

Behavior Change is A Process, Not an Event! Employing Teacher Knowledge and the Social Context to Impact Problem Behavior

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On behalf of the Colorado Department of Education Services and Sopris West, we want to welcome you to what we feel will be an exciting morning workshop. The topic of dealing with challenging student behavior through effective classroom-based and school-wide discipline programs is becoming one of interest to teachers throughout our nation. Over the next few hours, we will examine the changing demands placed upon teachers and how current educational strategies may either help or hinder our efforts. In an effort to maximize the utility of the information presented, participants will be asked to share their experiences and ideas. More importantly, participants will be provided an opportunity to objectively reflect upon their instructional and management systems, in an effort to identify existing strengths and weaknesses.

The content for this workshop was derived from research conducted in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and education. Nevertheless, the ideas and information presented in this text and throughout this workshop represent the views of the presenter, Dr. Richard Van Acker, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Colorado Department of Education Services or Sopris West.

Exploring the Demands of Today's Classrooms for Students and Teachers.

Introductory Activity:

Participants will be asked to identify the types of problem behaviors that children and youth might typically display. The group will then be asked to identify the disciplinary structures these students have typically be exposed to in the past (by home, community, and school) in an attempt to address their challenging behavior.

The nature of the demands placed upon both the teacher and the students in today's diverse classrooms is greater than ever before. Over the past decade significant demographic shifts have resulted in dramatic shifts in the student population of many of our public schools. Increasing numbers of children from culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse groups result in classrooms that present new demands upon our teachers and administrators. The experiences, beliefs, and values of these different groups often clash with those of the typical school culture. Additionally, paradigm shifts in how students with exceptional educational needs are provided services demand that more students with disabilities be educated within the regular division classroom. Thus, the general education classroom is often comprised of students with very different educational needs and abilities. For example, the typical fourth grade class in a suburban elementary school will have students who are still attempting to master letter-sound correspondence, while other students read three to four years above grade level. The various levels of instruction required and the diversity in ability and motivation tax the instructional skills of the teacher. Some students will develop

challenging behaviors they can use to mask their learning problems or to escape learning activities.

There also has been a rise in the number of children dealing with increased emotional stress. Poverty, child abuse and neglect, divorce, and parental substance abuse are only some of the issues that many children must confront in their daily lives. For many of these children, these problems result in serious emotional problems that interfere with their ability to succeed in school.

Despite these shifts in the school population, social demands call for an increased level of accountability on schools for promoting academic achievement. Most states have adopted some form of standardized testing to monitor student achievement. Schools in which large numbers of student fail to post anticipated academic gains are placed on "watch lists". It seems we are at a point where we are asking more of a student population that is less prepared to meet the challenges we pose. It is little wonder that schools report increased levels of student behavior problems, truancy, and teacher turnover. As a result schools must begin to develop systems to support both students *and teachers* to promote success.

Over the following few hours we will explore some key points that might assist school personnel and others as they attempt to address the needs of students who present challenging behaviors. Participants are asked to reflect upon the issues discussed in an effort to identify areas that might apply to their situation or the programs in which they work.

Teaching is a complex task!

If you watch anyone teach for twenty minutes, you should systematic

be able to identify at least two things they did well and two things that could be improved-teaching is that complex.

It should not be surprising that a teacher may not have all the answers when attempting to meet the needs of each student in a diverse classroom. Nevertheless, few schools provide any

feedback to teachers that allow them to reflect upon their teaching. In an effort to prepare the majority of students for state testing activities, curriculum has been intensified and the pace of instruction increased. Students who fail to succeed in the classroom are often "pushed aside" and left behind. Many of these students refuse to suffer in silence - in an effort to meet their needs (e.g., for attention, control, or to escape and avoid undesired activities) they begin to engage in various challenging behaviors. When students fail to meet with academic success both they and the teacher may experience feelings of inadequacy and anger.

One approach to promoting student and teacher success calls for a closer examination of the interaction between the child, the curriculum, and the instructional strategies being employed. Generally, when a student and/or a teacher is demonstrating difficulty, there is a lack of "fit" between two or more of these variables.

Some school systems have developed systems to provide teacher collaboration teams. Personnel employ systematic observation strategies to collect data on student and teacher interaction across the various tasks of the day. This information can be used to identify where students are successful and where they tend to fail. Teachers work with others (teachers,

administrators, and related services personnel) to develop meaningful modifications and supports to promote success.

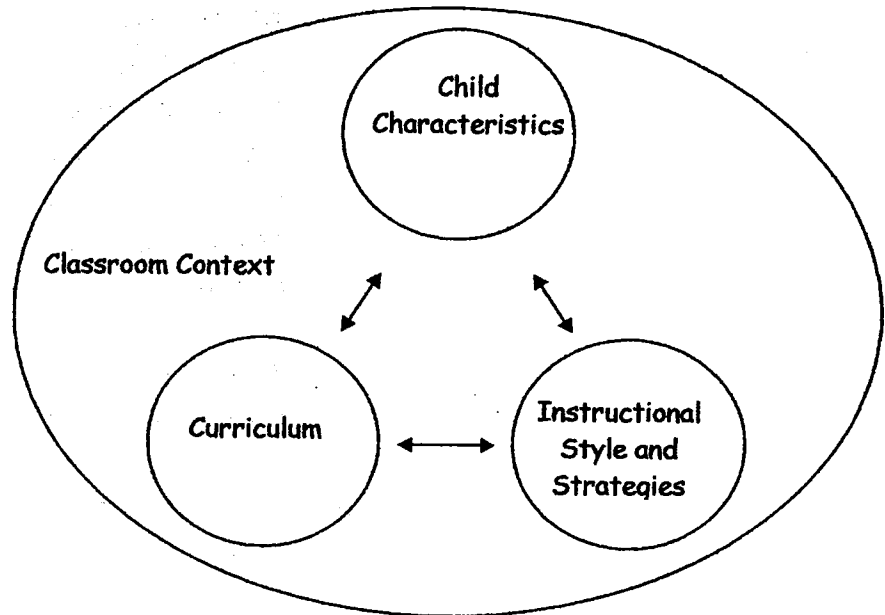


Figure 1. Student success depends upon an appropriate fit between the child, the curricular demands and the methods of instruction employed by the teacher.

Structured Exercise #1.

A select sample of participants will be provided a copy of the first three pages of the article Exploring the School Context when Attempting to Address Student Violence and Aggression. The participants will be asked to read passages aloud to the rest of the workshop participants. The nature of the task presents various challenges to performance that will then be discussed with the group as a whole.

The Curriculum of Non-Instruction

Shores and his associates (1993a, 1993b) have demonstrated how challenging behavior on the part of the student can effectively result in a powerful, but detrimental, change in teacher

behavior. Far too often, when students have demonstrated disruptive classroom behavior when asked to engage in academic tasks, teachers will begin to withdraw from the student. The teacher begins to make fewer and fewer academic demands of the student. The result is the student is not challenged to learn and in return becomes less disruptive. The student is provided a "curriculum of non-instruction". Often neither the teacher nor the student are consciously aware this arrangement has been entered into.

To be effective in our classroom we must become overtly aware of the diversity represented within

Charting classroom diversity

our students. Appendix A of this workshop manual provides participants with a sample chart that can be employed to document the academic and behavioral diversity found in their classrooms. This chart can be a great aid when developing instructional lesson plans. The teacher can compare the instructional and behavioral demands of a proposed lesson with the skills and needs of the students in an effort to recognize necessary supports and aids to make instruction succeed. For example, if a given lesson calls for a significant amount of reading and the student does not have the skill level to be successful, a tape recorded version of the reading material could be provided.

Clearly, instruction is a social interaction between the students and the teachers. As we have seen the behavior of the teacher impacts the student's willingness and ability to learn. In turn, the student's behavior influences the teacher's ability and willingness to teach. Often

students with behavior problems are not particularly interested in participating in activities and exercises designed to promote their academic development. These students would rather engage in disruptive or challenging behavior in an effort to avoid potential failure and embarrassment related to their learning problems.

Unfortunately, far too often, teachers are not prepared to deal with student resistance and conflict. How many participants were provided any pre-service instruction on how to address students who are resistive? How many of you have been confronted with student resistance in the past academic year? In light of a lack of knowledge and skill, too often teachers respond to student resistance in ways that lead to increased student resistance. The resulting power struggle generally leads to a lose/lose situation for both teacher and student.

Behavior Change is a Process, Not an Event!

Behavior is purposeful - Behaviors that may appear problematic for us may be quite useful to the student. Like us, students act to get their needs met.

Structured Exercise #2

Participants will be given some key facts surrounding a student who presents a challenging behavior. The group will be asked to identify typical approaches that might be employed to address this student's behavior. Participants will then be asked to identify positive approaches to behavior change for this student. Common pitfalls in the development of behavior intervention plans will be explored.

Like each of us, students have needs. To get these needs met, children behave. Sometimes we call this misbehavior.

If we hope to effectively address challenging behaviors we must attempt to understand how this behavior might prove effective in meeting specific student needs.

Let's return to the list of challenging behaviors we generated earlier. How have school personnel and others typically responded to these challenging behaviors? Have these suppressionary or punitive approaches proven effective? Why do we continue to employ these strategies?

For those students often identified as "at-risk" or "special" students, many of the common approaches to dealing with challenging student behavior have proven ineffective. Most of these students will not be "punished" out of any behavior.

Lasting behavior change calls for a willingness to teach students how to meet their needs through

How to "trap" a student.

the display of appropriate and socially acceptable behavior. Thus, behavior change calls for instruction. Typically, we will have to "trap" students into displaying desired behavior. What do we need when we build a trap?

First we need effective bait. If we watch carefully, the student will typically show us what will serve as the most effective bait. What does the student obtain through the display of the undesired, challenging behavior? This will prove to be the most effective bait for supporting the desired behavior. For example, if the student appears to obtain peer attention through the undesired behavior - can we find a way to promote increased peer attention for desired responses?

The functions of behavior

Common functions of behavior include:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Attention | Self-Expression |
| Escape or Avoidance | Social Affiliation |
| Power or Control | Justice or Revenge |

Understanding the Social Context of the School - The school represents a unique environment that places tremendous demands upon children, many of whom are ill-prepared to meet these demands.

Structured Exercise #3

One participant will be called upon to perform in front of the group. We will examine the nature of the demands placed upon students when asked to perform publicly. What are the likely rewards to be gained by public participation? What are the risks?

Nothing succeeds like success - so how can we begin to promote the success of our students

Students who are being successful in school seldom display serious problem behavior.

displaying challenging behaviors? This becomes the key question when attempting to address behavior. As teachers we must ask ourselves if we have the knowledge and skills to design and implement effective lessons that employ creative means to motivate student engagement. Can we modify lessons to insure student success, while presenting information at the various levels of instruction (e.g., acquisition, mastery, maintenance, and generalization) required by our diverse student needs.

Why Do We Often Forget Everything We Know About Learning When Attempting to Address Student Behavior?

Social problem solving skills must be learned.

Think back to when you were a small child first learning how to add numbers together. How was this accomplished? Did the teacher simply expect you to already know how this should be done?

4 + 4 + ____

Typically, teachers employ a series of manipulatives (e.g., blocks) and once a child has mastered one-to-one correspondence, begins to show how groups of items can be combined to make larger groups of items. This strategy training is critical to teach the skill.

Similarly, social problem solving skills must be taught to children. Teachers must take the time to provide meaningful instruction around those skills for which children appear to have difficulty. Unfortunately, there are not many good texts available to educators to help them teach social problem solving skill strategies to children within standard academic curricula. Teachers frequently must explore various social problem-solving curricula and adapt the materials to fit their specific needs.

Returning to our addition example, once the strategy has been taught does the teacher simply tell the student to go forth and add? Hopefully not, a good teacher provides guided practice and then a considerable amount of independent practice with care to provide meaningful corrective feedback and

Have you ever made an error when attempting to determine if you have enough money to purchase items in a store?

reinforcement as needed. How many times do you think you have calculated this problem throughout your academic career on various worksheets? Most of us have practiced this particular skill thousands of times. Nevertheless, there are times when we still make mistakes. We will discuss this later in the day.

Now think about your classroom, given the problems you identified previously, how much systematic strategy instruction have you provided to your students? How is guided and independent practice arranged? What types of corrective feedback and reinforcement are applied? How frequently are they administered? Most of us provide little strategy training for many important skills and reprimand for mistakes commonly are more frequently applied than are praise or reinforcement for desired behavior. In fact, it is not uncommon for teachers to provide 6 to 10 times more reprimand to students than praise.

Picture in your mind a student in your classroom that has a particularly difficult time when confronted with a difficult social situation. How would you predict this student might react in the given social situations?

PROBLEM

SOLUTION

Your target student returns _____
recess to find another _____
student has his favorite pen _____
and is using it to write a note. _____

The student is bent over the drinking fountain when someone runs down the hall and bumps the person standing directly in back (waiting for his turn at the fountain. This person falls into your target students causing him or her to hit their mouth on the fountain.

Your target student runs out to join a group of other children who have started a game of kickball. They tell the target student that don't want him/her to play because he or she is too bossy.

The importance of providing systematic instruction and practice of desired social skills is intensified when you think about how many students currently address difficult social situations. The problem isn't one of not having a solution. Most have a very powerful, though often undesired solution to the problems they confront.

This is not unlike the student who has learned something incorrectly. For example, taking our former addition problem, let's say the student had been taught that the correct answer was 9. Somehow the school he attended before coming to your classroom reinforced this error and convinced the student that this was the correct solution. Would it take

$4 + 4 = 9$

more or less instruction to convince the student that $4 + 4 = 8$?

Obviously, it would take more instruction and more practice for this student as they would have to "unlearn" their incorrect response. The same is true for the student who has learned and been reinforced for an incorrect social behavior/response.

Using the Existing Academic Curriculum to Teach Desired Social Problem Solving Skills -
As mentioned earlier, the task of the teacher in our nation's schools is very complex. Most of us find it difficult to accomplish much of what is currently expected of us. Most teachers would find it difficult to work harder - as we already are working very hard. We, therefore, must learn to work smarter. This means whenever possible we must "double dip". That is we must develop instructional activities that accomplish multiple goals. Fortunately, it is relatively easy, with only some simple thought and creativity, to find ways to incorporate social problem solving skill instruction and/or practice into existing academic activities. These activities should take advantage of the student diversity in your classroom and teach desired behavior as part of the academic task.

Examples of instructional strategies that take advantage of student diversity include:

- Cooperative learning (more than simply grouping students).
- Peer tutoring.
- Cross grade peer tutoring.
- Use of team cooperation/competition.

The content for social problem solving skill development can come from a variety of sources.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Special social problem solving curricula.
- Identified within existing materials.
(Bibliotherapy)
- Selected from incidents that arise in the classroom interactions.
- Role plays and structured exercises.

The Importance of Classroom Norms in Dealing with Challenging Behavior - Much of the discussion, thus far, has addressed systems to provide students increased instruction in social problem solving. Many of the strategies discussed involve the entire class of students in specified activities aimed at developing prosocial skills and normative beliefs against aggression. Is it important to involve all the students in a given class in efforts to reduce some challenging behaviors?

Recent data generated from our longitudinal study of aggression, the Metropolitan Area Child Study, would suggest that it is. Figure 1 (provided on the overhead), indicates the change in the level of observed aggressive behavior over a two year period (verbal and physical aggression) as a function of the source of contingency against this type of behavior. That is, what is the effect of peer sanctions against aggression, teacher sanctions against aggression, or both on the overall level of aggression displayed?

The data clearly indicates that peers (and their sanctions against aggression) play an important role in the reduction of aggressive behavior. Teacher sanctions only seem to maintain

aggression where it was upon entering the classroom (one would anticipate aggression to increase if untreated). Unfortunately, most current efforts to suppress aggression (and many other challenging student behaviors) involve teacher only sanctions and do little to develop normative beliefs against aggression in the peer group.

The implications of this research for teachers should be obvious. Clearly our classrooms are frequently composed of some students whose normative beliefs support continued inappropriate behavior. Our curriculum must attempt to foster the development and discussion of prosocial and desired normative beliefs.

How is it that teacher sanctions against aggression could result in the maintenance (or even the increase) of aggression in students? In a recent examination of teacher and student interaction, we discovered that the level of teacher reprimand observed in a classroom in the fall of the year is the best predictor of increased inappropriate behavior by the end of the school year. Moreover, for students identified as at-risk for aggression, teacher reprimand represents one of the only responses that the students can reliably predict. Thus, it appears that reprimand, one of the most frequently employed consequences for inappropriate behavior may serve to reinforce the future probability of the antisocial acts.

Developing Consequences for Undesired Social Behavior - Despite your best efforts in the prevention of disruptive and challenging behavior,

there will be times when students engage in these behaviors and disrupt the classroom. At these times you will have to select an appropriate consequence. Generally, such responses require some sort of direct consequence since planned ignoring could result in an increase in disruption and/or someone being harmed or injured.

When selecting a consequence for a given target behavior, there are several things that must be considered. For example, what function does the target behavior appear to serve for the child. The same behavior displayed by two different children could serve very different functions. One child might display non-compliance as a means of escaping a given task (due to lack of ability or lack of motivation), while another child might display this same behavior to gain attention from the teacher and/or his peer group.

It is very important to understand the function a behavior might serve to insure that the consequence does not satisfy this function. For example, if a student were displaying a given problem behavior to escape a situation, we would not want the consequence to result in his being allowed to escape (e.g., being sent to the office).

Another major consideration when developing a consequence is insuring that we promote the desired behaviors that could serve a similar function for student. For example, if the student seeks attention, we must help him or her develop a means to gain the desired attention in an appropriate manner.

I strongly urge teachers to develop consequences that meet one or more of the following criteria:

Critical dimensions of good consequences.

1. Consequences should maximize efforts to protect, preserve, and further the relationship you have developed with the child. This doesn't mean that you overlook the delivery of a consequence, but the consequence must be reasonable and delivered with care to show respect and concern to the child.
2. The consequence should provide an opportunity to learn the necessary skill to prevent future occurrences of the undesired behavior.
3. The consequence should allow the student to practice a skill or strategy that will prevent future occurrences of the undesired behavior.
4. The consequence should minimize student resistance. That is, care should be taken to employ consequences that can be delivered in private and/or that allow the student to alter his or her behavior without losing face in front of peers.

The consequence should be established in such a way that it can be delivered following *each occurrence* of the target behavior(s). Efforts to minimize attention (a potential positive reinforcer) and/or allowing the student the ability to escape or avoid a given task (a potential negative reinforcer) are important considerations in selecting consequences. Far too often teachers respond to undesired behavior in ways that will actually serve to strengthen the undesired response (more on this later).

The delivery of a consequence must be predictable to be effective.

Returning to our math example, suppose you are attempting to teach $4 + 4 = 8$, and the student incorrectly responds with 9. Would you simply warn him that this is an incorrect response. Typically not, the teacher generally marks each incorrect answer wrong. Thus, the consequence is relatively simple to deliver and is generally not going to result in significant costs to the student. That is, teachers want students to like math so they attempt to promote success rather than failure. This is accomplished, however by careful selection and sequencing of tasks, rather than ignoring incorrect responding.

How long would it take a child to learn that $4 + 4 = 8$ if you only corrected this error occasionally? If the child ever learned the correct response, it would take significantly longer than a consistent approach to error correction.

There are often misconceptions about what we mean by consistency.

Teachers often feel that providing the same consequence for each child following a given misbehavior is what is meant by the term consistency. Unfortunately, this type of behavior management system is seldom effective. Many children display behaviors that look very much alike for very different reasons (e.g., attention, escape, control, affiliation, or revenge). Let's say a teacher uses the common consequence of

Uniform codes of conduct with specified consequences for infractions are often ineffective and counter indicated.

sending a student to the office for swearing and insubordination. Now, if James engages in this behavior to obtain teacher attention, sending him to the office might prove effective. If, on the other hand, he engages in this behavior to escape a given task or situation in the classroom, a trip to the office is likely to increase this behavior in the future.

Learning is significantly related to the number of opportunities provided for responding.

Another critical issue when selecting a consequence is choosing one that does not necessarily impair the student's ability to demonstrate the appropriate or further instances of the inappropriate behavior for significant periods of time. At first this might sound ridiculous, for surely we want to reduce the demonstration of undesired behavior. But remember our task is to teach the student to select a more desirable solution when confronted with a given problem. As in all learning, the number of opportunities that a person is provided to learn is clearly related to how quickly the skill (or concept) will be learned. Thus, we want to provide students with frequent opportunities to experience the given social problem situation and provide reinforcement when desired responses are demonstrated and meaningful (but short) consequences for undesired behavior. This should help maximize learning.

For example, in one school in which I worked, students were punished for fights on the playground by losing recess privilege for 10 school days. Some children routinely were excluded from the playground for most of the school year. How would these students ever gain the skills needed to be successful on the playground? Ultimately we enacted a more progressive set of consequences. The first time the student was observed to engage in socially inappropriate behavior they were issued a 3-5 minute time-out against the school building wall. A second occurrence of undesired behavior during the recess period resulted in the student being assigned to an established playgroup operated by a teacher conducting a structured

game. This teacher was responsible for providing guided practice and feedback to the students in the group. Thus, students could continue to learn the skills needed to be successful in play situations.

Instructional Consequences for Behavior

- **Fighting/Aggression** - Intensive anger management skills training
 - Peer mediation training and assignment as peer mediator
- **Insubordination** - Dealing with authority and understanding consequences skills training
 - Adult mentoring program
- **Truancy** - Assignment to service learning activity with media coverage featuring truant in a prosocial and involved role.

In Most Cases, Teacher Behavior Must Change Prior to Any Change in Student Behavior.

This past year, I was asked to help a teacher develop a management plan for a student who frequently disrupted the class by talking or calling out in class. Often these "talk-outs" were very inappropriate in nature. As I observed the classroom interaction, I recorded each time the student talked-out and the response provided by the teacher. The data is depicted in Figure 2 (below).

Figure 2. Student talk-outs and consequences delivered.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Talk-out | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Consequence | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

1 = verbal reprimand, 2 = ignore, 3 = social response, 4 = time-out

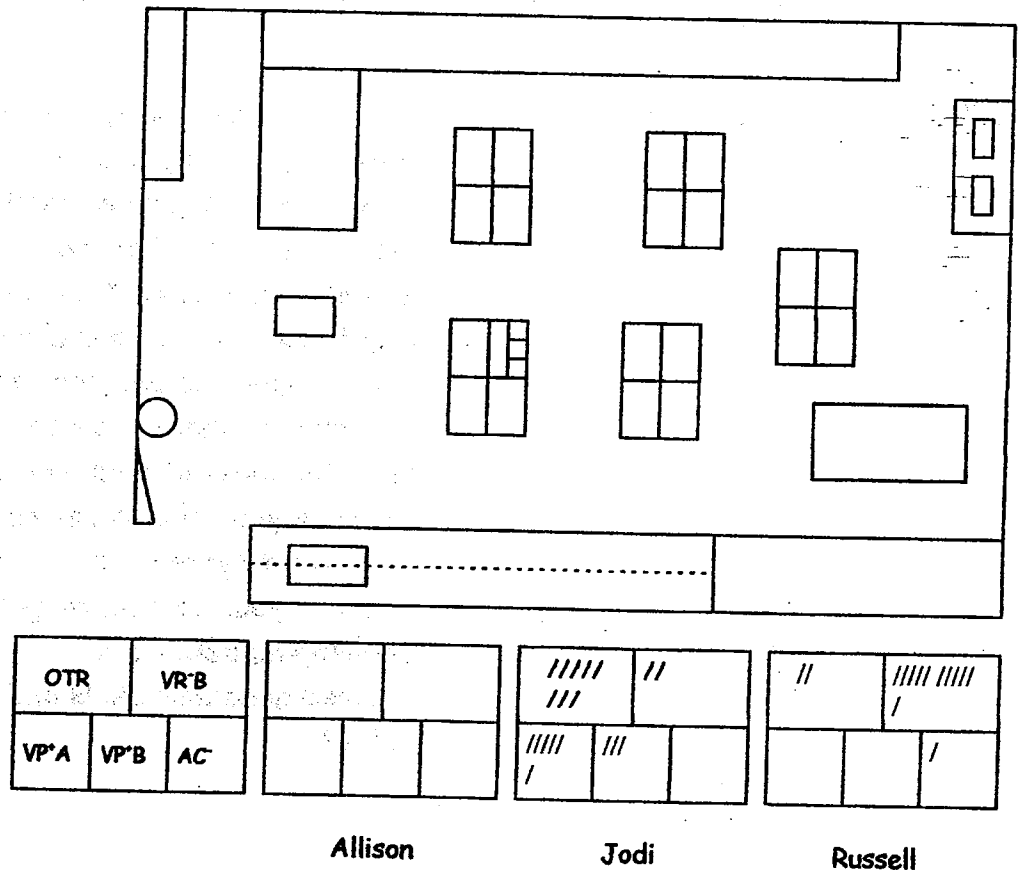
Examine the data presented. What can you say about the nature of the consequences provided for this target behavior? Is the nature of the consequences provided likely to result in any meaningful change in the student's behavior?

The teacher does not appear to have a clear understanding of the function this behavior plays for the student. Does the student want attention, escape, both, or something else altogether. Alarmingly, about 25% of the time, the teacher responds to the student' talk-outs as if this was an appropriate manner to get her attention. This is a schedule of reinforcement that is likely to strengthen, not reduce the target behavior.

When exploring the social context of the classroom for students who display challenging behaviors, I often collect another type of data related to teacher and student behavior. These data are collected on all students in the classroom and relate to classroom participation and teacher response to student behavior. The data collection procedure calls for the observer to make a sketch of the classroom and to indicate each time a student is provided any of the following:

- An opportunity to respond academically (OTR)
- Verbal praise for an academic response (VP*A)
- Verbal praise for desired behavior (VP*B)
- Verbal reprimand for undesired behavior (VR*B), or
- An academic correction (AC).

Figure 3 provides an example of this type of data.



This type of data can be very informative. The sketch of the classroom allows for an examination of potential problems associated with classroom layout (e.g., arrangement of desks, location of instructional materials). The data related to participation allows for an exploration of student and teacher interaction. What are the messages we give various students? If we assume the three boxes on the right relate to three different students who participated in a given classroom activity for a twenty minute period, what do the data suggest?

Structured Exercise #4

Participants will be asked to examine the data presented in Figure 3 and determine what it might suggest about the student's experience in the classroom. Participants will be asked to identify what changes in teacher behavior might be needed to promote student success.

Class-wide behavior management systems

Typically, students will engage in those behaviors that result in the greatest level of reinforcement (either positive or negative reinforcement). For many students teacher attention is a powerful reinforcer. One simple way to examine if your classroom is focused too heavily upon behavior as opposed to academics is to examine where you as the teacher have directed most of your energy and attention. Examine your classroom management system (e.g., point systems, reprimand systems). How much of your system targets suppressing challenging behaviors, as opposed to developing desired academic skills and social problem solving skills?

The "60-30-10 rule"

I strongly suggest that any classroom management system should call for 60 percent of the teachers attention and/or point delivery to be made for desired academic behavior (e.g., on-task behavior, academic engagement, work completion¹, accuracy of work, and improved academic performance). An additional 30 percent of teacher attention should focus upon rewarding desired social problem solving skills (e.g., ignoring others attempts to disrupt, conflict negotiation, altruistic behavior). Undesired behavior should only involve approximately 10 percent of the teacher's time and attention. Consequences for inappropriate behavior should be simple, delivered quickly, and minimize teacher attention to the greatest extent possible.

¹ Remember if your goal is to develop and support the intrinsic motivation of the student it is critical to actively support task engagement and persistence (the process of working) not only task completion. If our attention focuses upon correct task completion many students will not risk attempting work they feel is beyond their current level of mastery.

No one Likes Change but a Wet Baby!!

Change doesn't just happen because you have pointed out the need for change. Typically, school personnel will have to develop plans and actively support change. Both teachers and students may need accommodations and systematic monitoring to provide feedback related to behavioral change.

We can use technology to help support changes in teacher behavior.

For example, the teacher in the classroom depicted in Figure 3, will generally recognize the importance of attending to Russell, but attending to desired behavior is more difficult than it sounds. How can we support the teacher in his or her efforts to change their behavior? Recently, we have initiated a pilot study where we give teachers a small beeper/timer that they slip into their pockets. The unit can be set to vibrate on a repeated cycle of predetermined length (e.g., every three minutes). This vibration will help cue the teacher to attend to Russell.

In other situations, we have adopted a "bug in the ear" technique to assist teachers in their efforts to change their instructional and/or management behavior. In this approach, a mentor sits in the back of the room and employs a small radio transmitter/receiver unit to talk to the teacher who also wears a transmitter/receiver. This allows the teacher to obtain feedback immediately. The mentor can 'walk' the teacher through the desired approach to instruction or management of a given student or students. Inexpensive systems can be purchased at electronic stores (e.g., Radio Shack).

Some schools have adopted strategies that allow teachers to obtain systematic feedback from fellow teachers. In one study, we fostered a peer collaboration system in which teacher triads surrendered part of their planning periods each week (approximately 30 minutes per week) to observe members of their triad. Once every three weeks each teacher would be visited at different times by two of the other teachers. These teachers might be directed by the host teacher to observe specific interactions (e.g., "Help me with my approach to Johnny.") or observations may be undirected. Each partner was required to identify at least two areas of strength and two areas that could be improved that they would share with the host teacher. This system was so successful that five years after the sponsored intervention ended, over 60% of the teachers were still participating in the collaboration program with no direct administrative support.

Other school systems have identified specific staff members to serve as teacher support personnel. These individuals can be asked to observe classroom interaction to assist teachers identify areas of instruction or management that may need modification. Often these schools make this type of observation a requirement as a part of the Teacher Assistance Team/Pre-referral Intervention process. In fact, some schools have adopted 'automatic triggers' that will serve to initiate an observation and teacher collaboration intervention. For example one school district requires classroom observations for any student following their third referral to the office for discipline or if they receive a failure notice in a given class. An observation

also is required the fifth time any given teacher refers a student or students to the office. This might indicate a teacher who was assigned a particularly difficult group of students or perhaps a teacher who is more prone to 'power struggles' with students. Either way, this teacher needs support.

It is important that these efforts not be seen as an indication of poor teaching. The goal of collaboration is not evaluation. This goes back to the first assumption - teaching is complex and teachers can not be expected to have all of the knowledge and skills needed to address each and every student assigned to their classroom. Moreover, teachers can not observe their own teaching and need assistance to refine their approach with students who are failing academically or who display challenging behaviors.

Obviously, in a short workshop such as this, one can only provide a brief introduction to some of the critical concepts needed by school personnel and others that are attempting to promote the success of students who display challenging behaviors. I hope the information has been helpful and that our time together has been enjoyable. Below are just a few of the readings that might provide the interested participant with more information.

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