Overview:

The method of Direct Behavior Rating (DBR) emerged in the literature as a hybrid of both rating scale and systematic direct observation (SDO) procedures (Chafouleas, Christ, & Riley-Tillman, 2009; Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & McDougal, 2002; Riley-Tillman, Chafouleas, Briesch, 2007). The researchers who conceptualized DBR as a method of assessment provide the following definition.

“DBR is an evaluative rating that is generated at the time and place that behavior occurs by those persons who are naturally occurring in the context of interest…DBR instrumentation and procedures combine the benefits of both behavior rating scales (e.g., efficient data recording) and SDO (e.g., data recording that occurs at the time and place of behavior)...the defining characteristics of DBR include the directness of observation, observation of specific behaviors, and the evaluative component of ratings” (Christ et al., 2009, p. 205).

The defining features of DBR are specified in the tool’s name.

- **Direct** – ratings are recorded immediately at the end of an observation.
- **Behavior** – specific behaviors are rated, such as Academic Engagement and Disruptive Behavior.
- **Rating** – ratings are conducted repeatedly in a systematic and standardized manner similar to behavior rating scales.

How is a DBR completed (see DBR-SIS at the end of this brief)?

1. Complete the top of the DBR form, specifying the student, date, and day of the week under consideration.
2. Define the rating period (e.g., 9:00 – 9:45am) and activity (e.g. independent work) during which the observation will be conducted. The rater will evaluate behaviors observed within this time and context immediately following the rating period.
3. Determine which behaviors are to be rated and review operational definitions. The “Standard DBR-SIS Form” includes Academic Engagement, Disruptive Behavior, and Respectful Behavior. Additional behaviors (e.g., tantrums) can be rated, but must be operationally defined and reviewed prior to observation.

4. Rate the student’s behavior immediately following the observation period.

**Brief review of validity and reliability evidence:**

The research team associated with the initial development of DBR has engaged in a systematic line of research to develop and evaluate DBR as a method to assess behavior in the classroom setting. Funding by the Institute of Education Sciences was provided in 2006 (Project VIABLE, R324B060014), 2008 (DBR-BASIS Development, R324B060014) and 2011 (Project VIABLE II, R324A110017). The following sections provide a brief summary of the research line that establishes DBR as a defensible, flexible, efficient and repeatable method of classroom behavior assessment. There is a substantial research-base (with over 30 peer-reviewed publications to date) and what follows focuses only on the validation of single-item DBR scales for progress monitoring purposes.

- DBR data converges with systematic direct observation, and visual analysis of profiles obtained from both methods is generally consistent. Briesch, Chafouleas, & Riley-Tillman (2010); Chafouleas, Christ, & Riley-Tillman (2009); Chafouleas, McDougal, Riley-Tillman, Panahon, & Hilt (2005); Riley-Tillman, Chafouleas, Sassu, Chanese, & Glazer (2008); Riley-Tillman, Methe, & Weegar (2009)
- DBR data profiles are generally consistent across raters. Chafouleas, Christ, Riley-Tillman, Briesch, & Chanese (2007); Chafouleas, Briesch, Riley-Tillman, Christ, Black, & Kilgus (2010); Chafouleas, Christ, & Riley-Tillman (2009); Christ, Chafouleas, & Riley-Tillman (2009)
- Time series DBR data are sensitive to intervention effects. Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, Sassu, LaFrance, & Patwa (2007); Chafouleas, Sanetti, Kilgus, & Maggin (2012)

An independent review of Direct Behavior Rating can be found on the National Center of Intensive Interventions Progress Monitoring Tools Chart: http://www.intensiveintervention.org/chart/behavioral-progress-monitoring-tools

**Strength and Weakness:**

As discussed within Christ et al. (2009), Direct Behavior Ratings are...

- **Efficient**, as ratings are simple and quick to complete
- **Repeatable**, as they may be used formatively across time as part of progress monitoring assessment
- **Defensible**, given increasing evidence of technical adequacy for DBR-SIS
- **Flexible**, as it can be used across a range of students and settings, as well as for a range of purposes (i.e., assessment, intervention, and communication).

The primary weakness of DBR is a reliance on teacher report. While research supports the accuracy of this data, it is important to also collect other forms of data to track the ratings of specific teachers.
### Materials:

The only materials necessary are a standard DBR-SIS form. This form can be found in PDF version at www.directbehaviorrating.org

### Data coding/sorting/presenting process:

DBR data is typically graphed in a line graph with all appropriate intervention information included (e.g. baseline, intervention). This allows for visual analysis. Basic descriptive statistics can also be calculated and compared to relevant norms (e.g., for percentage of academically engaged behavior within the classroom context).

### Additional Resources/Suggesting for in-depth training materials:

Additional information can be found at the Direct Behavior Rating website (www.directbehaviorrating.org). The site contains information on DBR in general and assessment in particular, as well as provides access to DBR forms and a training system.

### References:


