

2014

DISCRETE TRIAL TEACHING

From Mass Trials to Mastery - Handout

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Foreword

This training document was developed by asktoks.com for use by asktoks.com. Asktoks.com was founded on the belief that we can change the world's response to autism and mental health issues through education, sharing information and a positive approach to every interaction. It is with this belief in mind that this manual on Discrete Trial Teaching was created.

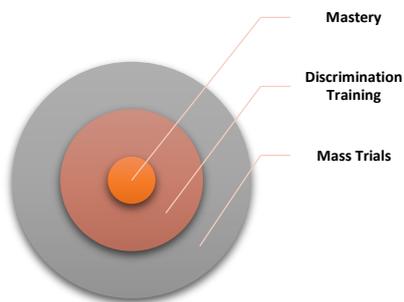
Discrete trial teaching is a method of teaching in simplified and structured steps and plays an integral role in many applied behaviour analysis programs. It breaks a task down into achievable steps, gradually building on what the learner can do.

This manual is aimed at the general public, families of children with developmental disorders, professionals working in the medical, mental health, social care and education sectors (including teachers, classroom facilitators, special educators, therapists etc.) and anyone who may be curious about the management and treatment of these disorders. It was developed with the aim of addressing the need to build capacity through training, in Nigeria, in the use of behavioural techniques to treat and educate children with autism spectrum disorders, other developmental disorders and undiagnosed behavioural challenges.

INTRODUCTION

The Discrete trail consists of three components. The SD (this is the antecedent), the Response (this is the behaviour of the learner) and the reinforcing stimulus (this is the consequence that happens immediately after the behaviour).

TEACHING PROCESS



If done correctly, the teaching process gives the learner a good foundation of how to carry out the new response, in mass trials. It builds on that foundation by challenging the learner with a mix of previous knowledge in discrimination training. Finally, it consolidates learning to achieve mastery.

Figure 1: Foundations for mastery model

Mass Trials

Mass trials means repeatedly presenting the same SD in consecutive trials. There are a number of stages within mass trials that help the learner reach the discrimination stage.

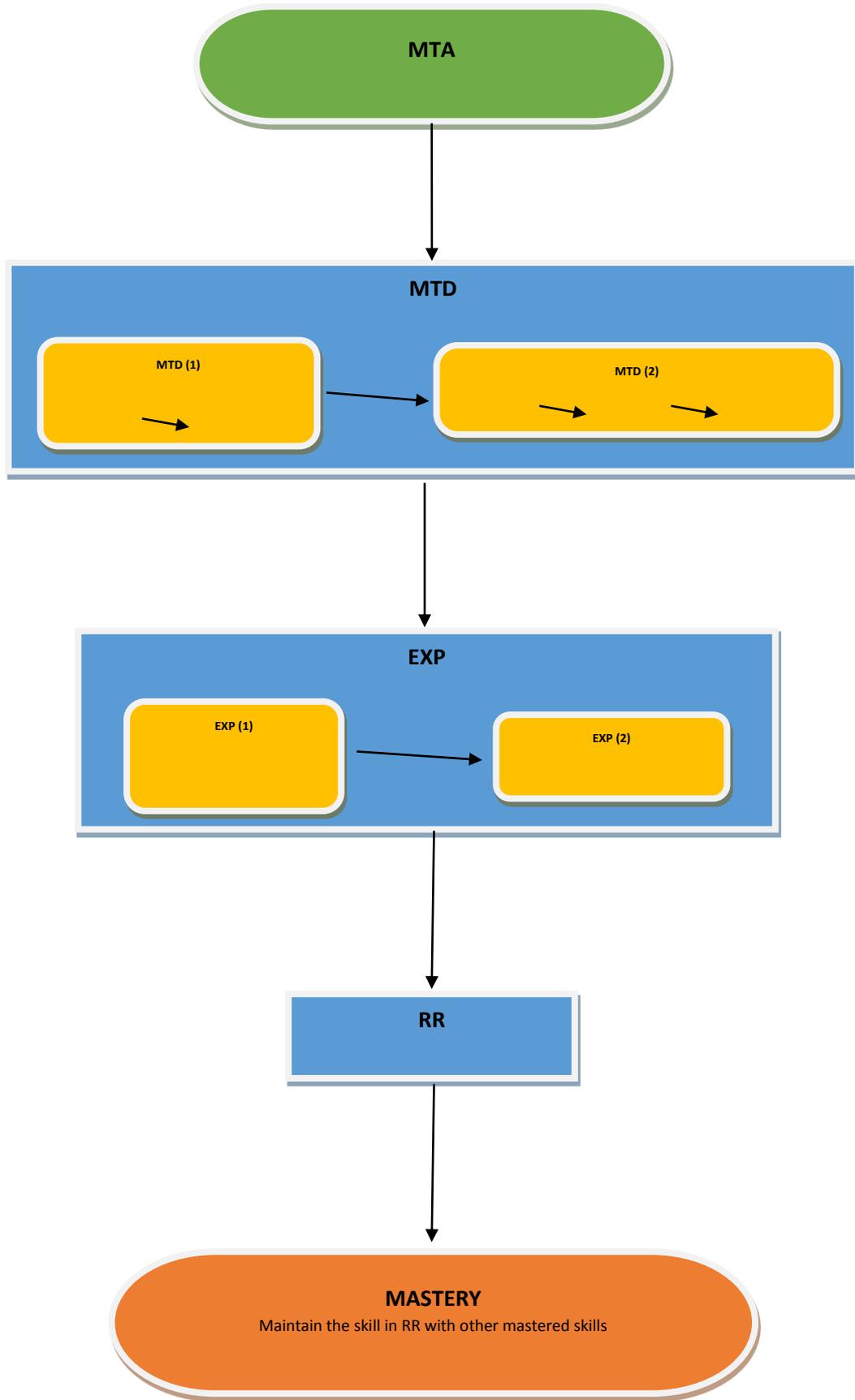


Figure 2: Flowchart – From Mass Trials to Mastery

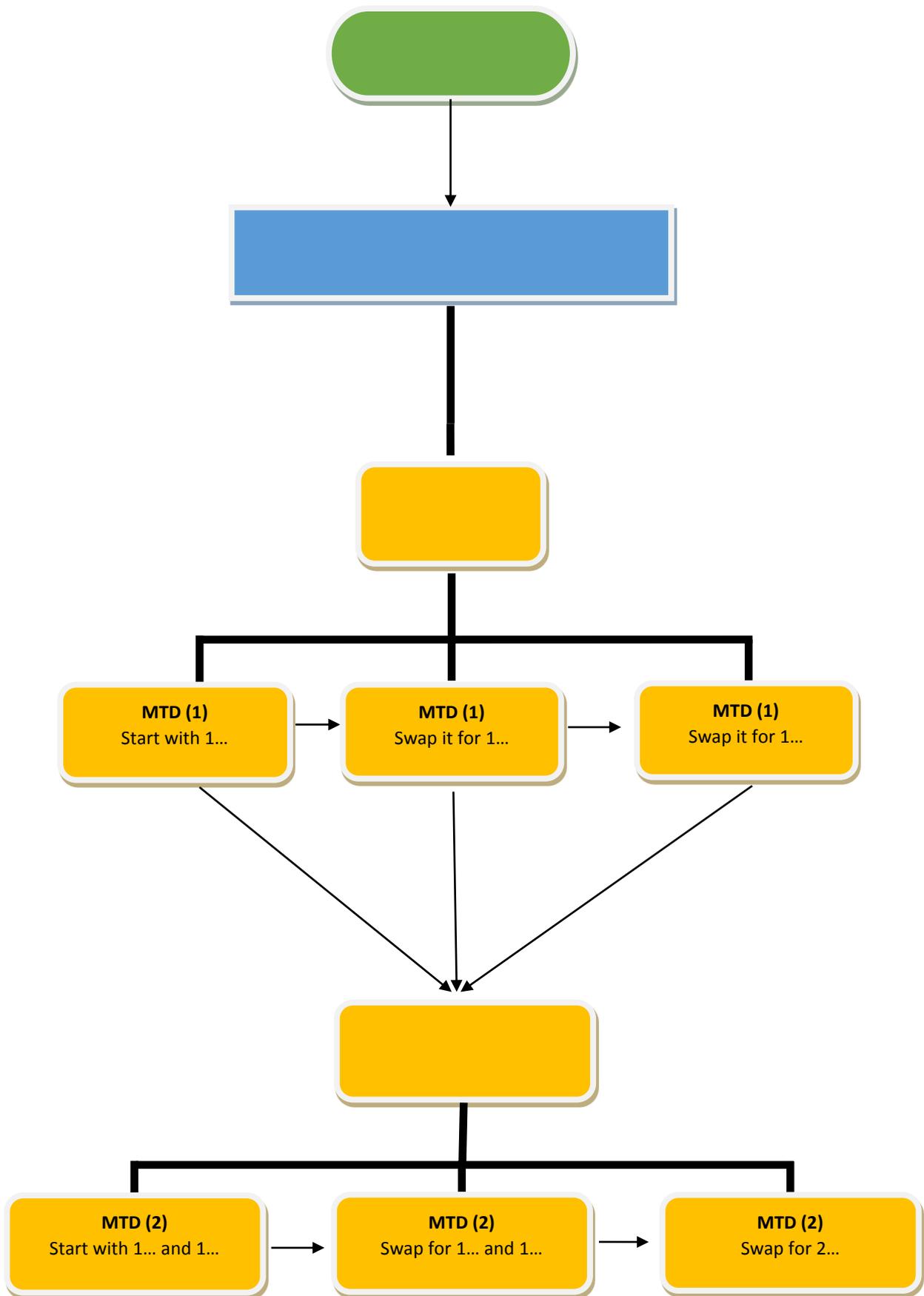


Figure 3: Flowchart – mass trials

Discrimination Training

Teaching the learner to discriminate new responses from previously learnt responses.



Figure 4: Discrimination Training

Expanded Trials

Expanded trials introduces mastered instructions between every acquisition instruction. You are no longer presenting the acquisition item in consecutive trials, because now you are asking them to demonstrate other responses too.

Random Rotation

Random rotation means presenting learnt responses in a random order. The learner must be able to discriminate between all mastered responses in any order.

Mastery

Mastery is an objective term determined by the responses demonstrated by the learner. Mastery of an item means the learner is able to consistently discriminate against other mastered items in the same programme without prompts.

Additional Stage

Block Rotation

Block rotation is an additional stage that can be used when the learner is finding a particular discrimination difficult.

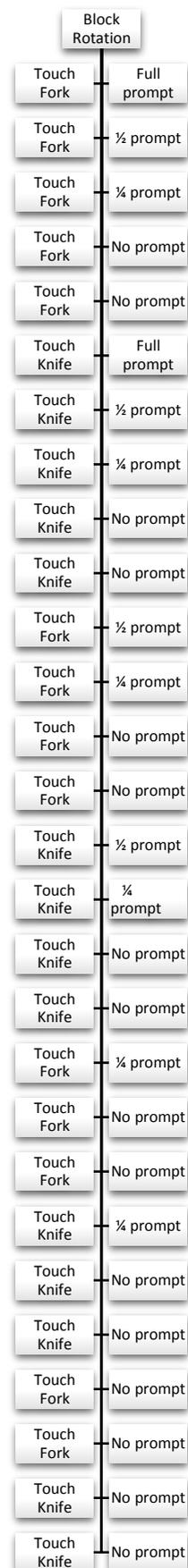


Figure 5: Block Rotation

DATA COLLECTION

Collecting data is an important part of any education program and is integral to an ABA program. Collect data on the responses the learner demonstrates.

How to record the data

When to record the data

What to record

Where to record the data



SUMMARY

In this workshop you have been introduced to the concept of discrete trial teaching as a system that turns teaching into a structured set of instructions, responses and consequences.

The teaching process is one that takes the learner from the point at which you first introduce an idea, through a series of increasingly complex discrimination stages to the point at which a concept can be considered mastered. This process allows for the possibility to adapt its steps according to the learning style of the individual, and allows for fluidity in teaching. It is easy to replicate across teachers and across teaching situations and can be implemented by any who is willing to learn.

The collection of data goes hand-in-hand with this teaching method. It is used to keep an accurate account of the learner's progress within the immediate teaching situation and over time. And it is only through the analysis of this data that behaviour change can adequately be affected.

The processes described in this workshop are extremely technical and no practitioner can become fluent in using them over night. It takes months of intensive practice with constant supervision and on-going training for even the best practitioners to become skilled in using discrete trial teaching. Nevertheless, the role play scenarios and demonstrations are designed to give you an understanding of the foundations of an ABA treatment session. That said, it should be remembered that all the practice in the world, crammed into one workshop cannot prepare you for the unpredictability and unrivalled rewards of working with children.

Best practice therefore dictates that we tirelessly insist on continuing our professional development as practitioners, through education, collaboration, and on-going training.

End of Workshop

Thank you for attending our workshop on Discrete Trial Teaching. We hope that you have enjoyed this training program and will find its contents useful in all your further interactions with children with autism spectrum disorders, other developmental disorders and behavioural difficulties. We look forward to your participation at the next workshop.

Please provide your feedback on the forms provided.

For further information on any of the topics discussed within this manual, please contact:

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