

Tips for Teaching

Generalizing and Maintaining Skills

Promoting Generalization and Maintenance of Skills

Generalization and maintenance are two very important concepts that should always be considered and incorporated into any programming for the teaching of new skills.

Generalization

- ◆ occurs when the behaviour is seen outside of the learning environment
- ◆ includes across different settings, times, people, environments, and stimuli

Example 1: Generalization

Mohammed learns to request to go out with one staff and is also able to ask to go out with all the staff that work in his group home.

Example 2: Lack of Generalization

Mohammed learns to request to go out with one staff, but does not ask to go out to any other staff in his group home.

Promoting Generalization

- ◆ Teach loosely. Use a variety of examples, materials, and instructions.
- ◆ Practice the skill in different environments, with different people, and at different times.
- ◆ Teach within the natural context as often as possible.
- ◆ Teach using many examples, including non-examples (e.g., what not to do)

Maintenance

- ◆ the continuation of a behaviour or skill over time
- ◆ includes when a behaviour or skill persists after teaching, prompts and rewards are no longer being provided

Example 1: Maintenance

Ryan learns to say hello to his peers at the day program in September and continues to say hello to his peers at the day program in January.

Example 2: Lack of Maintenance

Ryan learns to say hello to his peers at the day program in September. In January, Ryan no longer says hello to his peers at day program.

Promoting Maintenance

- ◆ Continue to practice skills after being learned and avoid prompts to maintain independence.
- ◆ Fade rewards slowly over time. Do not remove rewards all at once.
- ◆ When possible, have the learner monitor their own behaviour.
- ◆ Ensure frequent opportunities are available to continue using the skill.

Important to Consider: If steps are not taken to ensure that a skill can be maintained over time and persist after the fading of rewards, any skills learned may be lost. In addition, if steps are not taken to ensure a skill can be demonstrated with different people, in multiple environments, and when presented in a variety of ways, any skills learned during teaching may not be transferable to natural settings

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