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PSYC 531

Article Critique 5: REDUCING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS THROUGH FUNCTIONAL
COMMUNICATION TRAINING

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The behavior analysts always set goals to eliminate target behaviors; eventually, the target behaviors “must be replaced with socially useful behaviors (Carr & Durand, 1985, p. 111)”.

Therefore, the study designed two experiments which to develop “ a method for identifying and assessing those educational situation in which behavior problems reliably occur” and select strategies or alternative behaviors for misbehaviors(p.112).

Two levels of difficulties (easy vs. difficult) and two levels of adult attention (33% and 100%) are used to design the experiment 1. From the result, the author state that “the nature of the task and level of adult attention were the most reliable predictors(p. 116).” However, the experiment has a limitation on explaining the interaction of those two factors. For example, it cannot rule out the possibility that the participant did not understand the instruction when the teacher gave 33% adult attention.

In the experiment 2, the authors concluded that “decreases in the level of disruptive behavior cannot be attributed to changes in” “task difficulties, overall attention level and the level of

praise, mands, and comments” (p.122-123), but establishing “a functional communicative response” was effective when reducing aversive target behaviors (p.123).

The article provides scientific proof of why behavior analysts need to provide incompatible behaviors or alternative responses to the client when trying to eliminate their challenge behaviors.

Reference

Carr, E. G., & Durand, V. M. (1985). Reducing behavior problems through functional communication training. *Journal of applied behavior analysis*, 18(2), 111–126. doi:10.1901/jaba.1985.18-111