Effective Strategies for Students with Challenging Behavior

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Basics
Classroom Organization

- Classroom organization helps ensure that activities in the classroom are stable and predictable for students.
• In the classroom, the level of organization & planning sets the stage for learning & acceptable behavior.
Five Basic Strategies

1. Establish Clear Classroom Procedures
2. Establish clear classroom rules and expectations
3. Increase student opportunities to respond (OTRs)
4. Use positive prompts and wait time.
5. Use Frequent Contingent Praise
Establish Clear Classroom Procedures

- Provide students with a clear procedure on what to do with finished products.
- Decide what you would like students to do if they finish work before their classmates (consider filler activities)
- Determine HOW and WHEN you would like students to ask questions.
Classroom Procedures (con’t)

• Decide how you will handle students reentering the classroom from outside activities or therapies.
  – Is the student expected to join in with the lesson?
  – Is the student expected to begin a separate activity?

  Procedures should be in place so that the student knows exactly what to do
Establish Clear Classroom Rules or Expectations

- Rules are the guidelines for structure, consistency, fairness, & success.
- Rules provide a safe and predictable environment.
- Rules must be observable, measurable, and enforceable.
- Rules must be stated in short, simple, and positive terms.
- Rules can be explained to clarify their meaning.
- Rules should be posted so they are clearly visible by students.
Mrs. Mutner liked to go over a few of her rules on the first day of school.
Why Teach Expectations?

• Why Not Just Tell Them the Rules?
  • Cannot assume students know how to apply rules. Need to teach behaviors in context!
  • When your behavioral expectations are clear, students never have to guess how you expect them to behave
  • Teaching allows students to practice appropriate behavior and builds fluency
  • Allows students to see non-examples of expectation
    • Know when consequences will be applied
Teaching Expectations

• Define and offer a rationale for each expectation
• Describe what the behavior looks like
• Actively involve students in discriminating between non-examples and examples of the expectations
• Have students role play the expected behaviors
• Re-teach the expectations often
• Reinforce desired behavior
Sample Rules

1. Complete tasks accurately and on time
2. Use appropriate language
3. Follow directions the first time
4. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
5. Raise your hand to speak
   • State Rules positively:
     – Work quietly NOT Don’t talk
     – Walk in the classroom NOT Do not run
Increase student opportunities to respond (OTRs)

• Increasing the rate of student responses has resulted in improved academic performance and decreased disruptive behavior (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000).

• Research has shown that teachers should limit “instructional talk” to 40%-50% of a lesson. Short presentations should be alternated with opportunities to apply the information, discuss, and practice examples.
• OTRs reduces the occurrence of problem behavior by providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the learning process.

• Need balance – when planning instruction, be sure there is not too much lecture/demonstration or too much independent work.
Use Positive Prompts and Wait Time

• Use questioning, prompting, and cueing to increase instructional pacing and opportunities to respond (OTRs).

• Positive prompts are not corrective in nature; positive prompts are questions, statements, or gestures by the teacher that seek the response of a student to an academic task or request.

• Teachers should strive to increase their rate of positive prompts to three per minute.
Wait time

• Wait time = the amount of time a teacher waits for a student response after a prompt.

• Research has shown that most students will benefit from a wait time of at least 3 sec. (may need to be longer when new concepts are involved).

• Students can become frustrated when teachers habitually intervene during their thinking process by cutting them off and jumping in.
Use Frequent Contingent Praise

• Effective praise is SPECIFIC and CONTINGENT!

• Specific praise occurs when the teacher specifies the behavior being reinforced within the praise statement (e.g., “Good job, you stayed in your seat the entire reading lesson!”)

• Praise is contingent when it is a consequence for a specific expected behavior, such as completing an assigned task.
Balance Praise and Corrective Feedback!

• Deliver at least FIVE praise statements for each correction.

• Teachers who provide high rates of contingent praise, create a climate in which students’ appropriate behaviors are recognized and strengthened.

• When you need to give corrective feedback, say to yourself, “I owe this student five praise statements.”
• Look for opportunities to provide praise – especially for students with high rates of problem behavior.
• Move around the classroom and actively monitor students.
• Use proximity praise
  – Praise students who are following directions and who are in close proximity to the problem student.
Nuts & bolts of classroom organization.

Well-designed and managed classroom procedures increase the proficiency of learning time, reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors, and increase student academic achievement (Moyer, 1995)
Antecedent Interventions

• Implement *before* behaviors occur, to reduce their likelihood...
• Vs. “*reactive*” strategies
• Can do in absence of challenging behavior
• More teacher control of teaching opportunities
  – More educative/skill oriented
• Can disrupt problematic relationships between antecedents and behaviors
• May be less disruptive to the environment
• **Curricular /Instructional variables**
  – Precorrection
  – Different response modes
  – Building predictability
  – Collaborative activities
  – Embedding within preferred routines
  – Task Variation
Reinforcement-related strategies

• Noncontingent reinforcement
  – Periodically provide desired outcome/reinforcer “for free”...
Non-contingent Reinforcement

- Need to determine interresponse interval - how frequently are they typically trying to access the reinforcing outcomes?
- Set up noncontingent schedule that’s richer than that…
- Thin out schedule over time
- In context with other strategies
Using Choice

- Students are provided opportunities to independently make decisions between two or more options that affect their daily routine.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Johnny, you should get your project finished this morning</td>
<td>Bite Me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Johnny, I want you to make a choice - you get to decide. You can either get your math project done or you can get started on your writing assignment. It’s totally up to you - which one?</td>
<td>Math project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behavior Momentum

- A strategy for increasing the probability of compliant behavior by asking a student to do two or three things they typically want to do and then following these requests with a request for a behavior the student typically does not want to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Johnny, you should get your project finished this morning</th>
<th>NO!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Momentum</td>
<td>Johnny, can you help me with these books?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnny, will you sharpen my pencil</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnny, you should get your project finished this morning</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OVERBOARD

YOU GONNA WANT THOSE BURGERS RARE OR MEDIUM?

RARE.

YOU GONNA WANT SOME RICE WITH 'EM OR SOME FRIES?

FRIES.

YOU GONNA PAY US WITH PHONY CASH LIKE LAST TIME OR WITH A BAD CHECK?

BAD CHE-

YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK IT'S VERY ETHICAL TO RHYTHMICALLY LULL SOMEONE LIKE THAT!
Modifying Task Difficulty

- Students’ problem behaviors are often a result of frustration with academic work. By re-adjusting a student’s curriculum to less challenging work, students experience success and problem behaviors decrease.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Johnny, you should get your project finished this morning.</th>
<th>As if!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Momentum</td>
<td>Johnny, I want to show you how I’ve set your project up so that you’ll really be able to do awesome on it . . .</td>
<td>OK</td>
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*This is one step in facilitating success - need to fade back into normal task

*Student must be able to perform fluently at level presented
Understanding Functions of Behavior
Behavior Pathway – Predicting and Preventing Problem Behavior
Pathways: Identifying Stimuli

- Setting Condition
- Antecedent Trigger
- Problem Behavior
- Access or Avoid = reinforce

- Math Class
- Peer Insults
- Striking Peers
- Insulting Peer Goes Away

- Seat Work
- No Attention from Peers
- Disruptive Behavior
- Peer Attention
ABC Functional Assessment Form

Name: ______________________  Date: ______________________

Setting Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
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5 Major Components of an ABC

1. setting information
2. behavior in operationally defined terms
3. antecedent events
4. consequent events
5. time

EXAMPLE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>any stimuli that precede a behavior</td>
<td>all behavior of the target student (only) goes here</td>
<td>any stimulus or event that follows behavior goes here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>![checkmark] same as previous consequence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>![empty] no discernible antecedent</td>
<td></td>
<td>![empty] no discernible consequence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcome

Testable Explanations about possible Functional Relationships based on recurrent Behavior Chains.
Practice - Variables

• When Shirley gets at least 8 hours of sleep a night (IV) she can run a mile in under 5 minutes (DV)
• Jack reads orally at 100 words per minute when he reads from a passage that is at the second grade level.
• Johnny speaks continuously for durations of over 15 minutes when he is drinking coffee.
• Robert becomes aggressive with peers when it is math time.
• Benjamin puts tacks on the teacher’s chair when he watches “Barney” before school.
Testable Explanations vs. Explanatory Fictions

- Frank names all of his colors correctly when his teacher gives him candy for each color he names.
- Frank names all of his pencils because he is a schizophrenic.
- Robin is out of her seat during reading time because her neighbor talks to her.
- Sandra does not complete assignments when she is not motivated.
- Carl cries all morning when he rides the bus to school.
- Fritz yells because he doesn’t like math.
- Fritz yells when it’s math time.
- Ivan is cruel to animals when he feels inadequate.
Strategies to Strengthen Positive Behavior
Self-Management Strategies

- Self-monitoring, -reinforcement, -instruction, alternate response training
- a Stimulus Control problem
  - behavior controlled by inappropriate stimuli
    - interact with peers vs task materials
    - distracting noises
  - shift control to natural or "internal" stimuli
    - teacher instructions
    - instructional materials
    - self-observation, -instruction, -reinforcement
    - PLANNED shift
Self-Monitoring

• **Steps & Components**
  – self-observation
  – self-recording
  – self-evaluation
  – comparing own behavior to criterion
    • teacher, peer or self-determined

• Shifting from **overt to covert** monitoring
**Self-Reinforcement**

- Self-determined
  - Self-identified, self-chosen consequences
- Self-administered
  - Student manages reinforcement system partly or completely on his/her own
Self-Instruction

• "talking to oneself",
  – instructing through a sequence of behaviors

• self-observation & reinforcement make these instructions functional

• Academic & Social behavior problems

• Use modeling to teach self-instruction
  – competent vs coping model
Alternate Response Training

- Teach Alternative or Incompatible response
  - Incompatible
    - can’t physically happen at same time
  - Alternative
    - serve same function/purpose
- Adaptive responses vs current inappropriate
  - Relaxation training
  - “Mindfullness” strategies
  - Requesting help vs disruptive
  - Requesting a break
  - Self-instructions or reminders of how to respond to peer or teacher who is aversive
Using Peers for Behavior Change

- **Group Contingency**
  - consequences contingent on group behavior
  - or one person's behavior determines reinforcement for group
Group Contingency Types

- **Independent Group Oriented**
  - easily administered, remembered

- **DEPENDent Group Oriented**
  - group pressure to perform
  - advantageous for group to “help” targeted student or group of students

- **INTERdependent Group Oriented**
  - group pressure to work together
Independent Group Oriented

• **same contingency** for all students
• **applied to each individual**

**Example**
– for each student in class
– if you complete 5 of 8 pages of reading assignment
– you earn 10 minutes in free time activity of your choice
Dependent Group Oriented Contingency

- same contingency for all students
- only applied to one or small group for comparison to criterion
  - performance of one or more selected students determines reinforcement for whole group

- Example
  - if Jodi & Jennifer complete 5 of 8 reading assignments
  - each class member gets 10 minutes in free time activity of your choice
INTERdependent Group Oriented

• same target behavior contingency
• based on level of group performance
  – Good Behavior Game@
    • team with highest compliance to rules

• Examples
  – if all students complete 5 of 8 assignments, or
  – if class average is 5 of 8 assignments completed, or
  – in a class of 10, if 50 of 80 assignments completed
  – each student gets 10 min of free time activity
**INTERdependent Group Oriented**

- **same target behavior contingency**
- **based on level of group performance**
  - Good Behavior Game@
    - team with highest compliance to rules

**Examples**
- if all students complete 5 of 8 assignments, or
- if class average is 5 of 8 assignments completed, or
- in a class of 10, if 50 of 80 assignments completed
- each student gets 10 min of free time activity
Peer Mediated Interventions

- Peer Reinforcement
  - recognize target behaviors & reinforce
  - used in Social Skills Training
- Training peers to be responsive
- Training peers to initiate, to prompt
  - Peer Coaching--rehearsal, practice, role reversal
  - Classwide peer tutoring
High-Intensity Behaviors
Chain of Escalating Behavior
Activity

What is the same about each of these examples?
Example Two:
Joe steps on the bus and pulls out a monster cookie and begins to eat it. The driver points to the sign above the door and the following exchange occurs:

Driver: “Look no food on the bus.”
Joe: “So” and takes another bite.

Driver: “Alright. I said no food on the bus so give me the cookie.”

Joe: “No way.”

Driver: “OK give me the cookie or your off the bus.”

Joe: “I don’t care.”

Driver calls office to have student removed.
Example One:
Sarah comes into class wearing a rude T-Shirt. Students start to laugh and the teacher calls her aside and the following exchanges occur
Teacher “Sarah that T-shirt has a rude message and it can’t be worn.”
Sarah: “My dad gave it to me.”
Teacher: “That doesn’t matter. It is against our dress code rule and you need to go to the restroom and turn it inside out.”
Sarah: “you can’t make me.”
Teacher: “Do what you are asked or I’ll send you to the Office for insubordination.”
Sarah: “I don’t care.”
Teacher makes Office Referral.
List what is the same in each example

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
4. ________________________________
5. ________________________________
• At what point did the situation accelerate?

• How could this have been avoided?
Acting out cycle picture

Phases of Acting-Out Behavior

1. Calm
2. Trigger
3. Agitation
4. Acceleration
5. Peak
6. De-escalation
7. Recovery

Intensity

Time
Key Points

- While we must emphasize prevention, problem behavior may still occur. Why?
- Procedures are designed to
  a. Arrest problem behavior
  b. Ensure correct behavior occurs next time
  c. Avoid escalation
- Addressing problem behavior means providing attention which MAY REINFORCE the behavior
- Controlling for attention is critical
- The next student behavior is often determined by initial (and subsequent) teacher responses.
Stopping the Chain of Escalated Behavior

- Six classes of problem behavior will be addressed
- Behaviors range in intensity from low level to high level
- Behaviors fall short of physical or actual danger
- Behaviors may be defused or escalated, managed safely or unsafely
Examples

1. Off-task behavior
2. Rule violations
3. Disrespectful behavior
4. Agitation
5. Limit testing
6. Threats and intimidation
Off-Task Behavior
Scenario

- Students display off-task behavior
- Teacher addresses behavior
- Student engages teacher
- Situation leads to more engagement and may escalate
Off Task Behavior

Management Steps

1. Attend to students on task and delay responding to student off task
2. Redirect student to task at hand and do not respond directly to off task behavior
3. Present choice between on task direction and negative consequence
4. Follow through on student choice
RULE VIOLATIONS
Scenario

• Students break a rule for attention or to challenge
• Teacher addresses rule violation
• Student displays non-compliance
• Teacher follows through
• Situation may escalate
Rule Violation

Management Steps

1. State the rule or expectation
2. Explicitly request the student to “take care of the problem”
3. Present options if needed
4. Follow through
DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR
Scenario

• Student displays disrespectful behavior and sometimes quite offensive behavior
• Teacher may react and take the behavior personally
• Student reacts to the teacher response
• Situation may easily escalate
Disrespectful Behavior

Management Steps

1. Studiously reacting personally (such as shouting, challenging, becoming agitated)
2. Maintain calmness, respect and detachment (Teacher modeling role)
3. Pause and focus
4. Focus on the student behavior (“That language…”)
5. Deliver consequence as appropriate
Vignette Four
AGITATION
Scenario

- Students display agitation which can readily accelerate to serious behavior
- Agitated students have difficulty concentrating on instruction or tasks
- Normal correction procedures often accelerate behavior
- Agitation often leads to task avoidance
- Note agitation phase in cycle if acting out behavior (next slide)
Agitation
Management Steps

Three Steps
1. Re-direct the student to task at hand
2. Recognize signs of agitation
3. Use strategies to reduce agitation
Acting out cycle picture

Phases of Acting-Out Behavior

1. Calm
2. Trigger
3. Agitation
4. Acceleration
5. Peak
6. De-escalation
7. Recovery

Intensity vs. Time
Recognizing Signs of Agitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increases in Behavior</th>
<th>Decreases in Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Darting eyes</td>
<td>• Stares into space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-conversational</td>
<td>• Subdues language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>• Contains hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Busy hands</td>
<td>• Lacks interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moves in and out of</td>
<td>• Lacks involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groups</td>
<td>• Withdraws from groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Starts and stopping</td>
<td>• Lacks responding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moves around room</td>
<td>• Avoids eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fidgety</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Strategies for Reducing Agitation

- Teacher support and empathy
- Create space or isolation
- Provide choices
- Permit preferred activities (with clear boundaries)
- Use teacher proximity
- Provide independent tasks or activities
- Permit movement (use movement tasks)
- Use relaxation techniques
- Use passive activities
- Involve the student as appropriate
Strategies for Reducing Agitation

Possible Problems

Strategies are essentially *ACCOMMODATIONS*

Pre-Correct for these possible problems:

1. Avoidance
2. Other students’ perception, “It’s not fair.”

How would you pre-correct?
LIMIT TESTING
Scenario

Some students may display a range of behavior that is designed to test limits such as

- Refusing to follow directions
- Sustained arguing
- Challenging the teacher
- Sustained off task behavior
- Defiance and insubordination

When these behaviors are directly addressed the student may escalate.
Limit Testing

Management Steps

1. Pre-Teach the procedures

2. Deliver the following information in a calm matter-of-fact manner
   a. Present expected behavior and negative consequence as a decision
   b. Allow few seconds for decision
   c. Withdraw and attend to other students

3. Follow through based on student decision
THREATS AND INTIMIDATION
Scenario

- Students is escalated-maybe an outburst
- Body language may be present ("In your face")
- Words used to imply harm or danger
- Physical danger may be imminent
- Note location of threats ("acceleration phase" in Acting–out cycle (next slide))
Phases of Acting-Out Behavior

1. Calm
2. Trigger
3. Agitation
4. Acceleration
5. Peak
6. De-escalation
7. Recovery
Threats and Intimidation

Management Steps

Take all threats seriously
Student makes threat:
1. Pause, delay responding
2. Disengage, “Just a second.”
3. Depending on student’s state either
   a. Send for help (use school emergency procedures)
   b. Make office referral
4. Monitor till help arrives
Additional Resources


Let’s work through some examples together
Questions

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