Strategies to Help Paraprofessionals Increase Student Independence
Presented by: Danielle Ozimek
April 20, 2018

Today’s Objectives
Participants will...

- Identify eight strategies which can be used to facilitate increased student independence in the classroom
- Construct a systematic prompting plan that can be implemented with students in order to increase independence
- Analyze various organizational tools and determine how their utilization can increase student growth and independence within the educational setting

Setting the Stage

Consider this...
What would it be like to have a person paid to be with you 7 hours a day, 5 days a week?
- How would relationships change?
- Freedom? Privacy? Intimacy?
- Perception of co-workers and friends?

Impact
- Unintended consequences of paraprofessional support have been widely documented
- Interference:
  - Ownership and responsibility of general educators
  - Separation from classmates
  - Dependence on adults
  - Impact on peer interactions
  - Loss of personal control
  - Interference with the instruction of others
Student Perceptions

- Study of high schoolers with paraprofessional support in inclusive setting
- Described paraprofessionals as:
  - Mother
  - Friend
  - Protector
  - Primary Teacher
- Expressed "powerful messages of disenfranchisement, embarrassment, loneliness, rejection, fear, stigmatization" (Broer et al., 2005)

The Balancing Act

- When do we fade support?
- When do we support more?
- When is just enough?
- No balance=student’s achievement may not be optimal and/or students may become prompt dependent (learned helplessness)

Avoid the Velcro phenomenon!

Sole Partner Reflection

- Take 1 minute to reflect upon and jot down a thought about a student whom you feel is overly dependent upon adult(s) or a student who has noteworthy levels of independence and what steps were taken to arrive at this point
- At the tone, find a “sole partner”
- Each person will have 1 minute to share about the student on their mind (please keep names confidential!)
- Be prepared to share out a few examples

How can we develop student independence while supporting all students in general education settings?

Facilitating Independence

Independence: “Freedom from control or influence of another or others.” (Webster’s Dictionary Definition)

Interdependence: “People relying on each other in different places or in the same place for ideas, goods, and services.”
Reduce Audible Supports

- The best way!
  - Suggested questions:
    - During this assignment, what do you think you need?
    - When we work on ______, how do you want me to support you?
    - Would you prefer that I remind you or that I write you a list of things to do?
  - For students who are non-verbal:
    - Provide options which can be chosen without verbal communication
    - Example: Write “friend” on an index card and your name on another, then ask whom the student prefers to help with taking a note to the office

Consider Partial Participation

Case Study:

Michael was a student who had been in trouble several times for pinching the paraprofessional assigned to work with him. The paraprofessional had bruises on her arm and became frustrated with the situation. When the teacher observed Michael and the paraprofessional interact, however, she noticed that the paraprofessional was giving Michael verbal cues in a loud, shrill voice at a rate of more than 10 cues a minute. Michael was reacting to the verbal cues. When the teacher asked the paraprofessional to instead provide intermittent, silent support, Michael completely stopped pinching.

Listen to More than Words

Ask the Student
Listen to More than Words

- Students often communicate that they do not want invasive adult support, but we often do not listen to them
- Some verbal, some less socially appropriate
- Best response is to recognize behavior as communication and respond to what we think the request may be

Increase Peer Supports

- Try establishing the rule, “Ask three before me”
- Set up:
  - Play partners
  - Transition partners
  - Lunch partners
  - Etc.
- Ensure the student you are supporting has a choice in selection of partner(s)

Set Up and Walk Away

- Do not sit or place a chair meant for adult support next to a student!
- Structured teaching and work systems can support with this

Increase Visual Supports

- Visual schedules
- Mini schedules
- Visual routines
- Video modeling

Video Modeling

- Take out the piece of paper
- Follow along with the video to complete a masterpiece!

Types of Video Modeling

- There are several applications of video modeling:
  - Video modeling
  - Video self-modeling
  - Point-of-view video modeling
Video Modeling

- Most commonly used form of video modeling
- Three main features of video modeling:
  1. A model is video recorded performing the targeted behavior. This model can be a peer, a family member, teacher, or other adults.
  2. The video is played for the learner before each teaching situation.
  3. After the video is finished, the learner is prompted to perform the behavior.
- Example: http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/mod_view.php?nav_id=1407

Video Self-Modeling

- Primary model in the video is the learner him or herself
- Can be especially motivating for some learners and provides an example for the student performing the desired behavior successfully
- Example: http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/mod_view.php?nav_id=1407

Point-of-View Video Modeling

- A unique way of showing how the behavior would look through the learner’s eyes
- The video is filmed to show the learner’s view of the behavior.
- Example: if a teacher was teaching a student with ASD to tie his shoes, the video would be filmed showing the hands reaching down and working on the laces. It would not show the whole body of the person, but rather just what the eyes of the learner would see if she were actually tying their shoes.

Fading the Intervention

- Important to fade prompts once the learner shows progress or meets the target
- Procedures for effectively fading videos and prompting:
  • Delaying start of the video or stopping prematurely
  • Error correction

Fade the Prompts!

- Teaching a new skill involves “helping” the student to perform the new behavior
- The “help” we provide = prompt
- Prompt types include physical, verbal, gestural, visual...

Prompting Hierarchy

- Natural Cue
- Gesture
- Verbal
- Visual/Picture
- Model
- Physical (partial, full)
- Full Physical
○ Cue = natural event/signal we respond to
  - Natural is never faded or eliminated
○ Our job = gradually eliminate the prompt so student responds only to cue
  - “Prompts fade, cues stay”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Cue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requesting a drink of water</td>
<td>Parent saying, “Tell me what you want”</td>
<td>Thirst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping car at intersection</td>
<td>“STOP!”</td>
<td>Red light, stop sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking turn while playing a game</td>
<td>“It’s your turn now”</td>
<td>Previous player has finished turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing hands</td>
<td>“Wash your hands”</td>
<td>Hands are dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating lunch</td>
<td>“Eat your lunch”</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing plate in dishwasher</td>
<td>“Put your plate in the dishwasher”</td>
<td>Finishing lunch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prompting While Teaching
○ Use one prompt at a time
○ Quickly eliminate prompt - know your plan to eliminate before you begin the lesson
○ Lessons should be dynamic

*Prompt dependency is due to lesson design, not disability*

○ If it is a skill we want the student to demonstrate independently, do NOT use a verbal prompt!
  - Most challenging to remove
  - Use visuals
○ If verbal directions are necessary, do so in a way that can result in a mental picture
  - “Hands in pockets” or “Hands clasped” vs. “Quiet hands”

4-3-2-1 Activity
○ Touch all 4 walls
○ Take 3 giant steps in any direction
○ Use “air spelling” to write the names of any 2 members of your family
○ Find 1 partner who does NOT share your birthday month

What have you learned so far today that you are looking forward to implementing when you return to your setting?
Systematic Prompting Plans

Time to Practice!
- Take 1 minute to reflect upon a student you support and a routine that is not yet being completed independently.
- Complete the Systematic Prompting System (SPS) visual with that routine in mind (5 minutes).
- When the timer goes off, find someone who is wearing the same color and pair together.
- Each person will have 1 minute to share their SPS and the other person will provide feedback (please keep names confidential!).

Structures for Success

Adult Scheduling
Student Scheduling

References


Questions?

Thank You for Coming!

Contact Info:
doizimk@mtsd.k12.wi.us