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Antecedent Interventions and Motivating Operations Practice

Antecedent interventions change what happens before a behavior so that the behavior is less likely to occur. They include changing the environment, adjusting task demands, offering choices, and using motivating operations that alter how much a reinforcer is valued. This set asks you to recognize these strategies in short scenarios and to tell an establishing operation from an abolishing one. Good answers usually prevent the problem without relying on punishment, and they match the strategies the plan describes. Use the scenario details to decide whether the strategy changes the setting, the demand, or the value of a reinforcer.

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Practice questions

Answer every question before you look at the key, then check yourself on the next pages.

1. In a discrete trial with Nia, only one set of glitter pens is available. The RBT waits for the response and delivers the programmed consequence. What should happen next?

- **A** Enter the data, then allow a short pause before the next trial
- **B** Present a prompt with the next cue since the prior trial just ended
- **C** Record errors now and tally the correct responses from memory at the end
- **D** Repeat the same trial until the learner responds more quickly

2. Before hard tasks, an RBT gives several easy instructions with praise for compliance. Which antecedent strategy is shown?

- **A** Extinction procedure
- **B** Differential schedule plan
- **C** High-probability sequence
- **D** Permanent product data

3. The RBT times from the end of a question until the learner begins to answer. Which continuous measure is this?

- **A** Time to task completion
- **B** Frequency of compliance
- **C** Momentary time sampling
- **D** Latency recording

4. Ethan has stopped attending to the cue during rapid trials on waiting for a turn. Which adjustment best preserves discrete-trial quality?

- **A** Repeat the cue louder until the learner starts paying attention
- **B** Switch to a play-based teaching format for the rest of the session
- **C** Get the learner's attention, then present each cue at the usual pace
- **D** Lengthen the intertrial interval to several minutes so the learner rests

5. The antecedent plan for Mateo's pushing the trays away calls for delivering a pause from tray stacking on a time-based schedule, regardless of behavior. Which procedure is this?

- **A** Token economy: backup reinforcers are exchanged at set times
- **B** NCR: the functional reinforcer is given by the clock on a set schedule
- **C** DRO: reinforcement follows an interval that passes without the behavior
- **D** Fixed interval: the first response after the interval is reinforced

6. Before table wiping, the plan lets Zara choose a sponge or a cloth. Why can this be an antecedent intervention?

- **A** It lets the learner decide whether the task will happen that day
- **B** It prompts the correct response so that errors cannot occur
- **C** It extinguishes problem behavior by removing its reinforcer
- **D** It is set up ahead of the task to make cooperation more likely

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7. During a planned assessment, alone and attention conditions are compared. Which assessment component is being conducted?

- **A** Functional analysis
- **B** Preference assessment
- **C** Indirect assessment
- **D** Descriptive assessment

8. A supervisor asks an RBT to record what happens right before and after screaming during class. Which assessment component is this?

- **A** ABC recording
- **B** Token exchange
- **C** Chaining probe
- **D** Public statement

9. During a classroom observation, the RBT records events before behavior, the response, and what follows across the morning. Which component is this?

- **A** Token exchange trial
- **B** Generalization session
- **C** Maintenance probe
- **D** Descriptive assessment

10. A learner screams less when hard work is broken into smaller steps before the session begins. Which procedure type is most likely?

- **A** Antecedent intervention
- **B** Extinction burst
- **C** Permanent product
- **D** Public statement

11. During discrete-trial teaching, which sequence best fits one teaching trial?

- **A** Chat, play, graph, file notes
- **B** Wait, watch, guess, praise
- **C** Cue, response, consequence, data
- **D** Preference, snack, break, note review

12. Ethan mastered waiting for a turn last month. The RBT now checks it briefly twice per week without prompts. What is this?

- **A** Baseline: measuring the skill before any teaching has begun
- **B** Maintenance: periodic checks to confirm a learned skill persists
- **C** Fluency training: timed practice aimed at faster responding
- **D** Reacquisition: renewed teaching because the skill has been lost

Answer key and explanations

1. Correct answer: A · Enter the data, then allow a short pause before the next trial

A discrete trial includes an antecedent, response opportunity, consequence, data entry, and a clear transition before the next trial. Keep discrete trials clear, paced, and data based.

Task: C.3

2. Correct answer: C · High-probability sequence

A high-probability sequence occurs before the harder request.

Task: D.2

3. Correct answer: D · Latency recording

Latency is the time between a defined antecedent and the onset of the target response. Latency starts at the cue and ends when the response begins.

Task: A.1

4. Correct answer: C · Get the learner's attention, then present each cue at the usual pace

Effective discrete trials preserve clear antecedents, opportunities to respond, consequences, and manageable pacing. Good DTT is brisk but never sacrifices attending or stimulus control.

Task: C.3

5. Correct answer: B · NCR: the functional reinforcer is given by the clock on a set schedule

NCR delivers the functional reinforcer according to time rather than contingent on problem behavior, reducing motivation to obtain it through that behavior. NCR is scheduled access to a relevant reinforcer independent of problem behavior.

Task: D.2

6. Correct answer: D · It is set up ahead of the task to make cooperation more likely

Antecedent interventions alter events before a response to reduce the likelihood of problem behavior and support engagement. Antecedent strategies proactively adjust the context while keeping expectations clinically appropriate.

Task: D.2

7. Correct answer: A · Functional analysis

A functional analysis systematically manipulates relevant antecedents or consequences across controlled conditions to test their effects on behavior. Experimental manipulation distinguishes a functional analysis from indirect and descriptive assessment.

Task: B.3

8. Correct answer: A · ABC recording

ABC recording describes antecedents, behavior, and consequences.

Task: B.3

9. Correct answer: D · Descriptive assessment

Descriptive assessment records antecedents, behavior, and consequences in context.

Task: B.3

10. Correct answer: A · Antecedent intervention

Demand changes occur before behavior and alter the antecedent context.

Task: D.2

11. Correct answer: C · Cue, response, consequence, data

Discrete trials include an antecedent cue, response, consequence, and data.

Task: C.3

12. Correct answer: B · Maintenance: periodic checks to confirm a learned skill persists

Periodic practice or probes after mastery assess whether performance persists over time. Maintenance checks occur after mastery and are typically less intensive than acquisition teaching.

Task: C.9

Study tips

- Classify each strategy by whether it makes a reinforcer more or less valuable at the moment.
- Recognize an establishing operation as one that increases the value of a reinforcer, such as deprivation.
- Learn common antecedent strategies: choice-making, task variation, and visual schedules.
- Check whether the answer prevents the problem before the behavior occurs.

FAQ

What is an establishing operation?

An establishing operation temporarily increases the value of a reinforcer and increases the behavior that produces it.

Is offering choices an antecedent intervention?

Yes. Offering choices is an antecedent strategy because it changes the conditions before the behavior occurs, often reducing escape-maintained problems.

Can antecedent interventions be used alone?

They are often combined with teaching replacement skills. Any plan should be set by the supervisor and reviewed with data.

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