



Using Backward Chaining to Teach Functional Life Skills

What is the evidence base?

A *potential* level of evidence based on two acceptable quality single subject studies

With whom was it implemented?

- Students with
 - Moderate intellectual disability (1 study, n=5)
 - Severe intellectual disability (1 study, n=3)
- Ages ranged from 14 to 26
- Males (n=5), females (n=3)
- Ethnicity
 - None reported (n= 8)

What is the practice?

Backward chaining is defined by all behaviors identified in the task analysis initially completed by the trainer, except for the final behavior in the chain. When the learner performs the final behavior in the sequence at the predetermined criterion level, reinforcement is delivered and the next-to-last behavior is introduced (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007).

How has the practice been implemented?

- Backward chaining has been used to teach
 - Treating a cut, burn, and insect bite (Gast et al., 1992)
 - Purchasing fast food and grocery items (McDonnell & Laughlin, 1989)

Where has it been implemented?

- Community (1 study)
- School (1 study)

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The best place to find out how to implement backward chaining is through the following research to practice lesson plan starter:

- Using the backward chaining to teach first aid skills
<http://nstattac.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/63.pdf>

How does this practice relate to Indicator 13?

- Indicator 13 Checklist Item # 3: Teaching functional life skills may reflect results of transition assessment information
- Indicator 13 Checklist Item # 4: Functional life skills may be a transition service designated in an IEP that will enable a student to meet his or her postsecondary independent living goal(s)
- Indicator 13 Checklist Item #6: Teaching functional life skills may be part of an annual IEP goal that supports a student's postsecondary independent living goal(s)

How does this practice related to Common Core Standards?

Not applicable

How does this practice relate to States' Career Cluster Initiative: Essential Knowledge and Skills?

- Apply active listening skills to obtain and clarify information
 - Interpret a given verbal message/information (Communications)
- Implement personal and jobsite safety rules and regulations to maintain safe and healthful working conditions and environments
 - Align safety issues with appropriate safety stands to ensure a safe jobsite/workplace (Safety, Health, and Environmental)

References used to establish this evidence base:

Gast, D.L., Winterling, V., Wolery, M., & Farmer, J.A. (1992). Teaching first-aid skills to students with moderate handicaps in small group instruction. *Education and Treatment of Children, 15*, 101-125.

McDonnell, J., & Laughlin, B. (1989). A comparison of backward and concurrent chaining strategies in teaching community skills. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation, 24*, 230-238.