
Glossary

This Glossary has been developed as a supplement to the accompanying Intervention Tip Sheets to assist teachers and parents in providing the best possible educational opportunities to students with emotional and behavioral disorders. This Tip Sheet was published by the Institute on Community Integration, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and was authored by Kareen Smith of the Institute.

A-B-C analysis A technique to identify the relationship between environmental factors and behavior (antecedent - behavior - consequence).

ALT-R Reinforcement of alternative behavior.

antecedent stimulus A stimulus present immediately before the occurrence of a behavior. It may or may not serve as a discriminative stimulus.

artificial reinforcers Consequences used to reinforce behaviors which do not naturally occur outside of the intervention environment. For example, reinforcing appropriate peer interactions with stickers (*see natural reinforcers*).

assessment The systematic gathering of information in order to make educational decision.

augmentative communication Ways of exchanging information other than verbally, i.e., through hand signs, photographs, computers, etc.

aversive stimulus A stimulus which, due to its undesirable nature, serves to decrease the probability that a behavior will occur. Often occurs as a consequence of a behavior (i.e., punisher). Alternately, removal of aversive stimuli can serve to increase the likelihood that a behavior will be exhibited.

aversive procedure Any procedure which utilizes an aversive stimulus for the purpose of changing behavior (e.g., making a student write sentences for whispering during class time).

backward chaining Instructional method of teaching a task which begins with the last sub-task of the sequence and moves backward through the chain of sub-tasks as each is mastered (*see chained task/response, chaining, forward chaining*).

baseline The rate established by data collection of the natural occurrence of a target behavior.

behavior An observable and measurable act exhibited by a person which has a beginning and an end and can be reliably measured by more than one individual.

behavioral objective The desired behavior to be achieved after intervention, including the degree to which it will be performed (*see objective*).

chained task/response A skill or behavior which is comprised of sequenced, discrete sub-tasks.

chaining A teaching method which breaks a task into sub-tasks and teaches each sub-task one at a time, sequentially. Mastery of a sub-task is required before teaching of the next sub-task is undertaken (*see chained task/response, forward chaining, and backward chaining*).

cognitive behavioral modification Behavioral interventions which are based on the belief that a person's behavior is a result of his or her thoughts and beliefs. Cognitive behavioral interventions aim to help a person modify thoughts and beliefs in order to change their behavior.

consequences A stimulus which is presented after a behavior is exhibited and which is contingent upon the occurrence of the behavior.

contingency A relationship between behavior and consequences.

contingent Dependent on or upon.

continuous measurement Continuous data collection of each occurrence of a behavior for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating a student's behavior or progress.

contracting Designing contingencies for reinforcement of appropriate behavior and incorporating them into a written document to which both student and teacher can refer.

controlling prompt Behaviors or actions which elicit performance of a specific behavior.

cooperative learning A method for student learning by which students work together in groups. Thus, a teaching-learning exchange between students is created and cooperation, interpersonal and social skills, and interdependence are promoted.

correct response The accurate performance of the target behavior within the specified time interval.

corrective feedback Feedback given after an incorrect response which serves to point out the error in a neutral manner and demonstrate the correct response. The purpose of corrective feedback is to teach the correct response.

criterion A specified level of acceptable performance of a behavior. Criteria are used to evaluate success of instruction.

differential reinforcement Reinforcement which is delivered only after specific discriminative stimuli are presented or only after the correct behavior is exhibited.

discrimination The ability to distinguish between stimuli or environmental events.

discriminative stimuli Stimuli which cue a specific response (i.e., saying "bless you" after someone sneezes--sneezing is the discriminative stimulus).

DRA Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior. Reinforcement of any behavior more appropriate than the targeted inappropriate behavior.

DRI Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behavior. Reinforcement of any behavior which makes it impossible for the targeted inappropriate behavior to occur.

DRL Differential Reinforcement of Lower Rates of Behavior. Reinforcement of a behavior when exhibited at a lower frequency. The behavior itself is not inappropriate, but the frequency of it is inappropriate (e.g., a student asking to sharpen his pencil every 10 minutes).

DRO Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior. Reinforcement of behavior other than the target behavior to be decreased.

DSM IV (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition*) A manual that defines and classifies mental disorders according to the American Psychiatric Association guidelines (APA, 1994).

duration recording Recording the amount of time between the onset and termination of a behavior (e.g., the length of time a temper tantrum lasts).

event recording Tallying or recording the frequency of occurrences of a behavior during an observation period.

externalizing Acting out a behavior so that it is observable.

extinction Withholding reinforcement of a previously reinforced behavior in order to decrease the occurrence of a behavior.

fading The gradual removal of a prompt or an entire intervention program.

fair pair rule The principle which states that any intervention which aims to eliminate a nonfunctional behavior should include a component which teaches and/or increases a functional behavior.

formative evaluation Evaluation occurring while an intervention is being implemented to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

forward chaining Instructional method of teaching a task which begins with the first sub-task of the sequence and moves forward through the chain of sub-tasks as each is mastered (*see chained task/response, chaining, backward chaining*).

frequency The number of times a behavior is exhibited within a defined period of time.

frequency count A behavior measurement technique which tallies each and every occurrence of a behavior.

function The result which a behavior serves to achieve.

full physical prompt Manipulation of a student's hands or body in order to teach a student to correctly perform a kinesthetic behavior. For example, a student might be taught to correctly hold a pencil by the teacher forming the student's hand correctly on the pencil.

functional analysis An analysis which defines the undesirable behavior, predicts the times when the behavior will or will not be exhibited, and defines what it is that maintains or reinforces the student to continue displaying the behavior.

functional assessment The process of collecting information about the behavior patterns of an individual in order to complete a functional analysis. Collection may include interviewing the student or people who have direct contact with this individual, and observation and manipulation of specific situations to test your understanding of the predictability of a behavior.

functional communication Specific language behaviors which achieve specific results by conveying wants and needs.

generalization The exhibition of behavior in situations (across persons, settings, times, stimuli, etc.) other than that in which the behavior was learned.

generalization training Training which aims to increase the generalization of behavior or skills to other situations in which they are not being exhibited and in which they will be functional.

goals Broad and long-term statements about the behaviors to be achieved which include information about the activities which will take place, how often instruction will take place, and to what extent a student will participate.

group contingency The delivery of reinforcement contingent upon the behavior of a group of peers.

home contingency A contingency between a student's behavior at school and reinforcement delivered at home. For example, a student might be reinforced for improved grades with a later curfew on the weekend.

independent monitoring A behavior measurement/monitoring technique which is carried out by the student. The student periodically (whether independently or after specified intervals) he or she has achieved behaving appropriately.

intensity A function of the frequency and duration of a behavior. Also, the power, strength, or force with which a behavior is displayed. For example, if a student pushes furniture when angry, intensity would be described in terms of whether the furniture was slightly moved or was knocked over.

intermittent schedule of reinforcement The delivery of reinforcement after some, but not all, correct or appropriate responses. (Reinforcement can occur after a specific frequency or time interval, for example.)

interval count A behavior measurement technique which divides a time period into intervals (i.e., one hour is divided into six- to ten-minute intervals) and at the end of each interval, it is recorded whether or not the behavior occurred during the interval (as opposed to the number of times a behavior occurs)(*see partial interval recording and whole interval recording*).

interval recording *See interval count, partial interval recording, and whole interval recording.*

interval schedule of reinforcement Delivery of reinforcement contingent upon the occurrence of a behavior after a specified period of time.

intervention Involvement with a student in a systematic manner in order to improve his or her performance socially, emotionally, or academically.

intrusiveness The degree to which an intervention impinges or intrudes into a student's body or personal rights or the bodies or personal rights of others in the environment of the targeted student.

maintenance Continued performance of a target behavior after instruction has been faded out or terminated.

modeling An instructional procedure which attempts to prompt imitation of appropriate behavior through demonstration of that behavior.

natural reinforcers Consequences which reinforce behavior and occur naturally as they are contingent upon that behavior. For example, appropriate peer interactions being reinforced by resulting friendships.

negative reinforcement Reinforcement of behavior through the contingent removal or avoidance of an aversive stimulus. Successful avoidance or removal of the aversive produces an increase or maintenance in occurrence of the given behavior. For example, paying a bill on time is negatively reinforced by the avoidance of having to pay a late fee if the bill is paid late.

noncompliance Refusal to comply with teacher's request; the absence of stimulus control over a behavior (*see stimulus control*).

objectives Specific and short-term statements identifying target behavior, the conditions under which it will occur and to what degree of proficiency it will be performed.

off-task behavior Behavior which indicates that a student is not paying attention to or participating in the appropriate or designated activity.

on-task behavior When a student is paying attention to or participating appropriately in the designated activity.

partial interval recording Interval recording which records the occurrence of a behavior if it has occurred at all the designated time intervals (*see interval count and whole interval recording*).

positive programming A "gradual educational process for behavior change involving systematic instruction in more effective ways of behaving. Positive programming teaches new behavior over time and is based on full functional analysis" (LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986, p. 29).

positive reinforcement Delivery of a consequence contingent upon a specific behavior which strengthens or maintains the occurrence of that behavior.

praise Positive verbal attention for appropriate behavior.

pre-referral interventions Straightforward and relatively easy to implement interventions implemented by the regular classroom teacher before referral for special services occurs.

Premack Principle A principle which states that any highly preferred activity can serve as a positive reinforcer for a less preferred activity.

principle of partial participation The provision of supports or adaptations which allow individuals to participate in activities (which they otherwise would be unable to participate in) which results in the individuals becoming more integral members of their community, school, etc.

proactive interventions Interventions which aim to eliminate undesirable behavior by employing positive programming and altering environmental conditions to prevent the given behavior from being exhibited (*see positive programming*).

prompt A stimulus which is delivered in order to increase the probability of and encourage a desired response.

punisher A consequence which decreases the future probability of the occurrence of a behavior.

punishment An aversive consequence following a behavior, or the removal of a positive consequence following a behavior which occurs, in order to weaken a behavior.

rate The frequency of a behavior during a defined time period.

ratio schedule of reinforcement The delivery of reinforcement contingent upon the frequency or number of times a behavior occurs.

reinforcement The delivery of positive or removal of negative consequences which results in an increase or maintenance of the rate at which a behavior is being exhibited.

reliability The consistency of test performance; the degree to which a student will achieve a relatively consistent level of performance in completing a test repeatedly. Also, the degree of consistency achieved between different test administrators or scorers.

response interval The amount of time between the delivery of a prompt or stimulus which serves as a cue and the response of the student.

response generalization Changes in untargeted behaviors which are the result of changes in those behaviors targeted by intervention.

response maintenance The continuance of behavior after an intervention is withdrawn.

response prompt A stimulus which is delivered in order to increase the probability of and encourage a desired response.

restrictiveness The degree to which an intervention inhibits a student's freedom to be treated like other students.

rules The component of a school's discipline code which states student and teacher expectations.

schedule of reinforcement A defined schedule which determines when reinforcement will be delivered for the purpose of maintaining or increasing the rate of behavior.

shaping Reinforcing closer and closer approximations of desired behavior.

social contract Contingencies designed for reinforcement of an entire classroom incorporated into a written document to which both student and teacher can refer.

social reinforcement Teacher or peer attention, feedback, or approval which increases or maintains the occurrence of behavior.

stimulus control The reliable contingency between a stimulus and a response; a response is exhibited in the presence of a specific stimulus and is not when that stimulus is absent.

summative evaluation Evaluation which takes place at the end of a program or intervention.

systematic instruction A methodical, deliberate approach to instruction which follows a series of steps to identify behaviors to be taught, plans instruction by which they will be taught, implements these activities, evaluates the effects of the instruction, and determines whether the student's behavior has been changed as desired.

target behavior A behavior identified for change that is observable and measurable, defined so that two persons can agree as to its occurrence. This behavior has been identified by professionals and families as being in need of instruction.

token economy An intervention by which students earn points or tokens for appropriate behavior and trade them for preferred activities, objects, or privileges at a later time.

verbal reinforcement Reinforcing comments delivered contingent upon appropriate behavior. For example, "Good job, " "This is a model example if a neat and accurate book report," "I can tell that a lot of effort was put into this project by every member of the group."

whole interval recording Interval recording which records the occurrence of a behavior if it has occurred continuously throughout the designated time interval (*see interval count and partial interval recording*).

References

LaVigna, G.W., & Donnellan, A.M. (1986). *Alternative to punishment: Solving behavior problems with nonaversive strategies*. Irvington Publishers.

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