TRI-STATE WEBINAR SERIES

Teaching using Verbal Behavior Strategies

Presented by: Rhonda Ayres & Deb Rauner

COLORADO
Department of Education

TASN
Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports
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Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series

This presentation is a collaborative effort between the following:

COLORADO
Department of Education

This material was developed under a grant from the Colorado Department of Education. The content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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Presenter Information

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Deb Rauner, M.Ed, Currently an Autism Consultant and Verbal Behavior Trainer. Formerly a Special Education Teacher & Behavior Specialist

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Learner Objectives

- Understand and define Verbal Behavior
- Understand the behavioral teaching strategies of:
  - Reinforcement
  - Pairing
  - Discrete Trial Teaching
  - Using Prompts
  - Error Correction Procedure
  - Basic Data Collection

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Presentation Summary

- Why and When to use Verbal Behavior
- How to use Reinforcement effectively
- How use pairing to create a willing learner
- Components of Discrete Trial training
- Effective use of Error Correction & Prompting
- Understanding importance of Data Collection

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TEACHING USING VERBAL BEHAVIOR
STRATEGIES

What is Verbal Behavior?

- Any behavior that communicates our needs/wants to someone else

- A program of instruction for involved learners that is based on and growing from continuing research using Skinner's work.

Why Do It?

- Research Based

- Focuses first on the child developing a functional form of communication

- Teaches children that language is useful

Why Do It?

- Uses "Effective Teaching Methods" that makes learning more fun for the child as well as enabling the child to learn more efficiently

- Effective teaching reduces or naturally eliminates most problem behaviors in most students in both general education and special education environments

- Teaches the skills necessary to be successful in the general education classroom

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Where to Start??

UNDERSTAND REINFORCMENT!!

Reinforcer

- Any item or event that increases the rate of a behavior when it is presented following the behavior.
- Reinforcement usually makes people think of various types of rewards, however it is important to remember that rewards are not always reinforcing
- The key is, **reinforcing to the learner**, not what is reinforcing to us or what we think should be reinforcing to the learner

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Types of Reinforcement

- Sensory
- Social
- Activity
- Tangible
- Token

- We recommend using a Reinforcer Assessment or Inventory to identify possible reinforcers for individual students

Poll Question??

What types of Reinforcement do you use the most in your classroom and with your students.

A. Social
B. Activity
C. Sensory
D. Tangible
E. Token Economy

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"Rules" of Reinforcement

1. **Reinforcers need to be powerful**
2. **Reinforce only when a target behavior occurs**
3. **Pair specific praise with reinforcers**
4. **When teaching a new skill reinforcement should occur immediately for each correct response**
5. **As quickly as possible establish a variable or intermittent reinforcement schedule**.

Reinforcement Tips

- **Save the best reinforcer for the best behavior or the hardest work**

- **Note also that the difficulty of the response will also affect the level of motivation. While an item may be sufficiently reinforcing for an easy response it might not be "worth it " for a more difficult response.**

Pairing
Establish Yourself as a Reinforcer

- Pairing: the establishment of an association between a reinforcing stimulus and a neutral stimulus, which then becomes reinforcing
- Goal: To be able to establish rapport and engage the student in interactions
- Why do we pair? To establish instructional control

BE THE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE!

Short reinforcement example

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Discrete Trial Teaching

A three part teaching system consisting of:

- a discriminative stimulus (Sd)
- a response (R)
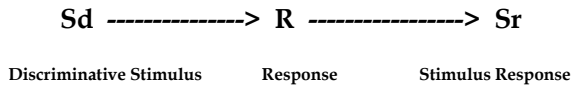- a consequence (Reinforcement=Rf or use of Correction Procedure)

What does a discrete trial look like?

Sd --------------> R ----------------> Sr

Discriminative Stimulus   Response   Stimulus Response

Example of Discrete Trial

Verbal S^D → Response → Generalized Reinforcement
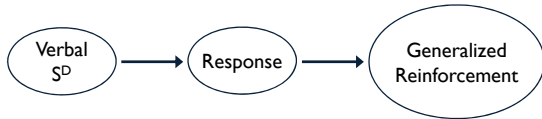
Teacher says "What is it?" &   "dog"   Child receives specific praise
shows picture of dog

Discrete Trial Example

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Using Discrete Trials in the Natural Environment

Discrete trials can and should take place throughout the day within the context of the natural environment.

EXAMPLE

Setting: Bathroom
Activity: Washing Hands

SD	Response	SR
"Turn on the water"	Turns on faucet	Water play
"Where's the soap?"	Touches soap	Verbal praise
"Do this" while rubbing hands together	Rubs hands together	Blow soap

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Reinforcement within a trial

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Discrete Trial Tips

- Allow 5-7 seconds for student to respond unless an incorrect response is being made
- Consequence (Stimulus Response) should be immediate- within 3 seconds of the response
- Reinforce correct responses or use an error correction procedure for each task
- Present the Sd clearly and consistently and only state once
- Know the correct response

PROMPTING

PROMPT: A stimulus in addition to the Sd that aids the student in giving a correct response.

Types of Prompts

Gestural: Non-verbal behaviors such as hand movements or facial expressions that tell the student what to do. No touching of the student.

Verbal: Vocal statements that help the students perform the correct response (direct statements about how to respond).

Full physical: Placing the teacher's hands on top of the students hands/arms and moving them through the target response. These are the most intrusive prompts.

Types of Prompts

Partial Physical: Partial touching of the student without controlling the movements.

Model: Demonstrations of the correct response; the teacher does the behavior and the student is expected to imitate the teacher's model. Use this technique after the child has learned to imitate.

Pictorial: Pictures or written messages that tell children how to do a behavior.

Positional: Move the item closer.

Reduction of array: 2 items to 1 item for example.

Question

1. What is a new type of prompt you have not used or are unfamiliar with?
   A. Gestural
   B. Verbal
   C. Physical
   D. Model
   E. Pictorial
   F. Positional
   G. Reduction of Array

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Prompting Problems

Prompting presents many challenges because those with autism learn things exactly as taught. Some prompting strategies will have paradoxical effects:

• Confusion, frustration and dependency may develop when prompts are delivered too quickly, before the learner has time to process a verbal direction and generate an independent response. This procedure is also likely to decrease motivation to try.

Prompting Problems

• Passivity occurs if physical assistance is provided when the learner is not attending or actively involved in the process.

• Full physical assistance can lead to resistance, aggression or efforts to escape. Efforts to avoid or stop the activity are often related to the overwhelming sensory stimulation of touch, close physical proximity, and/or panic from loss of personal control.

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Fading Prompts

"Systematically reducing the amount of prompt (from physical to gestural to verbal, for example) is needed to ensure a positive response."

• Fade to the most natural cue.

• Know how to fade a prompt before you put it in.

• Be systematic and monitor carefully.

• Communicate the level of fade to all staff.

Fading Prompts

• Consider the need for generalization.

• Individualize (For example, verbal prompts are very hard to fade for some students.)

• Sometimes the physical proximity of the staff member to the learner may be an inadvertent prompt. Remember, true independence can occur only when the staff person involved has been completely faded out of the situation unless he has a specific reason for being a part of it.

Prompt Fading Example

ERROR CORRECTION PROCEDURE

The correction procedure is "the consequence for an incorrect or no response following the presentation of the Sd."

The correction procedure uses prompts and prompt fading to teach the correct procedure.

ERROR CORRECTION PROCEDURE
(When student gives the wrong answer or no response)

• Restate the direction and prompt so that he/she gets the answer correct.

• Do a couple of distracter trials (tasks the student already knows how to do).

• Restate the direction again without any prompts.

• If they get it correct then praise and move to the next task.

• If the student gets it wrong again, prompt and be finished with that task. Always end on a positive note!

Error Correction Procedure

Question?

- When a student gets the answer wrong or does not respond, you should…
  A. Say, "Good try" and move to next task
  B. Say, "No, that was wrong"
  C. Restate the direction and prompt so that he/she gets the answer correct.

Taking Data

- Discrete trials should take place in all environments and throughout the day
- Any symbols may be chosen to represent a correct response or a prompted response (+ or P)
- Criteria for acquisition (mastery) should be determined in advance. Three days of first trial correct data could be used as the criterial for moving on
- Use a data collection system that is easiest for your particular use

Verbal Behavior Teaching Format:

• Pair with the student.

• Present the tasks using discrete trials.

• Use error correction when the student makes a mistake or doesn't respond.

• Reinforce (how often depends on the student: maybe after each response and then intermittently).

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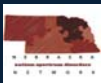
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THANK YOU!

Presenter Name(s)
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