PEARSON NEW INTERNATIONAL EDITION

Behavior Management
A Practical Approach for Educators

Thomas M Shea Anne M Bauer

Tenth Edition

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Program objectives should be written as instructional objectives, whether the target behavior is in the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor learning domain. The instructional objective in its written form should respond to the following guidelines:

1. What is the child or group of children whose behavior is being changed expected to do or not to do?
   a. Use action verbs to denote the behavior change process.
   b. List the specific resources and materials to be used by the child during the behavior change process.
   c. Indicate specifically the desired interaction between the child and the environment, including persons and objects.
2. What is the level of performance (in terms of accuracy, duration, and skill) expected of the child?
3. What percentage of time or what percentage of occurrences of the desired behavior is the child expected to perform at the criterion level?
4. How will the anticipated changes in behavior be measured for evaluative purposes? What instrumentation is needed for the evaluation?
5. How long will the proposed intervention program be in force before its effectiveness is evaluated?

The beginning practitioner is advised to use the checklist in Figure 6.1 to assist in the target behavior selection process.

COLLECTING AND RECORDING BASELINE DATA

Quantitative data collected before the behavior change intervention has been implemented is referred to as **baseline data.** The process of collecting preintervention or baseline data is grounded in functional behavioral assessment (FBA), which is discussed in Chapter 5. Baseline data provide the foundation on which the behavior change process is established. These data are also used to determine the effectiveness of the intervention during the evaluation step of the behavior change process.

In the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA 97), Congress required that an effort be made to understand the relationship between the individual student's learning and behavior. Knowledge of this relationship was seen as essential to planning the individual education plan (IEP). To respond to this mandate, the IEP team must address both the student's learning and the student's behavior. Thus, the team must conduct a FBA and plan and implement a behavior intervention plan (Buck, Palloway, Kirkpatrick, Patton, and Fad, 2000; Fitzsimmons, 1998).

According to Buck et al. (2000), two major assumptions underlie the mandate in IDEA 97: (a) "Behavioral problems are best addressed when the cause of the behavior is known; and cause can be determined best when a functional assessment of the student's behavior is conducted" and (b) "behavior intervention based on positive intervention strategies are more effective in changing maladaptive behavior than are punitive strategies (e.g., suspension). Such intervention strategies should be well thought out, implemented in a systematic fashion, and evaluated so that changes can be made when needed" (p. 4).

Target Behavior Selection Checklist

1. What is the target behavior to be modified? _____

_____

_____

_____

2. Each characteristic of the behavior that should be considered in the target behavior selective process is listed below. An X should be marked by each characteristic as it is considered.The pertinency of these characteristics varies with the specific target behavior under consideration.

(X)	Characteristic	Comment
( )	Frequency	
( )	Duration	
( )	Intensity	
( )	Type	
( )	Direction	
( )	Observability	
( )	Measurability	

3. Restate the target behavior in precise and specific terminology. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

FIGURE 6.1 Sample checklist to assist in the selection of a target behavior

Buck et al. (2000) state three reasons for previous failures that led Congress to mandate change:

1. School personnel often provide inappropriate interventions because they failed to identify the true cause of the disruptive behavior.
2. Behavioral interventions are often implemented haphazardly (e.g., lack of consistency, with little attention to the monitoring and evaluation of implementation).
3. Disciplinary actions in schools have tended toward punitive rather than positive behavioral intervention plans.

The FBA is conducted to gather information about the student's behavior problem. The assessment focuses attention on the underlying motivation for the problem. As suggested by Fitzsimmons (1998), the function or purpose of the behavior often is not inappropriate; rather, the behavior itself is inappropriate. Therefore, to effectively assist

the student, the focus of the intervention is on the purpose of the behavior rather than the characteristics of the behavior. For example, the purpose of a student's misbehavior may be to gain attention. Rather than trying to decrease through punishment or deprivation his inappropriate outbursts and interruptions during class, the appropriate intervention may be to provide opportunities for the student to receive consistent, repeated, and legitimate attention during class. An effective intervention plan for this student, then, focuses on both increasing appropriate behavior and decreasing inappropriate behavior.

Fitzsimmons (1998) suggests five steps common to the FBA:

1. Determine whether the problem behavior can be controlled by the usual classroom intervention strategies. If it cannot be controlled in this manner, then conduct an FBA.
2. Translate the behavior problem into descriptive behavioral terms. Define the behavior so that it can be directly observed and quantified.
3. Analyze the student's behavior and other information about the student to determine the possible cause of the behavior.
4. Collect data and analyze the problem behavior by focusing on the behavior itself as well as its antecedents and consequences.
5. Formulate a hypothesis with regard to the problem behavior. The hypothesis will state a possible explanation for the behavior's occurrence. The hypothesis is then tested by consistently manipulating the variables suggested within it over a period of time. In effect, the practitioner is conducting a research study to test the significance of the proposed hypothesis.

A behavior intervention plan should be written and incorporated into the student's IEP. Scott and Nelson (1999), as cited in Jolivette, Scott, and Nelson (2000), suggest a 10-step process for integrating FBA data into the behavioral intervention plan:

1. Determine the function of the behavior. A functional assessment of the behavior is conducted to determine the purpose of the learner's behavior problem.
2. Determine an appropriate replacement behavior. The alternative appropriate behavior(s) should serve to replace the purpose of the inappropriate behavior and be acceptable to others in the learner's environment.
3. Determine when the replacement behavior should occur. Determine when it is appropriate for the alternative behavior to occur, and instruct the learner in the use of the behavior.
4. Design a teaching sequence. As in the instruction of academics, an instruction plan should be developed to teach the learner the alternative acceptable behavior.
5. Manipulate the environment to increase the probability of success. Arrange reinforcers within the environment to increase the probability that the alternative behavior will occur and be positively reinforced.
6. Manipulate the environment to decrease the probability of failure. Arrange the environment to decrease any barriers to the occurrence of the alternative behavior.
7. Determine how positive behavior will be reinforced. Arrange the environment so that the alternative behavior will be reinforced with consistency. In addition, the environment must be arranged so that the alternative behavior will be reinforced, as necessary, with appropriate frequency and, as necessary, with artificial and natural reinforcers.

8. Determine consequences for occurrences of the problem behavior. Design strategies to be implemented when the learner exhibits the inappropriate behavior.
9. Develop a data collection system. Collect data on the frequency, intensity, and duration of both the inappropriate and the alternative behaviors. This system must also include the frequency, intensity, and duration of the problem behavior prior to the implementation of the intervention plan to teach the learner the alternative behavior.
10. Develop behavioral goals and objectives. These are similar to the goals and objectives developed to instruct in academic areas.

The plan should be positive in nature rather than negative. It should emphasize what the student can do rather than what he or she cannot do. It has been generally demonstrated that positive interventions have a more long-lasting effect on student behavior than negative interventions. Both positive behavioral support and FBA are addressed in detail in Chapter 5.

The behavior intervention plan may include manipulation of variables that precede the observable behavior, instructing in alternative forms of appropriate behavior or providing reinforcement for appropriate behavior (Jolivette et al., 2000).

■ ***Example***

The behavior change program Mr. Dixon developed for Jean concerned increasing the amount of time Jean remained in her seat during history class. Mr. Dixon collected baseline data for 1 week. The data demonstrated that Jean usually remained in her seat an average of 10 minutes at a time before she was up and about the classroom. This information provided Mr. Dixon with the data he needed to determine the kind and characteristics of the reinforcement schedule to be implemented. To ensure that Jean received immediate reinforcement for staying in her seat, a fixed interval schedule of 7 minutes was used.

The selection of the fixed interval schedule of 7 minutes was not a haphazard choice. It was based on the fact that Jean had demonstrated that she could, on the average, remain in her seat for 10 minutes without interference. Therefore, it was reasonable to select a 7-minute interval because that was a level of performance that Jean could easily attain. Consequently, she could be frequently reinforced for appropriate behavior.

If Mr. Dixon had not collected baseline data but had proceeded on a hunch, he might have selected a fixed interval schedule of 11 minutes. With this interval, there would be a strong possibility that Jean would be infrequently rewarded and that her behavior would not change significantly.

Reinforcement is initiated at a level of performance either above or below the baseline, depending on whether the behavior is to be increased or decreased. For instance, you want to work with a student on increasing the number of words he can read per minute. You know that the student can read 75 words per minute. To start at baseline or above baseline would usually mean waiting too long to get the appropriate behavior, and your behavior change program may not be effective. If, however, you start your reinforcement at a level below baseline—in this case, for example, at 65 words per minute—you have then established a level at which you can provide immediate success for the student and can begin the program on a positive note.

■ *Example*

Ms. Waters has a very active, unpredictable child in her class named Emmet. Emmet is constantly yelling in the classroom, to the annoyance of Ms. Waters and the other members of the group. Ms. Waters initiated a behavior change program but did not collect baseline data since Emmet appeared to yell constantly. She withdrew attention from Emmet each time he yelled and praised him when he was not yelling.

After 2 weeks, Ms. Waters was convinced that no change had occurred in the frequency of the behavior. Emmet seemed to yell in class more frequently. Ms. Waters concluded that "this intervention stuff" only works in textbooks, and she abandoned the project. Emmet is still yelling in class.

It should be stressed that, generally, failure of an intervention lies not in the principles of management but in the application of those principles by the practitioner. In the preceding example, Ms. Waters would have been wise to collect baseline data. She would have been able to evaluate the effectiveness of the behavior change process. Baseline data would have revealed that Emmet yelled in class an average of 21 times a day. When the intervention was abandoned, the behavior was occurring only 18 times a day (Figure 6.2). The behavior was, in fact, changing in the desired direction. However, without appropriate data, 18 yells a day seems very much like 21 when you are immersed in a situation, as in the case of Ms. Waters.

A variety of methods are available for observing and recording baseline data behavior. According to Lennox and Miltenberger (1989), the three categories of methods for collecting functional assessment data are (a) behavioral interviews, rating scales, and questionnaires that depend on information from the individual whose behavior is under consideration or an informant familiar with the individual, (b) direct observation of the target behavior, including its antecedents and consequences, and (c) experimental manipulation of variables in the environment in which the behavior is exhibited. The

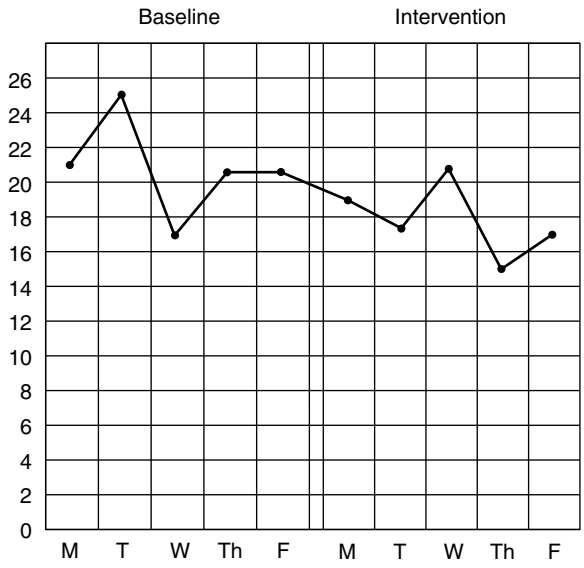

FIGURE 6.2 Frequency of Emmet's yelling behavior before and during the intervention

efficiency of a particular technique varies with the expertise of the practitioner, the characteristics of the behavior, and the setting in which the behavior occurs.

To obtain meaningful baseline data, the practitioner must engage in two activities: counting the behavior and graphing or charting the behavior. **Counting behavior** involves enumerating the number of times the behavior occurs in a given period of time. **Graphing (charting) behavior** involves preparing a visual display of the enumerated behavior in graphic form. These two processes are of paramount importance in the behavior change process.

When the number of occurrences or the average duration of the occurrences of a behavior in a temporal framework are known, the practitioner can select an efficient reinforcement schedule before implementing an intervention. Equally important is the application of the baseline data to the intervention evaluation process. By comparing baseline data with intervention data, the teacher can determine the effectiveness of the reinforcer and the reinforcement schedule. Judgments can be made regarding the responsiveness of the target behavior to the intervention—that is, is the behavior increasing, decreasing, or remaining unchanged?

The recommended method of collecting baseline data is direct observation in the environment in which the behavior occurs. The beginning practitioner is well advised to obtain observation data by means of a time-sampling technique.

A trained observer realizes that it is impossible to observe all the behavior occurring within the environment; neither is it possible to efficiently observe all the occurrences of a single behavior over an extended period. This is particularly true in a busy classroom with many students and a variety of activities occurring simultaneously.

With **time sampling**, the teacher first selects the behavior to be observed and then determines the periods of time that can be devoted to observing that behavior each day during the baseline period. Each occurrence of the target behavior during the observation period is tallied or recorded.

■ *Example*

Joshua's teacher, Mr. Cates, wished to modify Joshua's hitting behavior during the 2-hour language arts period. With all his other teaching duties, he could not observe Joshua the full 2 hours for the 5 days required to collect reliable baseline data. Thus, Mr. Cates used a time-sampling technique; he observed Joshua's behavior during two 10-minute periods for each hour of the language arts period for 5 days. He designed a behavior-tallying sheet to record his observations (Table 6.2).

TABLE 6.2 Baseline Data: Joshua's Hitting Behavior

	Day					
Time	**Mon.**	**Tue.**	**Wed.**	**Thur.**	**Fri.**	**Time Total**
9:00–9:10	/	/		/	/	4
9:30–9:40	/	/	//	/	/	6
10:00–10:10	//	///	/	//	/	9
10:30–10:40	///	/	////	///	//	13
DAY TOTAL	7	6	7	7	5	32