

Governors State University
Department of Communication Disorders

Guidelines for Single-Subject Designs

1. Establish adequacy of baseline.

- Has the target behavior been measured a sufficient number of times to ensure that it is not changing for other reasons prior to the administration of the treatment?
- Is there potential for contrast in subsequent phases when considering level of behavior, variability, and trends?

2. Measure the dependent variable (i.e., target behavior) more than once during any phase of the experiment.

- Obtain a reliable measure of the target behavior during all phases of the experiment.

3. Establish criterion levels of performance during all experimental phases.

- Does the observed behavior in the current phase permit the potential for contrast in previous and/or subsequent phases?
- What change in behavior suggests a treatment effect?
- What change in behavior suggests partial or complete extinction?

4. Address the following questions prior to commencement of the experiment.

- When will treatment be withdrawn?
- When will treatment be reinstated?
- When will treatment be applied to another behavior, subject, or setting?
- When will treatment be terminated (i.e., no evidence of treatment effect)?
- What is the minimum number of measurements during each phase?
- What is the maximum number of measurements during each phase?

5. Display data using a line graph during the experiment.

- Facilitates a visualization of the functional relationship between the treatment and target behavior.
- Facilitates the determination of “significance”.