

**TEACHING PROCEDURES**  
**of an Applied Behavior Analysis Program with emphasis on**  
**VERBAL BEHAVIOR**  
(all used in conjunction during teaching)

Referencing information printed from workshops by:  
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**1. PAIR TEACHING ENVIRONMENTS WITH REINFORCEMENT**

Initially, correlate the teaching environment with highly valuable and high-density reinforcement relative to the conditions that have typically been interrupted at the start of teaching sessions. Through this initial pairing with reinforcement process, the instructional setting becomes a conditioned reinforcer rather than a conditioned aversive stimulus. Therefore, pairs the instructional setting and materials as an improving set of conditions.

**2. KEEP DEMANDS LOW AT FIRST**

Present low frequency demands at first and fade in greater and greater response ratio requirements. This keeps the value of escape as a reinforcer low, instructional materials are correlated with improving set of conditions and correct responding is strengthened because it contacts valuable reinforcers.

**3. ERRORLESS TEACHING**

Prompts are antecedent (before) responding, therefore are not consequences for incorrect responses. This time delay prompting extends from “0” second delay to short durations of 2-3 seconds to avoid errors. Errorless learning methods change difficult tasks to easy tasks and therefore reduce the value of problem behaviors as a reinforcer.

**4. ERROR CORRECTION**

Used for incorrect responses or failure to respond. This procedure establishes prompts as slightly aversive and therefore strengthens two dimensions of responding to avoid it: short latency and correct responding. Procedure: child makes error/restate demand with a “0” second time delay prompt (i.e. hand over hand).

**5. INTERSPERSE EASY AND DIFFICULT DEMANDS**

Present several easy tasks (which are correlated with frequent reinforcement for correct responding) interspersed with difficult ones to insure that demands are correlated with mostly improving conditions, relative to the value of the reinforcer. This weakens the tendency to engage in problem behaviors that have produced other reinforcers. Teaching situations should be 80% easy 20% difficult.

**6. SHORT INTER-TRIAL INTERVALS (ITI)**

The time between the child’s response to a demand and your presentation of your next demand. Two seconds or less seem to produce the maximal benefit. Because demands are presented immediately after the last response, the time to reinforcement is short. Therefore each demand becomes a “promise” of reinforcement and not a “threat” of long delays to reinforcement.

**7. MIX AND VARY INSTRUCTIONAL DEMANDS**

The same stimulus is not presented repeatedly over many consecutive trials. For example, mass trialing (repeating same stimulus over and over) “Do this” or “What is it?”. The variation of stimuli from trial to trial appears to reduce the value of escape.

**8. TEACH TO FLUENCY**

Teaching skills to be correct and quick not just correct will decrease the value of escape. Students who learn to respond quickly and accurately and not just accurately tend to exhibit

greater endurance for longer duration sessions without problem behavior. Criterion for mastery of skills includes both accuracy AND speed.

#### 9. TRANSFER TRIAL

After every prompted trial a transfer trial should be performed. This is when you represent the demand with lesser or no prompting than the previous presentation (avoids prompt dependency).

For example:

Therapist asks child "What is it?"

Child says "horse" (for zebra)

First complete error correction procedure of restating demand with a "0" second delay- "What is it? Zebra"

Child echoes "zebra"

THEN conduct the transfer trial (with lesser or no prompts), "What is it? zzz"

Child answers "zebra"

#### 10. VARIABLE RATIO

Always use a variable ratio of reinforcement when working intensively. The child should not know when the reinforcer is coming. If your VR is 20, you would sometimes reinforce after 10 responses, sometimes after 30 or anywhere in between. Intermittent reinforcement creates strong behavior.