The use of a supervision curriculum for improving behavior technician performance

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Abstract

The training of behavior-technicians is a priority for ABA-based home-service delivery. If the acquisition of technical competencies and theoretical knowledge is important, their maintenance and their daily practical use have predominant importance. The supervision of behavior-technicians by the behavior analyst-supervisor is therefore essential. However, it's necessary that the behavior analyst-supervisor be able to rely on a clear reference framework of observable and measurable behaviors to objectively measure the skill level of the behavior technician. To increase the frequency of behavior to occur in the future, it must be reinforced. That's why it's necessary to ensure the maintenance of the skills and the improvement of the behavior-technicians by facilitating the reinforcement of their competence by the behavior analyst-supervisor with appropriate and clear feedback. To reach this goal, we have developed a direct supervision curriculum. This curriculum was used with 2 behavior-technicians, who were trained by the Behavior Technician Training Program (BTTP), to maintain or increase their performances. This curriculum of supervision uses the same data collection as the BTTP. The results of the supervision curriculum show good maintenance or improvement of the competencies of the behavior technicians.

Description

The curriculum of supervision includes different parts to monitor the current level of mastering skill of the technician:

- Monitoring of the theoretical knowledge based on the behavior technician task list once a year. The goal is to reach 80% at the multiple-choice question test. If the result is under 80%, a special program is designed in the function of the area of knowledge which needs to be review.
- Monitoring by Trial-by-trial-IOA of data of acquisition programs between the technician and the supervisor. The criterion is to stay above 90% agreement.
- Monitoring by Total-count-IOA of the frequency of behaviors between the technician and the supervisor. The criterion is to stay above 80% agreement.
- Monitoring of practical skills classed in 29 categories based on the behavior technician task list and on the behavior technician mission. Each category is divided into different competencies to give specific feedback.
- Pace of intervention is measured by the number of learning opportunities given by the technician per minute (calculated in 15-minute intervals during the session). The criterion is between 2 and 5 per minute.

This curriculum contains too a feedback part per week to note positive feedback and the future objectives (monitored by probe during the next supervisions).

This curriculum was used during one year with two technicians. The technician keeps his/her curriculum to always have the data of his/her competency in addition to the verbal feedback given by the supervisor during sessions.

Results

The 2 technicians maintained their competencies during the year. When a technician comes below a criterion (fig.1-2-3-6-7), it needs only one session to meet the criterion again. Only for one technician, for trial-by-trial IOA it needs 3 sessions.

Discussion

The supervision curriculum seems to be efficient for these 2 technicians for maintaining and improving their competency. But, before large-scale use of this supervision curriculum:

- It should be assessed with more technicians.
- The supervision should be assessed independently with other technicians and other supervisors in different settings of application of the technician's job.
- An experimental A-B-A-B design could be used to see the difference in maintenance and improvement of technician's skills in each domain on the utilization of the supervision curriculum with the keeping of the curriculum by the technician (A) and the utilization of verbal feedback during session alone (B).
- A research on the anxiety and the burn out in behavior technicians with different settings of supervision can be a good addition to improve the supervision methods to keep behavior technicians in good health, to keep their motivation, their good works and limit turn-over in behavioral teams.

References

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Data

Trial-by-trial-IOA

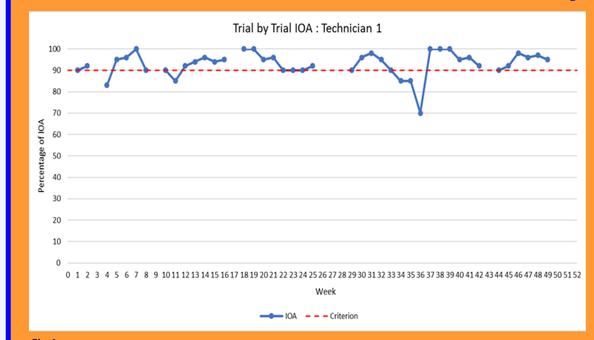

Fig.1

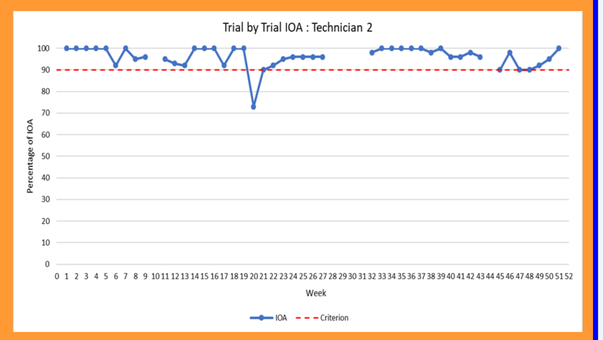

Fig.2

Total-count-IOA

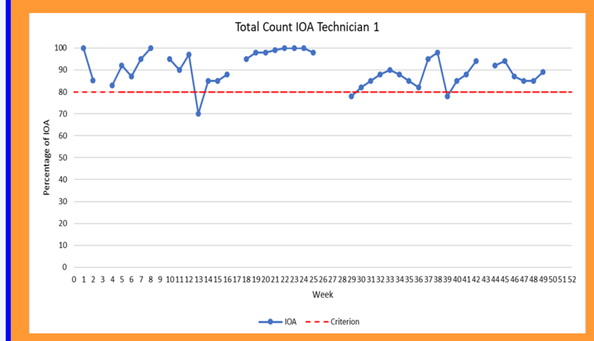

Fig.3

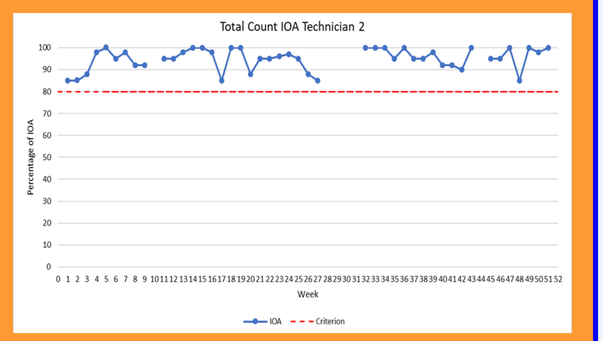

Fig.4

Practical skills

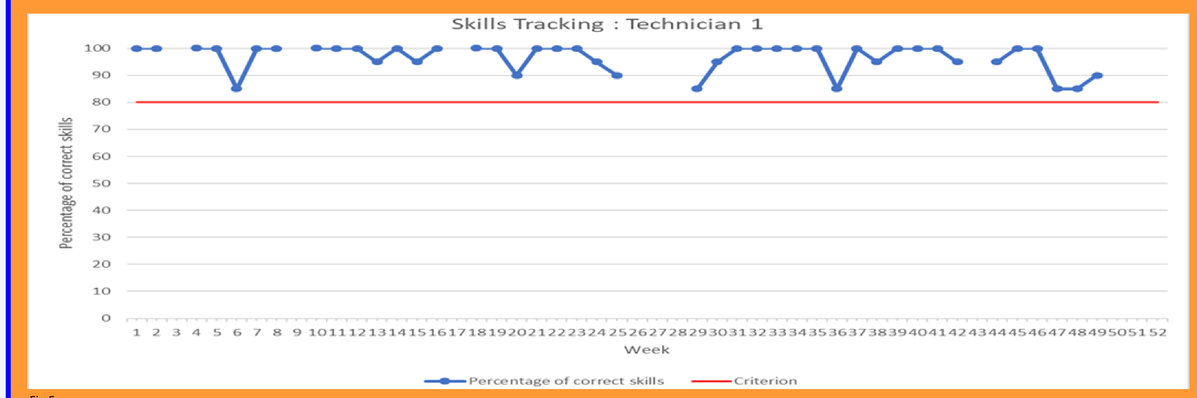

Fig.5

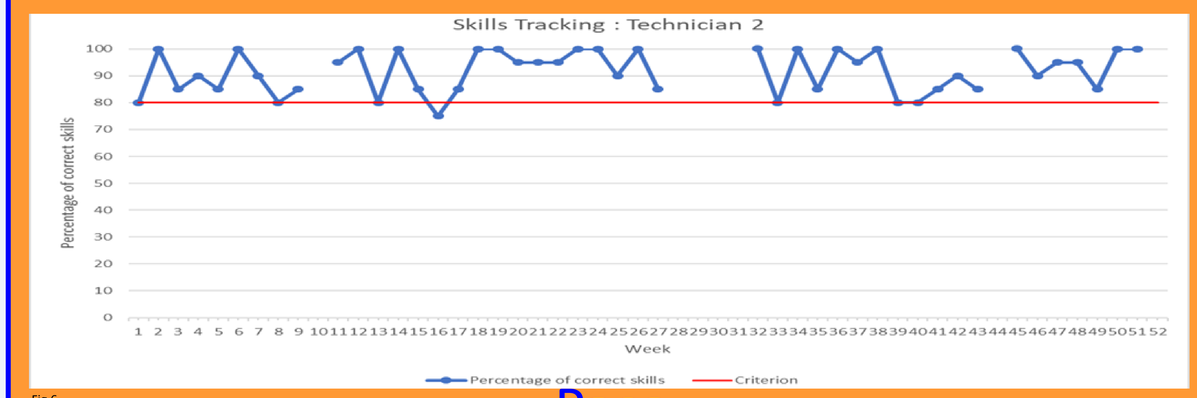

Fig.6

Pace

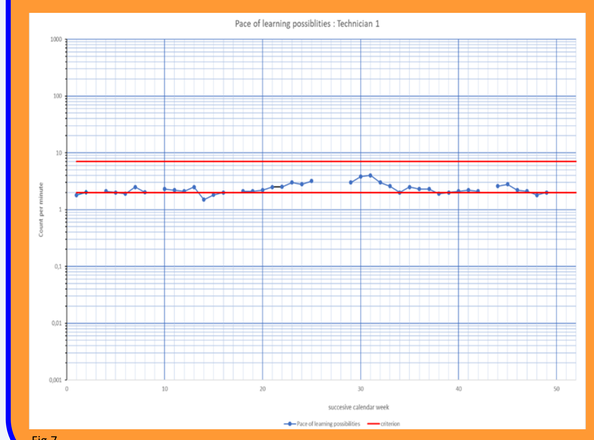

Fig.7

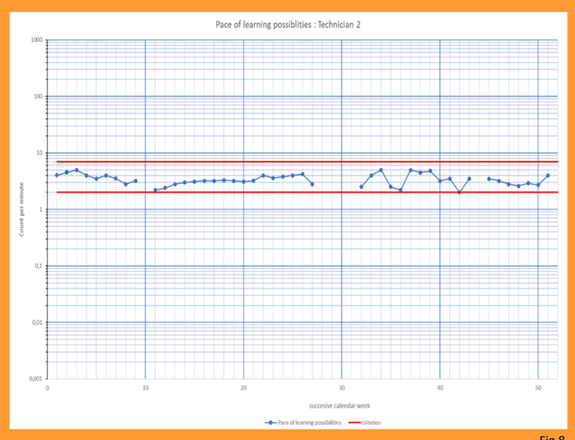

Fig.8