



TEACHING FORMAT DECISION MAP: DTT ↔ NET

From the CEU "DTT Is Not a Permanent Residence: Integrating Discrete-Trial and Naturalistic Teaching for Generalization" · 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

DTT is a tool, not a permanent residence. Pick the format for the learner and the skill, and build the exit to natural conditions on day one.

HOW TO USE THIS: Pick the format for the learner and the skill, not out of brand loyalty. Plan the move to natural conditions on day one.

1. DOES THIS SKILL NEED DTT RIGHT NOW?

- ☐ The skill isn't in the learner's repertoire, and it needs tight control of antecedents and prompts
- ☐ Many learning opportunities are needed quickly
- ☐ A safety or life skill that has to be acquired errorlessly
- ☐ If none of these apply, start in the natural environment

2. IF DTT: BUILD IN THE EXIT

- ☐ Use varied exemplars and instructions from the start
- ☐ Mix and vary trials rather than massed trials only
- ☐ Use natural reinforcers where possible; plan to fade contrived reinforcers
- ☐ Write the criterion for moving the skill to NET

3. BLEND WITHIN A SESSION

- ☐ Prime the skill with a few structured trials before the natural opportunity
- ☐ Use graduated guidance and fade it during the natural routine
- ☐ Embed targets in play, routines, and caregiver activities

THE RECEIPTS · REFERENCES

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- Geiger, K. B., Carr, J. E., LeBlanc, L. A., Hanney, N. M., Polick, A. S., & Heinicke, M. R. (2012). Teaching receptive discriminations to children with autism: A comparison of traditional and embedded discrete trial teaching. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 5(2), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03391823>
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- Yanchik, A., Vietze, P. M., & Lax, L. E. (2024). The effects of discrete trial and natural environment teaching on adaptive behavior in toddlers with autism spectrum disorder. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 129(4), 263–278. <https://doi.org/10.1352/1944-7558-129.4.263>

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.

4. LEARNER PREFERENCE COUNTS

- ☐ Watch for assent and withdrawal during DTT
- ☐ If the learner consistently avoids DTT, change the format unless it's a critical skill

5. MEASURE MORE THAN ACQUISITION

Measure	How
Spontaneous use	Count unprompted uses in natural routines
Latency to initiate	Seconds from natural cue to response
Variability	Different forms used appropriately
Caregiver implementation	Caregiver evokes the skill at home