Transcript - IB2: How can I fade supports?

Hello and welcome to another Para-Bytes. This one is all about taking what you do for a living and doing less of it. How's that Julie? Or we call it fading it.

Fading supports. So the question that we're answering is, how can I fade supports? In school systems all over, people say this in different ways. And sometimes they say this phrase, try to work yourself out of a job. I find that super unhelpful because most of us would like to stay employed. So instead, we like to say, you will still have a job for sure. And your job is to actually fade supports back so students can be independent and interdependent.

Yeah. And the next slide really captures that exact sentiment. The whole idea of providing support is that by doing the support, by offering the support, by creating this supportive environment, we are actually increasing independence, which means they need the support less.

And the phrase interdependence might be a little bit newer, but it's so important that we remember that interdependence is equally as important as independence. So Julie, how do you help folks understand what it means to be interdependent? I usually use adult examples. So what I mean is, think of one thing in your life that you get support to do.

So for me, it would be like balancing a checkbook or banking or things like that. I need support to do that. I'm not good at it on my own.

I'm interdependent with my partner to make that happen. Or just think of anything at all that you do in your life where you need somebody to support you and where you rely on your friends or your family to do something with you, that you just don't do everything on your own. OK.

We're going to give you some really helpful, I think, a really helpful visual that reminds us that the reason that we fade our supports is because we want to be as unintrusive as possible with our students. OK, so how we often look at this ladder is we pretend that someone is afraid of heights and you only go up as high as you have to and then you go down as quickly as you can. So what we have here are, do you want to describe the right hand side, like all the different, all different prompts? Yeah.

So this is called the prompting ladder. And like Julie said, the goal is maybe counterintuitive to what we've been taught in the past, that we don't want to start off with the most support, which are those things like full physical, certainly, or even a verbal prompt. And Julie, I would say a visual prompt because we get we you and you and I have even said across Para-Bytes, give visual support, provide a visual, do something that's multisensory.

What I want you to notice is how high up the ladder visual supports are or even modeling. And so what Julie just said is, wait, wait, wait, you're afraid of heights. If you're thinking of which prompt to start with, you need to be much closer to the bottom rung.

These invisible supports that we've also talked about, materials that are supports or natural cues or a wait time or even just a gesture, all of those would be less intrusive and good places to start. And then even if we get all the way up to modeling, we remember, oh, right, I am afraid of heights. I need to come back down or fade my support and do something that's less intrusive.

So that fading of support says, OK, take all these prompts listed. From the top of the ladder to the bottom and wherever you start, you want to fade it or make your way down. But on top of that, we're like, hey, try not to start at the top always and work your way down.

Sometimes you start at the bottom, maybe go up a little bit for a brief period and then come right back down. Yeah, so if this is we're going to give you an example that will really help you, but we want to remind you that there are some things to think about before you even get on that ladder. So before you even give a specific prompt to a student.
Now, I've never really thought about these things, Kristie, but when you said we do often suggest that you create visuals for people and usually what we want you to do is create visuals for everyone in the room as a support. This is different. This is how do you prompt a one specific student and how do we fade that prompt back? And so before you even jump on the ladder, even the first run, make sure that everyone in the class understands you are there to help all students.

So even if it's higher up when it's for everyone, then it's not so intrusive or not so much. It's still promoting independence or really interdependence because everyone is utilizing it to create access points versus just the student needs just this high level or intrusive support. Yeah, so when I think of prompting, I'm usually thinking of something we're telling just one student to do to get them to do something that they're struggling to do for some reason.

And so that's exactly right, Kristie. And the second bullet is really watch before helping. So before even leaping onto the ladder, just go, let me see what's going to happen.

Maybe they're going to figure it out on their own. And that cognitive work is really good for humans to figure out how might I do this on my own? Kristie, why don't you pick from these ones? What else do you want to share? Yeah, and I like that they're just kind of end with a question mark. So it's this idea of like you try it and then did it help? And so sometimes if you just go, huh, I think I'm going to give the student a little bit of time before I even get on the ladder or think about the ladder and then go, oh, wait, did that take care of it? Can I do something that's like by way of how the materials are organized or set up or accessible that doesn't even need me to go to the ladder to then prompt the student? Can I do something where the student monitors themselves so I'm not there prompting them along? And then always thinking about that interdependence.

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Is there a way that peers can support each other? And so, again, not just a student with a disability label has a peer that supports, but something in the environment, the lesson, the unit, the activity creates opportunities for peers to support one another, therefore not needing me to get on the prompting ladder. Exactly, exactly, and a lot of times when we work with paraprofessionals, this is a real quote from someone that we were working with, and he said, but my job is to sit next to Joe. Joe is a student with a disability.

And it was really, really helpful for us to understand that this person perceived his role as being next to. And what we want you to know that if you're a one on one paraprofessional and you're working and supporting one student or a couple of students, your job isn't to sit next to that student. Your job instead is to help the student become as independent as possible, help the student connect to other students and fade your support by helping them to implement a fading plan.

So we're going to go down the ladder. That's what we mean by fading plan. And so a way to think of this notion of sitting next to each other, that there's this chair that you bring with you so that you can get next to the student, whether they're in a small group, they're at their lab table, they're at their desk, they're in a play area.
It's almost like you come with a chair. And so, Julie, what do we want them to do with the chair? Well, this isn't literal, but we want you to burn the chair. And what we mean is we rarely, if ever, want an adult chair next to a student or group of students that you're working with that's permanent.

OK, we don't want your job, your place of residence to be next to the kid that needs support. Here's why. We want to promote independence.

We want to promote interdependence. And we want you to be seen as a support throughout the room or throughout the school or wherever we are. Right.

So we jokingly say it's time to burn the chair. We want to get rid of that permanent fixture next to a student. OK, so the resource you can use, Julie alluded to it earlier.

Do you want me to show my screen, Julie, or can you do it off of that? This is good. I can see it. So you have a resource you can use is actually three pages long and it has an example that's an early childhood example, an elementary example, and then even a high school example about how what do each of these prompts mean and or look like in a real situation.

And Julie is going to walk us through one so that you can understand what a full physical prompt is versus a visual prompt, but also get that notion of fading. All right. So this example, I want you to look right here where it says. The target skill, the thing you're working on is initiating cooperative play during center time. So imagine that the teacher has just gone over all the centers. All right.

They've explained this is happening here. This is happening here. This happening here.
This is happening here. And your hope is for the student to initiate going and choosing a center and they're not moving. That's when you usually know a prompt is needed more than everybody else has been given.

There's something else that needs to be done. And so we're going to just start on the bottom and visible material support are that the centers exist. I'm going to go kind of quickly.

When you look at this next one, a natural cue is that other kids are playing at the centers. If you just wait, that's wait time. Let's imagine you wait for a whole minute and all of a sudden the kid goes, gets up and then what I would do is mark off, oh, my gosh, wait time work today.

Tomorrow we're going to try maybe a natural cue. So that's what it means to go up only as high as you have to and back down as quickly as you can. So you've got all of these beautiful resources to look at for the different groups. But I'll go up and just show it one more example. A visual prompt might be showing a kid the photograph of the centers or showing the areas of the centers. Modeling would be kind of simply just walking over and starting to work at a center.

So you're modeling what's expected. Those are examples. In this case, you would not use full physical prompts. You wouldn't carry the student over to do center time. But sometimes full physical prompts are needed. And it would be, let's just imagine a student who needs hand over hand support to do something where you're actually providing or guiding or supporting the student's body.

But again, we've got to think of other, any other supports that could be put in place that would be better for their independence. So as you wrap up this Para-Byte, your application reflection is to kind of go back to the statement about, but I thought my job was to sit next to Joe. Sometimes you might understand that your job is different, but maybe others expect you to have the chair and they're like, hey, you're not working if you're not providing big time, full on hand over hand support.

So how is what we just shared in this Para-Byte different than how your job has been described, supported, required, that sort of thing? Who might you need to discuss the idea of fading? So you think, OK, we're ready to walk down the ladder and then other team members jump in and they're clear up high. So there's this lack of consistency among the supports that are being provided. And then lastly, as you think about this Para-Byte and the prompting letters included, including the examples, who can you share the prompting letter with or where could you maybe even post it as a good reminder for everyone on your team?