

# INTERSPERSING TASKS

WHAT IS IT? Interspersing means mixing mastered tasks in with new or

## WHY IS IT



- Children learn new skills in fewer trials or faster when mastered tasks are interspersed with new tasks.
- For behavior compliance, the child is likely to follow directions because they are getting reinforced for easy behaviors. It creates behavior momentum.
- Reduces frustration levels, because students are having success on easy tasks, increasing the likelihood that they will

- During any academic task (e.g., spelling, math, sequencing cards, labeling items, etc.).
- Used for discrete behaviors. Not as effective on chained behaviors such as reading a paragraph.
- Behavior compliance – mix easy behaviors (high probability, e.g., touch nose, pick up pencil, give me five) with behaviors that are more difficult or less likely to be successful (low probability, e.g., sit down, open book to



## WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

## HOW TO IMPLEMENT?

- Can be used with similar tasks (e.g., spelling mastered words with new words) or with dissimilar tasks (e.g., spelling unlearned words with labeling known animal pictures).
- Determine what reinforcement will be given for correct responses (e.g., praise, tickles, edibles, material item, etc.).
- Determine the ratio of mastered tasks with new or unlearned tasks. For example for every three mastered task items, introduce one new, or unlearned task or task step.
- Another strategy is to place easier or mastered questions or equations at the beginning of a task and gradually increase task difficulty.
- Provide more reinforcement for correct responses on the new, unlearned tasks, than for correct responses on the known tasks. Differentiate your praise, “Excellent! You’re so smart!” If using tangible or edible reinforcers, it is recommended to deliver them for correct responses on new, unlearned task steps. It is recommended to continue to praise correct responses on mastered task steps, but save the most powerful reinforce for unlearned



To view a short video, scan here:



## REFERENCES

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