



## ***Using Total Task Chaining to Teach Functional Life Skills***

### **What is the level of evidence?**

- This is a Research-Based Practice for **students with disabilities** based on four methodologically sound single subject studies across 16 participants with disabilities.

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

- Using total task chaining to teach laundry skills  
[Laundromat \(McDonnell & McFarland, 1988\)](#)
- Using total task chaining to teach bowling skills  
[Bowling and Pinball \(Vandercook, 1991\)](#)

### **With who was it implemented?**

- Students with
  - Severe intellectual disability (1 study, n= 5)
  - Moderate to severe intellectual disability (1 study, n=4)
  - Mild to moderate intellectual disability (1 study, n=3)
  - Moderate, severe, and profound intellectual disability (1 study, n= 4)
- Ages ranged from 16 to adult
- Males (n=5), females (n=7)
  - None identified (1 study, n=4)
- Ethnicity
  - None reported (n= 16)

### **What is the practice?**

Total task chaining is defined as a variation of forward chaining in which the learner receives training on each step in the task analysis during each session (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). Total task chaining is also sometimes referred to as concurrent training (McDonnell & Laughlin, 1989).

### **How has the practice been implemented?**

- Total task chaining paired with community-based instruction has been used to teach use of laundry machine and soap dispenser (McDonnell & McFarland, 1988).
- Total task chaining has been used to teach purchasing of fast food items (McDonnell & Laughlin, 1989)
- Total task chaining paired with most to least prompting to has been used to teach bowling in the community (Vandercook, 1991)
- Total task chaining paired with time delay has been used to teach changing sanitary napkins (Ersoy, Tekin-Iftar, & Kiracaali-Iftar, 2009)

### **Where has it been implemented?**

- Community (3 studies)
- Students' home (1 study)

### **How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?**

- **English Language Arts Standards, Reading Information Text**  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4, Craft and Structure  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

### **How does this practice relate to the Career Technical Core?**

- Finance Career Cluster, Utilize tools, strategies and systems to plan, monitor, manage and maintain the use of financial resources.

### **References used to establish this evidence base:**

- Ersoy, G., Tekin-Iftar, E., & Kiracaali-Iftar, G. (2009). Effects of antecedent prompt and test procedure on teaching simulated menstrual care skills to females with developmental disabilities. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 44*, 54-66.
- 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.
- McDonnell, J., & McFarland, S. (1988). A comparison of forward and concurrent chaining in teaching laundromat skills to students with severe handicaps. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 9*, 177-194.

Vandercook, T. (1991). Leisure instruction outcomes: Criterion performance, positive interactions, and acceptance by typical high school peers. *The Journal of Special Education, 25*, 320-339.

This Practice Description was developed by The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), Charlotte, NC, funded by Cooperative Agreement Number H326E140004 with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). This document has been reviewed and approved by the OSERS. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. OSEP Project Officer: Dr. Selete Avoke. RSA Project Officer: Kristen Rhinehart-Fernandez. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2018). *Using Total Task Chaining to Teach Functional Life Skills*.

