

PROMOTING LRE

Through Reduction in Prompt Dependence

By Diana Browning Wright, 2008

(Adapted from an original by Browning Wright, Kraemer, Morton, 1994)

Students who benefit from a para educator assigned to the classroom due to “special circumstances” often become prompt dependent. That is, their inclusion suffers as the aide applies interventions too restrictive for the students need. Assessment to determine the least intrusive prompt for an activity can be essential to avoid overuse of prompts which interferes with development and maintenance of independence. "Prompt dependence" occurs when either excessively intrusive prompts or a high frequency of prompts predominates. An analysis of the student’s need for prompts should occur for each activity in which it is concluded an aide’s assistance would be helpful. Requiring either continuous or periodic prompt recording teaches para educators the necessary discrimination on level of prompting and provides data on student progress. Students with disabilities may need more or less prompting across activities, times of day or days during the week. On-going monitoring and record keeping is essential for progress monitoring.

Definition of a Prompt:

A range of instruction stimuli provided in order to direct an individual toward the performance of a desired response.

Prompting Levels

Prompts range from the least to the most intrusive. The amount of assistance increases with each level in the hierarchy.

1. **Natural Cue:**

Behavior independently occurs as a result of a natural cue to a stimulus in the environment. The individual performs the behavior without any assistance. WAIT before prompting further.

Example: Peter stands up to go to lunch when he sees his friends stand up.

2. **Gestural Prompt:**

Physical gestures that may include pointing, beckoning, or shaking one's head to indicate approval or disapproval.

Example: Ms. Browning points to the yellow square to signal time for yellow reading group.
Mr. Jones holds up two fingers to signal "quiet now."

3. **Indirect Verbal Prompt:**

The instructor uses words to imply that some behavior needs to occur.

Example: Mrs. Keller says, "Children, what time is it?" Students understand it is time to quiet down and open their books.

4. **Modeling:**

Performing the desired behavior in order to encourage the initiation of that behavior by the individual.

Example: Mrs. Brown sits up tall in her seat with her hands folded on top of the desk as students come to a reading group. She waits until they copy her behavior.

5. **Symbolic (Pictorial or Written) Prompt:**
 Symbols (pictures or words) are presented to guide behavior. Often a sequence of pictures or a lists of words are used, combined with the gestural prompt of pointing to the symbol of the desired behavior for that moment in time.

Example: Michael has 4 pictures of how to make a pizza which he uses in sequence to prepare a snack. When he appears confused, his teacher gesturally redirects him to the correct picture.

6. **Direct Verbal Prompt:**
 The instructor explicitly state, the behavior that needs to occur.

Example: "Boys and girls, please stand up now."

7. **Minimal Physical Prompt:**
 Slight physical contact that guides the individual toward the behavior.

Example: When Phil does not open the door when verbally told to do so, Mrs. Jones lightly touches his elbow. *Note, depending on the situation, a minimal physical prompt may be less intrusive and facilitate more independence than a direct verbal prompt.

8. **Partial Physical Prompt:**
 The instructor physically starts the individual on the desired behavior, and then ceases the physical assistance so the individual may complete the behavior independently.

Example: When Phil does not open the door after being lightly touched on his elbow, Mr. Wright gently nudges his arm upward until the knob is touched and then he releases contact.

9. **Full Physical Prompt:**
 Use with caution. DO NOT IMPLEMENT WITHOUT COACHING; LACK OF TRAINING CAN RESULT IN RESTRAINT FOR NON COMPLIANCE AND INJURY TO STAFF AND STUDENT WHEN RESISTANCE OCCURS. A BRIEF PHYSICAL PROMPT SHOULD NEVER TRANSITION TO A SUSTAINED RESTRAINT FOR NON COMPLIANCE. ONLY IMMINENT DANGER TO SELF OR OTHERS JUSTIFIES A RESTRAINT. The instructor physically guides the individual through the entire behavior..

Example: John's mother physically positions his finger on the tape player eject button, provides a downward push motion, then moves his hand to grasp the tape. John does not resist, and is curious throughout the episode.

Record Keeping to Reduce Prompt Dependence

Record each prompt provided in a table and indicate if desired response occurred, speed of compliance, next steps conclusion (R= reduce next time) K=keep at current level)

Natural Cue	N	Direct Verbal Prompt	DV
Gestural Prompt	G	Minimal Physical Prompt	MP
Indirect Verbal Prompt	IV	Partial Physical Prompt	PP
Modeling.....	M	Full Physical Prompt	FP
Symbolic (Pictorial or Written) Prompt .	S		

Example Prompt recording entry

1.Art activity N, G, S yes 2 minutes to comply (K)
2.Solo text reading DV, yes 30 seconds (R to G next)