

SENSORIMOTOR STAGE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Small Group

The student does what peers do with help when needed, but there is a clear expectation that he will demonstrate targeted skills at designated times.

A group activity is not instructional if help is provided throughout without structured teaching of targeted skills. Participation must be frequent in order to maintain attention. If the learner does not attend to the actions of peers, the group is too large.

Independent Learning

Lilli Nielsen Active Learning Techniques:

The student is given access to learning media in adapted environments. Interaction with learning media is student initiated and executed. Lilli Nielsen Active Learning environments include the following.

- Little Room
- Position board
- Scratchboard
- Den

Other traditional independent learning environments include:

- Ball pits
- Battery operated switch toys
- Centers
- Playgrounds
- Computer labs

Independent learning environments are not instructional if the student is not selectively attending to media (attention level), actively exploring media (exploration level), or attempting to use media (function level).

Direct Instruction

Routines (Chen and Smith):

Routines are precision teaching. They provide the consistency and repetition required for neural development. The student participates in the activity with a teacher. The activity happens the same way each time it is done- same place, same materials, same

teacher, same sequence of steps, same opening and closing, same cues and accommodations. When the student is participating at a high level, anticipating the next step in the sequence and performing embedded IEP skills, the routine is revised and expanded to add new opportunities for learning.

Routines are not instructional if the student is doing the same thing over and over again without opportunities to learn new skills.

Offering Technique (Lilli Nielsen):

The student imitates as the teacher uses visual and tactile modeling to demonstrate actions that probe sensory potentials and/or functions of objects. At beginning stages, the teacher demonstrates simple exploration schemes like bang, shake, drop, throw, pull out, put in, pull apart, put together. For some students, she may demonstrate more specific functions related to the object. Instead of banging a pot lid, she may demonstrate putting the lid on the pot it goes with. She may show how a wire whisk and a bowl are used together by stirring. In the offering technique a variety of items are offered in one session and out of context. In other words a toothbrush and a spoon might be offered without regard to the fact that the activity is not taking place where those items are usually located or used in the way they are usually used.

The offering technique is not instructional unless the teacher can demonstrate actions with objects in such a way that the student can see and feel what she is doing and participate by initiating imitation without being physically manipulated.

Resonance Games (van Dijk):

The student plays a game with the teacher. The topic of the game is a sensory experience that the student enjoys very much, swinging, rocking, vibration, etc.) The teacher provides the desired experience two or three times and then stops at a significant moment during the presentation. She waits. When the student does something to indicate he has noticed the stoppage, she begins again, treating the behavior as a request to continue whether or not that was the student's intent. By pairing the behavior with continuation of the presentation, she teaches the student that his behavior sends her the message that he wants her to do something. This is the beginning of the communication skill of requesting.

Resonance games are not instructional if the student does not trust the teacher, like the experience provided, and do something to make it happen again when the teacher stops.

Calendars/Object schedules (van Dijk):

The student receives messages from his teacher about what he is going to do. Symbols are used in special communication environments called "calendar boxes." In the beginning, students may use an object that is part of a familiar activity as a symbol for that activity when it is placed in a "now" container. The student reads the message when he sees and touches the object in the container and understands that the teacher is telling him that he is going to do the activity associated with that object. Eventually the teacher might tell the student that he is going to this thing now and then another thing next using two objects and two containers. Gradually, the number of containers increases to give the student information about longer periods of time. Symbols also change. When a student knows what objects stand for, he may use symbols such as parts of objects, photographs, and pictures paired with objects. Later still, he may use photos and pictures without object pairing. Calendar symbols can be used expressively when students request an activity by choosing an object to put in a container or refuse an activity by taking an object out of a container.

Calendars are not instructional if students do not show that they are anticipating the activity associated with the symbol. Teachers can test this by presenting two additional objects on a tray next to the calendar box- one associated with the activity and one foil. For example, if a set of ear pods in the now container indicates music time, the teacher might put the switch used by the student during the activity and a shoe on the tray. The student demonstrates that he knows what is going to happen by looking at or touching the activity related object.