# Unit 6

Hi Everyone!

In the last unit we reviewed indirect methods of FBA. Remember, these methods involve information gathering from others. This unit, we reviewed the direct descriptive methods, which involve direct observation of the target behavior. Direct descriptive methods in FBA include data collection of the antecedent, behavior and consequence.

Before we can collect data on the target behavior, we must operationally define the target behavior. An operational definition of the target behavior describes exactly what the behavior looks like to an observer. When defining a behavior, practitioners stay away from using broad terms such as ‘defiant’, ‘unorganized’. These are not observable. Even labeling a behavior as aggressive and identifying hitting as the definition would not be sufficient when operationally defining a behavior for the purpose of data collection. Practitioners take the behavior and very specifically define what is observed. So, let’s look at an example of how to define, ‘aggressive’ operationally. Your definition may include the following description. Hitting is defined as any occurrence of making contact with any part of another person’s body with an open or closed hand from a distance of six inches or more. As you can see, this is much more descriptive than simply identifying hitting as the target behavior. Some questions that you may ask when operationally defining a target behavior can include: Can you count the behavior? Will a stranger know what to look for? Can you break the definition into smaller components that are more specific and observable? Keeping these questions in mind when developing operational definitions will help to ensure that your operational definition is solid and that those involved in collecting data know and agree when the behavior is and is not occurring.

Now that we have covered the importance of operationally defining behavior, let’s talk about ways to record behavior. We use frequency, duration and interval methods to record levels of behavior.

Frequency recording involves recording the number of times a behavior occurs. Duration involves the length of time the behavior occurs from when it started to when it stopped. Interval recording involves recording whether the behavior occurred during all or part of a pre-specified interval of time.

While we focus on ABC (antecedent-behavior-consequence) data when conducting a functional behavior assessment, there are specific direct descriptive methods. Your assigned reading this week reviews some of the specific types of direct descriptive methods used in functional behavior assessment. They include the following:

* Functional Behavior Assessment Observation Form (FBAOF) involves directly observing and recording interfering behavior(s) and associated contextual variables. In addition to ABC data, this form takes into account the setting events such tasks, activities, location and effect, like change in rate or intensity of the occurrence of interfering behavior.
* Interval Recording Procedure (IRP) is an assessment procedure involving the direct observation and recording of interfering behavior(s) and associated contextual variables at the conclusion of pre-specified intervals (usually 5, 10, or 15 minutes). The IRP is essentially a modified scatterplot that goes beyond documenting the occurrence of interfering behavior within particular times of the day to: identifying specific settings/activities/tasks in which interfering behavior occurs, recording the magnitude of appropriate behaviors, recording the magnitude of interfering behaviors identifying co-relationships among appropriate and interfering behaviors.
* Task Analysis Recording Procedure (TARP) is used to teach and record a student’s behavior during instruction. The TARP is useful as a tool in documenting the increase in appropriate behaviors while simultaneously decreasing the levels of occurrence of interfering behaviors.
* Task Difficulty Antecedent Analysis Form (TDAF) this is useful under circumstances where other information from interviews, observations, or various other assessment forms such as the Antecedent Variables Assessment Form, has indicated that the presentation of difficult tasks may be a trigger for the target behavior. The results of information collected using this tool might inform intervention such as changing task difficulty (remember MOs) while using reinforcement to improve skill or ability to perform the task.
* Conditional Probability Record (CRP) which allows the observer to simultaneously observe and record the antecedents and consequences of behavior. This tool provides information on the probability of a behavior given a particular antecedent as well as the probability of a particular response following behavior. It allows the practitioner to look at the percentage of intervals that a target behavior occurs in the presence of certain antecedent or consequence conditions.