

Examples

Mr. Carter notices that Juan frequently will get up and wander around the room when books are being read to him. Mr. Carter tracks Juan's wandering for five consecutive days. Each day at story time Juan will sit for about 2 minutes and then get up. In the past, Juan's reading aid has attempted to increase Juan's attentiveness to the stories by giving him free time if he is able to pay attention through the whole story. This strategy was not effective. Instead, Mr. Carter decides to use choice to help Juan attend to a whole story. Mr. Carter selects a set of books that are appropriate for Juan and allows him to choose which one will be read to him. Mr. Carter again tracks Juan's wandering for five days and finds that Juan is now able to attend to the entire story. Mr. Carter's intervention is successful and Juan is more engaged.

Mr. Stevens notices that John seems to get only about half of the words correct on the vocabulary quiz. He looks at the grade book and notices that John has received a 50 or less on his last two homework assignments. Typically any incorrect words need to be corrected for homework and brought back the next day, however, John has not been completing these assignments. Mr. Stevens asks John if he studies, John replies "No, this stuff is boring!". Mr. Stevens reminds John of his previous low grades but John says he doesn't care about the vocabulary tests. Mr. Stevens decides to try to get John to care more about the words by allowing John to choose three of the ten vocabulary words. After deciding what the first seven words will be, Mr. Stevens allows John to pick 3 more from a list of 6. At the end of four weeks, John's scores have improved and he is now turning in all homework assignments.

The above examples are some simple illustrations using choice to help students. Determining when to use choice interventions as opposed to other types of interventions can take some thought. Since the goal is to help students, interventions do not need to be mutually exclusive. You may decide that the best way to help your student is to give him choice, and incorporate task interspersal or preferred activities (for more information on task interspersal and preferred activities, you can check this web site.) Effort is required in determining in which areas students can make choices, and developing ways to incorporate those choices into the instructional day;

however, the benefits are great. The "trick", of course, is to give students choices so that no matter what choice is made, the objective of the lesson is still reached.