

Nine Effective Teaching Procedures

1. PAIR TEACHING ENVIRONMENTS WITH REINFORCEMENT

- Initially, connect the teaching environment with highly valuable and high-density reinforcement. If teaching sessions are typically interrupted with problem behavior, increase pairing sessions relative to the intensity of problematic behaviors.

2. FADE IN NUMBER OF DEMANDS

- At first, present low-frequency demands and then fade in greater and greater response requirements (e.g., more time on task or greater number of responses).
- When we start with low-frequency demands with a reluctant learner, the learner will tolerate giving up the reinforcer when he or she learns that by giving it up and by responding quicklythey get it right back.

3. FADE IN THE EFFORT/DIFFICULTY OF TASKS

- Start teaching sessions with activities and requests that the student has demonstrated successfully. This will increase momentum and cooperation because the student is getting contact with reinforcement by demonstrating correct responding. Gradually fade in difficult requests; this will reduce the likelihood of escape and problem behavior.

4. Reduce Learner Errors

- Reduce student errors through teaching methods that insure high levels of correct responding.
- The greater number of correct responses will lead to more reinforcement. The learner will correlate learning to an improving set of conditions.
- When a learner makes lots of errors, the student will likely become frustrated and may attempt to escape from demand or give up on the activity. The learner will correlate learning to a worsening set of conditions.

5. INTERSPERSE EASY AND DIFFICULT DEMANDS

- Intersperse “easy” tasks, which result in correct responding and are correlated with a higher density of reinforcement, with relatively more “difficult” tasks. Easy tasks will help to reduce problem behavior by reducing the value of escape.
- Hard tasks increase the likelihood of escape behavior from task. It is more reinforcing to escape than to remain on task.
- Hard tasks are **threats** to reinforcement because of errors are more likely to occur.
- Easy tasks are **promises** of reinforcement because the tasks have already been mastered by the learner.
- Teaching situations should be 80% easy and 20% difficult.

6. Mix and Vary Instructional Demands

- To reduce escape behavior, avoid mass trialing the same stimulus over and over again, such as “Do this” or “What is it?” Instead, mix and vary instructional demands to avoid fatiguing the learner on one subject/topic. Examples of mix and varying the discriminative stimulus could include the following: find, show me, what is it?, touch, do this, read, answering questions, fill in the blank, tell me, say _____, etc.

7. USE EXTINCTION FOR OFF-TASK RESPONSES

- When the learner engages in off task behavior, do not reinforce the behavior. Extinction is withholding reinforcement for a previous reinforced behavior, and the effect over time is the behavior fades and goes away. Escape behavior is strengthened when the learner is allowed to get out of the task. Develop a plan to address escape behavior and be consistent with implementation!

8. Fast-Paced Instruction

Instruction which is delivered in a fast-paced manner (short, inter-trial intervals; ITI) can reduce problem behavior and student errors, relative to the same demands when presented slowly. It is recommended to have no more than a 2-second delay between trials.

9. Teach to Fluency

- Teaching skills to fluency (correct and quick), as opposed to just correct, decreases the value of escape as a reinforcer, relative to other reinforcers available for non-fluent responding.
- It appears that students who learn to respond quickly and accurately, and not just accurately, tend to exhibit greater endurance for long duration sessions without problem behavior.

References

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