Instructional Support Guide *for* Teaching Students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Created by SCR Consulting LLC, 2023

Introduction to Teaching Students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Learners with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) are in many ways just like other learners you may have worked with in the past. Given the right tools and instructional guidance, they are capable of achieving supported learning goals. When learners with IDD are involved in identifying their learning goals, based on assessed needs and demonstrated interests, they are just as motivated to succeed as any other learner.

Learners with IDD benefit from scaffolded instruction, just like all other learners. They benefit most when these scaffolds are clearly planned in advance and consistently implemented across subjects and individual lessons. Where other learners benefit from scaffolds when being introduced to new topics and are able to transition to not needing them as they get accustomed to the topic, learners with IDD may require these scaffolds to be in place for much longer, or indefinitely. Learners with IDD benefit from repeated instruction, meaningful practice, and the opportunity to demonstrate their learning at regular intervals. Making their progress clear and explicit to the learner and their support system helps reinforce their internal motivation and supports transferability of lessons to other areas of their life outside of the classroom.

Before beginning instruction, please review all Instructional Strategies and Scaffolds shared below; they will be referenced through the lessons you teach.

Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies can be applied to a wide variety of subjects and lesson types. They are focused on supporting routines and practices for sustained learner engagement. By using these instructional scaffolds, educators see greater attention to task, memory of routines, and ability to transfer learned skills to new environments.

Instructional Strategy	Description	Sample Activity
Model	Modeling increases learners' ability to perform behaviors. Modeling has the learner observe someone performing an identified behavior. This demonstration of the behavior before the learner is asked to demonstrate it helps the learner understand the behavior. Modeling is also used as a prompt to provide support to the learner after instruction has been provided and they are asked to use the behavior for the first time. Modeling is most effective when it is paired with prompting and reinforcement.	Keep in mind that modeling can be used to either prime or prompt learners. When used as a prime, the desired skill is modeled before the learner is expected to demonstrate the skill. When used as a prompt, the model provides extra support to the learner after the direction has been given and when the learner uses the skill. Model as a prime: ● Cue the learner to observe the model ● Model demonstrates skill ● Wait for learner to imitate behavior. Model as a prompt: ● Direct learner to use skill ● If learner does not use skill, model the skill. ● If the learner demonstrates the skill, provide immediate learner reinforcement. ● If the learner does not demonstrate the target skill, provide a control prompt. If

		the learner demonstrates the skill following the control prompt, provide learner reinforcement.
Prompt	Prompting assists the learner in using a specific skill. Prompting is identifying a cue to assist the learner in knowing when to use a skill. Prompting reduces incorrect responses as learners acquire new skills.	The three prompting procedures are: <u>Least-to-Most Prompts</u> ● Use a prompting hierarchy with a minimum of three levels. There should be one independent level (no prompt) and a controlling prompt (prompt that consistently helps learner demonstrate skill. ● Select from the five types of prompts, including ○ Gestural prompts, ○ Verbal prompts, ○ Visual prompts, ○ Model prompts, ○ Physical prompts ● Sequence the prompts from least-to-most assistance ● Determine the prompt interval. Usually only a few (3-5) seconds ● Identify activities and times for using least-to-most prompting <u>Graduated Guide Prompts</u> ● Identify the controlling prompt. The controlling prompt is often physical. ● Determine the length of the response interval by considering learner

		characteristics, task characteristics, and the amount of time a learner will be allowed to begin and complete a task. ● Specify prompt fading procedures. Decisions to fade prompts are made within the context of on-going routines and activities. Prompt fading strategies should be decided before using prompting to decrease learners' dependence on prompting. <u>Simultaneous Prompting</u> ● Identify the controlling prompt. The controlling prompt is often physical. ● Determine the length of response interval. The controlling prompt is delivered before the learner responds during instructional sessions.
Reinforce	Reinforcement describes the relationship between learner skill and a consequence that follows the learner's demonstration of the skill. This relationship is reinforcing only if the consequence increases the likelihood the learner will perform the skill in the future.	The two reinforcement procedures are: ● Positive reinforcement ● Token economy Be sure that a cue takes into consideration the context (when), the skill will be used (what), and how you will know when the learner masters the skill (how). Establish at least three performance criteria for each skill to assist in monitoring progress and adjusting

		reinforcement strategies. IDENTIFYING REINFORCERS Identifying reinforcers for positive reinforcement and token economy programs ● Select reinforcers that will increase the likelihood that the skill will be used in the future. ● Considerations: age of learner, potential natural reinforcers, and possible suggestions from parents/team members ● Try out reinforcers to decide which will work best when applied to learners' skill development. PREPARING MATERIALS Positive reinforcement: ● Create a reinforcer menu for learners to select a desired object/activity Token economy: ● Identify tokens that are age and developmentally appropriate and can be used as a currency for desired objects/activities ● Set up a system for tracking and exchanging tokens to access reinforcers and determine a numerical value for each object/behavior USING REINFORCERS

		Positive reinforcement: ● Deliver reinforcement each time learner uses target skill. Make sure the learner does not have access to the reinforcer until the target skill is demonstrated. When using an activity, material, or primary reinforcer, also deliver a social reinforcement (praise, teacher attention). ● Prevent satiation by varying reinforcers. Teach the target skill or behavior during several short instructional sessions. Select different reinforcers if satiation occurs. ● Thin reinforcers and use reinforcers consistently across settings. Once the learner has met the initial performance criterion for the target skill or behavior an intermittent reinforcement schedule should be used to fad the use of reinforcers. Token economy: ● Describe to learners with ASD components of the token economy program. This includes: ○ The target skill or behavior they need to perform ○ Review with the learner how many

		tokens they need to earn before they can receive an item from the reinforcer menu ● Provide a token to the learner each time the skill or behavior is displayed. Explain to the learner why they are earning a token. ● Learners select reinforcement from the reinforcer menu during a specified time. To maintain learner's interest and motivation, adjust prices and rotate items on the reinforcer menu. ● Thin tokens and use tokens consistently across settings.

Scaffolds

<Insert instructions for use of this section. I will include language to tie this to the lessons themselves.>

Scaffold	Purpose/Application
Task Analysis (TA)	Learners with IDD struggle with learning new skills, especially when they are complex or have multiple components. Task analysis (TA) can be used to help break down and teach these chained skills.1 Chained skills consist of multiple steps such as tying shoes, grocery shopping, writing a paper, or cooking. Once chained skills are broken into smaller steps, team members work with the learner to systematically teach the individual steps. As the learner masters the individual steps, the learner will gradually become more independent using the target skill. By using TA to teach a learner individual steps, the learner can become more independent using the more complex target skill. Keep in mind that the three task analysis procedures are: ● Forward chaining ● Backward chaining ● Total task presentation Break down a target skill into smaller steps by: Watching someone complete the skill who is competent in the target task. As the person completes the task, write down each step. Asking an expert in the target skill to record each of the steps. Complete the task yourself and record each of the steps. Check to determine if the steps are accurate by performing the target skill again and

	following each of the steps. Make sure that each step is a separate skill, that steps are described accurately for the learners' needs. Consider the strengths and needs of the learner to determine how the steps of the Task Analysis should be presented to the learner. The TA steps can be presented with pictures, text, or video. When forward chaining is used, the learner begins by teaching the first step in the chain. As each step is mastered, the next step in the TA is then taught. Follow the steps outlined below: Prompt the learner to perform the first step identified in the task analysis. Use the selected prompting procedure (least-to-most prompting, graduated guidance, or simultaneous prompting). Be sure to use any additional created materials such as a video for video modeling or visual directions that could assist the learner in performing the skill/behavior. When learner completes the step, reinforce the learner with social praise and a tangible reinforcer if appropriate. After the first step is completed, guide the learner through the remaining steps. When the first step is mastered, the next step in the TA is added one at a time When backward chaining is used to teach a target skill, the steps identified in the TA will be taught in reverse order beginning with the final step. Follow the steps outlined below: ● Provide assistance to learner with completing the initial identified steps. ● Prompt learner to perform the final step. Remember, to select the prompting procedure (least-to-most prompting, graduated guidance, or

	simultaneous prompting) that would best assist the learner in understanding what is expected. Reinforce the learner for completing the final step. When the final step is mastered, the previous step is added one at a time. For total task presentation, the learner is taught the entire task including each individual step until the chain is mastered. Follow the steps outlined below: ● Use a prompting procedure (least-to-most prompting, graduated guidance, or simultaneous prompting) and visual supports or video modeling to assist the learner in performing each step of the task analysis. ● Reinforce the learner for completing each step. Be sure to save the most effective reinforcer for the final step when the entire skill/ has been performed. ● Fade reinforcers as quickly as possible.
Time Delay (TD)	Learners IDD are at risk for developing prompt dependence. Prompt dependence limits a learner's ability to generalize skills to new situations, activities, and individuals. Teachers can prevent prompt dependence by using Time Delay(TD). TD is a response prompting procedure that systematically fades prompts during instructional activities. When using time delay, teachers provide a controlling prompt (prompt which ensures learner will use the target skill) before

	learner responds, which reduces errors and increases reinforcement opportunities. Keep in mind that the two time delay procedures are: ● Constant Time Delay ● Progressive Time Delay When beginning to teach a skill using time delay, there is no wait time between the cue and delivering the controlling prompt. With constant time delay, team members implement a fixed delay (usually 3-5 seconds) after using the initial 0-second delay. With progressive time delay, team members gradually increase the delay between providing the cue and delivering the controlling prompt.
Visual Supports (VS)	Visual supports are concrete cues used to provide the learner with information about routines, activities, or behavioral expectations. Visual supports are concrete cues that are paired with, or used in place of, a verbal cue to provide the learner with information about a routine, activity, or skill demonstration. Visual supports might include: pictures, written words, objects, arrangement of the environment, visual boundaries, schedules, maps, labels, organization systems, timelines, and scripts. The various types of visual supports can be divided into three categories: ● visual boundaries, ● visual cues, ● visual schedules.

	ASSESSMENT <u>Visual Boundaries</u> When creating boundaries, remember boundaries provide information about where a particular area in the classroom begins & ends, and what activities are completed in each area. Create boundaries using natural objects, such as: furniture, tape on the floor, or rugs. <u>Visual Cues</u> Visual cues include graphic organizers, visual instructions, labels, and choice boards. When preparing visual cues consider: ● The information needed to be presented visually. Form of representation (objects, photographs, drawing or picture symbols, words, phrases, or a combination of formats). <u>Visual Schedules</u> Create a visual schedule considering the five core components: ● Form of representation: functional objects, representational objects, photographs, drawings or picture symbols, words or phrases, or a combination ● Length of the schedule: ○ One item, signifying upcoming transitions; ○ Two items, presented left-to-right or top-to-bottom; ○ Three to four items, presented left-to-right or top-to-bottom; ○ Half-day, presented

	left-to-right or top-to-bottom; ○ Full day, presented left-to-right or top-to-bottom; or Technology based schedule. ● Method of manipulating the schedule ○ Learner carries an object that will be used in the upcoming activity, ○ Learner carries a visual cue that represents an upcoming area and then matches the object/visual cue to a pocket, basket, or envelope in the represented location ○ Learner turns over the visual schedule cue or places the cue in a "finished" location when activity is completed, or ○ The learner marks the visual cue on schedule as completed. ● Location of the schedule ○ Schedule information brought to the learner, ○ A stationary schedule in a central location (on a wall, shelf, desk), ○ A portable schedule that a learner can carry across locations (e.g. clipboard, notebook, handheld device). ● Determine the method to initiate schedule use and transitioning from one activity to the next. ○ Staff bring schedule information to the learner or the learner moves to the

	schedule using a visual transition cue. TEACHING VISUAL CUES <u>Visual Boundaries</u> ● Introduce the learner to the established boundary and point out the important boundaries and tasks completed in that area. ● Use modeling to teach the learner to stay within the boundary. ● Use reinforcement when learner stays within a boundary. ● Use corrective feedback when learner does not stay within the boundary. <u>Visual Cues</u> ● Show the learner the developed visual cue. ● Stand behind the learner when prompting the use of the visual cue in order to make sure the learner is looking at the visual information and not the adult. ● Use concise, relevant words/terms while teaching the visual cue. ● Assist learner in participating in the activity/event with the visual cue. <u>Visual Schedule</u> ● Stand behind the learner when prompting use of the visual schedule. ● Place schedule information in learner's hand. ● Use concise, relevant words/terms (identify location where learner is transitioning). ● Assist learner in getting to designated activity/location, and

	prompt learner to place schedule materials in appropriate location. ● Ensure learner remains in scheduled location until prompted to use schedule to transition. ● Repeat steps until learner is able to complete the sequence independently across activities/locations. By fading prompts quickly, learners are less likely to become reliant on teacher prompts, and instead use the visual supports independently. Make sure all teachers working with the learner are consistent with expectations, reinforcement, correction, and follow-through when using visual supports.