

Criteria for choosing instructional programs  
materials  
format  
procedures

In choosing among two or more teaching methods which are designed to teach the same concepts or movements, a number of criteria may be invoked.

1. Does the student's performance leave a permanent product? That is, at the end of the performance can the teacher count or score some physical items without having to watch the student continuously as he performs? If so, data-gathering becomes easier, group sessions may be arranged so that one teacher can work with several students, and the student can see the results of his work. This latter consideration makes the delivery of consequences easier in some cases.
2. Does the procedure impose an arbitrary ceiling on the student's rate of performance? Procedures in which the student is allowed to complete as much work as he is able to are generally to be preferred to those in which there is an imposed maximum.
3. Does the procedure provide a high density of opportunities for the student to respond in a given period of time? Often materials can be arranged so as to increase the number of trials per minute by eliminating the time required for the teacher to present, arrange or re-arrange the materials. This is the difference between teacher-paced and student-paced performance.
4. Is it convenient to gather data? A fixed session length rather than a fixed number of trials makes the time dimension stable, thus eliminating the need for individually-timed and computed sessions. The end of the performance is thus defined by a set timer, requiring little teacher attention rather than by the student's individual rate of performance which requires the teacher to stop a stopwatch at the instant the student completes his work.
5. Are the materials easy (quick) to manipulate? If they are, both the teacher and the student will be able to work more quickly and efficiently.
6. Does any lack of proficiency on the part of the student with respect to a non-essential part of the performance prevent him from exhibiting his best performance on the essential task or concept? Often by simplifying

the response (movement) requirement, it is possible to allow the student to acquire and become proficient