

Individual Instruction

STEPS	DESCRIPTION			
Step 1: Provide Instruction	The instruction is any event in the environment that cues the student that a response is required. The instruction does not have to be verbal.			
Step 2: Provide Prompt (if necessary)	A prompt is assistance given to a child that occurs before a response and increases the likelihood that the child will respond correctly			
Step 3: Child Response	Independent Correct: <i>responds correctly with no prompts.</i>	Prompted Correct: <i>responds correctly with a prompt.</i>	Error: <i>responds incorrectly with or without a prompt.</i>	No response: <i>doesn't respond with or without a prompt.</i>
Step 4: Consequence	Reinforcement		Error Correction: Show the student how to perform the task correctly	

Instructions

- Keep instruction concise
- Present when student is paying attention
- Instructions do not have to be verbal
- Be sure and give the child time to respond (at least 5 seconds)
- Instructions can be verbal directions, events, or visual cues
- Instructions should be simple and concise (at first)
 - To help the child focus on the relevant information, avoid extraneous information. So say, "Touch ball" rather than, "Would you touch the ball please?" or "Can you point to the one that is a ball?" As the child makes progress, your language should gradually begin to approximate the normal complexity of language.
- Need to be observable
 - Can you observe the child doing what you are asking them to do?
- Should be positive
 - Try to tell the child what to do rather than what not to do. For example, you might say "Put your hands in your pockets" rather than "Stop flapping your hands."
- Provide an opportunity to respond (at least 5 seconds)
 - Make sure you are giving a child enough time to process and instruction before stepping in with a prompt.
- If an instruction is given, an adult must be available to carry through
- *An instruction is also called discriminative stimulus or S^D*

Examples of different instructions or S^Ds:

- the teacher says, "Show me the dog" while looking at a book with the student.

- The teacher says, “Do this” while clapping her hands.
- The teacher rings the bell indicating it is time to clean up.
- The teacher holds up a card for the child to read.

Prompts

A prompt is any assistance given to the student to successfully complete a task. The goal of selecting a prompt is to choose a prompt that provides the least amount of support necessary to facilitate a **correct response**. Some important considerations when selecting a prompt include:

- Prompts occur BEFORE or as the child is expected to respond
- Use the least amount of prompting necessary to ensure a correct response.
- A prompt is only a “good” prompt if it results in a child’s correct response.
- Prompts must be faded systematically.
- Any prompt that is added must be faded.
- Select a prompt that fits the behavior you are teaching (i.e., if teaching a response that involves a physical movement use a physical prompt).

Why is it important to prompt BEFORE the response?

We prompt before the response to reduce the number of errors that a child makes. This is called *errorless learning*.

Why do we want to minimize errors?

Frequent errors:

- can waste learning time
- tend to be repeated
- are often accompanied by problem behavior
- decrease opportunities for reinforcement
- decrease self confidence
- can delay child’s response to natural cues for appropriate behavior

A high success rate is believed to be important to maintain motivation.

TYPE OF PROMPT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	NOTES
Gestural	Indicates to the child the correct answer by using a nonverbal response	Pointing to the correct answer	The child has to understand the gesture for this prompt to work.
Model	Another person provides a visual demonstration of how to perform the task or behavior being targeted	You demonstrate to the child how to do the art project.	A child has to be able to imitate for a model prompt to be effective.
Verbal	Gives child additional verbal information to help them respond correctly.	Your instruction was, "Clean up." You give the verbal prompt, "Put the blocks in the bucket."	Be clear on whether your verbal is a direction or a prompt (that you want to fade)
Pictorial Prompts	Pictures or written messages that tell the child how to perform the task.	A picture of the child over his coat hook helps him to hang his jacket on the right hook.	
Environmental	The way the environment is arranged helps the child to know what is expected of him.	You place carpet squares at large group time shows the child where he or she needs to sit.	
Physical	Physically touching the child in order to provide assistance to performing the desired response.	You physically guide the child through the process of washing his hands.	Physical prompts can range from a full physical to partial physical.

Consequence

A consequence is the instructor's way of providing feedback to the student.

- When a student gives a correct response we should acknowledge that correct response with some type of reinforcement (e.g., praise, smile, access to a tangible item).
- When the student responds with an error or no response, we will want to provide some type of feedback that the response was incorrect and what response we were looking for.

Guidelines for delivering reinforcers:

- Reinforcers must be delivered IMMEDIATELY after a correct response.

- Optimally, you want to deliver the reinforcement within ½ second of the response. This is especially important with a new learner.
- Reinforcers must be CONTINGENT.
 - The child should get the reinforcement only when the target behavior occurs. It should not be available at any other time.
- Reinforcers should be VARIED.
 - No matter how much a child likes a reinforcer, they will get tired of it if it is the only reinforcer offered. Rotate reinforcers often.
- ALWAYS pair social praise with any food or tangible reinforcers.
 - If you do this, social praise will eventually become reinforcing itself.
- Reinforcement should be FADED over time.
 - Reinforcers should be natural and maintain the behavior.

Remember, if you are giving your student something following a behavior and the behavior isn't increasing, it's NOT reinforcement.