



Using Backward Chaining to Teach Functional Life Skills

What is the evidence base?

- This is a research-based practice for **students with disabilities** based on two methodologically sound single-subject studies across 8 participants with disabilities.
- This is a research-based practice for **students with intellectual disability** based on two methodologically sound single-subject studies across 8 participants with intellectual disability.

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 starters:

- [Using the Backward Chaining to Teach First Aid Skills - \(Gast, Winterling, Wolery, & Farmer, 1992\)](#)

With who was it implemented?

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

What is the practice?

Backward chaining has been 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).

- 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)

How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?

Not applicable

How does this practice relate to the Common Career Technical Core?

- 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.

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