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Background

- Functional behavior assessment (FBA) is an empirically validated strategy using direct and indirect methods to identify function of behavior and design behavior support plans based on identified function².
- There is not one single method for conducting functional behavior assessments⁶.
- There is a need for an efficient method of conducting functional behavior assessments within schools has been well documented in research⁵.

Purpose

Two methods of FBAs were used to establish function. In the first method, direct observations, indirect assessments and experimental analysis were used to determine function. In the second method, only direct observation and experimental analysis were used. This study began the process of looking at the necessary components of a functional behavior assessment and resulting behavior interventions.

Participants and Setting

- All observations, assessments, and interventions were conducted in the special education classroom for three of the four participants. For Maddox, the functional behavior process was conducted in the general education setting.

Experiment One

- Maddox** was a 7-year-old boy diagnosed with a language impairment with an IQ of 71. He displayed off-task behavior defined as looking away from the teacher, out of seat, talking about subjects unrelated to task, slapping staff, overturning furniture, throwing chairs, screaming, and dropping to floor
- Dylan** was a 10-year-old boy diagnosed with an intellectual disability with an IQ of 58. He displayed off-task behavior defined as out of seat, vocalizations, pushing or throwing materials from work space, verbal refusal, facing away from task, slapping staff, and removing clothing.

Experiment Two

- Daxter** was a 12-year-old male diagnosed with emotional disturbance and PDD-NOS with an IQ of 65. He displayed off-task behavior defined as looking away from the teacher, out of seat, talking about subjects unrelated to task, placing head on desk, punching staff or peers, overturning furniture, verbalizations, breaking materials, cursing, yelling, playing with objects, and drawing on furniture.
- Abby** was a 7-year-old female diagnosed with autism, epilepsy, and chromosomal abnormality with an IQ of 52. She displayed off-task behavior defined as out of seat, slapping staff or peers, kicking staff or peers, verbal refusal, pushing or throwing materials, waving materials overhead, placing head on desk, and self-stimulating behaviors.

Functional Assessments

Experiment One

- In experiment one, FBA procedures included indirect assessment rating scales (Motivation Assessment Scale¹ [MAS] and Problem Behavior Questionnaire⁴ [PBQ]), direct observations (A-B-C recording³) and brief experimental analysis³. Information from these methods was placed into the function matrix to organize the data and determine a hypothesis about the function of the off-task behavior.
- Maddox:** Results of the MAS¹ and PBQ⁴ identified a function of escape. Additionally, 88% of ABC observations⁷ and brief functional analysis³ resulted in escape from academic tasks. As a result, **escape** was identified as the function of off-task behavior.
- Dylan:** Results of the MAS¹ and PBQ⁴ identified a function of attention, specifically from adults. Additionally, 88% of ABC observations⁷ and brief functional analysis³ resulted in adult attention. As a result, **attention from adults** was identified as the function of off-task behavior.

Experiment Two

- In experiment two, FBA procedures included indirect assessment rating scales direct observations (ABC recording⁷) and brief experimental analysis³. Information from these methods was placed into the function matrix to organize the data and determine a hypothesis about the function of the off-task behavior.
- Daxter:** Brief functional analysis³ and 62% of ABC observations⁷ resulted in escape from academic tasks. As a result, **escape** was identified as the function of off-task behavior.
- Abby:** Brief functional analysis³ and 86% of ABC observations⁷ resulted in attention from adults. As a result, **attention from adults** was identified as the function of off-task behavior.

Function-Based Interventions⁷

Experiment One

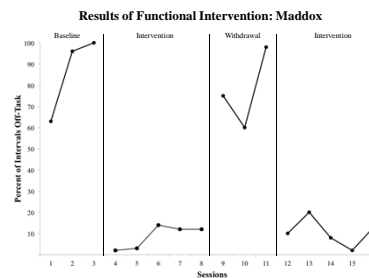
- Maddox:** Teach the use of a break card to request a break from tasks. Provide 2 minute breaks following the use of a break card. Violent behaviors are blocked and task continued. Prompt for use of the break card.
- Dylan:** Teach the use of a gesture to help to obtain attention during tasks. Implement a visual schedule and provide modeling and prompting of tasks. Utilize a token economy for completed tasks paired with adult praise for completed work and requests for help. Block violent behaviors – ignore all others.

Experiment Two

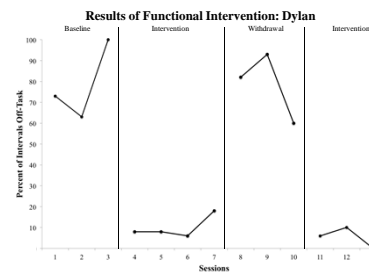
- Daxter:** Teach the use of a break card and allow for 3 per each half of the day. Provide a 5 minute break in the sensory room following use of a break card paired with adult praise. Block violent behaviors and continue task – prompt for use of a break card.
- Abby:** Utilize a token system awarding praise paired with each token. Following receipt of the predetermined number of tokens, provide a choice activity with a preferred adult. Block violent behaviors – ignore all others.

Results

Experiment One



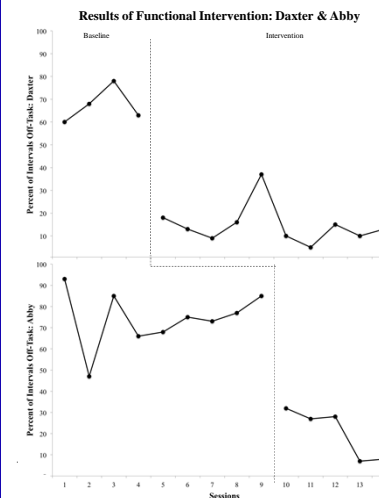
- Treatment integrity averaged 100% across all intervention sessions while IOA averaged 99.8% across all phases (minimum of 60% of sessions per phase).



- Treatment integrity averaged 100% across all intervention sessions while IOA averaged 100% across all phases (minimum of 25% of sessions per phase).

Results (cont'd)

Experiment Two



- Treatment integrity averaged 100% across all intervention sessions while IOA averaged 98% across all phases (minimum of 25% of sessions per phase).

Discussion

- In each experiment, functional interventions designed based on two methods of functional behavior assessment were effective in decreasing off-task behavior.
- Greater decreases in off-task behavior were seen in experiment one, in which indirect methods were used in addition to direct observation. This observation supports the use of teacher input in the FBA process.
- In addition to a decrease in off-task behavior, each participant's teacher reported they saw an increase in academic engagement and achievement in additional to positive social interactions.
- None of the participants were involved in physical restraints, as they were previously, following intervention implementation.