CEU COMPANION · EP 55 · WORKSHEET

PROMPTING PLAN & FADE RULE WORKSHEET

From the CEU "Your Prompting Hierarchy Sucks: Individualized Prompt Selection, Written Fading Rules, and Preventing Prompt Dependency" · Instructors: Sean Yocum, MA, BCBA, LBA; Michael Carrero, BCBA, LBA

NO FLUFF. NO SUGAR-COATING. JUST RESULTS. · PRESENTED BY **HICKORY LEARNING GROUP**

RAD N BAD RULE

Write the fade before you write the prompt. Name the prompt type, the fading method, and the reason in every program, and let the data, not habit, move the prompt level.

HOW TO USE THIS: Fill this in before the first prompt is delivered. If you can't write the why, run a quick prompt comparison before you commit to a default.

1. PROMPT TYPE (WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DO)

- ☐ Prompt type(s) for this skill (e.g., gestural, model, partial physical):
- ☐ What each prompt looks like, in one sentence a new RBT could follow:
- ☐ Prompts that are a no-go for this learner or this skill:

2. FADING METHOD (HOW PROMPTS CHANGE)

- ☐ Fading procedure (e.g., most-to-least with a delay, least-to-most, progressive delay):
- ☐ Starting level, and the wait time before any prompt (seconds):
- ☐ Why this combination, for this learner and this skill:

3. WRITE THE FADE RULE FIRST

Decision	Example rule (the team sets the numbers)
Move down a level	2 consecutive sessions at 80% or better at the current level
Move back up	3 consecutive errors at the current level, then review
Stalled	Same level for a set number of sessions with no plan change: run a prompt comparison
End point	Correct responding to the natural cue, with no prompt

4. QUICK PROMPT COMPARISON

- ☐ Pick 2–3 similar targets

- ☐ Teach each with a different prompt type or fading method
- ☐ Count trials or sessions to independent responding
- ☐ Make the winner the learner's default; recheck if acquisition slows

5. GRAPH IT AND AUDIT IT

- ☐ Graph prompt level on the same chart as accuracy
- ☐ Check the raw data before calling a variable graph 'not learning'
- ☐ Monthly: how long has each older program sat at one prompt level?
- ☐ During an observation, count the seconds between instruction and prompt

RED FLAGS

- ✦ One clinic-wide hierarchy for every learner and skill
- ✦ 'Use MTL' with no starting level and no fade steps
- ✦ Goals written 'with prompts' that can't be failed
- ✦ Prompt data recorded but never reviewed
- ✦ Same prompt level for a month with no plan change
- ✦ No BST, procedural integrity, or IOA on the prompting procedure

DISCLOSURES

Sean Yocum owns Hickory Learning Group (HLG), the CE provider for this event. Sean Yocum is also affiliated with Homestead, Hi Rasmus, and Rad N Bad Behavior Consultants; Michael Carrero is a co-host of the Rad N Bad podcast and co-instructor. Neither instructor has a financial interest in Disrupt ABA, Alan Fullbright or Attend Behavior, or Andy Bondy, PECS, or Pyramid Educational Consultants. HLG has a non-financial business relationship with Attend Behavior. The episode includes a promotional read for Disrupt ABA 2026, where Sean is a presenter, and a read for these OpenCEU events; neither is counted as instructional time.

ACCURACY NOTE

Sean says there is no research showing verbal prompts are the hardest to fade, and Mike later describes them as the hardest to fade. Both statements need context. Widely used practitioner guidance describes verbal prompts as difficult to fade and a common route to prompt dependence. MacDuff, Krantz, and McClannahan (2001) report that, in their clinical experience, verbal instructions faded to phrases, words, syllables, and expectant looks "can be very difficult to eliminate" (p. 47), and they recommend procedures that keep the learner responding to natural cues (e.g., graduated guidance, delayed prompting, script fading). That is a clinical observation, not an experimental comparison. Direct comparisons are mixed and learner-specific: picture prompts beat vocal prompts for all three participants in Ingvarsson and Hollobaugh (2011), while vocal prompts were most efficient for all four in Ingvarsson and Le (2011). Takeaway: plan the fading of verbal prompts deliberately; whether they are harder to fade than other prompts for a given learner is best answered with an individualized prompt assessment (Seaver & Bourret, 2014; Cowan et al., 2023).

THE RECEIPTS · REFERENCES

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2020). *Ethics code for behavior analysts*. https://www.bacb.com/ethics-information/ethics-codes/

Cengher, M., Budd, A., Farrell, N., & Fienup, D. M. (2018). A review of prompt-fading procedures: Implications for effective and efficient skill acquisition. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, *30*(2), 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-017-9575-8

Cowan, L. S., Lerman, D. C., Berdeaux, K. L., Prell, A. H., & Chen, N. (2023). A decision-making tool for evaluating and selecting prompting strategies. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, *16*(2), 459–474. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-022-00722-8

Ingvarsson, E. T., & Hollobaugh, T. (2011). A comparison of prompting tactics to establish intraverbals in children with autism. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *44*(3), 659–664. https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.2011.44-659

Ingvarsson, E. T., & Le, D. D. (2011). Further evaluation of prompting tactics for establishing intraverbal responding in children with autism. *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior*, *27*(1), 75–93. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03393093

Libby, M. E., Weiss, J. S., Bancroft, S., & Ahearn, W. H. (2008). A comparison of most-to-least and least-to-most prompting on the acquisition of solitary play skills. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, *1*(1), 37–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03391719

MacDuff, G. S., Krantz, P. J., & McClannahan, L. E. (2001). Prompts and prompt-fading strategies for people with autism. In C. Maurice, G. Green, & R. M. Foxx (Eds.), *Making a difference: Behavioral intervention for autism* (pp. 37–50). PRO-ED.

Seaver, J. L., & Bourret, J. C. (2014). An evaluation of response prompts for teaching behavior chains. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *47*(4), 777–792. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.159

Touchette, P. E., & Howard, J. S. (1984). Errorless learning: Reinforcement contingencies and stimulus control transfer in delayed prompting. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *17*(2), 175–188. https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.1984.17-175

This handout supports the asynchronous CE event and does not replace clinical judgment, the BACB Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts, or applicable laws and funder requirements. It contains no client-identifying information.