Behavioral Consultation in Schools: Helping Teachers to Identify Intervention Pathways to Better Manage Problem Behaviors

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Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

1. Behavioral Expectations. Students receive explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors—to include:
   - Teaching Behavioral Expectations. Students have been explicitly taught classroom behavioral expectations. Those positive behaviors are acknowledged and reinforced on an ongoing basis (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007).
   - Posting Positive Classroom Rules. The classroom has a set of 3-5 rules or behavioral expectations posted. When possible, those rules are stated in positive terms as ‘goal’ behaviors. (e.g., ‘Students participate in learning activities without distracting others from learning’). The rules are frequently reviewed (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).
   - Training Students in Basic Class Routines. The teacher has clearly established routines to deal with common classroom activities (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). These routines include but are not limited to:
     - Engaging students in meaningful academic activities at the start of class (e.g., using bell-ringer activities)
     - Assigning and collecting homework and classwork
     - Transitioning students efficiently between activities
     - Independent seatwork and cooperative learning groups
     - Students leaving and reentering the classroom
     - Dismissing students at the end of the period

2. Instruction That Motivates. Academic instruction holds student attention and promotes engagement—to include:
   - Delivering Effective Instruction. The teacher’s lesson and instructional activities include these components (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008):
     - Instructional match. Students are placed in work that provides them with an appropriate level of challenge (not too easy and not too difficult).
     - Explicit instruction. The teacher delivers instruction using modeling, demonstration, supervised student practice, etc.
     - High rate of student responding and engagement. There are sufficient opportunities during the lesson for students to be actively engaged and ‘show what they know’.
Teachers as Behavior Managers: Challenges

Teachers often face these challenges in managing classrooms:

1. Management strategies are ‘reactive’ rather than proactive.

2. There is limited time to implement classroom strategies.

3. There is no overarching blue-print or plan to prioritize/organize classroom management efforts.

4. The school lacks a coherent classroom-management framework to ensure consistency across classrooms.
Classroom Management: *Intervention Pathways*. How can teachers be encouraged to integrate more elements of effective behavior management into their practice?
Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes (1) teaching behavioral expectations to students; (2) providing strong instruction; (3) using proactive strategies to manage group behaviors; (4) building connections with students; and (5) responding flexibly and appropriately when individual behavior problems occur.

Teachers can use this checklist to build an intervention pathway that promotes effective classroom management and ensures that they are using the right balance of behavior management practices with their students.

1. **Behavioral Expectations.** Students receive explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors--to include:

   - **Teaching Behavioral Expectations.** Students have been explicitly taught classroom behavioral expectations. Those positive behaviors are acknowledged and reinforced on an ongoing basis (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Latham, 2007).

   - **Posting Positive Classroom Rules.** The classroom has a set of 3-6 rules or behavioral expectations posted. When possible, those rules are stated in positive terms as ‘goal’ behaviors (e.g. ‘Students participate in learning activities without distracting others from learning’). The rules are frequently reviewed (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Friesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).

   - **Training Students in Basic Class Routines.** The teacher has clearly established routines to deal with common classroom activities (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Latham, 2007; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Spick, Borgmeier, & Noreit, 2002). These routines include but are not limited to:
     - Engaging students in meaningful academic activities at the start of class (e.g., using bell-ringer activities)
     - Assigning and collecting homework and classwork
     - Transitioning students efficiently between activities
     - Independent seatwork and cooperative learning groups
     - Students leaving and reentering the classroom
     - Dismissing students at the end of the period

   - **Preparation of Appropriate Classroom Consequences for Misbehavior.** The teacher has a continuum of classroom-based consequences for misbehavior (e.g., redirect the student, have a brief private conference with the student, remove classroom privileges, send the student to another classroom for a brief timeout) that are used before the teacher considers administrative removal of the student from the classroom (Spick, Borgmeier, & Noreit, 2002).

2. **Instruction That Motivates.** Academic instruction holds student attention and promotes engagement--to include:

   - **Delivering Effective Instruction.** The teacher’s lesson and instructional activities include these components (Burns, VanDeHeyden, & Bolce, 2008):
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Behavior Management ‘Buckets’: Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes:

1. teaching behavioral expectations to students;
2. providing strong instruction;
3. using proactive strategies to manage group behaviors;
4. building connections with students; and
5. responding flexibly and appropriately when individual behavior problems occur.
Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

1. **Behavioral Expectations.** Students receive explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors.
1. Teaching Behavioral Expectations

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- **Posting Positive Classroom Rules.** The classroom has a set of 3-8 rules or behavioral expectations posted. When possible, those rules are stated in positive terms as ‘goal’ behaviors (e.g. ‘Students participate in learning activities without distracting others from learning’). The rules are frequently reviewed (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).
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  - Dismissing students at the end of the period
1. Teaching Behavioral Expectations:

Additional Resources

**Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker.** This online tool allows teachers to define student behavior during classroom routines and transitions – a great way to clearly define behavioral expectations.
Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

2. Instruction That Motivates. Academic instruction holds student attention and promotes engagement.
2. Strong Instruction That Motivates

- **Delivering Effective Instruction.** The teacher’s lesson and instructional activities include these components (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008):
  - *Instructional match.* Students are placed in work that provides them with an appropriate level of challenge (not too easy and not too difficult).
  - *Explicit instruction.* The teacher delivers instruction using modeling, demonstration, supervised student practice, etc.
  - *High rate of student responding & engagement.* There are sufficient opportunities during the lesson for students to be actively engaged and ‘show what they know’.
  - *Timely performance feedback.* Students receive feedback about their performance on independent seatwork, as well as whole-group and small-group activities.
2. Strong Instruction That Motivates

• *Maintaining Brisk Pace of Instruction.* The teacher presents an organized lesson, with instruction moving briskly.

There are no significant periods of ‘dead time’ (e.g., during roll-taking or transitioning between activities) when student misbehavior can start (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Ball, 2008).
2. Strong Instruction That Motivates

- **Giving Clear Directions.** When delivering directions to the class, the teacher uses strategies that increase the likelihood that all students hear and clearly understand them (Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001).

For large groups, such strategies might include using a general alerting cue (e.g., ‘Eyes and ears on me’) and ensuring general group focus before giving directions. Multi-step directions are posted for later student review. For individual students, the teacher may make eye contact with the student before giving directions and ask the student to repeat those directions before starting the assignment.
2. Strong Instruction That Motivates

- **Offering Student Choice.** The teacher provides the class or individual students with appropriate choice-opportunities when completing in-class academic tasks (Jolivette, Wehby, Canale, & Massey, 2001)

Offering choice options to students can increase academic motivation and focus while reducing problem behaviors. Examples include allowing students to choose (1) an assignment from among two or more alternative, equivalent offerings; (2) what books or other materials are to be used to complete an assignment; (3) who to work with on a collaborative task.
2. Strong Instruction That Motivates:

Additional Resources

Direct Instruction Checklist. Teachers can use this checklist to evaluate lesson plans to ensure that they provide appropriate direct-instruction support for struggling learners.
Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

3. **Group Behavior Management.** The teacher uses active, positive techniques to manage the classroom.
3. Group Behavior Management

- **Employing Effective Verbal Commands.** The teacher delivers clear directives to students that (1) are delivered calmly, (2) are brief, (3) are stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) use clear, simple language, and (5) are delivered one directive at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Matheson & Shriver, 2005).

These directives are positive or neutral in tone, avoiding sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.
3. Group Behavior Management

- **Providing Active Supervision.** The teacher frequently moves through the classroom—strategically recognizing positive behaviors while redirecting students who are off-task (De Pry & Sugai, 2002).

  As needed, the instructor gives behavioral reminders or prompts, teaches or reteaches expected behaviors, and praises examples of appropriate student behavior.
3. Group Behavior Management

- **Using Group Prompts to Hold Attention.** The teacher gives brief reminders of expected behaviors at the 'point of performance'—the time when students will most benefit from them (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002).

  To prevent student call-outs, for example, a teacher may use a structured prompt such as: "When I ask this question, I will give the class 10 seconds to think of your best answer. Then I will call on one student."
3. Group Behavior Management: Additional Resources

Assorted Classroom Management ‘Packages’.

Teachers can assert classroom control using one or more of these classwide packages: Zone Defense System, Good Behavior Game, Color Wheel, and Defense Management.

Color Wheel: Additional Considerations. Although the Color Wheel system is fairly easy to implement, teachers should be mindful of these recommendations (Fudge, et al., 2008).

1. Keep the Color Wheel red periods short. The red condition of the Color Wheel covers transitions between activities which should always be brief in duration. Teachers should therefore keep students on the red phase only long enough to complete the transition to a new green or yellow activity. Once students are trained to make efficient transitions, 3-5 minutes should be sufficient to move into and out of a red phase.

2. Do not use the red Color Wheel setting as punishment. The behavioral expectations for the red (transitions) Color Wheel condition are the most restrictive, as students need to be seated, quiet, and focused on the teacher to learn the details of the upcoming activity. However, teachers should never set the classroom color condition to red simply to punish students for misbehavior. Linking the red condition with punishment raises the possibility that students will fail to comply with the red behavioral rules because they are seen as punitive rather than necessary to support an effective learning environment.

References

Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

4. **Student Relationships.** The teacher uses strategies to promote in students a sense of classroom connection and belonging.
4. Student Relationships

- **Greeting Students at the Classroom Door.** A personalized greeting at the start of a class period can boost class levels of academic engagement (Allday & Pakurar, 2007).

  The teacher spends a few seconds greeting each student by name at the classroom door at the beginning of class.
4. Student Relationships

- **Shaping Behavior Through Praise.** To increase desired behavior, the teacher praises the student in specific terms whenever the student engages in that behavior (Kern & Clemens, 2007).

The teacher uses praise statements at a rate sufficient to motivate and guide the student toward the behavioral goal:

- The teacher selects the specific desired behavior(s) to encourage through praise;
- The teacher sets a goal for how frequently to deliver praise (e.g., to praise a student at least 3 times per class period for working on in-class assignments).
- The teacher makes sure that any praise statements given are behavior-specific.
4. Student Relationships

- **Maintaining a High Rate of Positive Interactions** Teachers promote a positive relationship with any student by maintaining a ratio of at least three positive teacher-student interactions (e.g., greeting, positive conversation, high-five) for every negative (disciplinary) interaction (e.g., reprimand) (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).
4. Student Relationships: Additional Resources

Praise (Teacher Handout) and Beep Tapes. Teachers can monitor and direct their use of classroom praise by (1) reviewing ‘best practices’ for praising students, and (2) employing ‘beep tapes’ to cue use of praise.

Praise (Teacher Handout)

Praise involves verbal or non-verbal communication of teacher approval of student behavior. Praise is easy to implement and fits into the natural pattern of classroom communication (Hawkins & Helfin, 2011).

Procedure: Effective teacher praise consists of two elements: (1) a description of noteworthy student academic performance or general behavior, and (2) a signal of teacher approval (Brophy, 1981; Brunell, 2001). The power of praise in changing student behavior is that it both indicates teacher approval and informs the student about how the praised academic performance or behavior conforms to teacher expectations (Brunell, 2001). As with any potential classroom reinforcer, praise has the ability to improve student academic or behavioral performance—but only if the student finds it reinforcing (Skinner, 1953). There are several suggestions for shaping praise to increase its effectiveness:

- Describe Noteworthy Student Behavior. Praise statements that lack a specific account of student behavior are ineffective as they fail to give students performance feedback to guide their learning.
  - For example, praise statements such as “Good Job!” are inadequate in itself because it is a behavioral description (Hawkins & Helfin, 2011). However, such a statement becomes acceptable when expanded to include a behavioral element: “You located eight strong source documents for your essay: Good Job!”

- Praise Effort and Accomplishment, Not Ability. There is some evidence that praise statements about general ability can actually reduce student appetite for risk-taking (Brunell, 2001). Therefore, teachers should generally steer clear of praise that includes assumptions about global student ability (e.g., “You are a really good math student”; “I can tell from this essay that writing is no problem for you”). Praise should instead focus on specific examples of student effort or accomplishment (e.g., “It’s obvious from your grade that you worked hard to prepare for this math test. Great work!”). When praise singles out exertion and work products, it can help students to see a direct link between the effort that they invest in a task and improved academic or behavioral performance.

- Match the Method of Praise Delivery to Student Preferences. Teachers can deliver praise in a variety of ways and contexts. For example, an instructor may choose to praise a student in front of a class or work group or may instead deliver that praise in a private conversation or as written feedback on the student’s assignment. When possible, the teacher should determine and abide by a student’s preferences for receiving individual praise. It is worth noting that while most students in elementary grades may easily accept public praise, evidence suggests that middle and high-school students actually prefer private praise (Brunell, 2001). So, when in doubt with older students, deliver praise in private rather than in public.

Tips for Use: Praise is a powerful motivating tool because it allows the teacher to selectively encourage different aspects of behavior or work production based on the individual student’s needs. For example, the teacher may want to boost a student’s academic performance by praising effort, accuracy, or speed on an assignment. Or the teacher may focus on increasing student responsibility by praising that student for attaining self-set academic goals.

The table below presents examples of praise statements, each linked to a different student outcome goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Praise Goal</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic effort</td>
<td>Praise can motivate students in the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Today is the day you write your story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-Minute Fixed-Interval Audio File: MP3 Format: 32 Minute Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-Minute Fixed-Interval Audio File: MP3 Format: 30 Minute Length</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5. **Individual Behavior Management.** The teacher uses flexible, positive techniques to manage behaviors of particular students.
1. Teaching Behavioral Expectations

• Preparing a Range of Appropriate Classroom Consequences for Misbehavior. The teacher has a continuum of classroom-based consequences for misbehavior (e.g., redirect the student; have a brief private conference with the student; remove classroom privileges; send the student to another classroom for a brief timeout) that are used before the teacher considers administrative removal of the student from the classroom (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).
5. Individual Behavior Management

- **Giving Pre-Corrections as Behavioral Reminders.** The teacher heads off a problem behavior by proactively prompting or reminding student to show appropriate behaviors (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Just before a time, situation or setting when problem behaviors are most likely to occur, the teacher 'pre-corrects' by reminding the student of appropriate behavioral expectations.
5. Individual Behavior Management

- **Emphasizing the Positive in Teacher Requests.** Whenever possible, the teacher states requests to individual students in positive terms (e.g., "I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat") rather than with a negative spin (e.g., "I won’t help you with your assignment until you return to your seat."). 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 (Braithwaite, 2001).
5. Individual Behavior Management

- **Asking Open-Ended Questions.** The teacher asks neutral, open-ended questions to collect more information before responding to a student who is upset or appears confrontational (Lanceley, 1999). The teacher can pose ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, and ‘how’ questions to more fully understand the problem situation and identify possible solutions (e.g., "What do you think made you angry when you were talking with Billy?"). Teachers should avoid asking ‘why’ questions because they can imply that the teacher is blaming the student.
5. Individual Behavior Management

• **Keeping Responses Calm and Brief.** The teacher responds to provocative or confrontational students in a 'neutral', business-like, calm voice and keeps responses brief (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002; Walker & Walker, 1991). The teacher avoids getting 'hooked' into a discussion or argument with that student. Instead, the teacher repeats the request calmly and—if necessary—imposes a pre-determined consequence for noncompliance.
5. Individual Behavior Management

• Selecting Behavior Management Strategies Matched to Student Need. The teacher is able flexibly to select different behavior management strategies for use with different students, demonstrating their understanding that one type of intervention strategy cannot be expected to work with all students. (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).
5. Individual Behavior Management:

Behavior Report Cards. Teachers can use BRCs to help students to internalize classroom behavioral expectations, set individual behavior goals, and self-monitor behavior.
Activity: Classroom Management: Intervention Pathways

In your groups:

- Brainstorm ideas in your consultant role for sharing and using this classroom management checklist with educators in your school or district.