

Lesson Plan

Objective: To **assess vocational preferences** of an individual with profound mental retardation, as well as deafness and blindness.

Settings and materials

- Primary setting is the student's job site location.
- Secondary setting (for the pre-work assessment) is in a classroom.

Content taught

- Preferences among work tasks are assessed using procedures similar to those developed in a prevocational classroom by Mithaug and Hanawalt (1978) later modified for use with individuals with severe disabilities prior to beginning supported work (Reid, Parsons, & Green, 1998).
- To address (a) concerns regarding whether preferences assessed would generalize to the job situation and (b) assessing unfamiliar job tasks, several components were included in the preference assessment:
 - Work materials used during the assessment are identical to the materials to be used on the job.
 - The support person who would later function as the job coach on the job conducts the preference assessment.
 - The student spends time working on each task during the preference assessment in the same manner as would be expected on the job.

Teaching procedure

Assessment Procedure

- The assessor guides the student to feel the materials associated with the work task on his right side and then the task on his left side.
- The assessor guides the student to complete one unit of the task on the right (e.g., stuff one book into the envelope) and one unit of the task on his left side (e.g., fold one flyer).
- After completion of one unit of both tasks, the assessor guides the student's hands to feel again the materials on his right and left sides.
- The assessor puts the student's left hand in his lap and allows him to search the tabletop by moving his right hand across the surface of the table.
- The student is given 30-sec to search the area with his right hand.
- A choice of tasks is defined as holding or manipulating a material associated with one of the tasks for at least 10-sec.
- When a task is chosen, the other task is removed and the student works on the chosen task for 3 minutes.

- If the student does not choose a task within 30-sec, the materials for both tasks are removed and the assessor prepares for another choice presentation trial.
- Physical guidance is provided with the student (e.g., to sign “work,” to feel the two sets of work materials present, to initially complete each respective work task) is included to assist the student to be aware of the expected work task and choice option in light of dual sensory disabilities.
- During the 3 minutes that the student works on a task following a choice, the assessor provides him with only as much assistance as needed to correctly complete the work.
- Observations of engagement with a chosen task are conducted in an attempt to provide validation of the student’s choices.
- After 3 minutes of work, the work materials are removed and the assessor prepares for the next choice presentation trial.
- The process is repeated until all combinations of the three tasks have been presented one time, at which point one assessment session is complete.
- One assessment session is conducted each day for a total of 10 days.

Comparison of pre-work preference assessment to preferences expressed on the job

- Prior to beginning each work period, the student is given a choice of his previously assessed most and least preferred work tasks.
- The choice is presented in the same manner by the job coach as during the pre-work preference assessment except that the presentation position on either of the student’s right or left side is alternated on every choice presentation trial.
- When the student chooses one of the tasks, he works on the chosen task for the 20-minute work period.
- If he does not choose either task, his job coach selects one of the tasks for the work period, counterbalancing the task provided across work sessions.

Method of evaluation

- On-the-job cumulative choices for the student’s most and least preferred work tasks based on the pre-work preference assessment are compared.

Lesson plan based on: Parsons, M.B., Reid, D.H., & Green, C.W. (1998). Identifying work preferences prior to supported work for an individual with multiple severe disabilities including deaf-blindness. Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 23, 329-333.