

● Direct Behavioral Assessment:

What To Record and How

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

● Topography – the form of a particular response, e.g. the exact movements involved in the behavior

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

● Amount – this includes two components:

- 1. frequency / rate (the number of instances of the behavior in a given period of time) and
- 2. duration (the length of time the behavior lasts).

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

- Amount – this includes two components:
- The behavior can be tallied by making tally marks, using a counter or calculator.
- Once the data is collected, it should be transformed into a graph.
- Graphs can be either *cumulative graphs* or *frequency graphs*

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

- Intensity – the force of a response. Measurement of intensity will often require some sort of instrumentation, e.g. the loudness of voice in decibel level, the speed of a pitch, the strength of a grip.

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

- Stimulus control – Hardy, Martin, Yu, Leader & Quinn (1981) *Objective behavioral assessment of the severely and moderately mentally handicapped: The OBA*

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

- OBA: detailed system of assessing the stimulus control of a variety of skills commonly found in training programs for the developmentally disabled.
- Each behavior is then rated on a four-point scale as to whether it was performed appropriately and without further prompting / guidance or the degree of additional instruction / prompting / guidance was needed.

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

- Latency – the time between the occurrence of a stimulus (e.g. a request from a teacher) and the beginning of the response (e.g. the behavior the teacher asked for).

Characteristics of the Behavior to be Recorded:

- Quality – i.e. how “good” was the response.
- This can involve a combination of the previous characteristic.
- For example, a “good student” may be one who shows a high frequency of studying and answers test items correctly.

Types of recording of data:

- **Continuous recording** – recording every instance of a behavior in a specified period of time

Types of recording of data:

- **Interval recording** – a small block of time is specified and further divided into equal intervals of short duration (e.g. intervals of 10 seconds).
- A specified behavior is then recorded a maximum of once per interval throughout the observation period, regardless of the duration of the behavior and the number of occurrences of the behavior within each interval.

Types of recording of data:

- **Tools to assist in interval recording:**
- Make a tape of signals at a specified interval to cue you to record. While observing, you would wear an earphone while your tape plays. At the signal, you would make a tally of whether or not the behavior occurred.
- Using programs such as BASC-POP
- Or using a WatchMinder

Types of recording of data:

- Time sampling – a behavior is scored as occurring or not occurring during very brief observation intervals, each of which is separated from the others by a much longer period of time, e.g. observe for 15 seconds every hour.

Types of recording of data:

- In recording classroom “misbehaviors” research has show that four categories will encompass the vast majority of problems:
 - Not attending
 - Inappropriate location
 - Off task
 - Physically negative

Types of recording of data:

- Peer-referenced behavior observation will help to determine the extent of the problem:
- Record the behavior of your identified student
- Record the same behavior of some random peers
- Do they differ significantly?

Types of recording of data:

- Recording procedures between interval recording and time-sampling – allows you to watch more than one student at once. For example, you would observe one student for 10 seconds, record the occurrence of the behavior, then observe another for 10 seconds, record the occurrence of his behavior,....return to the first student, etc.

**Assessing the accuracy of observations:
Hawkins & Dotson (1975)**
There are three sources of error that can affect the accuracy of observations:

- Characteristics of the behavioral definition: The response definition might be vague, subjective or incomplete, so that the observer has problems in taking in accurate observations.

**Assessing the accuracy of observations:
Hawkins & Dotson (1975)**
There are three sources of error that can affect the accuracy of observations:

- Characteristics of the situation: The observational situation might make it difficult to detect behavior due to distractions, obstructions to the observing process, or the behavior might be too subtle or complex to be observed in that manner.

**Assessing the accuracy of observations:
Hawkins & Dotson (1975)**

There are three sources of error that can affect the accuracy of observations:

- **Characteristics of the observer:
The observer might be poorly trained, unmotivated, biased, or incompetent.**

**Assessing the accuracy of observations:
Hawkins & Dotson (1975)**

There are three sources of error that can affect the accuracy of observations:

- **Other sources of error include:
poorly designed data sheets or cumbersome recording procedures.**

**Inter-observer reliability (IOR)
estimates:**

- **Two independent observers observe the same behavior and then compare their data. One procedure involves counting two totals, dividing the smaller number by the larger, and multiplying by 100. This gives you a percentage of the agreement between the two observers.**
- **By convention, an IOR score between 80% to 100% is acceptable.**

How does observation affect the observed?

- When the observation methods affects the behaviors of those observed, the observation is said to be *obtrusive*. If the observation does not cause those being observed to deviate from their typical manner of behaving, then the observation is considered *unobtrusive*.

Ways to increase unobtrusiveness of observations:

- Observe through one-way mirrors
- Inconspicuously observe from a distance
- Use someone who is normally in that environment to be a confederate and observe for you

Ways to increase unobtrusiveness of observations:

- Videotape with a hidden camera (in compliance with APA ethical guidelines – i.e. consent of guardian, part of a therapeutic program designed to benefit the observed person, maintain confidentiality, do not identify other individuals not part of the program, etc.)
