Effective Classroom Practices

Activity Sequencing and Choice

Practice

Activity sequencing involves firstly considering the manner in which instructional tasks, activities or requests are ordered. These tasks, activities or requests are then provided in a certain sequence in a way that promotes learning and encourages appropriate behaviour.

Offering choice is providing options to engage in or complete activities. This could involve for example the type of activity, order for completion, use of materials and the location for completing activities or tasks.

Research

Researchers have found that students are more likely to engage with tasks and be less likely to misbehave when they perceive the assignments are doable and they are provided with choices regarding their work (Kern and Clemens, 2007; Stormont, Reinke, Herman and Lembke, 2012).

Research shows that even within subject matter, there are a variety of ways to sequence content to promote learning and appropriate behaviour (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Cates & Skinner, 2000).

Offering choice and activity sequencing are preventive or antecedent interventions because they are implemented before problem behaviours occur (Kern & State, 2009).

Implementation

Activity Sequencing

1. Task Interspersal


- An item must be truly at mastery level before it can be used for interspersing. The easier items must indeed be easier as demonstrated by previous mastery.
- Students prefer assignments with a mix of already mastered tasks as well as the current skill tasks.
- Students prefer assignments when up to 30% of items are new.
- Intersperse already mastered items in a 1:3 ratio with more challenging or new items.
- Slowly fade the mastered items as fluency builds on the new content, for example decrease at a rate of 1:8.
- Eventually eliminate the already mastered items.
2. Behavioural Momentum

Steps involved in using Behavioural Momentum include:

1. Identify behaviours that have a higher probability of completion.

2. Then precede more difficult requests by giving three or more requests the student can readily do.

3. After successfully completing each request, reinforce the student.

4. Then present the task that is known to have a lower probability of being completed.

5. Reinforce the student for doing as asked.

6. Gradually reduce the number of easier requests.

Offering Choice

Choice can be used class-wide, with groups or with individual students. Choices that can be built into routines include:

- Create a menu or choices that are practical and doable.
- The order of activity completion.
- Materials to be used to complete the task.
- Independent, partner or small group work.
- Location in the classroom where work will be completed, for example, desk, computer corner, mat area.

References


For further support or information:

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