Behavior Specific Praise: Implementing, Coaching, and Measuring the Impact of this Simple Yet Specific Strategy

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Introduction

- Long history of empirical evidence suggesting the positive effects of praise on student behaviors (Royer et al., 2019)
  - Academic
  - Social/emotional

- That long history limits the methodological quality of studies included in reviews to determine whether praise is an evidence-based practice (Moore et al., 2019)

What is Behavior Specific Praise?

- BSP refers to when the teacher issues a praise statement related to a specific action or achievement completed by a child.

- For example, instead of the teacher saying, "Good job," the teacher might say, "Good job taking your time to carefully color all of the triangles blue."

- As teachers issue more BSP, they in turn issue fewer reprimand statements, which improves teacher–child relationships (Smith et al., 2011).

Characteristics of Praise

Specificity

- General praise (GP) vs behavior specific praise (BSP)

- Most researched characteristic

- Consensus that specific feedback is a greater reinforcer (Cooper et al., 2020)

Characteristics of Praise [2]

Contingency

- Contingent praise follows the occurrence of the desired behavior

- Contingent praise is immediate

- Mentioned in studies as an important characteristic, but not measured

Characteristics of Praise [3]

Variety

- Quality of reinforcer

- Habituation of reinforcer (Cooper et al., 2019)

- Few studies mention variety

Developing and Measuring the Behavior-Specific Praise Observation Tool

Purpose of the BSP-OT

The purpose of the study was to examine the reliability of the behavior specific praise observation tool (BSP-OT) so that the field of teacher development can utilize a precise tool for measuring effective praise.

- Markelz, A. M., Riden, B. S., Zoder-Martell, K., Miller, J. E., & Bolinger S. J. (2020). Reliability assessment of an observation tool to measure praise characteristics. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 23*(1), 17-29.

How Did We Do This?

- Development of BSP-OT
  - Three characteristics
  - BSP-OT training packet
- Frequency within intervals for inter-observer agreement
- For this study, interaction between one teacher and one student

Behavior Specific Praise Observation Tool (BSP-OT)

Teacher: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ - _____

Class: _____ Student: _____ Time Per Cell: _____

School: _____ Observer: _____ Notes: _____

A		1		2		3	
	Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
	Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Variety						

B		1		2		3	
	Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
	Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Variety						

C		1		2		3	
	Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
	Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Variety						

D		1		2		3	
	Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
	Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Variety						

E		1		2		3	
	Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
	Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Variety						

BSP-OT Summary Sheet

Notes:

Count the frequency of all BSP statements	BSP Total = _____
BSP contingency _____ divide by BSP Total _____ x 100	BSP Contingency = _____%
Number of different types of BSP praise statements _____ divided by total BSP _____ x 100	BSP Variety = _____%

Count the frequency of all GP statements	GP Total = _____
GP contingency _____ divide by GP Total _____ x 100	GP Contingency = _____%
Number of different types of GP praise statements _____ divided by total GP _____ x 100	GP Variety = _____%

How Did We Do This?

16 videos between four teachers (each 15-minutes)

- Three members of the research team created master copies of accurately coded BSP-OTs for each video
- Three experts in praise research coded videos independently

What Did We Find Out?

- Direct observation procedures should be designed to allow for accurate (i.e., valid) and consistent (i.e., reliable) measurement of behavior (Hintze, 2005).

- BSP-OT is the first valid and reliable tool to measure specificity, contingency, and variety

What types of praise are teachers using in the classroom?

Are Teachers Using Praise in the Classroom?

1. What are inservice and preservice teachers' natural rates and percentages of specific, contingent, and varied praise?

2. Are there differences in the rates and percentages of specific, contingent, and varied praise between inservice special education teachers and inservice general education teachers?

   - **Markelz, A. M.,** Riden, B. S., Floress, Balint-Langel, K.B, M., Heath, J. A., & Pavelka, S. (2021). Teachers' use of specific, contingent, and varied praise. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions.*

What Did We Find?

Specificity

- Each teacher group delivered low BSP rates.
  - General education teachers delivered 6.92 BSP per hr.
  - Special education teachers delivered 6.84 per hr.
  - Preservice teachers delivered 5.4 per hr.

What Did We Find Out? [2]

Contingency

O Each teacher group delivered medium levels of contingent praise

- O General education teachers = 59%

- O Special education teachers = 65.6%

- O Preservice teachers delivered 70.6%

What Did We Find Out?

Variety

O Each teacher group delivered medium levels of praise variety

- O General education teachers = 44.5%

- O Special education teachers = 44.9%

- O Preservice teachers delivered 51.5%

Let's Take a Moment and Review the Tool and Coding Manual

Included in the Manual are:

- Our suggestions for how to use the tool
- Definitions
- Procedures on how to use the summary table
- A completed example based on a 5-minute observation
- A blank copy of the tool

Behavior Specific Praise Observation Tool (BSP-OT)

Teacher: Mr. Ruiz Date: 2/14/20 Time: 10:00 - 10:05

Class: Math Student: Dylan Time Per Cell: 20 sec

School: Northwest Observer: _____ Notes: Baseline

A

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	| GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	| Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety				Great Job		

B

	1		2		3	
Specificity	| BSP	GP	BSP	GP	| BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	| Yes	Yes
Variety	Good job				Awesome	

C

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	| GP	| BSP	GP	BSP	| GP
Contingency	Yes	| Yes	| Yes	Yes	Yes	| Yes
Variety	Good job	Love				Good job Like

D

	1		2		3	
Specificity	| BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	| Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety	Awesome					

E

	1		2		3	
Specificity	| BSP	GP	| BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	| Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety	Good job		Good job	Good job		

BSP-OT Summary Sheet

Notes:

Great job delivering frequent praise!

6 BSP ÷ 5 min = 1.2 BSP per min

5 GP ÷ 5 min = 1 GP per min

You had a total of 2.2 praise statements / min.

Contingency of praise should be closer to 100%
 - Make sure you are delivering praise immediately after appropriate behaviors

BSP variety = Good, Love, Awesome

GP variety = Good, Great, Like.

Try to vary your praise statements more.

Count the frequency of all BSP statements	BSP Total = 6
BSP contingency 4 divide by BSP Total 6 x 100	BSP Contingency = 66 %
Number of different types of BSP praise statements 3 divided by total BSP 6 x 100	BSP Variety = 50 %

Count the frequency of all GP statements	GP Total = 5
GP contingency 4 divide by GP Total 5 x 100	GP Contingency = 80 %
Number of different types of GP praise statements 3 divided by total GP 5 x 100	GP Variety = 60 %

Example of the BSP-OT

Let's Do Some Practice With The Tool

- On the following slide we are going to use the BSP-OT to measure the teacher use of the following during a three minute segment of a lesson:
  - Specific Praise
  - General Praise
  - Contingent Praise
  - Variety of Praise
- The "pop" will cue you to move to the next

Behavior Specific Praise Observation Tool (BSP-OT)

Teacher: _Video 1_   Date: _____   Time: _____ - _____

Class: _____   Student: _____   Time Per Cell: _____

School: _____   Observer: _____   Notes: _____

A

		1		2		3	
Specificity		BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety						Thank you	

B

		1		2		3	
Specificity		BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety					Great		Thank you

C

		1		2		3	
Specificity		BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety				Excellent	Awesome	Great	

D

		1		2		3	
Specificity		BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety							

E

		1		2		3	
Specificity		BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety							

BSP-OT Summary Sheet

Notes:

Count the frequency of all BSP statements	BSP Total = 3
BSP contingency _3_ divide by BSP Total _3_ x 100	BSP Contingency = 100 %
Number of different types of BSP praise statements _3_ divided by total BSP _3_ x 100	BSP Variety = 100 %
Count the frequency of all GP statements	GP Total = 3
GP contingency _2_ divide by GP Total _3_ x 100	GP Contingency = 66 %
Number of different types of GP praise statements _3_ divided by total GP _3_ x 100	GP Variety = 100 %

Now Let's Use The Summary Tool

- Get into groups to discuss your results

- We'll come back in a few minutes to compare and discuss

Let's Compare

Behavior Specific Praise Observation Tool (BSP-OT)

Teacher: Video 2   Date: _____   Time: _____ - _____

Class: _____   Student: _____   Time Per Cell: _____

School: _____   Observer: _____   Notes: _____

A

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety						Very good

B

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety			Excellent Great	Very good		

C

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety						

D

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety						

E

	1		2		3	
Specificity	BSP	GP	BSP	GP	BSP	GP
Contingency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Variety						

BSP-OT Summary Sheet

Notes:

Count the frequency of all BSP statements	BSP Total = 2
BSP contingency 2 divide by BSP Total 2 x 100	BSP Contingency = 100 %
Number of different types of BSP praise statements 2 divided by total BSP 2 x 100	BSP Variety = 100 %

Count the frequency of all GP statements	GP Total = 2
GP contingency 2 divide by GP Total 2 x 100	GP Contingency = 100 %
Number of different types of GP praise statements 0 divided by total GP 2 x 100	GP Variety = 0 %

Questions?

Thanks!

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Maybe the way we change the world is by raising better kids and being more attentive to those kids. Maybe that's how we change the world. I think that's the punkest thing of all.
Jim Lindberg of Pennywise