

Research-Based Practice: High-Probability Instructional Sequences

Reference:

Davis, C. A., Brady, M. P., Hamilton, R., McEvoy, M. A., & Williams, R. E. (1994). Effects of high-probability requests on the social interactions of young children with severe disabilities. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 27*, 619–637.

Mace, F. C., Hock, M. L., Lalli, J. S., West, B. J., Belfiore, P., Pinter, E., & Brown, D. K. (1988). Behavioral momentum in the treatment of noncompliance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 21*(2), 123–141.

Description: This strategy involves presenting students with a series of easy requests (high-probability requests) followed by a more difficult request (low-probability request) and repeating this pattern for the purpose of increasing motivation to attempt difficult tasks. Other terms used to describe this teaching approach include interspersal procedures, high preference procedures, and behavioral momentum. The pattern of high-probability and low-probability requests can vary. Here are a couple of examples:

Easy-easy-difficult-easy-easy-difficult-easy-easy-difficult-easy-easy-difficult (and so on)

Easy-easy-easy-difficult-easy-easy-easy-difficult-easy-easy-easy-difficult-easy-easy-easy-difficult (and so on)

*This strategy can be used for verbal or written responses and can be applied to teaching basic math facts, sight words, or more advanced academic skills, social skills, communication skills, etc.