A DURABLE RECORDING AND FEEDBACK SYSTEM¹

PATRICK J. CARROLL

WILLMAR, MINNESOTA

A durable low-cost data-recording and feedback system is described. Data transcribed with a special pen onto a plastic sheet can be removed only with two solvents. These data can be displayed for feedback purposes without fear of destruction.

DESCRIPTORS: data recording, public posting, feedback, recording and measurement techniques

Data collection in institutions becomes problematic in that recordings are frequently destroyed during behavior eruptions. Data are ripped up, flushed down toilets, hidden, made into airplanes, etc.

While collection of data is a necessary part of any behavior-modification program, the usefulness of those data could be lessened if they are not available to the subjects being observed and recorded. Feedback of information has been shown to be a viable means for modifying behavior (Cooper, Thompson, and Baer, 1970; Leitenberg, Agras, Thompson, and Wright, 1970; Panyon, Boozer, and Morris, 1970; Milby, Willcutt, Hawk, MacDonald, and Whitfield, 1973). Public posting of information has been used in many settings to accomplish this feedback function (Hall, Cristler, Cranston, and Tucker, 1970; McKenzie and Rushall, 1974; Van Houten, Hill and Parsons, 1975). The problems cited earlier would make public posting of data difficult in many settings.

In an attempt to offer data collectors a simple, effective, low-cost, virtually indestructible means for collecting and presenting data, the following system was created. The major component of the system is a 2.5 by 25 by 30-cm piece of stained and varnished lumber or plywood covered with a 0.32 by 22.8 by 29.8 cm piece of Plexiglas. A recording sheet, piece of graph paper or checklist is placed between the plastic and the board. This sheet should be long

enough so that at least two of the screws that hold the plastic can be driven through it to hold it securely in place. Four 1.9-cm #7 phillips head screws countersunk into the plastic are used to fasten the plastic and wood together. A decorative picture hanger or screw eye is used to hang the board on the wall. (See Figure 1.)

Data are recorded directly on the plastic by using a Sharpie pen manufactured by the Sanford Corporation.² This pen contains a waterproof marking substance that is virtually impossible to remove from the plastic without the aid of substances not normally available to the subjects being recorded. Other companies probably manufacture similar pens that would work equally as well. Only two products have been identified that remove the markings without any difficulty. These are A B Dick Spirit Duplicator Hand Cleaner and Shaklee Products Basic I.³ Other products could be used to remove the markings but care has to be taken so that the plastic is not damaged.

Data from the boards can be photocopied or transferred from the recording board to another recording sheet before the information is removed from the plastic.

These data recording and feedback boards have been in use for over 1 yr at a residential treatment center for 31 emotionally disturbed children. The durability of the boards has been exceptional. During the year, only one plastic covering had to be replaced after a subject had removed data with a sharp object and scratched the plastic beyond usefulness. Two other boards had to have plastic replaced because a cheaper plastic covering was used. This material tended to crack and did not stand up as well as Plexiglas coverings.

The total cost of each board ranged between \$2.60 and \$3.00, depending on the source of supply. This low-cost, durable, behavior recording and feedback system has considerable potential as a simple procedure for increasing both the amount of and the usefulness of data collected in any natural environment.

¹Reprints may be obtained from Patrick J. Carroll, Willmar State Hospital, Adolescent Treatment Unit, Box 1128, Willmar, Minnesota 56201.

²Information concerning suppliers of Sharpie pens can be obtained by writing the Sanford Corporation, Bellwood, Illinois 60104.

³Names of supplies of A B Dick Products can be secured by writing A B Dick, 5700 W. Touhy Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60648, or by looking in the white pages of your local phone directory. Shaklee Products are manufactured and distributed by the Shaklee Marketing Corporation, Hayward, California 94540.

FIG. 1

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