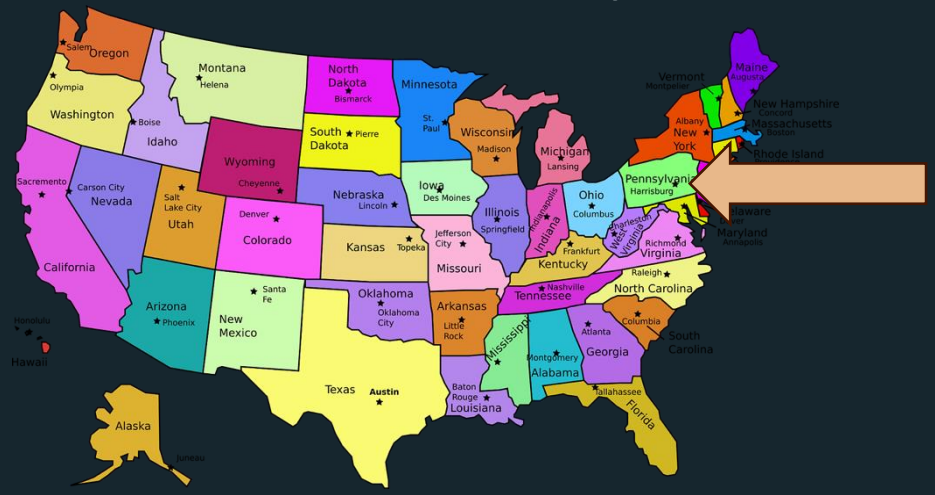
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Why Are We Teaching Learners to Escape?

Engineering Environments Where Participation Is the Natural Response



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BEFORE WE BEGIN

Think of a learner you work with.

Rarely approaches you.

Seems to tolerate you.

Complies with the task demand.

And leaves the moment they can.

Hold that learner in mind. We come back to them at the end.

What you will walk out able to do

1. **Identify** ways instructional control is misunderstood, and ways to address them.

2. **Describe** how the four parts of the instructional conditions — curricula, learners, physical structure, teacher delivery — are arranged to make participation the learner's preferred response.

3. **Evaluate** a classroom scenario to determine which parts required rearrangement when a learner was escaping rather than participating.

ONE BELIEF, THREE SENTENCES

“He did his work. He earned his break.”

And when he will not do the work, one of two things —

“He isn't ready.”

“No response-keep the demand.”

Compliance is the unit we measure — so compliance is what we build.
Comply, and you get away from me.
Refuse, and I remove you, or I hold you here.

Nowhere in those three sentences is there a reason to want me there.

Three ways we misunderstand instructional control

The misunderstanding	What it sounds like	What instructional control actually is
1 · IC is compliance on command	“I asked him to write his name. He did. I have instructional control.”	Willing responding to a valued instructor. The response alone tells you nothing about what you are to him.
2 · IC is proven at the table	“He needs more table time.”	Table time is the outcome of instructional control, not the way to get it. It is built wherever the learner already is.
3 · IC is bought with the reinforcer	“Three more, then you can have the rice bin.”	The reinforcer is not payment for leaving. We get in the bin together — and he does not push me away.

The learner who complies and then leaves has told us something.

We recorded it as a success.

READINESS, REDEFINED

We ask whether the learner is ready for us.

The learner has already learned what our arrival means.

The history we inherit

An adult appears. Demands follow. The good part is what happens once they go. So she tolerates us long enough to comply, and then leaves for the bin.

What readiness actually is

Learning that we are valued in their life. Our arrival stops predicting a worsening scenario and starts predicting a good one.

Readiness is not a skill the learner is missing. It is a history we wrote.

The learner is responding correctly

Escape is not a deficit. It is behavior that works, in a condition we arranged.

The learner has read the contingencies accurately. Leaving pays better than staying.

The question is not what the learner misread. It is what we taught them to read.

Do not falsely assume that the learner is **NONCOMPLIANT**.

It is more useful to simply assume that **the learner is NOT participating**.

Therefore, your focus will be on developing the participator repertoire that is “missing.”

Tucci — Competent Learner Model, Course of Study Guide, Unit 9A Lesson 4

We condition the escape, then we measure it

What we usually arrange

Work with the instructor → earn the token → take the reinforcer **and leave**.

The instructor is paired with demand.
The reinforcer is paired with the instructor being **gone**.

So the adult becomes the thing worth getting away from.

When the terminal reinforcer is removal from the instructional context, the arrangement is escape-maintained — whatever the data sheet calls it.

What we can arrange instead

Learn with the instructor → **enjoy the reinforcer together** → return to learning from inside that context.

The instructor is paired with the reinforcer.
Participation is no longer the price of escape.

The adult becomes a **valued instructor** — part of what the learner wants.

To be clear: **the break stays available.** A learner asking for one is a mand, and honoring it is assent. It simply stops being the most valuable thing in the room.

WHAT THE PAIRING PRODUCES

Instructional control lives with the valued instructor — not the table

What the adult arranges

- Paired before any demand is placed
- Joins the learner's activity — interrupts nothing
- Directions lead to something wanted
- Present — nothing else in their hands
- Never forces a response

How the learner answers

- Approaches, or moves away
- Stays when the adult steps back, or stops
- Brings things to show, or hides
- Stays with you when work appears, or falls apart
- Learns anywhere, or only at the table

THE SELF-CHECK

When I walk over, does my learner come toward me — or move away?

The four parts of the instructional conditions

Arranged in this order. Delivery is the part you set last, because it is the part that changes as the learner grows.

1

Curricula

Sequence of related tasks · validated formats · cumulative review · materials within reach before you begin

2

Learners

Group same level or mixed · when mixed, teach to the lowest performer

3

Physical Structure

Proximity: at-hand, near, far · arrangement: U-shaped, cooperative, theatre, casual · size

4

Teacher Delivery

Set up for responding · present lessons · assign tasks · announce free choice

> “Teaching is the arrangement and re-arrangement of contingencies to facilitate learning.”

Skinner, 1968 — we do not change the learner. We change a part, check the data, and change it again.

What the four parts are building

Participating is a skill. It is **taught** — and the conditions arrive in this order.

Condition	Who sets the occasion
Non-directed	The learner — his own preferred activity
Semi-directed	The task the teacher set up
Teacher-directed	The teacher, response by response
Peer-directed	The other children

Most of us start at the other end: **teacher-directed, work then play**, with a learner who has no reason yet to want us there.

We do not wait for the competent learner. We arrange the conditions that build one.

What changed, and in what order

One learner, one teacher, four sessions months apart. Same repertoire throughout — **0.703 Observer, match to sort**.

1 · TEACHER-DIRECTED

Five objects, three clear containers. *"Label it, put it where it goes."* She is beside him, directing every item. **He refuses.**

2 · PAIRING

No sorting at all. We moved him back a lesson and went into his play, until being with her was worth something.

3 · SEMI-DIRECTED

The same format returns. Nobody gives a direction — **the plates set the occasion**. She is close by, not beside him.

4 · TEACHER-DIRECTED

A harder task — matching pictures to objects — and she is directing every trial again. **Now it works.**

We had placed him too high. He was in Lesson 4, and he was a Lesson 3 learner. **Curricula changed first — the placement. Delivery followed it.**

He didn't fail at sorting. He failed at a condition we hadn't built yet.

BACK TO YOUR LEARNER

The learner who rarely approaches you is not telling you about themselves.

They are telling you about the condition.

On Monday, take one session with that learner. Do not ask whether they are ready for it.

Ask whether it is arranged for them. Then change one part, and see whether they come closer.

That is how a competent learner is built — arranged for, not waited for.

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