Guidelines for Conducting Structured A-B-C Data Collection

The aim of using an ABC chart is to understand better what the behavior is communicating. The 'A' or ***antecedent*** refers to the or event before the behavior. This can include what the person was doing, who was there, where they were, and what sights/sounds/smells/temperatures/number of people were in the environment. The 'B' or ***behavior*** refers to a clear description of the behavior *(e.g., X threw an* item on the floor); a behavior is observable and measurable. The 'C' or ***consequence*** refers to what occurred immediately after the behavior (e.g., students moved away from X, and noise levels in the room decreased). Place the ABC chart in an accessible place to make it easier to use after the target behavior has been exhibited.

After identifying two or three problematic behaviors, you could use an ABC checklist (see below).

ABC Data Collection Planning
1. Identify who will be responsible for collecting the data.
2. Identify one or two behaviors of concern that your team will prioritize.
3. Define the behaviors in very specific terms so that everyone collecting the data will know exactly what behaviors to include and when a specific behavior occurred. A good definition could be given to someone who does not know the student but would be able to identify the behavior/s.
4. Decide when and how often data will be collected.
5. When collecting data, try to capture what is happening in as few words as possible (see examples below).
   a. Student working alone – math worksheet
   b. The student is talking to a peer next to him
   c. The teacher gives a direction – (e.g., "Do your worksheet," "You need to stop talking," "Stay in your seat."
   d. The teacher reprimands the student
6. Limit your data to what you observe the student or staff doing. Avoid making assumptions about what the student or staff are thinking or feeling.

ABC Data Collection Analysis Tips

After collecting data on several occasions and environments at different times of the day, the team should choose the most significant behaviors to target. Behaviors that are the most dangerous, disruptive, frequent and intense is a good starting point. Keep in mind this will require letting go of some of the other inappropriate behavior for now. The team should ask the following when prioritizing target behavior:
- What behaviors are potentially dangerous?
- How long have these behaviors been a problem?
- Will changing this behavior provide more opportunities for functional independence, inclusion, or socialization?
- Will changing this behavior improve the student's quality of life?
- Which behavior is the most disruptive to the class/other students?
- What is the cost-benefit of improving this behavior?
- Once the team prioritizes target behaviors, it is recommended to write a very specific definition of the behavior – an operational definition.

Next, examine the data for triggers or situations where the behavior is most likely to occur:
- When / what time is the behavior most likely to occur?
- During what activities are the behavior most likely to occur?
- Are there any times or activities during which the behavior does not occur?
- Where is the behavior most likely to occur?
- With whom is the behavior most likely to occur?

Then, analyze what might be maintaining the behavior - the consequences:
- What does the behavior achieve for the student?
- Does the student avoid or escape any activity by engaging in the behavior?
- Is the student rewarded in any way by engaging in the behavior?
- What might the student be attempting to communicate by engaging in this behavior?

Once identified the triggers and consequences for the behavior, you are now ready to develop a plan.

- What alternative or more appropriate skill can you teach the student to eliminate their need to engage in this behavior?
- What changes can you make to the environment or the student's schedule to decrease their exposure to triggers?
- How have you addressed the need that the student was trying to communicate?
- Is there any need for a reward/incentive system in the short term?
- Have you communicated your plan to everyone caring for the student?

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ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence, Response) Chart Form

Date/Time	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Student Response
Date/Time when the behavior occurred	What activity was going on when the behavior occurred	What happened right before the behavior that may have triggered the behavior	What the behavior looked like	What happened after the behavior, or as a result of the behavior	How did the student respond to the consequence (stop, continue, or escalate)?

Student Name: _____ **Observer:** _____

Start Time: _____ **End Time:** _____ **Total Time: (in minutes)** _____

Circle: (1) Does the ongoing activity match the Daily Schedule? Yes   No (2) If there is a change in activity, does the new activity match the Daily Schedule? Yes   No

Location of Observation:	Classroom, Playground/Recess, Lunch Area, Office, Hallway, Therapy Room, Resource Room, Other:
Type of instruction / activity in progress:	Writing Assignment, Math, Social Studies, Art, PE, Science, Free Choice/Time, Reading, Carpet Time, Computer Assignment, Other:

Antecedent

A	Date of the observation:																		
	Time Event Occurred:																		
	Academic work demand- ongoing academic demand																		
	Give a nonpreferred academic task																		
	Denied attention- peer or adult is giving attention to someone else																		
	Whole group instruction - instruction provided to entire class, no individual attention to anyone																		
	Small-group Instruction																		
	Independent work -computer/Chromebook/seat work/worksheet/independent reading																		
	Denied request or denied access to desired activity																		
	Angry peer or disagreement with a peer																		
	Punitive consequence – e.g., time is taken away from recess, cell phone was taken away, etc.																		
	Environment – circle all that apply – noisy, lighting, crowded																		
	Transition																		
	Other:																		

Behavior

B	Physical aggression – circle all that apply – hit, kick, spit, bite, throw objects																		
	Verbal outburst – circle all that apply – yell, scream, cry, curse, name-calling, blurting out																		
	Disruptive behavior – circle all that apply – wandering, noise-making, property misuse,																		
	Destructive behavior - circle all that apply – breaking materials, breaking objects,																		
	Elopement – circle all that apply – campus, classroom, desk																		
	Refusal – circle all that apply – active refusal or passive refusal																		
	Other:																		

Consequences

C	Planned ignoring																		
	Attention – circle all that apply - peer or adult																		
	Tangibles - circle all that apply – gained access or lost assess to desired person, place or thing																		
	Verbal prompt – e.g., a reminder of activity/item being earned, reminder of consequence																		
	Escape- removal or reduction of demand, or undesired situation/person/task																		
	Avoidance- delay or complete avoidance of undesired situation/person/task																		
	Left Alone /no interaction or access to tangible																		
	Automatic (self-stimulation)																		
	Other:																		