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Contingencies Systems for Behavioural Control

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Contingencies Systems for Behavioural Control

Over the time, several contingencies systems have been implemented to control the behaviors of persons. These are techniques and policies created with the aim of achieving positive behaviors from the targets through reinforcements. Such systems include group-oriented which according to Lito and Pumroy (1975) has been successfully used in managing student's behavior due to its easier practical approach. It involves reinforcing the entire class by one or some students. The system is further categorized into three contingencies which include independent, interdependent and dependent. Gresham (2007) in his article ¹*Interdependent, Dependent, and Independent Group Contingencies for Controlling Disruptive Behaviour* investigates effectiveness of the group contingencies systems in managing the disruptive behavior of students. According to him when single contingency technique in a classroom it has several advantages compared to others which include; teachers save time since different records are unnecessary and because of its structural modification, it's more efficient compared to individuals. Group-oriented contingencies have a different level of effectiveness when applied for behavioral control in classrooms.

Types of subjects

The experiment involved 12 educable mentally retarded (EMR) children enrolled in a self-contained classroom in an elementary school. Their ages ranged from 8 to 10 years averaging 8.2 years with an IQ of 45 to 68 totaling to a mean class IQ of 57. Ten children had previously spent one year in the class before the study. The experiment incorporated a masters-level teacher, an aide, and a student teacher.

Behavioral definitions/observational methods

Based on the disruptive study behavior refers to any occurrence such as talking with no permission; shifting from seats; laughing inappropriately; physical and verbal abuse including actions like shoving, uttering imperative words and pulling one's hair. Also, some actions such as throwing stationary materials were regarded as disruptive behavior.

The five categories of behavior were coded horizontally while the children names were recorded vertically and the total frequency used in calculation and plotting based on interobserver agreements which were represented by the teacher's aide and student's teacher. The teachers had been trained on observation code and behavioral definitions for five days, each session taking 30 minutes.

The training entailed operations definitions of terms which include;

Talking out inappropriately. This refers to talking without permission from the teacher which involved audible verbalization.

Laughing inappropriately. This included audible sounds that are non-verbalization made by the children instead of engaging on the required behaviour or non-verbalization sounds made by the students whenever the teacher reprimanded others.

The observations were made during noninstructional class time which included events such as seat work, free time, in group discussions and warm-ups for 30 minutes in the morning and afternoon every day. Resulting rates were done based on 1 hour of observation daily. On the other hand, reliability checks were done twice on each phase of the study totaling to 16 checks.

Experimental conditions (what was done in each condition?)

Baseline 1. In this condition, the frequency of the group's which includes the whole class, the disruptive behavior was recorded on five consecutive day baseline by the observers, and two reliability checks were done.

Interdependent contingency 1. Here, the teacher divided the group to two teams where the children were informed that the team with the fewest marks would be given the reinforcement for the day such as rubbers and pencils. These reinforcers were decided by the teachers based on reinforcement done by the teachers before the commencement of the study. Therefore, the team with the highest marks was supposed to work while the other was involved in the reinforcers. The teacher did this by recording on the chalkboard every time a member happened to commit a disruptive behavior.

Dependent contingency 1. Here, each leader, in this case, the children with the most disruptive behavior in the baseline were assigned to the respective teams. As a result, reinforcement was made based on the leader's frequency of disruptive behavior. Here, the captain of each team earned the group extra points based on the number of disruptions caused. Also, captains were not allowed to emit more than five disruptive behavior behaviors.

Independent contingency 1. In this case, every child was competing against each other for reinforcement. Thus, reinforcement was not based on how the group performed but on every child where each had to have less than or equal to five disruptions. Here, for a child to take part, one had to have five or less disruptive behavior where the one with the fewest won.

The final observation was based on all the above, where every condition was repeated.

Results- contrast the effectiveness of the various conditions.

In independent contingency, reinforcement was obtained by either one or other team in the eight out ten days whereas, in the dependent, reinforcement was obtained in 1 or other in 7 out ten days.

In interdependent, reinforcement was obtained in 6 out of 10 days where only three children were reinforced during ten days. Therefore, both dependent and independent accounted for 75% of reinforcement during the 20 days of contingency were in operation.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that if well utilized, the group-oriented contingency can be efficient in managing the behavior of students. In such a case, the dependent and independent contingencies are more effective compared when compared to the interdependent. Therefore, teachers should utilize them more often to control the behavior of the students since it is economical and practical. Additionally, it saves time which helps them to free up more time that can be used in doing productive work.

References

- Litoe, L., & Pumroy, D. K. (1975). A brief review of classroom group-oriented contingencies. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 8(3), 341.

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