Introducing and Expanding Small Group Instruction for Children Diagnosed with Autism and Related Disabilities

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Overview

- Determining Student Readiness
- Preparing for Instruction
- Group instruction
What is group instruction?

Why is group instruction important?

- Effective group instruction results in improved student performance.
- Students will learn best if we teach essential skills in the most effective and efficient manner possible and focus is placed on explicit and systematic teacher-led instruction.

(Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2004)
Principles of Effective Instruction (direct instruction)

- Present new material in small steps/break down complex skills into smaller units, model the steps and have students practice after each step
- Sufficient time allocation for instruction
- Limit amount of material presented at one time
- Sequence skills
- Begin lesson with clear statement of goal
- Use clear and concise language
- Provide opportunities for frequent responding/practice
- Review previously learned materials
- Monitor performance of ALL students
- Provide systematic feedback and corrections
- Deliver lesson at a brisk pace
- Provide many examples
- Use materials at appropriate instructional level
- Reteach material when necessary

(Marchand-Martella, Slocum, & Martella, 2004; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986, Rosenshine, 2012)

Goals for Group Instruction

- Active student engagement
- Choral/unison responding
- Clear targets
How to Determine Readiness Skills

- Assessment of group skills
  - VB-MAPP (milestones and barriers assessment)
  - Researched curricula pre-requisites
  - Other curriculum assessments
  - Classroom observations

- Where to start?
  - Establishing instructional control
  - Pre-requisite skills
  - Balanced programming

Beginning Group Instruction

- Determine your group of students
- Identify common skills from intensive teaching
- Prepare reinforcers
  - VRs
  - Token Economy

- Focus of Instruction
  - Responding to signals
  - Choral responding
  - Best to pre-teach with known skills prior to teaching targets in a group.
Direct Instruction

- Published, research-validated curriculum used in combination with direct instruction (effective teaching procedures)

- Main Components:
  1. Active student participation
  2. Group unison responding
  3. Signals
  4. Pacing
  5. Teaching to mastery
  6. Correction procedures
  7. Motivation

Group Direct Instruction

- Determine readiness skills
- Administer placement tests
- Determine appropriate research-based programs and student groups
- Establish data systems
- Begin instruction
Examples of Readiness Skills for Commonly used DI Curricula

**Language for Learning (LFL):**
- Echo words/phrases
- Discriminate and Tact many items and actions
- Respond to simple yes/no questions
- Perform simple actions on command
- Describe objects (parts/features)
- Respond to name

**Reading Mastery:**
- Should start after student has completed lesson 40 of LFL
- Echo sounds/words
- Imitate prosody...speed (fast and slow)
- Imitate prosody...duration (sustain a sound for about 3 seconds)
- Follow simple instructions

**Distar Math/Connecting Math Concepts:**
- Echo words/phrases
- Respond to simple yes/no questions
- Respond to “Stop”
- Rote count
- Match-to-sample
- Replicate patterns/sequences
- Prepositions

What if student does not meet criteria?

- Some students may be missing one or more pre-requisites but may in fact have the component skills to begin academic training.

- Start teaching group responding and readiness skills:
  - Start with “show me ready”:
    - Ready hands (hands folded on lap)
    - Seated in chair
    - Feet on floor
    - Body and eye gaze oriented toward teacher

- Other critical skills:
  - Choral/unison responding
  - Individual responding
  - Waiting/attending when others are engaged in unison responding
Set-Up for Successful Teacher-Student Interactions

- Clear expectations (rules and routines)
- Materials organization
- Seating
  - Assign seating
  - Lower performers closest to teacher
  - All students can see the teacher/materials
  - Teacher can see all students in the group
  - Teacher can see independent workers

Basic Teaching Template: Instructional Format
Model-Lead-Test-Verify

**Frame:** The teacher states the learning task at hand.

**Model (I do):** The teacher provides the expected response verbally or through demonstration. If needed, the teacher repeats the model to make sure all students heard or saw it.

**Lead (we do):** The teacher and students respond together—several times if needed to ensure that all students practice responding correctly with teacher.

**Test/Check (you do):** Students perform the task independently, several times if needed to do it correctly.

**Verification:** The teacher provides specific praise—stating what the students learned.
### Sample Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>“This letter makes the sound /mmm/”</th>
<th>“My turn to sound out this word. Mammaannn”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Teacher and Students</td>
<td>“Say it with me, /mmm/”</td>
<td>“Sound it out with me, mmmaaannnn”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>“What sound?”</td>
<td>“All by yourselves, sound it out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>“Yes, /mmm/”</td>
<td>“Yes, mmmaaannnn”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Signals

- **Visual** or **auditory** cues that are used to control the timing of students’ responses.

**Purpose of signals:**
- Increase the likelihood of ALL students initiating a response.
- Allow ALL students to practice the task.
- Allow the instructor to monitor every student.
- Allow the instructor to hear incorrect responses and correct them immediately.
All signals have 4 basic steps:

- A focus cue to gain students’ attention and present the task
- Brief pause (about 1 second) to allow think time
- A verbal cue (“get ready”)
- A signal

Rules for signaling:

- Instructor only talks on focus position
- Instructor never talks and moves
- Instructor only signals when it is time for students to respond

Goal for DI: Criteria for Mastery

- All students responding correctly on signal in the scripts original context.
- Criteria applies for moving on to next exercise/lesson as well as for mastering lesson
Error Correction

All statement corrections start with “My turn” and end with “starting over”

Error Correction Template:
- Model: “My turn”
- Lead: “Say it with me”
- Test: “Your turn by yourself”
- Verify: “Yes, ____”
- Starting Over: Start at beginning of task

Error Correction

If a student responds either before or too long after the signal…

- Teacher corrects by saying, “I need everybody to respond on my signal”, and returns to the beginning of the task.
- Alternatives:
  - “You have to wait until I signal. Let’s try it again.”
  - “You have to answer as soon as I signal.”
Error Correction

*If students are not responding consistently, use the following format…*
- “Keep your place”
- “Eyes on me”
- “Get ready”
- Signal/call individual student’s name
- Verify in complete sentences
- Turn individual responses into group responses

Specific Corrections:
- Vary depending on the specific response errors.
- Correction procedures are presented in the teacher's presentation book under the exercise for which they apply.
Error Correction

Correcting Alternative Responding

- Used when student responds with correct but alternative response (different from response on presentation book).
- Teacher indicates response is correct by saying, “right, some people call this ____, but it is also called a ____. Let’s use ____.”
- This is important for consistency across students and on future lessons.

Error Correction

Correct but Inappropriate Responding:

- Teacher immediately stops the students and follows this sequence:
  - Models an acceptable way of responding (Example: “I can say that sentence the nice way. Listen. I am touching my head.”)
  - Leads students through response (“Let’s all say that sentence the nice way”)
  - Tests students (“Let’s hear you say that sentence the nice way all by yourselves”).
Promoting Generalization

- Transferring Group Skills to naturally occurring instructional sessions
- Determine students readiness
- Determine type of instruction to be delivered
- Prepare materials for instruction
- Establish Data Systems

Example of Group Instruction: Morning Meeting
Pictures of Group Materials: Early Learners

Pictures of Group Materials: Early-Intermediate Learners
Pictures of Group Materials: Advanced Learners

Data Collection: Group Instruction

Morning Meeting Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time: to</th>
<th>Staff Member:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Responds to signal P UP</td>
<td>Mands to peer P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2 (give to peers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Snack Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time: to</th>
<th>Staff Member:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Raises Hand P UP</td>
<td>Waits until called on P UP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff Behavior During Group Instruction

Teacher Role
- Prepares materials and instructional environment
- Only deliverer of instruction and prompting?
- Deliverer of reinforcement
- Training and Treatment Integrity

Support Staff
- 2nd person partial prompts, if needed
- Supports delivery of reinforcement when needed
- Data collection
- Training and Treatment Integrity

Questions
Thank you!

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