



# The Relationship Between Allotted Response Time and Compliance in a Girl with Rett's Syndrome



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## Background

- Rett's Disorder
  - Pervasive Development Disorder
  - Normal development for the first 6-8 months of life followed by a slowing or cessation of the acquisition of developmental milestones and by significant deviations in milestones requiring balance (e.g., walking).
- Motoric Limitations
- In discrete trial training, the time interval allowed between the SD and the response is usually 1-3 seconds (Lovaas, 2003).
- Goal of treatment is to increase independent responding.
- Independent responding may be diminished if adequate time to respond is not allotted for children with motoric difficulties.
- **Research Questions:** To what extent does the length of time allotted for independent responding in the context of discrete trial training influence independent completion.

## Method

### Participant

- 5-year-old girl diagnosed with atypical Rett's Syndrome but exhibits some characteristics of Forme Fruste.
  - bruxism
  - hand-clapping
  - seizure activity
  - apraxia
  - retained purposeful hand use and verbal skills

## Dependent Variables

- Number of trials yielding independent compliance during five-minute sessions with one demand being delivered every 30 seconds.
- Compliance was defined as the initiation of the required task without prompting by the experimenter within the designated time period and eventual completion of the task.

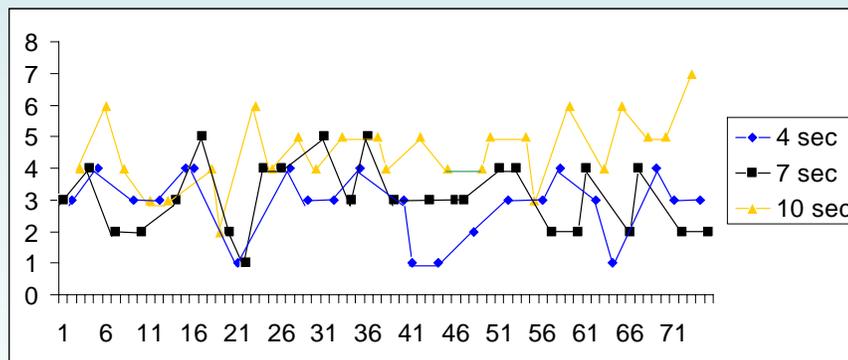
## Independent Variables

- Latency allowed for a correct initiation of the response to occur without prompting following command delivery.
- Levels of the independent variable:
  - 4 seconds
  - 7 seconds
  - 10 seconds

## Procedures

- Alternating treatments design.
- 5-minute conditions with 5-minute breaks.
- Level of the independent variable was randomly assigned for each session.
- Demands that were previously mastered demands but not generalized to other settings or with related stimuli were targets.
- Command delivered every 30 seconds.
- Tasks were similar for each condition and were randomly presented.
- Independent compliance resulted in access to highly preferred reinforcers.
- Prompted compliance resulted in access to medium preferred reinforcers.
- Conditions were in place several hours a day with 5-minute breaks between conditions.

## Results



## Discussion

- Highest number of independent responses occurred in the 10-second condition.
- Anecdotally, Dorothy often exhibited independent compliance after the time-limit expired in the other two conditions.
- Children with ASD often become prompt-dependent. Providing opportunities for independent responding is critical for children with ASD.

## Limitations

- Short conditions with frequent breaks may have resulted in more motivation to work than in the regular classroom environment.
- No opportunity to assess actual classroom performance with a 10-second latency.

## References

- Lovaas, O. I. (2003). *Teaching individuals with developmental delays*. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.