Using a System of Least-to-Most Prompts to Teach Functional Life Skills

What is the level of evidence?

This is an Evidence-Based Practice based on one acceptable quality group study and five acceptable quality single subject studies.

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The best place to find out how to implement least-to-most prompting is through the following research to practice lesson plan starters:

- Least to Most Prompting - Functional Life Skills - Lesson1
- Least to Most Prompting - Functional Life Skills - Lesson2
- Least to Most Prompting - Functional Life Skills - Lesson3
- Least to Most Prompting - Functional Life Skills - Lesson4

With who was it implemented?

- Students with
  - Moderate intellectual disabilities (3 studies, n=44)
  - Mild intellectual disabilities (2 studies, n=23)
  - Severe intellectual disabilities (1 study, n=4)
- Ages ranged from 11 to 20
- Males (n=47), females (n=24)
- Ethnicity
  - None reported (n= 71)

What is the practice?

A system of least-to-most prompts is a method used to transfer stimulus control from response prompts to the natural stimulus whenever the participant does not respond to the natural stimulus or makes an incorrect response.

- Least-to-most prompts begin with the participant having the opportunity to
perform the response with the least amount of assistance on each trial.

- Greater degrees of assistance are provided with each successive trial without a correct response (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007).

In the studies used to establish the evidence base for using least- to -most prompting to teach functional life skills, least-to-most prompting included using:

- naturally occurring, nonspecific verbal, specific verbal, gesture and verbal, partial physical and verbal, total physical and verbal prompting (Steege, Wacker, & McMahon, 1987)
- increasing prompts with a visual organizer (Arnold-Reid, Schloss, & Alper, 1997) increasing prompts in combination with total task chaining and simulation (Taber, Alberto, Hughes, & Seltzer, 2002; Taber, Alberto, Seltzer, & Hughes, 2003)
- increasing prompts with multiple exemplars (Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinert, 2002)
- increasing prompts in the community (Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabek, 2001)

**How has the practice been implemented?**

- Least-to-most prompting was used in combination with a meal chart organizer to teach making a grocery list to prepare nutritionally sound meals (Arnold-Reid, Schloss, & Alper, 1997)
- Least-to-most prompting was used during community-based instruction with social praise reinforcers to teach washing and drying clothes in a laundromat (Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabek, 2001)
- Least-to-most prompting (i.e., naturally occurring, nonspecific verbal, specific verbal, gesture and verbal, partial physical and verbal, total physical and verbal prompting) in combination with total task chaining was used to teach making toast, making popcorn, and operating a dryer (Steege, Wacker, & McMahon, 1987)
- Least-to-most prompting was used in combination with total task chaining and simulation to teach using a cell phone to call for help when lost (Taber, Alberto, Hughes, & Seltzer, 2002) and answering a call or using speed dial on a cell phone when lost (Taber, Alberto, Seltzer, & Hughes, 2003)
- Least-to-most prompting was used in combination with multiple exemplars to teach using a washer and dryer (Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinert, 2002)

**Where has it been implemented?**

- Classroom at separate school (1 study) Group home (1 study)
- Family living classroom (1 study)
- Kitchenette/ laundry area at school (1 study) Laundromat in community (1 study)
- Self-contained classroom (2 studies)
- Various locations in community (2 studies)
How does this practice relate to Indicator 13?

- Indicator 13 Checklist Item #3: Teaching functional life skills may reflect results of transition assessment information
- Indicator 13 Checklist Item # 4: Teaching functional life skills may be a transition service designated in an IEP that will enable a student to meet his or her postsecondary independent living goal(s)
- Indicator 13 Checklist Item #6: Teaching functional life skills may be part of an annual IEP goal that supports a student’s independent living goal(s)

How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?

- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas (Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening, Grades 6-12)
  - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems (Ratios and Proportional Relationships, Grade 6)
  - Use ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems, e.g., by reasoning about tables of equivalent ratios, tape diagrams, double number line diagrams, or equations

How does this practice relate to States’ Career Cluster Initiative: Essential Knowledge and Skills?

- Demonstrate language arts knowledge and skills required to pursue the full range of postsecondary education and career opportunities (Academic Foundations)
- Employ critical thinking skills (analyze, synthesize, and evaluate) independently and in teams (Problem Solving and Critical Thinking)

References used to establish this evidence base:


