

Task Analysis

Fact Sheet



Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity

To develop independence in the workplace, it is essential that the job seeker attains proficiency in core (frequent) and episodic (infrequent) job routines. One of the primary roles of a Job Coach (JC) is to support the job seeker with the acquisition of new skills, especially those skills that enable the individual to more competently perform their job. The information below provides tips and best practices for how to effectively conduct a task analysis and the acquisition of new skills.

Task Analysis (TA) is a process of breaking a task down into smaller teachable steps within a core or episodic routine. This gives the job seeker step-by-step instructions for how to complete a task they are struggling with. Often, the goal of a TA is to master a foundational level skill that serves as a steppingstone to the mastery of more complex tasks.

When to do a Task Analysis?

You notice a job seeker is struggling with a specific task. This may look like the individual not being able to complete the task independently, without being able to fade prompts, or inability to meet the task speed requirements. Are they getting stuck at the same point over and over? Are they not initiating the task independently? These are all good indicators that we as JC's need to step in and provide individualized support.

How to conduct a Task Analysis

Determine a measurable objective or goal. Without a clear goal, it is difficult to know if progress is being made. By measuring, we will know if our approach is effective and can adapt to the individuals learning styles more efficiently. Write out step-by-step instructions in sequential order from start to finish. Pro tip: doing the task yourself will help you in writing clear instructions. These steps can also be used on the task analysis form that measures the acquisition of the new skill. Identify speed requirements for the task. If proficiency is the issue, where is the job seeker getting stuck? Is there a way we can adapt the approach to reach the same goal more efficiently? Is an accommodation needed? Begin performing the task and utilize prompts and compensatory strategies to master the skill. Make sure you are documenting the prompts you are using for each step in the task on the task analysis form. Example form is included below.

Task Analysis

Fact Sheet



Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity

Prompting

A prompt can be a nudge, reminder, example, or physical support that aids a job seeker in learning a new skill. The types of prompts are listed below and are ordered in a least-to-most level of support. When job coaching, we want to start with the least intrusive prompt, with the intention that we are promoting autonomy in the learning process.

Indirect Verbal Prompt	An indirect verbal prompt is an indirect verbal statement that cues a learner about an expected response. For example: “What do you need to do now?” or “What is next?”
Direct Verbal Prompts	A direct verbal prompt explicitly cues the learner about the expected response. For example, “Give the coffee to the customer.”, or “Pour milk into the coffee.”
Model Prompts	When using a model, the job coach models and demonstrates how to perform the expected response. For example, the job coach places straighten out can on shelves to model the task.
Partial Physical Assistance	Partial physical assistance is brief physical contact with the employee to elicit a response. For example, the job coach might tap the employee on the elbow to cue him/her to grab a mop.
Full Physical Assistance	Full physical assistance is full contact with the employee to assist the employee with completing the expected response. For example, the job coach places his hand over the employee’s hand to grasp a mop.

Task Analysis

Fact Sheet



Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity

Fading Support

A JC must be intentional with their plan to fade support over time, and planning this begins on day one at the job site. By fading support over time, the job seeker is less reliant on JC support and can operate more independently and develop problem solving skills. The support from a JC can also be faded and reinforced by natural supports (usually a co-worker or supervisor). As a job seeker begins to master task and job routines, the JC is able to fade from the immediate area. The JC may still be in sight of the job seeker without hovering directly next to them. Eventually, the JC may remain at the job site but out of sight for a short period of time (5,10,30, 60 mins), allowing for more autonomy in the work. Ideally, the JC is fading entirely from the job site and periodically (weekly, monthly) checking in to see how things are progressing. If fading from the job site entirely is not a realistic approach for your environment, consider fading support in one area and focusing on developing skills in other areas. It is imperative that the JC avoid complacency at the workplace and should be challenging job seekers to grow and develop in their role.

Compensatory Strategies

Compensatory strategies enhance an individual's ability to perform a job without being dependent on a JC. Individualized support and understanding the job seekers learning style is important for skill acquisition. There are a variety of aids that can be employed including pictures (visual learners), memory cards, and written check-off lists. Pictures are helpful and can show what a finished product is supposed to look like. Memory cards and checklists serve to help us stay on task if the task requires multiple steps. In some cases, having a checklist present while performing the task is required by the employer for quality assurance purposes. Regardless, the goal of compensatory strategies is to support the job seeker with comprehension for completing a task or job routine.

Task Analysis

Fact Sheet



Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity

References

Hase, H. (2021). Fading Job Coaching Supports [Fact sheet].

<https://ceiutah.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fading-Factsheet.pdf>.

Horner, R. H., McDonnell, J., & Bellamy, G. (1986). Teaching generalized skills: General case instruction in simulation and community settings.

In R. Horner, L. Meyer, & H. Fredericks (Eds.), Education of learners with severe handicaps: Exemplary service strategies (pp. 289-214). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Riesen, T., & Jameson, J. M. (2018). A comparison of prompting procedures to teach work tasks to transition-aged students with disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 53 (1), 100-110.

Wehmeyer, M. L., & Field, S. L. (2007). *Self-determination: Instructional and assessment strategies*. Thousand Oaks: CA; Crown Press.