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Discrete Trial Training Practice Questions for RBTs (PDF)

Discrete trial training (DTT) breaks a skill into short, repeatable trials, each with a clear antecedent, a learner response, and a consequence. This set focuses on how those three parts are delivered and recorded, and on the decisions an RBT makes between trials. You will see items about the discriminative stimulus, the timing of reinforcement, and how to respond to incorrect or no responses. Keep in mind that the correct answer usually follows the written program, so read each stem for the exact instruction the supervisor gave. Read each trial as a short sequence, so you can tell which part went wrong when a learner does not respond as expected.

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Practice questions

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

1. 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

2. In a discrete trial with Mateo, the closed container is presented. The RBT waits for the response and delivers the programmed consequence. What should happen next?

- **A** Give a short break away from the table before every new trial
- **B** Repeat the consequence so the learner links it to the response given
- **C** Score the trial, then pause briefly before presenting the next cue
- **D** Ask the learner to describe why the response earned that consequence

3. Aisha has stopped attending to the cue during rapid trials on matching identical pictures. Which adjustment best preserves discrete-trial quality?

- **A** Keep the usual pace but secure attending before giving each cue
- **B** Combine several cues into one longer instruction to reduce downtime
- **C** Present cues even faster so the learner has less time to look away
- **D** Deliver the reinforcer before each cue to keep the learner engaged

4. In a DTT session, a learner answers incorrectly and the plan says to provide a model, repeat the trial, and record prompted responding. What should the RBT follow?

- **A** Personal judgment call
- **B** Parent preference note
- **C** Error-correction step
- **D** Session summary only

5. In a discrete-trial teaching program, which sequence is most complete?

- **A** Preference, break, graph, note
- **B** Instruction, response, consequence, data
- **C** Timer, interval, total, rate
- **D** Antecedent, crisis, report, discharge

6. The plan identifies Nia's repeating the same question loudly as attention maintained. During the behavior, what implements attention extinction?

- **A** Remove one earned token each time the behavior occurs in session
- **B** Deliver attention on a timer, whether or not the behavior occurs
- **C** Hold back comments, eye contact, and reactions to the behavior
- **D** Have a different adult respond so the RBT can stay neutral

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7. Zara is learning to select the item named by the RBT. After “Show me the cup,” the learner selects a spoon. What should the RBT do?

- **A** Prompt the cup selection and record the first response as an error
- **B** Label the spoon aloud and reinforce the learner for making a selection
- **C** Record the error and present a new target to avoid frustrating the learner
- **D** Take the spoon away and wait for the learner to try again unprompted

8. The plotted values are 50%, 48%, 52%, 49%, and 51%. What trend statement is supported?

- **A** A functional relation
- **B** Increasing trend
- **C** Decreasing trend
- **D** No consistent trend

9. At the supervisor's direction, this assessment component uses a structured caregiver interview. What type is it?

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

10. The client's performance changed in a session where the family had moved to a new home over the weekend. How should this be handled?

- **A** Mention the variable to the supervisor if today's data look worse than usual, and otherwise leave it out.
- **B** Record the observable facts about the variable in the note and inform the supervisor promptly.
- **C** Note the observable variable, then lower today's mastery criteria to offset its effect on the data.
- **D** Promptly tell the caregiver that the variable explains today's results so the family is not concerned.

11. When the RBT says, "Raise your hand to talk," Maya raises a hand before speaking only after the instruction has been given three times. What is the best interpretation?

- **A** The skill may be independent, since no physical or model prompt is used
- **B** The learner may be showing noncompliance that calls for extinction
- **C** The repetitions may be acting as extra prompts that need to be faded
- **D** The learner may have generalized the skill across repeated instructions

12. On the playground, an adult consistently talks to Ethan immediately after shouting repeatedly. Data show the behavior increases when this occurs. Which function best matches this pattern?

- **A** Escape: the adult's talking interrupts whatever task is under way
- **B** Automatic: the adult's reply follows the behavior without fail
- **C** Tangible: the conversation with the adult is the item being obtained
- **D** Attention: another person's response is what keeps the behavior going

Answer key and explanations

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

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

Task: C.3

2. Correct answer: C · Score the trial, then pause briefly before presenting the next cue

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

3. Correct answer: A · Keep the usual pace but secure attending before giving each cue

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

4. Correct answer: C · Error-correction step

The RBT follows the specified error-correction steps.

Task: C.3

5. Correct answer: B · Instruction, response, consequence, data

DTT includes a cue, learner response, consequence, and data.

Task: C.3

6. Correct answer: C · Hold back comments, eye contact, and reactions to the behavior

Function-based extinction withholds the specific reinforcer that previously maintained behavior. Safety and the written protocol remain controlling. Extinction is function specific: withhold the maintaining reinforcer named in the plan.

Task: D.4

7. Correct answer: A · Prompt the cup selection and record the first response as an error

The programmed prompt and correction should guide the correct selection, followed by reinforcement and later fading. Prompt correct selections as planned, reinforce them, and fade help systematically.

Task: C.6

8. Correct answer: D · No consistent trend

The series does not show a sustained upward or downward direction; it is variable or roughly level. Do not force an upward or downward label onto a variable series.

Task: A.7

9. Correct answer: A · Indirect assessment

Indirect assessment obtains information from reports or existing records rather than observing the target directly. Indirect methods report what others recall or have documented; they do not demonstrate function by themselves.

Task: B.3

10. Correct answer: B · Record the observable facts about the variable in the note and inform the supervisor promptly.

Illness, medication, schedule, setting, staffing, and material changes can affect progress. The RBT records observable facts and reports them without diagnosing or discarding valid data. Keep the entry to the details needed to interpret the session, which also protects client confidentiality. Record the context, keep valid data, and avoid causal claims outside your role.

Task: E.3

11. Correct answer: C · The repetitions may be acting as extra prompts that need to be faded

If multiple cue repetitions are required, responding is not under the intended single cue. The team should follow a prompt-fading or transfer plan. Count repeated instructions as prompts when they provide extra help.

Task: C.7

12. Correct answer: D · Attention: another person's response is what keeps the behavior going

Social interaction follows the behavior and is associated with an increase, which is consistent with an attention function. Attention-maintained behavior produces a socially delivered response from another person.

Task: D.1

Study tips

- Name each trial component before you read the answer choices: antecedent, response, consequence.
- Note that the discriminative stimulus should be presented clearly and only once per trial.
- Learn the difference between correct, incorrect, and no-response consequences in your program.
- Use the written program as the standard, because a general rule may not match what the plan says.

FAQ

What are the three parts of a discrete trial?

A trial includes an antecedent or discriminative stimulus, the learner's response, and a consequence delivered by the RBT.

Should an RBT repeat the instruction if the learner does not respond?

Follow the written program. Many programs call for a planned no-response procedure rather than repeated or louder instruction.

Does DTT replace natural environment teaching?

Neither replaces the other. Programs often combine structured trials with teaching in natural routines, as directed by the supervisor.

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