

Autism Initiative: Training Series

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 3.2: Part 10 – Generalization

Part 1: Review of Concepts

- *Generalization* is the occurrence of a skill or behavior across different settings, situations, or responses.
- When teaching a new skill/behavior it is important to plan for how you want to generalize a skill/behavior. A good way to increase generalization is to teach skills that will be naturally reinforced in the actual environment.
- *Maintenance* is the continued occurrence of a behavior across time. It occurs after the behavior program has been successfully completed.
- When teaching a new skill/behavior it is important to plan for how you want to assess the maintenance of a skill and also how you want to generalize a skill/behavior.

Part 2: Examples and Discussion Questions

1. **Example:** A direct care staff member is teaching Tommy how to discriminate colors. Tommy is learning the colors green, blue and red. The direct care staff member holds up a laminated piece of green, blue or red construction paper and asks Tommy what color it is.
 - *How could generalization be applied to this example?*
 - **Answer:** Generalization would have occurred if Tommy were able to identify different things in his environment that were green, blue or red. For example, Tommy learned colors by looking at laminated pieces of construction paper, but if he was able to identify green grass, a blue car or a red flower we would know generalization has occurred. In this example generalization would have occurred because Tommy was able to identify objects other than those that were trained with their corresponding color.
2. **Example:** A 13-year old adolescent with autism is learning to read words by using flashcards. An index card with a word on it is held up and the student is asked to read the word.
 - *How could generalization be applied to this example?*
 - **Answer:** Generalization could occur when the adolescent begins reading the words she learned from the flashcards as they occur in the natural environment without any additional training. For example if one of the words the student was working on was stop, if she is driving in the car with her mother and they come to a stop sign and the student reads the word stop, generalization has occurred.

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3. **Example:** Samara only eats a limited variety of foods; therefore one of the programs she works on in school is increasing the variety of foods she will consume. Prior to the implementation of this program Samara was not eating apples or peaches, but after the implementation she began consuming these foods.
- *How could generalization be applied to this example?*
 - **Answer:** Generalization would have occurred if Samara began eating apples and peaches in other settings outside of school without any additional training. For example, if Samara was at her friend's house and her mother gave them apples for a snack and Samara ate those apples, generalization has occurred.