EFFECTS OF INCIDENTAL TEACHING ON ANTECEDENT AND CONSEQUENT BEHAVIOR

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Several studies indicate that incidental teaching is a successful behavioral intervention for increasing social behaviors in children with developmental disabilities. This technique focuses on accurately identifying reinforcers by interrupting initiation towards a desired object and making further interaction with that object contingent upon a desired response. Therefore, no artificial reinforcers are used and teaching occurs in the child's natural environment. Disequilibrium theory, proposed by William Timberlake and Valeri Farmer-Dougan in 1991, suggests that stronger reinforcement effects will be produced as the disruption of baseline rates of child-initiations increase. However, at extremely high rates of interruption, reinforcement rates are expected to satiate. This study determines the magnitude of reinforcement effects when varying degrees of incidental teaching are used with disadvantaged preschoolers in a Head Start classroom.