Partial Interval – Description, Procedures, & Example

When the behavior that you are looking at is not easily counted, you can measure the behavior by counting the number of time-intervals in which the behavior occurred. A behavior is not easily counted when:

- It is difficult to tell exactly when the behavior begins or when it ends, or
- It occurs at such a high rate that it is difficult to keep a count on it.

If this behavior happens so quickly that it is hard to catch (the behavior itself does not last for a long time), you may use the Partial Interval method to measure this behavior: You can look to see whether or not the behavior occurs at some point in each time interval. You should note that you will need some timing instrument such as a wall clock, wristwatch, or stopwatch in order to keep track of the time intervals.

Examples of behaviors that you can measure using Partial Interval include praising others, making a particular comment, making a certain gesture, walking by a particular place, ....

Procedures

At the meeting:
- Write down the behavior that you will be looking for and its definition
- Write down how long you will be observing every time: Total Observation Time
- Divide the total observation time into 10 same length intervals; write down the length of each interval
  - All intervals need to be the same length: Intervals can be from a few seconds long up to a few minutes long (less than 11 minutes)

  Note: Total observation time and length of intervals need to be the same each time that you observe
- If the team decides on an intervention (meetings 2 or 3), enter it in the box provided (p. 2)

After the meeting:
- Enter the date of your observation
- Make sure that you have your timing instrument available prior to beginning your observation
- Keep an eye on your timing instrument to keep track of the intervals
- During each time interval:
  - Look to see if the behavior occurs
  - Once the behavior occurs, place a checkmark (√) for that interval
  - If, at the end of the interval the behavior did not occur, place an X for that interval
- At the end of your observation time, total the number of checkmarks (This is what you graph)

**Example**

**Behavior:** Saying something nice

**Behavior Definition:** Making a statement to a peer or a teacher during class time, in a pleasant tone, which includes either praise or politeness, for example saying “you did well” or “excuse me”

**Total Observation Time:** 20 minutes  
**Length of each interval:** 2 minutes

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<th>Interval #</th>
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Total times behavior occurred: 3
Partial Interval Form

Student's Name: ________________________   Teacher: ________________________
Subject/Period: _________________________ Date(s): _________________________
Next meeting Date/Time/Place: _________________________

Procedures: For directions on how to fill out this form, please look at p. 1
* If you need more space, please make copies of this form
* Bring this information to the next meeting

Behavior (From 1st Meeting): _____________________________________________
Behavior Definition (in specific, observable, measurable terms):
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Total Observation Time: ________ Length of each interval: ________

Intervention (From 2nd or 3rd Meeting):
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

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Date | Interval # | Total times behavior occurred (✓) |
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<th>Total times behavior occurred (✓)</th>
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