

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES [OR 'GENTLE SABOTAGE']

WHAT IS GENTLE SABOTAGE?

- The intent is to manipulate a situation in order to create a reason for a student to communicate.
- It is also known as environmental engineering & communication temptations.

WHY IS GENTLE SABOTAGE IMPORTANT?

- It promotes real communication as opposed to "show", "test", or "drill" communication.
- It provides an opportunity to use a variety of reasons to communicate.
- It promotes opportunities for a student to initiate interaction.

HOW DO YOU USE GENTLE SABOTAGE?

- Sabotage is useful only after a student has a very good sense for routines.
- You must consider the likes and dislikes of the student.
- You must determine the general idea you would like the student to communicate.
- Then you must make sure that the student has a way to communicate the idea.
- Use pausing and waiting to allow the student time to initiate.
- Use modeling, prompting as needed to teach the communication.

You can create communicative temptations to increase opportunities for requesting by using these strategies:

1. **Missing Item Strategy.** This strategy involves giving the student all but one of the items needed to complete or engage in some preferred activity. When that item is needed, the student is required to request the missing item. After the request occurs, the student is immediately given the missing item. For example, the student might be given a bowl of ice cream, but no spoon. This creates an opportunity for the student to request the missing spoon.
2. **Interruption or Violation of Routines Strategy.** This technique involves momentarily interrupting the student from completing or continuing some on-going activity. For example, the student might be stopped at the door as he or she is about to walk out of the classroom to the music room. In order to continue with this motivating activity, the student is required to make a request (e.g., gesture "out please" or point to schedule showing that he or she is going to the music room). If a request does not occur within a reasonable amount of time (e.g., 10 seconds), you prompt a correct request using the least-to-most prompt hierarchy and then allow the student to proceed with the activity. Interrupting a preferred activity creates an opportunity for the student to indicate that he or she would like to continue that activity. It is important to present it as meaningful or fun – not as a punishment. Other examples: give the student a shoe before a sock; give the student a fork to eat soup.
3. **Delayed Assistance Strategy.** This strategy requires the communication partner to react when it is clear the student needs help with some activity. After observing the student requires help, you walk over and wait up to 10 seconds for the student to request assistance in some appropriate manner, before providing the needed help. If the student does not request assistance within a reasonable amount of time (e.g., 10 seconds), you prompt a correct request using the least-to-most prompt hierarchy and then supply the needed help. For example, if the student is struggling with opening his or her lunch box (or bottle top), you would approach and wait to see if the student requests "help". If so, you would give help. If not, the correct request would be prompted and only then would help be provided. This strategy creates an opportunity for the student to request assistance when help is needed. Try to be creative in setting up more frequent opportunities that require the student to ask for help. When waiting, do not let the student see that you already know what is needed.