

Generalization

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WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will explore generalization by defining and discussing the following:

1. Types of Generalization
 - a. Across Stimuli
 - b. Across Responses
 - c. Across Settings or Environments
 - d. Across People

1. Types of Generalization

Generalization is the application of a learned skill across all relevant aspects of a patient's everyday life. Two main categories of generalization are critical: stimulus generalization and response generalization. Additionally, generalization can occur across environments and across people.

With generalization, behavior change starts to occur in settings other than instructional settings.



BIG IDEA

These skills or new responses occur without training in new environments and situations.

Generalization involves the occurrence of the relevant behavior under different, untrained conditions. It uses newly acquired skills in novel and appropriate situations or settings, as well as new forms of behavior as appropriate.

Generalization can occur in these forms:

- across stimuli
- across responses
- across settings
- across people

1a. Across Stimuli

Generalization across stimuli involves variations in instructions, materials, and formats.

➡ **EXAMPLE** The patient is taught to say “Dog” when a picture of a Dalmatian is shown, or the patient is able to say “Dog” when they see a German shepherd, bulldog, or corgi in real life.

Remember when we learned about SPs while discussing the discrete trial? We stated that most of the SPs we present to our patients are visual, vocal, or a combination of visual and vocal.

Whenever we teach the patient to respond to one visual or vocal stimulus, we must ensure generalization to other similar visual or vocal stimuli so that when the patient encounters visual or vocal stimuli similar to those they have learned in therapy, they can still respond.

Type of Stimuli	Example
Visual Stimuli	Enrique can respond correctly to “Give me the bear” in the presence of a stuffed toy bear. We must make sure he responds correctly to a picture of a bear, a plastic bear figurine, a bigger bear stuffed toy, etc.
Vocal Stimuli	Enrique can respond correctly to “What’s your mom’s name?” We must make sure he also responds to “Who’s your mom?” or “What’s your mommy’s name?”

In everyday situations, we rarely say the same thing twice in exactly the same way, so it’s essential that our patients generalize across verbal stimuli.

Video Transcription

Yeah. There you go. What are these?

Fingers.

Fingers. Good job. What are-- hmm.

Mouth.

Mouth. Yeah. What's this?

Head.

Head. Very good. OK, one more sticker. What are these?

Fingers.

Fingers. Good job. All right.

Mouth.

Oh, a mouth. Where does the mouth go? Oh, nice job. So you have hands, eyes, nose, and a mouth. What else does he need? Does he need ears? Oh, there's one ear. (SINGING) Eyes and ears and--

Mouth.

--and--

Nose.

Good. (SINGING) Head, shoulders, knees and goes. Whoa! You almost [INAUDIBLE] there.

Knees and toes.

[LAUGHS] Yay. You finished the song. OK. Come here.

1b. Across Responses

In this type of generalization, skills or new responses that have the same function as a learned behavior emerge without being taught.

➦ **EXAMPLE** A friend says, “Hello.” The patient can respond with, “Hello,” “Hi,” “Hey,” etc.

Video Transcription

Jessica has been working on "WH" questions, such as "where".

I want to play the iPod.

OK, go get it. Go get the iPod. Where is it?

"Who".

Who is there?

"What".

What is it?

There we go. It's iced coffee.

"Why".

Why are-- why wearing the glasses?

I'm pretending I need them, so I can see you better.

That's funny.

[LAUGHTER]

What do you want to eat?

Can I have corn on the cob and some turkey? Careful, it's hot.

It's hot.

What are you building?

I'm building a tower.

1c. Across Settings or Environments

Generalization across settings involves learning to engage in a behavior (skill or response) across different locations, such as school, home, center, park, etc.

➦ **EXAMPLE** At home, the technician teaches the patient how to ask for a glass of water when they are thirsty. At the restaurant, the patient asks the waiter for a glass of water.

In addition to making sure the patient demonstrates generalization across visual and vocal stimuli, we also must make sure the patient can demonstrate generalization across settings or locations. Our patients may do most of their early learning in structured therapy sessions. It is our job to teach them to use these skills in other settings such as at school.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Salma consistently responds to the S^D , “Come here,” in the room where therapy takes place. To demonstrate generalization across settings, Salma needs to learn to respond to the S^D , “Come here” in

- other rooms in the house
- the backyard
- the front yard
- community locations

Video Transcription

Hello. Welcome to my restaurant. What would you like to eat today?

Um, hot dogs and [INAUDIBLE] burgers.

You want a hot dog, a burger. Anything to drink?

Milk.

Milk?

Now that he understands the different roles, they're going on an outing to a real restaurant to see if he can implement what he's learned through play.

Jack Riley, where are we going?

To the res-tant.

To the what?

Res-tant.

Restaurant.

You're not saying the word, really.

We're going to the res-tant.

Thank you.

Come on, Giselle.

OK, I'm coming.

Have you gone to a restaurant with Jack Riley recently?

Not recently. It's been quite a while, actually, so we've been sort of excited because we haven't gone since he's been sort of playing restaurant at home.

I'm going to ask the lady some pie.

This here's breakfast. These are good breakfasts right here.

And there's all of this at the top of that.

No, I think those are burgers and pizza and stuff, but we want to have breakfast, I think.

And there's mud and ice cream on the pizza.

Yeah.

Do you like the restaurant so far?

Yeah.

Yeah. Cool.

And there's coffee that you want to drink.

Daddy wants to drink. What do you want, what do you want?

Um, I want piece of pie.

I think we're not going to have pie. We'll come back for dinner and have pie, OK?

Good morning. How are you?

Good. How are you?

Fine, thank you. Anything to drink?

Can I have a--

I want-- I want the blueberry waffles, please.

1d. Across People

Generalization across people refers to being able to perform a learned skill or provide a response to a cue from different people, such as family, caregivers, peers, teachers, etc.

Our patients may do most of their learning in therapy sessions with their behavior technician. However, in order for our therapy to be effective, the patient must be able to use the skills they can use with the behavior technician with caregivers, teachers, and peers. If the patient cannot demonstrate skills with other people, these skills do them no good in the long run.

➞ **EXAMPLE** The behavior technician teaches their patient the correct response to the \mathfrak{D} , “Put your shoes on.” Grandma comes over to spend time with the patient, and says, “Put your shoes on,” before the patient goes outside to play. The patient follows the instruction.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Jeorg consistently responds to the \mathcal{SD} , “Come here,” when his behavior technician Florian instructs him to come here. To demonstrate generalization across people, Jeorg needs to learn to respond to the \mathcal{SD} , “Come here,” with these other people:

- other behavior technicians on his team
- caregivers, family members
- other familiar adults (for example, family friends)
- teachers, classroom aides

➞ **EXAMPLE** The behavior technician teaches their patient to request, “My turn,” during games. When playing with peers, the patient requests, “My turn.” To demonstrate generalization across people, the patient needs to learn to use the skill with others when the skill would be needed. For this patient, this might include peers or siblings.

It may not be appropriate to generalize skills across all people. It would be unsafe for a client to follow \mathcal{SD} s from strangers. Or, it may not be appropriate to follow all \mathcal{SD} s issued by peers.

Video Transcription

Do this. Good job. Do this. Good job. Do this. Good try. Over here. Like this. Can you try? There you go.

You want to watch the kids jump now?

[LAUGHING]

Hi Jack Riley.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Talk.

They're talking to you.

My name is Michaela and this is how we jump on the trampoline.

No way. Oh my gosh.

Jump, jump, jumping. Jack, they're jumping. They're jumping. They're jumping. [INAUDIBLE]. They're jumping. Down. Up.

Up.

Down.

Up! Down. Up!

Up.

Yup! Down.



HINT

One way we can promote generalization is by making sure caregiver training is always heavily incorporated in ABA sessions. Please connect with your BCBA as to how you can support caregiver training. As a general rule incorporating caregivers into your treatment can be very helpful for generalization. One easy thing you can do is just encourage caregivers to observe the ABA session. If you are working on a particular skill you have the caregiver step in and practice the skill with you during the session.



TERM TO KNOW

Generalization

Behavior change starts to occur in settings other than the instructional setting.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about generalization, which is the application of a learned skill across all relevant aspects of a patient's real everyday life. It is important to note that these skills or new responses occur without training in new environments and situations. You learned about the different **types of generalization**, including these: **across stimuli**, such as visual or vocal stimuli; **across responses**, in which skills or new responses that have the same function as a learned behavior emerge without being taught; **across settings or environments**, where patients learn to engage in a

behavior (skill or response) across different locations, such as school, home, center, park, etc.; and **across people**, involving performing a learned skill or provide a response to a cue from different people, such as family, caregivers, peers, and teachers.



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