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RBT Measurement: Latency and IRT Cheat Sheet (PDF)

This sheet is for RBT candidates who mix up latency and interresponse time (IRT) on the measurement section. Both are time-based measures, but they answer different questions: latency asks how long passes before a response starts after a cue, while IRT asks how much time passes between the end of one response and the start of the next. The questions below pull only items that use these terms, so you can drill the distinction until the definitions feel automatic. Read each explanation carefully, because many answer choices differ by a single word such as cue, start, or end.

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Practice questions

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

1. The team wants to know the spacing between successive bites. What should the RBT measure?

- **A** Interresponse time
- **B** Frequency
- **C** Duration
- **D** Latency

2. The clinical question is how long the learner takes to begin answering after the end of a question. Which measure should be recorded?

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

3. A supervisor says to record the delay from "touch the card" to the learner touching it. Which measure fits?

- **A** Count total responses
- **B** Time response duration
- **C** Time cue-to-response delay
- **D** Score end-of-interval state

4. A technician records the time from "touch head" to the learner's response. Which measure is being collected?

- **A** Frequency
- **B** Latency
- **C** Percentage
- **D** Duration

5. A caregiver asks for an interpreter for a planning conversation. Which action best respects the family?

- **A** Thank the caregiver, ask a bilingual sibling to interpret, and continue with the meeting as planned.
- **B** Thank the caregiver, pass the request to the supervisor promptly, and confirm an interpreter is arranged.
- **C** Reassure the caregiver, speak slowly and simply, and proceed without an interpreter to save time.
- **D** Note the request, use a free translation app for the meeting, and mention the request to the supervisor later on.

6. Which response is most appropriate when three data points are far outside the client's usual range?

- **A** Promptly ask another RBT how they handled something similar and follow that approach for now.
- **B** Pause unclear steps, run the rest of the written plan, and contact the supervisor promptly.
- **C** End the session and cancel further sessions until the supervisor can come and observe in person.
- **D** Adapt the written plan using personal judgment, since the RBT knows the client's behavior best.

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7. Right after Caleb sorts mail by name, the RBT provides a cup of coffee. Over the next few days, the skill occurs more often. Which process is demonstrated?

- **A** Establishing operation: the consequence raised the learner's motivation
- **B** Shaping: the consequence was given for closer versions of the target skill
- **C** Prompting: the consequence served as a cue that set up the next attempt
- **D** Reinforcement: the consequence strengthened the skill it immediately followed

8. Caleb cannot yet sort mail by name. The plan reinforces responses that meet a criterion raised step by step toward the full skill. Which procedure is this?

- **A** Graduated guidance, with physical help reduced as responding improves
- **B** DRO, with reinforcement for intervals that are free of incorrect responses
- **C** Total-task presentation, with every step practiced on each occasion
- **D** Shaping, reinforcing each closer form while earlier forms go unreinforced

9. While Ethan is motivated for a turn on the swing on the playground, the RBT creates an opportunity for Ethan to wait for a turn. Which teaching feature is most naturalistic?

- **A** Teaching happens within an activity the learner has already chosen
- **B** Trials are massed quickly so many responses occur in a short time
- **C** Reinforcers are earned as tokens and exchanged at a later break
- **D** The RBT uses a fixed script of cues that stays the same across trials

10. After the session, the RBT discovers that materials required by the plan were unavailable. What should happen next?

- **A** Note the problem factually in the session record and report it to the supervisor
- **B** Fix the issue on the spot and mention it if the supervisor asks about the session
- **C** Ask the caregiver how the learner usually does and record that value instead
- **D** Discard the affected session's data so that questionable values stay off the graph

11. Soon after extinction begins, Aisha's screaming becomes temporarily more frequent and intense. Which secondary effect is this?

- **A** Resurgence
- **B** Extinction-induced aggression
- **C** An extinction burst
- **D** Spontaneous recovery

12. An RBT learns that two observers use different response definitions. What is the main reason this should be reported promptly?

- **A** The session may be billed incorrectly if the funder reviews the data sheets
- **B** The learner may notice the recording errors and start to behave differently
- **C** The RBT's own performance rating may drop if the errors are found later
- **D** Decisions may rest on a record that does not match what really happened

Answer key and explanations

1. Correct answer: A · Interresponse time

Interresponse time measures the elapsed time between consecutive responses of the same class. IRT is response-to-response time; latency is event-to-response time.

Task: A.1

2. Correct answer: C · 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

3. Correct answer: C · Time cue-to-response delay

Task A.1 includes latency, which is time from a cue to the start of a response.

Task: A.1

4. Correct answer: B · Latency

Latency is time from a cue to a response.

Task: A.1

5. Correct answer: B · Thank the caregiver, pass the request to the supervisor promptly, and confirm an interpreter is arranged.

Cultural humility is ongoing self-evaluation, listening, and learning. RBTs work directly with their supervisor on cultural responsiveness and any needed training (1.07), and when a bias may affect services they take steps and document them (1.09), without assuming neutrality, avoiding discussion, or stereotyping. Cultural humility is a continuing practice of reflection, listening, and responsive learning.

Task: F.10

6. Correct answer: B · Pause unclear steps, run the rest of the written plan, and contact the supervisor promptly.

When training, data, or procedural concerns arise, the RBT seeks and prioritizes timely clinical direction. Safety and the written plan guide what can continue while clarification is obtained. When a task is beyond the RBT's training or competence, the supervisor should hear about it right away, and that conversation should be documented. Uncertainty is a signal to seek timely direction, not to improvise or conceal.

Task: E.2

7. Correct answer: D · Reinforcement: the consequence strengthened the skill it immediately followed

A stimulus was added immediately after the response, and future responding increased. That pattern defines positive reinforcement. Classify reinforcement by its effect on future behavior, then note whether a stimulus was added or removed.

Task: C.1

8. Correct answer: D · Shaping, reinforcing each closer form while earlier forms go unreinforced

Shaping reinforces successive approximations toward a target response. Shaping changes one response dimension through successive approximations.

Task: C.10

9. Correct answer: A · Teaching happens within an activity the learner has already chosen

Naturalistic teaching embeds instruction in ongoing activities and uses relevant motivation and natural outcomes. Naturalistic teaching follows motivation and uses outcomes connected to the activity.

Task: C.4

10. Correct answer: A · Note the problem factually in the session record and report it to the supervisor

Integrity problems should be documented and communicated promptly so the record and future implementation can be addressed appropriately. Never repair uncertainty by inventing data; document and escalate it.

Task: A.8

11. Correct answer: C · An extinction burst

A temporary increase in frequency, duration, or intensity after extinction begins is an extinction burst. An extinction burst is a temporary escalation, not proof that the plan should be changed independently.

Task: D.6

12. Correct answer: D · Decisions may rest on a record that does not match what really happened

Unreliable measurement can obscure real patterns and lead the team to make decisions from inaccurate data. Data quality matters because treatment decisions depend on the record.

Task: A.8

Study tips

- Write both definitions on one card and say, in your own words, what starts the clock and what stops it.
- Before you answer, identify the anchor event named in the stem, such as the cue or the end of the prior response.
- Practice with a timer and a short scenario each day until you can classify a case in a few seconds.
- Watch for the word 'after' in a question; it often signals latency rather than IRT.

FAQ

What is the simplest difference between latency and IRT?

Latency is measured from a cue or antecedent to the start of the response. IRT is measured from the end of one response to the start of the next response.

Do I need to memorize formulas for this section?

Focus on the definitions and what each measure starts and stops on. Scenario-based questions are more common than formula recall.

Is this cheat sheet official material?

No. It is an independent summary written for practice and does not come from the certifying body. Confirm definitions against the task list and your training materials.

Turn this sheet into a real exam rehearsal

The free mock exam runs on the clock and shows which task-list areas still cost you points.

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