



Behavioral Data-Based Decision-Making

Purpose

Data are used to make informed decisions when setting and working toward student goals. Ongoing analysis provides opportunities to make data-based instructional decisions that will increase student achievement. Representing student data in a visual format such as a graph simplifies the team's ability to track student progress toward goals.

Graphing data

Graphing data enables the team, including staff and parents, to see patterns of performance. They can recognize the student's rate of progress compared to the performance criteria outlined in their goals. Team members can view the student's rate of challenging behavior in comparison to their pre-behavioral intervention levels. Visual displays of replacement skill acquisition are easy to understand. Recognizing and discussing patterns in the graph can lead the team to make decisions about what actions they might take to better support the student.

Steps for graphing data

1. Set a progress monitoring schedule.
2. Collect the behavioral data.
3. Graph the behavioral data.
4. Visually analyze the behavioral data.
5. Make data-based decisions as a team.

Visual analysis patterns

- **Level:** Refers to the amount of behavior that occurs. It is described as low, moderate, or high.
- **Trend:** The direction that the data points are moving over time. It is described as increasing, decreasing, or no trend.
- **Variability:** The change from one data point to the next, generally reported as either highly variable or somewhat variable.
- **Stability:** The predictability and consistency of data, or the lack of fluctuation between data points. It is described in terms of level stability, trend stability, or both.



Data-based decision-making: Questions to consider

Is the student doing better?

- Did we remember to celebrate their accomplishments?
- What interventions, strategies, and supports were effective in facilitating behavior change for the student?
- Can any of these interventions, strategies, and supports be used in the future?

Is the student doing worse, staying the same, or displaying variable performance?

- Are positive behavior supports or behavior interventions being implemented with fidelity?
- If the student has an IEP, do they have access to the supports outlined?
- Does the data collection method align with the behavior that is being measured?

Is there a lack of progress?

- Does the student need an increase in the intensity or frequency of the intervention?
- Are there prerequisite skills the student is missing that need to be developed?
- Is the intervention being implemented with fidelity across all staff?
- Should there be a change in the intervention or strategies provided to the student?

How can I revise the behavior intervention plan and the plan to teach behavioral skills?

- Consider changes to the condition or environmental components, including setting/location, prompting/supports, and material/content.
- Consider changes to the consequences outlined, including item(s) used as reinforcers, frequency of reinforcement, and amount/length of access to reinforcement.

Additional Resources

- [Behavior Intervention Plan Practice Guide](#)
- [Behavior Progress Monitoring: Part 5 - Analyze Data and Make Data-Based Decisions](#)
- [Behavior Goal Planning Form](#)
- [Behavior Goal Planning Form Guided Notes](#)

References

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Jung, L. A. (2015). *A Practical Guide to Planning Interventions and Monitoring Progress*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Ledford, J. R., & Gast, D. L. (2018). *Single Case Research Methodology: Applications in Special Education and Behavioral Sciences* (3rd ed.). Routledge.