

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Behavior Intervention and Support Module: Positive Behavior Support-Shifting Paradigms

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~ Module 3, Session 5 ~ Lecture Notes

Introduction

Traditional behavioral paradigms assume that students need to be managed via consequences that are strongly aversive so that the student does not want to engage in the behavior or so strongly positive that the student avoids the problem behavior to get the reinforcers. Teachers subscribing to this paradigm focus on specifying the consequences of misbehavior and, to some extent, the consequences of acceptable behavior for students. Positive behavior support, on the other hand, focuses on why the behavior occurs in the first place. When using a positive behavior approach, teachers need to be cognizant of antecedents that might cause undesirable behavior, use effective teaching strategies, and modify and accommodate curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of students with challenges. Positive student behavior needs to be taught in a supportive nurturing environment. Consider the following point counterpoint analysis.

Traditional Behavior Management Positive Behavior Support

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Views individual as the problem | • Views systems, settings, and skill deficiencies as the problem |
| • Attempts to fix the individual | • Attempts to fix the systems, settings, and skills |
| • Extinguishes behavior | • Creates new contacts, experiences relationships, and skills |
| • Sanctions aversives | • Sanctions positive approaches |
| • Takes days or weeks to fix | • Takes years to create a single behavior systems, personalized settings and appropriate |

empowering skills

- Implemented by a behavioral specialist often in a typical collaborative team
- Often resorted to when systems are inflexible
- Implemented by a dynamic settings person using centered planning in typical setting
- Flourishes when systems are flexible

Behavior Support Plans (BSP):

This new way of dealing with behavior is also an integral part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA Section 614 (d) (2) (B) requires the IEP team to include positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to address behavior that impedes learning or that of others. State educational codes expand and operationalize the definition to include functional behavior assessment and a specific written behavioral plan as part of the student's individualized educational program.

Positive Behavior Support-Key Elements:

The following elements constitute positive behavior support for individual students, classrooms, and schools.

- Designed for individuals who exhibit problem behavior. These students might be dangerous, highly disruptive or impede learning. The principles, however, are useful for all students.
- Most effective when there is a positive classroom and school wide system in place.
- Should include the people who know him/her best to promote positive change.
- The goal of PBS is to diminish problem behavior and increase a student's adaptive skills.
- PBS involves a process of functional behavioral assessment and a support plan made up of individualized assessment-based intervention strategies.
- Intervention strategies include:
 - Guidance of instruction for the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behavior.
 - Some rearrangement of the antecedent environment so those problems can be prevented and desirable behaviors can be encouraged.
 - Procedures are in place for monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing of the plan as necessary.
 - The plan may include emergency procedures to ensure safety and rapid de-escalation of severe episodes.

Alternative Replacement Behavior:

In order to write a good BSPm educators must first figure out what the student is trying to get or protest/escape/avoid and then determine what behavior is more suitable or appropriate. It is best to anticipate antecedents that might cause misbehavior, structure the learning environment, and provide an engaged learning atmosphere to offset behavioral problems.

However, when behavior problems arise, it is best to ask yourself what is the function (be reasonable here—don't try and figure out the function when the student is throwing a chair through the window) and then think of a replacement behavior. For example, if a student argues when you say “no” (protesting), teach the student (at a later time) how to say no. If a student is out of his/her seat talking with a friend when you are teaching a lesson (trying to get attention), ask him/her where he/she is supposed to be and then ensure the student of a chance to talk in a cooperative group activity later.

The key is not to “sweat the small stuff,” stay and act positive, and think what alternatives or replacements make sense for the student at that specific time.

Structure the Environment—Think MIST (Materials-Interactions-Space-Time):

Positive behavior support philosophy encourages educators to model, cue and prompt appropriate behavior. That is positive behavior is taught! One way to do that is to structure the environment for success. Too often teachers complain about students without thinking whether:

1. The **M**aterials are too complex or difficult or if the materials are too easy.
2. Specific **I**nteractions such as moving close to the student or using a soft voice tone might make a difference in student performance.
3. Reconfiguring the room to get more **S**pace or moving desks to have a better traffic flow will reduce tension.
4. Manipulating **T**ime to ensure success, such as giving more time on tasks, completing tasks in parts help students succeed.

Teaching Strategies/Curriculum/for New Behavior:

Teaching HELPS!! The key to positive behavior support is to create a teaching and learning environment that is empowering and caring while at the same time teaches appropriate behavior. Teaching strategies and necessary curriculum or materials for new behavior instruction include good social skills programs, conflict resolution programs, classroom meetings, choice-making opportunities for students, and organizational skills approaches. The key is to teach these skills to promote self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and more intrinsic motivation.

Reinforcement Procedures:

Reinforcement in a positive behavior support paradigm means that you are considering a range of possibilities to motivate students. Some students respond to a kind word while others need a tangible reinforcer. In this model, the teacher is matching the reinforcer to the individual student in order to promote appropriate behavior. Consider the following reinforcers:

- **Intrinsic**—self-praise, self-regulation
- **Praise**—from adults, parents, teachers, staff, peers
- **Social Status and Recognition**—peers and adults
- **Privileges**—choice-making, sense of “power”
- **Contingent access**—Premack Principle (if you do this first, you can then to that) activities, free time
- **Closure**—completing an assignment
- **Tangibles**—money, stickers, etc.

Reactive Strategy:

In the positive behavior support paradigm, educators are constantly looking to offset negative behavior by attending to antecedents, analyzing the function of the behavior, and providing a suitable replacement for the unsuitable behavior. However, when dealing with students with significant behavioral issues, it behooves educators to know what to do when behavior begins to escalate. Think about the following:

- Look for what triggers the behavior in the first place (“the yellow light goes on before the red!”).
- How do you prevent escalation?
- What works to de-escalate the situation or how do you calm the student?
- Will consequences be necessary?

Communication Provisions:

Communication is the lifeblood of positive behavior support. Decide on what you will communicate, when, how, and with whom. The key is to develop a system that works for you and your students. For instance, a note home on a weekly basis might be all that is needed to reinforce appropriate behavior in class. Consider the following ideas:

- Daily or weekly logs
- Report new skills learning rate on a chart
- Informal notes
- Phone calls

Contents of Behavior Support Plans:

Behavior Support Plans should be:

- Brief
- Collaboratively developed
- Supporting antecedent change, not focused on consequence imposition
- Based on identifying the function of behavior
- Seeking to alter environments to better support the student
- Assuring the student possesses an alternative replacement behavior