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The effects of instructions and reinforcement on thinking and language behavior of schizophrenics

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Abstract

Six experimental groups and 2 control groups ($N=48$) were used to investigate the relative effectiveness of prolonged training of schizophrenics with contingent social and token reinforcement on (a) the level of abstraction as measured on a proverbs task, (b) the percentage of "sick talk" (% ST) emitted in a structured interview, (c) both verbal response classes of proverb abstraction and % ST. Prior to treatment, schizophrenic Ss compared with 20 nonpsychiatric hospitalized medical patients were significantly inferior on the proverbs task and emitted five times more ST in a structured interview. The results indicated that the experimental treatments were effective in decreasing % ST and increasing abstraction to proverbs with token reinforcement being most effective. Evidence for response and stimulus generalization was obtained.



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