

# Constant Time Delay



## What is Constant Time Delay?

Constant Time Delay is a form of errorless learning that can be used with discrete responses. For example, activities such as number identification, vocabulary term review, or matching responses. If a student makes several errors through guessing, it may take longer to learn the response. Constant Time Delay teaches the student to WAIT for help if unsure of the correct answer but anticipate the answer when sure.

## Where do we begin with Constant Time Delay?

We begin with a zero-delay round to introduce the skill. Give the cue to respond and prompt together to ensure correct responding. The student can only make an error if he or she does not imitate this response (if this happens, a better prompt may be needed, or the student may need to be reminded to attend closely).

After a few trials (or sessions), wait a few seconds before giving the prompt to allow the student to anticipate the correct answer.

## Zero Delay Round

Provide the task direction and immediately give the controlling prompt to teach the child the correct response. Reinforce the child's correct response. For example (number identification):

- Teacher says "Find three" while pointing to the number 3.
- Student responds by pointing to the number 3.
- Teacher reinforces the correct response by saying, "Good, that is three". You may want to record data.

## Time Delay Round

After several trials or sessions at zero delay, move to a 3-5 second delay. It is important to select a delay time that is appropriate for your student to start responding, but do not vary that delay length.

The task direction is given (target stimulus); wait 3-5 seconds delay time for the student to respond.

If no response after delay, then the controlling prompt is used. After the student gives the correct response offer praise. You may want to record the data. If an incorrect response is given, provide error correction procedures. If multiple errors occur, return to the zero-delay condition.

*For example:*

- Teacher says, "Find three" and waits 4 seconds, which allows the student to have a chance to answer.
- If the student independently points to 3, reinforce the correct response by saying "Good, that is three" and record the data.
- If the student waits and does nothing, after 4 seconds the teacher points to the 3. After the student points to the 3, teacher records data.
- If the student points to the wrong answer, teacher immediately points to the correct answer, does not reinforce and records the data

1. Summarize the Constant Time Delay process.
2. How could this technique increase performance of students in your class?
3. What tasks could you use to teach Constant Time Delay to students?
4. In what ways could you model and share this strategy with paraprofessionals?