

# The Application of Behavior Contract in Education

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doi:10.56397/RAE.2023.03.10

## Abstract

Behavior contract is the agreement of the relationship between the completion of specific behavior and the acquisition and distribution of specific rewards. This method can be used in education for a variety of behavior changes, such as to improve individual learning habits, academic performance, weight control, daily habits and so on. It is also conducive to the improvement of individual self-management ability. In the implementation of the behavior contract, the educator and the educated must respect each other and agree on the relevant content through the form of consultation. This helps them to enhance the self-binding behavior of the parties and make them more willing to comply with the terms of the contract. Whether to make the contract public or not, educators should handle it carefully according to the personality characteristics of the parties and the characteristics of the acts in the contract. Educators also need to obtain the consent of the parties before making public the deed of conduct.

**Keywords:** behavior contract, application, education

## 1. Introduction

It is necessary for psychology to acknowledge the fact that no single theory or paradigm can encompass the vast scope and full complexity of human behaviour. Understanding the different schools of theory allows us to understand complex human behavior more objectively from different perspectives. At the same time, these theories also provide a theoretical basis for behavior change.

In any behavioral contract, it is critical that an individual receives reinforcements in a timely manner after successful completion of a task. Timely reinforcement is to let the individual as soon as possible to know the results of their behavior or progress. The educator tried to reward them accordingly. Timely reinforcement gives encouragement to the individual and gives him or her confidence and motivates him or her to continue working.

## 2. Behavior Contract and Its Theoretical Basis

### 2.1 Behavior Contract

A behavior contract is a special contract. The contract specifies the relationship between the completion of a particular action and the acquisition and award of a particular reward. This method can be used to correct many kinds of behavior, such as improving individual's study habit and academic achievement, weight control, daily habits and so on.

In terms of the scope of its application, it can be divided into the behavior contract applied to the school environment, the behavior contract applied to the family and the behavior contract applied to the clinical intervention. Kindergarten teachers in kindergarten do well in the hope of what kind of reward reached consensus. For example, children can get praise, recognition or small stickers for not wasting food or returning

toys after playing with them. They can be teacher's assistant during a spring outing. This is the behavioral contract of the school environment. At home, it can be used for children's good habits of living habits, eating habits, good social interaction and other training reached consensus and agreement. These are the family's behavior contract. People with diabetes voluntarily sign a health-care contract to establish a health record. This is the behavioral contract for clinical intervention.

From the point of view of its contract form, behavior contract can have two forms. One is a one-way contract and the other is a two-way contract. A one-way contract is a unilateral agreement on an individual's behavior, while a two-way contract is usually a mutual agreement between two or more people. Two-way contracts are often more common. The teachers in kindergarten do well in the hope of what kind of reward reached consensus. This is one-way contracts. One-way agreement is for young children or people with diabetes. The child and parents make a behavior agreement to solve the problem and to improve the parent-child relationship. This is a two-way contract.

## *2.2 The Theoretical Basis*

Skinner developed the operant classical conditioning theory, which states that humans and animals act on the environment in order to achieve certain goals. When the consequences of such an action are favourable to him, it will be repeated in the future. When the consequences of such an act are adverse to him, it diminishes or disappears. People can modify their behavior by reinforcing the consequences of their actions. This is known as reinforcement theory, which is also known as behavior modification theory.

Reinforcement theory helps us to understand and guide people's behavior. There are consequences to an action. These consequences may determine to some extent whether the behavior is repeated. The application of reinforcement theory in behavior change includes increasing the frequency of response to good behavior and decreasing the frequency of response to bad behavior.

Skinner believes that children's psychological development is the result of environmental education. Reinforcement theory discusses the relationship between stimulus and behavior. Its goal is to predict and control people's behavior without inferring people's internal mental processes and states. However, strengthening the theory of control, mainly refers to external factors added to the environment. As to how such external factors act through people's cognition and psychology, the reinforcement theory has not been emphatically explained.

## **3. The Application Process of Behavior Contract in Education**

### *3.1 Set the Task*

In the process of making the behavior contract, the task to be accomplished by the individual should be agreed first. The core of a task is the behavior that an individual needs to perform. It could be a specific behavior (put book back on the shelf after reading it). It could be a set of behaviors. For example, one-way contracts for good behavior in kindergartens, the behaviors that children need to accomplish include self-care ability such as self-dressing and self-washing, positive social behaviors such as being willing to share. In this task, children need to complete a series of behaviors.

The level to which an individual accomplishes a task is considered to be the most critical and important component of the entire behavioral contract. The content of this part is often described in detail by the behavior contract. If the individual needs to achieve a clear step-by-step list or the individual needs to complete the sub-task can be clearly written out, it helps to check the individual's behavior in a given time. If there are special considerations for the project, it also asked to write out in this section. For example, some behavior requirements to achieve a level are different from ordinary young children.

### *3.2 Set Reward*

Tokens are commonly used in behavior contracts. Tokens can be exchanged for rewards or favorite activities after reaching a certain amount. The use of tokens can make the quantity of rewards and the quality of positive behavior of young children corresponding. At the same time, tokens are not as easy to satisfy as the original reinforcements, resulting in the failure of reinforcements. The delayed gratification caused by tokens also contributes to the development of children's self-control.

Tokens are symbolic reinforcements. Small red flowers, small stars or cartoon stickers can be used as tokens. When the child does what is agreed upon in the contract, the educator issues them an equivalent amount of tokens as reinforcements. Children can exchange a certain amount of tokens for a favorite reward or activity. This link needs to be negotiated. Each person has his own characteristics and personality. Their needs are also different. They also respond differently to specific rewards. For example, the educator may ask the child to say or write out what he or she likes best in order. Then, educator negotiate with the child on the basis of what he or she answers to determine what is acceptable to all to issue reinforcements and the number of reinforcements issued and other related content specific agreement. Educators can also agree on additional things, such as what

additional reinforcement a person will get if the behavior goes far beyond what was originally expected.

For the investigation of reinforcements, educator can use the reinforcements questionnaire to investigate the things and activities that the behavioral parties prefer. The behavior contract may list his favorite thing, activity or other special reward in the list.

The behavioral contract must specify how many reinforcements are available after the individual has successfully completed the task. Special rewards can also be described. For example, the parties may exceeded the target set and be rewarded.

### 3.3 Draw up Behavior Contract

Some behavior contracts are verbal in everyday life. To express the contents of the contract in written form is more helpful for the parties to further understand and grasp the requirements of the act and to clarify the specific content agreed in the contract. More importantly, behavior contracts in written form are more discreet than oral contracts. Speak without the evidence of words. This is conducive to the parties agreed on the content of supervision and inspection.

In the process of behavior contract drafting, we should pay attention to the appropriate language will be negotiated the content clearly expressed. In the behavior contract, the relevant content of the behavior request, reinforcement or punishment should be clearly written. The language should be concise and clear. The reading ability of the party concerned may be limited. For example, according to the pre-school children's cognitive level and the ability to understand, the use of pictures will be agreed on the content of the performance.

### 3.4 The Execution of Behavior Contract

In the behavior contract implementation process, educators should conduct a detailed record of performance. This helps to monitor the performance of the behavioral contract. It is conducive to the parties to conduct a proper evaluation of the effectiveness of the contract. At the same time, it can also allow the parties themselves to see the change in their own behavior, enhancing confidence.

In fact, the content of the contract of public conduct is that the parties to the conduct have made a public commitment. This causes the individual to feel the outside pressure in the concrete action. Educators can also timely remind the parties should show what behavior at what time. The disclosure of the contract also helps the reinforcement or punishment to be carried out in accordance with the agreement of the contract. All these are beneficial to increase the binding force of behavior contract.

## 4. Conclusion

Although the educator can directly help the individual to determine the tasks that need to be completed according to the behavior displayed by the individual. However, unilateral determination often makes the individual in a passive situation, which is not conducive to the individual to play a subjective initiative. Therefore, the tasks in the behavior contract can be specified by holding formal consultation meetings. Sometimes the child distrusts the parent and an intermediary may be needed. During the discussion, parents and children can each express their full opinions on the tasks they wish to accomplish.

It could be either an oral expression followed by a consultation or it could be written down with the specific content of the act followed by a discussion and consultation on the specific matters listed. In short, educators and children must respect each other which helps to improve the parties to the act of self-restraint. They are more willing to honor the terms of the contract.

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