Partial Interval - Description, Procedures, & Example

When the behavior that you are looking at is not easily counted, you can measure the behavior by counting the number of time-intervals in which the behavior occurred. A behavior is not easily counted when:

- It is difficult to tell exactly when the behavior begins or when it ends, or
- It occurs at such a high rate that it is difficult to keep a count on it.

If this behavior happens so quickly that it is hard to catch (the behavior itself does not last for a long time), you may use the Partial Interval method to measure this behavior: You can look to see whether or not the behavior occurs at some point in each time interval. You should note that you will need some timing instrument such as a wall clock, wristwatch, or stopwatch in order to keep track of the time intervals.

Examples of behaviors that you can measure using Partial Interval include praising others, making a particular comment, making a certain gesture, walking by a particular place,....

Procedures

At the meeting:

* Write down the behavior that you will be looking for and its definition
* Write down how long you will be observing every time: Total Observation Time
* Divide the total observation time into 10 same length intervals; write down the length of each interval
  * All intervals need to be the same length: Intervals can be from a few seconds long up to a few minutes long (less than 11 minutes)
  
  **Note:** Total observation time and length of intervals need to be the same each time that you observe
* If the team decides on an intervention (meetings 2 or 3), enter it in the box provided (p. 2)

After the meeting:

* Enter the date of your observation
* Make sure that you have your timing instrument available prior to beginning your observation
* Keep an eye on your timing instrument to keep track of the intervals
* **During each time interval:**
  * Look to see if the behavior occurs
  * Once the behavior occurs, place a checkmark (3) for that interval
  * If, at the end of the interval the behavior did not occur, place an X for that interval
* At the end of your observation time, total the number of checkmarks (This is what you graph)

Example

Behavior: Saying something nice
Behavior Definition: Making a statement to a peer or a teacher during class time, in a pleasant tone, which includes either praise or politeness, for example saying “you did well” or “excuse me”

Total Observation Time: 20 minutes
Length of each interval: 2 minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interval #</th>
<th>Total times behavior occurred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or X</td>
<td>3, X, X, 3, X, X, X, 3, X, X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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