



Using a System of Least-to-Most Prompts to Teach Functional Life Skills

What is the evidence base?

- This is a Research-Based Practice for **students with disabilities** based on one methodologically sound group study with non-random assignment across 40 participants and five single subject studies across 31 participants.
- This is a Research-Based Practice for students with **mild intellectual disability** based on one methodologically sound group study with non-random assignment with 20 participants with mild intellectual disability and one single subject study across 3 participants with mild intellectual disability.
- This is a Research-Based Practice for **students with moderate intellectual disability** based on one methodologically sound group study with non-random assignment with 20 participants with moderate intellectual disability and three methodologically sound single subject studies across 24 participants with moderate disability.
- This is a Promising Practice for students with **severe intellectual disability** based on one methodologically sound single subject study with 4 participants with intellectual disability.

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

- The best place to find out how to implement using least-to-most prompting to teach functional life skills is through the following research to practice lesson plan starters:

- [Meal Planning \(Arnold-Reid, Schloss, & Alper, 1997\)](#)
- [Cell Phone Usage When Lost \(Taber, Alberto, Hughes, & Seltzer, 2003\)](#)
- [Laundry Skills \(Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinart, 2002\)](#)

With who was it implemented?

- Students with
 - Moderate intellectual disabilities (3 studies, n=44)
 - Mild intellectual disabilities (2 studies, n=23)
 - Severe intellectual disabilities (1 study, n=4)
- Ages ranged from 11 to 20
- Males (n=47), females (n=24)
- Ethnicity
 - None reported (n= 71)

What is the practice?

A system of least-to-most prompts is a method used to transfer stimulus control from response prompts to the natural stimulus whenever the participant does not respond to the natural stimulus or makes an incorrect response.

- Least-to-most prompts begin with the participant having the opportunity to perform the response with the least amount of assistance on each trial.
- Greater degrees of assistance are provided with each successive trial without a correct response (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007).

In the studies used to establish the evidence base for using least- to -most prompting to teach functional life skills, least-to-most prompting included using:

- naturally occurring, nonspecific verbal, specific verbal, gesture and verbal, partial physical and verbal, total physical and verbal prompting (Steege, Wacker, & McMahon, 1987)
- increasing prompts with a visual organizer (Arnold-Reid, Schloss, & Alper, 1997) increasing prompts in combination with total task chaining and simulation (Taber, Alberto, Hughes, & Seltzer, 2002; Taber, Alberto, Seltzer, & Hughes, 2003)
- increasing prompts with multiple exemplars (Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinert, 2002)
- increasing prompts in the community (Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabek, 2001)

How has the practice been implemented?

- Least-to-most prompting was used in combination with a meal chart organizer to teach making a grocery list to prepare nutritionally sound meals (Arnold-Reid, Schloss, & Alper, 1997)
- Least-to-most prompting was used during community-based instruction with social praise reinforcers to teach washing and drying clothes in a laundromat (Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabek, 2001)
- Least-to-most prompting (i.e., naturally occurring, nonspecific verbal, specific verbal, gesture and verbal, partial physical and verbal, total physical and verbal prompting) in combination with total task chaining was used to teach making toast, making popcorn, and operating a dryer (Steege, Wacker, & McMahon, 1987)
- Least-to-most prompting was used in combination with total task chaining and simulation to teach using a cell phone to call for help when lost (Taber, Alberto, Hughes, & Seltzer, 2002) and answering a call or using speed dial on a cell phone when lost (Taber, Alberto, Seltzer, & Hughes, 2003)
- Least-to-most prompting was used in combination with multiple exemplars to teach using a washer and dryer (Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinert 2002)

Where has it been implemented?

- Classroom at separate school (1 study) Group home (1 study)
- Family living classroom (1 study)
- Kitchenette/ laundry area at school (1 study) Laundromat in community (1 study)
- Self-contained classroom (2 studies)
- Various locations in community (2 studies)

How does this practice relate to States' Career Cluster Initiative: Essential Knowledge and Skills?

- Demonstrate language arts knowledge and skills required to pursue the full range of postsecondary education and career opportunities (Academic Foundations)
- Employ critical thinking skills (analyze, synthesize, and evaluate) independently and in teams (Problem Solving and Critical Thinking)

References used to establish this evidence base:

- Arnold-Reid, G. S., Schloss, P. J., & Alper, S. (1997). Teaching meal planning to youth with mental retardation in natural settings. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*, 166-173.
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- Steege, M. W., Wacker, D. P. & McMahon, C. M. (1987). Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of two stimulus prompt strategies with severely handicapped students. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 20*, 293-99.
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- Taylor, P., Collins, B. C., Schuster, J. W., & Kleinert, H. (2002). Teaching laundry skills to high school students with disabilities: Generalization of target skills and nontargeted information. *Educational and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 37*, 172-183.

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