

Lesson Plan

Objective: To assess differences in **choice-making** and **preference** in individuals with profound mental retardation across different settings.

Setting and materials: A center-based setting consisting of one large work area and two smaller break rooms and community based settings such as shopping malls, restaurants, and community parks.

Content taught

Two-choice trials are implemented across both the center and community-based settings. The target response is drinking one of two beverages from one of two cups.

The purpose is two-fold:

1. A selecting response assessment is developed to identify:
 - a. an independent, adaptive response
 - b. several beverage options to be incorporated into a later preference analysis.
2. A preference analysis is developed to incorporate the previously identified beverages and independent selecting response into an assessment of beverage choice across center and community-based sites.

Teaching procedure

Phase One

- Before the preference analysis begins, the ability to make an independent selection is assessed for each person. A selecting response was task analyzed as:
 - a. move arm in direction of the target stimulus,
 - b. make contact with hand and target stimulus,
 - c. grasp target stimulus with hand,
 - d. manipulate target stimulus adaptively (e.g., grasp and wipe mouth with napkin, grasp and eat with a spoon).
- Selecting is assessed in a separate office.
- Each student is given 10 trials.
- Presentation of the target stimulus is paired with an instructor delivering a verbal cue (e.g., "Would you like a drink?")
- Each step is scored as correct or incorrect.
- A step is mastered when the student reached 80% criteria (8 of 10 trials).
- Each student is given the opportunity to complete the entire task chain at each trial presentation.

- During this phase, beverage options for assessments are based on:
 - a. adaptive responses made during the selecting response assessment,
 - b. teacher reports as to what beverage was typically provided with lunch,
 - c. availability across all locations, and
 - d. teacher purchases while in the community.

Phase Two

The preference analysis is initiated after two beverages and an independent selecting response are identified.

- The two conditions, center-based and community-based, are counterbalanced across sessions.
- Upon arrival at either location, and after the student and teacher are seated, two single choice trials are conducted for each beverage (four total single-choice trials for each sitting).
- Two trials are run per beverage, one trial left of the table midline and one trial right of the table midline.
- One cup is placed on the table with the teacher cue, “Would you like something to drink?”
- If the student does not reach for the cup within 5 s of the cue, the teacher prompts sampling by placing the cup in the student’s hand and repeats the verbal cue.
- After two trials are run with that beverage, the other beverage is presented in the same right and left position.
- Following the single choice trials, the first session of 10 trials is initiated.
- The teacher places two identical Styrofoam cups filled with 10 ml of the previously identified beverage in front of the student, and says, “Would you like something to drink?”
- When the student selects one of the cups, the teacher removes the other cup from the table while the student drinks the selected beverage.
- After the student drinks the selected beverage, the teacher removes the empty cup and waits 10 s to start the next trial.
- If one of the two cups is not chosen within 5 s of the end of the verbal cue (“Would you like something to drink?”), both cups are removed from the table, no response is scored, and the teacher waits 10 s to initiate the next trial.
- At the end of one block of 10 trials, the teacher removes all cups from the table top.
- The next block of 10 trials begins 5 minutes afterwards.
- Three 10-trial sessions (30 trials per sitting) are run in each location, each day.

Phase Three

Maintenance probes consist of only one trial per session in both settings.

- The teacher presents the two beverages in the identical manner as in the preference analysis, with the exception that each cup is filled with the normal amount of a purchased beverage (355 ml).
- Once the student selects one of the cups, the second cup is removed, and the student is allowed to finish the beverage at his/her leisure.
- If no response occurred within 5 s, both cups are removed and the assessment terminated.

Method of evaluation

- Cumulative frequency of selecting responses to a series of two-choice trial. A second dependent measure is the ratio of choice-making responses to one of two beverages within each location.
- A measure of beverage preference defined as a response ratio for one beverage as .80 or higher.

Lesson plan based on: Belifore, P. J., Browder, D. M., & Mace, C. (1994). Assessing choice-making and preference in adults with profound mental retardation across community and center-based settings. Journal of Behavioral Education, 4, 217-225.