7. Strategies for Successful Teaching - Part 2

Student Resource Guide: SESSION 7

Strategies for Successful Teaching: Part II

OUTCOMES

When you finish this session, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate least-to-most prompting strategy.
- Define partial participation and describe how it can be used with an individual with whom you are working.
- Describe several types of adaptations and identify how an individual you are working with can use an adaptation.
- Describe reinforcement strategies.
- Demonstrate shaping as an instructional strategy.
- Identify how to ensure individuals generalize skills.
- Describe strategies for evaluating teaching success and identify when it is appropriate to modify teaching strategies.
- Describe strategies for ensuring that skills are maintained.

KEY WORDS

Acquisition: Development of a new skill or way of doing something.

Adaptation: Objects or devices that are made or changed specifically to help an individual learn or do an important skill.

Functional skills: Skills that are necessary for the individual's own self-care. Skills that someone will have to perform for the individual if the individual doesn't learn to perform them.

Generalization: Performing a newly learned skill in whatever situation the individual needs or wants to use the skill. A way to help someone overcome their fears by offering objects or activities somewhat like those used to teach the skill.

Partial participation: Teaching or supporting an individual to perform or to participate, at least partially, in an activity even though he or she may not be able to function independently in the activity.

Prompt: Providing additional information to ensure success.

Reinforcement: Rewards given after successfully performing a desired behavior.

Task analysis: Listing the sequence of actions or steps involved in completing a skill.

THE GOAL OF TEACHING

The goal of teaching is to support individuals with disabilities in living as independently and with as much enjoyment as possible.

Determining Present Levels of Performance

How can we determine how much help to provide an individual when he or she is learning to do something new? Simply exposing someone to a new task is usually not enough to ensure learning. If we don't provide enough help, the individual will not be able to learn and will continue making mistakes. For example, someone learning to tie his shoes will have difficulty making bows unless he or she receives enough teaching support to know how to manipulate the laces. If we provide too much help, the individual never gets to move beyond what he already knows. The amount of prompting support should follow the "Goldilocks" rule: Not too much, not too little, just the right amount.

Developing the task analysis is the first step in making this teaching decision. With the task analysis, you have clear expectations about the way a task will be performed and you can simply have the individual try to complete it to determine how much help he or she needs.

Least-to-Most Prompting Strategy

To find out how much help the learner needs, begin by allowing hom or her to complete the first step independently. If the learner cannot complete this step correctly, provide a gentle prompt, such as an indirect verbal prompt. For example, a staff member is assessing to see how Jason is able to set the table for dinner. After he is asked to set the table, the first step expected is for Jason to get out the placemats and put them on the table in front of each chair. Since Jason does not go to get the placemats, staff prompts by saying, "What do you need to do, Jason?" If the learner does not complete the step after this mild prompt, a stronger prompt is provided. If Jason still did not get the mats, staff would say, "Jason, get the placemats." Stronger prompts would be provided until Jason was able to complete the task correctly. If, in our case, Jason still did not get the mats, even with the direct verbal prompt, we might repeat the verbal prompt and point to the mats. If necessary, we might need to assist Jason physically by lightly guiding his hands to get the mats and place them on the table.

The important thing in using this "*least-to-most*" prompting strategy is that you start by allowing the individual to complete the task step independently, then provide only gentle assistance, moving to stronger prompts as necessary. You never give more help than necessary to correctly perform the step.

Once staff knows how much help an individual needs in completing each step, no more than that amount of prompting should be given each time the learner practices the task and, in fact, staff should begin to provide just a bit less than the learner usually needs to correctly perform the step.

To illustrate, when teaching an individual to drink from a cup, if partial physical assistance is usually required for the learner to complete step 1 (grasping the cup), you would begin with a very light partial physical prompt, shadowing the individual's hands as he or she grasped the cup. This shadowing of the hands might next move to a gesture toward the cup as the individual became more familiar with the task and more competent in grasping the cup. Ultimately, of course, the individual would require no prompting at all to grasp the cup.

You must remember that initially, individuals will not be perfect in performing new skills so you will need to accept a less than perfect performance. If you continue to provide assistance because individuals are having some difficulty, the individual will not be able to move to more independence. For example, if the individual in the previous scenario is grasping the cup, but spilling some of the liquid, it would be better to focus on the independence rather than the spilling, because spilling is expected.

Common Mistakes When Prompting

In using a least-to-most prompting strategy, some common mistakes interfere with the individual learning to become more independent.

- **Providing the same prompt more than one time on a given step.**
  One mistake is that the DSP repeats prompts at the same level for a given step. For example, if you give the learner a verbal prompt to "Pick up the cup," and the prompt is unsuccessful, you might repeat the same prompt. A better strategy would be to provide a more helpful prompt, such as saying, "Pick up the cup" while pointing to the cup.

- **Providing less help in a second prompt.**
  Newer staff members are often tempted to repeat the verbal prompt several times or to rephrase it, ("Come on, you can pick it up"). Repeating prompts only prolongs the teaching process and often confuses the learner. If the learner does not respond to a given prompt, either the learner does not understand the prompt or is not motivated to respond to it. Repeating the prompt does not help. A second prompt on any step of a task analysis should always be more helpful than the first. If a third prompt is required, it should be more helpful than the second, and so on.

- **Providing multiple prompts.**
  Providing multiple prompts on one step is also confusing to the learner; for example, when you use a verbal prompt while gesturing. Once the appropriate prompt has been determined, provide that prompt only.

- **Providing a stronger prompt too quickly.**
  Giving a stronger prompt too quickly before allowing enough time for a learner to respond to the original prompt is also a common error in prompting. Patience is a virtue in teaching. Individuals sometimes need additional time to process information and to remember the next step. Often, the additional prompt is not necessary.

- **Providing full physical guidance the first time.**
  When teaching a new task, you may assume an individual needs to be physically guided to initiate the first step. This may occur because it appears that the individual does not know what he or she is expected to do. Remember that the individual may only need a small amount of information in the form of a mild, non-intrusive prompt to get started.

- **Completing a step in the task without allowing the individual to attempt the step.**
  Staff members often err in completing one or more steps in a task for the learner without expecting the learner to complete the step. Unless there is going to be an adaptation for a particular step, staff members should provide prompting assistance for each step rather than completing the step for an individual.

Error Correction

Practice makes permanent. The more an individual is allowed to make errors in completing a task, the more difficult it will be to change that pattern. The best way to avoid errors is to teach in a way that provides the best chance for the individual to respond correctly on each step of the task. Choosing the right type of prompt for the activity, for the learning style of the individual, and at the right level, makes correct responses more likely and errors less likely to occur. However, when an individual does make an error on a task step, the best thing to do is to immediately interrupt the task and provide the next stronger level of prompt so that the current step is performed correctly before moving on to the next step. Typically, a staff member might say, "Let's try that again," and prompt at the next level. If the individual continues to make the same error trial after trial, you should examine the step to determine if it needs to be broken down further, or examine the level of prompt to see if you can provide a more effective prompt. As the individual demonstrates correct responding on the difficult step, staff can consider fading the prompt.

Let's look at an example. Frank is learning how to tie his shoes. One of the steps he has difficulty with is making the first loop in the lace. When he gets to this step, the DSP prompts, "Make a loop." Frank has been neglecting the loop and making a knot. As he begins to make the knot, the DSP says, "Wait, let's try that again," while demonstrating the loop and saying, "Okay, go ahead."

Fading Prompts

Do you repeat the same prompts over and over? If you continue to provide extra assistance by prompting, an individual is not really learning. The test of whether an individual is really learning as a result of our teaching is for you to have to do less prompting. Our goal is for the individual to complete the task without assistance. One important rule of prompting is that whenever we provide assistance in terms of prompting, we have to have a plan to remove that assistance. This is called "prompt fading." Earlier, we discussed the relative strength of various prompts, noting that this is always an individual consideration. The DSP who teaches must have a plan to move to prompts of lesser strength as the individual becomes more capable on each step. For example, Tom, the DSP, is teaching Theresa how to make her bed. At first, Theresa needed physical guidance on both hands to make the corners on the blanket. She now remembers how to start this process, but still needs some help to hold the corner while she tucks in the blanket. The DSP now provides only a light touch on one hand while she tucks in the blanket.

A good strategy for knowing when to fade prompts is to periodically wait a bit longer than normal before delivering a prompt. We may be surprised to learn that the individual does not need a prompt at all and has learned to do the step.

Tom decides to see if Theresa can remember how to hold the corner of the blanket, so rather than lightly touch her hand at this point, he waits and watches. If Theresa places her hands in the correct spots, he lets her go on. If Theresa doesn't make the correct response within 10 seconds, he provides a light touch on her hand.

Partial Participation

Why should we teach something to someone when it seems clear that he or she will never be independent on the task? It's clear that some individuals will always need some level of support. Because of challenges in motor, cognitive, or sensory abilities, certain activities may seem to be beyond the capacity of some individuals with disabilities. However, even though some individuals with disabilities may not be able to function independently in all activities, they should be taught to participate at least partially in those activities. This is called "*partial participation*."

Consider all the activities in your own lives in which you participate. In most of them, you are not totally independent. In the past, for example, many people repaired their own cars, even replacing parts in the engine. Now, because automobile engines are so complex, self-repair is not as common, although many of us still like to do some of the repair. We may change the oil or the battery or replace a burned-out headlamp, even though we could easily take the car to the shop. Some of us enjoy gardening, and even though we may have a gardener doing the major work, we may do the pruning or planting. We feel a measure of pleasure in doing some things, even if we don't do it all. The ability to participate is important to all of us. This is no different for the people we support.

Annette is helping to prepare her own breakfast in the morning. She has cereal and orange juice. Annette has difficulty controlling her movements enough to pour milk and orange juice, but she can get out her bowl and glass, and she can pour her cereal. Staff assists her by pouring her milk and juice.

ACTIVITY

Partial Participation

Directions: Take a moment to consider the things that occur on a daily basis at the home where you work. Identify some tasks that staff members complete because the individuals are not able to complete such tasks independently. Share these thoughts with your neighbor and discuss how the individual might partially participate in the activity. Be prepared to share key points with the class.

Adaptations for Participation

Are there ways to adapt an activity so that an individual with disabilities can participate without being taught? All of us use adaptations in our lives. Using glasses to see more clearly is using an adaptation. When we use a calculator to check our math, we are using an adaptation. The spellcheck on our computer is an adaptation, as is the timer we use in cooking. Adaptations allow us to bypass sensory, physical, or cognitive challenges in order to participate in activities.

You can increase the meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities in age-appropriate, functional activities with the support of adaptations. In many situations, you can increase the success of your teaching through the use of adaptive devices and environmental adaptations.

Here are some ways to use adaptations:

- Adapting materials
- Adapting environments
- Adapting the sequence of activities
- Adapting the rules of activities
- Providing physical support

Adapting Materials

Robert has a number of jobs to do in his home on Saturdays. He is quite capable of doing the jobs, but staff at his home find they are prompting him repeatedly to remember many of the jobs. Sometimes, individuals have problems learning a task not because the task is hard to do, but because they have trouble remembering when to do each part. Picture cues can help individuals remember when to do each step. In Robert's case, pictures of him doing each job are placed in order in a small book. As he completes each job, he turns the picture to see the next step in the job.

Grace is learning to fix her own coffee. She likes cream and sugar, but has difficulty measuring the sugar and pouring the cream from a container. Staff members have prepared sugar packets for her use and they have a small container of cream in the refrigerator for her.

Samantha is beginning to feed herself but has great difficulty holding a regular spoon because she has poor ability to grasp. She has been provided utensils with built-up handles that improve her grip.

Above are examples of material adaptations. Staff may need to continue to work with Robert on his ability to remember his tasks, with Grace and her ability to measure and pour, and with Samantha on her ability to grasp. Teaching those skills might take a long time and because of the disabilities these skills might not develop sufficiently. Adaptations enable these individuals to demonstrate independence and participate in tasks even without all of the necessary skills.

Adapting Environments

Tim uses a wheelchair. He enjoys being independent and is quite proud of his ability to care for himself. One of the things he enjoys most is cooking. Because he is unable to stand, his kitchen counters have been adapted to allow him to work from his wheelchair.

Beth has a visual impairment. She is learning how to move safely in her new home with the support of DSPs who arrange items so that Beth knows where to expect to find them.

Andrew has difficulty living in homes with too many people. He likes his privacy and needs to have his possessions in the right place. Andrew has had difficulties in other living situations because he became angry when others living in the home moved things or left things out. Staff members have helped Andrew find a home with one other individual who is neat and quiet.

These three examples show that environments may be adapted to allow individuals to live more independently and comfortably.

Adapting the Sequence of Activities

Joan has a busy social life. She enjoys many community activities with friends such as swimming. Because Joan has significant physical disabilities, she has difficulty changing her clothes by herself. When she goes swimming, she prefers not to have someone in the dressing room with her, so she changes into her swim suit at home, then puts loose clothing over her suit to go to the community pool. This change in the normal sequence of the activity allows her more independence.

William uses a picture communication system (material adaptation) to communicate with others. Because he has only begun to use this system, he needs to locate items in the book. When William goes to a restaurant, a DSP discusses what William will order before they leave so that when he arrives, he can more quickly find the pictures and communicate with the counter person.

Sometimes the typical sequence of a task or activity can be changed to allow for participation.

Adapting the Rules of an Activity or Changing the Way an Activity is Conventionally Performed

At times, the rules of activities make it difficult for some individuals to participate because of physical, cognitive, or sensory challenges. You can examine how the rules or activities might be changed to allow participation while still maintaining the point of the game. For example, the rules of pitching in baseball are changed for children who are just beginning to learn to hit; that is, a batting "T" is often used. The normal rules of a card game such as 500 Rummy may be changed to allow for books of two instead of three. Games that require chasing may be adapted so that someone who cannot run can throw a soft Nerf® ball at the person instead, or the individual may get a head start on the chase.

James enjoys playing board games like Pictionary®, but often requires a longer time than normally provided to complete his drawing. The rules of the game have been changed to allow for more time when it is his turn.

It is important to recognize that the point of playing a game is for fun, not necessarily to follow specific rules that may make it impossible to play.

Providing Physical Support

Individuals often need a helping hand in completing tasks. For example, in making a batter for cake, Sam needs someone to hold the mixing bowl when he is stirring the batter. When he uses the mixer, he needs someone to get it down from the cabinet. Sara needs assistance to get into the shower, but once in there, she can shower herself. Providing this type of physical assistance allows Sam to demonstrate his skills in the kitchen and enables Sara to shower.

Holding open a door, assisting someone to get into a car, or assisting someone with meals are all examples of providing physical assistance as an adaptation. The routine of eating a meal involves more than just getting the food to one's mouth. For someone who needs this type of assistance, it may also involve making selections of what to prepare and how to prepare it, getting to the table, requesting items to put on the plate, asking for a drink, conversing with others, and deciding when he or she is finished.

Adaptations for Participation (continued)

When is an Adaptation Appropriate?

There are many ways to adapt for participation. If an individual can be taught a skill in a relatively short amount of time, it makes sense to work to that end, rather than provide an adaptation. At times, however, the time it takes to teach may prevent the person from participation and independence. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- Is the adaptation easier to use than the normal method?
- Does the adaptation allow the individual to be as independent as possible?
- Is the adaptation supported by significant people in the individual's life?
- Is the adaptation as inconspicuous as possible?
- Is the adaptation applicable in a number of activities?
- Is the adaptation easily maintained?
- Is the cost of the development and maintenance of the adaptation reasonable given the expected benefits?

ACTIVITY

Generating Adaptations

Directions: Divide into small groups. Brainstorm ideas for adaptations using the categories shown below. Remember, when we brainstorm, we don't evaluate ideas until the end. Sometimes ideas that are considered unrealistic may actually be quite realistic or may stimulate our thinking of other creative ideas. Be prepared to share ideas with the large group.

Adaptation Type	Examples
Adapting materials	
Adapting environments	
Adapting the sequence of activities	
Adapting the rules of an activity	

Adaptations for Participation (continued)

Providing physical support

Adaptations are useful tools to encourage and facilitate participation when individuals have physical, cognitive, or sensory challenges. Adaptations allow for immediate participation without waiting for the individual to learn all steps of an activity. It is important, though, to remember that being able to perform tasks and activities without adaptations is preferable, because at times the adaptation is not available or easily transported from place to place. An individual will not need adaptations if he or she can learn to perform tasks in a typical manner. Remember that participation is the most important consideration.

Reinforcement Strategies

How do you know when you're doing well? What helps you when you are learning a difficult task? You learn better when you are encouraged and positively motivated to learn. When teaching individuals with disabilities, providing positive consequences for their efforts can help them learn more quickly. Consequences are items or events that follow the demonstration of a skill. Reinforcement is one of the most important consequences we have. Reinforcement is defined by the result it has on behavior. If the consequence doesn't result in the individual demonstrating the skill any more often, it is not a reinforcer, even if we think the person likes the consequence. If, by providing positive consequences, an individual performs the steps of a skill with less and less assistance, then it is likely the consequence is a reinforcer.

Because every person is different, everyone has an individual set of reinforcers. No single item or event is reinforcing to everybody. An important job of a DSP is to discover the reinforcers that motivate the particular learner. There are several ways to find out what kind of consequences might act as reinforcers for learning.

- Ask the individual what they like.
- Ask close acquaintances what the individual likes.
- Observe the individual to see what he or she does during free time.
- Provide a choice of items, events, and activities to see what the individual prefers.
- Continue to expose the individual to novel events, activities, and items.

To know if a consequence is a reinforcer, use it when teaching a skill and see if the learner improves his or her ability to perform the skill over time.

How to Use Reinforcers

A reinforcer is provided immediately following a correct response or step in a task so that the individual connects that correct response to the reinforcer. Not every step needs to be reinforced. Sometimes waiting until the task is complete is a better strategy because then you will not be interrupting the task. Reinforcers should only be used when a step is particularly difficult for the individual to learn. Reinforcers say, "Good for you, that was difficult, but you got it!"

Aaron is learning to button his shirt and this is difficult for him to do. He's learned to line his shirt up and can hold the button, but pushing it through the button hole is a struggle. Mary, the DSP, has been providing light physical assistance. Lately, he's been asking to do it on his own and he finally gets the button through the button hole independently. Mary says, "Great job, Aaron! You did it!"

In the same way that a prompt must be faded, reinforcers must also be faded. When someone is independent, artificial reinforcers are not provided. No one says to you, "Nice job buttoning your shirt," right? Eventually, natural reinforcers such as looking good and feeling comfortable maintain your initiative to perform a skill.

As Aaron becomes more consistent in putting the button through the correct button hole without assistance, Mary says, "Nice work, Aaron" less frequently and then finally, only at the end of the whole task analysis for putting on his shirt. Eventually, Mary won't reinforce this task at all, but may periodically say, "Aaron, you look very handsome, today."

Another important consideration is that reinforcers can lose their strength over time. Things that were reinforcing at one point, might not be on other occasions. It is a good idea to develop a reinforcer survey for each individual and continue to add to and update it.

Shaping

Can just reinforcement be used to teach skills? Think about an individual you know who seems to be able to complete a particular task but usually doesn't. For example, Guy is shy about sitting with visitors in the living room at his home. For a number of reasons, you would not want to force Guy to be with the group. Rather, you would want to teach him how to become part of the group in a way that is comfortable for him. Shaping reinforces the individual's successive attempts of a behavior as the behavior becomes more and more like the skill we want to teach. At first, you reinforce any attempt to perform the task. On the next attempt, you reinforce only when the individual performs the task a bit better. The final result of shaping is when you provide the reinforcer only when the individual performs the skill correctly.

You know that Guy really enjoys talking about his favorite team, the San Francisco Giants. Using shaping, you might smile at Guy as he looks in on the group from the hallway. Next, as he walks by or comes closer to the living room, you could say something he likes to hear; for example, "Guy, how are the Giants doing today?" When Guy enters the room, you might say to the guests, "You know, Guy is our resident expert on baseball around here."

Sometimes, an individual can do a task, but doesn't do it as well as he or she could. Rebecca is learning to ask her housemates to pass food at the table, rather than reaching across the table. Mary, the DSP, has begun to shape Rebecca's behavior. At first, whenever Rebecca looked at her, Mary said, "Oh, please pass the (food item). Good job asking," and passed her the food or drink. Next, she waited until Rebecca looked at her and said, "Pass that," before Mary praised her and passed the food or drink. As Rebecca becomes more consistent in looking and verbalizing, Mary will reinforce her only when Rebecca says, "Pass (food/drink)" and finally, "Please pass (food/drink)."

Note: Shaping works if the reinforcer is powerful enough and if the individual can at least attempt the skill you are teaching.

Ensuring Skills Are Generalized

Is it common for an individual to be able to demonstrate a skill in one place but not another? In the last session and again, at the beginning of this section, we talked about the purpose of teaching. The reason we teach is to support individuals in learning to live as independently and enjoyably as possible. To fulfill this purpose, you must make sure that when you teach a skill to an individual, the individual can use the skill in each situation that the skill is needed. That is, the individual must be able to generalize the skill across situations. For the skill to be most useful, the individual should be able to use the skill in the environments in which he or she lives, works, and plays.

Robert has been working with his DSP, Tom, to be able to buy a soda and the newspaper at the market near his home. He has become familiar with the staff at the market and can easily find the soda and paper. Robert usually has plenty of time to count his change at the counter while he talks with the clerk. Tom thinks it's time for Robert to try another market near the bus line. In this very different environment, Robert has trouble finding items and is very nervous at the checkout line. He'd rather not go.

Learning to generalize skills across different situations can be difficult; however, you can teach in a way that makes this more likely. The more situations in which you teach a skill, the easier it will be for the individual to then generalize and use the skill in new situations.

There are two main ways you can use different situations during the teaching process. First, you can include different situations such as different teachers, different teaching materials, and different locations during all of the teaching process. This is probably the best way to help an individual generalize a newly learned skill. However, using different situations can also slow down the teaching process because it can make learning the skill harder at first. For Robert, this would mean having him practice his purchases in both the market with which he was familiar and the market near the bus line (and maybe another store or two) right from the start.

A second way to teach an individual to generalize a skill is to include different situations toward the end of the teaching process. For example, you can begin to teach the skill to the individual in one situation; that is, one or a small number of teachers, one set of teaching materials, and teaching in one location. Then after the individual has learned to do the skill in one teaching situation, work with him in different situations. This is the way Tom taught Robert.

Remember: A good way to make sure you teach a skill that can generalize to other situations is to make sure you are teaching truly meaningful or functional skills.

ACTIVITY

Generalizing Skills

Directions: Identify a skill you are teaching an individual and write it down below. Determine at least four ways you can teach that will support the individual in generalizing the skill across situations. Write the answers down below the strategy with which they correspond.

Skill:

Generalization Strategies

People:

Environments:

Materials:

Teaching strategies:

Times of day:

Tom has been working with Andy to teach him how to wash his hair for the past three years. Andy just doesn't get it. He tries to put far too much shampoo in his hand, and he just rubs it a few times on his head. He doesn't completely rinse his hair. Tom has to measure out the shampoo each time, and he always has to work it into Andy's hair. Then he has to keep reminding Andy to get under the shower to rinse all the shampoo out.

Using Powerful Teaching Strategies

For many individuals with disabilities, especially those with cognitive disabilities, learning new skills is difficult. From the perspective of the DSP, questioning the ability of the individual to learn is not productive. What is important is the *power* of your instruction. You have a number of powerful teaching strategies to use, and when the strategy you chose is not working, you must move to a more powerful strategy.

Previously we discussed identifying natural times for instruction and the importance of selecting meaningful and functional skills to instruct. The task analysis strategy was examined to break difficult tasks down into smaller, more easily learned parts. Prompting strategies gave us multiple ways to provide additional information to individuals learning something new and to support them in practicing the correct way to demonstrate a skill. And when an entire task was not likely to be learned, we discussed the importance of partial participation in meaningful, functional, and age-appropriate activities. Adaptation of materials, environments, rules, sequences, and physical assistance compensates for those skills that, because of sensory, physical, or cognitive disabilities, interfere with performing a task independently. We also discussed the effective use of reinforcement and its use in shaping skill development. Finally, we discussed how to teach so that individuals can generalize skills across situations.

After you begin the teaching process, you can change how you teach by using any of the procedures we have talked about in this class. For example, you can decide to change how you respond to what the individual is doing. This is *responsive teaching*. With responsive teaching, when an individual is learning, you can respond by continuing to use your strategies. When an individual is not learning, you can change the strategies to those that hold more promise for being effective. Effective teachers operate with a definite plan, but when the plan is not working, they are willing to change the plan in a way that is responsive to the learner.

You can change your teaching plan in many ways. For example, you can:

- Make your relationship with the learner more interesting and engaging.
- Teach skills that are the most appropriate in terms of relevance, age-appropriateness, and interest.
- Teach in the natural time of occurrence.
- Break the skill down sufficiently to ensure learning.
- Use a prompting strategy that is sufficiently powerful.
- Prompt appropriately.
- Ensure that all staff members follow the teaching plan.
- Consider adaptations for certain skills.
- Use reinforcement and make sure that the consequence is actually reinforcing to the individual.
- Accept approximations of the skills you want and then shape them.
- Plan and teach for generalization.

Evaluating Teaching Success (continued)

Returning to Andy, is there a prompting strategy Tom can use that ensures Andy will squeeze out the right amount of shampoo? Or, is there an adaptation such as a different type of shampoo or a premeasured shampoo he can use? Can Andy learn a counting strategy for working the shampoo in? Can it become a game for him to remember to touch all parts of his head when he works it in? Can he learn to count and rub for a certain number to ensure that all the shampoo is out? Can Tom tie Andy's success with the whole task to earning a strong reinforcer?

How do I know if an individual is learning?

Often, DSPs who are teaching offer a general answer to the question, "Is this individual learning?" Sometimes your answer depends on how the individual performed that day or in the last teaching situation. You may feel that because an individual still cannot demonstrate the skill independently, he or she is not learning. Or you may believe an individual is learning when actually his or her overall performance has not really changed at all. How do you know?

One way to evaluate teaching effectiveness is to keep track over time of how many steps the individual is doing without any prompting or help from the teacher. If records show that the individual is completing more steps without help, then you can consider that your teaching approach is working. You might also keep track of the type of prompt provided, and if it is fading to less powerful prompting, you might also consider if your teaching plan effective. Conversely, if records show that you continue to provide the same prompts over and over and that the individual is not demonstrating independence or even requires less powerful prompting, then you should change your teaching approach to bring about more progress. Keeping records is critical. A data collection worksheet is easy to develop and maintain and it can make a difference in the success of your plan.

ACTIVITY

Documenting Progress

Directions: Divide into small groups. Set up a task analysis for using a napkin. One team member should be the teacher, one the student, and one the observer/recorder. Follow the task analysis and use the least-to-most prompting strategy. Record the prompt required for correct responding.

Progress Record

I= independent
I.V. = indirect verbal
D.V. = direct verbal
M = model
G = gesture
P.P. = partial physical
F.P. = full physical

Skill/Task:

Task steps	Progress
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Skill Maintenance

Once the individual learns the skill, should you stop teaching it? At the start of this session, we discussed the importance of selecting skills that are:

- Functional
- Age-appropriate
- Relevant and likely to be used often
- Supporting independence
- Likely to be reinforced by natural outcomes

While you are teaching skills that meet these criteria, the individual will have the opportunity to practice the skill frequently. He or she will also have the opportunity to continue to practice the skill even beyond the teaching situation. Maintaining a newly learned skill means that an individual can continue to use the skill over time. After an individual learns a skill as a result of a teaching plan, you should not assume that the individual will maintain or remember how to use the skill.

Two things help individuals maintain learned skills:

- **Regular opportunities to perform the skill**

Ensure that the individual has the opportunity to perform the skill frequently in different situations. If he or she is not going to perform the skill, why did you teach it?

- **Periodic re-teaching of the skill**

Next, you can check the performance of a skill by conducting a teaching session periodically to examine how fluently the individual demonstrates the skill. This enables you to intervene if the individual has forgotten something or if the individual has some difficulty with one or more of the steps.

CONCLUSION

Powerful Teaching

This concludes the section on teaching strategies. To review, whether an individual with disabilities learns new skills depends in large part on the power of the teaching plan. The following teaching strategies can make your teaching plan powerful:

- Teach during natural times.
- Establish a good relationship with the learner.
- Focus on teaching functional, age-appropriate, and meaningful skills.
- Identify natural times for instruction for typical functional skills.
- Complete a task analysis for selected skills.
- Determine the most appropriate instructional prompts.
- Use least-to-most prompting strategies.
- Allow for partial participation.
- Use several types of adaptations.
- Use reinforcement strategies.
- Use shaping as an instructional strategy when appropriate.
- Teach to ensure that skills generalize.
- Evaluate teaching success and identify when it is appropriate to modify teaching strategies.
- Use strategies for ensuring that skills are maintained.

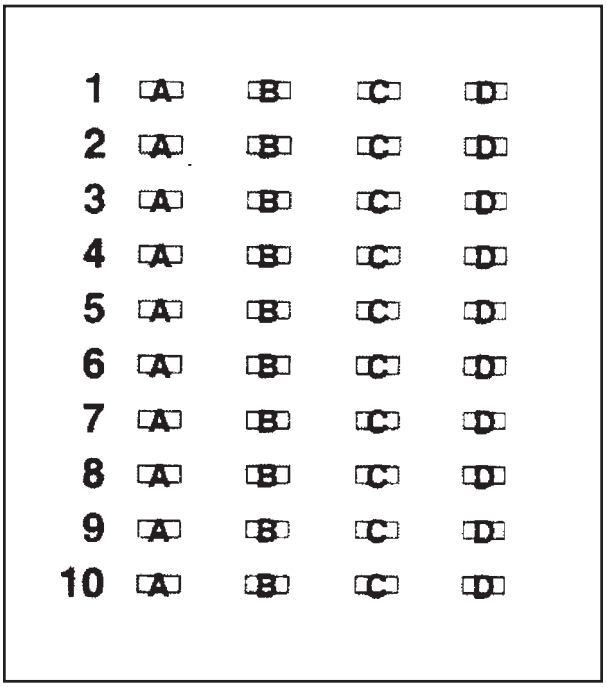
PRACTICE AND SHARE

Using the following survey, determine what items, activities, or events are reinforcing for an individual you support. Comment on how you know this is true. Be prepared to share your answers with the class at the beginning of the next session.

Reinforcement Survey

Reinforcer	**How I Know**
Tangible reinforcers (CDs, toys, food, clothing items, and so on.)	
Activity reinforcers (such as going to the mall, drinking coffee with staff, or watching a movie)	
Social reinforcers (praise, positive feedback)	
Secondary reinforcers (money, tokens, points that lead to purchasing an activity or tangible items)	

Strategies for Successful Teaching, Part 2



1. "Least-to-most" prompting occurs when:

A) The least capable individual in the home is the first to receive instruction, while other individuals watch what is going on.
B) A gentle hint or reminder of what has to be done, is given to the individual, with stronger prompts following if the task remains undone.
C) The DSP demonstrates the skill or activity, while the individual watches and tries to imitate the action afterward.
D) The individual in the home who knows the least is taught by the individual in the home who knows the most.

2. An important principle of "least-to-most" prompting is that the individual is:

A) Given full instructions each time the individual is trying to do the task.
B) Never given more help than is necessary to perform the task correctly.
C) Left alone to work at the task without any further help.
D) Only given verbal prompts.

3. When an individual is unable to do a task completely independently, the DSP should aim for "partial participation" in which the individual:

A) Is not expected to do any part of the task, even if they are able to.
B) Is gently guided away from the task to another task that can be done by the individual independently.
C) Gets other individuals to participate in getting the task done.
D) Does as much of the task as is possible.

4. When the DSP prepares small packets of sugar for use by an individual who likes to put sugar in their coffee, but who has difficulty using a spoon for the sugar, the DSP is:

A) Using an adaptation to help the individual accomplish the task.
B) Violating Community Care Licensing regulations regarding the handling of foods.
C) Providing a physical prompt for the individual.
D) Doing too much to assist the individual.

5. "Reinforcers" should be used by the DSP:

A) Only when a task or a step in a task is particularly difficult for the individual to learn.
B) Immediately after the individual has failed to accomplish a task.
C) If "least-to-most" prompting does not work with the individual.
D) Every time there is a chance to use them.

6. The DSP tells the individual who has accomplished a difficult task: "Wow! You did a great job on that!" This is an example of:

A) Relying on a verbal prompt to help the individual.
B) Using a reinforcer to motivate the individual.
C) Most-to-least prompting.
D) Least-to most prompting.

7. Giving verbal or other encouragement to an individual for even the slightest first attempt they make to change or learn a behavior is known as:

A) Physical prompting.
B) Reinforcement by proxy.
C) Shaping.
D) Partial participation.

8. One of the best ways to help an individual generalize a skill is to:

A) Make sure the same instructor does the teaching every time.
B) Teach the skill in different situations and with different materials.
C) Stop teaching the skill as soon as the individual can do it alone.
D) Practice the skill in exactly the same way, over and over.

9. One of the best ways to learn if your teaching has had a lasting effect on a particular individual, is:

A) Asking the individual how things are going.
B) Try having another DSP teach the skill to the individual.
C) Apply "shaping" motivational prompts, from least to most.
D) Keeping good records that track the individual's use of the skill over a period of time.

10. Two things that help individuals maintain skills they have learned are:

A) Opportunity to use the skill, and brush-up teaching of the skill.
B) Physical prompts, and shaping.
C) Most-to-least prompting, and brush-up teaching of the skill.
D) Opportunity to use the skill, and use of partial participation.

Appendices

Appendix 7-A /Task Analysis Data Sheet

Documenting Progress

Progress Record

I= independent
I.V. = indirect verbal
D.V. = direct verbal
M = model
G = gesture
P.P. = partial physical
F.P. = full physical

Skill/Task:

Task steps	Progress
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11 .	
12.	
13 .	
14.	