

TIPS FOR GRADING ACTIVITIES

The ability to grade activities is an important tool in occupational therapy practice, part of the unique process of applying principles of task analysis to facilitate change in people whose occupational performance is compromised. The following variables, continuums, and other adaptations can help sequence activities of self-help, academics, and play to insure success with a just-right challenge for each individual child.

Variables	Continuums	Adaptations
Activity start	Adult-imposed → self-initiated	
Adult interaction	Familiar → unfamiliar	Continuous, intermittent
Choice of activity	Directed → self-directed	
Context	Artificial (one-on-one) → natural environments	School, home, community
Distractions	No distractions → distractions	Number, type, frequency
Duration of activity	Brief → prolonged	
Equipment/materials	Adaptive → mainstream	Compensatory strategies
Feedback	Positive → mixed → negative	Frequency
Gravity factor	With gravity → gravity eliminated → gravity	
Gross motor patterns		Homolateral, bilateral, contralateral
Hand use		*Unilateral, bilateral, bimanual
In-hand manipulation		*Translation, shift, simple or complex rotation
Instructions	Concrete → abstract	Auditory, visual, kinesthetic, multiple
Interaction with materials	Exploration → structure	
Level of assistance	Manual → demonstration → verbal	
Manual dexterity	Visually directed ↔ without visual monitoring	Familiar, novel
Motivation	Extrinsic → intrinsic	
Number of repetitions		Increased, decreased
Object identification	Matching → pointing → naming	
Object placement	Near → far	Left side, midline, right side; eye level, below, above
Object properties	Large ↔ small, light → heavy	Size, shape, weight, texture
Peer interaction	Alone → paired → group	
Performance monitoring	Adult monitoring → self-monitoring	
Play	Solitary → parallel → cooperative → competitive	
Practice		*Blocked, constant, distributed, massed, part, whole, random, variable
Sensory stimulation		Intensity, frequency, duration
Skill components in task	Single → multiple	
Task timing	Untimed → timed	
Type of task	Closed → open (predictable g inconsistent)	Objects & people stationary (closed), in motion (open)

***Definitions:**

Two-hand use

Bilateral: symmetrical (steering bicycle, throwing or catching large ball), stabilizing or assisting (peeling banana)

Bimanual: each hand doing different things (e.g. cutting with scissors, tying shoelaces)

In-Hand manipulation

Translation: Movement of an object from fingers to palm or from palm to fingers

Shift: Slight adjustment of an object on or by the finger pads

Simple rotation: turning or rolling an object 90° or less, fingers acting as a unit

Complex rotation: Turning an object over (90-360°), using isolated finger and thumb movements

Practice

Blocked: movements always done in the same order (early learning)

Constant: activity practiced under same conditions each time (early learning)

Distributed: amount of rest time greater than amount of practice time

Massed: amount of rest time less than amount of practice time

Part: each subset of complex movement components practiced separately

Whole: entire task practiced to integrate timing

Random: movements done in different order each time (achieves generalization)

Variable: activity practiced under different conditions (achieves generalization)