Effective Strategies for Teaching Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities

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The child with deafblindness or vision impairment with additional disabilities (VIAD) requires considerable modifications to teach content using different teaching strategies. He cannot learn from what he sees like the deaf child does. He cannot learn from listening like the blind child does. He learns only by what he does. This means that no learning is taking place for him while waiting for others to take their turn. For this reason, small group or individual instruction becomes more critical. Large group instruction is only valuable if he can be consistently active (e.g. playground activities). The curriculum focus for a child with deafblindness or vision impairment with additional disabilities should be on bonding and developing interactions and routines for expanding the frequency and functions of communication. This child will not learn about objects or actions incidentally. He cannot tie together the fragmented input he receives without interpretation and instruction from others. He must be taught to use and accept this instruction.

**Bonding**

A child who has vision impairment with additional disabilities also may have problems experiencing new things. Encountering the world without benefit of vision and hearing requires a great deal of trust. Hence bonding with the child is critical for the teacher, therefore it is important to evaluate the child’s response to an individual when determining who will be the primary provider of instruction. She may be withdrawn or passive, content to stay in one place and let the world come to him. Remember she will learn only through doing. Bonding can best take place when the child’s favourite activity is used and she is allowed to lead with the teacher following the child.

Mahima is a little girl with deafblindness aged four. Her favourite activity is to stay by herself and spin around. It is just a week in school and the teacher Meena is trying to establish a bond with her. Meena realizes that she has to take the lead from Mahima and she picks her up and spins her around gently. Initially Mahima resists and wants to be let off, but when Meena stops and sets her down, she stretches her arm to look for her teacher as if asking to spin her again. This starts the process of bonding. When Meena takes the lead from Mahima in various situations, the latter realizes that she can trust the adult. When this bond is established, a schedule can be developed.

In the case of a child with deafblindness and vision impairment with additional disabilities, things often magically appear and disappear before her. Cause and effect are elusive. People do things to her but not necessarily with her. There is hardly any explanation of events before they occur. Instruction that is always directive requires no response from her. For this reason it is important to make use of turn taking activities so that the interactions are balanced, (my turn, your turn) encouraging equal participation.
Access to Meaningful Communication:

Communication for the student who is vision impaired with additional disabilities, is one of the most critical skills. Communication is more than the use of words. It is the way we reach out to other people in our environment. It is the way we connect to each other both verbally and nonverbally. It is the way we express our feelings, share information, tease, joke, and convey needs. For the student who is deafblind or has vision impairment with additional disabilities, it is important that she is given access to communication and allowed to be heard for what she has to say with language, with gestures, with movements, with voice, with hands, with eyes, with silence (Miles & Riggio 1999). Educators must help all students communicate by providing appropriate motivation, keeping expectations high, and letting those with disabilities realize that what they have to say is valued.

Developing a communication foundation for learning is a priority. Typically, communication is tactile in nature using signals, objects, gestures and later on sign language or tactile symbols or some combination of forms. Language is developed through the use of routines, calendar systems or discussion boxes. The use of print, pictures, and demonstration will be of value to this child depending on her vision loss. The child may first need to be moved co-actively through an activity to know what is expected of her. After she understands what is expected, this support could be faded to avoid building prompt dependence.

This child will require a great deal of individual support. Initially this may need to be provided by the teaching staff. Although it may not be possible for her to have individual instruction all day long, the teacher will have to work with the child individually for at least two hours a day. However, if good interaction and communication skills are modeled for the other students and an effort is made to draw them into successful play situations together, they may be able to provide instructional support for some activities.

Safety

Safety is also of critical importance to this child. Not only must the environment be made safe for her, but she must feel safe in order to move around on her own. If she does not, she is unlikely to move in her environment, resist interaction with her environment and the people in it. Instruction and support from an orientation and mobility specialist is very important. She may need to help staff evaluate the environment for hazards and develop travel routes for the child to use. She may work directly with her to orient her to that environment, and provide training on travel techniques and travel equipment.

Functional Age-Appropriate Activities:

A skill selected for instruction will have a naturally-occurring purpose (i.e. doing a cooking activity in the kitchen at school rather than in the class room where she has her circle time activity) and will be performed in natural settings. The age appropriate skills selected to be taught are similar to skills acquired, performed, and valued by non disabled individuals of approximately the same age. Activities can be meaningful based on the relevance or the value ascribed to them by the student and the family. A 7-year-old student who is visually impaired and has multiple disabilities is practicing social skills in an art activity in a general education art class and engaged in a meaningful activity even
though the activity itself may have no direct functional application in that student’s life after school age. However, at age 7, it is important to be a part of her school community. This activity is providing her exposure and expectation of learning about art which can lead to a preferred leisure activity in the future.

Community-Based Experiences:
Opportunities to learn skills in the community are very important at every age. For the younger student, the school may be the primary community environment. For secondary-age students, opportunities to work and socialize with non disabled adults become increasingly important. Usually, the emphasis on community-based instruction as part of the school-day curriculum increases as the student gets older. Community-based instruction is based on some key concepts:

- Individualized instruction to teach specific skills within the most natural environment;
- Instruction occurs on an individual basis or in very small groups;
- Instruction relates to specific IEP objectives as determined by the educational team;
- The goal of community-based instruction is to increase competent functioning among individuals in normalized environments, now and in the future;
- Community-based instruction is NOT a field trip.

Suresh is a child with vision impairment and cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. He accompanies his mother to the supermarket every week. Mother wants Suresh to communicate his needs to the supermarket staff. In preparation of this, his teacher at school helps Suresh prepare a shopping list using a packet of his favourite snack and putting in his communication pack along with a communication card in Braille and print that says “Please give me one packet of Lays Chips”. During his orientation and mobility class the mobility instructor takes Suresh to the supermarket and there, he encourages him to use the communication card to interact with the store staff.

Motivation
Motivation or reward is a very important part of learning. In designing a task, the teacher must ensure that there is appropriate motivation for the child. The most successful motivation is to complete the task itself. Operating a toy by winding it, is a task with an inbuilt or intrinsic reward. Sometimes a task may be designed with other motivating factors in the task such as using a cane to reach the nearby store and buying an ice-cream or buying a soft drink. Sometimes a task may need additional motivation. For example, child learning to brush her hair may get a pretty hairclip to put in her hair. Best rewards include others appreciating the child and showing happiness. However, children with vision impairment and additional disabilities will find social rewards harder to understand and may rely on material and intrinsic rewards for a longer time.

Small Steps
Children with vision impairments and additional disabilities need to learn by small steps often known as task analysis. Although the child may be involved in complex routines such as getting ready for lunch, the teacher will need to find small achievable goals in the whole routine.
Sumita is a 5-year-old girl whose teacher is working on her lunch time activity. Teacher goes with Sumita to the lunch rack, helps her to locate her lunch basket by her object of reference attached on it and guides her back to class. Once in class Sumita is learning to set the table for lunch. Teacher has broken the task into small achievable steps.

Reach for napkin in basket.
Unfold napkin.
Place napkin on the table.
Take lunch box out of the basket.
Place on napkin.
Take out water bottle from basket.
Place water bottle on left side of lunch box.
Take spoon from lunch basket.
Place spoon on right side of lunch box.

Considerations Favourable for Learning

When deciding on what consideration would facilitate optimum learning, we must keep in mind that the best learning environment is created and tailored keeping that particular child’s needs in mind. We must remember that the child’s needs and capacities change and we should move the child to more natural environments.

Environmental Considerations

The quality program indicators will guide educators in setting and establishing effective best practices programs for children and youth who have visual impairments and additional disabilities. It is important to realize the diversity of this population and make any adaptations and/or accommodations depending on each child’s unique needs. Some environmental strategies to consider are listed below:

Physical Environment

Auditory Environment: Sound level should be comfortable and at a low level so that children are not disturbed. The timetable should be such that for those children who do not tolerate loud noise are not in the room when noisy activities are going on. Background noise in the environment should be reduced. Radios, televisions, children playing, general classroom noise, generators, air conditioners and traffic noise all add to the list of sounds that may be distracting to a child. Location of the classes away from the main road, carpeting on the floor, rubber bushes for the furniture, and cow dung on mud floors and curtains will all help to absorb sound and help in providing a congenial auditory environment. While it is not possible to remove all background noise, be aware of the effect they may have on the child’s level of attention.

Use of hearing aids/assistive listening devices: Hearing aids do not amplify just speech but they amplify everything. This includes all the background noise in a classroom (children moving in the class, teachers talking to paraprofessionals, fans running, rustling papers).
Assistive listening devices (ALD) are designed to help a person with a hearing impairment better cope with the problem of noise and distance from the speaker. An ALD works by having the speaker wear a microphone connected to a receiver, worn by the listener. The speaker’s voice is then sent directly to the listener’s ear. Background noise is not picked up by the microphone and so its effects are decreased. Therefore, children with central auditory processing disorders and children with hearing loss only in one ear may have more troubles with noise and distance than listeners with no impairments. These people may not wear hearing aids or amplification gadgets but may benefit from the use of an ALD. Also, when the child has visual impairment also, the access to all information gets decreased.

**Visual Environment :**

Special attention should be paid to lighting, glare, and illumination in the environment:

If students are positioned on the floor for some activities, educators should position themselves in the same place to experience what the lighting situation is and determine whether it is conducive to the students’ visual performance. If the educator wants the child to do an activity on a mat, then the mat must have one solid colour and not busy patterns. Evenly-distributed, softly-diffused indirect lighting is recommended. Illumination can be used to draw attention to an object or figure by shining a light on it. Students should avoid directly looking at a light source as not only is it uncomfortable, but it also reduces the amount of detail seen. Looking into a strong light source can cause retinal damage especially to students who have aphakia. Surfaces within the normal viewing area of the students should be glare-free (blackboards, windows, cabinet doors, wall surfaces). Colored paper or paper with a matte finish can be used to cover the surface. Some children will benefit from additional light on an object or written material.

**Using color and Contrast:**

The contrast of an object against its background is a significant factor in improving visibility (e.g. light objects on dark mats, dark objects on light counters or cutting boards, using a dark toothbrush in a white toothbrush holder). Walls should be of one colour and differentiated from the floor by another colour. We can change small things using cloth, paper and select objects using contrast with wall

When choosing toys or tools for students, we should consider the colour and contrast of the object itself (a bright yellow ball with one wide black stripe draws a child’s attention better than a solid blue ball). Bright and shiny objects are easier for some children to see and some can see red, yellow and orange better.

High contrast of letters on a page may improve visual functioning. However, sometimes, white letters on a black background are easier for students to see and reduce glare. Bolder and well spaced letters are often easier to see than larger letters. Dark pens, markers, and soft leaded pencils may be helpful. The width and color of the line on writing paper should be selected according to the student’s needs and preferences. Using a reading stand may also be of help.
Magnification: (Size)

Visual efficiency can be improved by increasing or decreasing the size of the objects being viewed. Visual efficiency can be accomplished by using devices for magnification.

The optimal position or location of students must be considered. Some examples include, students may need to use a low vision device, or walk up to view something more closely or students with vision in the left eye may need to sit on the right side of the classroom.

Being close to an object can result in automatic magnification, students may lean closer to an object or bring an object near their eyes.

Reading materials can be enlarged and large print books can be used. However, adapting all reading materials into large print is not recommended unless it is for a temporary period until the student can be evaluated for potential use of low vision devices.

Interest (Familiarity)

Most children find it easier to recognize things which are familiar or in which they are interested. A child may recognize a cup she knows because she may use it everyday to drink milk and not a new one. The familiar cup becomes a representation for “drink”. We may use a familiar cup along with a new one and gradually withdraw the old one when she begins to recognize the function of the new cup.

Space and Arrangement:

Background visual clutter should be avoided as it makes it difficult for the student to focus on the object or person from the environment. It is recommended for educators to wear darker colors when possible (black, brown, navy blue), or to have a black apron or dupatta. Limiting the visual clutter of the object may help (simplifying patterns, using solid colors with high contrast). It is difficult to see things against a cluttered background such as heap of blocks presented on a patterned table cloth or a gaudy mat is more difficult to see and hence it is better to put a white or black cloth on the table or of contrasting colours could be used. Displays should be placed at children’s eye level. Equipment to be used by children should be placed where they are accessible.

Tactual Environment: Tactual displays are necessary in the classroom and wherever the child goes. Braille and object markers are to be placed at appropriate places - the route from the classroom to the toilet could be marked with objects like small plastic mugs at regular intervals. The door of the school kitchen could be represented by a ladle or a kadhai (or whatever the children use for cooking). It is necessary that objects common to the whole school for children with VIAD be used in common areas. Children’s furniture should be marked with their names in Braille or large print along with the object of reference/picture. An object of reference board helps children to know which child or teacher is not in class when they see the object of reference still on it. Areas for different activities should be separate and appropriately marked. Materials that provide good tactile inputs must be used. The whole environment should be one that encourages tactual exploration. Many children are tactile defensive and hence materials that the child prefers should be made use of.
**Integrating visual information with other senses:** Many children will find it easier to use their vision if they also have clues about the object from touching it or from the sound it makes. During the early years, young children begin to learn about their bodies, other people, and objects through their senses and movement within their environment. Each sense provides some specific qualities that, when combined with other sensory information, helps us understand our environment. When a child gets information through all his senses, he/she gets a ‘whole’ experience. A child with visual impairment and additional disabilities learns best through a multi-sensory approach. The main aim of the multisensory approach is to combine the use of all the senses to allow communication for the special child. It gives the child

- combined stimulation of all senses
- encourages the child to use his senses such as,
  a) Early movement experiences - allow for intense and varied vestibular input that provides children with sense of movement, gravity and security
  b) Sound – encourage localization of sound, identify the source of environmental sounds and smells
  c) Use residual vision
  d) Touch and tactile experiences
  e) Develop the sense of taste
- increases tolerance for handling
- increases tolerance for new experiences
- increases movement
- increases body awareness which is important for the development of both sensory and motor skills.
- encourages simple discrimination
- provides enjoyment and fun

The multi-sensory approach can be successful only if the child is involved in, and able to

- choose an activity
- choose materials
- choose to continue an activity
- choose to say ‘no’

All this can be done when there is motivation and in real contexts where opportunities are available for generalizing learning. Activities like dance, music, bathing, dressing, cooking, mobility, washing clothes, washing plates, gardening and massage, can be multisensory experiences.

The teacher must be patient and the child must have enough time to process information. The child must be allowed to learn through her preferred sensory channel. We must watch out for sensory overload. Some children may find the multisensory approach too much to handle, and may require information to be presented through single sensory channels.
Learning Style
Before planning teaching activities and strategies, we must consider the learning style of the child. This would mean consideration of
- Child's likes and dislikes.
- Child's strengths
- What works
- Who the child likes to work with
- Material selection based on child's likes, age, appropriateness to the activity, safety.
- Fun

Charlie is a ten year old boy with vision impairment and severe seizures. He is very sleepy in the first two hours of the school day due to the high dosage of anti epileptic drugs. He comes to school with his mother who is a teacher trainee and needs to be in school on time. Charlie is exempted from his morning school routine as he is under the influence of drugs and needs to do some physical exercise activity and orientation and mobility. He sit on the swing till he is ready to work. After these activities, Charlie has a cup of coffee and begins to work. Once awake, his favourite activity is to walk up and down the corridor. His teacher has planned that to make this walking a meaningful activity, Charlie can carry filled up bottles from the water container to the refrigerator, come back with empty bottles, fill them up and stock them in the refrigerator for others to use. This example shows that Charlie is a kinesthetic learner, learns best in the mid morning and his preferred activity of walking up and down the corridor has been made more meaningful and age appropriate.

(Note : Guidelines for Learning Style Profile - Given at the end of the chapter as appendix)

How to Work with Children Who Have Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities
- Provide plenty of wait/response time because of distorted information in both distance senses. It may require extra time to process the information through other senses. This is also true if the child has some usable vision and hearing. The information is still distorted and may take a child longer to process visual and auditory information. Practice waiting for responses from children.
- Children with visual impairments and additional disabilities need more time to look at things than other children. They might need extra time to integrate the image in a whole; others will take time to process the image into something that has meaning for them.
- Role of distance is important for these children. They may need to be close to the material and people in order to see them properly. Some children may have motor problems and need objects to be brought close to their eyes as they may not be able to do it themselves.
- Use a hand-under-hand approach for providing information to children with dual sensory losses. Many educators and family members use the hand-over-hand prompts for teaching skills and routines. Sometimes, this may be effective in the beginning for teaching a skill, but should be
faded as the skill is learned. However, presenting objects using a shared topic of conversation is preferred. This allows the child additional control over the situation. It also gives a child the opportunity to reject, explore, ask for more, attend or request. Many children have a number of topics that interest them and the teacher can use that object or activity to carry on a conversation.

Yamini is a little six year old child with total blindness autistic features and no oral communication. She enjoys hitting objects against her right ear. This activity has become so stimulating to her that when she finds a new toy or new object, she immediately hits it against her right ear. The watchful teacher has capitalized on this situation and realized that Yamini enjoys the sound it produced, thus realizing how much usable hearing she has. This has led the teacher to go close to Yamini’s right year and speak or hum her favourite tune. When this is done, Yamini is ready to work with her teacher on the object given to her and together they explore it while discussing about it close to Yamini’s right ear.

- Alert the child/student through consistent and respectful cues (touch cues like touching the child gently on the shoulder) to inform the child you are going to communicate. This means that a child may not recognize you or may not perceive that someone is approaching her until you make contact (touch). The team should agree upon consistent and respectful cues to interact with the student. It is important to share the cues with other family members, team members, and friends.

- Identify yourself to the child/student, perhaps using a name sign, an object (ring, watch, hair). This will depend on each individual child, but some children will need this additional information to associate the object with the person. This can create, when used consistently, some anticipation skills and also awareness of objects being connected to individuals, but still separate from them.

- Get close, (if needed), to the child who is deaf-blind. Touch cues, tactile signing, or talking very closely into the better ear are examples of how conventional expectations about personal space may not be allowed. The child will also need to get close to you.

- Many children will need the support of an adult while learning a task. Adults may help children to start and complete tasks by using prompts which could be either
  - Visual (pointing or showing child what to do next)
  - Auditory (making a sound or telling a child what to do next)
  - Tactile (putting the child’s hand on an object or helping her to move her hand)
  - Structural (pauses, starting the next part of the activity)
  - Positioning is very essential for those children who have additional physical difficulties (some children learn better during movement or while lying down)
Specialized Teaching Strategies

Timetable:

- A timetable should be flexible and as close to the child’s natural lifestyle as possible.
- It must consider the attention duration of the child.
- It gives the teacher an opportunity to intersperse quiet indoor activities like listening to music, playing with toys, table top work, with active outdoor activities like playing outdoors, going shopping, watering the plants.
- It allows a mix of individual and group activities.
- It can have many different activities to reinforce the same skills of the children.
- The timetable could take advantage of the season, month and special events.
- Activities could be linked throughout the day and also spread over the week.

Pacing: Pacing of activities is slow and deliberate, allowing the child time to fully explore the physical and social environments according to the need of child

Use of language: The special educator must stress on use of language to label objects and to describe activities, as far as possible in which the child is engaged. This is best done when the child and teacher go through the calendar in the beginning of the school day and no opportunity is wasted to make the child use language.

Use of real objects and real life activities: Real objects should be used in place of replicas. Activities should be meaningful and age appropriate, - if talking about a fruit, the real fruit should be used and not the plastic or wax representation.

Meaningful repetition: Frequent repetition of common actions and activities helps the child who is visually impaired with additional disabilities internalize what sighted children see again and again, and creates opportunities for hands-on practice. A skill should be repeated in different activities - sorting activity could be done with various materials like fruits, vegetables or shapes. Consistency in activities is also of utmost importance.

Interpreting a child’s signals: The special educator must interpret the child’s signals and react appropriately. The child might express her boredom by moving away from the activity. The educator should be able to read the child’s signals and communicate suitably.

Adapted Signs and Communication systems: Signs depend upon the vision of the child. If the child has low vision, we will need to determine her signing frame and use signs that are visible. For a child with total deaf blindness, our signs will be tactile and on-the-body. A child with motor problems may use her own signs which could be an approximation of the real sign.

Child with Cerebral palsy (CP) may use picture systems or a communication board. Children with visual impairment and additional disabilities will need to use alternative and augmentative communication modes.

Systematic and consistent instructions: We must be consistent and systematic with our instructions.
Using a structured approach: A structured approach allows the child to function in a more predictable world and to generalize his knowledge to all environments and situations.

Using a participatory approach: Activities should be done with the child and not to or for the child—stirring sugar in a cup of milk with the child and not to or for the child.

Using a process approach: A process approach to learning fosters the development of compensatory skills of touch, hearing, residual vision, taste, and smell as tools for concept development and organization of the child’s world and experiences.

Appropriate student teacher ratio: Small child—teacher ratio assures ongoing access to information and the environment. Groupings can be done with the support of volunteers and parents.

Rifana is a child with visual impairment and medical issues and her mother Salma is a parent volunteer in her school. Initially Salma insisted on being with her child in the class but soon she realized that Rifana would cling to her. The coordinator of the program asked Salma if she would like to work with another child in her daughter’s class while the teacher gave Rifana more time since she needed it. In this way both children got individual attention and Salma learnt on the job. In the following year, she decided to enroll in the Teacher Training Course.

Readiness Activities: Engagement in readiness activities involving pre-braille and early literacy experiences must be integral parts of the program for children with vision impairments and additional disabilities.

Opportunities for Orientation and Mobility: The child should be given an opportunity to develop and practice orientation and mobility skills in a safe and predictable environment. She should have a reason to move and should be encouraged to move purposefully. For example, if the child goes to the shop, she must be allowed to buy something.

When planning an activity, we must keep in mind that every activity has a clear beginning, middle and end.

Before the activity

- Inform the child what we are going to do in order to develop anticipation.
- Consider the child’s likes and dislikes before planning an activity.
- Consider the environment where the activity will take place and choose an appropriate environment.
- Consider whether the activity is appropriate for the child.
- Use materials which are age appropriate and familiar to the child along with some new materials.
- Materials must have as many sensory components as possible.
Creating Learning Opportunities

- Ensure that the material is safe.
- The size of the material should be comfortable so that the child can explore it fully.
- Use real or concrete objects as far as possible and not plastic replicas.
- Ascertain the level of skill before starting a new activity in a squeezing a sponge activity, the child must have the skill of pressing the sponge.

During the activity
- Use limited materials.
- Let the child be oriented to the material.
- Both teacher and child should be comfortable with consideration for better viewing listening and interaction. Posture is also determined by the preferred learning style and physical needs of an individual child.
- Do a complete activity - cooking would mean making the shopping list, going to the shop, washing the vegetables, cutting, cooking, eating, cleaning.
- Always remember to offer choices
- Pause to know whether the child wants to continue or stop.
- Keep in mind the response time - some children will respond immediately while others may take a longer time to process before responding. If we do not allow response time, there will be no balance in interaction.
- We must remember the child's communication mode or communication level.
- Always reinforce the child according his preferred mode of reinforcement.

After the activity
- Restore or bring back to the same condition, this means let the child assist the teacher to put back all the things. If the child is independent, let her do it as a part of her routine.
- Summing up-this helps the child to remember the sequence in the activity that may have just taken place - a trip by train-show the child the train ticket or the packet of groundnuts that she ate while in the train. If the child can read and write a few sentences encourage to do so. This could be done the next day as well. A regular or a tactile story book could be used, as per the read
- Emphasize on the key actions and words depending on the purpose of doing this activity-water play - the key words would be dry - wet, hot water - cold water, splashing water and so on.
- Let one activity lead to another - after water play, child could wipe herself dry (ADL) make a choice of clothes to wear (Communication), squeeze (Fine Motor) and dry her clothes on the clothes line( Work)
Summary

- A child with visual impairment and additional disabilities is disadvantaged by her lack of access to communication and information. It is the teacher of this child who is responsible for creating a learning environment that minimizes the effects of the sensory impairment and maximizes the opportunities for learning.
- Good teaching, based on appropriate principles will allow the child the opportunity for learning.
- Use calendar systems with tangible symbols.
- Involvement of the family members in the education of the child is important because they know the child and her needs better. They should be involved in planning for the child.
- Inter-disciplinary team in which a team of several professionals from different disciplines undertake independent assessments of the child, but carry out programme development as a collaborative effort, would be a good option.

Reading List:


Learning Style Profile

The following list provides a number of dimensions that may affect the individual’s rate of learning. Kindly tick the response that describes the conditions in which the individual generally learns best.

- **Individual factors:**
  
  Preferred modality of instruction – visual/auditory/tactile/combined/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Most effective modality of prompts – Physical/visual/verbal/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Physical Position – Seated/standing/lying down/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Physical movement – Stationary/some movement/Physically active/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Previous activity - preceded by physical activity/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Mealtimes – Before meals/after meals/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Time of day – Morning/afternoon/evening/night/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Time of the week – Early in the week/mid week/late in the week/week ends/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Length of time on task - < 5 minutes/5 – 15 minutes/15 – 30 mins/>30 mins/varies by task/not sure/not important.

- **Reinforcers:**
  
  Preferred modality – Social/material/activity/free time/self-reward/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Social – Praise or recognition/Physical contact/public posting/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Material – money/toys/preferred items/food/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Activities or special privileges – school/day program or work/home/community/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Free Time – break from task/relaxation time/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Self reward – Pride in accomplishment/engaging in sensory–motivated activities/varies by task/not sure/not important.

- **Instructional factors**
  
  Group size – 1:1/small group/large group/varies by task/not sure/not important.
  
  Style of Interaction – Friendly or familiar/stern or formal/varies by task/not sure/not important.
Task variety – Single activity at a time / working on variety of tasks / varies by task / not sure / not important.

Task type – Open ended tasks / tasks with a clear starting and ending point / varies by task / not sure / not important.

Task familiarity – familiar / new / varies by task / not sure / not important.

Task difficulty – easy / moderate / difficult / varies by task / not sure / not important.

Transitions – Signaled / occur on schedule without any other notice / varies by task / not sure / not important.

Daily Schedule – Clearly explained and followed / changes without notice / varies by task / not sure / not important.

- Environmental factors
  Noise / activity level – in quiet areas / in active areas / varies by task / not sure / not important.
  Lighting level – soft dimly lit areas / in bright, well – lit areas / varies by task / not sure / not important.
  Temperature – cool / warm / varies by task / not sure / not important.
  Location – indoors / outdoors / varies by task / not sure / not important.
  Clutter – Clean, uncluttered area/ messy, stimulating areas / varies by task / not sure / not important.