


INDEPENDENCE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMPTING

Effective Practices Conference

Mark P. Groskreutz
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Agenda

- Introduction
 - Why talk about prompting?
- The purpose of prompting
 - Ensuring prompting leads to independence (3 keys)
- Educators' role in prompting
 - Finding prompts that work
- 'Prompt Dependency' example
- Finer points of prompting
- Conclusions

Introduction

- Educators may work with many types of learners
- At some point in their education, all learners will need some form of prompting

←

Rarely need Prompting to be successful

→

Often need prompting to be successful

Introduction

- Careful use of prompting is especially important for those learners who are less likely to show independence
 - Such as learners with moderate, severe, or profound disabilities
- Careful prompting can be the difference between learners who gain independence versus learners who always need someone there to help them

Defining prompting

- On the other hand . . . prompting will be important for all students at various times
 - Because it is one of the only ways to help students respond correctly if 'typical' strategies have not worked
- What is prompting?
 1. Something we **add** to help a student respond correctly
 2. It is something we **do not** always want to provide for the learner to be successful

Defining prompting ~ Examples

- When working on basic math skills, we provide a number line
 - The number line is added to help the learner succeed
 - But later on, we want to remove the number line and still have the learner succeed
- After saying "line up for lunch", we physically guide a student to line up
 - Add the physical guidance to line up
 - But, do not always want to do this
 - -want learner to line up without extra support

Educators' role in prompting

- Finding prompts that work
- The best prompts are the ones that can be faded and the learner remains successful
 - Will depend on specific learner and skill
- 4 General types of prompts
 - Physical
 - Gestural
 - Visual / Spatial
 - Verbal (use caution with these)

Types of prompts

- Physical
 - Hand over hand guidance → light physical assistance
- Gestural
 - Pointing, modeling
- Visual / Spatial
 - Showing written or pictured information
 - Modifying position and/or visual aspects
- Verbal (use caution with these)
 - Saying something

Types of prompts

- Prompt hierarchies
 - Prompts should be arranged into hierarchies of intrusiveness
 - Typically, the goal is to decrease intrusiveness while the learner remains successful
 - Start at level where he/she is consistently successful

Example

Most	↓	1. Immediate physical guidance at the hand
to	↓	2. Immediate physical guidance at the wrist
Least	↓	3. Immediate physical guidance at the forearm
Intrusive	↓	4. Shadow at forearm
	↓	5. Independent

Other example hierarchies

- Immediate physical guidance at the hand
- Immediate partial physical guidance at the hand
- Immediate partial physical guidance at the forearm
- Shadow at the upper arm
- Independent

- Immediate full model
- Immediate partial model
- Immediate initial model
- independent

Prompt hierarchies

- Purpose of hierarchies is to help design a fading plan and structure teaching to maximize consistency
- As a learner is successful with a more intrusive prompt (for several opportunities), then the next less intrusive prompt should be used . . .
 - And so on
- If a learner is not successful, then he/she should move to a more intrusive prompt

Fading Interventions: to be completed before beginning the intervention

Learner: _____

Share the target skill: _____

Things to remember when planning fading procedures:

- Interventions that include vocal prompts or instructions may be more difficult to fade
 - Change from explicit instructions to facilitative fading
- Prompting from behind the learner will facilitate fading
- The intervention must not imply dependence for the learner (e.g. "holding")
 - The intervention must help the learner do the response

Who will be implementing the intervention? _____

Does the implementation need to be tracked? _____

Who will do the tracking? _____

How will progress be monitored? _____

What are the fading steps?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What are the criteria to begin fading the intervention? Be specific.
 (e.g. 2 consecutive accurate correct trials in a row, or challenging behavior for 2 days...)

How often will the intervention be re-evaluated? _____

ASSERT

Activity or task: _____

Chances for success with no or low level of support: _____

Chances for success with high level of support or having a different time performing independently: _____

Who will be responsible for recording success or not? _____

Opportunity	Prompted		Not prompted	
	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

The problem with verbal prompts

- For typical learners, there is probably no problem with verbal prompts
- For learners with disabilities, verbal prompts are often **very** difficult to fade
 - Very difficult to fade verbal prompts
 - Difficult to say only parts of words
 - Easy to overuse verbal prompts
 - easy and effective – learner may rely on them
 - May learn to wait for the verbal prompt before beginning

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The problem with verbal prompts

- Example
 - <Bell rings>
 - Billy does not line-up for lunch
 - Billy is told to “go line-up”
 - (probably the lowest effort prompting strategy)
 - Billy never lines-up without the verbal prompt
 - Verbal prompts are easy to use and often effective, so they can become ‘routine’
 - But learner then does not gain independence

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Prompt dependency

- May learn to respond only with prompts
 - Become ‘used to’ being prompted and don’t try to respond independently
 - May ‘like’ the prompts (attention)
 - May learn that they ‘might as well wait’ for the right answer

example
- Best way to avoid prompt dependency is to carefully plan how and when to prompt

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Prompt dependency

- Reducing prompt dependency may be challenging – i.e., individualized interventions
 - Individual has learned that it is useful to wait . . .
 - Interventions often involve using most-to-least physical prompts that do not give student time to wait
 - May also involve changing students’ routines slightly
 - So new/alternative procedures may be more effective

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Finer points of prompting

- When possible
 - Use physical prompts
 - They are the easiest and quickest to fade for most learners
 - Prompt while standing behind student
 - Less likely to associate the prompt with the task
 - Goal is always to have learner respond to natural cues
 - Plan how to fade prompts
 - Do not just continue to deliver full prompts
 - While verbal prompting is easy to use, it may make independence more difficult for our learners

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Conclusions


- Must identify a prompt that allows learners to succeed
 - Cannot assume learners simply need more time
- Start with success
 - Then decrease the amount of prompting, so they may be successful even with less prompting
- Avoid verbal prompts when possible

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Thank You


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Visual Prompt Example

Mark	Bill	George
Bill	George	Mark
George	Mark	Bill


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Visual Prompt Example

Mark	Bill	George
George	Mark	Bill
Bill	George	Mark

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Visual Prompt Example

	Bill	George
Mark		
George		Bill
	Mark	
Bill	George	Mark

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