Finding the Right Spark: Strategies for Motivating the Resistant Learner at the Middle and High School Levels

Jim Wright

www.interventioncentral.org
Response to Intervention

Motivating Students: Agenda...

1. Student Motivation: A Systems-Level Problem

2. Understanding and Analyzing Student Motivation Problems: Key Concepts

3. Motivation: The Construct

4. Motivating Students: A Sampling of Strategies

5. Motivation: Increasing ‘Teacher Tolerance’ & Empowerment

6. Motivation Case Example: Classroom Intervention for a Non-Compliant Student

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Access the introductory PPT from this workshop at:
http://www.jimwrightonline.com/cesa3.php
A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist (600 BC-531 BC)
Student Motivation: A Systems-Level Problem
Childhood and Beyond Longitudinal Project

- 3 cohorts of children (about 250 children per cohort) were followed across elementary, middle and high school. (Children were recruited from 4 middle-class school districts in the midwest.)

- In the subject areas of math, language arts, and sports, students were asked each year to rate their competence in the subject and their valuing of it.

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Childhood and Beyond Longitudinal Project: Some Findings

• Ratings of both competence and value declined for all 3 subject areas (math, language arts, and sports) for boys and girls as they grew older.

• Girls rated themselves lower in competence in math throughout school—until grade 12, when boys and girls converged in their ratings (because boys’ ratings declined faster than did girls’ ratings).

• Across all grade levels, boys rated themselves significantly less competent than did girls in language arts.

• Not surprisingly, boys’ and girls’ valuing (enjoyment, liking) of a subject area correlated with perceived ability. Generally, boys and girls who rated themselves as lowest in ability also rated their valuing of the subject area as lowest.

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Five Strands of Mathematical Proficiency (NRC, 2002)

1. **Understanding**: Comprehending mathematical concepts, operations, and relations—knowing what mathematical symbols, diagrams, and procedures mean.

2. **Computing**: Carrying out mathematical procedures, such as adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately.

3. **Applying**: Being able to formulate problems mathematically and to devise strategies for solving them using concepts and procedures appropriately.

4. **Reasoning**: Using logic to explain and justify a solution to a problem or to extend from something known to something less known.

5. **Engaging**: Seeing mathematics as sensible, useful, and doable—if you work at it—and being willing to do the work.

School Dropout as a Process, Not an Event

“It is increasingly accepted that dropout is best conceptualized as a long-term process, not an instantaneous event; however, most interventions are administered at a middle or high school level after problems are severe.”

Student Motivation & The Need for Intervention

“A common response to students who struggle in sixth grade is to wait and hope they grow out of it or adapt, to attribute early struggles to the natural commotion of early adolescence and to temporary difficulties in adapting to new organizational structures of schooling, more challenging curricula and assessment, and less personalized attention. Our evidence clearly indicates that, at least in high-poverty urban schools, sixth graders who are missing 20% or more of the days, exhibiting poor behavior, or failing math or English do not recover. On the contrary, they drop out. This says that early intervention is not only productive but absolutely essential.”

What Are the ‘Early Warning Flags’ of Student Drop-Out?

A sample of 13,000 students in Philadelphia were tracked for 8 years. These early warning indicators were found to predict student drop-out in the sixth-grade year:

- Failure in English
- Failure in math
- Missing at least 20% of school days
- Receiving an ‘unsatisfactory’ behavior rating from at least one teacher

## What is the Predictive Power of These Early Warning Flags?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of ‘Early Warning Flags’ in Student Record</th>
<th>Probability That Student Would Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding and Analyzing Student Motivation Problems: Key Concepts
Response to Intervention

Academic or Behavioral Targets Are Stated as ‘Replacement Behaviors’

“The implementation of successful interventions begins with accurate problem identification. Traditionally, the student problem was stated as a broad, general concern (e.g., impulsive, aggressive, reading below grade level) that a teacher identified. In a competency-based approach, however, the problem identification is stated in terms of the desired replacement behaviors that will increase the student’s probability of successful adaptation to the task demands of the academic setting.” p. 178

Big Ideas: Similar Behaviors May Stem from Very Different ‘Root’ Causes
(Kratochwill, Elliott, & Carrington Rotto, 1990)

• Behavior is not random but follows purposeful patterns.

Students who present with the same apparent ‘surface’ behaviors may have very different ‘drivers’ (underlying reasons) that explain why those behaviors occur.

A student’s problem behaviors must be carefully identified and analyzed to determine the drivers that support them.

Inference: Moving Beyond the Margins of the ‘Known’

“An inference is a tentative conclusion without direct or conclusive support from available data. All hypotheses are, by definition, inferences. It is critical that problem analysts make distinctions between what is known and what is inferred or hypothesized. . . . Low-level inferences should be exhausted prior to the use of high-level inferences.”

p. 161

Examples of High vs. Low Inference Hypotheses

An 11th-grade student does poorly on tests and quizzes in math. Homework is often incomplete. He frequently shows up late for class and does not readily participate in group discussions.

**High-Inference Hypothesis.** The student is ‘just lazy’ and would do better if he would only apply himself.

**Low-Inference Hypothesis.** The student has gaps in academic skills that require (a) mapping out those skill gaps, and (b) providing the student with remedial instruction as needed.
Student Motivation Levels Are Strongly Influenced by the Instructional Setting (Lentz & Shapiro, 1986)

- Students with learning or motivation problems do not exist in isolation. Rather, their instructional environment plays an enormously important role in these students’ degree of academic engagement.

..educators continue to exert change efforts toward the individual, particularly in the form of punitive responses, when academic or behavior problems arise. Yet, a rapidly growing literature base offers evidence that this may not be an altogether effective, expedient, or comprehensive approach to academic and behavioral challenges. Instead, intervention strategies that are likely to have a large impact and sustained effect must duly alter those environmental events that beget student challenges. (Kern & Clemens, 2007)

Big Ideas: Academic Delays Can Be a Potent Cause of Behavior Problems
(Witt, Daly, & Noell, 2000)

Student academic problems cause many school behavior problems.

“Whether [a student’s] problem is a behavior problem or an academic one, we recommend starting with a functional academic assessment, since often behavior problems occur when students cannot or will not do required academic work.”

Defining **Motivation**: Activity

At your table:

- Discuss the term ‘motivation’.
- Come up with a definition of this term that you feel would be appropriate to share with your teaching staff.
Motivation: The Construct
Definitions of ‘Motivation’

“...motivation refers to the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior.”

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“Motivation is typically defined as the forces that account for the arousal, selection, direction, and continuation of behavior.”

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Source: Excerpted from Chapter 11 of Biehler/Snowman, PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO TEACHING, 8/e, Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
Motivation can be thought of as having two dimensions:

1. the student’s expectation of success on the task

   Multiplied by

2. the value that the student places on achieving success on that learning task

The relationship between the two factors is multiplicative. If EITHER of these factors (the student’s expectation of success on the task OR the student’s valuing of that success) is zero, then the ‘motivation’ product will also be zero.

Academic Motivation: ‘Domain-Specific’

“Research on achievement motivation has documented the role of self-competence beliefs as mediators of actual achievement in various domains. According to numerous theories (e.g., attribution theory, self-efficacy theory, self-worth theory), children perform better and are more motivated to select increasingly challenging tasks when they believe that they have the ability to accomplish a particular task. Most current research and theory focuses on the links between domain-specific self-competence beliefs and domain-specific motivation and performance.” p. 509

Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

“An intrinsically motivated behavior [is defined as] one for which there exists no recognizable reward except the activity itself (e.g., reading). That is, behavior that cannot be attributed to external controls is usually attributed to intrinsic motivation.”

“...an extrinsically motivated behavior refers to behavior controlled by stimuli external to the task.”

p. 345

Intrinsic Motivation: Is There Any Utility to This Construct?

By definition, intrinsic motivation is supported by the reinforcing quality of the activity alone.

As a construct, ‘intrinsic motivation’ may be untestable, because the reinforcer cannot be directly observed or experimentally manipulated.

Big Ideas: The Four Stages of Learning Can Be Summed Up in the ‘Instructional Hierarchy’

(Haring et al., 1978)

Student learning can be thought of as a multi-stage process. The universal stages of learning include:

- **Acquisition**: The student is just acquiring the skill.
- **Fluency**: The student can perform the skill but must make that skill ‘automatic’.
- **Generalization**: The student must perform the skill across situations or settings.
- **Adaptation**: The student confronts novel task demands that require that the student adapt a current skill to meet new requirements.

Motivation in Action: ‘Flow’
Definition of the ‘Flow’ State

“Being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills to the utmost.”

–Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Qualities of Activities that May Elicit a ‘Flow’ State

• The activity is challenging and requires skill to complete
• Goals are clear
• Feedback is immediate
• There is a ‘merging of action and awareness’. ‘All the attention is concentrated on the relevant stimuli’ so that individuals are no longer aware of themselves as ‘separate from the actions they are performing’
• The sense of time’s passing is altered: Time may seem slowed or pass very quickly
• ‘Flow’ is not static. As one acquires mastery over an activity, he or she must move to more challenging experiences to continue to achieve ‘flow’

Response to Intervention

Flow Channel

- Student A: Low Skills, Low Challenge
- Student B: High Skills, Low Challenge
- Student C: Low Skills, High Challenge
- Student D: High Skills, High Challenge

Anxiety

Challenges

Skills


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[An important] assumption of social cognitive models of motivation is that motivation is not a stable trait of an individual, but is more situational, contextual, and domain-specific. In other words, not only are students motivated in multiple ways, but their motivation can vary depending on the situation or context in the classroom or school. [This assumption] means that student motivation is conceived as being inherently changeable and sensitive to the context. This provides hope for teachers and school psychologists and suggests that instructional efforts and the design of classrooms and schools can make a difference in motivating students for academic achievement. (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002, p. 314).

The Gordian Knot: A Symbol for an Intractable Problem Solved Through an Innovative Approach

• The Gordian Knot was a relic kept in an ancient temple in the kingdom of Phrygia. The knot was so intricate and cunningly woven together that no person could untie it.

• One day, the Macedonian military conqueror Alexander the Great visited the temple to view the knot. When told that many had tried without success through the ages to untie it, Alexander studied the knot closely—then pulled out his sword and cut it in two.
Student Motivation: Two Steps to Reframing the Issue and Empowering Schools

Step 1: Redefine ‘motivation’ as academic engagement: e.g., The student chooses “to engage in active accurate academic responding” (Skinner, Pappas, & Davis, 2005).

Step 2: Build staff support for this mission statement: “When a student appears unmotivated, it is the school’s job to figure out why the student is unmotivated and to find a way to get that student motivated.”

Team Activity: Select an Unmotivated Student...

• At your table:
  – Discuss students in your classrooms or school who appear to be unmotivated.
  – Of the students discussed, select one student that your team will use in an exercise of defining the possible cause(s) of poor motivation.
  – Write a brief statement describing the student and his or her area(s) of poor motivation.
Motivating Students: A Sampling of Strategies
The Unmotivated Student: Possible Reasons

- The student is unmotivated because he or she cannot do the assigned work.
- The student is unmotivated because the ‘response effort’ needed to complete the assigned work seems too great.
- The student is unmotivated because classroom instruction does not engage.
- The student is unmotivated because he or she fails to see an adequate pay-off to doing the assigned work.
- The student is unmotivated because of low self-efficacy—lack of confidence that he or she can do the assigned work.
- The student is unmotivated because he or she lacks a positive relationship with the teacher.
Response to Intervention

The student is unmotivated because he or she cannot do the assigned work.

**Recommended Response.** The school should:

- Inventory the student’s academic skills
- Provide support in core instruction to address the student deficits
- Provide supplemental (intervention) instruction as needed to address the student deficits
Verifying Instructional Match

Be sure that assigned work is not too easy and not too difficult. It is surprising how often classroom behavior problems occur simply because students find the assigned work too difficult or too easy. As a significant mismatch between the assignment and the student’s abilities can trigger misbehavior, teachers should inventory each student’s academic skills and adjust assignments as needed to ensure that the student is appropriately challenged but not overwhelmed by the work.

Students are taught to boost their comprehension of expository passages by (1) locating the main idea or key ideas in the passage and (2) generating questions based on that information.

The Effect of Grammar Instruction as an Independent Activity

“Grammar instruction in the studies reviewed [for the *Writing Next* report] involved the explicit and systematic teaching of the parts of speech and structure of sentences. The meta-analysis found an effect for this type of instruction for students across the full range of ability, but ... surprisingly, this effect was negative... Such findings raise serious questions about some educators’ enthusiasm for traditional grammar instruction as a focus of writing instruction for adolescents... Overall, the findings on grammar instruction suggest that, although teaching grammar is important, alternative procedures, such as sentence combining, are more effective than traditional approaches for improving the quality of students’ writing.” p. 21

Sentence Combining

Students with poor writing skills often write sentences that lack ‘syntactic maturity’. Their sentences often follow a simple, stereotyped format. A promising approach to teach students use of diverse sentence structures is through sentence combining.

In sentence combining, students are presented with kernel sentences and given explicit instruction in how to weld these kernel sentences into more diverse sentence types either

- by using connecting words to combine multiple sentences into one or
- by isolating key information from an otherwise superfluous sentence and embedding that important information into the base sentence.


Response to Intervention

Formatting Sentence Combining Examples

- In each example, the base clause (sentence) appears first. Any sentence(s) to be combined or embedded with the base clause appear below that base clause.

  Example:  **Base clause:** The dog ran after the bus.  
             **Sentence to be embedded:** The dog is yellow.  
             **Student-Generated Solution:** *The yellow dog ran after the bus.*

- ‘Connecting words’ to be used as a sentence-combining tool appear in parentheses at the end of a sentence that is to be combined with the base clause.

  Example:  **Base clause:** The car stalled.  
             **Sentence to be combined:** The car ran out of gas. (because)  
             **Student-Generated Solution:** *The car stalled because it ran out of gas.*

- The element(s) of any sentence to be embedded in the base clause are underlined.

  Example:  **Base clause:** The economic forecast resulted in strong stock market gains.  
             **Sentence to be embedded:** The economic forecast was *upbeat.*  
             **Student-Generated Solution:** *The upbeat economic forecast resulted in strong stock market gains.*
### Table 1: Sentence-combining types and examples (Saddler, 2005; Strong, 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sentence</th>
<th>Sentence Combining Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple (Compound) Sentence Subjects or Objects:</strong></td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more subjects can be combined with a conjunction (e.g., or, and).</td>
<td>• Skyscrapers in the city were damaged in the hurricane. Bridges in the city were damaged in the hurricane. Skyscrapers and bridges in the city were damaged in the hurricane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more direct or indirect objects can be combined with a conjunction (e.g., or, and).</td>
<td>• When they travel, migratory birds need safe habitat. When they travel, migratory birds need regular supplies of food. When they travel, migratory birds need safe habitat and regular supplies of food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjectives &amp; Adverbs:</strong> When a sentence simply contains an adjective or adverb that modifies the noun or verb of another sentence, the adjective or adverb from the first sentence can be embedded in the related sentence.</td>
<td>• Dry regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. Overpopulated regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. Dry and overpopulated regions are at risk for chronic water shortages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health care costs have risen nationwide. Those health care costs have risen quickly. Health care costs have risen quickly nationwide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 1: Sentence-combining types and examples (Saddler, 2005; Strong, 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sentence</th>
<th>Sentence Combining Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Connecting Words:** One or more sentences are combined with connecting words. Coordinating conjunctions (e.g., *and, but*) link sentences on an equal basis. Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *after, until, unless, before, while, because*) link sentences with one of the sentences subordinate or dependent on the other. | • The house was falling apart. No one seemed to care. *(but)*  
*The house was falling apart, but no one seemed to care.*  

• The glaciers began to melt. The earth’s average temperature increased. *(because)*  
*The glaciers began to melt because the earth’s average temperature increased.* |
| **Relative Clauses:** Sentence contains an embedded, subordinating clause that modifies a noun. | • The artist was the most popular in the city. The artist painted watercolors of sunsets. *(who)*  
*The artist who painted watercolors of sunsets was the most popular in the city.* |
| **Appositives:** Sentence contains two noun phrases that refer to the same object. When two sentences refer to the same noun, one sentence be reduced to an appositive and embedded in the other sentence. | • The explorer paddled the kayak across the raging river. The explorer was an expert in handling boats.  
*The explorer, an expert in handling boats, paddled the kayak across the raging river.* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sentence</th>
<th>Sentence Combining Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Possessive Nouns**: A sentence that describes possession or ownership can be reduced to a possessive noun and embedded in another sentence. | - Some historians view the Louisiana Purchase as the most important expansion of United States territory. The Louisiana Purchase was President Jefferson’s achievement.  

_Some historians view President Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase as the most important expansion of United States territory._ |
‘Academic Enabler’ Observational Checklists: Measuring Students’ Ability to Manage Their Own Learning
‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Why Are They Important?

Student academic success requires more than content knowledge or mastery of a collection of cognitive strategies. Academic accomplishment depends also on a set of ancillary skills and attributes called ‘academic enablers’ (DiPerna, 2006). Examples of academic enablers include:

- Study skills
- Homework completion
- Cooperative learning skills
- Organization
- Independent seatwork

Because academic enablers are often described as broad skill sets, however, they can be challenging to define in clear, specific, measurable terms. A useful method for defining a global academic enabling skill is to break it down into a checklist of component sub-skills—a process known as ‘discrete categorization’ (Kazdin, 1989). An observer can then use the checklist to note whether a student successfully displays each of the sub-skills.

‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Why Are They Important? (Cont.)

Observational checklists that define academic enabling skills have several uses in Response to Intervention:

– Classroom teachers can use these skills checklists as convenient tools to assess whether a student possesses the minimum ‘starter set’ of academic enabling skills needed for classroom success.

– Teachers or tutors can share examples of academic-enabler skills checklists with students, training them in each of the sub-skills and encouraging them to use the checklists independently to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

– Teachers or other observers can use the academic enabler checklists periodically to monitor student progress during interventions—assessing formatively whether the student is using more of the sub-skills.

### ‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

**Study Skills. The student:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takes complete, organized class notes in legible form and maintains them in one accessible note book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews class notes frequently (e.g., after each class) to ensure understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When reviewing notes, uses highlighters, margin notes, or other strategies to note questions or areas of confusion for later review with teacher or tutor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows an efficient strategy to study for tests and quizzes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocates enough time to study for tests and quizzes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is willing to seek help from the teacher to answer questions or clear up areas of confusion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
### ‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

**Organization Skills. The student:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Arrives to class on time.
- Maintains organization of locker to allow student to efficiently store and retrieve needed books, assignments, work materials, and personal belongings.
- Maintains organization of backpack or book bag to allow student to efficiently store and retrieve needed books, assignments, work materials, and personal belongings.
- Brings to class the necessary work materials expected for the course (e.g., pen, paper, calculator, etc.).
- Is efficient in switching work materials when transitioning from one in-class learning activity to another.
- Other: ____________________________

**Comments:**

______________________________

______________________________
'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Completion. The student:</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ writes down homework assignments accurately and completely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ makes use of available time in school (e.g., study halls, homeroom) to work on homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ has an organized, non-distracting workspace available at home to do homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ creates a work plan before starting homework (e.g., sequencing the order in which assignments are to be completed; selecting the most challenging assignment to start first when energy and concentration are highest)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ when completing homework, uses highlighters, margin notes, or other strategies to note questions or areas of confusion for later review with teacher or tutor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ turns in homework on time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other: _________________________________</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
________________________________________
________________________________________
‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative Learning Skills: The student:</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>participates in class discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gets along with others during group/pair activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participates fully in group/pair activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does his or her ‘fair share’ of work during group/pair activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is willing to take a leadership position during group/pair activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
### ‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

**Independent Seat Work.** The student:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has necessary work materials for the assignment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is on-task during the assignment at a level typical for students in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrains from distracting behaviors (e.g., talking with peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without permission, pen tapping, vocalizations such as loud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sighs or mumbling, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognizes when he or she needs teacher assistance and is willing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to that assistance</td>
<td></td>
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<td>requests teacher assistance in an appropriate manner</td>
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<td>requests assistance from the teacher only when really needed</td>
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<td>if finished with the independent assignment before time expires,</td>
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<td>uses remaining time to check work or engage in other academic</td>
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<td>activity allowed by teacher</td>
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<td>takes care in completing work—as evidenced by the quality of the</td>
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<td>finished assignment</td>
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<td>is reliable in turning in assignments done in class.</td>
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**Other:**

Comments:
‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

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<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>NA</th>
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<tr>
<td>□ has a positive sense of ‘self-efficacy’ about the academic content area (self-efficacy can be defined as the confidence that one can be successful in the academic discipline or subject matter if one puts forth reasonable effort)</td>
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<td>□ displays some apparent <em>intrinsic</em> motivation to engage in course work (e.g., is motivated by topics and subject matter discussed or covered in the course; finds the act of working on course assignments to be reinforcing in its own right)</td>
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<td>□ displays apparent <em>extrinsic</em> motivation to engage in course work (e.g., is motivated by grades, praise, public recognition of achievement, access to privileges such as sports eligibility, or other rewarding outcomes)</td>
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<td>□ Other:</td>
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Comments:

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‘Academic Enabler’ Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

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Comments:
Team Activity: How Can You Support Academic Enabling Skills in Your Classroom?

- At your table:
  - Review the Academic Enablers Observational Checklists in your handouts.
  - How might you use this resource in your classroom to help unmotivated students?
The student is unmotivated because the ‘response effort’ needed to complete the assigned work seems too great.

**Recommended Response.**

- The teacher can use strategies that reduce the apparent effort required of a task. However, the instructor should avoid using strategies that hold the student to a lower standard of academic performance than peers.
Response Effort

Jim Wright

www.interventioncentral.org
Response Effort: Example

Response Effort: A Shopper's Tale
Response Effort

• The teacher selects either an undesirable behavior to decrease or a desirable behavior to increase.

• If necessary, the teacher breaks the targeted behavior into more manageable sub-steps.

• The teacher chooses ways to alter the response effort required to complete each selected behavior or behavior sub-step.
Response to Intervention

Response Effort: Examples

• TO INCREASE BEHAVIOR. A student with ADHD would stall for long periods when assigned independent seatwork. The teacher assigned him a peer ‘study buddy’ who helped the student to get organized and start the assignment. As a result, the student began to turn in work regularly.

• TO REDUCE BEHAVIOR. A teacher had a student who would walk over to the computer to play academic games at inappropriate times. The teacher decided to shut the computer down when it was not being used. The student did not want to wait for the computer to boot up each time he wanted to play and quickly stopped using it outside of scheduled times.
‘Chunking’ the Assignment

Break a larger assignment into smaller segments. If a single, larger assignment appears too overwhelming for the student, the instructor can break that assignment into smaller segments, or ‘chunks’. The student completes each segment, gets performance feedback on the work, and takes on the next segment.

For example, a teacher can take a math computation worksheet of 20 problems and cut it into four strips of 5 problems each. The student completes each strip, gets performance feedback, and moves onto the next collection of problems until the entire assignment is done.

Sequencing of Activities: Interspersing Problems

Intersperse a mix of challenge and easier problems. On independent student assignments, easier problems or items that the student can do without difficulty are interspersed among more challenging problems or items (e.g., Cates et al., 2003). For example, a math computation worksheet may contain two problem types: double-digit subtraction with regrouping (challenge problem) and single-digit subtraction (easy problem), with an easy item placed after every two challenge problems. The ratio of challenge to easy problems or items can be manipulated to provide appropriate academic challenge to the student while also motivating that student to complete the worksheet.

Sequencing of Activities: Precede Low-Probability Items with High-Probability Items Using High-Probability Sequencing. A ‘low-probability’ problem or item is one that the student is less likely to attempt, perhaps because of poor motivation. However, educators can make use of behavioral momentum to raise the odds that the student will attempt a low-probability challenge problem by first presenting that student with a series of problems that are ‘high probability’ (the student is likely to attempt and to complete them correctly) (Cates et al., 2003). On a spelling test, for example, the instructor may present three easier words in a row before presenting the low-probability challenge word (e.g., ‘specific’). The instructor can experiment with the number of high-probability problems or items that precede each low-probability challenge problem to find the most efficient sequence that still promotes student motivation and learning.

Response Effort Idea: Hold ‘Read-Alouds’
Select texts that supplement the course textbook and that illustrate central concepts and contain important vocabulary covered in the course. Read those texts aloud for 3 to 5 minutes per class session—while students follow along silently. Read-alouds provide students with additional exposure to vocabulary items in context. They can also lower the threshold of difficulty: **Students may be more likely to attempt to read an assigned text independently if they have already gotten a start in the text by listening to a more advanced reader read the first few pages aloud.** Read-alouds can support other vocabulary-building activities such as guided discussion, vocabulary review, and wide reading.

Guided Notes
Team Activity: What Are Response-Effort Ideas for Your Classroom?

- At your table:
  - Discuss practical ways that a teacher might apply the concept of ‘response effort’ to increase the motivation of students to engage in schoolwork.
The student is unmotivated because classroom instruction does not engage.

**Recommended Response.** The teacher can:

- Reduce distractions that draw student attention away from instruction
- Increase the engaging qualities of instruction
Reducing Competing Opportunities for Reinforcement in the Classroom

Students allocate their attention in classrooms across all reinforcing opportunities that are available (Herrnstein’s Law). This means that teacher-delivered instruction or assigned academic tasks must compete with other sources of potential student reinforcement, such as talking with peers, playing with objects, looking out the window, etc. The teacher can reduce the competition with competing non-instructional reinforcers by:

- Eliminating them (e.g., moving a student’s seat away from a peer group that engages in non-instructional conversations).
- Increasing the positive reinforcing qualities of instruction to out-compete with other distracting reinforcing opportunities.
- Incorporating elements of competing reinforcement (e.g., peer interactions) into instruction (e.g., in cooperative group activities).

Ensuring that Instruction Contains These Research-Based Elements

- **‘Correctly targeted’**: The intervention is appropriately matched to the student’s academic or behavioral needs.

- **‘Explicit instruction’**: Student skills have been broken down “into manageable and deliberately sequenced steps and providing overt strategies for students to learn and practice new skills” p.1153

- **‘Appropriate level of challenge’**: The student experiences adequate success with the instructional task.

- **‘High opportunity to respond’**: The student actively responds at a rate frequent enough to promote effective learning.

- **‘Feedback’**: The student receives prompt performance feedback about the work completed.

Move Instruction Along at an Appropriate Pace

**Instruct students at a brisk pace.** A myth is that struggling learners must be taught at a slower, less demanding pace than their more skilled peers (Heward, 2003). In fact, a slow pace of instruction can actually cause significant behavior problems, because students become bored and distracted. Teacher-led instruction should be delivered at a sufficiently brisk pace to hold student attention. An important additional benefit of a brisk instructional pace is that students cover more academic material more quickly, accelerating their learning (Heward, 2003).

Providing Student Choice

Offer frequent opportunities for choice (empowerment). Teachers who allow students a degree of choice in structuring their learning activities typically have fewer behavior problems in their classrooms than teachers who do not. One efficient way to promote choice in the classroom is for the teacher to create a master menu of options that students can select from in various learning situations. For example, during independent assignment, students might be allowed to (1) choose from at least 2 assignment options, (2) sit where they want in the classroom, and (3) select a peer-buddy to check their work. Student choice then becomes integrated seamlessly into the classroom routine.

Choice: Allowing the Student to Select Task Sequence
Choice of Task Sequence

Allowing the student choice in the sequence of academic tasks can increase rates of compliance and active academic engagement. The power of allowing the student to select the sequence of academic tasks appears to be in the exercise of choice, which for ‘biologic reasons’ may serve as a fundamental source of reinforcement (Kern & Clemens, 2007; p. 72).

Choice of Task Sequence

1. Meet individually with the student just before the independent work period. Present and explain to the student each of the 2 or 3 assignments selected for the work period. Ask if the student has questions about any of the assignments.

2. Direct the student to select the assignment he or she would like to do first. [Optional] Write the number ‘1’ at the top of the assignment chosen by the student.

3. Tell the student to begin working on the assignments. NOTE: The student is allowed to switch between assignments during the work period.

4. If the student stops working or gets off-task during the work period, prompt the student to return to the task and provide encouragement until the student resumes working.

The student is unmotivated because he or she fails to see an adequate pay-off to doing the assigned work.

**Recommended Response.** The teacher can:

- Complete a reinforcer inventory to discover what incentives will motivate the student
- Construct a custom reward menu for use with the student
- Use reinforcers/rewards as a temporary means to provide the student the incentive to put effort into academic work—then fade use of artificial reinforcers as other ‘natural reinforcers’ (e.g., teacher praise, improved grades, peer acceptance) take hold
Creating a Reward Menu

Conduct a reinforcer survey to create a ‘Reward Menu’.

1. The teacher collects a series of feasible classroom ideas for possible student reinforcers, writing each idea onto a separate index card. This serves as a master ‘reinforcer deck’ that the teacher can reuse.

2. The teacher meets with the student individually to review the reward ideas in the master reinforce deck. The student states whether he or she ‘likes’ each reinforce idea ‘a lot’, ‘a little’ or ‘not at all’ and the teacher sorts the reinforce ideas accordingly into separate piles. The reinforce ideas that the student selected as ‘liking a lot’ will be used to create a customized reinforce menu for the student.

3. Whenever the student meets teacher-established criteria to earn a reward, that student selects one from the reinforce menu.

4. If the reward menu appears to be losing its reinforcing power, the teacher can repeat the steps above with the student to update and refresh the reward menu.
The student is unmotivated because of low self-efficacy—lack of confidence that he or she can do the assigned work.

**Recommended Response.** The teacher can:

- Provide support and encouragement to reduce student anxiety and reluctance
- Challenge examples of faulty attribution through disconfirming evidence
Response to Intervention

both experimental and correlational research in schools suggests that self-efficacy is positively related to a host of positive outcomes of schooling such as choice, persistence, cognitive engagement, use of self-regulatory strategies, and actual achievement. This generalization seems to apply to all students, as it is relatively stable across difference ages and grades as well as different gender and ethnic groups. (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002, p. 315).

Challenging ‘Faulty’ Student Attributions

Understand student self-talk (attributions) that give evidence of sense of self-efficacy. When students provide evidence of a low sense of self-efficacy in a subject area, activity, or academic task, the teacher can respond by questioning students to better understand what attributions they make that ‘explain’ their academic difficulties.

Then the teacher can find appropriate ways to challenge any student’s faulty thinking, often through use of disconfirming evidence—and ultimately to have the student reframe their view of their abilities in more adaptive and positive ways.

A framework supplied by Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) is helpful. Attributions often explain events as falling into these categories: unstable/stable, internal/external, uncontrollable/controllable.

How Attributions About Learning Contribute to Academic Outcomes

Attribution Theory: Dimensions Affecting Student Interpretation of Academic Successes & Failures

(Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002)

The situation or event is...

- Unstable (changes often)
- Stable (can be counted on to remain relatively unchanged)
- Internal (within the student)
- External (occurring in the surrounding environment)
- Uncontrollable (beyond the ability of the student to influence)
- Controllable (within the student’s ability to influence)
How Attributions About Learning Contribute to Academic Outcomes

Some people are born writers. I was born to watch TV. This teacher always springs pop quizzes on us and picks questions that are impossible to study for! I can’t get any studying done at home because my brother listens to the radio all the time. So I did lousy on this one test. That’s OK. Next time, I will study harder and my grades should bounce back.

The situation or event is…

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<tr>
<th>Unstable (changes often)</th>
<th>Stable (can be counted on to remain relatively unchanged)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Internal (within the student)</td>
<td>External (occurring in the surrounding environment)</td>
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<td>Uncontrollable (beyond the ability of the student to influence)</td>
<td>Controllable (within the student’s ability to influence)</td>
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Challenging ‘Faulty’ Student Attributions: Example

A student says ‘I am just not wired to be a writer” (faulty attribution: stable, internal, uncontrollable). The teacher shows the student evidence to disconfirm her attribution: examples of the student’s own writing from a portfolio that are of high quality because the topic had interested the student.

The instructor demonstrates that when the student puts effort into her writing, the product is reliably and predictably improved—reframe: unstable/changeable (quality of the writing product depends on student effort), internal (the student has the necessary skill set to produce good writing), controllable (student effort is the key factor in producing a quality writing product).

Team Activity: How Can We Challenge Students’ ‘Faulty Thinking’?

- At your table:
  - Discuss ways that you might discover whether a particular student’s self-defeating ‘faulty thinking’ (low sense of self-efficacy) in a subject is significantly interfering with his or her academic performance.
  - Brainstorm ideas to challenge student ‘faulty thinking’.
Response to Intervention

Maintaining Classroom Discipline (1947): Pt. 1 of 3 (4:12)


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The student is unmotivated because he or she lacks a positive relationship with the teacher.

**Recommended Response.**

- The teacher can ‘recalibrate’ his or her interactions with students to ensure that the majority of those interactions are positive in emotional tone.
- The teacher can single out students with whom he or she has a strained relationship and target them for non-contingent (positive) attention.
Teacher Requests: Adopting a Positive Tone

Emphasize the positive in teacher requests. When an instructor’s request has a positive 'spin', that teacher is less likely to trigger a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance. Whenever possible, avoid using negative phrasing (e.g., "If you don't return to your seat, I can't help you with your assignment"). Instead, restate requests in positive terms (e.g., "I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat").

Skewing Teacher Interactions Toward the Positive

Maintain a high ratio of positive vs. disciplinary interactions. Teachers should make an effort to give positive attention or praise to problem students at least three times more frequently than they reprimand them. The teacher gives the student the attention or praise during moments when that student is acting appropriately—and keeps track of how frequently they give positive attention and reprimands to the student. This heavy dosing of positive attention and praise can greatly improve the teacher’s relationship with problem students.

Two by Ten: Non-Contingent Teacher Attention

Use ‘Two by Ten’ to ‘jump-start’ a connection with the student. The teacher makes the commitment to set aside two minutes per day across ten consecutive school days. During that daily time, the teacher has a two-minute positive conversation with the student, which can focus on current events, a topic of high interest to the student (e.g., NASCAR, fashion), the weather, or other subjects. NOTE: The conversation should not address the student’s problem behaviors, poor grades or other negative topics.

The teacher continues to have these 2-minute conversations for 10 school days in a row. At the end of the timespan, both teacher and student are likely to find it more rewarding to interact with one another—and there is an increased probability that the student will comply more readily with teacher requests.

RTI Problem-Solving Teams: Promoting Student Involvement

Jim Wright
www.interventioncentral.org
# Intervention Responsibilities: Examples at Teacher, School-Wide, and Student Levels

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<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School-Wide</th>
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| • Signed agenda  
• ‘Attention’ prompts  
• Individual review with students during free periods | • Take agenda to teacher to be reviewed and signed  
• Seeking help from teachers during free periods | • Lab services (math, reading, etc.)  
• Remedial course  
• Homework club |
Engaging the Student as an Active RTI Partner in the Intervention Planning Process

Schools should strongly consider having middle and high school students attend and take part in their own RTI Problem-Solving Team meetings for two reasons. First, as students mature, their teachers expect that they will take responsibility for advocating for their own learning needs. Second, students are more likely to fully commit to RTI intervention plans if they attend the RTI Team meeting and have a voice in the creation of those plans.

Before the RTI Team Meeting: The student should be adequately prepared to attend the RTI Team meeting by first engaging in a ‘pre-meeting’ with a school staff member whom the student knows and trusts (e.g., school counselor, teacher, administrator). By connecting the student with a trusted mentorfigure who can help the student navigate the RTI process, the school improves the odds that the disengaged or unmotivated student will feel an increased sense of connection and commitment to their own school performance (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006).

A student RTI ‘pre-meeting’ can be quite brief, lasting perhaps 15-20 minutes. Here is a simple agenda for the meeting:

- **Share information about the student problem(s).** Share with the student information about the problems with academic performance or behavior that led to an RTI Team referral. For example, the student may be shown RTI referral forms from teachers documenting their concerns or review recent grade reports.

- **Describe the purpose and steps of the RTI Problem-Solving Team meeting.** Be sure that the student understands that the goal of the upcoming RTI Team meeting is to develop an intervention plan designed to help the student be successful.

- **Stress the student’s importance in the intervention plan.** Emphasize the key role that the student can and should play in designing the intervention plan. Here the school is only acknowledging the obvious: a middle or high school student holds most of the power in deciding whether or not to commit to an intervention.

- **Have the student describe his or her learning needs.** Consider using the attached structured interview Pre-RTI Team Meeting Student Interview: Sample Questions to collect information about the student’s learning needs.

- **Invite the student to attend the RTI Team meeting.** Reassure the student that he or she will not be singled out or ‘attacked’ at the problem-solving meeting. Assure the student that the meeting’s purpose is simply to develop a plan to help the student to do better in school.

During the RTI Team Meeting: If the student agrees to attend the RTI Team meeting, he or she participates fully in the meeting. Teachers and other staff attending the meeting make an effort to keep the atmosphere positive and focused on finding solutions to the student’s presenting concern(s). As each intervention idea is discussed, the team checks in with the student to determine that the student(a) fully understands how to assess or participate in the intervention element being proposed and (b) is willing to take part in that intervention element. If the student appears hesitant or resistant, the team should work with the student either to win the student over to the proposed intervention idea or to find an alternative intervention that will accomplish the same goal.
RTI: Promoting Student Involvement

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- **Share information about the student problem(s).**
- **Describe the purpose and steps of the RTI Problem-Solving Team meeting.**
- **Stress the student’s importance in the intervention plan.**
- **Have the student describe his or her learning needs.**
- **Invite the student to attend the RTI Team meeting.**
### Pre-RTI Team Meeting Student Interview: Sample Questions

**Directions.** Set aside time before the RTI Problem-Solving Team meeting to meet individually with the referred student. Ask the following questions to better determine the student's learning needs. Record student responses and bring the completed questionnaire to the RTI Team meeting.

1. Which of your courses are the most challenging? Why?

2. Describe how you study for quizzes and tests in your most challenging course(s).

3. What strategies do you use to get help in your most challenging course(s)?

4. Homework:
   a. Describe the physical setting in which you usually do your homework.
   b. How long do you typically work on homework each night?
   c. Do you have access to cell phones, TV, video games, or other entertainment while you do homework? If so, how frequently are you using them during homework time?
   d. How do you decide which homework assignment to do first?
   e. Do you spend time each night reviewing course notes or sections from your course textbooks? If so, about how much time do you usually spend doing this?
   f. What kinds of homework assignments do you like least or find most challenging?

5. What would you want your teachers to know about your strengths and challenges as a student?

   **Strengths:**
   -
   -
   -
   -

   **Challenges:**
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   -
   -
   -

6. What are steps that you can take on your own to be more successful in school?

7. What would you like to see as outcomes after the RTI Team meets to discuss your learning needs?

   **Outcomes:**
   -
   -
   -
RTI: Promoting Student Involvement

- **During the RTI Team Meeting.** If the student agrees to attend the RTI Team meeting, he or she participates fully in the meeting. Teachers and other staff attending the meeting make an effort to keep the atmosphere positive and focused on finding solutions to the student’s presenting concern(s). As each intervention idea is discussed, the team checks in with the student to determine that the student (a) fully understands how to access or participate in the intervention element being proposed and (b) is willing to take part in that intervention element. If the student appears hesitant or resistant, the team should work with the student either to win the student over to the proposed intervention idea or to find an alternative intervention that will accomplish the same goal.

- **At the end of the RTI Team meeting,** each of the intervention ideas that is dependent on student participation for success is copied into the *School Success Intervention Plan.*
# School Success Intervention Plan

**School Success Intervention Plan** for: __________________________  Date: ________

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<tr>
<th>The student agrees to carry out the strategies listed below to promote school success:</th>
<th>[Optional] If adults in school or at home will assist the student with a strategy, the ADULT responsibilities are listed below:</th>
<th>[Optional] Name of adult(s) assisting student with strategy</th>
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Signature of Student  Signature of Adult School Contact  Signature of Parent
The Unmotivated Student: Possible Reasons: Activity

At your table:

- Review the possible reasons for lack of student motivation reviewed in this presentation.
- Discuss the unmotivated student selected earlier by your team.
- Choose the most likely reason(s) that this student is unmotivated.

- The student is unmotivated because he or she cannot do the assigned work.
- The student is unmotivated because the ‘response effort’ needed to complete the assigned work seems too great.
- The student is unmotivated because classroom instruction does not engage.
- The student is unmotivated because he or she fails to see an adequate pay-off to doing the assigned work.
- The student is unmotivated because of low self-efficacy—lack of confidence that he or she can do the assigned work.
- The student is unmotivated because he or she lacks a positive relationship with the teacher.
Motivation Intervention: Case Example

Jim Wright

www.interventioncentral.org
Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Problem

• Justin showed a pattern from the start of the school year of not complying with teacher requests in his English class. His teacher, Mr. Steubin, noted that – when given a teacher directive—Justin would sometimes fail to comply. Justin would show no obvious signs of opposition but would sit passively or remain engaged in his current activity, as if ignoring the instructor.

When no task demands were made on him, Justin was typically a quiet and somewhat distant student but otherwise appeared to fit into the class and show appropriate behavior.
Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Evidence

- **Student Interview.** Mr. Steubin felt that he did not have a strong relationship with the student, so he asked the counselor to talk with Justin about why he might be non-compliant in English class. Justin told the counselor that he was bored in the class and just didn’t like to write. When pressed by the counselor, Justin admitted that he could do the work in the class but chose not to.

- **Direct Observation.** Mr. Steubin noted that Justin was less likely to comply with writing assignments than other in-class tasks. The likelihood that Justin would be non-compliant tended to go up if Mr. Steubin pushed him to comply in the presence of Justin’s peers. The odds that Justin would comply also appeared to increase when Mr. Steubin stated his request and walked away, rather than continuing to ‘nag’ Justin to comply.
Response to Intervention

Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Evidence (Cont.)

• *Work Products.* Mr. Steubin knew from the assignments that he did receive from Justin that the student had adequate writing skills. However, Justin’s compositions tended to be short, and ideas were not always as fully developed as they could be—as Justin was doing the minimum to get by.

• *Input from Other Teachers.* Mr. Steubin checked with other teachers who had Justin in their classes. The Spanish teacher had similar problems in getting Justin to comply but the science teacher generally found Justin to be a compliant and pleasant student. She noted that Justin seemed to really like hands-on activities and that, when potentially non-compliant, he responded well to gentle humor.
Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Intervention

• Mr. Steubin realized that he tended to focus most of his attention on Justin’s non-compliance. So the student’s non-compliance might be supported by teacher attention. OR the student’s compliant behaviors might be extinguished because Mr. Steubin did not pay attention to them.

• The teacher decided instead that Justin needed to have appropriate consequences for non-compliance, balanced with incentives to engage in learning tasks. Additionally, Mr. Steubin elected to give the student attention at times that were NOT linked to non-compliance.
Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Intervention (Cont.)

- *Appropriate Consequences for Non-Compliance.* Mr. Steubin adopted a new strategy to deal with Justin’s episodes of non-compliance. Mr. Steubin got agreement from Justin’s parents that the student could get access to privileges at home each day only if he had a good report from the teacher about complying with classroom requests.

Whenever the student failed to comply within a reasonable time (1 minute) to a teacher request, Mr. Steubin would approach Justin’s desk and quietly restate the request as a two-part ‘choice’ statement. He kept his verbal interactions brief and neutral in tone. As part of the ‘choice’ statement, the teacher told Justin that if he did not comply, his parents would be emailed a negative report. If Justin still did not comply, Mr. Steubin would follow through later that day in sending the report of non-compliance to the parents.
Teacher Command Sequence: Two-Part Choice Statement

1. **Make the request.** Use simple, clear language that the student understands. If possible, phrase the request as a positive (*do*) statement, rather than a negative (*don’t*) statement. (E.g., “Justin, please start your writing assignment now.”) Wait a reasonable time for the student to comply (e.g., 1 minute)
Teacher Command Sequence: Two-Part Choice Statement

2. [If the student fails to comply] **Repeat the request as a 2-part choice.** Give the student two clear choices with clear consequences. Order the choices so that the student hears negative consequence as the first choice and the teacher request as the second choice. (E.g., “Justin, I can email your parents to say that you won’t do the class assignment or you can start the assignment now and not have a negative report go home. It’s your choice.”) Give the student a reasonable time to comply (e.g., 1 minute).
Teacher Command Sequence: Two-Part Choice Statement

3. [If the student fails to comply] **Impose the pre-selected negative consequence.** As you impose the consequence, ignore student questions or complaints that appear intended to entangle you in a power struggle.
Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Intervention (Cont.)

• *Active Student Engagement.* Mr. Steubin reasoned that he could probably better motivate the entire class by making sure that lessons were engaging.

He made an extra effort to build lessons around topics of high interest to students, built in cooperative learning opportunities to engage students, and moved the lesson along at a brisk pace. The teacher also made ‘real-world’ connections whenever he could between what was being taught in a lesson and ways that students could apply that knowledge or skill outside of school or in future situations.
Case Example: Non-Compliance

The Intervention (Cont.)

- *Teacher Attention (Non-Contingent).* Mr. Steubin adopted the two-by-ten intervention (A. Mendler, 2000) as a way to jumpstart a connection with Justin. The total time required for this strategy was 20 minutes across ten school days.
Response to Intervention

Sample Ideas to Improve Relationships With Students: The Two-By-Ten Intervention (Mendler, 2000)

- Make a commitment to spend 2 minutes per day for 10 consecutive days in building a relationship with the student...by talking about topics of interest to the student.

  Avoid discussing problems with the student’s behaviors or schoolwork during these times.

**Case Example: Non-Compliance**

**The Outcome**

- The strategies adopted by Mr. Steubin did not improve Justin’s level of compliance right away. Once the teacher had gone through the full ten days of the ‘two by ten’ intervention, however, Mr. Steubin noticed that Justin made more eye contact with him and even joked occasionally. And the student’s rate of compliance then noticeably improved—but still had a way to go.

- Mr. Steubin kept in regular contact with Justin’s parents, who admitted about 8 days into the intervention that they were not as rigorous as they should be in preventing him from accessing privileges at home when he was non-compliant at school. When the teacher urged them to hold the line at home, they said that they would—and did. Justin’s behavior improved as a result, to the point where his level of compliance was typical for the range of students in Mr. Steubin’s class.
Defining Student Problem Behaviors: A Key to Identifying Effective Interventions

Jim Wright

www.interventioncentral.org
Defining Problem Student Behaviors...

1. Define the problem behavior in clear, observable, measurable terms (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). Write a clear description of the problem behavior. Avoid vague problem identification statements such as “The student is disruptive.”

A well-written problem definition should include three parts:

– Conditions. The condition(s) under which the problem is likely to occur
– Problem Description. A specific description of the problem behavior
– Contextual information. Information about the frequency, intensity, duration, or other dimension(s) of the behavior that provide a context for estimating the degree to which the behavior presents a problem in the setting(s) in which it occurs.
## Sample Problem Behavior Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions. The condition(s) under which the problem is likely to occur</th>
<th>Problem Description. A specific description of the problem behavior</th>
<th>Contextual Information. Information about the frequency, intensity, duration, or other dimension(s) of the behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, ...</td>
<td>...John talks with peers about non-instructional topics...</td>
<td>...an average of three times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school settings such as the playground or gymnasium, when unsupervised by adults, ...</td>
<td>...Angela is reported by peers to use physically threatening language...</td>
<td>...at least once per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given a verbal teacher request...</td>
<td>...Jay fails to comply with that request within 3 minutes...</td>
<td>... an average of 50% of the time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Develop examples and non-examples of the problem behavior (Upah, 2008). Writing both examples and non-examples of the problem behavior helps to resolve uncertainty about when the student’s conduct should be classified as a problem behavior. Examples should include the most frequent or typical instances of the student problem behavior. Non-examples should include any behaviors that are acceptable conduct but might possibly be confused with the problem behavior.
## Examples and Non-Examples of Problem Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Behavior</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Non-Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John talks with peers about non-instructional topics | - John chats with another student that he encounters at the pencil sharpener.  
- John whispers to a neighboring student about a comic book in his desk. | - At the direction of the teacher, John pairs up with another student to complete an assignment.  
- John verbally interacts with students in an appropriate manner while handing out work materials as requested by the teacher. |
| When given a verbal teacher request, Jay fails to comply with that request within 3 minutes. | - Jay does not comply when directed by the teacher to open his math book and begin work.  
- Jay is verbally defiant and uncooperative when requested by an adult to stop running in the hall. | - Jay does not comply with a teacher request because he does not hear that request.  
- Jay asks the teacher to explain directions that he does not understand. |
3. Write a behavior hypothesis statement (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). The next step in problem-solving is to develop a hypothesis about why the student is engaging in an undesirable behavior or not engaging in a desired behavior. Teachers can gain information to develop a hypothesis through direct observation, student interview, review of student work products, and other sources. The behavior hypothesis statement is important because (a) it can be tested, and (b) it provides guidance on the type(s) of interventions that might benefit the student.
### Behavior Hypothesis Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Behavior</th>
<th>&lt;Because&gt;</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John talks with peers about non-instructional topics...</td>
<td>...because...</td>
<td>...he is avoiding academic work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given a verbal teacher request, Jay fails to comply with that request...</td>
<td>...because...</td>
<td>...he is reinforced by the negative adult attention that results from his noncompliance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defining Problem Student Behaviors... 

4. **Select a replacement behavior** (Batsche et al., 2008). Behavioral interventions should be focused on increasing student skills and capacities, not simply on suppressing problem behaviors. By selecting a positive behavioral goal that is an appropriate replacement for the student’s original problem behavior, the teacher reframes the student concern in a manner that allows for more effective intervention planning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Behavior</th>
<th>Replacement Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John talks with peers about non-instructional topics.</td>
<td>During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John is engaged in active accurate academic responding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given a verbal teacher request, Jay fails to comply with that request.</td>
<td>When given a verbal teacher request, Jay carries out the request without argument or complaint within 3 minutes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Write a prediction statement** (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). The prediction statement proposes a strategy (intervention) that is predicted to improve the problem behavior. The importance of the prediction statement is that it spells out specifically the expected outcome if the strategy is successful. The formula for writing a prediction statement is to state that *if* the proposed strategy (‘Specific Action’) is adopted, then the *rate* of problem behavior is expected to *decrease* or *increase* in the desired direction.
## Prediction Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Action</th>
<th>Problem Behavior</th>
<th>Rate of Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If prior to independent seatwork, John meets with a tutor to review key vocabulary terms and rehearse the assigned reading,...</td>
<td>...the amount of time that John spends talking with peers about non-instructional topics during independent work...</td>
<td>...will decrease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If adults avoid engaging Jay in long exchanges when he fails to comply with their requests and instead impose appropriate pre-selected consequences...</td>
<td>...the frequency of Jay’s timely compliance with adult requests...</td>
<td>...will increase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding the Right Behavioral Intervention: Five Steps to Defining Student Problem Behaviors

Teachers can select effective interventions for student behavior problems only if they first clearly define the problem behavior(s) and the reason(s) that a behavior is occurring.

The process of defining student problem behaviors goes more smoothly if the teacher has first collected relevant information about the student’s problem behavior (e.g., examples of seatwork, anecdotal notes of student behavior, frequency counts of behavior, student interview, etc.).

By following the five steps below, the teacher is more likely to describe a student’s problem behavior(s) with clarity and to identify effective interventions to address them.

1. Define the problem behavior in clear, observable, measurable terms.

   | Sample Problem Behavior Definitions |
   | Conditions: The condition(s) under which the problem is likely to occur |
   | Problem Description: A specific description of the problem behavior |
   | Contextual Information: Information about the frequency, intensity, duration, or other dimension(s) of the behavior |

2. Develop examples and non-examples of the problem behavior.

   | Examples and Non-Examples of Problem Behavior |
   | Examples |
   | Non-Examples |

3. Write a behavior hypothesis statement.

   | Behavior Hypothesis Statements |
   | Problem Behavior | <Because> | Hypothesis |
   | ...because... |

4. Select a replacement behavior.

   | Selection of Replacement Behavior |
   | Replacement Behavior |

5. Create a prediction statement.

   | Prediction Statement |
   | Specific Action | Problem Behavior | Rate of Behavior |
Response to Intervention

Defining Student Motivation/Behavior Problems: Activity

At your table:

- Review the 5-step process described in the workshop for identifying and analyzing student behavior problems.

- How might this process be useful in working with unmotivated students?
Improving the Integrity of Academic Interventions Through a Critical-Components ‘Pre-Flight’ Check (pp. 12-15)

Jim Wright

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**Academic Interventions ‘Critical Components’ Checklist**

This checklist summarizes the essential components of academic interventions. When preparing a student’s Tier 1, 2, or 3 academic intervention plan, use this document as a pre-flight checklist to ensure that the academic intervention is of high quality, is sufficiently strong to address the identified student problem, is fully understood and supported by the teacher, and can be implemented with integrity. NOTE: While the checklist refers to the teacher as the interventionist, it can also be used as a guide to ensure the quality of interventions implemented by non-instructional personnel, adult volunteers, parents, and peer (student) tutors.

**Allocating Sufficient Contact Time & Assuring Appropriate Student-Teacher Ratio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Item</th>
<th>Intervention Element</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Allocated. The time set aside for the intervention is appropriate for the type and level of student problem (Burns &amp; Gibbons, 2003; Kretschmair, Clements &amp; Keymon, 2007). When evaluating whether the amount of time allocated is adequate, consider:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of each intervention session.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of sessions (e.g., daily, 3 times per week).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duration of intervention period (e.g., 6 instruction weeks).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student-Teacher Ratio. The student receives sufficient contact from the teacher or other person delivering the intervention to make that intervention effective. NOTE: Generally, supplemental intervention groups should be limited to 5-7 students (Burns &amp; Gibbons, 2003).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Matching the Intervention to the Student Problem**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Critical Item</th>
<th>Intervention Element</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem Definition. The student academic problem(s) to be addressed in the intervention are defined in clear, specific, measurable terms (Ebergen, 1996; Witt, VerDeHeiden &amp; Gilberston, 2004). The full problem definition describes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditions. Describe the environmental conditions or task demands in place when the academic problem is observed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem Description. Describe the actual observable academic behavior in which the student is engaged. Include rate, accuracy, or other quantitative information of student performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Typical or Expected Level of Performance. Provide a typical or expected performance criterion for this skill or behavior. Types or expected academic performance can be calculated using a variety of sources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate Target. Selected intervention(s) are appropriate for the identified student problem(s) (Burns, VerDeHeiden &amp; Bolte, 2003). Tip: Use the Instructional Hierarchy (Haring et al., 1978) to select</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Academic Interventions ‘Critical Components’ Checklist

This checklist summarizes the essential components of academic interventions. When preparing a student’s Tier 1, 2, or 3 academic intervention plan, use this document as a ‘pre-flight checklist’ to ensure that the academic intervention is of high quality, is sufficiently strong to address the identified student problem, is fully understood and supported by the teacher, and can be implemented with integrity. NOTE: While the checklist refers to the ‘teacher’ as the interventionist, it can also be used as a guide to ensure the quality of interventions implemented by non-instructional personnel, adult volunteers, parents, and peer (student) tutors.
## Allocating Sufficient Contact Time & Assuring Appropriate Student-Teacher Ratio

The cumulative time set aside for an intervention and the amount of direct teacher contact are two factors that help to determine that intervention’s ‘strength’ (Yeaton & Sechrest, 1981).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Item?</th>
<th>Intervention Element</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ☐️ | **Time Allocated.** The time set aside for the intervention is appropriate for the type and level of student problem (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Kratochwill, Clements & Kalymon, 2007). When evaluating whether the amount of time allocated is adequate, consider:  
  - Length of each intervention session.  
  - Frequency of sessions (e.g., daily, 3 times per week)  
  - Duration of intervention period (e.g., 6 instructional weeks) |       |
| ☐️ | **Student-Teacher Ratio.** The student receives sufficient contact from the teacher or other person delivering the intervention to make that intervention effective. NOTE: Generally, supplemental intervention groups should be limited to 6-7 students (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). |       |
Matching the Intervention to the Student Problem

Academic interventions are not selected at random. First, the student academic problem(s) is defined clearly and in detail. Then, the likely explanations for the academic problem(s) are identified to understand which intervention(s) are likely to help—and which should be avoided.

<table>
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<th>Intervention Element</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Problem Definition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student academic problem(s) to be addressed in the intervention are defined in clear, specific, measurable terms (Bergan, 1995; Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004). The full problem definition describes:

- **Conditions.** Describe the environmental conditions or task demands in place when the academic problem is observed.
- **Problem Description.** Describe the actual observable academic behavior in which the student is engaged. Include rate, accuracy, or other quantitative information of student performance.
- **Typical or Expected Level of Performance.** Provide a typical or expected performance criterion for this skill or behavior. Typical or expected academic performance can be calculated using a variety of sources.
### Academic Problems: Sample Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Conditions or Task Demands</th>
<th>Problem Description</th>
<th>Typical or Expected Level of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When given a passage from the 3rd grade reading series book…</td>
<td>...John reads 56 words per minutes…</td>
<td>...compared to DIBELS mid-year 3rd-grade benchmark norms of 78 words per minute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a math computation worksheet (double-digit times double-digit with no regrouping)…</td>
<td>...Ann computes 45 digits per minute…</td>
<td>...while peers in her 3rd grade compute an average of 67 correct digits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During social studies large-group instruction…</td>
<td>...Franklin attends to instruction an average of 45% of the time…</td>
<td>...while peers in the same room attend to instruction an average of 85% of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For science homework…</td>
<td>...Tye turns in assignments an average of 50% of the time…</td>
<td>...while the classroom median rate of homework turned in is 90%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On weekly 30-minute in-class writing assignments…</td>
<td>...Angela produces compositions that average 145 words…</td>
<td>...while a sampling of peer compositions shows that the typical student writes an average of 254 words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Matching the Intervention to the Student Problem (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Item?</th>
<th>Intervention Element</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Appropriate Target.</strong> Selected intervention(s) are appropriate for the identified student problem(s) (Burns, VanDerHeyden &amp; Boice, 2008). TIP: Use the Instructional Hierarchy (Haring et al., 1978) to select academic interventions according to the four stages of learning:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Acquisition.</em> The student has begun to learn how to complete the target skill correctly but is not yet accurate in the skill. Interventions should improve accuracy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Fluency.</em> The student is able to complete the target skill accurately but works slowly. Interventions should increase the student’s speed of responding (fluency) as well as to maintain accuracy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Generalization.</em> The student may have acquired the target skill but does not typically use it in the full range of appropriate situations or settings. Or the student may confuse the target skill with ‘similar’ skills. Interventions should get the student to use the skill in the widest possible range of settings and situations, or to accurately discriminate between the target skill and ‘similar’ skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Adaptation.</em> The student is not yet able to modify or adapt an existing skill to fit novel task-demands or situations. Interventions should help the student to identify key concepts or elements from previously learned skills that can be adapted to the new demands or situations.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Matching the Intervention to the Student Problem (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Item?</th>
<th>Intervention Element</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Can’t Do/Won’t Do’ Check. The teacher has determined whether the student problem is primarily a skill or knowledge deficit (‘can’t do’) or whether student motivation plays a main or supporting role in academic underperformance (‘wont do’). If motivation appears to be a significant factor contributing to the problem, the intervention plan includes strategies to engage the student (e.g., high interest learning activities; rewards/incentives; increased student choice in academic assignments, etc.) (Skinner, Pappas &amp; Davis, 2005; Witt, VanDerHeyden &amp; Gilbertson, 2004).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
These effective ‘building blocks’ of instruction are well-known and well-supported by the research. They should be considered when selecting or creating any academic intervention.

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Explicit Instruction.</strong> Student skills have been broken down “into manageable and deliberately sequenced steps” and the teacher provided “overt strategies for students to learn and practice new skills” (Burns, VanDerHeyden &amp; Boice, 2008, p.1153).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Appropriate Level of Challenge.</strong> The student experienced sufficient success in the academic task(s) to shape learning in the desired direction as well as to maintain student motivation (Burns, VanDerHeyden &amp; Boice, 2008).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Active Engagement.</strong> The intervention ensures that the student is engaged in ‘active accurate responding’ (Skinner, Pappas &amp; Davis, 2005). at a rate frequent enough to capture student attention and to optimize effective learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Performance Feedback.</strong> The student receives prompt performance feedback about the work completed (Burns, VanDerHeyden &amp; Boice, 2008).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Maintenance of Academic Standards.</strong> If the intervention includes any accommodations to better support the struggling learner (e.g., preferential seating, breaking a longer assignment into smaller chunks), those accommodations do not substantially lower the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated and are not likely to reduce the student’s rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas &amp; Davis, 2005).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Response to Intervention

Verifying Teacher Understanding & Providing Teacher Support

The teacher is an active agent in the intervention, with primary responsibility for putting it into practice in a busy classroom. It is important, then, that the teacher fully understands how to do the intervention, believes that he or she can do it, and knows whom to seek out if there are problems with the intervention.

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Teacher Responsibility.</strong> The teacher understands his or her responsibility to implement the academic intervention(s) with integrity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Teacher Acceptability.</strong> The teacher states that he or she finds the academic intervention feasible and acceptable for the identified student problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Step-by-Step Intervention Script.</strong> The essential steps of the intervention are written as an ‘intervention script’—a series of clearly described steps—to ensure teacher understanding and make implementation easier (Hawkins, Morrison, Musti-Rao &amp; Hawkins, 2008).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Intervention Training.</strong> If the teacher requires training to carry out the intervention, that training has been arranged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Intervention Elements: Negotiable vs. Non-Negotiable.</strong> The teacher knows all of the steps of the intervention. Additionally, the teacher knows which of the intervention steps are ‘non-negotiable’ (they must be completed exactly as designed) and which are ‘negotiable’ (the teacher has some latitude in how to carry out those steps) (Hawkins, Morrison, Musti-Rao &amp; Hawkins, 2008).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td><strong>Assistance With the Intervention.</strong> If the intervention cannot be implemented as designed for any reason (e.g., student absence, lack of materials, etc.), the teacher knows how to get assistance quickly to either fix the problem(s) to the current intervention or to change the intervention.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interventions only have meaning if they are done within a larger data-based context. For example, interventions that lack baseline data, goal(s) for improvement, and a progress-monitoring plan are ‘fatally flawed’ (Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004).

<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Intervention Documentation.</strong> The teacher understands and can manage all documentation required for this intervention (e.g., maintaining a log of intervention sessions, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Checkup Date.</strong> Before the intervention begins, a future checkup date is selected to review the intervention to determine if it is successful. Time elapsing between the start of the intervention and the checkup date should be short enough to allow a timely review of the intervention but long enough to give the school sufficient time to judge with confidence whether the intervention worked.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Baseline.</strong> Before the intervention begins, the teacher has collected information about the student’s baseline level of performance in the identified area(s) of academic concern (Witt, VanDerHeyden &amp; Gilbertson, 2004).</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Goal.</strong> Before the intervention begins, the teacher has set a specific goal for predicted student improvement to use as a minimum standard for success (Witt, VanDerHeyden &amp; Gilbertson, 2004). The goal is the expected student outcome by the checkup date if the intervention is successful.</td>
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<td><strong>Progress-Monitoring.</strong> During the intervention, the teacher collects progress-monitoring data of sufficient quality and at a sufficient frequency to determine at the checkup date whether that intervention is successful (Witt, VanDerHeyden &amp; Gilbertson, 2004).</td>
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References


A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist (600 BC-531 BC)
Student Motivation: Two Steps to Reframing the Issue and Empowering Schools

Step 1: Redefine ‘motivation’ as academic engagement: e.g., The student chooses “to engage in active accurate academic responding” (Skinner, Pappas, & Davis, 2005).

Step 2: Build staff support for this mission statement: “When a student appears unmotivated, it is the school’s job to figure out why the student is unmotivated and to find a way to get that student motivated.”

‘Defensive Behavior Management’: The Power of Teacher Preparation

Jim Wright
www.interventioncentral.org
Defensive Management: A Method to Avoid Power Struggles

‘Defensive management’ (Fields, 2004) is a teacher-friendly six-step approach to avert student-teacher power struggles that emphasizes providing proactive instructional support to the student, elimination of behavioral triggers in the classroom setting, relationship-building, strategic application of defusing techniques when needed, and use of a ‘reconnection’ conference after behavioral incidents to promote student reflection and positive behavior change.

Defensive Management: Six Steps

1. **Understanding the Problem and Using Proactive Strategies.** The teacher collects information—through direct observation and perhaps other means—about specific instances of student problem behavior and the instructional components and other factors surrounding them. The teacher analyzes this information to discover specific ‘trigger’ events that seem to set off the problem behavior(s) (e.g., lack of skills; failure to understand directions).

The instructor then adjusts instruction to provide appropriate student support (e.g., providing the student with additional instruction in a skill; repeating directions and writing them on the board).

Defensive Management: Six Steps

2. **Promoting Positive Teacher-Student Interactions.** Early in each class session, the teacher has at least one positive verbal interaction with the student. Throughout the class period, the teacher continues to interact in positive ways with the student (e.g., brief conversation, smile, thumbs up, praise comment after a student remark in large-group discussion, etc.). In each interaction, the teacher adopts a genuinely accepting, polite, respectful tone.

Defensive Management: Six Steps

3. **Scanning for Warning Indicators.** During the class session, the teacher monitors the target student’s behavior for any behavioral indicators suggesting that the student is becoming frustrated or angry. Examples of behaviors that precede non-compliance or open defiance may include stopping work; muttering or complaining; becoming argumentative; interrupting others; leaving his or her seat; throwing objects, etc.).

Defensive Management: Six Steps

4. **Exercising Emotional Restraint.** Whenever the student begins to display problematic behaviors, the teacher makes an active effort to remain calm. To actively monitor his or her emotional state, the teacher tracks physiological cues such as increased muscle tension and heart rate, as well as fear, annoyance, anger, or other negative emotions. The teacher also adopts calming or relaxation strategies that work for him or her in the face of provocative student behavior, such as taking a deep breath or counting to 10 before responding.

Defensive Management: Six Steps

5. **Using Defusing Tactics.** If the student begins to escalate to non-compliant, defiant, or confrontational behavior (e.g., arguing, threatening, other intentional verbal interruptions), the teacher draws from a range of possible descalating strategies to defuse the situation. Such strategies can include private conversation with the student while maintaining a calm voice, open-ended questions, paraphrasing the student’s concerns, acknowledging the student’s emotions, etc.

Defensive Management: Six Steps

6. **Reconnecting with The Student.** Soon after any in-class incident of student non-compliance, defiance, or confrontation, the teacher makes a point to meet with the student to discuss the behavioral incident, identify the triggers in the classroom environment that led to the problem, and brainstorm with the student to create a written plan to prevent the reoccurrence of such an incident. Throughout this conference, the teacher maintains a supportive, positive, polite, and respectful tone.

Activity: Apply the ‘Defensive Management’ Strategy to Video

At your table:

- View the video clip of a middle-school classroom.
- Review the ‘defensive management’ steps.
- Write down ‘coaching’ feedback for the teacher, recommending strategies for each of the steps. Be as specific as you can.

Defensive Management: Six Steps

1. Understanding the Student Problem and Using Proactive Strategies to Prevent It
2. Promoting Positive Teacher-Student Interactions
3. Scanning for Warning Indicators
4. Exercising Emotional Restraint
5. Using Defusing Tactics
6. Reconnecting With the Student