

Tackling problem behaviour in classrooms | case study



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Single Subject Design

Abstract

The following addresses the case study level C, case 2. It concludes on how to tackle problem behavior faced by teachers in class rooms through single subject research designs and offers a few solutions on how to counter act them.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variables (DV) in this case are two specific behaviors demonstrated by Rachel, which are:

1. Not raising her hand before answering a question
2. Unnecessarily communicating with her peers during class lecture

Independent Variable

The independent variable (IV) will be the response of the teachers to Rachel's problematic behavior, that is how they reprimand her and the corrective measures they take to correct her behavior in class so that she learns to follow the class room norms and maintain discipline and abides by the rules similar to her peers.

Behavior Which Needs To Be Changed

Rachel demonstrates two sets of behavior related to disturbing classroom discipline which she needs to rectify in order to maintain the decorum of the class room. Firstly, Rachel needs to learn to raise her hand before answering questions asked by her teachers during comprehension and reading

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activities like everyone else instead of just blurting out answers without being called upon or waiting her turn. Secondly, she must learn not to pass notes to her friends or talk to her peers during class unnecessarily and pay attention to the lecture and focus on what is being taught.

Single Subject Research Designs (SSRD)

In SSRD, basically, the participant is passed through a non-treatment (baseline) and a treatment (experimental condition) phase and his performance is identified during each phase. Since Rachel is the only one in her class demonstrating problem behavior, she will be the only test subject and will act as her own control group. In this type of design a non-treatment stage is first initiated till the performance in question validates steadiness. When the behavior becomes steady, the treatment stage is started. Since Rachel's obtrusive behavior is already very consistent we can move on to the next phase in our research design.

Based on the data collected through direct observation of Rachel's behavior, in Mr. Smith and Mrs. Patel's biology class during reading and comprehension activities, and the personal insight of the observer a treatment plan for Rachel will be developed as a corrective measure for her behavior. The behavior in demand, the dependent variable in the experiment, that is, Rachel not raising her hand before answering a question and passing notes to her friends in class and talking to her peers will be measured through appropriate data collection methods. In this scenario event recording (frequency of the target behavior is noted with each one having a specific beginning and end) and interval recording (observation of

an individual during specified observation periods divided into equal time intervals) will be most appropriate. The observer has to be discrete while collecting data so that the subject remains unaware that he/she is being observed as this might cause them to become cautious and change their pattern of behavior causing distortion in the data collected leading to incorrect results. It is always wiser to assess a group of students than a single individual as to ward off suspicion. (Sachse-Lee)

The event recording chart shows on which specific occasions Rachel has spoken out of turn in class and on which ones she waited to be called on. A written record provides an actual proof of her behavior and provides a justification for taking corrective measures against her actions. The interval recording chart shows how many times the problem behavior has occurred over a specific period of time. If the frequency of occurrence of problem behavior is greater than what otherwise might be considered normal, it calls for corrective measures to be taken to correct the situation, which is the case for Rachel.

The results of a single subject experiment are classically understood by mentioning to the behavioral chart in which the data is shown graphically. For example, the ' number of lectures' can be plotted on the x-axis and the ' number of times hand raised before answering a question' can be plotted on the y-axis. The effectiveness of IV can be measured by the direction of the behavior before and after the experimental condition was implemented.

Statistics are not usually used to understand the outcomes of single subject experiments but if the slope of curve moves upwards and becomes steeper it

means that Rachel raised her hand before answering a question a greater
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number of times after the implementation of experimental conditions than she did under the baseline conditions. A distinct slope is stronger indication that the behavior is varying than if the slope is a gentle one. (Strain)

ABA Change Format

An ABA design is such type of single subject research design in which contributors are first presented to a baseline state (A). In the baseline state, no treatment or experimental variable is presented. After this the participants obtain the experimental state or treatment (B), after which they arrive to the baseline condition (A). The ABA design enables the experimenters to detect behavior before treatment, throughout treatment and after the treatment.

To establish a course of action or experimental conditions to rectify Rachel's behavior is important to first establish goals, that is, what is hoped to be accomplished after the experiment or what kind of short term and long term behavioral changes are expected to be demonstrated by Rachel.

Short term

1. Rachel raises her hand to answer and awaits her turn to speak in class.
2. Rachel stops talking to her peers unnecessarily during lectures or pass notes to her friends.
3. Rachel concentrates more on what is being taught and improves her grades.

Long term

Rachel discontinues all problem behavior and learns to follow the discipline and norms of any institute that she may attend after graduating and develops a sense of responsibility and maturity.

Teachers are faced with challenges even before they begin to educate students. Not only are teachers responsible for teaching the core academic subjects such as reading, math, science, and social studies, but teachers are also presented with nonacademic challenges that influence their instruction (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006).

First of all, in the face of discretion Rachel cannot be made to feel the center of attention or that steps to rectify her behavior are being taken. As this can cause her to rebel and worsen the condition by making her behavior more extreme. Secondly, sending Rachel to the office every time she demonstrates any kind of problem behavior must be terminated. It only makes her feel like she is being bullied or unfairly targets. Under both these scenarios Rachel's behavior cannot be improved or rectified. A more group focused approach is required for positive results.

The entire class should be told what kind of behavior constitutes as acceptable or unacceptable in class with a set of rules mandatory for all to follow under the pretense that problem behavior will lead to negative marking which will affect their grades.

Another approach can be to reinforce positive behavior instead of punishing negative behavior. Students who behave in a desirable or exemplary manner in class can be rewarded via a small token of appreciation, which be wither

verbal appreciation, a piece of candy or deciding which chapter to be quizzed on. The teachers can be as creative as they like.

Bibliography

Sachse-Lee, C. (n. d.). *A Meta-Analysis of Single-Subject* . Retrieved March Sunday, 2014, from <http://idx.sagepub.com/content/33/2/114>. short

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