



## Technical Assistance Sampler

### ***Behavioral Initiatives in Broad Perspective***

(updated 2016)

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## **I. Keeping a Broad Perspective**

### **A. What is a Behavioral Initiative?**

***Flaunting the rules, vandalizing property, bullying others, acting out in disrespectful, defiant, and violent ways*** -- schools across the country are being called on to do more about such student misbehavior. From the general public's perspective, the incidence of "discipline" problems is far too great; from the perspective of teachers and other school staff and many students, the problems represent additional barriers to teaching and learning. Concern about all this is heightened by the movement to keep special education students in regular classrooms, including those who need special interventions to address behavioral needs.

***How should schools respond to problem behavior?*** In too many cases, the tendency is to overrely on strategies such as denying privileges, detention, and suspension. Too often, such measures are ineffective and even counterproductive. The necessity for schools to improve how they respond to behavioral needs is delineated in the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) which calls for IEPs (Individual Education Programs) to address such needs among children with disabilities early and comprehensively.\* This requirement is a catalyst for schools to enhance the way they address behavioral concerns of all students.

***And so the move to behavioral initiatives.*** In response to increasing need and the deficiencies of current practices, those responsible for public education are now developing behavioral initiatives. Such initiatives emphasize proactive programs to address student misbehavior. They provide families, schools, and communities with reforms and tools to reduce behavioral barriers to learning. In the process, they have the potential to foster school wide approaches to addressing barriers to learning and enhance positive relationships among school, family, and community.

***What does a behavioral initiative look like?*** Because there is no consensus about the characteristics of such interventions, marked variations can be expected as initiatives develop. Some will focus on underlying causes of misbehavior; a few will emphasize holistic approaches; many will focus directly on behavioral interventions and functional assessments; some will emphasize direct and indirect ways to promote student social and emotional development; some will focus on enhancing school and community attitudes, skills, and systems. All will recognize the need for schools and communities to work together. The state of Montana, for example, sees its initiative as assisting "educators and other community members in developing the attitudes, skills, and systems necessary to ensure that each student leaves public education and enters the community with social competence appropriate to the individual regardless of ability or disability." The aim is to develop students who are "personally and socially ready to participate as productive citizens." This is to be accomplished through "a comprehensive staff development venture created to improve the capacities of schools and communities to meet the diverse and increasingly complex social, emotional and behavioral needs of students."

*This sampler is designed to provide a quick overview of some resources that may be of use to anyone who is interested in the topic of behavioral initiatives.*

\*See the following pages for discussion of what IDEA '97 mandates related to behavioral needs.

## I. Keeping a Broad Perspective (cont.)

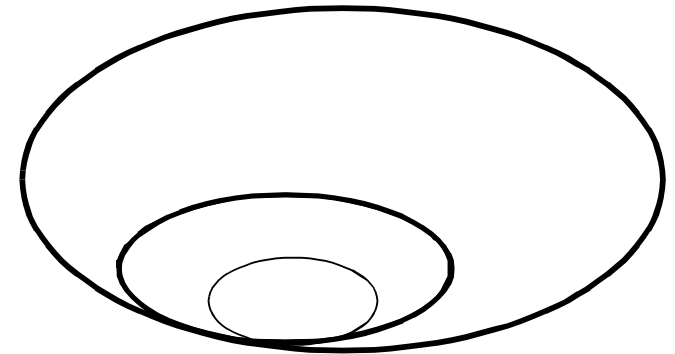
### ***B. Putting Behavioral Initiatives in Broad Perspective***

#### **Comprehensive, Multifaceted, Integrated Programs to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development**

Designed to address *all* barriers to learning and healthy development (external as well as internal) through systemic reforms that restructure how schools and communities work together. Emphasis is on establishing a full continuum of programs and services and a caring school culture (prevention, early-after-onset intervention, and treatment for chronic, severe, and pervasive conditions)

#### **Broad-Band Behavioral Initiatives**

Designed to address behavioral problems of *any* student in order to minimize misbehavior that interferes with effective teaching and learning. Emphasis is on establishing schoolwide programs and services for prevention and early intervention



#### **Narrow-Band Behavioral Initiatives**

Designed mainly to respond to behavioral needs as delineated in the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) which calls for IEPs (Individual Education Plans) to address such needs among children with disabilities early and comprehensively

## I. Keeping a Broad Perspective (cont.)

### Common Behavior Problems at School: A Natural Opportunity for Social and Emotional Learning

(<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/behaviorsocialemot.pdf>)

*Students misbehave.*

It's a daily fact of life in classrooms. What's a teacher to do? More to the point: What *should* a teacher do? That is a question for all of us.

To answer the question, we need to broaden the context from concerns about consequences, social control, removing "triggers," and social skills *training*.

The context must be the goals of schooling. And the goals must include not only academic learning, but the promotion of healthy social and emotional development.

In some form or another, every school has goals that emphasize a desire to enhance students' personal and social functioning. Such goals reflect an understanding that social and emotional growth plays an important role in

- enhancing the daily smooth functioning of schools and the emergence of a safe, caring, and supportive school climate
- facilitating students' holistic development
- enabling student motivation and capability for academic learning
- optimizing life beyond schooling.

With all this in mind, efforts to address misbehavior provide *natural*, albeit challenging, opportunities to promote social and emotional development and minimize transactions that interfere with positive growth in these areas.

Support staff need to grab hold of these opportunities as an avenue for working with teachers in a new way. Whenever a student misbehaves, personal and social growth should become a major priority in deciding how to react. The teacher's work with the student must expand beyond academics and standard curriculum.

The attached tool outlines steps teachers can learn to implement so that the response to misbehavior expands student goals and processes to ensure appropriate social and emotional learning. As can be seen, this means that consequences are formulated in ways that support rather than undermine such goals, that processes are minimized that instigate psychological reactance and negative attitudes toward classroom learning and teachers. In general, the processes enhance rather than threaten the student's feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to teachers, good student role models, and parents.

### *Working Toward Prevention of Further Occurrences*

- Promote a caring, supportive, and nurturing climate in the classroom and schoolwide
- Personalize classroom instruction (e.g., to accommodate a wide range of motivational and developmental differences by ensuring a good match with students' intrinsic motivation and capabilities)
- Provide status opportunities for nonpopular students (e.g., special roles as assistants and tutors)
- Identify and remedy skill deficiencies early
- For proactive misbehavior, offer appropriate and attractive alternative ways the student can pursue a sense of competence, control, and relatedness
- Equip students with acceptable steps to take instead of misbehaving (e.g., options to withdraw from a situation or to try relaxation techniques)
- Enhance student motivation and skills for overcoming behavior problems (including altering negative attitudes toward school)
- Provide extra support and direction so that students who are prone to misbehave can cope with difficult situations (including steps that can be taken instead of misbehaving)
- Develop consequences for misbehavior that are perceived by students as logical (i.e., that are perceived as reasonable fair, and nondenigrating reactions which do not threaten students' sense of competence, self-determination, and relatedness)

### References and Resources

*Behavior Problems: What's a School to Do?*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/behprob.htm>

*What Teachers Can Do to Promote Social and Emotional Learning* [http://www.edutopia.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_685&key=020](http://www.edutopia.org/php/article.php?id=Art_685&key=020)

*Creating Caring Schools.* <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over4.html>



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## **Steps in Using Common Behavior Problems as a Natural Opportunity for Social and Emotional Learning**

### ***During Misbehavior***

- (1) Base response on understanding of underlying motivation (if uncertain, start with assumption the misbehavior is unintentional)
- (2) Reestablish a calm and safe atmosphere
  - Use understanding of student's underlying motivation for misbehaving to clarify what occurred (if feasible involve participants in discussion of events)
  - Validate each participant's perspective and feelings
- (3) Indicate how the matter will be resolved emphasizing use of previously agreed upon logical consequences that have been personalized in keeping with understanding of underlying motivation
- (4) If the misbehavior continues, revert to a firm but nonauthoritarian statement
- (5) As a last resort use crises back-up resources
  - If appropriate, ask student's classroom friends to help
  - Call for help from identified back-up personnel
- (6) Throughout the process, keep others calm by dealing with the situation with a calm and protective demeanor

### ***After Misbehavior***

- (1) Implement Logical Consequences (e.g., loss of privileges, removal from activity)
- (2) Work with Student(s) to Clarify, Repair, Correct, and Prevent
  - (re)clarify limits (emphasis on what is acceptable behavior rather than reiteration of rules)
  - repair/replace damaged or stolen property
  - implement special interventions to address relational problems
  - shared development of plans for avoiding future problems
- (3) Work with Parents to Clarify, Repair, Correct, and Prevent
  - explain the actions and reasoning for the steps taken with the student(s)
  - Clarify how the teacher plans to incorporate appropriate social and emotional learning into the goals for the student
  - explain how they can support positive social and emotional learning at home
  - mobilize them to work preventively with school

## I. Keeping a Broad Perspective (cont.)

### D. Behavior Problems: What's a School to Do?

In their effort to deal with deviant and devious behavior and create safe environments, schools increasingly have adopted social control practices. These include some *discipline* and *classroom management* practices that analysts see as "blaming the victim" and modeling behavior that fosters rather than counters development of negative values.

To move schools beyond overreliance on punishment and social control strategies, there is ongoing advocacy for social skills *training* and new agendas for *emotional "intelligence" training* and *character education*. Relatedly, there are calls for greater home involvement, with emphasis on enhanced parent responsibility for their children's behavior and learning. More comprehensively, some reformers want to transform schools through creation of an atmosphere of "caring," "cooperative learning," and a "sense of community." Such advocates usually argue for schools that are holistically-oriented and family-centered. They want curricula to enhance values and character, including responsibility (social and moral), integrity, self-regulation (self-discipline), and a work ethic and also want schools to foster self-esteem, diverse talents, and emotional well-being.

#### Discipline

Misbehavior disrupts; it may be hurtful; it may disinhibit others. When a student misbehaves, a natural reaction is to want that youngster to experience and other students to see the consequences of misbehaving. One hope is that public awareness of consequences will deter subsequent problems. As a result, the primary intervention focus in schools usually is on *discipline* -- sometimes embedded in the broader concept of *classroom management*. More broadly, however, as outlined below, interventions for misbehavior can be conceived in terms of:

- efforts to prevent and anticipate misbehavior
- actions to be taken during misbehavior
- steps to be taken afterwards.

From a prevention viewpoint, there is widespread awareness that program improvements can reduce learning and behavior problems significantly. It also is recognized that the application of consequences is an insufficient step in preventing future misbehavior.

For youngsters seen as having emotional and behavioral disorders, disciplinary practices tend to be described as strategies to modify deviant behavior. And, they usually are seen as only one facet of a broad intervention agenda designed to treat the youngster's disorder. It should be noted, however, that for many students diagnosed as having disabilities the school's (and society's) socialization agenda often is in conflict with providing the type of helping interventions such youngsters require. This is seen especially in the controversies over use of corporal punishment, suspension, and exclusion from school. Clearly, such practices, as well as other value-laden interventions, raise a host of political, legal, and ethical concerns.

Unfortunately, too many school personnel see punishment as the only recourse in dealing with a student's misbehavior. They use the most potent negative consequences available to them in a desperate effort to control an individual and make it clear to others that acting in such a fashion is not tolerated. Essentially, short of suspending the individual from school, such punishment takes the form of a decision to do something to the student that he or she does not want done. In addition, a demand for future compliance usually is made, along with threats of harsher punishment if compliance is not forthcoming. And the discipline may be administered in ways that suggest the student is seen as an undesirable person. As students get older, suspension increasingly comes into play. Indeed, suspension remains one of the most common disciplinary responses for the transgressions of secondary students.

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## Intervention Focus in Dealing with Misbehavior

### *I. Preventing Misbehavior*

#### A. Expand Social Programs

1. Increase economic opportunity for low income groups
2. Augment health and safety prevention and maintenance (encompassing parent education and direct child services)
3. Extend quality day care and early education

#### B. Improve Schooling

1. Personalize classroom instruction (e.g., accommodating a wide range of motivational and developmental differences)
2. Provide status opportunities for nonpopular students (e.g., special roles as assistants and tutors)
3. Identify and remedy skill deficiencies early

#### C. Follow-up All Occurrences of Misbehavior to Remedy Causes

1. Identify underlying motivation for misbehavior
2. For unintentional misbehavior, strengthen coping skills (e.g., social skills, problem solving strategies)
3. If misbehavior is intentional but reactive, work to eliminate conditions that produce reactions (e.g., conditions that make the student feel incompetent, controlled, or unrelated to significant others)
4. For proactive misbehavior, offer appropriate and attractive alternative ways the student can pursue a sense of competence, control, and relatedness
5. Equip the individual with acceptable steps to take instead of misbehaving (e.g., options to withdraw from a situation or to try relaxation techniques)
6. Enhance the individual's motivation and skills for overcoming behavior problems (including altering negative attitudes toward school)

### *II. Anticipating Misbehavior*

#### A. Personalize Classroom Structure for High Risk Students

1. Identify underlying motivation for misbehavior
2. Design curricula to consist primarily of activities that are a good match with the identified individual's intrinsic motivation and developmental capability
3. Provide extra support and direction so the identified individual can cope with difficult situations (including steps that can be taken instead of misbehaving)

#### B. Develop Consequences for Misbehavior that are Perceived by Students as Logical (i.e., that are perceived by the student as reasonable fair, and nondenigrating reactions which do not reduce one's sense of autonomy)

### *III. During Misbehavior*

#### A. Try to base response on understanding of underlying motivation (if uncertain, start with assumption the misbehavior is unintentional)

#### B. Reestablish a calm and safe atmosphere

1. Use understanding of student's underlying motivation for misbehaving to clarify what occurred (if feasible, involve participants in discussion of events)
2. Validate each participant's perspective and feelings
3. Indicate how the matter will be resolved emphasizing use of previously agreed upon logical consequences that have been personalized in keeping with understanding of underlying motivation
4. If the misbehavior continues, revert to a firm but nonauthoritarian statement indicating it must stop or else the student will have to be suspended
5. As a last resort use crises back-up resources
  - a. If appropriate, ask student's classroom friends to help
  - b. Call for help from identified back-up personnel
6. Throughout the process, keep others calm by dealing with the situation with a calm and protective demeanor

### *IV. After Misbehavior*

#### A. Implement Discipline -- Logical Consequences/Punishment

1. Objectives in using consequences
  - a. Deprive student of something s/he wants
  - b. Make student experience something s/he doesn't want
2. Forms of consequences
  - a. Removal/deprivation (e.g., loss of privileges, removal from activity)
  - b. Reprimands (e.g., public censure)
  - c. Reparations (e.g., of damaged or stolen property)
  - d. Recantations (e.g., apologies, plans for avoiding future problems)

#### B. Discuss the Problem with Parents

1. Explain how they can avoid exacerbating the problem
2. Mobilize them to work preventively with school

#### C. Work Toward Prevention of Further Occurrences (see I & II)



As with many emergency procedures, the benefits of using punishment may be offset by many negative consequences. These include increased negative attitudes toward school and school personnel which often lead to behavior problems, anti-social acts, and various mental health problems. Disciplinary procedures also are associated with dropping out of school. It is not surprising, then, that some concerned professionals refer to extreme disciplinary practices as "pushout" strategies.

(Relatedly, a large literature points to the negative impact of various forms of parental discipline on internalization of values and of early harsh discipline on child aggression and formation of a maladaptive social information processing style. And a significant correlation has been found between corporeal punishment of adolescents and depression, suicide, alcohol abuse, and wife-beating.)

## Logical Consequences

Guidelines for managing misbehavior usually stress that discipline should be reasonable, fair, and nondenigrating. Motivation theory stresses that "positive, best-practice approaches" are disciplinary acts recipients experience as legitimate reactions that neither denigrate one's sense of worth nor reduce one's sense of autonomy. To these ends, discussions of classroom management practices usually emphasize establishing and administering logical consequences. This idea plays out best in situations where there are naturally-occurring consequences (e.g., if you touch a hot stove, you get burned).

In classrooms, there may be little ambiguity about the rules; unfortunately, the same often cannot be said about "logical" penalties. Even when the consequence for a particular rule infraction has been specified ahead of time, its logic may be more in the mind of the teacher than in the eye of the students. In the recipient's view, any act of discipline may be experienced as punitive -- unreasonable, unfair, denigrating, disempowering.

Basically, consequences involve depriving students of things they want and/or making them experience something they don't want. Consequences take the form of (a) removal/deprivation (e.g., loss of privileges, removal from an activity), (b) reprimands (e.g., public censure), (c) reparations (e.g., to compensate for losses caused by misbehavior), and (d) recantations (e.g., apologies, plans for avoiding future problems). For instance, teachers

## Defining and Categorizing Discipline Practices

Two mandates capture much of current practice:

- (a) *schools must teach self-discipline to students;*
- (b) *teachers must learn to use disciplinary practices effectively to deal with misbehavior.*

Knoff (1987) offers three definitions of discipline as applied in schools: "(a) ... punitive intervention; (b)... a means of suppressing or eliminating inappropriate behavior, of teaching or reinforcing appropriate behavior, and of redirecting potentially inappropriate behavior toward acceptable ends; and (c) ..a process of self-control whereby the (potentially) misbehaving student applies techniques that interrupt inappropriate behavior, and that replace it with acceptable behavior". In contrast to the first definition which specifies discipline as punishment, Knoff sees the other two as nonpunitive or as he calls them "positive, best-practices approaches."

Hyman, Flannagan, & Smith (1982) categorize models shaping disciplinary practices into 5 groups:

- psychodynamic-interpersonal models
- behavioral models
- sociological models
- eclectic-ecological models
- human-potential models

Wolfgang & Glickman (1986) group disciplinary practices in terms of a process-oriented framework:

- relationship-listening models (e.g., Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training, values clarification approaches, transactional analysis)
- confronting-contracting models (e.g., Dreikurs' approach,, Glasser's Reality Therapy)
- rules/rewards-punishment (e.g., Canter's Assertive Discipline)

Bear (1995) offers 3 categories in terms of the goals of the practice -- with a secondary nod to processes, strategies and techniques used to reach the goals:

- preventive discipline models (e.g., models that stress classroom management, prosocial behavior, moral/character education, social problem solving, peer mediation, affective education and communication models)
- corrective models (e.g., behavior management, Reality Therapy)
- treatment models (e.g., social skills training, aggression replacement training, family therapy, parent management training, behavior therapy).

commonly deal with acting out behavior by removing a student from an activity. To the teacher, this step (often described as "time out") may be a logical way to stop the student from disrupting others by isolating him or her, or the logic may be that the student needs a cooling off period. It may be reasoned that (a) by misbehaving the student has shown s/he does not deserve the privilege of participating (assuming the student likes the activity) and (b) the loss will lead to improved behavior in order to avoid future deprivation.

Most teachers have little difficulty explaining their reasons for using a consequence. However, if the intent really is to have students perceive consequences as logical and nondebilitating, it seems logical to determine whether the recipient sees the discipline as a legitimate response to misbehavior. Moreover, it is well to recognize the difficulty of administering consequences in a way that minimizes the negative impact on a student's perceptions of self. Although the intent is to stress that it is the misbehavior and its impact that are bad, the student can too easily experience the process as a characterization of her or him as a bad person.

Organized sports such as youth basketball and soccer offer a prototype of an established and accepted set of consequences administered with recipient's perceptions given major consideration. In these arenas, the referee is able to use the rules and related criteria to identify inappropriate acts and apply penalties; moreover, s/he is expected to do so with positive concern for maintaining the youngster's dignity and engendering respect for all.

For discipline to be perceived as a logical consequence, steps must be taken to convey that a response is not a personally motivated act of power (e.g., an authoritarian action) and, indeed, is a rational and socially agreed upon reaction. Also, if the intent is a long-term reduction in future misbehavior, it may be necessary to take time to help students learn right from wrong, to respect others rights, and to accept responsibility.

From a motivational perspective, it is essential that logical consequences are based on understanding of a student's perceptions and are used in ways that minimize negative repercussions. To these ends, motivation theorists suggest (a) establishing a publicly accepted set of consequences to increase the likelihood they are experienced as socially just (e.g., reasonable, firm but fair) and (b) administering such consequences in ways that allow students to maintain a sense of integrity, dignity, and autonomy. These ends are best achieved under conditions where students are "empowered" (e.g., are involved in deciding how to make improvements and avoid future misbehavior and have opportunities for positive involvement and reputation building at school).

## **Social Skills Training**

Suppression of undesired acts does not necessarily lead to desired behavior. It is clear that more is needed than classroom management and disciplinary practices.

Is the answer social skills training? After all, poor social skills are identified as a symptom (a correlate) and contributing factor in a wide range of educational, psychosocial, and mental health problems.

Programs to improve social skills and interpersonal problem solving are described as having promise both for prevention and correction. However, reviewers tend to be cautiously optimistic because studies to date have found the range of skills acquired are quite limited and generalizability and maintenance of outcomes are poor. This is the case for training of specific skills (e.g., what to say and do in a specific situation), general strategies (e.g., how to generate a wider range of interpersonal problem-solving options), as well as efforts to develop cognitive-affective orientations (e.g., empathy training). Based on a review of social skills training over the past two decades, Mathur and Rutherford (1996) conclude that individual studies show effectiveness, but outcomes continue to lack generalizability and social validity. (While their focus is on social skills training for students with emotional and behavior disorders, their conclusions hold for most populations.)

For a comprehensive bibliography of articles, chapters, books, and programs on social skills and social competence of children and youth, see Quinn, Mathur, and Rutherford, 1996. Also, see Daniel Goleman's (1995) book on *Emotional Intelligence* which is stimulating growing interest in ways to facilitate social and emotional competence.

## **Addressing Underlying Motivation**

Beyond discipline and skills training is a need to address the roots of misbehavior, especially the underlying motivational bases for such behavior. Consider students who spend most of the day trying to avoid all or part of the instructional program. An intrinsic motivational interpretation of the avoidance behavior of many of these youngsters is that it reflects their perception that school is not a place where they experience a sense of competence, autonomy, and or relatedness to others. Over time, these perceptions develop into strong motivational dispositions and related patterns of misbehavior.

Misbehavior can reflect proactive (approach) or reactive (avoidance) motivation. Noncooperative, disruptive, and aggressive behavior patterns that are proactive tend to be rewarding and satisfying to an individual because the behavior itself is exciting or because the behavior leads to desired outcomes (e.g., peer recognition, feelings of competence or autonomy). Intentional negative behavior

stemming from such approach motivation can be viewed as *pursuit of deviance*.

Of course, misbehavior in the classroom often also is reactive, stemming from avoidance motivation. This behavior can be viewed as *protective reactions*. Students with learning problems can be seen as motivated to avoid and to protest against being forced into situations in which they cannot cope effectively. For such students, many teaching and therapy situations are perceived in this way. Under such circumstances, individuals can be expected to react by trying to protect themselves from the unpleasant thoughts and feelings that the situations stimulate (e.g., feelings of incompetence, loss of autonomy, negative relationships). In effect, the misbehavior reflects efforts to cope and defend against aversive experiences. The actions may be direct or indirect and include defiance, physical and psychological withdrawal, and diversionary tactics.

Interventions for such problems begin with major program changes. From a motivational perspective, the aims are to (a) prevent and overcome negative attitudes toward school and learning, (b) enhance motivational readiness for learning and overcoming problems, (c) maintain intrinsic motivation throughout learning and problem solving, and (d) nurture the type of continuing motivation that results in students engaging in activities away from school that foster maintenance, generalization, and expansion of learning and problem solving. Failure to attend to motivational concerns in a comprehensive, normative way results in approaching passive and often hostile students with practices that instigate and exacerbate problems. After making broad programmatic changes to the degree feasible, intervention with a misbehaving student involves remedial steps directed at underlying factors. For instance, with intrinsic motivation in mind, the following assessment questions arise:

- Is the misbehavior unintentional or intentional?
- If it is intentional, is it reactive or proactive?
- If the misbehavior is reactive, is it a reaction to threats to self-determination, competence, or relatedness?
- If it is proactive, are there other interests that might successfully compete with satisfaction derived from deviant behavior?

In general, intrinsic motivational theory suggests that corrective interventions for those misbehaving reactively requires steps designed to reduce reactance and enhance positive motivation for participating in an intervention. For youngsters highly motivated to pursue deviance (e.g., those who proactively engage in criminal acts), even more is needed. Intervention might focus on helping these youngsters identify and follow through on a range of valued, socially appropriate alternatives to deviant activity. From the theoretical perspective presented above, such alternatives must be capable of producing greater feelings of self-determination, competence, and relatedness than usually result from the youngster's deviant actions. To these ends,

motivational analyses of the problem can point to corrective steps for implementation by teachers, clinicians, parents, or students themselves. (For more on approaching misbehavior from a motivational perspective, see Adelman and Taylor, 1990; 1993; Deci & Ryan, 1985.)

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# I. Keeping a Broad Perspective (cont.)

## E. Behavior Supports Overview

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/behavior-supports>

[Learn About RTI](#)

What is RTI?

Research Support for RTI

LD Identification

Diversity and Disproportionality

**Behavior Supports**

RTI in Pre-Kindergarten

RTI in Secondary Schools

Get Started

Include Essential Components


Connect With Others

Professional Learning

 **Get Email Updates**

Sign up to receive the RTI Action Network e-newsletter.

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The Behavior Supports section discusses how to maximize student learning and the impact of effective interventions by preventing the development and lessening the intensity of problem behaviors. The introductory article by George Sugai of the University of Connecticut examines social behavior supports within the RTI framework as a way to improve academic and social behavior outcomes for struggling students. [Read "School-wide Positive Behavior Support and Response to Intervention."](#) »

### Integrating Academic and Behavior Supports Within an RtI Framework

This series of articles provides a framework for the integration of academic and behavior supports for each tier of intervention in a Response to Intervention (RtI) model.

#### Part 1: General Overview

This first article in the series includes a rationale for combined academic and behavior supports..

[Read "Integrating Academic and Behavior Supports Within an RtI Framework, Part 1: General Overview"](#) »

#### Part 2: Universal Supports

This second article involves a discussion of the universal academic and behavioral reform that is needed to arrive at an integrated model.

[Read "Integrating Academic and Behavior Supports Within an RtI Framework, Part 2: Universal Supports"](#) »

#### Part 3: Secondary Support

This third article provides a description of supports for groups of students who do not respond to the core curriculum based on the nature of their needs.

[Read "Integrating Academic and Behavior Supports Within an RtI Framework, Part 3: Secondary Support"](#) »

#### Part 4: Tertiary Supports

The fourth and final article includes an overview of how to identify strategies for intervention and how to establish progress monitoring for students with the most intensive needs.

[Read "Integrating Academic and Behavior Supports Within an RtI Framework, Part 4: Tertiary Supports"](#) »

#### WHAT'S NEW

[RTI-Based Specific Learning Disability \(SLD\) Identification Toolkit](#)

[Webinar: RTI-Based SLD Identification Toolkit](#)

[Considerations for English Language Learners](#)

[Case Study: Beginning with the Whole Mind - Florida's Systems Approach to Response to Intervention](#)

#### FEATURED TERM

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Process of designing instruction that is accessible by all students; UDL includes multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement; the focus in creation of UDL curricula is on technology and materials.

[More Terms](#) »

#### NEED HELP WITH RTI?

The RTI Action Network has developed a new online planning tool to help educators successfully implement RTI K-6. [Now available from Corwin Press! >>](#)



[LEARN MORE](#)

#### SUPPORT RTI

**Become a Friend of the RTI Action Network**

The RTI Action Network is a program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities. FRIENDS of NCLD help support outstanding programs,

## I. Keeping a Broad Perspective (cont.)

### ***F. A Cautionary Note***

(from the Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA)

It is easy to fall into the trap of ignoring the underlying causes of a student's misbehavior in designing ways for schools and communities to carry out behavioral initiatives. In particular, it is tempting to apply strategies to all students that in actuality are only necessary and appropriate for those who manifest the most severe and pervasive behavior problems.

The objective of any behavioral initiative must be first and foremost to enhance in all students feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness (see the brief article enclosed in this sampler entitled *"Behavior Problems: What's a School to Do?"*). The key to this is transforming schools and classrooms into environments that are caring environments that truly enable learning (see the brief article in this sampler entitled *"Enabling Learning in the Classroom: A Primary Mental Health Concern"*).

Teachers and parents (and almost everyone else) are confronted with the problem of whether to treat children differentially -- recognizing that youngsters differ in terms of problems, age, competence, and so forth. Some try to simplify matters by not making distinctions and treating everyone alike. For example, it was said of Coach Vince Lombardi that he treated all his players the same -- like dogs! *A caring school culture cannot treat everyone the same.*

Teachers and other school staff often argue that it is unfair to other students if the same rule is not applied in the same way to everyone. Thus, they insist on enforcing rules without regard to a particular student's social and emotional problems. Although such a "no exceptions" strategy represents a simple solution, it ignores the fact that such a nonpersonalized approach may make a child's problem worse and thus be unjust.

A caring school culture must develop and apply rules and offer specialized assistance in ways that recognize that the matter of fairness involves such complicated questions as, Fair for whom? Fair according to whom? Fair using what criteria and what procedures for applying the criteria? Obviously what is fair for the society may not be fair for an individual; what is fair for one person may cause an inequity for another. To differentially punish two students for the same transgression will certainly be seen as unfair by at least one of the parties. To provide special services for one group's problems raises the taxes of all citizens. To deny such services is unfair and harmful to those who need the help.

(cont.)

Making fair decisions about how rules should be applied and who should get what services and resources involves principles of *distributive justice*. For example, should each person be (1) responded to in the same way? given an equal share of available resources? (2) responded to and provided for according to individual need? (3) responded to and served according to his or her societal contributions? or (4) responded to and given services on the basis of having earned or merited them? As ethicists point out, the first principle emphasizes equal access to the goods in life that every rational person desires; the second emphasizes need; the third emphasizes contribution and merit; and the fourth emphasizes a mixed use of such criteria so that public and private utility are maximized. Obviously, each of these principles can conflict with each other. Moreover, any may be weighted more heavily than another, depending on the social philosophy of the decision maker.

Many parents and some teachers lean toward an emphasis on individual need. That is, they tend to believe fairness means that those with problems should be responded to on a case-by-case basis and given special assistance. Decisions based on individual need often call for exceptions to how rules are applied and unequal allocation and affirmative action with regard to who gets certain resources. When this occurs, stated intentions to be just and fair often lead to decisions that are quite controversial. Because building a caring school culture requires an emphasis on individual need, the process is not without its controversies.

It is easy to lose sight of caring, and it is not easy to develop and maintain a caring school culture. In an era when so many people are concerned about discipline, personal responsibility, school-wide values, and character education, *caring counts*. Indeed, it may be the key to student well-being and successful schools.

No school can afford to create a safe environment by relying primarily on security and police methods. No teacher or administrator can move students toward becoming fully-functioning persons and productive citizens through a narrow focus on behavior modification. The dilemma for schools where large numbers of students are misbehaving is not just how to reassert social control, but how to do so in ways that mobilize student desire to pursue the opportunities that schools can provide for expanding one's horizons and building a future of hope.

## **II. Specific Approaches**

**A. NASET's Behavior Management Series**

**B. Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom**

**C. About the Pax Good Behavior Game**

**D. Abstracts from Articles on:**

**>Typical School Personnel Developing and Implementing  
Basic Behavior Support Plans**

**>The Use of Structural Behavioral Assessment to Develop  
Interventions for Secondary Students Exhibiting Challenging Behaviors**

**>Improving Teachers' Knowledge of Functional Assessment-based  
Interventions: Outcomes of a Professional Development Series.**

**>Teacher Judgment in Assessing Students' Social Behavior Within a  
Response-to-Intervention Framework: Using What Teachers Know**

**E. Assessing Resources for School-wide Approaches – Self-Study Surveys**

**F. Enabling Learning in the Classroom: A Primary Mental Health Concern**

## II. Specific Approaches

### A. NASET's Behavior Management Series



<https://www.naset.org/2523.0.html>

*See Available Issues and Behaviors Discussed - <https://www.naset.org/2523.0.html#c11516>*

### Introduction

**NASET's Behavior Management Series** is a unique guide for all teachers in helping to understand what their student's behavior really means and how to identify and resolve the issue. This series offers teachers the insight into the inner dynamics, conflicts, fears, symptoms, tension, and so on of students who may be experiencing difficulty learning or behaving in the classroom. This series is like having a psychologist in the classroom, and assists teachers in fully understanding the causes of behavioral and learning problems that they observe on a daily basis, along with practical suggestions for dealing with these issues.

As a special education teacher you will come in contact with a variety of personality types in the classroom. For the most part, teachers are put on the firing line with little or no training in why children do what they do. They are expected to help children learn but are not trained in understanding the numerous dynamic obstacles that prevent children from reaching this objective. Most teachers have not taken courses on human nature and dynamics and are not aware of symptomatic behavior and what it means. This lack of understanding creates immense frustration which only hinders the teacher's progress in working with fostering children's academic success.

All teachers need to understand the inner workings of children who are experiencing trouble in school. Understanding what causes children to choose certain behavioral patterns can help reach them sooner and prevent long lasting scars.

We will present you with an easy to understand basis of why children do what they do. It is our hope that this insight will allow you to work more effectively on the real issues that may be creating problems in and outside of school. We have also provided step by step suggestions on what to do when a specific behavior occurs in your classroom. The suggestions are only guidelines on what to do. It is critical to understand that patterns of inappropriate behavior should always be shared with the school psychologist or child study team. We hope this series acts as reference tool for early identification of problems seen in everyday classrooms.



## What is School-wide PBIS? <https://www.pbis.org/school>

One of the foremost advances in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a piecemeal approach of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways buses, and restrooms). Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary (school-wide), secondary (classroom), and tertiary (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making targeted behaviors less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

### school (/school)

Bully Prevention (/school/bully-prevention)

SWPBIS for Beginners (/school/swpbis-for-beginners)

PBIS FAQs (/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs)

Primary Level (/school/primary-level)

Primary FAQs (/school/primary-level/faqs)

Case Examples (/school/primary-level/case-examples)

Secondary Level (/school/secondary-level)

Secondary FAQs (/school/secondary-level/faqs)

Tertiary Level (/school/tertiary-level)

Tertiary FAQs (/school/tertiary-level/tertiary-faqs)

Case Examples (/school/tertiary-level/case-examples)

Wraparound (/school/tertiary-level/wraparound)

PBS and Job Coaches (/school/tertiary-level/pbs-and-job-coaches)

PBS for Paraprofessionals (/school/tertiary-level/pbs-for-paraprofessionals)

District Level (/school/district-level)

PBIS and the Law (/school/pbis-and-the-law)

Reauthorized FBA (/school/pbis-and-the-law/reauthorized-fba)

School Mental Health (/school/school-mental-health)

Interconnected Systems (/school/school-mental-health/interconnected-systems)

Children Support (/school/school-mental-health/children-support)

High School PBIS (/school/high-school-pbis)

RTI (/school/rti)

Equity & PBIS (/school/equity-pbis)

Exemplar from the Field (/school/exemplar-from-the-field)

McNabb Elementary (KY) (/school/exemplar-from-the-field/mcnabb-elem)

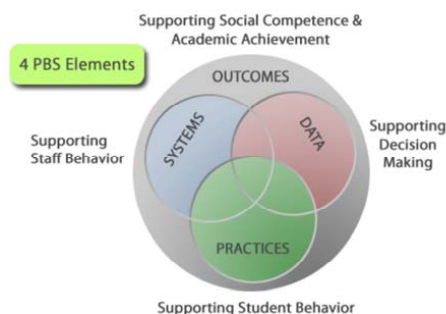
### Why is it so important to focus on teaching positive social behaviors?

Frequently, the question is asked, "Why should I have to teach kids to be good? They already know what they are supposed to do. Why can I not just expect good behavior?" In the infamous words of a TV personality, "How is that working out for you?"

In the past, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important step of a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

### What is a systems approach in school-wide PBIS?

An organization is a group of individuals who behave together to achieve a common goal. Systems are needed to support the collective use of best practices by individuals within the organization. The school-wide PBIS process emphasizes the creation of systems that support the adoption and durable implementation of evidence-based practices and procedures, and fit within on-going school reform efforts. An interactive approach that includes opportunities to correct and improve four key elements is used in school-wide PBIS focusing on: 1) Outcomes, 2) Data, 3) Practices, and 4) Systems. The diagram below illustrates how these key elements work together to build a sustainable system:



- Outcomes: academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators. (What is important to each particular learning community?)
- Practices: interventions and strategies that are evidence based. (How will you reach the goals?)
- Data: information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions. (What data will you use to support your success or barriers?)
- Systems: supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBIS. (What durable systems can be implemented that will sustain this over the long haul?)

## For Resources

See original document.

Numerous products are available for school personnel, parents, and care-providers, all with the promise of erasing targeted behaviors. Unfortunately, no magic wand single-handedly works to remove the barriers to learning that occur when behaviors are disrupting the learning community. The climate of each learning community is different; therefore, a one size fits all approach is less effective than interventions based on the needs of each school.

## II. Specific Approaches (cont.)

### What Works Clearinghouse



### ***B. Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom***

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=4>

#### Summary

Designed for elementary school educators and school- and district-level administrators, this guide offers prevention, implementation, and schoolwide strategies that can be used to reduce problematic behavior that interferes with the ability of students to attend to and engage fully in instructional activities.

#### Recommendations

Recommendation	Level of Evidence
1. <i>Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it.</i> Every teacher experiences difficulty at one time or another in trying to remedy an individual student's behavior problem that is not responsive to preventative efforts. Because research suggests that the success of a behavioral intervention hinges on identifying the specific conditions that prompt and reinforce the problem behavior (i.e., the behavior's "antecedents" and "consequences"), we recommend that teachers carefully observe the conditions in which the problem behavior is likely to occur and not occur. Teachers then can use that information to tailor effective and efficient intervention strategies that respond to the needs of the individual student within the classroom context. <a href="#">Source</a>	Moderate

[http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice\\_guides/behavior\\_pg\\_092308.pdf#page=20](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=20)



#### Practice Guide Details

Released: September 2008

Topic: [Student Behavior](#)

Education Level: Elementary

Audience: Administrator,  
Parent/Family,  
Policymaker,  
Researcher,  
School Specialist,  
Teacher

Related Resources: [Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom](#)

#### Panel

**Michael Epstein** (Chair)  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

**Marc Atkins**  
University of Illinois, Chicago

**Douglas Cullinan**  
North Carolina State University

**Krista Kutash**  
University of South Florida  
Research and Training Center for  
Children's Mental Health

**Robin Weaver**  
Principal, Harmony Hills Elementary  
School

<p>2. <i>Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.</i> Many effective classroom-focused interventions to decrease students' problematic behavior alter or remove factors that trigger them. These triggers can result from a mismatch between the classroom setting or academic demands and a student's strengths, preferences, or skills. Teachers can reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behavior by revisiting and reinforcing classroom behavioral expectations; rearranging the classroom environment, schedule, or learning activities to meet students' needs; and/or individually adapting instruction to promote high rates of student engagement and on-task behavior. <a href="#">Source</a></p>	<p>Strong</p>	<p>4. <i>Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students' families for continued guidance and support.</i> Social relationships and collaborative opportunities can play a critical role in supporting teachers in managing disruptive behavior in their classrooms. We recommend that teachers draw on these relationships in finding ways to address the behavior problems of individual students and consider parents, school personnel, and behavioral experts as allies who can provide new insights, strategies, and support. <a href="#">Source</a></p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p><a href="http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=28">http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=28</a></p>		<p><a href="http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=43">http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=43</a></p>	
<p>3. <i>Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.</i> We recommend that teachers actively teach students socially- and behaviorally-appropriate skills to replace problem behaviors using strategies focused on both individual students and the whole classroom. In doing so, teachers help students with behavior problems learn how, when, and where to use these new skills; increase the opportunities that the students have to exhibit appropriate behaviors; preserve a positive classroom climate; and manage consequences to reinforce students' display of positive "replacement" behaviors and adaptive skills. <a href="#">Source</a></p>	<p>Strong</p>	<p>5. <i>Assess whether schoolwide behavior problems warrant adopting schoolwide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative and foster positive interactions.</i> Classroom teachers, in coordination with other school personnel (administrators, grade-level teams, and special educators), can benefit from adopting a schoolwide approach to preventing problem behaviors and increasing positive social interactions among students and with school staff. This type of systemic approach requires a shared responsibility on the part of all school personnel, particularly the administrators who establish and support consistent schoolwide practices and the teachers who implement these practices both in their individual classrooms and beyond. <a href="#">Source</a></p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p><a href="http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=35">http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=35</a></p>		<p><a href="http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=50">http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wWc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=50</a></p>	

This practice guide was prepared for the WWC by Mathematica Policy Research under contract ED-07-CO-0062.

The following research staff contributed to the guide: Scott Cody, and Cassie Pickens Jewell.

## II. Specific Approaches (cont.)

### *C. About the Pax Good Behavior Game*

#### *How does the Pax Good Behavior Game help students be students?*

<http://goodbehaviorgame.org/about>

The Game teaches students to “flip on” their internal focus switch, required for any learning. It teaches students how to work toward valued goals, and teaches them how to cooperate with each other to reach those goals. Students learn how to self-regulate during both learning and fun. Students learn how to delay gratification for a bigger goal. And, the Game protects students against lifetime mental, emotional, behavioral, and related physical illnesses for their futures. PAX GBG also significantly improves multiple measures of academic success such as reading test scores, high-school graduation and university entry.

PAX teaches students self-regulation, self-control, and self-management in context of collaborating with others for peace, productivity, health and happiness. PAX is not a classroom management program, but it makes managing classrooms a breeze. PAX GBG is the combined science from PeaceBuilders, Good Behavior Game & other studies.

#### *Individual and School Organizational Factors that Influence Implementation of the PAX Good Behavior Game Intervention*

C.E. Domitrovich,, E.T. Pas, C.P. Bradshaw, K.D. Becker, at al. (2015).  
Prevention Science, 16, 1064-1074.

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11121-015-0557-8?no-access=true>

#### **Abstract**

Evidence-based interventions are being disseminated broadly in schools across the USA, but the implementation levels achieved in community settings vary considerably. The current study examined the extent to which teacher and school factors were associated with implementation dosage and quality of the PAX Good Behavior Game (PAX GBG), a universal classroom-based preventive intervention designed to improve student social-emotional competence and behavior. Specifically, dosage (i.e., number of games and duration of games) across the school year and quality (i.e., how well the game is delivered) of PAX GBG implementation across four time points in a school year were examined. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to examine the association between teacher-level factors (e.g., demographics, self-reports of personal resources, attitudes toward the intervention, and workplace perceptions) and longitudinal implementation data. We also accounted for school-level factors, including demographic characteristics of the students and ratings of the schools’ organizational health. Findings indicated that only a few teacher-level factors were significantly related to variation in implementation. Teacher perceptions (e.g., fit with teaching style, emotional exhaustion) were generally related to dosage, whereas demographic factors (e.g., teachers’ age) were related to quality. These findings highlight the importance of school contextual and proximal teacher factors on the implementation of classroom-based programs.

## II. Specific Approaches (cont.)

### **D. Abstracts from a Few Articles**

#### **Typical School Personnel Developing and Implementing Basic Behavior Support Plans**

M.K. Strickland-Cohen, R.H. Horner, & M.K. Strickland-Cohen (2015).  
*Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 17, 83-94.  
<http://pbi.sagepub.com/content/17/2/83>

##### **Abstract**

We evaluated the ability of typical school personnel with basic behavioral training to develop and implement function-based supports for students with mild to moderate problem behaviors. Descriptive results indicated that following four 1-hr training sessions, 13 participants were able to (a) identify interventions that were and were not functionally related to problem behavior and (b) lead school-based teams in developing function-based supports that were rated as technically sound by external behavior analysts. Data resulting from a non-concurrent multiple baseline analysis across five of the trained professionals, each working with a team to address the problem behavior of one elementary school student, indicated that plan implementation occurred with high fidelity and was functionally related to decreases in problem behavior and increases in academic engagement. In addition, school personnel rated the training, tools, and implementation process as effective and efficient. Limitations and implications of these results are discussed.

#### **The Use of Structural Behavioral Assessment to Develop Interventions for Secondary Students Exhibiting Challenging Behaviors**

Mickey Losinski, John W. Maag, Antonis Katsiyannis, Joseph B. Ryan (2015).  
*Education and Treatment of Children* 38, 149-174.  
<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/582491>

##### **Abstract**

Structural behavioral assessment (SBA) involves a series of heuristic approaches similar to those used with functional behavioral assessment (FBA). It involves assessing contextual variables that precede the occurrence of a behavior. These variables have also been termed antecedents, setting events, or establishing operations. Once these variables have been assessed, contextually based manipulations are developed and implemented, and interventions are developed from the results to reduce or prevent challenging behaviors from occurring. A major advantage of structural assessment is that teachers may find interventions based on the results easy to implement and relevant to the classroom. However, most of the research on SBA has been conducted with younger children with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, and those with emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD). Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to extend the research by training a general education teacher to use SBA to develop interventions for secondary students displaying challenging behaviors who are at risk in general education classrooms. An alternating treatments design was used with four at-risk middle school students. Results indicated that a brief SBA can easily be conducted in general education classrooms, and interventions developed from manipulations can not only decrease (a) verbal outbursts (e.g., talking out of turn, arguing, laughing at inappropriate times); (b) inappropriate contact with others (e.g., touching, pushing, hitting, kicking, braiding hair); (c) taking other's belongings; (d) being out of the student's assigned seat without permission; and (e) passing notes but also increase writing and eyes on materials or eyes on the teacher during a language arts class. Implications for practice and future research are described.

### **Improving Teachers' Knowledge of Functional Assessment-based Interventions: Outcomes of a Professional Development Series**

K.L. Lane, W.P. Oakes, L. Powers, T. Diebold, et al. (2015).  
*Education and Treatment of Children* 38, 93-120.  
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/571771>

#### **Abstract**

This paper provides outcomes of a study examining the effectiveness of a year-long professional development training series designed to support in-service educators in learning a systematic approach to functional assessment-based interventions developed by Umbreit and colleagues (2007) that has met with demonstrated success when implemented with university supports. Forty-eight educators attended a 4-day, practice-based professional development series, with coaching and applied practice occurring between sessions. Participants completed pre- and post-training surveys to evaluate their perceived knowledge, confidence, and usefulness as well as actual knowledge of 15 concepts and strategies addressed in the training series. Outcomes as well as implications for professional development to support in-service teachers and school personnel in learning how to design, implement, and evaluate functional assessment-based interventions are offered. Results indicated statistically significant improvements in each concept and strategy measured. Findings are discussed in light of noted limitations, with recommendations offered to improve subsequent professional development efforts.

### **Teacher Judgment in Assessing Students' Social Behavior Within a Response-to-Intervention Framework: Using What Teachers Know**

H.M. Walker, B. Marquez, P. Yeaton, (2015).  
*Education and Treatment of Children*, 38, 363-382.  
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/597841/pdf>

#### **Abstract**

This article is focused on the initial development and trial testing of a brief teacher rating tool that can be used for universal screening and tracking of instructionally relevant forms of student social behavior over time. A 12-item scale is described in which teachers make judgments about student performance on a skills-based rather than a frequency-based rating dimension. We believe teachers are expert judges of student skill levels in social behaviors and academic enablers that are of critical importance to school success (i.e., enhanced social-behavioral adjustment and academic performance) as opposed to frequency- or rate-based estimates that are less essential to a teacher's instruction and management of the classroom. The Elementary Social Behavior Assessment (ESBA) asks teachers to judge each student's performance regarding evaluative criteria based on their teaching and management of the classroom. Case-study illustrations of the universal screening and tracking functions of the ESBA are provided.



## II. Specific Approaches (cont.)

### ***E. Assessing Resources for School-wide Approaches -- A Set of Self-study Surveys***

This set of surveys is designed as self-study instruments related to a school's programmatic areas for addressing barriers to learning. School stakeholders use such surveys to map and analyze the current status of their programs. As your school sets out to enhance the usefulness of education support programs designed to address barriers to learning, it helps to clarify what you have in place as a basis for determining what needs to be done. You may want to pay special attention to:

- *clarifying what resources already are available*
- *how the resources are organized to work in a coordinated way*
- *what practices are in place for enhancing resource usefulness*
- 

This survey provides a ***STARTING POINT!***

Every school needs a learning support or “enabling” component that is well-integrated with its instructional component. Such an enabling component addresses barriers to learning and promotes healthy development. This set of self-study survey tools covers six program areas and the leadership and coordination systems every school must evolve to enable learning effectively. *Areas covered include (1) classroom-focused enabling, (2) crisis assistance and prevention, (3) support for transitions, (4) home involvement in schooling, (5) student and family assistance programs and services, and (6) community outreach for involvement and support (including volunteers).* In addition, there is a survey of mechanisms for leadership and coordination of enabling activity. This type of self-study is best done by teams. For example, a group of teachers could use the items to discuss how the school currently supports their efforts, how effective the processes are, and what's not being done. Members of the team initially might work separately in filling out items, but the real payoff comes from discussing them as a group. The instrument also can be used as a form of program quality review.

In analyzing the status of the school's efforts, the group may decide that some existing activity is not a high priority and that the resources should be redeployed to help establish more important programs. Other activity may be seen as needing to be embellished so that it is effective. Finally, decisions may be made regarding new desired activities, and since not everything can be added at once, priorities and timelines can be established.

***Download from our Center –***  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf>

## II. Specific Approaches (cont.)

### ***F. Enabling Learning in the Classroom: A Primary Mental Health Concern***

*It seems that the most important influences in the prosocial development of children are the experiences that form the foundation of caring -- receiving nurturance and empathy and being given the opportunities for mastery.*

*Chaskin & Rauner, 1995*

***O***ver half my class needs special help!

What's a teacher to do?

For many, when any student is not doing well, the trend is to refer them directly for counseling or for assessment in hopes of referral for special help -- perhaps even special education assignment. In some schools and some classrooms, the number of referrals is dramatic. Where special teams have been established to review teacher requests for help, the list grows as the year proceeds. The longer the list, the longer the lag time for review -- often to the point that, by the end of the school year, the team only has reviewed a small percentage of those on the list. And, no matter how many are reviewed, there are always more referrals than can be served.

One solution might be to convince policy makers to fund more services. However, even if the policy climate favored expanding public services, more health and social services alone are not a comprehensive approach for addressing barriers to learning. More services to treat problems certainly are needed. But so are prevention and early-after-onset programs that can reduce the numbers teachers send to review teams.

#### **Helping Teachers Assist Identified Students: *Classroom-Focused Enabling***

When a teacher encounters difficulty with a youngster, a first step is to try addressing the problem in the regular class. This usually means enhancing the

teacher's ability to prevent and respond to learning and behavior problems. In developing a school's *Enabling Component* (see box on p. 42), this area is one of six clusters of programmatic activity and is called *Classroom-Focused Enabling*.

A key facet of Classroom-Focused Enabling is personalized on-the-job education. The aim is to increase a teacher's array of strategies for working with a wide range of individual differences and creating a caring context for learning. Such strategies include ways to accommodate and also teach students to compensate for differences, vulnerabilities, and disabilities. In this context, special attention is given to targeting how paid assistants, peers, and volunteers are used to enhance social and academic support.

Another aspect of Classroom-Focused Enabling involves restructuring the functions of student support staff so they play a greater role in directly assisting the teacher *in the classroom*. This calls for redesigning the job descriptions and staff development of resource and itinerant teachers, counselors, and other pupil services personnel so they are able to work closely with teachers and students in the classroom and on regular activities.

*Classroom-Focused Enabling* requires programs and systems for

- personalized professional development of teachers and support staff
- developing the capabilities of paraeducators and other paid assistants, and volunteers.
- temporary out of class assistance for students
- expanding resources.

Through a programmatic approach for *Classroom-Focused Enabling*, teachers increase their ability to address problems as they arise. In turn, this can increase the effectiveness of regular classroom programs, support inclusionary policies, and reduce the need for specialized services.



## A Caring Context for Learning

From a psychological perspective, it is important that teachers establish a classroom atmosphere that encourages mutual support and caring and creates a sense of community. Such an atmosphere can play a key role in preventing learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems. Learning and teaching are experienced most positively when the learner *cares* about learning and the teacher *cares* about teaching. Moreover, the whole process benefits greatly when all the participants *care* about each other.

*Caring has moral, social, and personal facets.* And when all facets of caring are present and balanced, they can nurture individuals and facilitate the process of learning. At the same time, caring in all its dimensions should be a major focus of what is taught and learned. That is, the classroom curriculum should encompass a focus on fostering socio-emotional and physical development.

Caring begins when students (and their families) first arrive at a school. Classrooms and schools can do their job better if students feel they are truly welcome and have a range of social supports.

### *Why Schools Need an Enabling Component*

No one is certain of the exact number of students who require assistance in dealing with the many factors that can interfere with learning and performance. There is consensus, however, that significant barriers are encountered by many, especially those from families that are poor. Schools committed to the success of all children must be designed to *enable learning* by addressing barriers to learning.

Enabling is defined as "providing with the means or opportunity; making possible, practical, or easy; giving power, capacity, or sanction to." The concept of an *enabling component* is formulated around the proposition that a *comprehensive, multifaceted, integrated continuum of enabling activity* is *essential* in addressing the needs of youngsters who encounter barriers that interfere with their benefitting satisfactorily from instruction.

Turning the concept into practice calls for weaving together school and community resources to address problems experienced by students and their families. Included are programs to promote healthy development and foster positive functioning as the best way to prevent many learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems and as a necessary adjunct to correcting problems. An *enabling component* encompasses six programmatic areas of activity designed to (1) enhance classroom-based efforts to enable learning, (2) provide prescribed student and family assistance, (3) respond to and prevent crises, (4) support transitions, (5) increase home involvement in schooling, and (6) outreach to develop greater community involvement and support (including recruitment of volunteers).

The concept of an *enabling component* provides a broad unifying notion around which those concerned with restructuring education support programs and services can rally. At a fundamental policy level, the concept paves the way for understanding that restructuring should encompass three primary and complementary components: *instruction/curriculum, enabling, and governance/management*. The message for policy makers is:

*For school reform to produce desired student outcomes, school and community reformers must expand their vision beyond restructuring instructional and management functions and recognize there is a third primary and essential set of functions involved in enabling teaching and learning.*

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A key facet of welcoming encompasses effectively connecting new students with peers and adults who can provide social support and advocacy. On an ongoing basis, caring is best maintained through use of personalized instruction, regular student

conferences, activity fostering social and emotional development, and opportunities for students to attain positive status. Efforts to create a caring classroom climate benefit from programs for cooperative learning, peer tutoring, mentoring,

advocacy, peer counseling and mediation, human relations, and conflict resolution. Clearly, a myriad of strategies can contribute to students feeling positively connected to the classroom and school.

Given the importance of home involvement in schooling, attention also must be paid to creating a caring atmosphere for family members. Increased home involvement is more likely if families feel welcome and have access to social support at school. Thus, teachers and other school staff need to establish a program that effectively welcomes and connects families with school staff and other families to generate ongoing social support and greater participation in home involvement efforts.

Also, just as with students and their families, school staff need to feel truly welcome and socially supported. Rather than leaving this to chance, a caring school develops and institutionalizes a program to welcome and connect new staff with those with whom they will be working. And it does so in ways that effectively incorporates newcomers into the organization. (For more on this, see the *Lessons Learned* section on pages 10-11.)

### **Expanding the Context**

Learning is neither limited to what is formally taught nor to time spent in classrooms. It occurs whenever and wherever the learner interacts with the surrounding environment. All facets of the community (not just the school) provide learning opportunities. *Anyone in the community who wants to facilitate learning might be a contributing teacher.* This includes aides, volunteers, parents, siblings, peers, mentors in the community, librarians, recreation staff, etc. They all constitute what can be called *the teaching community*. When a classroom successfully joins with its surrounding community, everyone has the opportunity to learn and to teach.

Most schools do their job better when they are an integral and positive part of the community. Unfortunately, schools and classrooms often are seen as separate from the community in which they reside. This contributes to a lack of connection between school staff, parents, students, and other community residents and resources. For schools to be seen as an integral part of the community, steps must be taken to create and maintain collaborative partnerships.

A good place to start is with community volunteers. Greater volunteerism on the part of parents, peers,

and others from the community can break down barriers and helps increase home and community involvement in schools and schooling. Thus, a major emphasis in joining with the community is establishment of a program that effectively recruits, screens, trains, and nurtures volunteers. In addition, we all must work toward increased use of school sites as places where parents, families, and other community residents can engage in learning, recreation, enrichment, and find services they need.

#### ***What is a psychological sense of community?***

People can be together without feeling connected or feeling they belong or feeling responsible for a collective vision or mission. At school and in class, a psychological sense of community exists when a critical mass of stakeholders are committed to each other *and* to the setting's goals and values *and* exert effort toward the goals and maintaining relationships with each other.

A perception of community is shaped by daily experiences and probably is best engendered when a person feels welcomed, supported, nurtured, respected, liked, connected in reciprocal relationships with others, and a valued member who is contributing to the collective identity, destiny, and vision. Practically speaking, such feelings seem to arise when a critical mass of participants not only are committed to a collective vision, but also are committed to being and working together in supportive and efficacious ways. That is, a conscientious effort by enough stakeholders associated with a school or class seems necessary for a sense of community to develop and be maintained. Such an effort must ensure effective mechanisms are in place to provide support, promote self-efficacy, and foster positive working relationships.

There is an obvious relationship between maintaining a sense of community and sustaining morale and minimizing burn out.

### **Teachers Working and Learning Together in Caring Ways**

Increasingly, it is becoming evident that teachers need to work closely with other teachers and school personnel, as well as with parents, professionals-in-training, volunteers, and so forth. Collaboration and teaming are key facets of addressing barriers to

learning. They allow teachers to broaden the resources and strategies available in and out of the classroom to enhance learning and performance.

As Hargreaves (1984) cogently notes, the way to relieve "the uncertainty and open-endedness" that characterizes classroom teaching is to create

communities of colleagues who work collaboratively [in cultures of shared learning and positive risk-taking] to set their own professional limits and standards, while still remaining committed to continuous improvement. Such communities can also bring together the professional and personal lives of teachers in a way that supports growth and allows problems to be discussed without fear of disapproval or punishment.

*Collaboration and collegiality* are fundamental to morale and work satisfaction and to transforming classrooms into caring contexts for learning. Collegiality, however, cannot be demanded. As Hargreaves stresses, when collegiality is *mandated*, it can produce what is called *contrived collegiality* which tends to breed inflexibility and inefficiency. Contrived collegiality is compulsory, implementation-oriented, regulated administratively, fixed in time and space, and predictable. In contrast, *collaborative cultures* foster working relationships which are voluntary, development-oriented, spontaneous, pervasive across time and space, and unpredictable.

In many ways, the success of *Classroom-Focused Enabling* depends on the school's ability to organize itself into a learning community that personalizes inservice teacher education. Such "organizational learning" requires an organizational structure

`where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision and improve shared mental models' [Senge, 1990] by engaging in different tasks, acquiring different kinds of expertise, experiencing and expressing different forms of leadership, confronting uncomfortable organizational truths, and searching together for shared solutions (Hargreaves, 1994).

Finally, we all must acknowledge that problems related to working relationships are a given -- even in a caring environment. A common example that arises in such situations is rescue dynamics. These dynamics occur when caring and helping go astray, when those helping become frustrated and angry because those being helped don't respond in desired ways or seem not to be trying. To minimize such dynamics, it is important for all concerned to understand interpersonal dynamics and barriers to working relationships and for sites to establish effective problem solving mechanisms to eliminate or at least minimize such problems.

Additional discussion of working relationships is available in several works prepared by our center. (Some of these works are already or soon will be accessible through the Internet.)

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## ***A Few More Journal Abstracts***

### **Coaching Teachers' Use of Social Behavior Interventions to Improve Children's Outcomes: A Review of the Literature**

M. Stormont, W.M. Reinke, L. Newcomer, D. Marchese, & C. Lewis (2015).  
*Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 17, 69-82.  
<http://pbi.sagepub.com/content/17/2/69.short>

#### **Abstract**

Children with social behavior problems need teachers who are prepared to use evidence-based interventions to increase their likelihood of success. However, it is clear that teachers do not feel prepared to support children in this area. One approach for supporting teachers in using more effective interventions for children with behavior needs is the use of coaching. The purpose of this review of the literature is to explore the research to date that specifically targets coaching teachers on the use of social behavior interventions to improve children's social behavior outcomes. Criteria were established to increase the generalizability of the results of the review and 29 studies met inclusionary criteria. Of these studies, 86% documented positive findings and the remaining documented neutral findings. Only 31% of studies documented a measure of integrity for the coaching process. Main findings and implications for future research are discussed.

### **Self-Monitoring Interventions for Students with Behavior Problems: A Systematic Review of Current Research**

A. Bruhn, S. McDaniel, & C. Kreigh (2015).  
*Behavioral Disorders*, 40, 102-121.  
<http://ccbdjournals.com/doi/abs/10.17988/BD-13-45.1?journalCode=bedi>

#### **Abstract**

Explicitly teaching skills associated with self-determination has been promoted to support students' independence and control over their own lives. This is especially important for students with behavior problems. One self-determination skill or behavior that has been studied widely is self-monitoring. Although multiple reviews of various self-monitoring interventions exist, we provide an updated review of the literature focusing on the role various elements such as reinforcement, feedback, function, and technology play in self-monitoring interventions for students with behavior problems. In this review, we synthesize 41 recent (2000-2012) studies of self-monitoring interventions conducted with K-12 students exhibiting persistent behavior problems. Key findings, limitations, and implications for research and practice are discussed.

## **The Effects of Check-In/Check-Out on Problem Behavior and Academic Engagement in Elementary School Students**

L.M. Miller, B.A. Dufrene, H. E. Sterling, D.J. Olmi, & E. Bachmayer (2015).  
Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 17, 28-38.

<http://pbi.sagepub.com/content/17/1/28>

### **Abstract**

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Check-in/Check-out (CICO) for improving behavioral performance for three students referred for Tier 2 behavioral supports. An ABAB withdrawal design was used to evaluate CICO and results indicate that intervention was effective for reducing problem behavior as well as increasing academic engagement for all students as evidenced by direct observation of students' behavior. Following effective implementation of CICO, a fading process was introduced that included use of Mystery Motivator (MM). Results indicate that MM successfully maintained behavioral performance for two of the three students. In addition, for one student, intervention was further faded such that self-monitoring replaced teacher ratings and feedback for behavior. Results are discussed in terms of CICO research and practice.

## **Behavior-Focused Alternative Schools: Impact on Student Outcomes**

K. Wilkerson, K. Afacan, A. Perzigian, W. Justin, & J. Lequia (2016).  
Behavioral Disorders, 41, 81-94.

<http://ccbdjournals.com/doi/abs/10.17988/0198-7429-41.2.81?journalCode=bedi>

### **Abstract**

Behavior-focused alternative schools serve students who have been unsuccessful in other school settings due to low academic achievement coupled with significant behavior challenges. In this study, we investigated the effectiveness of secondary behavior-focused alternative schools on four different student outcome variables: (a) school attendance, (b) credits earned, (c) number of office referrals, and (d) number of suspensions. Using longitudinal data from a large urban school district and propensity score matching, we examined the extent to which outcomes of secondary students attending behavior-focused alternative schools differed compared to a matched sample of students attending traditional secondary schools. Findings from Poisson regression analyses indicate that enrollment in a behavior-focused alternative school significantly predicts earning fewer credits in one semester, lower attendance, and a lower number of office referrals. Implications for policy, practice, and further research relative to these findings are discussed.

## **Profiles of Classroom Behavior in High Schools: Associations with Teacher Behavior Management Strategies and Classroom Composition**

E.T. Pasa, A.H. Cashb, L. O'Brennana, K.J. Debnama, & C.P. Bradshaw (2015).  
Journal of School Psychology, 53, 137–148.  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022440514001150>

### **Abstract**

Although there has been considerable attention to the issue of classroom management and processes in educational reform models, there has been relatively limited research on these factors in high schools. The current study utilized observational data from 1262 classrooms in 52 high schools to examine teacher classroom management strategies and ratings of student compliance, engagement, and social disruption. Latent profile analysis (LPA) was conducted to examine specific patterns of classroom-wide student behavior in relation to teachers' use of classroom management strategies and classroom composition. The LPA revealed three distinct classroom behavioral profiles where students consistently met behavioral expectations (71%), inconsistently met expectations (23%), and were noncompliant (6%). Analyses indicated a functional association between patterns of student behavior and teachers' classroom management. In classrooms where students consistently met expectations, teachers provided more opportunities to respond and less disapproval and reactive behavioral management. Classrooms with noncompliant students had teachers who used the most disapproval and reactive behavior management. In addition, classrooms characterized as consistent had fewer males and more White students than classrooms characterized by inconsistent and noncompliant behaviors. These findings highlight the link between student patterns of behavior and teacher classroom management and have important implications for screening and professional development.

## ***IV. Agencies, Organizations, & Internet Sites***

**Center for the Study & Prevention of Violence (CSPV)**

<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv>

**Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)**

<http://www.cec.sped.org>

**Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

<http://www.cec.sped.org/>

**Federal Resource Center for Special Education (FRC)**

<http://www.dssc.org/frc/>

**National Association of School Psychologist (NASP)**

<http://www.nasponline.org/index2.html>

**National Association of State Directors of Special Education**

<http://www.nasde.org>

**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)**

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/>



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## V. Quick Find On-line Clearinghouse

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TOPIC: *Resilience/Protective Factors* -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/resilience.html>