

Fragile World On The Spectrum

*Tools for Helping Your Child Feel
“Safe, Accepted, & Competent”*



Bill Nason, MS, LLP
Behavior Specialist
Limited License Psychologist
billnason@yahoo.com

Apprenticeship Learning

*Building Competence By
Learning Through Others*

Tool #24

Social Learning



- Most early learning occurs through apprentice learning; learning by doing with others.
- The child grows by copying themselves after the people they value. Doing with them, to be like them.
- The child feels “competent” by doing it with the more experienced adult.
- Through guided participation, the child tastes mastery, which motivates further learning.
- “Experiencing mastery” builds further social bonding between parent and child.

Learning From Others



- A major portion of early learning occurs by watching and following the lead of more experienced mentors (parents).
- Learning through others establishes strong emotional bonding with the mentor.
- Children learn to reference, imitate, and coordinate actions with the mentor..
- “Doing with” to “become like” the mentor.
- Learning through others teaches not only “how to” skills, but also “relating skills” (referencing, joint attention, reciprocal interaction, etc.) which strengthens future learning.



Two Types Of Teaching

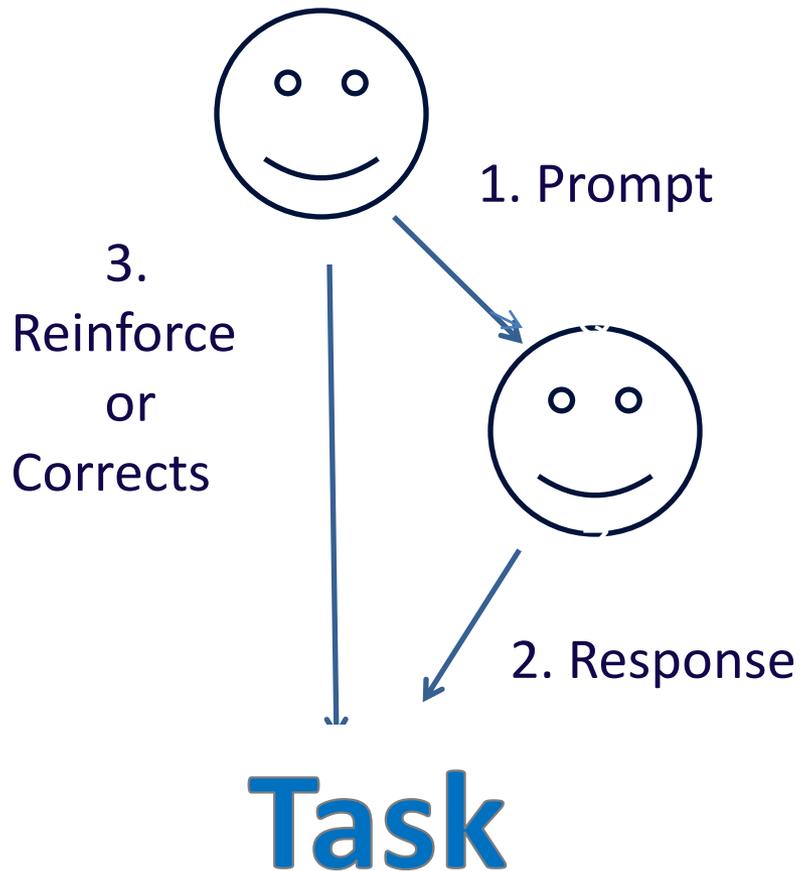
Instructional Teaching

- Teacher directs, prompts, instructs.
- Child attempts activity.
- Teacher rewards right responses and corrects wrong responses.
- Provide repetitive, rote trials.
- Teacher directs, child does.
- Most common form of teaching children with special needs.

Apprenticeship Teaching

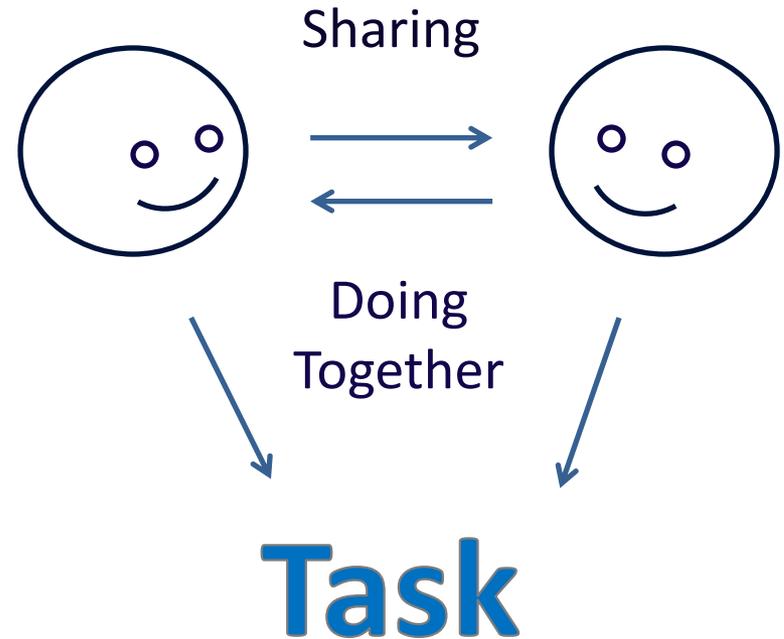
- Learning by “doing it together.”
- Both are “doing”, sharing the experience.
- Teacher uses guided participation to ensure success.
- Teacher uses all daily routine activities as teaching opportunities.

Instructional



Person does; staff instructs
Emphasis on task and performance

Apprenticeship



- Doing Together
- Learning through “sharing the experience”
- Less emphasis on formal teaching.

Instructional Learning

- Prompting, directing, and correcting often creates “task performance anxiety” in children.
- It puts the child on the spot, with learner “doing” while teacher is prompting, monitoring, and correcting.
- Teacher holds a strong power position over the learner.
- Learning is very “performance oriented”, with reinforcement tied to correct performance only.
- For children who struggle, they tend to become opposition, with strong feelings of incompetence.

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Apprentice Learning



- Apprentice learning takes the pressure off, minimizing performance anxiety.
- Learning by “doing with”, and following the lead of the trusted coach.
- Coach frames the activity for the child to feel safe, accepted, and competent.
- Through guided participation the child “feels” the correct way to do things.
- “Sharing the experience” and “feeling the success.”
- Child takes on more independence as she builds competence.
- Learning “independence” through “interdependence.”

Apprentice Learning

- Many children with special needs have problems with apprentice learning.
- It requires: social referencing
joint attention
imitation
co-regulation, etc.
- Although natural for other children, these skills need to be taught to children with special needs.
- Since social learning is so important for development, it is important that we teach these skills.
- These social learning skills can be developed by providing numerous daily learning opportunities via “we-do” activities.

Tool #25

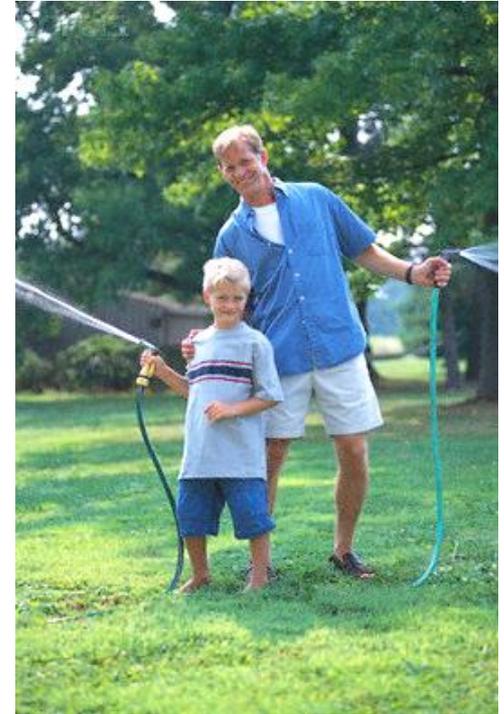
We-Do Activities



Doing Together



Helping Each Other



Being A Mentor

Teach Through “We-Do” Activities



- Turn daily activity into “We-Do” activities; doing them together, taking turns, helping each other out, etc.
- Numerous daily learning opportunities: daily household chores, leisure/play activities, homework, shopping/banking, etc.
- Child learns by following your lead and “doing it together.”

We-Do Activities



- Both participants play an active role.
- Coach frames and scaffolds the activity to maximize success.
- Focus is on “sharing the experience”, rather than task performance.
- Celebrate “doing it together”, rather than “Good job Johnny.”



“We-Do” Activities

Household Tasks



Working partner with me.
Trusted guide for me.

- Laundry: Sorting clothes, putting clothes in washer/dryer, folding together, etc.
- Cooking/baking: Pouring, mixing, stirring, tasting, etc.
- Dishes: Washing dishes in sink, loading/unloading dishwasher, putting dishes away, etc.
- Washing windows, mirrors, etc. Add excitement first by tracing each others face on mirror and than clean.
- Yard work: Raking, sweeping, watering flowers, watering lawn and each other!
- Washing car/wagon/bike/each other.

Leisure/Play



Doing it together.
Sharing the experience.
Feeling the mastery!

- Sports
- Passive games
- Reading together
- Playing video games
- Building things
- Playing with others children
- Teaching sharing, taking turns,
- sharing fun, relating!

Personal Care



Learning “through” you,
by doing “with” you.

- Brushing teeth together
- Washes hands together.
- Dressing together.
- Eating together.
- Doing together, modeling, guiding, having fun!!
- Using daily functional tasks to teach social referencing, imitation, and personal care skills.

Community Skills



Close zone of connection
Face to face, eye level.
Sharing the experience!

- Shopping: making grocery picture cards, finding items to match card, purchasing item, etc.
- Banking: Opening up account, filling out deposit and withdraws, budgeting envelopes, etc.
- Eating out: Ordering food from a menu, giving an order, paying for meal, etc.
- Library: finding books, checking out books, taking books back, asking for help, etc.

Moving From Self Involvement To Functional Engagement



Less time with....
Solitary Play
Watching Videos
Playing computer



More time in learning.
Functionally engaged
with others, in “we-do”
functional activity.

Gradually move from a world of isolation to a “shared” world

Basic Guidelines

- Do task together, both taking active roles.
- Coach leading and guiding the activity.
- When possible work face to face, at eye level, to maximize facial gazing.
- Use less words, and more non-verbal communication (animated facial expressions, exaggerated gestures) to guide child.
- Focus on reciprocal interaction, helping each other out, succeeding together.
- Frequently celebrate “doing it together.” High fives, thumbs up, etc.
- Teach the child to reference you for information and to coordinate his actions with you.

Coaching Tips

- Know your child's strengths and interests. Try and build we-dos around them.
- Understand the learning style your child responds best to (visual, tactile, auditory, etc.).
- Use the interaction style that works best for your child (animated, gentle, slow or fast pace, loud/quiet, etc.).
- Understand your child's comfort zones. How long can he engage, what overwhelms him, what type of support does he respond well too? How much and how fast can I stretch him?
- Start in child's comfort zone and stretch slowly.

Where To Start

- Don't overwhelm yourself.
- Start with a couple of short “we-do” activities a day.
- Use these to learn how to frame and guide your child in reciprocal engagement.
- Start with activities that are simple and maximize the child's success, often including the child's interests.
- Often better to start with activity the child already knows how to do. Then you can focus on teaching the child the functions of referencing and coordinating with you; rather than learning a new skill at same time.