

Generalization Programming Brief - Train Diversely

Function of Generalization Programming Category:

Train the student diversely (using different environments) in order to increase the chances that the student will generalize the target behavior. This generalization programming brief was based on Stokes & Osnes (1989).

Brief Description:

Training and instruction can be adjusted to maximize potential for generalization. Trainers need to cautiously keep the balance between behavior acquisition (learning the behavior) and behavior robustness (how many environments can the trained behavior be used in?) Four ways to alter training in order to facilitate generalization: use sufficient stimulus exemplars, use sufficient response exemplars, make antecedents less discriminable, and make consequences less discriminable.

What “Common Problems” does this address?

Student in new environment does not engage in target behavior.

Method 1: Use sufficient stimulus exemplars

Change components of the teaching environment in order to increase likelihood that target behavior will generalize.

- Step 1. Identify the setting in which the target behavior is being taught.
- Step 2. Alter aspects of the environment while teaching the behavior (could include moving to a different place in the room, using different paper, performing behavior in another classroom or outside, etc.)

Method 2: Use sufficient response stimulars

Respond and teach in varied ways in order to promote generalization.

- Step 1. Identify current teaching and response methods.
- Step 2. Change components of teaching (modeling, prompting: visual, verbal, auditory) and/or components of responding (verbal praise, high fives, applause, etc.) when teaching the target behavior. You want to choose teaching methods and responses that will easily be applicable to or naturally occur in other environments.

Method 3: Make antecedents less discriminable

Make antecedents blend into the natural environment.

- Step 1. Identify the target behavior's antecedent.
- Step 2. When teaching the target behavior, choose an antecedent that blends in with the natural environment as much as possible. (Ex: For example, rather than teaching a child to put away his books when he sees a cue card, you can teach the target student to put away his books when he sees that other students have closed their books and begun to put them away.)

- Step 3. Reinforce target behavior (Ex: Verbally recognize the student's behavior: "I see that you put your books away like everyone else! I'm so proud of you!")

Method 4: Make consequences less discriminable

- Step 1. Identify the consequence of the target behavior.
- Step 2. When developing a new consequence to promote behavior change, teach the new behavior using a consequence that will most likely be found in the natural environment.
- Step 3. Reinforce target behavior (Ex: Verbally recognize the student's behavior: "I see that you put your books away like everyone else! I'm so proud of you!") Remember – in order to decide whether or not your consequence is reinforcing you must observe the behavior to see if it increases (not decreases).

Critical Components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:

Reinforce the target behavior as soon as it occurs in the natural setting. Figure out which naturally occurring antecedents and consequences reinforce (increase) or punish (decrease) the desired behavior. Use the natural antecedents and consequences first before introducing consequences that are do not occur naturally within the environment. Reinforcers and punishers must be embedded within the natural environment.

Critical Assumptions/Problem-Solving Questions to be Asked:

- This intervention assumes that naturally occurring antecedents and consequences can be found in the teaching environment.
- It also assumes that both the naturally occurring antecedent and the naturally occurring consequence will serve as a reminder and reward/punisher that will be effective for the child.
- In addition, this procedure assumes that the child can fluently and accurately perform the target behavior for which generalization is programmed.

References

- Burns, M. K., Riley-Tillman, T.C. & VanDerHeyden, A. (In Press). *Response To Intervention Applications Volume 1: Academic and Behavioral Interventions*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Stokes, T. F., & Baer, D. M. (1977). An implicit technology of generalization. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 10*, 349-367.
- Stokes, T. F., & Osnes, P. G. (1989). An operant pursuit of generalization. *Behavior Therapy, 20*, 337-355.

