



Abstract

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Teaching Problem Solving to Increase Verbal, Social, and Academic Skills

Problem solving is defined as manipulating stimuli to increase the probability of arriving at a solution to a problem. When given a problem, such as a math problem or a question that involves recalling a past event, an individual arrives at a solution by engaging in a few behaviors, such as asking herself questions, drawing out possible solutions, or visualizing. A challenge of analyzing problem solving is it often occurs covertly, or within an individual's skin. Two potential benefits of teaching problem-solving skills to children with autism are less rote responding and more generalization. The presenter will provide a conceptual analysis of problem solving and review previous research on using problem solving to teach verbal, social, and academic skills. The presenter will also describe a recent study on teaching problem solving to help children with autism recall past events. One problem-solving strategy used in this study was self-questioning, or asking and answering questions about the event (e.g., "Who was there?" "What was there?"). The other problem-solving strategy was visual imagining, which involved showing the child a picture of the event and asking him to close his eyes and imagine the place.

Teaching Multiply Controlled Intraverbal Behavior

The analysis of multiple control in the intraverbal relation is critical for moving individuals with autism and related language delays towards naturalistic conversational repertoires. One area in this analysis is "verbal conditional discriminations," when multiple verbal stimuli evoke a verbal response. The presenter will provide definitions, examples, and a review of research on verbal conditional discriminations. A second area is answering questions about visual stimuli, and the presenter will review a study on targeting this repertoire. In this study, the researchers showed children with autism objects that were different colors and asked, "What is it?" and "What color?" They also showed numbers inside shapes and asked, "What number?" and "What shape?" The teaching strategy involved teaching the children to repeat the key word in the question in addition to answering the question, such as answering "What color?" with "Color blue." The results are discussed in terms of the teaching strategy incorporating four verbal operants: echoics, intraverbals, tacts, and autoclitic frames.