



Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviors (DRO)/Omission Training

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior (DRO)/Omission Training is the delivery of reinforcement when the target behavior has not occurred during a specific period of time. DRO procedures provide reinforcement for the absence or omission of a target behavior.

What is a DRO?

- A specific schedule of reinforcement
- Used to decrease the rate of behaviors that are inappropriate
- Time-dependent rather than response-dependent
- Reinforcement is delivered after a time period of non-responding

Guidelines for a DRO Program

- Define the target behavior in measurable, observable terms (e.g. use action words).
- Determine highly preferred items or activities to deliver for reinforcement.
- Collect baseline data to establish the current rate of the target behavior.
- Set initial DRO intervals just below the average period of time that the student emits the inappropriate behavior to ensure frequent reinforcement.
- Explain rules to earn reinforcement prior to starting the schedule.
- Be careful not to accidentally reinforce other undesirable behaviors.
- DRO may be more effective when combined with other procedures. For example, reinforcing appropriate alternative/replacement behaviors as they occur may increase the effectiveness of a DRO schedule.

Why should I use a DRO?

- Positive approach to change inappropriate behaviors
- Used to reduce a wide variety of behaviors
- Easy to implement
- Highly structured

Implementing a DRO Program

- Determine a time interval that is feasible throughout the day. (E.g. 5 min., 15 min., class period, etc).
- Inform the student that s/he will earn reinforcement if they do not engage in the target behavior during a specified amount to time.
- Consider providing visual supports (tokens, picture representations of reward) for students with disabilities.
- At the end of the time period, provide the student with the reward if the target behavior was not emitted.
- If the student engages in the target behavior, inform the student that s/he did not earn the reward this time, but may do so next time.
- Start time period and continue sequence above.
- Implement daily and consistently.
- As the student makes progress, increase the time period.
- May include self-monitoring for some students.

Examples

Reducing classroom disruptions

Timmy interrupts his teacher during classroom instruction on an average of 5 times per 30 minute period. These interruptions occur most frequently during whole group instruction in core content areas such as reading and math. Timmy's teacher decides to use a DRO procedure to reduce Timmy's interruptions. She sets the initial time interval for 5 minutes. Timmy is told that each time he does not interrupt his teacher for 5 minutes, he will earn one additional minute of recess. Timmy's teacher uses a timer to indicate the beginning and end of each 5 minute interval. After each successful interval without interruption, Timmy is given a sticker to put on a reward chart. At the end of the day, Timmy is allowed to have additional recess time based on the total stickers earned. Over time, the time interval may be extended.

Resources

- Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2007). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (Second Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Sulzer-Azaroff, B. & Mayer G.R. (1991). *Behavior Analysis for Lasting Change*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.