

DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING (DBR): AN OVERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

By Ajlana Music, T. Chris Riley-Tillman, & Sandra M. Chafouleas

What is Direct Behavior Rating (DBR)?

Direct Behavior Rating (DBR) refers to the rating of one or more specified behavior(s) at least daily and the sharing of that information with someone other than the rater. For example, a teacher might use a DBR form to rate how well Johnny paid attention in math class. Then, the teacher might share that rating with Johnny and, as part of an intervention, link a consequence (e.g., a sticker) to that rating. DBR tools have a long history of use as a component of behavior support plans (e.g., self-management, behavior contracts) and are also used to collect information about behavior change over time (e.g., monitoring effects of medication for Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder). Other common terms for DBR tools have included home-school note, good behavior note, behavior report card, etc.

Why is DBR appealing?

DBR can be appealing from a communication standpoint as the ratings can provide a simple, inexpensive, and flexible method of providing frequent feedback about behavior among students, parents, and teachers. Another appealing aspect of DBR is that use requires only minor change to existing classroom practices. DBR form completion time has been estimated to be between **10 seconds and slightly less than 1 minute per student**, depending on the number of behaviors being rated. Thus, DBR data can provide a quick assessment of relevant behaviors, especially those not easily captured by other means.

Another reason for the appeal of DBR relates to the connection between data collection and intervention – DBR may serve both purposes! When used to communicate information about student behavior across settings, the home environment can offer an opportune setting to increase the number of potential contingencies and promote generalization of school-based intervention efforts. For example, parents may choose to provide reinforcers (e.g., movie, family outing) depending on if rating goals were met. Additionally, DBR can help increase communication between teachers and students, offering an opportunity to teach expected behavior and even have students participate in independent rating (e.g., self-monitoring). In summary, DBR offers opportunities for use in purposes related to assessment, communication, and/or intervention.

Potential Benefits of Using DBR:

- Increases communication about behavior among teachers, parents, and students
- Provides “quick” way to assess student behavior
- Repeated assessments can be used to monitor behavior change over time
- Demonstrated effectiveness as part of an intervention package
- Efficient given “dual” use in both assessment and intervention purposes

Why is data collection important, and what do I do with the obtained data?

Given that intervention effectiveness can be difficult to predict, we need ongoing sources of data to inform us about progress toward intended goals. DBR offers potential for collecting “quick” data across a wide variety of cases. Obtained data can then be quantified and compared for both summative (pre/post) and formative (on-going) assessment purposes. For example, DBR data of Susie’s disruptive behavior over the past week can be summarized into a statement of average rating (e.g., 6 out of 10 points) or be used to determine the most likely period of high or low disruption if multiple ratings per day are taken (e.g., just before lunch). Data are

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Downloadable at www.directbehaviorratings.org.

summarized relevant to the DBR scale used to rate behavior. For example, rating information might be plotted on a line graph, with the gradients along the y-axis showing the DBR scale (e.g., 0-10) and observation period on the x-axis (e.g., Monday, Tuesday, etc.).

How is a DBR completed?

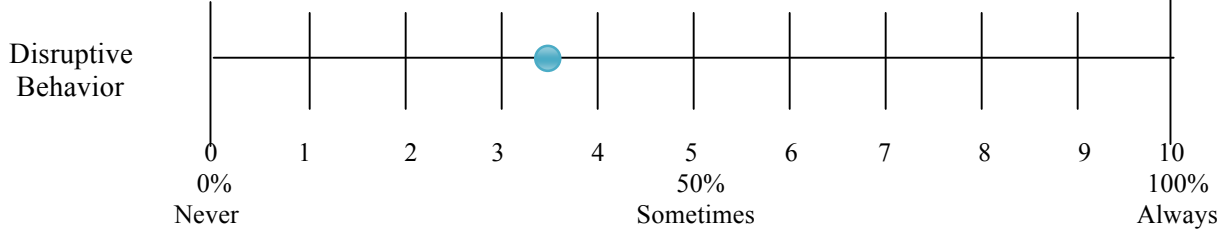
Step 1: Complete the top of the DBR form (e.g., Date, Student, Day of Week).

Step 2: Define the observation rating period (e.g., 9:00am – 9:45am) and activity (e.g., independent work).

Step 3: Determine whether to rate an additional behavior (e.g., sleeping, tantrums). If so, complete the “optional behavior” section; this includes defining the behavior and completing information about the DBR scale (i.e., scale anchors, type of rating).

Step 4: Immediately following the observation period, rate the student’s behavior (e.g., percentage of time displayed, total number of times displayed).

Example 1: Mrs. Smith is estimating the *percentage* of time that Emily displayed disruptive behavior during math (10-10:44am).



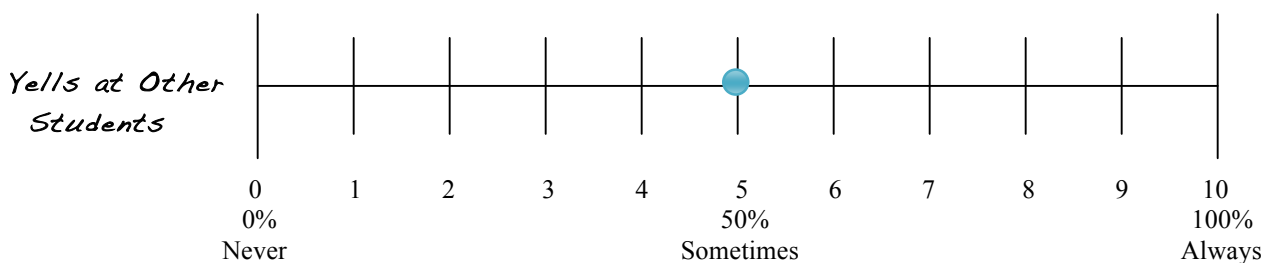
In this example, Emily displayed disruptive behavior 35% of the total observation period.

Example 2: Mr. Green is estimating the *intensity* of disruptive behavior displayed by during science class (1:12-1:50pm).



In this example, John’s behavior during science was rated at 6, which represents moderately disruptive

Example 3: Mrs. Wright has chosen to add the behavior “*Yells at Other Students*” and is estimating the *percentage* of time Sam displayed this behavior during language arts (8:30-9:25am).



In this example, Sam yelled at other students about 50% of the observed time.