Effectiveness of video feedback and self-management on inappropriate social behavior of youth with mild mental retardation

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Abstract

The effectiveness of a video feedback and self-management package was assessed with various inappropriate behaviors exhibited by six youth with mild mental retardation. The procedure consisted of (a) videotaping participants’ inappropriate behavior, (b) having them self-monitor and record their behavior, (c) prompting them to evaluate their behavior against a criterion, and (d) allowing to reinforce themselves for appropriate behaviors. Data were collected within a nonconcurrent multiple baseline design across participants. Results showed a statistically significant decrease of the percentage intervals of inappropriate behavior when the procedure was in effect. The total number of interactions remained stable across the different phases of the study. Video feedback and self-management contributed to generalization across settings. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

During the last two decades, much attention has been given to the social behaviors of persons with mild mental retardation. These people tend to exhibit more social behavior deficits and inappropriate behaviors as compared to peers without disabilities (e.g., Schumaker, Pederson, Hazel, & Meyen, 1983). Defi-
cient social behaviors hinder their integration into the mainstream of society. As integration of people with a handicap receives high priority it is clear that this area deserves attention from behavior analysts. Various strategies have been employed to improve social behaviors, such as instruction, modeling, role playing, behavior rehearsal, coaching, feedback, homework, and reinforcement (e.g., Amish, Gesten, Smith, Clark, & Stark, 1988; Bates, 1980).

Although these procedures have demonstrated their effectiveness on the acquisition of social behaviors, they are also associated with several shortcomings. Due to their reliance on external control, the effects obtained have, by definition, limited generalizability to natural settings. The validity of procedures to establish social behaviors depends therefore, upon the degree to which the behaviors to be taught generalize across settings, time, and responses. Stokes and Osnes (1989) indicate that generalization of behaviors is more likely to occur if a procedure is at least partly conducted in natural settings. A problem of this approach is, however, the staff time needed to conduct such procedures in natural settings. Moreover, external contingencies may then interfere with ongoing interactions.

Self-management is one of the strategies that may provide a solution to this problem (Ferretti, Cavalier, Murphy, & Murphy, 1993; Harchik, Sherman, & Sheldon, 1992). Self-management has been defined as the application of operant procedures to one’s own behavior (Skinner, 1973). Procedures of self-management, such as self-monitoring, self-recording, self-evaluation, and self-administering consequences have shown to be effective with various populations and target behaviors (e.g., Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges, 1997; Dunlap, Dunlap, Koegel, & Koegel, 1991). Research has shown that self-monitoring can be helpful in reducing external control and by consequence, to facilitate generalization across stimulus dimensions (e.g., Koegel & Koegel, 1990; Lonnecker, Brady, McPherson, & Hawkins, 1994; Rhode, Morgan, & Young, 1983). Despite these advantages, self-monitoring requires immediate self-recording of target behavior(s). It might be argued that such recording may disturb ongoing social interactions.

For establishing social behaviors the use of videorecording may be considered, which involves recording participants while they are interacting with others and then having them view a playback (e.g., Booth & Fairbank, 1984). Research on this means has shown that video feedback improves responding of behaviorally disordered children (Osborne, Kiburz, & Miller, 1986), on-task performance of children with emotional and behavioral disorders (Walther & Beare, 1991), peer interactions of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (Falk, Dunlap, & Kern, 1996; Kern-Dunlap et al., 1992; Kern et al., 1995), and productivity of an adult worker with moderate mental retardation (Cavaiuolo & Gradel, 1990).

The purpose of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of a video feedback and self-management package on the frequency of inappropriate social behavior exhibited by youth with mild mental retardation. The procedure encompassed (a) videotaping participants during lunch and dinner time and during group meetings, (b) while viewing the video, having them monitor and record
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