

Running the Interruption-Transition Teaching Protocol

Objective: To replace problem behavior that has been acquired when problem behavior has resulted in the removal of demands to transition to another activity and thereby the student has maintained possession of a toy, activity or item.

Candidates for the Program: Following a functional assessment, students whose behavior has been determined to be a function of a history of having demands removed and reinforcing items maintained following problem behavior.

1. Set up many opportunities a day to teach the learner to be interrupted and transition to a less preferred activity without problem behavior. Start these practice session by placing the learner in a preferred activity and allow some time for the reinforcing value of the activity to build.
2. Determine the demand to transition to a less reinforcing activity that you will place on the learner. (These steps can be predetermined and written in advance on an interruption/transition skills tracking sheet to track mastery of steps)
3. At **first** make the demands during practice **easy and relatively effortless**, within sight of the reinforcing activity just removed and for only a brief period, e.g. count of 10 once in the less preferred activity. An example might be to ask the learner to put down a toy and sit in a chair from the activity for the count of 10 with the offer of a Promise Reinforcer. (Silent count or show of finger count for some students).
4. Intersperse both easy and target transitions during training session. Run target criteria on only 20% or so of each day's trials; the other 80% of trials should be at levels the student has already mastered.
5. Also run trials intermittently in conditions where the student is engaged in a highly preferred activity and may be less likely to cooperate. Cooperation at such times should result in **copious** amounts of reinforcement. In other words, differentially reinforce any and all better performances on transitions (quicker, more successful, problem free transitions get more and better reinforcement.)
6. Run these trials both during Natural Environment Teaching, during structured teaching (IT sessions), during high MO activities, etc and on an unpredictable schedule. Don't just run interruption trials as a session.
7. The reinforcer for complying will be the delivery of the Promised Reinforcer and the opportunity to immediately return to the preferred activity after the student has transitioned without problem behavior.
8. Fade the use of Promise Reinforcer through intermittent trials for easy transitions. It will also be necessary to fade the counting procedure and any other stimuli you have used over time to make the transitions initially easier.
9. Run as many interruption transition trials per day as possible (20 to 50 per day). A trial equals each time the student leaves the preferred item and then returns to it.
10. As the learner is successful, transition activities may involve doing other tasks along the way such as put in a puzzle piece; give a non reinforcing item, or gross motor movements. Make note of those tasks you add them.
11. If the transition was slow or escape extinction procedures (keep on the demand) were used, practice the transition again within a few trials in order to get a better performance.
12. If problem behavior occurred, record data on Interruption/Transition data sheet.

13. When the student has mastered transitioning, complying with a few demands, begin to increase the number of demands, the distance from the reinforcing activity, and the length of time in the non-preferred activity. How you do this will vary depending on the student's data obtained once the program is implemented. The data are what will ultimately guide your decision making process on increasing parameters of the demand.

Quick Summary of Procedures

- Determine the demand to transition to a less reinforcing activity that you will place on the learner.
- Identify and have prepared in advance the Promise Reinforcers to be used in the interruption transition training.
- Present the Promise Reinforcer before you give the direction to transition.
- Present the direction to transition in clear direct wording.
- If the learner successfully complies, give him the Promised Reinforcer and have him return to the preferred activity. (You can deliver additional reinforcement when he returns to the activity).
- If the learner engages in problem behavior as soon as you request the transition, do not remove the demand or allow access to the preferred item or activity the child is being asked to give up. In addition, remove the Promised Reinforcer. Instead, keep the demand on the learner and use physical guidance to obtain compliance with the demand while maintaining safety of student and others. Once at the transitioned area, continue to place easy demands until you gain instructional control, and then place the demand to go back to the original area. Do not give additional reinforcement upon return to the original location when problem behavior has occurred.
- Allow him there for a few seconds and interrupt again using the original procedure and do not place extra demands unless problem behaviors occur. Differentially reinforce the better transition if and when it occurs.
- As the learner accomplishes successful transitions, delay the interval that he must wait to go back to the original activity. (unless following a specific schedule)
- Record the learner's responses on the Interruption/transition data sheet.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** ____ to ____
Target Step: _____ **Cold Probe:** YES NO #Y's _____

BEHAVIOR KEY: Designate an abbreviation for the problem behavior in the box.

Hitting = H Bolting = B On Floor = OF Spitting = S Yelling = Y Grabbing = G
 Throwing objects = TO Kicking = K

	<i>Location</i>	<i>Demand</i>	<i>Problem Behavior</i>	<i>Time to compliance</i>	<i>Initial</i>
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Criteria: When the student successfully complies with a request of the target transition for 3 consecutive Y's on the daily cold probe.

Mastery would be the student performing successful interruptions with many different people, in many different environments, during highly reinforcing activities.