



## HLP 21: Teach Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning Across Time and Settings

Students with disabilities frequently struggle with learning and applying new content across time and settings. When students with disabilities learn new information or skills but are unable to apply them to novel situations or settings, the utility of that instruction may be called into question. Educators and IEP teams carefully consider the various times, places, and situations in which students' skills and knowledge might be needed and provide explicit instruction and other opportunities to practice in those situations. Educators use feedback within authentic learning settings to help students develop the capacity to generalize their learning and skills.

This resource is intended to support school leaders looking to embed the HLPs in professional development, implementation, teacher observation, and feedback efforts at their school site.

### Teachers Who Effectively Teach Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning

#### Promote Generalization of Skills/Behaviors

- Apply the same techniques that successfully changed behavior in one setting to all settings where the target behavior is desirable (i.e., sequential modification).
- Help students to recognize reinforcement available in the natural environment and to recruit reinforcers or recognize subtle forms of "social reinforcement."
- Use sufficient exemplars in different settings and contexts and with different people when teaching students to demonstrate a behavior/ skill.
- Use indiscriminable contingencies. Indiscriminable contingencies are when students do not know when reinforcement will happen, thus promoting the likelihood that desirable behaviors continue.
- Deliberately program similar stimuli in the training setting and the setting where generalization is desired.
- Provide students training in self-management, teaching students to monitor and report on their own generalization of behavior, to mediate generalization of skills.
- Use verbal instructions to promote generalization.

#### Use Reinforcement Schedules

- Use reinforcement schedules to ensure that desirable behaviors persist across settings. These may include:
- Continuous Schedules – a reinforcer is provided each time a desired behavior occurs
- Intermittent Schedules – a reinforcer is provided after a certain number of responses (ratio schedule), or after a specific amount of time (interval schedule)
- Thin schedules of reinforcement, moving from continuous schedules to intermittent schedules as students continue to demonstrate success with a behavior/skill.
- Build in opportunities for overlearning trials and distributed practice.
- Provide students with instruction in self-management skills (e.g., goal setting, self-evaluation and reflection, self-reinforcement, and self-talk).

#### Use Data to Monitor Generalization and Maintenance

- Consider the time and place that is most appropriate for collecting data.
- Collect data on the behavior of interest reliably and over time, using a clear definition of the target behavior.

- Select a data collection system that will give the clearest picture of student performance.
- Summarize data using graphical displays.
- Examine data from baseline and instruction phases to compare differences in student performance and reviewing methods for increasing generalization and maintenance as needed.

#### Tips for School Leaders to Support Teachers

- Provide educators with instruction, professional development and/ or coaching in selecting and implementing strategies that promote generalization and maintenance of skills/behaviors.
- Observe and provide feedback and/or coaching on the practices that teachers use to support students' generalization and maintenance of skills/behaviors.
- Encourage and facilitate collaboration between all professionals in the school building, helping all understand that promoting generalization and maintenance among students is a team-oriented process.
- Provide educators with instruction, professional development, and/ or coaching in teaching self-management behaviors to students.

#### Questions to Prompt Discussion, Self-Reflection, and Observer Feedback

- What strategies are teachers currently using to help students retain key concepts beyond the initial learning period?
- How do we monitor long-term retention of learning, and what data informs our decisions?
- What role does spaced practice or retrieval practice play in our instructional planning?
- How can we support teachers in designing cumulative reviews or spiraled content that reinforces prior learning?

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