Zack Cartmel

SPED 785

M5: Functional Behavioral Assessment – Data Collection Assignment

Featured Student

Nevah is a preschool student diagnosed with ASD and meets autism eligibility under IDEA. She receives early childhood intervention services from her designated school district and receives ABA therapy in-home for 10 hours per week. At school, Nevah is in a self-contained classroom with three other students with autism and receives instruction from a teacher and a teacher’s aide. According to her achievement testing she is not far behind academically compared to her same aged peers. She enjoys school and enjoys working with her ABA therapist. She enjoys playing with different toys like Lego, Care Bears, and the iPad.

Nevah’s teacher, ABA therapist, and parents all report that Nevah has difficulty attending to instructions. She may gaze off while someone is talking to her or become fixated on other things on the table or in the room while working one on one with the therapist or teacher. Nevah is motivated to work at school and during her ABA therapy hours, but her off task behavior impedes her ability to work.

Identify Need

Nevah needs to increase her attending skills. This will allow her to stay focused while receiving instructions. Currently, instances of off task or inattentive behavior impede the fluency of Nevah’s responding during academic tasks as well as during her ABA therapy. It will also allow her to engage in appropriate social reciprocity when interacting with peers. If she seems disinterested when talking to others it could get in the way of her ability to socialize. If this behavior is resolved it will allow Nevah to increase her fluency in responding as well as provide better opportunities to socialize with others by remaining attentive to what they are communicating to her.

Operationally Define Behavior

Off task behavior is defined as engagement in any activity other than the instructed task or ongoing activity for more than 5 seconds. Examples of this include looking around the room, staring at other parts of the room other than the task, playing with items, talking, or laying head on desk.

Data Collection Method and Procedures

Data on Nevah’s off task behavior will be collected using partial interval recording. Partial interval recording allows for us to track the occurrence of the behavior, but is not as time consuming as frequency recording. It may overestimate the occurrence of behavior, but since this is a behavior, we are looking to decrease this is an acceptable disadvantage. We will record this data using a data sheet that allows us to observe the behavior for 4 minutes broken into 24 10-second intervals. We will mark an X for intervals during which the behavior occurs. At the end we can get a percentage of intervals during which Nevah engages in off task behavior.

The data will be collected during an ABA therapy session. Nevah will be observed for 4 minutes with 10-second intervals. An observer will collect data while the regular ABA therapist conducts the session as normal.

Data Collection Document

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Observer’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation Length: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Interval Length: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred | Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred | Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred | Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred |
| 1 |  | 8 |  | 15 |  | 22 |  |
| 2 |  | 9 |  | 16 |  | 23 |  |
| 3 |  | 10 |  | 17 |  | 24 |  |
| 4 |  | 11 |  | 18 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  | 12 |  | 19 |  |  |  |
| 6 |  | 13 |  | 20 |  |  |  |
| 7 |  | 14 |  | 21 |  |  |  |

Total Intervals: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Intervals with behavior: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Percent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Record Behavior

Video: [ABA Therapy: Sarah (04:35) (Links to an external site.)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLBLnNxzftM) Communication preschool

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Nevah\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Observer’s Name: \_\_\_Zack Cartmel\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation Length: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_4 minutes\_\_\_ Interval Length: \_\_\_\_\_10 seconds\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred | Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred | Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred | Interval | Mark X if behavior occurred |
| 1 |  | 8 | X | 15 |  | 22 |  |
| 2 | X | 9 | X | 16 |  | 23 | X |
| 3 | X | 10 |  | 17 |  | 24 |  |
| 4 |  | 11 |  | 18 |  |  |  |
| 5 | X | 12 | X | 19 |  |  |  |
| 6 | X | 13 | X | 20 |  |  |  |
| 7 | X | 14 |  | 21 |  |  |  |

Total Intervals: \_\_\_\_\_24\_\_\_ Intervals with behavior: \_\_\_10\_\_\_\_\_ Percent: \_\_42%\_\_\_\_

Analyze

Nevah was observed for 4 minutes during her ABA therapy session. During this time, she had 10 of 24 intervals where off task behavior occurred or 42% of intervals. When Nevah is in one on one instruction and she is given a direct instruction, she engages in off task behavior to avoid the demand being placed on her.

In order to test this hypothesis, we need to modify the setting and/or activity to increase the probability the behavior occurs. In this case, we will increase the instructions given to Nevah. With an increase in demands, we expect to see an increase in the off-task behavior in order to avoid those instructions.

Identify EBP

In order to reduce the interfering behavior, we will use response interruption/redirection. When Nevah is engaging in off task behavior we can interrupt it in order to reduce that behavior and redirect back to the correct response. By interrupting the off-task behavior, we hope that it will reduce and correct responding will increase.

We can also pair this with this with an antecedent based intervention by ensuring that Nevah’s motivation for reinforcement is high. We can do this by withholding desired items until she engages in the responses we want. By doing this we control her motivating operations and we can hope that the desire to respond and earn reinforcement is greater than the desire to avoid the task.

Reflection

I learned that it is difficult to define a behavior like off task behavior. It is tough to define a lack of responding how you want a student to respond. This was useful for understanding why a student may engage in behavior like that, but I think I would make my priority reinforcing desired behaviors rather than really worrying about why they are choosing an avoidant behavior.

This assignment was useful for practicing creating operational definitions. It was also useful practice for hypothesizing about the function of a behavior. It was good to practice these things for when I have to do this in the future with my students.