Video Modeling to Train Staff to Deliver Preferred Qualities of Attention

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Abstract

Attention is regularly used as positive reinforcement for desired behaviors, although rarely is consideration given to the qualities of attention that may be preferred by an individual. The purpose of the current study was to train classroom staff to provide attention that included specific qualities preferred by an adolescent student with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A video modeling technique was used to train staff to use open-ended statements, musical tones, chanting and smiling when delivering praise statements to and interacting with the student in the classroom. The video model was created using the student and a novel, neutral staff member to demonstrate the delivery of attention containing the qualities preferred by the student. A multiple baseline across participants design was used to evaluate staff delivery of the preferred qualities of attention following the video modeling training. Results indicated that the video modeling technique was effective in increasing staff use of preferred qualities of attention. Data was collected for a one-month follow-up phase to evaluate staff maintenance of the increased delivery of preferred qualities of attention.

Method

PARTICIPANTS:
- The participants for this study were 4 staff members who worked with an 18-year-old female student diagnosed with ASD.
- The student had a history of significant aggression that resulted in a physical management procedure (escort) to maintain safety for students and staff.

SETTING:
- These data were collected at a school-based program in New England serving children and adolescents with ASD and other developmental disabilities. This center provides educational programming across academic, vocational, social, and life skills using applied behavior analysis.

DATA COLLECTION:
- Data were collected during 10-minute observations using 10-second partial interval recording.
- Percentage of intervals of occurrence are reported.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES:
- The primary dependent variable in this study was a distinct quality of attention hypothesized to be preferred by the student, referred to as reciprocal attention.
- For the purpose of this study, reciprocal attention was defined as:
  » Open-ended acknowledgement of behavior (e.g., “You’re doing a good job staying in your seat, aren’t you?”).
  » Intra-verbal exchange (e.g., Student: “I want to say hi to mommy and daddy”. Staff: “What do you want to say to mommy and daddy?”).
  » Singing, whistling, or chanting along with participant.
- Additional dependent variables were:
  » Discrete attention, defined as a closed-ended statement acknowledging behavior (e.g., “Nice job staying in your seat!” or “I like how you’re keeping safe hands.”).
  » Escorts used as a physical management procedure to ensure student and staff safety.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:
- The independent variable was a 15-minute training protocol that included a 7-minute video model of staff interacting with the participant using reciprocal attention.
- The training protocol included:
  » An introduction to the purpose of the training, including the definition of reciprocal attention.
  » Providing examples and non-examples of reciprocal attention.
  » Watching the 7-minute video model
  » Answering staff questions related to the video model and/or the nature of reciprocal attention

Introduction

Attention has been clearly identified as a function of behavior (Iwata, Dorsey, Sifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1982/1994). However, not all attention is equally effective. Fisher, Ninness, Piazza, and Owen–DeSchryver (1996) found that qualitative differences in attention produced different rates of behavior. While some staff may naturally deliver attention with preferred qualities, others may require explicit training.

Video modeling has been found to be an effective tool in training teachers and staff to implement a variety of instructional and behavior management tools (Catania, Almeida, Liu-Constant, & Reed, 2009; Moore & Fisher, 2007). The current study sought to use a brief training protocol that included a video model to train staff to implement qualities of attention hypothesized to be preferred by a student.

REFERENCES:

Results

Results

- The video modeling training increased teachers’ use of reciprocal attention.
- The use of discrete attention was maintained at a level similar to that before the training.
- The increased use of reciprocal attention was maintained during follow-up observations conducted one month after maintenance observations were concluded.
- A concurrent reduction in the use of physical management (escorts) with the student was evident.

Discussion

- The results of this study indicate that a brief training protocol that includes a video model can be effective in training teachers to deliver attention with specific qualities that may be preferred by students.
- Increasing preferred qualities of attention can subsequently have an effect on student behavior, reducing the need for physical management procedures.
- Limitations of this study include:
  » Staggered implementation of the video modeling training led to some modeling effects between staff and an increasing trend in baseline for Amanda.
  » No follow-up data was collected for one staff; only 2 data points in follow-up for a second staff.
- Future research should extend the current findings by considering other qualities of attention that may be preferred by students.