YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

Psychology 790

FIELD WORK

GOALS AND PRINCIPLES -

PROGRAM FOR EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED:

A GUIDE

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Introduction

This Field Work experience will make substantial demands upon you intellectually and emotionally. It is hoped that your personal involvement in the program will result in benefits for all concerned - for you, the children with whom you interact, the teachers under whom you work, and all additional support personnel.

The Program for Emotionally Disturbed (PED) is for young children (up to about age 12) and is housed in Sheridan School. The building principal is Mr. Trucksis. There are presently 8 children in two classrooms, separated by an observation booth.

The behavioral principles set forth in this guide are intended to be a preview for you. The lack of elaboration is purposeful. It is hoped that you will be stimulated to think, to look, and to ask. We have included in the bibliography the best authorities on the indicated topics.

In addition, the enclosed goals are intended to partially structure your experience and point you in several directions we think are important. Hopefully, as you progress through the quarter, you will establish additional goals of your own.

Objectives

Toward the end of your experience in the PED program you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe and discuss the characteristics of emotionally-problemed children.

2. Discuss the historical development of the behavioral approach; distinguish the "behavioral" model from the "medical" model.

3. Define the following concepts and provide a personal, classroom example of each:

1. Consequation

2. Positive reinforcement

3. Negative reinforcement

4. Shaping

5. Schedules of reinforcement

6. Extinction

7. Timeout

8. Punishment

9. Premack principle

10. Token Economy

11. Response cost

12. Baseline

13. Precision teaching

14. Movement cycle

15. Rate

16. Time sampling

17. Chaining

18. Observable

19. Countable

Objectives: (continued)

    3.   <u>Define</u> the following concepts and <u>provide a personal</u>, classroom
<u>example</u> of each: (continued)

        20.   Repeatable

        21.   Self-Controllable

        22.   Systematic exclusion

    4.   <u>Describe</u> how you would identify reinforcers.

    5.   <u>Devise</u> a step-by-step sequence for effecting a solution to a
problem derived from actual classroom experiences.

    6.   <u>Indicate</u> how to accelerate, decelerate, and/or maintain specified
behaviors for one individual; <u>support</u> this with data.

    7.   <u>Describe</u> how to establish a token economy system; <u>discuss</u> the
advantages and disadvantages of same.

    8.   <u>Indicate</u> your competency in charting with the Daily Behavior Chart
by charting the data in number six.

    9.   <u>Evaluate</u> the PED program based upon specified criteria (e.g.
structure, consistency, goals).

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

I. The Foundation

II. Program

III. Programmed Event

IV. Movement Cycle

        A. Observable

        B. Movement

        C. Repeatable

        D. Self-Controllable

V. Arrangement

VI. Arranged Event

        A. Acceleration Procedures

          1. Positive Reinforcement

            a. Shaping

            b. Schedules

          2. Negative Reinforcement

          3. Counting

        B. Deceleration Procedures

          1. Extinction

          2. Response Cost

          3. Exclusion Techniques

            a. Timeout

            b. Isolation

            c. Systematic Exclusion

          4. Counting

VII. Conclusion

VIII. Bibliography

1. The Foundation

Behavior is determined by the environmental events which precede it and by the environmental events which follow it. Of these two determining factors, the latter is most important. In fact, the major underpinning of a behaviorally oriented system can be stated simply: Behavior is a function of its consequences. Any particular behavior which increases in strength does so because of subsequent reinforcement. Upon that behavioral law, the major portion of the following program rests.

The analysis of any behavioral situation is composed of five parts: (1) Program, (2) Programmed event, (3) Movement Cycle; (4) Arrangement, and (5) Arranged Event. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

II. Program

The program (P) for any behavioral situation is what might be designated as the environmental setting. It is the background against which or in which the behavior is going to take place.

III. Programmed Event

The programmed event (PE) consists of the materials or events which are set up to occur prior to any specified movements of interest by the pupil, or "behaver." What are referred to as "discriminitive stimuli" and "S-deltas" are programmed events, as are instructions, demonstrations, or teaching materials supplied to the behaver by the teacher.

IV. Movement Cycle

A child makes a large number of responses or movements and we're usually not interested in all of them, but instead just some particular behavior. To measure a movement accurately, it is necessary to pinpoint exactly what the movement involves. Movement cycles (MC) refer to behaviors which are observable, contain movement, are repeatable and are controllable by the student.

A. Observable

To measure the frequency of something, one must be able to count the number of times it occurs. To count the number of times something occurs in the classroom, it is necessary to see it happen, i.e., it must be observable.

B. Movement

In order to see something happen, movement must occur. Does the behavior you have pinpointed contain movement? This point is not quite so obvious as it appears. For example, "sitting on a chair" does not contain movement, but "getting out of a chair" does. To describe behavior precisely, the behavior should contain movement.

C. Repeatable

Another aid in precisely identifying a movement cycle is to ask whether the movement is repeatable. A movement cycle is complete only when the behavior can be repeated. Thus, if the movement specified is "gets out of seat," the movement cycle is complete only after the child gets back in his seat. Only then can the movement be repeated.

IV. Movement Cycle (Continued)

    D. Self-controllable

The behavior pinpointed in a movement cycle should be self-controllable, i.e., the pupil must be potentially able to control it. One's heartbeat generally is not considered self-controllable, while the behavior of leaving one's seat is.

V. Arrangement

The arrangement (A) refers to the specific numerical relationship between the movement cycle and the arranged event. One possible arrangement would be for the arranged eve nt to follow every movement cycle. A different arrangement would be for the arranged event to follow only after every sixth movement cycle.

An arrangement may be based on a specified number of responses or a specified amount of time. "Schedules of reinforcement" provide various arrangement alternatives.

VI. Arranged Event

An arranged event (AE) is what happens when an arrangement is satisfied. As the word implies, an arranged event is arranged and is not a haphazard event.

    A. Acceleration Procedures

        1. Positive Reinforcement

This concept, contingently, systematically, and warmly applied, is the basis of the program. Positive reinforcement is defined as increasing the strength of a response by the contingent application of a stimulus. ("Contingent" is the key word - it makes explicit the notion that the positive reinforcement is not applied whimsically, randomly, nor willy-nilly by the individual doing the reinforcing. If the

VI. Arranged Event (Continued)

   A. Acceleration Procedures (Continued)

      1. Positive Reinforcement (Continued)

         specified behavior occurs, then and only then will the
         reinforcer follow. A contingency means that the re-
         inforcement is not to be delivered arbitrarily but
         instead only after the specified movement cycle has
         occurred. Whether or not a reinforcement is delivered
         is dependent upon whether a specified movement cycle is
         emitted). Thus, positive reinforcement is understood
         in terms of its effects. Life bulges with examples.
         BE CONSTANTLY AWARE OF CONTINGENTLY, SYSTEMATICALLY, AND
         WARMLY APPLYING reinforcement!

         Individuals differ in terms of what the positive re-
         inforcers are that they will respond to. A pleasant
         stimulus for one child may be aversive for another. It is
         your task to constantly observe behavioral consequences
         and determine the appropriate reinforcers for each
         individual.

         The immediacy of positive reinforcement is crucial to
         its effect: the sooner it follows a response the stronger
         its effect. In addition to timing, you must be concerned
         with reinforcing initial approximations to a final, pin-
         pointed movement cycle. Shape behavior by positively re-
         inforcing small, distant approximations to the final goal.
         As progress is made, the criterion is raised and thus a
         more complex behavior (a behavior getting ever closer to

VI. Arranged Event (Continued)

    A. Acceleration Procedures (Continued)

        1. Postiive Reinforcement (Continued)

the final goal) is positively reinforced. When a behavior needs considerable strengthening, a continuous reinforcement schedule is necessary. Once a behavior reaches proper strength, then a variable schedule is appropriate.

        2. Negative Reinforcement

Like positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement increases behavior; but whereas positive reinforcement entails presenting a stimulus following a response, negative reinforcement entails removing a stimulus following a response. In other words, a specified behavior increases upon the contingent removal of an aversive stimulus. Since, by definition, negative reinforcement includes the presence of aversive stimuli, its use should be rare. The presence of aversive stimuli frequently generates avoidance behaviors in which the student avoids the entire setting, e.g. not coming to school.

        3. Counting

By definition, reinforcers increase the probability of occurrence of the behaviors which they follow. One consequence which has often been found to be reinforcing is simply counting the occurrence of a particular behavior. Any time movement cycles are counted, the length of the time sample involved should be specified.

VI. Arranged Event (Continued)

   B. Deceleration Procedures

      1. Extinction

            As an arranged event, extinction can be a powerful

         strategy; however, it is such an outwardly simple

         technique, it can be easily misunderstood and misued.

         Extinction is equivalent to non-reinforcement. Thus, by

         an extinction procedure, a behavior designated for

         deceleration would consistently and reliably receive no

         reinforcement as a consequence of its occurrence. How-

         ever, several cautions are in order. First, you can't

         remove a reinforcer until or unless you know what the

         reinforcer is. Second, a behavior placed on extinction

         typically results in an initial increase in the undesirable

         behavior and may include aggressive behavior. Third,

         extinction should be used in conjunction with positive

         reinforcement. For example, if it is decided to

         decelerate a particular movement cycle by extinction, then

         another movement cycle, targeted for acceleration, should

         be positively reinforced. In summary, extinction plus

         positive reinforcement are an excellent couple.

VI. Arranged Event (Continued)

    B. Deceleration Procedures (Continued)

        2. Response Cost

Response cost is equivalent to a fine. As an arranged event it involves taking away a specified amount of reinforcers contingent upon the occurrence of a previously specified movement cycle. Just like a librarian tells you that you'll be fined a specified amount if you keep a book past the due-date so too an unacceptable behavior is pre-designated as leading to a specific response cost. A fine is levied in the form of taking away previously earned reinforcers. The specific response cost for a specified movement cycle must be cautiously chosen so as not to remove too many reinforcers at once (an unfair penalty). Also, it should be specified in advance, rather than an arbitrary, on-the-spot, after-the-fact decision.

        3. Exclusion

           A. Time-out

Time-out as an arranged event involves removing the opportunity for further reinforcement if a specified movement cycle occurs. The behaver is placed in a situation (e.g. a pre-designated place in the classroom) where reinforcement is not available. In order to be effective, the classroom must be a truly reinforcing place to be (otherwise removal from the classroom would be reinforcing); the technique must be used consistently; and the time duration should be short (e.g., 5 minutes).

VI. Arranged Event (Continued)

    B. Deceleration Procedures (Continued)

        3. Exclusion (Continued)

           B. Isolation

As an arranged event, isolation goes one step
further than time-out. Whereas time-out usually
involves placing a child in a quiet area of the
classroom, isolation is the removal of the child
to a totally different environment (e.g. a room
near the classroom where the child is placed for a
pre-designated short time). In this room, there
should be no potentially reinforcing objects or
people. In effect, the child is left alone for a
short time so that he gains control and can re-
enter the classroom to engage in productive behavior.

Like time-out, isolation is employed where a
movement cycle occurs which clearly cannot be
placed on extinction (e.g. starting a fight in the
classroom). If used consistently and judiciously,
it is a useful decelerating technique.

           C. Systematic Exclusion

Systematic exclusion is the final crisis inter-
ventive procedure. It should be used only as a
last resort (only after time-out and isolation have
been tried) and only with definite family support.
Systematic exclusion involves a mutually agreed upon
contract between the family, the child, the principal,

VI. <u>Arranged Event</u> (Continued)

  B. <u>Deceleration Procedure</u> (Continued)

    3. <u>Exclusion</u> (Continued)

      C. <u>Systematic Exclusion</u> (Continued)

      and the teacher. If specified non-productive,
      non-ignorable 🖤 behavior occurs and both time-out
      and isolation are ineffective in reducing this be-
      havior, then systematic exclusion is put into
      effect. The parent is asked to bring the child
      home and there places the child in isolation. Upon
      prior instruction, the parents have set aside a room
      in their house where no reinforcement or punishment
      is available to the child.

      This is advisable only in extraordinary
      circumstances since it effectively removes the child
      (on a long time interval) from the possibility of
      receiving reinforcement.

    4. <u>Counting</u>

      Just as counting will often aid in increasing movement
      cycles targeted for acceleration, so will counting likewise
      decrease the occurrence of movement cycles targeted for de-
      celeration. As always, the time interval during which the
      counting took place should be specified (e.g., counting
      "spits on floor" for a time sample of 10 minutes).

VII. Conclusion

The content of this guide should serve as a review and synopsis
for you - as such, it omits lengthy explanations and examples. It is
hoped that any lack of understanding will be cleared up through the
weekly seminars and your own searching through the professional literature.
The enclosed bibliography is highly selective. Additional references are
readily available. Please ask if you feel you need more references.

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