

10-Step Protocol for Group Contingencies*

Step	Task	Tools / Resources Needed	Date Completed
1.	Select and define the target behavior(s) to modify		
2.	Decide on data collection tool	List of data collection options	
3.	Obtain baseline of target behavior(s)	Data collection tool	
4.	Identify reinforcers	Reinforcer survey	
5.	Select group contingency program		
6.	Set reasonable goal(s) for group contingency program	Reference to baseline data	
7.	Make sure everyone can perform the behavior(s)	Behavior Lesson Plan Development Form	
8.	Implement group contingency program		
9.	Monitor group and individual performance	Group Performance Data Collection Sheet	
10.	Revise as needed		

Adapted from Axelrod, S. (1998). *How to use group contingencies (How to manage behavior series)*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Step 1: Select and Define the Target Behavior(s) to Modify

Two attributes of behavior:

- ❖ Form (or “topography”)
 - The way a behavior looks; what we observe; a precise, specific description of the behavior
- ❖ Function
 - The purpose a behavior serves
 - To get something
 - To avoid, delay, or escape something

****STEPS 1 & 2 will focus on the FORM or TOPOGRAPHY of the target behavior(s)****

Target behavior(s) should be:

- ☒ Educationally meaningful
- ☒ Socially meaningful
- ☒ Somewhat easy to change

Must define the target behavior(s) in an unambiguous way:

- ☒ Precise
- ☒ Concrete

Two people must agree on whether or not the behavior has occurred

Clearly define the target behavior(s) using concrete and precise language:

Step 2: Decide on Data Collection Tool

Question of Interest	Dimension to Measure
How often?	Each event (frequency, rate, or percentage)
How long?	Duration (each event or cumulative)
How long to begin a behavior?	Latency

Definition of behavior(s): _____

Data collection tool to be used: _____

When will data be collected: _____

Person(s) responsible for collecting baseline data: _____

Complete attached “Data Collection and Reinforcer Action Plan”

DATA COLLECTION AND REINFORCER ACTION PLAN



Action	Considerations	Timeline	What materials are needed?	Who is responsible?
Collect baseline data	1. Educationally meaningful? 2. Socially meaningful? 3. Choose easy behaviors first 4. Is behavior clearly defined? 5. Decide on data collection tool 6. Who, when, how? 7. Collect for 5 days 8. Calculate average for behavior(s)			
Identify Reinforcers	1. Poll or survey class (e.g., interventioncentral.org) 2. Watch what kids do in free time 3. Choose reinforcers that are not typically available			

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Step 3: Obtain Baseline Data for Targeted Behavior(s)

Data collection tool used: _____

Dates of data collection: _____

Time of data collection: _____

Person(s) responsible for collecting baseline data: _____

Record of baseline data collection:

	Day 1 (_____)	Day 2 (_____)	Day 3 (_____)	Day 4 (_____)	Day 5 (_____)	Average
Behavior 1 (_____)						
Behavior 2 (_____)						
Behavior 3 (_____)						
Behavior 4 (_____)						
Behavior 5 (_____)						
Behavior 6 (_____)						

Step 4: Identify Reinforcers

Method of identifying reinforcers:

- ☐ Poll or survey students (e.g., www.interventioncentral.org)
- ☐ Watch what students do in free time

**** Choose reinforcers that are not typically available****

List of Available Reinforcers:

Activity / Privileges	Tangible / Edibles	Social

Step 5: Select Group Contingency Program

Type	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Independent (<i>Consequence sharing</i> or <i>hero procedure</i>)	Individual's performance, or small subset of the group, determines the consequences for entire group	- Common to see group members encouraging the efforts of the responsible person - Group members may stop reinforcing undesirable behavior	- May be difficult to manage different contingencies for various groups - Excessive pressure may be placed on one or more students - Possible sabotage by unmotivated students - Scapegoating - Need to take care of covert verbal threats toward students who fail to reach standard
Interdependent group	Behavior of all group members determines consequences	- Whole group motivated to comply - Group stops reinforcing inappropriate behavior and helps each other out - Convenient and easy to apply to whole classroom - One set standard and reinforcer - No one single student needs to be singled out	- Excessive pressure may be placed on one or more students - Possible sabotage by unmotivated students - Scapegoating - Need to take care of covert verbal threats toward students who fail to reach standard

Considerations:

- ☐ Critical to assess skills to make sure that every student is capable of performing the behavior(s) correctly. If not, then explicit instruction of behaviors needs to occur.
- ☐ Choose group members based on a favorable history of social interaction
- ☐ Choose groups of roughly equal ability
- ☐ Select reinforcers carefully so that they are reinforcing for all members
 - Perhaps consider a mystery motivator
- ☐ Reinforcers must be above and beyond what students typically receive
- ☐ Always pair reinforcers with considerable amounts of verbal praise and other social reinforcers

Type of Group Contingency Program Chosen (see next page for examples):

Examples of Group Contingencies

Response Cost - The teacher offers the students extra free time or other rewards if they do not perform a particular inappropriate behavior. The teacher writes the numbers 10 through 0 on the board and crosses off the highest numbers remaining for each time any student exhibits the behavior. The starting number can be changed based on the baseline data collected. This program works well for behaviors such as out-of-seat, talking out, hitting, etc.

10
9
8
7
6
5
7
3
2
1
0

Upper Limit - Using the baseline data, the teacher sets the upper limit of inappropriate behavior. If the students perform at or below that level, the class earns a reinforcer. For example, a teacher tells the students that they can begin recess 5 minutes earlier than usual if they talk out 25 times or fewer during Math class. As the students improve, the teacher lowers the criterion gradually.

Caught You! - The teacher tells the students the behavior he/she wants to observe and sets an egg timer to go off at random intervals that the students cannot predict. It is important that there be both long and short intervals and that students not be able to predict when the timer will go off. Each time the timer goes off, the teacher checks to see if all the students are exhibiting the desired behavior. If so, the class receives a point. Each point can be exchanged for minutes of favored activities, tangibles, etc.

The Good Behavior Game - The class is broken into two groups / teams. The teacher lists the rules for behaviors and teaches what those desired behaviors look like. Each time a student breaks a rule, a mark is placed under the team's name. If a team's count remains under a number designated by the teacher and based on baseline data, that team wins. This can also be a competitive game in that whichever team has the least number of marks at the end of the time period wins.

Step 6: Set Reasonable Goal(s) for Group Contingency

Considerations:

- ☐ Refer to baseline data collection (Step 3)
- ☐ Competitive or group-dependent reinforcement schedule?

Competitive or Group-Dependent Schedule: _____

- ☐ Decide on a reasonable, attainable goal based on the baseline data
 - Independent (consequence sharing or hero procedure)
 - Interdependent
- ☐ Be willing to accept gradual decreases in behavior over time
 - Define upper limit of the behavior
 - Plan to decrease the behavior gradually
 - Reinforce lower and lower levels of the targeted behavior

Reasonable Goal Decision: _____

- ☐ Clearly display goal to the groups

Step 7: Make Sure Everyone Can Perform the Behavior(s)

- ❖ Group contingencies do not teach new behaviors; rather, they are used to motivate the occurrence of existing behavior.
- ❖ Teacher needs to have evidence that every student in the program can independently perform the behavior.

Target behavior(s):

Evidence that ALL students can independently perform the target behavior(s):

- ❖ If any student does not have the behavior skills to perform independently, then instruction must occur.
 - Use attached *Behavior Lesson Plan Development Form*

Students who cannot independently perform the target behavior(s):

Date(s) of behavior lesson: _____

Assessment strategy: _____

Behavior Lesson Plan Development Form

Target Behavior(s): _____

Lesson Segments	Contents Materials Logistics
Opening • Review - previous content or - background information and pre-requisite skills • Lesson contents • Goals • Incentive/motivation • Brief description lesson sequence	
Body • Demonstration using examples and non-examples • Modeling - teacher only then - teacher + students using any needed prompting and cueing • Controlled/guided practice via carefully designed exercises • Student independent application of knowledge and skills learned	
Closing • Review important elements in light of the originally stated goals and expectations • Provide direction for content of next lesson or • State how current lesson fits into context of events or lessons to come.	

Step 8: Implement Group Contingency Program

Required Decisions / Actions:

- ☐ Division of class into groups
- ☐ Explain program to class
- ☐ Select a time of day to implement
- ☐ Start date
- ☐ Other

Complete attached “Program Implementation Action Plan”

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN



Action	Considerations	Timeline	What materials are needed?	Who is responsible?
Divide class into groups				
Explain program to class				
Select time of day to implement				
Select start date				

Begin implementation				
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Step 9: Monitor Group and Individual Performance

Things to remember:

- ☐ Praise individual performance immediately
- ☐ Praise group performance immediately
- ☐ Keep a permanent record of group performance – see attached Group Performance Data Collection Sheet
- ☐ Look at individual performances
- ☐ Is anyone sabotaging the program?
 - How do you know that?

Group Performance Data Collection Sheet

Complete this sheet every day of the group contingency to monitor points earned by group, reinforcer earned, and any additional comments.

Date	Group 1	Group 2	Other ()	Reinforcer	Comments

Step 10: Revise As Needed

☐ Evaluate outcomes of the program

☐ Need to change or add reinforcers? If so,

- Return to Step 4 and proceed to Steps 8-10

☐ Need to change goal(s)? If so,

- Return to Steps 6-10

☐ Need to change groups? If so,

- Return to Steps 8 -10

☐ Are there any saboteurs? If so:

- Remove that student from the group and establish his / her own individual contingency
 - Periodically reconsider placing that student back with his / her own group
- Remove a few saboteurs and create their own group with their own contingency
 - Periodically reconsider placing those students back with their own groups
- Return to Steps 8-10

☐ Need to teach targeted behavior(s)? If so,

- Return to Steps 7-10

☐ Need to change the type of group contingency program? If so,

- Return to Steps 5-10

Changes made: _____

Reason(s) for making changes: _____

Date of changes: _____



RETURN TO APPROPRIATE STEP