

Effective Teaching: Errorless Learning/Discrete Trial Methodology

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Hope Through Treatment

Overview

- Discrete trial methodology
- Prompt hierarchy
- Defining what you are trying to teach
- Teach, probe, test
- The teaching process in action

What is Discrete Methodology?

- Teaching method associated with ABA
- Breaking skills into discrete steps
- Teaching over a number of trials

What Does a Trial Look Like?

- Present an Sd
- Facilitate a response
- Reinforce response

SD: Discriminative Stimulus

- The cue that signals a specific response
 - Verbal instruction
 - Non-verbal cue (gesture, vocalization)
 - Environmental cue (external and internal)
 - Question
 - Model
 - WAITING
- The “other” side of the interaction

Facilitating a response: the Prompt Hierarchy

- Independent
- Verbal Prompt (VP)
- Visual Support Prompt (VSP)
- Gestural Prompt (GP)
- Model Prompt (MP)
- Partial Physical Prompt (PPP)
- Put-through-the-motions Prompt (PTM)

Prompting Guidelines

- Repeat the Sd with other prompts
- Be aware of unplanned or inadvertent prompts
- Think about prompt fading right from the start

Prompting Guidelines (cont'd)

- Prompting has to be individualized:
 - Not all prompts apply to all objectives
 - The size of the hierarchy will vary for different clients/objectives
 - Different clients become dependent on different prompts
 - Waiting times depend on the child

Common Prompting Errors: Implementation

- Over-prompting
 - Not fading when child is ready
 - Using prompts that are more/less intrusive than necessary
- Failing to prompt (allowing errors to occur)
- Talking too much (over verbal prompting)
 - The difference between repeating your sd, and providing too many verbal prompts

Common Prompting Errors: Recording

- Mixing up a VP with a MP when the expected response is verbal
 - Remember the response you're prompting for
 - Staff: "apple"
 - Client: "apple"
- Confusing the Sd with a VP (we can't expect kids to read our minds)
 - "Show me green", responding to greetings, body identification

Common Prompting Errors: Recording (cont'd)

- Confusing the Sd with a MP
 - Motor imitation
- Environmental cues vs. prompts
 - Open hand for receptive identification

Reinforcing the Response

- Intensity of reinforcement should “match” the response
 - Less intense if a prompted response, more intense for independent response
- Ideally, the same person should provide the Sd and the reinforcement (think long-term – what are we teaching the kids?)

Defining What You are Teaching

- Think long-term – what does an independent response look like?
 - Example 1: Responding to “give me”
 - Example 2: Learning to imitate vs. imitating to learn
 - Example 3: Initiating requests
 - Example 4: Entering group play

Teaching: What does it Mean?

- Determine the teaching process
 - Errorless
 - Errors as part of the teaching process
- The process is dependent on the objective being taught
- Teaching involves providing the child with the prompting necessary to correctly respond to the stimulus
- Prevent errors from occurring – think: is this always possible?
 - Minimize the errors

Probing versus Testing

- Probing:
 - Intermittently withdrawing support (prompting) to assess skill level
 - Allows goals to be changed at the child's rate of learning
 - Prevents boredom and prompt reliance
- Testing :
 - Gives us an understanding of generalization

Correct Response

- Sd issued
- Child produces correct response
- Child is reinforced (big-time)

Roleplays

- Motor imitation
 - Matching
- Receptive vocabulary

Child does not respond: lack of skill

- Sd issued
- Child does not respond (teacher felt he was attending)
- Move through appropriate prompts (don't let them be wrong)
- Child prompted to produce correct response
- Child is reinforced (little party)

Roleplays

Child does not respond: inattention

- Sd issued
- Child does not respond
- Child was inattentive
- Teacher gains child's attention and reissues original Sd

Roleplays

Child begins to respond incorrectly

- Sd issued
- Child initiates incorrect response
- Teacher jumps in, prevents error, prompts correct response
- Move quickly onto another trial (may or may not be exactly the same)

Roleplays



Videos



Things to remember

- Autism is a diverse disorder, every kid is different
- We want to push just enough to teach
- **ALWAYS & NEVER:** Words to avoid