

Choosing Reinforcers: Preference Assessments

Goals

- Learn the Importance of choosing effective reinforcers
- Learn different informal and formal methods of assessment

Part 1: Reinforcers

To be successful in changing behavior, functional _____ must be used.

If we want to _____ a behavior we use a reinforcement procedure.

Remember that reinforcement is a _____ in which behavior is followed by some consequence. Behavior is _____, or more likely to occur again in future.

A (antecedent /before) –**B** (response/behavior) – **C** (consequence/ after)

= Strengthened behavior/ behavior is more likely to occur

Potential Reinforcers:

1. Food
2. Toys
3. Activities
4. Social Interaction
5. Praise

Examples of Reinforcers

Toys: _____, _____, slinky

Food: _____, cookies, _____

Activities: game, _____, _____

Social interaction: _____, _____

Physical interactions: tickles, _____, high fives

Break from a task or demand

Items: coins, stickers, _____

Sample Reinforcement Process

The goal is for the student to look at the _____ and say “yes” when (s)he calls his name:

- Present the reinforcer _____ after he does what is asked.
- Give the reinforcer only after the student does what is _____. Make sure to give ____ with the reinforcer
- _____ what you are praising
- Initially, reinforce even if you _____ the student do what you ask As you _____ your prompts offer better rewards
- Reserve the best reinforcers for _____ responses

Important Factors to Consider when Choosing Reinforcers

- How desirable the reinforcer is: how much the learner wants access to the reinforcer
- The preferences of the learner: what each learner specifically likes and dislikes

Remember, each learner is _____ and has different preferences, so to help us determine what the learner prefers, we can use various informal and formal _____.

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Part 2: Informal assessments

Methods for choosing reinforcers:

1. Ask
2. Watch
3. Sample
4. Offer choices
5. Try and see

Ask: simply ask the learner what he or she _____; the person's response can help you identify potential reinforcers. Factors to consider include:

1. A person's desires may not stay the same over time; _____ check and ask what the learner wants.
2. A person might want the item or activity only at certain times or situations.
 - A learner may like to swing, but only on specific types of swings.
3. If the learner can't communicate, _____ other people who know the learner well: family members, caregivers, therapists, teachers.

Watch: spend time _____ the student to see what he or she chooses to do during playtime or leisure time.

_____ the student when he or she is spending leisure time with caregivers to identified preferred items and activities or restricted interests.

Sample: use _____ sampling to help the student expand his or her range of interests.

Sampling involves providing a sample of some _____ reinforcers that the student has not engaged with or experienced before.

- Example: expose the student to new board games during leisure time

Offer choices: provide a _____ of items or activities that are available and then ask the student what he or she wants.

Chosen item will be provided after _____ behavior is demonstrated.

Try and see: Student demonstrated desired _____ > provide different items and activities > observe what happens to the behavior

- if the item is a reinforcer, behavior should occur again
- if it is _____ a reinforcer, behavior will not likely occur again

Vary and add to reinforcer list _____. This helps the student stay motivated. Expose students to new items and activities as well, as they can become reinforcers. If the student only likes food for example, pair food with praise until the praise becomes a reinforcer.

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Part 3: Formal Assessments

Formal standard assessments _____: refer to standard assessment procedures used for determining a person's preference.

Preference Assessments

- Present a _____ of items in a structured manner
- Measure how often items are _____ Collect and analyze data
- Item chosen most often = potential reinforcer

Prior to performing an assessment, gather a group of items to assess.

Three types of preference assessments

1. Single stimulus: present one item at a time
2. Paired stimulus: present two items at a time- which is most preferred?
3. Multiple stimulus: present more than two items at one time, all in a row

Part 4: Conducting a Preference Assessment

Single stimulus: present one item at a _____.

- a. Did the child approach?
- b. Did the child engage?
- c. Collect data/notes
- d. Repeat until all items have been tested

Paired stimulus: testing _____ items at a time to determine which is most preferred. Items are compared and a hierarchy of most preferred to least preferred items is created.

- a. Gather approximately 6-8 items and assign a number to each item
- b. Present two items at a time - one on the left and one on the _____
- c. Let the child choose one and engage with it
- d. Remove the remaining item
- e. Present the next pair of items
- f. Repeat for at least 8 trials until all items have been paired with each other
- g. Review _____ to determine the percentage of trials an item was chosen
- h. Create a hierarchy of how often items were chosen
- i. The most chosen items is the most preferred

Multiple stimulus: present _____ than two items at one time, all in a row. Items are compared and a hierarchy of most preferred to least preferred items is created. Use approximately 5-8 items.

- a. Gather items
- b. Place items in a straight line in front of the learner
- c. Assign each item a _____ position
- d. Ask the child to choose one item
- e. Allow the child to eat/engage with the item
- f. Record which item was chosen and its position
- g. Rearrange the remaining items- item on extreme right is moved so it becomes the first item on the left

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- h. Reassign the starting numbers
- i. Repeat
- j. Data reflects order of _____.

- k. The first item chosen is the most preferred the last item the least preferred.

Review

Success of reinforcement procedures depends on how desirable or preferred the consequence is

Informal assessment methods:

1. Ask
2. Watch
3. Sample
4. Offer choices
5. Try and see

Formal methods include conducting preference assessments - Three preference assessments:

1. Single stimulus
2. Paired stimulus
3. Multiple stimulus