

Dealing with Problem Behaviors in Early Learning and Elementary Classrooms:

Training Teachers in Function-Based Interventions

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my most supportive husband, Kris, and my beautiful daughters, Brooklyn and Sienna. Without their endless encouragement, patience, understanding, love, and belief in my ability to accomplish this, this project would never have been possible. My heartfelt gratitude also goes out to my parents and extended family, who were always there for my children while I worked tirelessly to get through this process. Finally, I would also like to give special thanks to the Emotional Behavioral Specialists that I have had the pleasure of working with, who have truly opened my eyes to something profound and amazing when it comes to helping children with challenging behavior. I will be forever grateful for your insight and guidance.

Abstract

One of the biggest challenges for early learning and elementary teachers today is the presence of an increasing amount of student behavior to manage in the classroom. University education programs lack the training that teachers require to identify the functions of and successfully modify student problem behavior. The lack of teacher expertise in dealing with the emotional and behavioral needs of children is to the detriment of our students and their overall functioning within a classroom setting. This project outlines the necessary components and content to create a resource that could be used by educators or administrators to facilitate the development of teacher skills in function-based interventions. It examines the four functions of behavior, function-based assessments, behavior intervention plans, function-based intervention strategies, and successful strategies for classroom implementation, including modeling and teacher coaching.

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Table of Contents:

Dedication ii

Abstract..... iii

Table of Contents iv

Chapter One 1

My Background 1

The Significance..... 4

Conceptual Framework 7

Chapter Two.....8

Introduction 8

Freud and Adler (A Brief History of Behavior Theories) 10

 Freud’s influence 10

 Adler and his connection to Freud 11

 Adler’s influence 12

Functions of Behavior 13

Functional Behavioral Assessment 16

Interventions (Behavior Intervention Plans) 19

Successful Execution of Interventions (Modeling, Coaching and Social Validity) 23

Challenges 25

Conclusion..... 25

Chapter Three27

Introduction 27

My Rationale..... 28

Implications – My Action Plan..... 32

 Functions of Behavior 32

 Functional Behavioral Assessment 32

 Behavior Intervention Plans 34

 Intervention Strategies..... 36

 Effective Reinforcement 37

 Modeling and Coaching 39

 Maintaining Contact with Participants 40

Data Collection – Evidence of Success..... 41

Evaluation 44

Limitations and Considerations..... 46

Discussion 47

Conclusion..... 48

Chapter Four49
 Personal Changes as an Educator..... 49
 Direction for My Professional Career 52
 Key Recommendations 54

References57

Appendix A62
Appendix B63
Appendix C64
Appendix D65
Appendix E66

Chapter One

My Background

I have taught in a variety of elementary grades, schools and demographics during my 17 year teaching career. Looking back on how I used to manage my classroom and children who I believed were behaving badly, I knew very little about why children acted the way they did or how I could help to modify those behaviors.

Then I had my own children. My life changed. My views about childhood development changed. Returning from my last maternity leave, I was in such a different headspace that I decided to make a career change and move into the world of early learning. It's been 5 years since I made this change, moving into a 100 Voices program, and have learned more in those last 5 years about the development of children than I did during my entire career prior.

100 Voices is an early intervention (pre-school) program within Edmonton Catholic Schools. It is similar to Edmonton Public's Head Start program in structure, however, 100 Voices is inquiry based and focuses on following the lead of the child in all of our projects and therapy with the children. I work closely in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary team, which includes a Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Early Learning Consultant, and in recent years, an Emotional Behavioral Specialist (EBS). The school that my program is located is in a high needs, low socio-economic area, where the majority of parents are young and uneducated. All of the children in my classes either have speech/language delays, motor delays (fine or gross motor), and/or are lacking in social and self-regulation skills.

When I started in this program, I felt confident that I would know how to manage the children involved. I had strong classroom management skills, and I was a mother that believed

in firm and clear expectations for children. To my surprise, my first year in 100 Voices was where I encountered some of the most severe behaviors of my career. I was dealing with defiant children and needed two people to put their coats on in the winter, children who flipped tables over when they didn't get their way, children who tried over and over to jump off the loft in our classroom, physical threats from four year olds, being bitten, punched, and laughed at. I wondered if it was just the school or demographic that I was working in, but when I met with other 100 Voices teachers at professional development sessions, I learned that these kinds of behaviors were common to almost every program around the city. At these sessions, we often discussed how important a student's early childhood experiences were for setting them up for successful school careers. According to Carter, Norman and Tredwell, (2011), "the call for effective and efficient behavior support in early childhood is evident when you look at the long-term negative outcomes of early problem behavior, such as school drop-outs, failure, encounters with the juvenile justice system, unemployment, divorce or psychiatric illness" (p. 349). As the year progressed, I began to feel helpless and hopeless that I would be able to provide happy and positive early childhood experiences for some of these students.

In my third year of teaching in this program, the district created an Autism Team, and an EBS was hired to work closely with the rest of my multi-disciplinary team. It was then that I realized there were many strategies out there to help not just autistic children, but all children with problem behavior, and I knew nothing about them. I immediately was drawn to this field of information, soaking up as many strategies as I could from my EBS, because I knew that they could really make a difference for some of these children. The more I learned, the more baffled I became as to why I had never learned anything about the 'Functions of Behavior' in my own formal university training or previous professional development.

What really completely convinced me that understanding and applying function-based interventions was highly effective with disruptive behavior was the experience I had with an autistic boy that we worked with last year. For the sake of this explanation, we will call him 'John'. John was an extremely high-functioning, bright four-year old child that was verbal and was able to read when I met him. You would never know he was autistic by just looking at or speaking with him. Within the first few days of school, John quickly became the most violent, aggressive child I had ever worked with. When John was asked to do something that he didn't want to do, he would hit, punch, bite, throw chairs and hard objects, kick, scream, cry and refuse to comply. The worst part of his episodes was that he would get 'stuck' in them and they would last for a large part of his school day. We worried for his safety, and for the safety of the other children. We tried talking with him when he was calm to prepare him for what was coming next in the routine. We tried using visuals to help him understand the daily schedule. We tried pushing him through the routines, as I had been taught to do with other non-compliant children in the past. We tried giving him natural consequences like missing snack if he didn't wash his hands. Sometimes the strategies worked, sometimes they didn't. Most of the time anything we tried seemed to make him worse.

Then we were lucky to get an EBS who had a background in working with function-based interventions with autistic children. She started coming in 1-2 times a week, first to observe him, and then to help us understand why John was doing what he was doing and how we could help him. One of the most amazing pieces of this process for me was learning more about why John was displaying certain behaviors. What originally looked like a child that was just spoiled and had never had been given a routine or expectations before ended up being a child that had (from possibly one small negative experience) made the association that there was

nothing at school that was fun. He literally was stuck in the mindset, “school is bad. My teacher isn’t fun. Anything new is scary.” It was then that my EBS explained how we could help John to make new, positive associations about school. Over the following weeks, she modeled and coached us through different strategies to use with John, and we began to see immediate positive changes in his behavior. As time went on, my classroom staff (and myself) became more confident in managing him, even when the EBS wasn’t there. She was able to phase her presence out of my room completely within 2 months. From the beginning to the end of the EBS coming in to support us, John was a completely different child. He was happy, compliant, willing to try new things, and on the rare occasion when he was having a bad day, we knew exactly how to help turn things around for him.

It was then that I realized that function-based interventions was something that could make a world of difference in early learning and to elementary teachers, whether they were beginning or veteran teachers.

The Significance

I question the omission of function-based assessment and intervention from university teacher education programs. We learn how to manage classes, but do we learn how to manage children based on individual need? Do we learn how to modify the undesirable, off-task behavior in children, so we can help them academically? How can teachers be expected to educate children and meet academic standards when they are not trained to identify, understand, manage or modify the different kinds of problem behaviors that are seen every day in typical classrooms?

In order for teachers to teach, they first need the skills or support (through the presence of an EBS who can help to assess and identify the function of the behavior) to alter undesirable student behaviors. Only then can an effective plan be made to intervene and replace these behaviors with something more productive and functional. Teachers would greatly benefit from training in the assessment of functions of behavior, as well as the appropriate intervention for each function so that strategies can be purposeful and effective.

Regardless whether this kind of training is done in university with pre-service teachers or as professional development for current teachers, a key component is the need for intervention strategies to be modeled and coached. Some of these intervention strategies are very different from what you would see a teacher doing with typical, functioning students. Sitting in a university course listening to a professor, or watching an expert at a professional development session explain it just isn't enough to create competency in these new strategies. Bethune and Wood (2013) support this by stating that "in-service/workshop training alone is not sufficient to train most teachers to accurately implement FBAs [function-based assessments] and function-based interventions. School districts and administrators might consider adopting a training model based on expert coaching to provide teachers individualized support" (p. 112). Just like any new skill, the strategies must be modeled, practiced, and feedback should be provided to develop confidence and proficiency in teachers.

This area of teacher training is important to me, as I feel it is the piece that is missing to provide many of my students with a successful early intervention program and experience. I find that the more I teach, the more time I spend managing behavior, and typical children sometimes get left behind or not given the attention that they deserve. When I speak to colleagues in elementary classes about their concerns, I hear that many teachers feel the same way I do, stating

that they don't remember ever being taught how to deal with student behavior in university. These teachers are frustrated because many feel under-qualified to deal with some of these behaviors, frustrated with inclusion of these children into regular classrooms when they aren't supported, and frustrated because children with emotional and behavioral issues take away so much time and energy from the rest of the class. Renshaw, Christensen, Marchant and Anderson (2008) stated that "the unmet need for behavioral services from qualified school-based personnel is unlikely to be resolved in the near future. Several scholars have recommended that school personnel, such as general educators, be trained to implement FBS [function-based support/intervention] for at-risk students exhibiting problem behavior" (p. 503). How can teachers be provided with the necessary training in order to better manage these behaviors in their classrooms?

If education for pre-service teachers currently does not include function based assessment and intervention, then this is a great disservice to our future teachers, not to mention the students and families they serve. Current educators are crying out for help, especially in high needs schools like the one I work in. Until teachers (new and experienced) can be trained in function-based interventions, it will be an ongoing challenge for educators to help children who display problem behavior to develop academic skills.

Conceptual Framework

Although the education of pre-service teachers is just as important, the purpose of this paper will be to create a plan for a professional development resource for current early learning and elementary teachers to utilize. This resource would provide them with information on how to assess functions of behavior, and will include some of the basic function-based intervention

strategies. It could be used in conjunction with a coach (Emotional Behavior Specialist, Psychologist or even a fellow teacher who has some experience using function-based strategies in their classrooms) who visits classrooms to model strategies, coach teachers and provide them with feedback. If we can provide educators training to understand functions of behavior in their classrooms, as well as strategies to manage them accordingly, it makes the possibility of appropriate interventions far more likely. It also would likely increase the possibility of teacher buy-in to the strategies, which is equally important. My hope is that this information will lessen teacher/student stress, increase teacher understanding and empathy, increase the ability to teach content, increase the ability for children to retain it, and reduce problem student behavior.

In the following chapter, I intend to look briefly at the history of behavior analysis and some of the influences that have brought us to today's theories. I will list and describe what the different functions of behavior are. Then I will look at the steps needed to work through an effective function of behavior assessment and intervention (behavior plan). Next, I will share research that shows how important teacher modeling, coaching and social validity is to this process. Finally, I will look at some of the challenges of applying function-based interventions in general education classrooms.

Chapter Two

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges for early learning and elementary teachers today is the presence of an increasing amount of student behavior to manage in the classroom. Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson and Ruef (2000) state that “approximately 1% to 5% of students exhibit chronic and intense externalizing (e.g., aggression, property destruction, antisocial behaviors) or internalizing (e.g., social withdrawal or depression) problem behavior” (p. 135). Alkon, Ramler and MacLenna (2003) state that “preschool teachers report children’s challenging behavior as their single greatest concern” (p. 91). The behavior challenges facing educators today are significant, and better support is needed for today’s children and teachers.

With the absence of functional behavior assessments and interventions from teacher education programs, educators are often left on their own to learn how to manage problem student behavior through personal trial and error. Vo, Sutherland and Conroy (2012) stated that “there is a need for interventions that focus on building teachers’ knowledge and skills to promote positive teacher-child interactions that are developmentally appropriate and supportive of children’s emotional and behavioral growth” (p. 403). Often, because teachers don’t have the knowledge or skill to intervene effectively, children with problem behavior are isolated, removed, or managed in a way that is the least disruptive for the teacher. These practices often do not address the reason behind the behavior, nor do they help to change the behavior into something more productive or functional. This is a great disservice to these children and their academic futures.

Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper (1982) proposed that the deficits in a child's learning be viewed as an educator's teaching disability rather than the physical aspects of the child's failure to learn, because all children possess the innate potential to learn and achieve. The educational system must become accountable for the success or the failure of students and provide them with a staff who finds the appropriate methods and techniques to promote learning. (p. 304)

The authors suggest that any deficits in a child's learning should be viewed as a teacher's disability and not that of the child. Therefore it is our responsibility, as teaching professionals, to have some background knowledge in appropriate and effective behavior management strategies for those students that would benefit from them. I have dedicated my research and writing to what I believe can make a difference for every early learning or elementary teacher and every child who displays problem behavior – function-based interventions. According to research in this field, this type of intervention is proving to be very successful. Newcomer and Lewis (2004) state that “research has indicated that behavioral interventions based on functional assessment are more effective at reducing problem behaviors of students with EBD [Emotional Behavioral Disorders] compared with traditional intervention approaches” (p. 178).

This literature review will start off by taking a brief look at the history of behavior analysis through the eyes of Dr. Sigmund Freud and Dr. Alfred Adler. Then, I will examine what the functions of behavior are, and what steps are involved with function-based assessments and interventions (a system of recognizing why a child behaves the way they do and effective planning to replace those behaviors into something desirable instead). It will include the research that shows some of the most effective ways to implement these interventions

successfully in a general education classroom, including modeling strategies for teachers and coaching them through the implementation process. Finally, it will mention some of the challenges that have been noted while using these interventions in general education classrooms.

Freud and Adler (A Brief History of Behavior Theories)

Freud's influence. Dr. Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) is considered today to be the founder of the psychodynamic approach to psychology, which looks closely at the ‘unconscious drives’ that motivate people to act in certain ways. He has also been said to be the father of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. Freud's psychoanalytic systems came to dominate the field from early in the twentieth century, forming the basis for many later variants. While these systems have adopted different theories and techniques, all have followed Freud by attempting to effect behavioral change through having patients talk about their difficulties. Muris (2006) claimed that “Freud’s psychoanalytic theory is still one of the most influential theoretical models of abnormal human behavior” (p. 1). Emde (1992) stated that “Freud is known as the founder of psychoanalysis, but today’s reader may find surprise in the extent to which his contributions frame a good deal of our contemporary developmental thinking” (p. 347). It was Freud’s initial theories that proposed human behavior could be analyzed and modified by looking into the subconscious of the individual.

Muris (2006) stated that

at least one important issue on which Freud was right: that is, human abnormal behavior frequently has its origins in childhood. Researchers and clinicians seem to have accepted this idea, but it is time that politicians and policy makers also become convinced of this

notion, so that they put more effort in tackling the problems that hinder the effective detection and intervention of disordered youths (p. 9).

One of Freud's most important influences today, as mentioned above, is his theory that abnormal behavior originates in childhood. It is crucial for not only policy makers and politicians to keep this in mind, but it is also imperative that education systems do as well. This can be shown by providing teachers with the right kind of support and training to adequately address some of the abnormal or inappropriate behaviors in their classrooms.

Adler and his connection to Freud. Dr. Alfred Adler (1870 – 1937) is known today as the founder of the school of 'Individual Psychology'. Long ago, he was a respected general practitioner in Vienna. He was fascinated when he heard his first psychoanalysis lecture by Dr. Sigmund Freud, but never considered himself to be a pupil of Freud. He was invited to join the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1902. By the end of the decade, he had become the president of the society and, over time, came to criticize several underpinnings of psychoanalytic theory. Piotrowski (2010) stated that "as Adler's own theories developed, and as he voiced them within the association, Freud became increasingly defensive" (p. 999). Hirsch (2005) claimed that "Freud and Adler had a famous falling out... at its center was Freud's insistence that neurotic phenomena were of sexual origin. Adler refused to take this as proven" (p. 473). When Adler would not recant his theories, the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society was split into a Freudian majority and an Adlerian minority. For a brief time, Adlerians retained the term "psychoanalysis", only later defining their school as Individual Psychology.

It is largely in Adler's reaction against Freud that he truly defined himself. Piotrowski (2010) indicated that "Freud's influence on Adler can be seen in the emphasis on the importance

of early childhood and on the ideas that the motives that underlie neurosis are outside the conscious awareness and that it is only through insight into these motives that a cure can be attained” (p. 999). This statement shows us how Freud and Adler’s early theories have laid the ground work and have influenced the behavior programs that are accessible to our therapists, educators, behavior specialists and youth of today. Function-based interventions are one of these programs that focus on early childhood and, most importantly, on the identification of the motives or ‘functions’ of certain behaviors before coming up with a ‘cure’ or intervention plan to change the behavior.

Adler’s influence. Following his break from Freud, Adler opened a child guidance clinic in which he gave advice to teachers and parents of problem children. This was in accordance with Adler’s view that that the right kind of upbringing and education can play a role in avoiding neurosis. According to Hirsch (2005), “Adler said that for every child there is an associated level of challenge, and the teacher’s job was to recognize what it was” (p. 476). Much of today’s child-centred teaching and ideas of differentiated learning flow from this idea.

Adler’s theories and advice to teachers and parents often emphasized the importance of social interactions and building self-esteem in children, especially ones with problem behavior. He believed that using praise was a far more effective strategy than any other authoritarian method. Blamires (2006) confirmed this by stating that “from an Adlerian perspective, praise teaches a child to conform, to please others and to feel worthwhile” (p. 185). Furthermore, Blamires (2006) explained that “reconsidering Adler can also emphasize a positive long term view of emotional and behavioral development that counters the short term authoritarianism of current public debate” (p. 183). These Adlerian principles are seen in today’s function-based

interventions, with the praising of appropriate replacement behaviors in social settings being a fundamental part of the intervention process.

According to Piotrowski (2010)

Adlerians recommend that parents and teachers be firm, fair, and, above all, encouraging. One should tell children that they can overcome their disabilities and praise every progress toward accomplishment and social interest. One should avoid excessive punishments, for this will only convince children that others are against them and that they must withdraw. (p. 998)

Adler's focus on the significance of childhood goals led him and his colleagues to pay considerable attention to educational processes. Hirsch (2005) noted that "his [Adler's] strategies for behavior change in schools have influenced educational psychologists and, of course, teachers themselves" (p. 481). One example of Adlerian principles operating in classrooms today is the relatively new approach of conflict resolution and mediation, which are strategies that have become more common for teaching social skills in early learning settings today. This is just another example of the many ways that Adler's early theories have influenced the practices of educators and other professionals who provide support for today's young children.

Functions of Behavior

All behavior occurs for a reason. Sometimes the reason will be clear, but at other times it may not be clear. Thompson and Rudolph (1996) stated that "according to Adlerian principles, all behavior is purposive and goal-directed... therefore, people act in ways that meet their needs" (p. 112). What can be said with certainty is that children demonstrate challenging behaviors

because they meet specific needs for them. Understanding why the behavior may be happening is necessary in order to select more appropriate behaviors to replace the challenging ones and also, to create an effective, long-term plan.

Before we can determine the functions or reasons for behavior, the term ‘behavior’ should be defined. Kauffman (2005) explains that emotional and behavioral problems are generally classified into two domains: internalizing and externalizing. Internalizing problems (anxiety, shyness, depression, fear, social withdrawal) are often overlooked because they are not disruptive. Caldarella, Christensen, Kramer and Kronmiller (2009) explain that much research has focused on externalizing problems in school aged children, describing them as “acting out behaviors that may include physical and verbal aggression, anger, irritability and defiance” (p. 51). For the purposes of this paper, and because internalizing behaviors must be handled quite differently, the problem student behavior mentioned will always be referring to the externalizing domain.

Behaviors re-occur when they receive positive, negative or a combination of both kinds of reinforcement. Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin (2013) explain this by stating that “the user first determines whether the student is gaining access to something (positive reinforcement), escaping/avoiding something (negative reinforcement), or both.... Then identifies whether the student is gaining or escaping attention, tangibles/activities, or sensory consequences” (p. 52). Germer, Kaplan, Giroux, Markham, Ferris, Oakes and Lane (2011) confirm this by listing the functions of behavior as being: access to attention, escape from tasks, tangibles or activities, and sensory stimulation (p. 22). What this means is that a child’s behavior could happen: to access attention from an adult or a peer, to escape doing an undesired task or participating in an undesired activity, to access a desired item (tangible), or because the behavior is internally

reinforcing (sensory). Although the functions are sometimes labeled slightly differently, the research consistently identifies four.

| 4 Functions of Behaviour | | What It Does For Me | When Does it Happen |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
| S Sensory | | Provides preferred sensory experiences; behaviour feels good to do | Anytime, even when alone. Especially if I'm anxious |
| E Escape | | Removes undesired activities or interactions | When task is too: hard, easy, boring, or scary |
| A Attention | | Provides access to people or interactions | When I want social interaction |
| T Tangibles | | Provides preferred items or activities | When I want a preferred item or activity |

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Figure 1. *Functions of Behavior Chart, Andrew Davis (2013)*

Pryor and Tollerud (1999) indicated that

Human beings are social beings and have an insatiable goal to belong.... Behavior is purposeful. Recommended methods for dealing with children’s behavior makes sense only if we can understand and/or recognize the purpose of that behavior. Viewing a child through labels such as hyperactive, learning disabled, or mentally retarded is of no use in helping discover more feasible alternatives. Children are sensitive to the social

atmosphere they are engaged in and will perform early experiments with it, seeking what they want (p. 299).

By accurately identifying the function of or reasons behind a student's behavior, an interventionist (e.g., educator, school psychologist, behavioral consultant) is able to choose, teach, and reinforce an appropriate replacement that serves the same function as the problem behavior. However, functions of behavior need to be investigated by observing a child a number of times and not for just one occurrence. They can be determined by conducting a 'Functional Behavioral Assessment', which will be discussed in the next section.

Functional Behavioral Assessment

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is generally considered to be a problem-solving process for addressing student problem behavior. According to Bethune and Wood (2013), "[FBA] identify the relationship between the challenging behavior and the environment" (p. 98). Franzone (2009) states that "an FBA provides teachers/practitioners with a clear understanding of why learners engage in the interfering behavior" (p. 2). Essentially, an FBA provides a systemic and informed means by which targeted interventions may be developed and monitored.

To conduct an FBA, interventionists (i.e., educator, school psychologist, behavior consultant) typically review student records, interview individuals who know the student, and observe the student's behavior in the problem context to identify stimuli that maintain the problem behavior. According to Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin (2013), an FBA identifies the antecedent (A) conditions that set the occasion for the target behavior (B), and the consequences (C) that maintain the target behavior (p. 52). To elaborate, the antecedent (A) is whatever has happened just before the undesirable target behavior (B) occurs. The consequence

(C) is the reinforcement that happens after and maintains the target behavior. This information is usually compiled in a three column chart and is known as the A-B-C's of behavior analysis.

The following figure has been included to show an example of an A-B-C behavior analysis chart:

ABC's of Behavior Analysis

One of the components of a functional behavior analysis (FBA) is to note what happened prior to the behavior, what the behavior looked like, and what happened after the behavior. For purposes of the example below, let's assume that Johnny doesn't start tasks promptly and we need a better understanding of what's going on so that we can develop a plan for him.

| Antecedent | Behavior | Consequences |
|---|--|---|
| What was going on before the behavior occurred? Objective reports, may include time of day, setting, and activity. | Describe what the student did and/or said. Provide a verbal picture of the behavior. | What happened after the behavior occurred? Include reactions of school personnel, peers, others. Write this part as if someone else had been there observing the events and was diligently recording the sequence. |
| The Following is a Worked Sample: | | |
| Sept 20, 8:49 A.M., classroom. Mrs. K. gives the class math worksheets, reviews the instructions, and asks them to get started. | Johnny sits at his desk, but doesn't start. | <p>8:51 Mrs. K. comes over, talks to him and shows him how to do the first problem, writing in the answer for him. She walks away. Johnny continues to sit there.</p> <p>8:54 most students are working on the math sheet except for Johnny and one other student.</p> <p>8:56 Mrs. K. comes back and talks to Johnny again. She does the second problem with him, and then says "Very good -- now please do the rest of the sheet and show me when you're done!" She walks away, and Johnny puts down his pencil.</p> <p>9:02 Class done with sheet. Johnny has not done anything.</p> |

Figure 2. Sample A-B-C Behavior Assessment Chart, Adapted from Leslie E. Packer (2000)

A chart like this often helps the interventionist to be able to identify the cause of the behavior. It also helps to see how the child is being reinforced, explaining why he/she continues to engage in the same behavior. As cited in Dwyer, Rozewski and Simonsen (2012), “an interventionist may conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA) to describe the problem behavior and identify triggers (i.e., antecedents that occasion the problem behavior) and maintaining consequences (i.e., reinforcers) of the problem behavior” (p. 115). An ABC data form or assessment chart is simply an assessment tool used to gather this information, and should eventually be used to help create a positive behavior support plan.

In one study, Germer, Kaplan, Giroux, Markham, Ferris, Oakes and Lane (2011) documented the processes of a function-based intervention, intended to increase a second grade student’s on-task behavior in a general education classroom. Germer et al. (2011) noted that during classroom observations “liaisons [interventionists] recorded antecedents, occurrences and consequences (A-B-C) of the target behavior.... This information allowed liaisons to identify antecedents preceding the target behavior and consequences maintaining the behavior” (p. 21). Afterwards, the liaisons collaborated with the teacher to devise a hypothesis for the function of the behavior. The hypothesis was then used to generate intervention components relating to the functions of the target behavior.

Essentially, the goal of doing a functional behavioral assessment is to discover what the function of the problem behavior is. Truly understanding why a child behaves the way he or she does is the first, best step to developing strategies to stop the behavior. Once the function is identified, a behavior plan can be created and implemented to extinguish the target behavior and replace it with a new, more appropriate behavior that serves the same function.

Interventions (Behavior Intervention Plans)

Once the function of a problem behavior has been established, a behavior plan is the next step. A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) takes the observations made in a Functional Behavioral Assessment and turns them into a concrete plan of action for managing a student's behavior. Horner (1994) explains that “function-based interventions are positive interventions used to target challenging behavior and increase a functionally appropriate alternative behavior” (p. 402). For this to happen, there are three common components that a BIP should include.

Crone and Horner (2003) and O’Neill et al. (1997) as cited in Dwyer, Rozewski and Simonsen (2012) describe these three components

The results of the FBA are used to create an individualized, positive behavior intervention plan (BIP) that matches the function of the student’s behavior. A well-developed BIP includes (a) antecedent strategies that prevent the problem behavior and prompt appropriate behavior (b) strategies to teach the student an appropriate alternative behavior that meets the same function and replaces the problem behavior, and (c) consequence strategies that prevent reinforcement of the problem behavior and increase reinforcement for appropriate behaviors. (p. 116)

Although worded slightly differently, these components are confirmed by other scholars in the field. Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin (2013) state that “each intervention method has three common components: Antecedents are adjusted to increase the likelihood of the replacement behavior, reinforcement is provided when the replacement behavior occurs, and reinforcement is withheld (extinction) when the target behavior occurs” (p.54). Germer et al. (2011) also affirm the three components of a function-based intervention as being: antecedent

adjustments, adjusting the reinforcement contingencies, and extinction (p. 22). Regardless of wording or source, the research clearly shows that a BIP should include: ways to change the environment to keep behavior from starting in the first place, teaching the child a replacement behavior that still meets the same function, providing positive reinforcement to promote good behavior, and employing planned ignoring to avoid reinforcing the problem behavior.

The following is a sample of an easy to follow Behavior Intervention Plan:

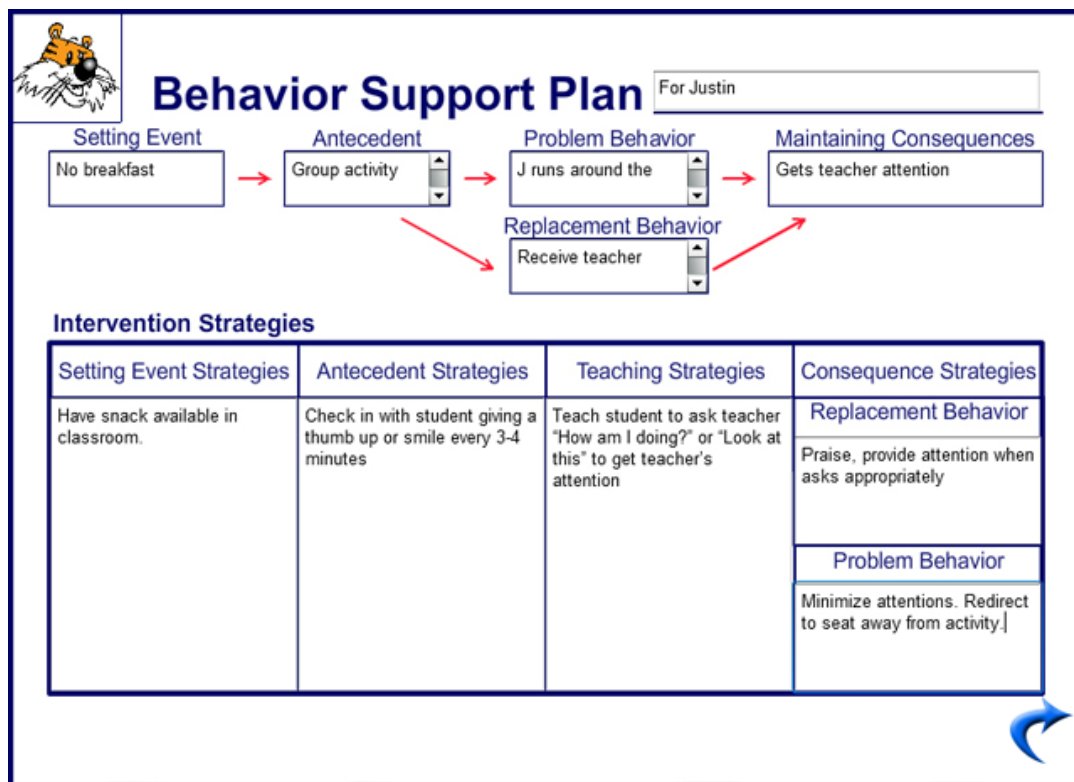


Figure 3. Behavior Intervention Plan sample, Taken from Kid Coach (2011)

Just as Adler asserted, positive reinforcement is a crucial part of the implementation of any function-based intervention. This means that the educator or professionals implementing the behavior plan must be diligent in seeking out desired behavior occurrences and providing a high rate of praise for them. Paniotti (2010) explains that reinforcement is critical to successful implementation and that it “must be given frequently and consistently” (p.14). According to Weber (2005), at the beginning of implementation, reinforcement must be continuous; teachers must provide reinforcement each and every time a desired behavior occurs. As target behavior improves, a less frequent, more intermittent schedule may be adopted.

Depending on the function that is identified in the Functional Behavioral Assessment, different strategies can be used as part of the Behavior Intervention Plan. The following is a list of possible interventions that can be used for each function of behavior:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Escape/Avoidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teach how to appropriately ask for help or a break -Reinforce and praise for compliance -Using a first-then board -Using a visual schedule -Establishing a good rapport -Using social stories -Offering choices -Clear expectations -Follow through | <p style="text-align: center;">Attention Seeking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teach how to appropriately ask for/get attention (e.g., tap on shoulder, "look at me") and reinforce when these new behaviors occur -Give positive attention many times throughout the day -Ignore when undesired attention seeking behavior occurs |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Seeking Access to Materials/Tangibles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teach how to appropriately ask for the item/material. -Deny access when not appropriately requested -Increase the variety of activities/items the child is interested in so there are more things to help motivate him/her -Teaching your child to accept 'no' -Control access to tangibles -Transitional warnings | <p style="text-align: center;">Sensory Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase access to alternative sources of stimulation -Introduce your child to self-management techniques -Interrupt/redirect inappropriate behaviors to more functional ones and reinforce those behaviors (i.e. tapping fingers on a table -> tapping keys on a piano) -Reinforce behaviors that are incompatible with the self-stimulatory behavior (e.g. a child that flaps their hands would be reinforced for keeping their hands folded) -Physical exercise may decrease behavior -Seek medical advice |

Figure 4. *Interventions for Different Functions of Behavior, Adapted from Katie Sadowski (2012) and ErinOakKids (2012)*

Many studies have shown that function-based interventions and BIP are successful in reducing problem behavior in children. Ingram, Lewis-Palmer and Sugai (2005) verify this by claiming that “students benefit from interventions based on the function, or purpose of their problem behavior” (p. 115). Ellingson, Miltenberger, Stricker, Galensky and Garlinghouse (2000) also affirm this point when they indicate that “function-based interventions are more effective in decreasing students’ problem behaviors than similarly comprehensive interventions that do not consider function” (p. 93). One of the greatest influences on the successful implementation of these interventions is the presence of modeling and coaching for the educator learning the strategies and incorporating the behavior plan. This will be discussed in the following section.

Successful Execution of Interventions (Modeling, Coaching and Social Validity)

As mentioned previously, the results of Bethune and Wood’s (2013) study show that in-service and workshop training alone is not sufficient to train most teachers to accurately implement FBA’s and function-based interventions (p. 112). In several different studies that examined the effectiveness of function-based interventions, results that showed positive outcomes (the reduction of problem behavior) often included modeling and coaching for teachers in their implementation processes. Some of these studies have been mentioned below to validate the importance of this type of teacher training.

In Germer et al. (2011), a function-based intervention of a second-grade student’s on-task behavior was documented and specific training procedures were outlined. The day before the intervention was implemented, two liaisons [interventionists] met with the teacher to conduct a training session, where detailed descriptions of the intervention were discussed. On the first day

of implementation, prior to collecting intervention data, two liaisons observed the teacher and student during the first half of the morning. The liaisons provided corrective feedback and demonstrated the appropriate implementation, as needed. The liaisons also provided verbal praise when the teacher and student followed the intervention procedures. The teacher implemented the intervention for 6 days before it was withdrawn. Intervention components were withdrawn once a clear change in level and trend was evident (p. 27). In Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin's (2013) study using function-based interventions, training procedures included an explanation of the overall intervention, and then the individual elements of the intervention were then taught using modeling, provision of examples and non-examples, and opportunities to practice (p. 55). Both of these examples validate the importance of modeling, corrective feedback, and opportunities for teachers to practice intervention strategies.

In addition to modeling and coaching, when teachers are part of the entire process (when they are included in discussions and decisions during the FBA and the creation of the BIP), there is more willingness to implement the strategies, therefore creating more teacher buy-in. Teacher buy-in can be measured by checking for social validity. According to Luiselli and Reed (2011), social validity refers to the acceptability of and satisfaction with intervention procedures, usually assessed by soliciting opinions from the people who receive and implement them. Bethune and Wood (2013) state that social validity questionnaires determine a teacher's perception of the effectiveness of the function-based interventions, the feasibility of implementing function-based interventions, the effectiveness of coaching, and whether coaching was a socially acceptable method for improving accuracy of implementation of function-based interventions" (p. 109). Intervention procedures for child behavior are socially valid when people judge them as being acceptable.

Challenges

Although much of the research demonstrates their effectiveness, challenges have also been noted regarding attempts to train general educators to acquire and apply function-based intervention strategies in addition to their typical school duties. For instance, while referring to modeling and coaching teachers, Scott, Bucalos, Liaupsin, Nelson, Jolivette, and DeShea (2004) state that “although traditional function-based intervention training methods should not be abandoned, training should be adapted and grounded in effective procedures that can be sustained by school personnel, because time constraints, classroom size, and training backgrounds must be accommodated throughout the training process” (p. 193). Christensen, Renshaw, Caldarella, and Young (2012) also mention that function-based intervention training efforts should be as stream-lined as possible in providing opportunities to develop fluency with these skills. Adaptability to work with a teacher’s specific skill set, time constraints and current classroom needs seem to be the keys to finding a balance that can make these training methods manageable and successful.

Conclusion

In sum, research supports function-based interventions for students who exhibit problem behaviors. In the Kamps, Wendland and Culpepper (2006) study of active teacher participation in Functional Behavioral Assessment for students with emotional and behavioral disorders risks in general education classrooms, results “confirmed the effectiveness of FBA, including functional analysis, in designing effective intervention for students with or at risk for EBD (emotional and behavioral disorders) in elementary school settings” (p. 142). Furthermore, Kamps et al. (2006) added that a goal in school settings should be to use FBA procedures as a

prevention strategy, that is, to reduce or eliminate behavior problems early rather than allowing escalation to serious emotional problems and violent behaviors.

In order for function-based interventions to be successful, research shows us that teachers need training prior to, during and after the implementation of interventions, by ‘experts’ in the field, such as behavior specialists or psychologists. Teachers benefit from participating in all parts of the process, including the assessment, the determination of function, and the intervention, with modeling and corrective feedback being provided throughout. This is the most effective way for teachers to generalize the use of these strategies into their everyday practices when experts are not present, so replacement behaviors can be maintained.

Not only do teachers need training, modeling and coaching in function-based interventions, but they would also benefit from a written resource or text where behavior intervention strategies and processes are all collected. Christensen, Renshaw, Caldarella and Young (2012) explain that “a major objective underlying these texts [texts developed to help guide educational professionals through successful function-based intervention implementation in schools] is to teach educational professionals to conduct FBA for proactive purposes: preventing the occurrence and exacerbation of student problem behavior” (p. 315). The following chapter of this paper will contain a plan for a teacher resource that I would create for educators to use when:

- Interventionists (consultants, psychologists, etc.) are not available to them
- As a text to refer back to when they are trying to implement strategies on their own coaching and feedback stages have been completed.
- As a school-wide professional development presentation

Chapter Three

Introduction

In any typical elementary classroom, individualized approaches to student learning are challenging for teachers when you take classroom sizes and the inclusion of coded children (children identified as requiring special education programming) into consideration. In addition to feeling overwhelmed and pressured by the demands of covering curriculum, teachers are often left to their own devices to research and find ways to help such a wide range of needs in their own classrooms. Due to these pressures, academic needs are often prioritized over emotional or behavioral ones. The lack of teacher expertise in dealing with the emotional and behavioral needs of children is to the detriment of our students and their overall functioning within a classroom setting.

Working with a multi-disciplinary team in 100 Voices has changed my views and beliefs about learning and education forever. As a beginning teacher seventeen years ago, I was naïve in believing that most children should be able to fit into the mold of a traditional classroom and that if they couldn't, it was the job of the student to change their ways and the job of the parents to help find a way to correct this. I am sad to admit that I also felt justified in removing a child when they were disruptive and not productive in my classroom setting. When I moved into early learning, however, I had no idea how this would change me completely as a teacher, as a professional, and as a mother.

The support I have received from my early learning multi-disciplinary team (through observation of their engagement with students, professional development sessions lead by different disciplines, feedback and suggestions, and meetings to discuss student progress) has

changed my beliefs about how children learn and my role as the classroom teacher tremendously. Today, I whole-heartedly believe that every child has a right to an inclusive education where proper supports are in place for them. This must include behavior supports. As previously mentioned, student behavior has been reported as teachers' greatest concern (Alkon, Ramler and MacLenna, 2003). Educators cannot be expected to manage children with behavior unless proper support is provided. If we are looking to actually change problem behavior into something functional and appropriate for students, then teachers need training in behavior assessment and intervention strategies.

My Rationale

In our province's Education Act, Alberta Education (2014) states that, "the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of an inclusive education system that provides each student with the relevant learning opportunities and supports necessary to achieve success" (pg. 11). I believe that these supports must include providing teachers with strategies to help children find functional ways to meet their emotional needs so problem behavior can be reduced. If a child's emotional needs are not being met, it is difficult to meet their academic needs. In addition, an Alberta Education document entitled *Education Act – Frequently Asked Questions* (2012) mentions that Albertans expect their government to provide for standards that support teaching excellence, as well as the training and resources necessary for teachers to meet the standards. (p. 7). Without training and resources around function-based assessments and intervention strategies, educators will continue to struggle with problem behavior in classrooms and student academic performance will always be limited to what a teacher can manage on their own.

It is because of my early learning experiences and support that my stance today on educational issues has become more of a progressive one. Eisner (1998) described the progressive way of teaching as seeing each child as a custom job. I believe that as Eisner explained, we must look at each child separately, including the individual's background, and then deal with the 'whole child.' I now know that every student is capable of learning, if we offer him or her the right conditions and accommodations to best fit their individual needs. I believe that it is my job to seek out, to the best of my ability, the appropriate strategies to help each individual learn and successfully function within a classroom, ensuring that these strategies are developmentally appropriate based on where that child is currently at. Although it isn't always easy, I know that my role as a teacher is to build from a child's current skillset, not where a curriculum says they should be.

Today, I view my students as emotional and social beings (not just academic or intellectual ones), and understand that supporting emotional and social skill deficits is a crucial part of my job. I believe that although many early learning and elementary teachers want to support all facets of their students, most are lacking in the skillset and training to be able to help children emotionally and behaviorally. It is through modeling, coaching and giving teachers opportunities to practice new skills that they learn best. It is my hope that what I am proposing in the pages ahead can be a solution to this area of need in teacher education.

With increasing student behavior being one of the biggest concerns of early learning educators today, it is not surprising that teachers are feeling frustrated with the inclusion of some children into their classrooms. Feeling under-qualified to deal with student aggression and disruptive behavior, frustrated with inclusion without support, and discouraged by the amount of time and energy children with emotional and behavioral issues take from the rest of the class, it

becomes apparent that teachers need training to better manage classroom behavior. Renshaw, Christensen, Marchant and Anderson (2008) confirm this by suggesting that “school personnel, such as general educators, be trained to implement FBS [function-based support/intervention] for at-risk students exhibiting problem behavior” (p. 503).

In the section to follow, I will describe and show samples of a PowerPoint resource that could be used for a school professional development session on behavior management. For best results, it should be used in conjunction with a coach (Emotional Behavioral Specialist, Psychologist, or a fellow teacher who has experience using those strategies) who visits classrooms to model strategies, coach teachers and provide them with feedback. In addition, this PowerPoint could also be printed off and used by any individual teacher, new or experienced, that is looking to develop their personal skills in positively shaping student behavior.

This sort of resource would be valuable in an early learning or elementary school demographic where problem student behavior is high. Based on my experience as a teacher, the information presented could be useful at any point in a school year, but would be best implemented and most effective at the beginning (September-October), when a teacher is establishing relationships and classroom expectations. It would be valuable for teachers who feel that they are not receiving enough support, or that feel they don't have the training or background to deal with problem classroom behavior. The ultimate goal of the resource would be to enable educators by teaching the necessary skills to positively shape student behavior, so that less time is spent on management, and more time can be spent delivering curriculum and offering appropriate learning opportunities.

As cited throughout Chapter 2, much of the research available today confirms that student behavior is reduced when function-based interventions are implemented (Ellingson, Miltenberger, Stricker, Galensky and Garlinghouse, 2000; Ingram, Lewis-Palmer and Sugai, 2005; Kamps, Wendland and Culpepper, 2006; Newcomer and Lewis, 2004). This project is significant to the educational professional community because it provides teachers with strategies to independently prevent and reduce problem student behavior. Vo, Sutherland and Conroy (2012) have confirmed the need to build on teachers' knowledge and skills to promote positive teacher-child interactions that are developmentally appropriate and supportive of children's emotional and behavioral growth. This is crucial in school districts or individual school communities where, for whatever reason, outside supports are not available or accessible to teachers. By providing teachers with step-by-step instructions on assessing, identifying functions, implementing behavior plans and intervention strategies, power is given back to those who feel frustrated with the lack of funds or options available that provide support when dealing with problem behavior in classrooms.

This resource will include the following sections:

- Identification of the functions of behavior
- Using an A-B-C template when completing an FBA (functional behavioral assessment) on a student
- Behavior Plan requirements (including samples/templates),
- Intervention strategies (including mention of 'extinction bursts' and 'effective praising')
- Suggestions for successful intervention methods (modeling and teacher coaching).

Implications – My Action Plan

What I am proposing in this section is how to create a resource that teachers could use as a reference guide, or for a school to use to lead a staff professional development session. Ideally, this information would best be presented to a staff (with the expectation of follow-up meetings after experimenting in classrooms with strategies recommended), so that professional dialogue in the forms of offering feedback and asking questions about the process could occur. The resource would be created using PowerPoint or Keynote, which are both types of presentation software that are widely used today. Using either of these two programs would make the information accessible to audiences in a presentation form and in a printable form as well.

Functions of Behavior. The first area that would need to be covered is defining ‘behavior’, explaining that all behavior happens for a reason, and then listing the Functions of Behavior. This would be important to mention, based on Pryor and Tollerud’s (1999) claim, that recommending methods for dealing with children’s behavior only makes sense if we can understand and/or recognize the purpose of the behavior. According to Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin (2013) and Germer et al. (2011), the four functions that should be mentioned and explained are: “attention, escape, tangibles and sensory” (p. 52 and p. 22). This could be displayed in a visual similar to Figure 1, where a simple explanation of how each function serves the individual, and when we might see a behavior with this function occur.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The next section would need to explain what an FBA is and why we need to use them when trying to identify the function behind a child’s behavior. It would explain that a FBA is used to identify the relationship between the problem behavior and the environment, and provide teachers with a clear understanding of why

learners engage in interfering behavior. As mentioned earlier, this has been stated in research done by Bethune and Wood (2013) and Franzone (2009).

It would also be important to explain the A-B-C's of FBA. As described by Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin (2013), FBA identifies antecedents, behaviors and consequences that maintain that behavior. I would use Dwyer, Rozewski and Simonsen (2012) to explain that an FBA may be conducted to describe problem behaviors, and identify triggers (antecedents) and reinforcers (consequences) of the problem behavior. I would include a sample A-B-C Behavior Assessment Chart, similar to the one provided in Figure 2, to define each term and demonstrate how a teacher might collect and document observations of a child to further analyze and determine functions of behavior. To further illustrate this process, I would include the following video link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xThcmhwFIKw> (Olson Eglund, 2011), which looks at different ways to document observations and different charts to use when doing an FBA.

To help provide a better understanding and some practice for teachers in identifying the functions of problem behavior, a worksheet activity would be included after this section. This would also provide teachers with plenty of additional examples of what the antecedents and consequences of various behaviors could potentially be. A screenshot of the activity is provided on the following page.

Functions of Behavior Worksheet

Please identify the function of **behaviour** (escape, attention - positive or negative, tangible - to obtain item or activity, or sensory). You may wish to look at the consequences for clues.

| | ANTECEDENT - what happens right before the behavior | BEHAVIOUR - what the child does | CONSEQUENCE - what happens right after the behaviour | FUNCTION |
|----|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Teacher asks child to sit and print. | Child hits teacher. | Teacher gives child a time out. | Escape (avoid task) |
| 2 | Children playing on playground. Child is not playing with others. | Child throws sand. | Child is reprimanded by adult supervisor and peers yell at him. | Attention (negative attn) |
| 3 | Peer is playing with the iPad. | Child hits peer. | Peer cries and runs away. Child gets the iPad. | Tangible (Obtain item) |
| 4 | Free play at recess. | Child wanders around playground and flaps hands in front of face. | No response from peers or adults. | Sensory |
| 5 | Teacher asks child to complete a math exercise. | Child wanders around classroom, sharpens pencil, looks for book, talks to friends. | Math time ends. | |
| 6 | Teacher asks child to clean up toys. | Child cleans up toys. | Teacher immediately says, "Thank you for cleaning up your toys!" | |
| 7 | Teacher asks child to share a toy with a peer. | Child throws toy at peer. | Child is asked to apologize to peer and then returns to the same toy. | |
| 8 | Teacher asks child to come inside after recess is over. | Child screams and cries. | Teacher allows the child time to calm down. | |
| 9 | Child is given free time to do whatever they would like. | Child repetitively lines up books in the classroom. | No response from peers or adults. | |
| 10 | Class is asked to sit for carpet time. | Child blows raspberry sounds during carpet time. | Peers look at him and giggle. | |

Figure 5. *Functions of Behavior Worksheet slide, HagEstad 2014.*

See *Appendix A* for a blank A-B-C Behavior Assessment Chart to be used by teachers.

Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP). The next part of this resource would describe the necessary parts and show samples of BIP. It would explain, as cited in Horner (1994), that function-based interventions are positive interventions used to target challenging behavior and increase a functionally appropriate alternative behavior. It would include this list of required components of a well-developed BIP, as mentioned by Crone and Horner (2003), O’Neill et al. (1997), Gann, Ferro, Umbreit and Liaupsin (2013), and Germer et al. (2011):

1. Antecedent adjustments (ways to change the environment to keep the behavior from starting in the first place)
2. Strategies to teach the child an appropriate replacement behavior that still meets the same function

- Consequence strategies that prevent reinforcement of the problem behavior (planned ignoring leading to extinction) and increase reinforcement for appropriate behaviors (positive, immediate, and frequent).

As a resource for teachers, I would suggest that they look at the PBIS World website at <http://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/behavior-intervention-plan-bip/> (Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), n.d.) for a huge collection of BIP templates and additional information on implementing behavior plans. I would also include this slide displaying some examples of various BIP's to offer teachers some options in how behavior plans can look, depending on the need and style desired.

Behavior Intervention Plan Samples

| Behavior Intervention Plan for | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Target Behavior: What behavior(s) adversely affect the student's learning? | Preventative Strategies: What will adults do to support the student and prevent the target behavior from recurring? | Replacement Behavior: What behavior will be taught to replace and serve the same function as the target behavior? | Instructional Strategies: What strategies will be used to instruct the student in the use of replacement behaviors? | Positive Consequences: What will be done when the student uses correct replacement behaviors? | Negative Consequences: What will be done when the target behavior recurs? |
| Running Away: Takes the form of leaving the school building or the school grounds during the school day and without permission. Often returns to the school after 5-10 minutes. | -Foreshowing and preplanning with student about upcoming activities -Opportunities to talk about anxiety, anger, and frustration she is feeling -Breaks | -Give pre-established cue or pass to staff, go to identified "safe" space -Use journal to write about frustrations, concerns etc. -Speak to trusted staff about concerns, frustrations etc. | -Social skills / anger management coaching -Develop system of passes and/or nonverbal cues between teachers & student to communicate need for break -Teach student ways to use journal effectively | -Earning of points that can be used for other tangible rewards -Phone call home to share positives with mother -Verbal praise & feedback -Opportunities for more choices and freedom w/in school setting | -Loss of points -Increased adult supervision during the next 2 days -Possible in-school suspension -Possible police involvement if leaves school grounds |
| | Person Responsible: Any staff working with student | | Person Responsible: Special education staff | Person Responsible: Special Ed. Teacher & General Ed. Teacher | Person Responsible: Case manager, principal, school crisis team |

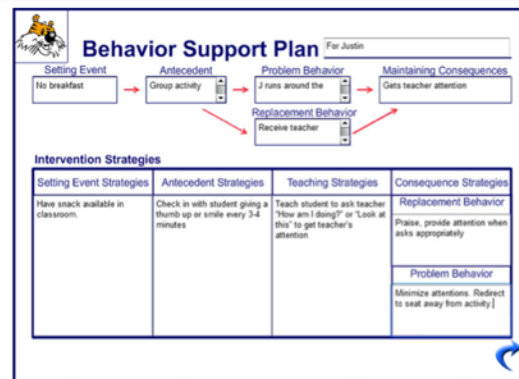
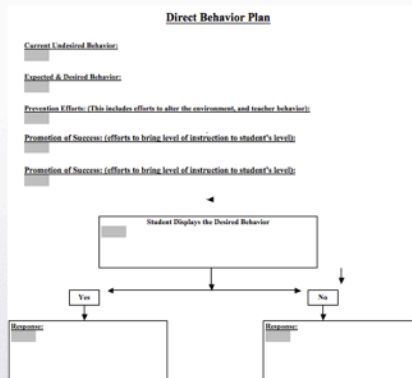


Figure 6. Behavior Intervention Plan Samples, Taken from School District of West Allis (2008), Kid Coach (2011) and www.PBISWorld.com

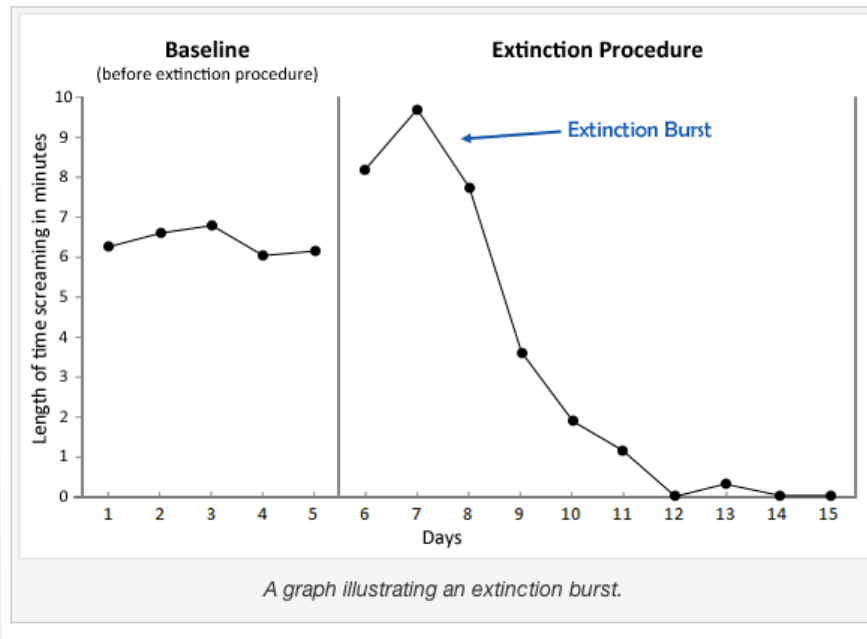
See Appendices B, C, D and E for blank BIP templates to be used by teachers.

Intervention Strategies. At this point, now that teachers would be familiar with using an FBA to determine the function of a behavior, as well as understanding what a BIP requires, the next step would be to provide strategies to use for each corresponding function. These strategies would need to be carefully selected, depending on the function, and incorporated into the BIP. This is where I would insert a slide with the same chart and information that is displayed in Figure 4. This figure offers clear, effective intervention strategies for each of the four functions of behavior. As previously noted, Ellingson et al. (2008) verify that function-based interventions are more effective in decreasing student problem behaviors than interventions that do not consider function.

One point that would be important to mention to teachers at this time is that when intervention strategies are implemented, “extinction bursts” can occur. According to Lerman, Iwata and Wallace (1999), sometimes a behavior that is being targeted by an extinction procedure won’t initially begin to decrease and will instead do the complete opposite and actually increase. When this occurs it is known as an “extinction burst” and can be defined as ‘a temporary increase in the frequency, duration, or magnitude of the target response’. This would be important for teachers to know beforehand, so that an increase would be expected and not seen as strategies being ineffective.

The graph on the following page is a slide that I would show teachers, which illustrates what an extinction burst might look like in terms of duration of a child’s screaming after implementing intervention strategies.

Extinction Burst Illustration



Taken from Educate Autism website (www.educateautism.com)

Figure 7. *Extinction Burst Illustration, Taken from Educate Autism website*

(www.educateautism.com)

Effective Reinforcement. It would be important to mention the importance of positive reinforcement to the implementation of function-based interventions. As noted by Paniotti (2010) and Weber (2005) previously, positive reinforcement (praise) must be provided each and every time a desired behavior occurs initially. It must be done frequently and consistently, and when the desired behavior starts happening more often, a more intermittent schedule may be adopted.

In the following screen shot that I would present next, some important principles of effective praising of children are mentioned.

Praise statements are always:

- **immediate:** be clear about what you are praising
- **descriptive:** be specific in what you are praising for
- **genuine:** be sincere and sound like you mean it
- **frequent:** give praise often, especially in the beginning

Figure 8. *Principles of effective praising, Adapted from Diane Davies (2011) and Tutor Guide to Early Literacy (2002)*

I would also offer some examples of positive praising statements in a slide shown in the following screen shot.

Effective Reinforcement (Praise)

Examples of Effective Praise

1. "I liked the way you worked out that word."
2. "I can see that you are putting in the sounds you know."
3. "Good, you noticed that and fixed it."
4. "I liked the way you tried to help yourself."
5. "I can tell that you're really thinking about what you are reading."
6. "You are paying attention to the pictures to help you with your reading."

Figure 9. *Examples of Effective Praise*

Modeling and Coaching. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, studies done by Bethune and Wood (2013), Germer et al. (2011), and Gann et al. (2013) have confirmed that modeling and coaching for teachers throughout implementation of function-based interventions increase the positive outcome of the process. The availability of someone experienced in using function-based interventions that would be able to offer modeling and corrective feedback to teachers during implementation would depend on the school district, the school administration and the school budget. To convey the importance of coaching and modeling to the success of these interventions, I would include the following slide.

Modeling and Coaching - Keys to Success!

Studies show that having someone to model strategies, offer you corrective feedback, and coach you through = **greater success!**

Who can help?

- Emotional Behavioral Specialists
- Teacher experienced in function-based interventions
- Psychologists

Don't be shy. If you want to succeed, ASK FOR HELP!!

Figure 10. *Importance of Modeling and Coaching*

Maintaining Contact with Participants. Flint, Zisook and Fisher (2011) claim that the most effective and lasting professional development creates communities of practice in which teachers work alongside and support one another. As defined by Wenger (n.d.) in Seaman (2008), “communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern of a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 270). Seaman further explains that, “a community of practice consists of members that share more than simply an interest; a community of practice shares expertise, competence, learning, activities, discussions, information, tools, stories, experiences, and a knowledge base. A community of practice not only shares knowledge; but also it creates, organizes, revises, and passes on knowledge among the members of the community” (p. 271). With the possibility that this document could be used as a school-wide professional development (PD) resource, I would encourage contact between participants and the establishment of a community of practice by creating a follow-up activity. I would include instructions at the end of the presentation resource that encourage teachers to choose a student and attempt a function-based assessment/intervention. This could be requested of all staff, with the expectation that teachers try this in their classrooms and report back at the next scheduled meeting time. This activity would provide an opportunity for teachers to experiment with the strategies and come back together as a community of practice to discuss successes, failures, and the direction of future school PD to develop deeper skills in this area.

The following is a slide that I would include at the end of my resource, in the case that it was being used in presentation form for a staff PD.

What's next?

- Choose one student in your class that exhibits problem behavior
 - Using a copy of the A-B-C template attached (Appendix 2), observe your student throughout various parts of a school day
 - Using the Functions of Behavior chart provided (Figure 1), evaluate your observations to assess what the functions of behaviors are
 - Make a behavior plan, using one of the templates provided (see Appendices), or one offered on <http://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/behavior-intervention-plan-bip/>.
- Refer to Figure 4 for intervention strategies.**
- Implement your plan consistently for the next 2 weeks!
 - Be prepared to share what you tried and how it worked with the staff 2 weeks from today.

Figure 11. *Next steps – Planning for Implementation*

Data Collection - Evidence of Success

One of the most valuable ways and opportune times to collect evidence of the success and effectiveness of this resource would be from the conversations during PD or community of practice meetings (i.e., the initial and following meetings after implementation). According to Creswell (2009), this kind of data collection would be considered a qualitative method called “focus groups” or “group interviews” (p. 179). Focus groups are often used when there are limited resources (time, manpower, finances), when the phenomena being researched requires a collective discussion in order to understand the circumstances, behavior or opinions, or when greater insights may be developed from the group dynamic. The aim of using a focus group would be to make use of all participants' feelings, perceptions and opinions. This data could be collected by recording the conversations (to be re-played at a later date) or by taking notes on

comments made during the discussion. Data collected, either way, could then be evaluated at a later time. There are some sample focus group questions listed below.

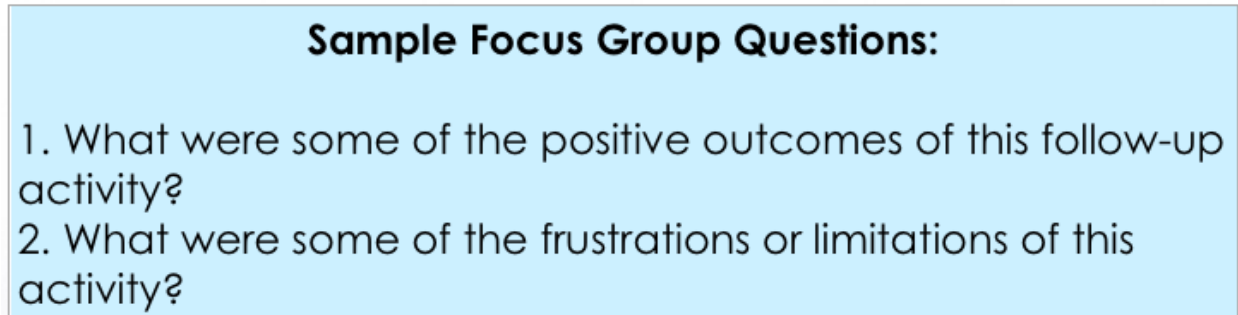


Figure 12. *Sample Focus Group Questions*

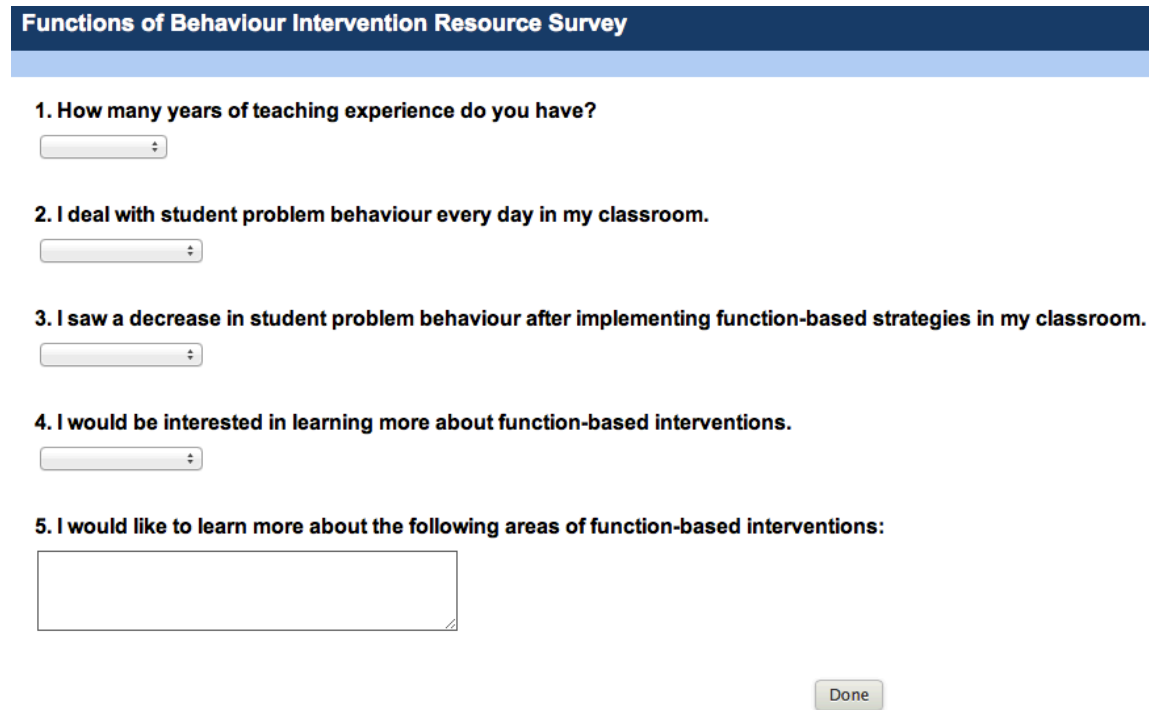
It is important to note some of the limitations to using focus groups for data collection. It could be argued that the data collected in focus groups is not valid or accurate because the environment is artificial. This is because the researchers often situate themselves in the focus group environment, causing the potential for participants to behave differently from how they would behave if they were not being watched. Focus groups also have the potential to be influenced by one or two dominant people in the session, thus creating the possibility of the output to be very biased.

Because of the flexibility in how my proposed resource could be used, data could also be collected using quantitative methods to determine its effectiveness. Creswell (2009) states that “survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 14). Administering online surveys as a way of collecting data is a low cost, anonymous and convenient way for participants to share their thoughts and opinions about a specific topic or issue. Because there is no interviewer

present when answering questions, participants may be more willing to share information more honestly and opening. However, there are also limitations to using online survey research, such as a lack of accountability (few responses) from participants, incomplete or superficial data resulting from lack of time to adequately complete the survey, and the researcher's inability to further probe the participants. Regardless, surveys allow researchers to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short period of time.

A survey could be administered, irrespective of whether this resource was used by an individual teacher, or by an entire staff. The survey could include questions about the teacher's previous training experiences and background. It could also ask questions about their experiences and feelings in dealing with problem student behavior before, during and after attempting a function-based intervention. Teachers could respond to statements about their experience by choosing one of the following: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It would also be appropriate for the survey to include questions that collect data on the number of problem behavior incidences noted throughout the process. There could also be a more open-ended section where teachers could also be asked to comment on: what they found the most valuable, what could make the resource better, and what they would recommend for future professional development in terms of behavior intervention. This survey could be given to teachers to complete on their own time or, more effectively, at the beginning of a follow-up meeting (after implementation), to provoke reflection and provide direction before opening up discussion within the community of practice.

To ensure anonymity and a quick collection of data, surveys could be created and administered online using a website called www.surveymonkey.com. A sample of some of the questions that could be asked in this teacher survey is included in the following screen shot.



The screenshot shows a survey titled "Functions of Behaviour Intervention Resource Survey". It contains five questions, each with a corresponding input field:

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
2. I deal with student problem behaviour every day in my classroom.
3. I saw a decrease in student problem behaviour after implementing function-based strategies in my classroom.
4. I would be interested in learning more about function-based interventions.
5. I would like to learn more about the following areas of function-based interventions:

A "Done" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Figure 13. *Sample of Functions of Behavior Intervention Resource Survey*

Evaluation

The evaluation of this project's success would come from my observations in focus groups and from data collected through discussions and survey collection. According to Glesne (2006), observations allow the researcher to immerse themselves into a social setting, enabling them to learn firsthand how:

- The actions of participants are compatible with their words
- Patterns of behavior exist
- Expected and unexpected experiences occur
- Trust, relationships and obligations with others are developed.

Essentially, the data collected should give me information on a number of things, such as what the need is for such teacher training, how successful teachers felt with initial implementations, what could make the resource more useful, what the interest level is in future behavior intervention training, and what the ‘social validity’ measures were. As stated in Chapter 2, Luiselli and Reed (2011) explain that ‘social validity’ measures the acceptance of and satisfaction with the intervention procedures. It is important to note that interventions for child problem behavior are only considered socially valid when people judge them as being acceptable. If there is no teacher buy-in, the chance of strategies offered in this resource being used outside of PD expectations is slim.

However, if the social validity from this resource was high, along with the school need for behavior intervention, and the success of these initial implementations, this kind of training could drastically change the way that teachers deal with problem behavior from students on a daily basis. As previously mentioned in a study done by Kamps, Wendland and Culpepper (2006), results confirmed the effectiveness of function-based interventions for students with or at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders in elementary schools, adding that a goal in school settings should be to use FBA as prevention strategies. These findings verify that if teachers received training in function-based interventions, behavior problems could be reduced or even eliminated early, preventing escalation to more serious and violent behaviors in later years.

Limitations and Considerations

There are some limitations and some things to consider that I have noted throughout this project. While recognizing the value of training knowledge competencies, this project does not include a measure of staff performance. That is, a better understanding of function-based intervention concepts and principles does not guarantee that staff will interact more effectively with students during instructional activities, especially if modeling or coaching is not requested or supplied for teachers. Accordingly, schools or teachers interested in using this resource for behavioral intervention training should consider the importance of “on the job” support (i.e., modeling of strategies, corrective feedback and opportunities for practice). Without it, determining if teachers have retained the knowledge weeks and months following training, or being able to assess if teachers are interacting more effectively with students displaying problem behavior, would be difficult. Although the ideal situation would be for this resource to be paired with activities such as modeling, role-playing, and supervised practice with immediate verbal feedback, limitations such as financial restraints or lack of administration support do not always make this possible.

Another possible limitation to the success of behavior intervention training, as pointed out by Scott, Bucalos, Liaupsin, Nelson, Jolivette and DeShea (2004) is time constraints. With various school district initiatives and professional development opportunities often pre-determined for teachers, time could be limited to engage in additional professional development activities of choice, including participation in communities of practice. Additionally, most training occurs outside the context of the individual teacher’s classroom. Many teacher-training activities occur during a break from application opportunities, which can create a substantial delay between training and implementation.

A common barrier and limitation to the sustainability of new initiatives or professional development programs is the ongoing concern of classroom sizes. Teachers often feel overwhelmed with the number of students they have, the pressures of covering curriculum, extra-curricular commitments, reporting and lesson planning. Although valuable, teachers may not feel that they are able to fully commit to function-based interventions, seeing the steps involved as time consuming and taking away from curriculum instruction.

Differences in the training backgrounds of teachers (based on years of experience, education background, teaching history and personal beliefs) may also influence a teacher's comprehension of and willingness to implement some of the strategies suggested. University teacher training programs must be re-evaluated and updated to ensure that function-based interventions are introduced, modeled and practiced (in practicums) prior to graduation and certification. Without this modification to our teacher education programs, we are doing a disservice to future teachers and their students by not fully preparing them to manage their classrooms effectively.

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to create a teacher training resource that effectively increased teacher knowledge of skills in managing problem behavior of students. Teacher training is of paramount importance in the implementation of function-based interventions, especially when problem behavior has been noted to be one of the greatest concerns among educators. With the elimination of special education programs and the inclusion of children with a variety of behavioral needs, effective training needs to be made available to all professionals in a manner that allows them to be prepared to implement function-based interventions. When

structured with the correct elements, teacher training of these intervention strategies can be highly successful in equipping teachers with the skills necessary to perform at mastery levels. However, training procedures need to be developed and implemented in a cost efficient and time efficient manner. The streamlined, condensed resource that I have proposed would introduce teachers to many of the foundational components of function-based interventions.

Conclusion

From my own personal experience with function-based intervention training, I can say that it has changed who I am as a teacher and how I see children with problem behavior today. Since incorporating function-based strategies into my instruction and student interactions, I have seen positive changes in student behavior that I know I wouldn't have seen using traditional methods. With plans of working towards a career move into school administration, I can see myself using this resource as a way of introducing behavior intervention to a staff that knew little about it. It would be my hope that this presentation would peak interest for further professional development, and help teachers to understand that intentional interactions with students can change problem behavior into something functional and productive. To try to establish a community of practice within my staff, I would also feel comfortable enough (if a Behavioral Specialist or Psychologist trained in function-based interventions was not available), to mentor teachers, model some of these strategies, and offer corrective feedback for those attempting implementation. Regardless of how it is done, training teachers with these skills would likely improve teacher-student relationships, productivity, and most importantly, the academic performance of children.

Chapter Four

Throughout the entirety of my Masters of Education (MEd) program, my beliefs and thoughts about education have grown and changed immensely. This process has deepened my awareness about important, current educational issues that I had never seriously considered prior to becoming a graduate student. It has helped me to discover what I really feel passionate about in education today. I know, without doubt, that this experience has changed me forever as an educator. In this final section of my paper, I will reflect upon my learning by describing many of the insights I have acquired, explaining how these insights will change my future as a teaching professional, and by offering recommendations for other educators who may be interested in my project topic (functions of behavior in classroom settings).

Personal Changes as an Educator

Looking back through my coursework, readings and assignments, one of my initial revelations was that children learn far more in school than just the prescribed curriculum. Learning about the three kinds of curriculum (explicit, implicit and null) really brought to light the power and responsibility that educators and school systems potentially have over how children see themselves as learners and as functioning citizens of society. As I've pondered memories of my own teachers, classmates and classroom experiences, I can think of many social expectations that I learned at school, without any actual verbal instruction. I understand now that the implicit and null curriculum in school is just as, if not more important to the healthy development of our students. If children don't perceive themselves as people with the capability to learn, to belong, or to be accepted for who they are, then the delivery of the explicit curriculum we are expected to teach is lost.

When we looked at different ideologies surrounding curriculum, I realized that in many ways, my own personal ideologies had changed over the years. As a beginning teacher in a Catholic school system, I started my career using more of a Religious Orthodoxy/Rational Humanist approach, believing that my students were empty vessels and that my job was to impart wisdom and to shape them into our Catholic mold. I also believed that following the prescribed outcomes and texts were my first priorities, and that how well students received the information wasn't necessarily my concern. Through different life and teaching experiences, particularly the last few years as a mother and early learning teacher, my personal ideology has drastically changed. I am much more progressive in my thinking now, and understand that we, as educators, must work with the whole child, knowing that they are social and emotional creatures, as well as academic and intellectual ones. I take much more of an individualized approach, knowing now that each child is a custom job. By learning about different curriculum ideologies in my first graduate course, I quickly became aware of the different views that teachers can have of their own professional obligations and of their students' capabilities, which helped me to be able to identify who I was and who I am today as an educator.

With a future goal of moving into a leadership position in my district, my thoughts and beliefs about the role of school leaders have also changed throughout my masters experience. From the research and assignments we completed in our leadership course, I learned that instructional leadership is most effective and can best be implemented into schools by using a shared leadership approach. This approach allows for the distribution of leadership responsibilities, which promotes teacher ownership, and also lessens the workload of the administrator. I realized that when teachers are given the responsibility of developing and implementing a plan to improve student achievement, as well as collaborating with colleagues to

devise and review this plan, there is more investment and ownership taken by the teacher. Teachers (collaboratively) are also the best suited to problem solve when it comes to issues that arise in classroom settings, because they work so closely with children and often can see directly what is best for them. Today, I have a better understanding that trust, between staff and administration, is key in promoting a desire to lead and initiate change, and that time and the establishment of proper collaboration is crucial for shared leadership to be successful within a school. I have learned that when teachers are given the opportunity to teach what they love, their sense of leadership and ownership develops. Moving forward into any future leadership position, my view that instructional leadership is the responsibility of the administrator has changed to a firm belief that it is actually the responsibility of the entire school community.

In one of our first summer courses, we also examined the curriculum redesign shifts happening in Alberta. Because I had learned about these curricular redesign concepts, I later applied to take part in a district project where we were asked to actually redesign the K-3 curriculum, following these shifts that were outlined by Alberta Education. After months of collaboration with other selected teachers, creating new curriculum outcomes and field-testing them in our own classrooms, completed prototypes, along with extensive teacher feedback on the process, were sent to Alberta Education for review. During the months that I was involved in this district project, I took a lead role in sharing and communicating the process with colleagues in my school community, which further developed my understanding of the curriculum redesign process occurring in Alberta. By learning about these upcoming curriculum shifts at the beginning of our masters program, I gained the background knowledge and leading edge that I needed to be carefully chosen to participate in such an important teacher research project. This experience allowed me to be part of such a successful collaborative opportunity that I know it

will propel me to take part in other teacher research projects in the future. It also has confirmed my beliefs that teachers are very capable of researching within their own classroom contexts and creating positive changes to promote student success. These insights will undoubtedly help guide my leadership approach when I eventually move into an administrative position.

Direction for My Professional Career

I am confident that my graduate experience will change the future of my professional career in a number of ways. Because our graduate work brought to light the importance of providing teachers with opportunities to be classroom researchers, since my involvement in our district curriculum project, my interest to participate in teacher research projects has flourished. In fact, I am currently participating in a new early learning teacher research project, where a number of us are looking at how to introduce and develop coding skills through the use of robotics (cubelets) in preschool aged children. This has been a slow moving process, but the professional dialogue with other passionate teachers has been motivating and inspiring for me. This new interest I have developed in teachers as researchers was initiated by our graduate studies on inquiry as stance, professional learning communities and teacher action research.

I am also confident that my research, reading, learning and writing about the functions of behavior will be incorporated into any position that I have throughout the rest of my teaching career. I am currently using intervention methods and strategies that I reported on in previous chapters in my classroom everyday. I also fully accept and appreciate the modeling and coaching that my Emotional Behavioral Specialist offers me, partially because I have experienced success from her feedback already, but also because of the evidence I found that confirms its positive effects on implementation and outcomes. I always believed that these

strategies could effectively reduce problem behavior, but because of the research I did around this topic, I now have the science and scholarly articles to back up my beliefs.

Because I believe so strongly in the positive impact that using functions of behavior strategies can have to successful classroom management, I will always promote teacher education on this topic. I actually could see myself using the resource that I planned in chapter 3 as a professional development session with my staff when I eventually move into a leadership position. Even now, as I have recently had opportunities to be the acting administrator at my school while administration was away, I have dealt with children sent to me from various classes using praise and offering their teachers strategies to deal with them based on what I could already tell might be effective. These suggestions have been received well from my colleagues. I feel passionate about and have had enough personal experience working with functions of behavior strategies to know that I will always offer to mentor teachers or model interventions for them if they invite me to. Because I have experienced such incredible success from observing modeling and being coached, I know that my future roles as a mentor teacher or leader in any capacity will always involve advocating for these kind of opportunities for my colleagues.

I also know that my own personal leadership approach will be altered from the research and assignments we did in our leadership course. Through interviews and course readings, I acquired insight into many of the qualities and skills that effective leaders should possess. I feel more confident that I have the experience, qualities and background knowledge necessary to move into a leadership position and do the job effectively. I have a better understanding of the process of change within a school environment, and realize that modifications to a school must be made very slowly and after you have earned the trust of your staff. Today, I understand that effective leaders must develop relationships first before they can encourage change and growth.

Good leaders must actively participate as learners when encouraging school improvement, and should model an interest in any professional development offered to their staff. Most importantly, effective leaders don't expect changes to happen overnight. They believe that change is about learning something over time, by confronting challenges and making progress, with an understanding that immediate perfection is not expected. These are all values and qualities that I hope to carry with me into future leadership positions that I take on within our district.

Key Recommendations

For any educators interested in engaging with or learning more about the functions of behavior, particularly in classrooms settings, I would offer the following recommendations:

- 1) *Perfect your praising.* One of the most crucial aspects of behavior modification is reinforcing desirable behavior. This may sound like an easy task, but extremely high levels of praise can feel very unnatural initially, especially when you are targeting one or two children out of a classroom. In the beginning, praise needs to be so frequent that you almost feel like you are doing nothing else but praising. In addition, because praise needs to be immediate, specific and enthusiastic, a simple "Good job" is not sufficient when you are attempting to replace problem behavior with something more functional and appropriate. I can say from experience that things to praise children for do not always come easily, even with the most appropriately behaved children. It takes practice for praise to come quickly, to be specific enough that the child knows exactly what they did that you liked, and to sound genuine. Learning to praise

- students effectively is a skill that must be developed over time through practice and if possible, from having someone model and coach you through the process.
- 2) *Expect an extinction burst – things will get worse before they get better.* People can tell you to expect an extinction burst when you are trying to extinguish problem behavior, but it is a completely different thing when you actually experience one. With almost any kind of problem behavior that you are implementing strategies to extinguish, you can be sure that the behavior will get much worse before it gets better. This is because the student has always found this behavior to be an effective way to serve and fill a specific function, so when that function is no longer being filled, the child will likely increase the intensity or duration of the behavior in hopes that this will bring about the desired consequence. Extinction bursts can make you question whether you have chosen the right strategies, but you have to remember that if the child is ‘upping the ante’, it likely means that the child doesn’t like what you are implementing, proving its effectiveness. Be prepared for things to get rather intense, and keep reminding yourself that this is a means to a positive end. The key to getting through an extinction burst is remembering that, no matter how loud, destructive or distracting, what you are seeing is the peak of problem behavior. This is only temporary, and once you are through it, you should see a decline in the intensity and duration of the behavior you are trying to eliminate.
- 3) *Be open to modeling and coaching to improve your practice.* Some of the very best professional development that I have ever received as a teacher has been from the modeling and coaching that I have accepted from my multi-disciplinary team over the last three years. I have attended years of PD sessions where I have sat and listened to

ideas and suggestions to improve my teaching practices. None of them ever actually modeled strategies (with students) or coached me through my initial implementation of them. Having the opportunity to watch experts in their field model exactly how to implement new strategies has been such an effective learning experience for me. In addition, I have also had the chance to practice these strategies, in the presence of these experts who offered help and guidance. Being open to having others offer you corrective feedback takes an open mind, confidence in your ability as a teacher, and a willingness to admit that you have areas that you could improve upon. The opportunity to grow and learn as a teacher is so much greater if you are open to having others model effective strategies for you and coach you through your first experiences implementing them. As proven by research previously noted, having functions of behavior strategies modeled and offering coaching to teachers new to implementing them will greatly increase the chances of successful behavior modification.

Completing my masters has been one of the most challenging and difficult experiences of my life. It has also been one of the most rewarding. It has opened my mind to a number of different perspectives and issues in education today that I know will guide me as I enter into the second half of my career. My graduate experience has given me the opportunity to learn about many educational topics that I feel very passionate about. It has also provided me with many opportunities to get clear about what I believe and who I am as a teacher. I am confident that this background knowledge and reaffirmed self-identity will help me in all of my future career choices.

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Appendix A

A-B-C Behavior Assessment Chart. Adapted from HagEstad's worksheet in Figure 5.

| ANTECEDENT - what happens right before the behavior | BEHAVIOUR - what the child does | CONSEQUENCE - what happens right after the behaviour | FUNCTION - Escape, Attention, Tangible, Sensory |
|---|---|--|---|
| | | | |

Appendix B

Behavior Intervention Plan Template. Adapted from www.PBISWorld.com

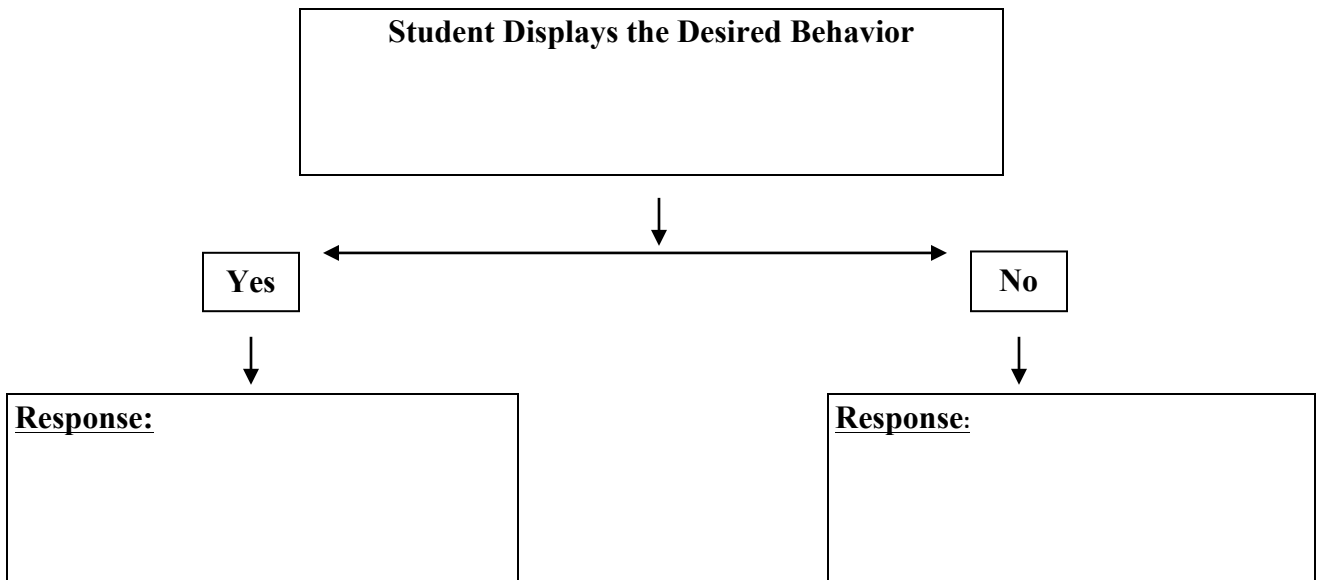
Direct Behavior Plan

Current Undesired Behavior:

Expected and Desired Behavior:

Prevention Efforts: (This includes efforts to alter the environment, and teacher behavior):

Promotion of Success: (efforts to bring level of instruction to student's level):



Appendix C

Behavior Intervention Plan Template. Adapted from School District of West Allis (2008).

Behaviour Intervention Plan for: _____

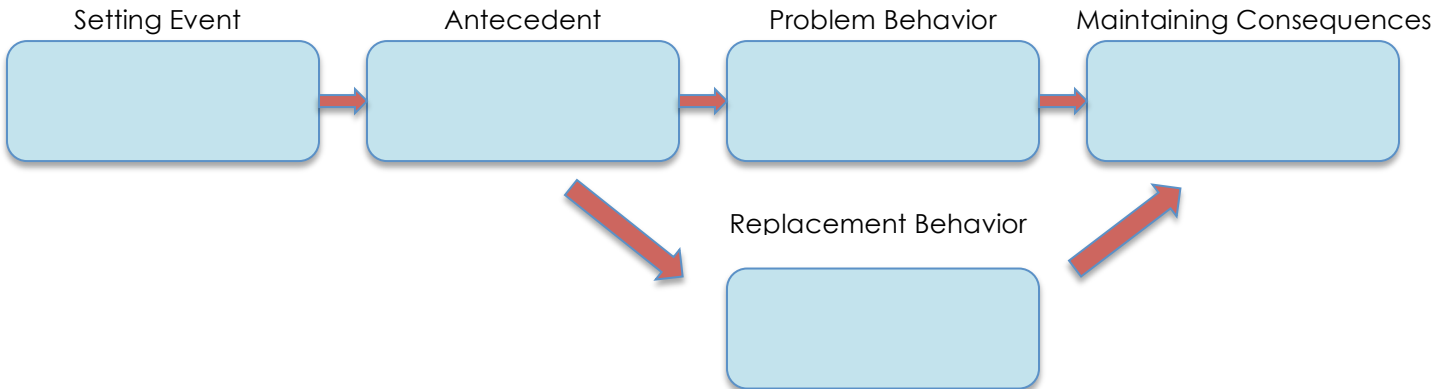
| Target Behavior: | Preventative Strategies: | Replacement Behavior: | Instructional Strategies: | Positive Consequences: | Negative Consequences: |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Appendix D

Behavior Intervention Plan Template. Adapted from Kid Coach (2011).

Behavior Support Plan

For:



Intervention Strategies:

| Setting Event Strategies | Antecedent Strategies | Teaching Strategies | Consequence Strategies |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | | | Replacement Behavior: |
| | | | |
| | | | Problem Behavior: |
| | | | |

Appendix E

Behavior Intervention Plan Template. Adapted from www.PBISWorld.com

Tantrums/Upset/Crying BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PLAN (BIP)

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| Name: | Date: |
| Parent: | School: |
| D.O.B. | Teacher: |
| Telephone: | Support Staff: |

Target Problem Behaviors:

- Student cries and/or tantrums easily when upset or when they do not get their way
- Student cries and/or tantrums when told to do something they do not want to do or when confronted with a challenging task
- Student cries and/or tantrums when interacting with peers
- Student cries and/or tantrums when they do not understand how to do something
- Student cries and or tantrums when redirected, corrected, or disciplined
- Student frequently becomes upset, cries, tantrums, and/or destroys property
- Student has trouble compromising, sharing, taking turns, etc and cries or tantrums in response to such situations
- Other: _____

Intervention Plan:

Objectives:

- Student will decrease tantrums and crying spells
- Student will improve coping skills

- Student will comply with adult directives without losing control or tantruming
- Student will maintain self-control when faced with challenging circumstances and tasks or when they do not understand how to do something
- Student will verbalize feelings, concerns, and thoughts rather than acting them out
- Student will engage in problem solving with teacher or adult and compromise to reach a solution
- Student will share and take turns without becoming upset
- Student will interact with peers without crying, tantruming, or becoming upset
- Student will improve relationship skills
- Other: _____

Preventative Strategies:

- Teacher will address and handle the student in a calm neutral tone and manner
- The teacher will give the student forewarning regarding changes in routine and schedule
- Teacher will frequently check in with the student to see if they need help or are stuck
- Teacher will use proximity control
- Teacher will break assignments down into smaller parts, put fewer items on a page, and increase white space
- Teacher will have the student explain directions and directives in their own words
- Teacher will have the student explain what they have done and tried and how they are trying to solve the problem or complete the item
- Teacher will reduce assignments or number of items to be completed
- Teacher will have the student complete an item of less difficulty to experience success and gain momentum before trying harder and more challenging items
- Teacher will provide alternate and restated explanations of how to do a task when the student becomes upset

Other: _____

Teaching Alternative Behaviors:

- Teacher will present the student with choices in a calm neutral tone, and if the student refuses to choose, the teacher will
- Teacher will set clear, consistent, and predictable expectations for the student, posting the expectations near or within view of the student (may use pictures next to word statements of the expectations, especially with younger students)
- Teacher will develop a systematic procedure for the student to “take a break”, teach and role play with the student how to take a break, and implement the intervention such that the teacher may tell the student to take a break or the student will initiate a break on their own when they feel they need one
- Teacher will teach and role play coping skills with the student (like closing eyes and counting to ten, taking deep breaths, skip the item you are on and go to the next one, coming back later, verbalizing feelings to the teacher, taking a short break or breather, drawing or writing to get frustration out, positive internal dialogue, etc)
- The teacher will frequently remind the student to verbalize their thoughts and feelings rather than acting them out
- Student will participate in Check In Check Out (CICO) program
- Student will utilize a stress ball or fidget to squeeze rather than blurting out, having outbursts, or whining and complaining
- Student will utilize alternative methods of completing work (draw, verbal responses, hands-on, demonstration, typing, etc)
- Teacher will remind student how to cope with feeling upset and what to do before beginning difficult and challenging tasks
- When upset and stuck on an item or concept, the student will raise their hand for help and quietly and patiently wait for the teacher to come help
- Student will utilize positive self talk to calm down and regain control of emotions and behavior

Other: _____

Positive Reinforcement:

- Teacher and parent will reward the student for maintaining control of behavior and emotions, calming down quickly, using interventions like “taking a break” appropriately, putting forth good effort, attempting assignments and tasks, and exhibiting a positive attitude

- Teacher will praise and encourage the student for good behavior, remaining calm, coping well, good effort, attempting tasks, completing work, etc (utilize the clinically supported ratio of at least 4 positive to 1 correction)
- Teacher will give the student frequent positive feedback, like a pat on the back, high-five, etc
- Teacher will provide positive feedback and praise discretely, whispering or leaving a note to be discovered
- Teacher will provide frequent positive praise and feedback for each small part or step of a problem or item completed without becoming upset, remaining calm, and verbalizing needs, frustration, and feelings rather than acting them out
- Teacher will send a positive note home, call the parent in front of the student to give positive verbal praise, write encouraging notes, or put reward stickers on their papers that are completed without incident
- When the student interacts well, shares, takes turns, and compromises with peers, they will be praised or rewarded
- Teacher will meet with and mentor the student once a week after school to build rapport through talking, doing a non-academic task, playing a game, going to the gym, etc
- Student will utilize a sticker or other similar chart for effort and work, receiving rewards for reaching goals
- Teacher will reward or praise the student for verbalizing their thoughts and feelings rather than acting them out
- Student will be rewarded for meeting or exceeding CICO goals

Other: _____

Consequences for Non-Compliance:

- Student will be subject to the school and class discipline policies and procedures
- Student will be subject to natural consequences
- Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day when they cannot calm down or regain control
- When aggressive or destructive to property, the student will be immediately removed from the room and sent home
- When the student is having trouble deescalating or maintaining control, the teacher will call the parent with the student to discuss the issues and have the parent speak to the student

- Teacher will send a note home regarding the student's behavioral and/or emotional difficulties
- Student will complete a reflection sheet after incidents with peers or tantrums/losing control
- Student will write an apology letter or verbally apologize to students they have incidents with
- If the student refuses to work on assignments during class, the student will remain after school to work on the assignments for at least 15 minutes

Other: _____