Selected Interventions for Classroom Academic & Behavior Problems

Presenter: Jim Wright, School Psychologist
Syracuse (NY) City Schools
Accommodating All Students: ‘Classic’ Ideas That Teachers Can Use to Diversify Classroom Instruction

Teachers are required to accommodate a wide range of student abilities in their classrooms. Below are some ‘classic’ ideas that teachers found help them to meet the unique learning needs of particular students within a busy general-education classroom.

To communicate clearly with students:
- Post a daily classroom schedule. Preview the schedule with students and highlight academic and behavioral expectations for each activity. Leave the schedule up through the entire day.
- Speak in a clear voice that all students can hear easily ('strong teacher instructional signal'). Be sure that all students can see the board or projection screen without difficulty.
- Make eye contact with the student before giving directions. Have the student repeat directions back to you before beginning assignment.
- Use simple, clear language when communicating with the child.
- Keep instructions brief. Break multi-step directions into smaller subsets—and have the student complete one subset before advancing to another.
- Write assignments or complex directions on the board in addition to saying them.

To ensure student understanding of newly introduced academic material:
- Structure lessons so that they contain no more than one-quarter new material. (Students are most successful when they can ‘anchor’ new concepts to known information.)
- Match student's level of instruction to ability level to guarantee him or her high rate of success (80% or greater).
- Use a ‘think-aloud’ approach: Talk through the steps of a problem-solving strategy as you teach it so that students can understand and internalize those steps. Then have them use the same ‘think-aloud’ approach as they work through the strategy, so that you can observe them and offer feedback.
- Give the student your master notes as a guide for improving or expanding his or her own notes. Or at the end of each class period, have the student compare his or her notes for thoroughness and accuracy against those of a classmate who takes thorough notes.

To promote student attention and motivation in group instruction:
- Seat the student at the front of the room, so that you face him or her as you teach (the teaching ‘action zone’).
- Use alerting cues to get the class’s attention before giving a directive or assignment.
- Integrate learning into game-like tasks that allow students to win praise, points, privileges, or rewards; promote friendly competition between student teams; or use puzzles, riddles, or other novel vehicles to kindle student interest.
- Present instructional material in short sessions at a brisk pace.
- Require that students engage in some type of active responding to teacher instruction (e.g., students respond to teacher question in unison; students write down their response and then the teacher calls randomly on one student to share his or her answer; students break into small groups and use cooperative-learning strategies to solve a problem).
To increase the student's persistence with independent academic tasks:
- Decrease assignment length (e.g., reduce number of items, shorten the required length of an essay)
- Break assignment into smaller, more manageable ‘chunks’. Acknowledge, praise, or reward student for completion of each chunk.
- Explicitly recognize, praise, and reward the effort that a student puts into an assignment-no matter how imperfect the outcome. Students can become more motivated as they learn that effort (a factor is entirely within their control) can actually pay off!
- Have student monitor and chart own work completion as a motivation-builder.
- Provide the student with a copy of reading material (e.g., expository article) with main ideas already highlighted.
- Post a range of modest classroom ‘work accommodations’ that any student in the room can take advantage of (e.g., moving to a different part of the classroom to work; choosing which of several in-class assignments to do first; using a tape recorder to dictate the first draft of an essay, etc.). Encourage students to choose those accommodations that help them to work most productively.

To ensure that students who need help with independent classwork get it promptly:
- Create easy-to-follow ‘strategy’ sheet that lays out academic problem-solving steps in a clear manner for student to refer to as needed. Give copies of this model to each student, and mount poster-size versions on classroom walls.
- Teach students acceptable, unobtrusive ways to get academic assistance from peers.
- Put together ‘help-signal’ program: when a student gets ‘stuck’ on seatwork, he or she displays help-signal (e.g., brightly colored index card) on desk, switches to other work until teacher is freed up to approach and provide assistance.
- Train classmates (or even older students from another classroom) to serve as floating ‘peer-tutors’ during seatwork, circulating around classroom to help students in difficulty.

To promote student retention of information that you have taught:
- Review previously taught material frequently (‘distributed review & drill’). Come up with high-interest learning activities that allow the student to practice skills without drudgery.
- Train the student to ‘help out’ as a tutor in younger classrooms. The tutor can help children on academic material that the tutor has already mastered but should continue to practice (e.g., multiplication skills)

To get the student to complete and bring in homework or to finish long-range assignments:
- Help the student to prioritize assignments by importance and deadline.
- Establish a homework contract with the student's parent (in coordination with the school, the parent records the student’s completion of homework and provides appropriate daily and/or weekly rewards).
- Have the student write homework assignments into a daily planner. Check the planner at the end of each day to ensure that the student has written down all assignments accurately. Check also that the student has all necessary textbooks, materials, etc.
- Discuss with the parent the student’s need for an organized study area at home, as well as the benefit of a fixed nightly schedule for completing homework.
- Conference with the student to break long-range assignments into shorter subtasks. Help the student to construct a timeline/schedule for completing these subtasks.
Listening Passage Preview

**Description:** The student follows along silently as an accomplished reader reads a passage aloud. Then the student reads the passage aloud, receiving corrective feedback as needed.

**Materials:**
- Reading book

**Preparation:**
- The teacher, parent, adult tutor, or peer tutor working with the student should be trained in advance to use the listening passage preview approach.

**Intervention Script:**
1. Sit with the student in a quiet location without too many distractions. Position the book selected for the reading session so that both you and the student can easily follow the text. (Or get two copies of the book so that you each have your own copy.)

2. Say to the student, “Now we are going to read together. Each time, I will read first, while you follow along silently in the book. Then you read the same part out loud.”

3. Read aloud from the book for about 2 minutes while the student reads silently. If you are working with a younger or less-skilled reader, you may want to track your progress across the page with your index finger to help the student to keep up with you.

4. Stop reading and say to the student, “Now it is your turn to read. If you come to a word that you do not know, I will help you with it.” Have the student read aloud. If the student commits a reading error or hesitates for longer than 3-5 seconds, tell the student the correct word and have the student continue reading.

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you have finished the selected passage or story.

**Tips:**

**Ask Occasional Comprehension Questions.** You can promote reading comprehension by pausing periodically to ask the student comprehension questions about the story (e.g., who, what, when, where, how) and to encourage the student to react to what you both have read (e.g., “Who is your favorite character so far? Why?”).

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In certain situations, you may wish to practice a particular text selection repeatedly with the student, using the listening passage preview approach. For example, if the student is placed in a reading book that is quite difficult for him or her to read independently, you might rehearse the
next assigned story with the student several times so that he or she can read the story more fluently during reading group.

References:

“Click or Clunk?” A Student Comprehension Self-Check

Description: Students periodically check their understanding of sentences, paragraphs, and pages of text as they read. When students encounter problems with vocabulary or comprehension, they use a checklist to apply simple strategies to solve those reading difficulties.

Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in “Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach”).

Materials:
• Overhead transparencies of practice reading passages and “My Reading Check Sheet”, transparency markers
• Student copies of practice reading passages (optional) or reading/text books, “My Reading Check Sheet”

Preparation:
• Prepare overheads of sample passages.

Intervention Script:
1. Tell students that they will be learning ways to read more carefully. Hand out student copies of “My Reading Check Sheet”.

   Review all of the reading strategies on the student handout.

   Instruct students that, during any reading assignment, when they come to:

   • the end of each sentence, they should ask the question, “Did I understand this sentence?” If students understand the sentence, they say “Click!” and continue reading. If they do not understand, they say “Clunk!” and refer to the strategy sheet “My Reading Check Sheet” to correct the problem.

   • the end of each paragraph, they should ask the question, “What did the paragraph say?” If they do not know the main idea(s) of the paragraph, students refer to the strategy sheet “My Reading Check Sheet” to correct the problem.

   • the end of each page, they should ask the question, “What do I remember?” If they do not remember sufficient information, students refer to the strategy sheet
“My Reading Check Sheet” to correct the problem.

Read through a sample passage with the class. At the end of each sentence, paragraph, and page, “think aloud” as you model use of the comprehension checks. (As you read each sentence, be sure to call out “Click!” when you and the class understand a sentence and “Clunk!” when you do not.)

2. When students have learned to use the “Click or Clunk?” strategy, have them use it in independent reading assignments.

Tips:

Create Silent ‘Click-Clunk’ Signals. Although it may seem rather silly to have students call out “Click” and “Clunk” as an aid to monitor their own reading, the technique is actually quite valuable. When students must make regular summary judgments about how well they comprehend at the sentence level, they are more likely to recognize—and to resolve—comprehension errors as these mistakes arise.

You might find, however, that students start to distract each other as they call out these comprehension signals. Once you see that students consistently use the technique, you can train them to softly whisper the signal. Or confer with your students to come up with an unobtrusive non-verbal signal (e.g., lightly tapping the desk once for “Click” and twice for “Clunk”) that is obvious enough to allow you to monitor readers’ use of the technique without distracting other students.

References:


**My Reading Check Sheet** *

Name: __________________  Class: ______________

**Sentence Check...** “Did I understand this sentence?”

If you had trouble understanding a word in the sentence, try...

- Reading the sentence over.
- Reading the next sentence.
- Looking up the word in the glossary (if the book or article has one).
- Asking someone.

If you had trouble understanding the meaning of the sentence, try...

- Reading the sentence over.
- Reading the whole paragraph again.
- Reading on.
- Asking someone.

**Paragraph Check...** “What did the paragraph say?”

If you had trouble understanding what the paragraph said, try...

- Reading the paragraph over.

**Page Check...** “What do I remember?”

If you had trouble remembering what was said on this page, try...

- Re-reading each paragraph on the page, and asking yourself, “What did it say?”

*Adapted from Anderson (1980), Babbs (1984)*
Cover-Copy-Compare

Students who can be trusted to work independently and need extra drill and practice with math computational problems, spelling, or vocabulary words will benefit from Cover-Copy-Compare.

Preparing Cover-Copy-Compare Worksheets:
The teacher prepares worksheets for the student to use independently:

For math worksheets, computation problems with answers appear on the left side of the sheet. The same computation problems appear on the right side of the page, unsolved. Here is a sample CCC item for math:

For spelling words, correctly spelled words are listed on the left of the page, with space on the right for the student to spell each word.

For vocabulary items, words and their definitions are listed on the left side of the page, with space on the right for the student to write out each word and a corresponding definition for that word.

Using Cover-Copy-Compare Worksheets for Student Review:
When first introducing Cover-Copy-Compare worksheets to the student, the teacher gives the student an index card. The student is directed to look at each correct item (e.g., correctly spelled word, computation problem with solution) on the left side of the page.

- (For math problems.) The student is instructed to cover the correct model on the left side of the page with an index card and to copy the problem and compute the correct answer.
in the space on the right side of the sheet. The student then uncovers the correct answer on the left and checks his or her own work.

- (For spelling problems.) The student is instructed to cover the correct model on the left side of the page with an index card and to spell the word in the space on the right of the sheet. The student then uncovers the correct answer on the left to check his or her work.

- (For vocabulary items.) The student is instructed to cover the correct model on the left side of the page with an index card and to write both the word and its definition in the space on the right side of the sheet. The student then uncovers the correct model on the left to check his or her work.

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**Troubleshooting: How to Deal With Common Problems in Using 'Cover-Copy-Compare'**

**Q:** How do I respond if the student simply copies the correct answers from the models into the answer blanks and tries to pass this off as his or her own work?

An essential requirement of Cover-Copy-Compare is that the student cover the correct model and attempt independently to solve the item using his or her own skills. If the student simply copies the correct answer from the model math problem or spelling word, the review process is short-circuited and the student will not benefit. If you suspect a student will copy rather than attempt to solve items on a CCC worksheet, arrange to have a peer tutor, adult in the classroom, or parent sit with the student to provide encouragement and monitoring.

**Q:** I have a student who is so disorganized that he will lose the index card before he can complete a CCC worksheet. Any suggestions?

Here is an idea for getting rid of that index card: You can fold the worksheet in half length-wise so that the answers appear on one side of the folded worksheet and the answer blanks appear on the other side. For each item, the student will peer at the correct model, then flip the folded sheet over to the right side to independently solve the item (with the correct model neatly folded out of sight).
Creating Reward Menus That Motivate: Tips for Teachers

Rewards are often central to effective school interventions. As possible incentives that students can earn for appropriate school performance or conduct, these reinforcers (or ‘rewards’) often serve as the motivational ‘engine’ that drives successful interventions.

Choosing rewards to use as incentives for a student intervention may seem simple and straightforward. A reinforcer, however, probably will not be successful unless it passes three important tests:

- **Acceptability Test.** Does the teacher approve of using the reinforcer with this child? Are parent(s) likely to approve the use of the reinforcer with their child?

- **Availability Test.** Is the reinforcer typically available in a school setting? If not, can it be obtained with little inconvenience and at a cost affordable to staff or parents?

- **Motivation Test.** Does the child find the reinforcer to be motivating?

Reward systems are usually most powerful when a student can select from a range of reward choices (‘reward menu’). Offering students a menu of possible rewards is effective because it both gives students a meaningful choice of reinforcers and reduces the likelihood that the child will eventually tire of any specific reward.

However, some children (e.g., those with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may lose interest in specific reward choices more quickly than do their typical peers. Teachers will want to regularly update and refresh reward menus for such children to ensure these reinforcers retain their power to positively shape those students’ behaviors.

**Creating a ‘Reward Deck.’** A Reward Deck is an idea that can help teachers to quickly select and regularly update student reward menus. This strategy involves 5 steps:

1. The teacher reviews a list of reward choices typically available in school settings. (Instructors can use the comprehensive sampling of possible school rewards that appears in the next section: *Jackpot! Ideas for Classroom Rewards.*). From this larger list, the teacher selects only those rewards that she or he approves of using, believes would be acceptable to other members of the school community (e.g., administration, parents), and finds feasible and affordable.

2. The teacher writes out acceptable reward choices on index cards-- to create a master ‘Reward Deck’

3. Whenever the teacher wants to create a reward menu for a particular student, he or she first ‘screens’ reward choices that appear in the master Reward Deck and temporarily removes any that seem inappropriate for that specific case. (For
example, the teacher may screen out the reward ‘pizza party’ because it is too expensive to offer to a student who has only minor difficulties with homework completion.)

4. The teacher then sits with the child and presents each of the reward choices remaining in the Reward Deck. For each reward option, the child indicates whether he or she (a) likes the reward a lot, (b) likes the reward a little, or (c) doesn’t care for the reward. The teacher sorts the reward options into three piles that match these rating categories.

The teacher can then assemble that child’s Reward Menu using the student’s top choices (“like a lot”). If the instructor needs additional choices to fill out the rest of the menu, he or she can pull items from the student’s “like a little” category as well.

5. (Optional but recommended) Periodically, the instructor can meet with the student and repeat the above procedure to ‘refresh’ the Reward Menu quickly and easily.
Jackpot!: Ideas for Classroom Rewards

Read through this list for reward ideas that will motivate your students.

Academic Activities

- Go to the library to select a book
- Help a classmate with an academic assignment
- Help the teacher to present a lesson (e.g., by completing sample math problem on blackboard, reading a section of text aloud, assisting cooperative learning groups on an activity)
- Invite an adult “reading buddy” of student’s choice to classroom to read with student
- Listen to books-on-tape
- Play academic computer games
- Read a book of his/her choice
- Read a story aloud to younger children
- Read aloud to the class
- Select a class learning activity from a list of choices
- Select a friend as a “study buddy” on an in-class work assignment
- Select friends to sit with to complete a cooperative learning activity
- Spend time (with appropriate supervision) on the Internet at academic sites

Helping Roles

- ‘Adopt’ a younger student and earn (through good behavior) daily visits to check in with that student as an older mentor
- Be appointed timekeeper for an activity: announce a 5-minute warning near end of activity and announce when activity is over
- Be given responsibility for assigning other students in the class to helping roles, chores, or tasks
- Complete chores or helpful activities around the classroom
- Deliver school-wide announcements
- Help the custodian
- Help the library media specialist
- Help a specials teacher (e.g., art, music, gym)
- Take a note to the main office
- Work at the school store

Praise/Recognition

- Be awarded a trophy, medal, or other honor for good behavior/caring attitude
- Be praised on school-wide announcements for good behavior or caring attitude
- Be praised privately by the teacher or other adult
- Design--or post work on--a class or hall bulletin board
- Get a silent “thumbs up” or other sign from teacher indicating praise and approval
- Have the teacher call the student’s parent/guardian to give positive feedback about the student
- Have the teacher write a positive note to the student’s parent/guardian
- Post drawings or other artwork in a public place
- Post writings in a public place
- Receive a “good job” note from the teacher

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**Prizes/Privileges/Rewards**

- Allow student to call parent(s)
- Be allowed to sit, stand, or lie down anywhere in the classroom (short of distracting other children) during story time or independent seat work
- Be dismissed from school 2 minutes early
- Be given a ‘raffle ticket’ that the student writes name on and throws into a fishbowl for prize drawings
- Be permitted to sit in a reserved section of the lunchroom
- Be sent to recess 2 minutes earlier than the rest of the class
- Draw a prize from the class ‘prize box’
- Earn behavior-points or -tokens to be redeemed for prizes or privileges
- Have first choice in selecting work materials (e.g., scissors, crayons, paper) and/or seating assignments
- Have lunch in the classroom with the teacher
- IOU redeemable for credit on one wrong item on a future in-class quiz or homework assignment
- Receive a coupon to be redeemed at a later time for a preferred activity
- Receive a sticker
- Receive candy, gum, or other edible treats
- Receive pass to “Get out of one homework assignment of your choice”
- Select a class fun activity from a list of choices
- Select the pizza toppings for a class pizza party
- Sit near the teacher
- Take the lead position in line
- Tell a joke or riddle to the class

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**Recreation**

- Be selected by the teacher to accompany another student to a fun activity
- Get extra gym time with another class
- Get extra recess time with another class
- Listen to music
- Play a game with a friend
- Play non-academic computer games
- Select fun activity from “Activity Shelf” (stocked with play materials, games)
- Spend time (with appropriate supervision) on the Internet at recreational sites
- Watch part or all of a video (preselected by the teacher and cleared with the student’s parent)
- Work on a jigsaw or other puzzle
- Write or draw on blackboard/whiteboard/easel paper
Finding the Spark: Ideas for Enhancing Student Motivation

Teachers can feel overwhelmed when faced with students who are unmotivated to learn. The task becomes less daunting, though, when teachers realize that they can boost student motivation in five important ways: by (1) making positive changes to the learning environment, (2) fostering a sense of community in the classroom, (3) enhancing the interest of classroom activities, (4) responding to individual learning challenges, and (5) building in additional outcomes/pay-offs for learning. Here are some ideas:

Learning Environment
The setting in which we work can encourage us to give our best effort or discourage us from even trying to perform.

Ideas to motivate by influencing factors in the student's environment:
- Reduce distractions in the classroom.
- Create a consistent room arrangement, with predictable materials and routines.
- Let students choose their seat location and study partners.
- Enlist students to come up with rules and guidelines for effective classroom learning.
- Create a memory-friendly classroom. Post assignments and due dates, written steps for multi-step tasks, etc.
- Use a mix of verbal and environmental cues to keep students focused and on-task.
- Hold class in different locations occasionally (“within-building field trip”). For example, think about ‘swapping’ classrooms with another teacher on a given day.
- Ask for student advice on how to make the classroom a more inviting and useful learning environment.

Classroom Community
We define ourselves in relation to others through social relationships. These connections are a central motivator for most people.

Ideas to motivate by fostering a sense of a learning community:
- Be as inviting a person as possible by actively listening to students and acknowledging their contributions.
- Greet students at the classroom door. ‘Check in’ briefly with students at the start and end of a work period.
- Ask students to complete a learning-preferences questionnaire.
- Assign ‘study buddies’ who help each other to get organized, start work projects, encourage one another, and provide peer feedback.
- Train students to be peer editors or evaluators of others’ assignments.
- Hold weekly 5-minute ‘micro-meetings’ with the group or class. Check in with the group about topics or issues important to them. Record important points brought up and get back to students if necessary.
- Keep ‘dialog journals’. Have students write daily or weekly comments in a journal to be kept in class. Respond to student comments with short comments of your own.
- Circulate through the classroom. Be interactive and visible to kids. Use words of praise and encouragement.

Classroom Activities

Motivated students are engaged in interesting activities that guarantee a high success rate and relate to real-world issues.

Ideas to motivate through selection and development of learning activities:
- Use humor.
- Keep miscellaneous work supplies on hand (e.g., paper, pencils, etc.) for students to borrow.
- Set a timer (e.g., for 60 seconds) and challenge students to finish routine tasks or transition between activities before timer runs out.
- Set up academic ‘culminating event’ fieldtrips. On these fieldtrips, have students use skills learned in class (e.g., drafting questions in social studies to be used in an interview with a member of city government).
- Invite interesting guest speakers into the classroom to speak on academic topics. Prepare index cards with review questions and answers based on material covered in class. Have guest speaker ‘quiz’ teams; award points to teams based on their mastery of material.
- Offer students meaningful choice in setting up their assignments (e.g., selection of work materials, type of activity).
- Select fun, imaginative activities for reviewing academic material. In order to get students to assemble material for a research paper, for example, you might send them to the library on a fact-finding ‘scavenger hunt.’
- Encourage active student participation.
- Use motivating ‘real-world’ examples for review, quiz, or test items.
- Keep instructions and assignments short. Have students repeat instructions back.
- Celebrate student achievement.
- Celebrate mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- Prior to assignments, have students set their own short-term work or learning goals. Periodically, have students rate their own progress toward their self-selected goals.
- Structure work period so that more difficult activities are in the middle, with easier tasks at the start and end.
- Liven potentially dull student review activities by conducting them as class-wide or small-group drills. Use a game format to maintain interest.
- Use novel, interesting materials for instruction.
- Allow students to set their own pace for completing work.
- Select activities that make a community contribution. Students may, for instance, work on writing skills by publishing a monthly newsletter for the 7th grade.

Learning Challenges

Every learner presents a unique profile of strengths and weaknesses. We unlock motivation when we acknowledge and address unique learning profiles.

Ideas to motivate by accommodating challenges to learning:
Avoid ‘stigmatizing’ as low performers those students who require remedial academic support.
Lead students through the first part of an assignment as a group before having them complete it independently.
If an assignment requires use of new or difficult terms or concepts, first pre-teach or preview this material.
Make the classroom a ‘safe’ setting in which in which students can identify and work on their own skill deficits.
Give students credit and recognition for effort on assignments as well as for mastery of content.
Be honest in telling students how challenging a topic or activity is likely to be to master. Never downplay the difficulty of an assignment!
Use a ‘think-aloud’ approach when introducing a skill or strategy.
Select academic activities that guarantee a high degree of student success.
Allow students to take a brief break when tired or frustrated.
Help students to get organized and started on an activity.
Have students keep a schedule of work assignments and due dates.
Encourage students to use memory aids such as notes and lists.
Assist students in breaking large, multi-step tasks into smaller subtasks. Have students write those subtasks down as a personal ‘to-do’ list.
Teach students to use a notebook organizer.
Give reminders of upcoming transitions between activities.
Help students to highlight key information to be remembered.
Provide frequent review of key concepts.
Periodically remind students of timeline of upcoming assignments.

Outcomes/Payoffs for Learning

Learning is a motivating activity when the learner can count on short- or long-term payoffs for mastering the material being taught.

Ideas to motivate by arranging or emphasizing payoffs to the student for successful learning:

- Reward student effort along with quality of completed work. (One way to do this is to use frequent encouragement for good effort along with praise for finished work.)
- Build in short-term rewards (e.g., increased free time, pencils, positive note home) for student effort, work completion.
- Create high-visibility location for displaying student work (e.g., bulletin board, web site). Encourage students to select their own best work to be posted.
- Have students monitor their own progress in accuracy/work completion. For example, have students create graphs charting homework assignments turned in. Tie student-monitored performance to reward programs.
The Good Behavior Game is an approach to the management of classrooms behaviors that rewards children for displaying appropriate on-task behaviors during instructional times. The class is divided into two teams and a point is given to a team for any inappropriate behavior displayed by one of its members. The team with the fewest number of points at the Game’s conclusion each day wins a group reward. If both teams keep their points below a preset level, then both teams share in the reward. The program was first tested in 1969; several research articles have confirmed that the Game is an effective means of increasing the rate of on-task behaviors while reducing disruptions in the classroom (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969; Harris & Sherman, 1973; Medland & Stachnik, 1972).

The process of introducing the Good Behavior Game into a classroom is a relatively simple procedure. There are five steps involved in putting the Game into practice.

**Steps in Implementing This Intervention**

**Step 1: Decide when to schedule the Game.** The teacher first decides during what period(s) of the school day the Game will be played. As a rule of thumb, instructors should pick those times when the entire class is expected to show appropriate academic behaviors. Blocks of time devoted to reading, math, content instruction, and independent seatwork would be most appropriate for putting the Game into effect.

**Step 2: Clearly define the negative behaviors that will be scored during the Game.** Teachers who have used the Good behavior Game typically define three types of negative behavior that will be scored whenever they appear during the Game. Those behaviors are:

- leaving one's seat,
- talking out,
• engaging in disruptive behavior.

Out-of-seat behavior is defined as any incident in which a student leaves his or her seat without first getting permission from the teacher. Related behaviors, such as "scootching" one's seat toward another desk are usually scored as out-of-seat. Instructors often build in certain exceptions to this rule. For example, in some classrooms, children can take a pass to the bathroom, approach the teacher's desk for additional help, or move from one work site to another in the room without permission as long as these movements are conducted quietly and are a part of the accepted classroom routine. Children who leave their seats intending to complete an allowed activity but find that they cannot (e.g., walking toward the teacher's desk and then noticing that another student is already there) are not scored as being out of their seat if they quickly and quietly return to their desk.

Talking-out behavior is defined as any incident of talking out loud without the permission of the instructor. Permission is gained by raising one's hand and first being recognized by the teacher before speaking. Any type of unauthorized vocalization within the hearing of the instructor is scored as talking out, including shouts, nonsense noises (e.g., growling, howling, whistling), whispers, and talking while one's hand is raised.

Disruptive behavior consists of any movement or act that is judged by the teacher to be disruptive of classroom instruction. For example, knocking on a table, looking around the room, tearing up paper, passing notes, or playing with toys at one's desk would all be scored as disruptive behaviors. A good rule of thumb would be to regard as disruptive behavior any action that does not fall under another category but is perceived by the teacher as annoying or distracting.

Step 3: Decide upon suitable daily and (perhaps) weekly rewards for teams winning the Game.

Teachers will need to choose rewards that they feel will effectively motivate students to take part in the Game. Most often, instructors use free time as a daily reward, since children often find it motivating. To cite a single example, one teacher's reward system included giving her daily 4th-grade Game winners the privilege of wearing a "victory tag," putting a star next to their names on a "Winner's Chart," lining up first for lunch, and getting 30 minutes of time at the end of the day to work on fun, educationally related topics.

When choosing rewards, instructors are advised to consider using reinforcers that fit naturally into the context and mission of a classroom. For example, allowing winners to play quietly together at the end of the school day may help to promote social skills, but dispensing material rewards (e.g., comic books) to winners would probably be less likely to contribute directly to educational and social goals. Of course, if both teams win on a given day or a given week, the members of those teams all receive the same rewards.

Step 4: Introduce the Game to the class.

Once behaviors have been selected and clearly defined by the teacher, the next step is to
introduce the Game to the class. Ideally, time should be set aside for an initial group discussion. The teacher mentions that the class will be playing a game and presents a schedule clearly setting forth the instructional times during which the game will be in effect.

The teacher next divides the classroom into two teams. For ease of recording, it is usually recommended that the instructor divide the class down the center of the room into roughly equal halves. Some teachers have used three teams successfully as well. To build a sense of team spirit, students may be encouraged to name their groups.

The children are informed that certain types of behavior (i.e., leaving one’s seat or talking without permission, and engaging in disruptive behaviors) will earn points for the team to which they belong. Students are also told that both teams can win if they earn no more than a certain number of points (e.g., 4 points maximum per day). If both teams happen to exceed 4 points, then the team with the lowest total at the end of the day is the winner. In case of a tie, both teams earn the reward. The instructor is the final judge of whether a behavior is to be scored. (As an option, students can also be told that the team with the fewest number of points at the end of the week will win an additional reward.)

It is a good idea when introducing the Game to students to clearly review examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. After all, it is important that all children know the rules before the Game begins. To more effectively illustrate those rules, children may be recruited to demonstrate acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, or the teacher may describe a number of behaviors and ask the class to decide with a show of hands whether such behaviors are to be scored or not.

**Step 5: Put the Game into effect.**

The instructor is now ready to start the Game. During those times that the game is in effect in the classroom, the teacher continues to carry out his or her usual instructional practices. The only alteration in the routine is that the instructor is also noting and publicly recording any negative points incurred by either team. Instructors might want to post scores on the blackboard or on a large piece of paper visible to everyone in the room. If working with children in a small group, the instructor can record negative behaviors on a small note pad and later transfer them to the blackboard. Teachers can also choose to publicly announce when another point has been earned as a reminder to the class about acceptable behavior. It is helpful to keep a weekly tally of points for each team, especially if teams are competing for weekly as well as daily rewards.

Care should be taken to be as consistent as possible in scoring negative behaviors. Winning teams should be praised as well as rewarded for their efforts, with that praise tied when possible to specifically observed behaviors. Instructors may want to alter the Game somewhat as necessary (e.g., changing rewards or more carefully defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviors with students). Obviously, any alteration of the Game, no matter how small, should be shared with the classroom before being put into effect.

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**Troubleshooting: How to Deal With Common Problems in Using the 'Good Behavior Game'**
Q: What should I do if a small number of students try to sabotage the game for other children by deliberately acting out and earning penalty points for their team?

If a small number of students are earning a large number of points during the Game, consider forming them into a separate team. While not the norm, occasionally a single student or small group of children may be tempted to undermine the Game by deliberately incurring a large number of penalty points for their teams. (Such children may find the resulting negative social attention of other members of their team to be its own reward!) A simple remedy for this problem is to modify the Game by making those disruptive students into a separate team. The Game will continue unchanged, except that your room will now have three teams rather than two competing for rewards.

Q: I have used the Good Behavior Game for a while and have found it to be effective. But lately it doesn't seem to have the same impact on my students. What do you recommend?

If the Good Behavior Game appears to be losing effectiveness over time, be sure that you are consistently noting and assigning team points for inappropriate behaviors and that you are avoiding verbal arguments with students. It is very important that points be assigned consistently when you witness inappropriate behavior; otherwise, the Game may not bring about the expected behavioral improvement among your students. Teachers using the Game sometimes find it helpful to have another adult familiar with the Good Behavior Game observe them and offer feedback about their consistency in assigning points and success in avoiding negative verbal exchanges with students.

References

