A Quick Review of Behavioral Terms

Defining Observable Problem Behaviors

- Definitions of behaviors need to be:
  - **Observable**: The behavior is an action that can be **seen**.
  - **Measurable**: The behavior can be counted or **timed**.
  - Defined so clearly that a person unfamiliar with the student could recognize the behavior without any doubts!

Which is described in observable and measurable terms?

- hits with his fist –OR- aggressive
- bully –OR- takes money from peers
- psychotic –OR- says she hears voices
- arrives at class 10 minutes late –OR- irresponsible
- out of seat 55% of time –OR- hyperactive

Once you have defined the problem behavior...

Then: **Where & When** does the behavior occur?

- **Antecedents** - occur immediately before and act as “triggers” for problem behavior
- **Setting Events** - indirectly “set-up” the problem behavior by **temporarily** altering the value of maintaining consequences.
Examples of Antecedents: “Triggers”

- When told to “shut up” by a peer, Ben hits the student
- When asked to read aloud in class, Tracy gets up and tells jokes
- Jessie often begins to cry, when praised during circle time

* Note: these are also described in observable and measurable terms

Examples of Setting Events: “Set ups”

- Lack of sleep or food
- Having a fight on the way to school
- Bad grade on a test / reprimands
- Forgetting to take medication
- Substitute teacher / changes in routine

Non-examples:
- Diagnosis of autism or ADHD
- “Bad” home life

* Note: Setting Events can be difficult to identify, are sometimes unknown.

Review #2 (page 7)

After having an argument with his sibling at home before school, when peers approach Victor in the hallway and say, “Hello”, he yells “Leave me alone!” and “Go away!” Peers call him a weirdo and walk away.

What is the triggering antecedent?
- Peers approach and say “hello”

What is the setting event?
- Argument with sibling before school

Once you have defined the behavior (the **What**) & know **Where & When** the behavior occurs…

Then: **WHY** does the behavior continue to occur (… what happens right afterwards)? What is the **REINFORCER**?

Reinforcement

- If a behavior is continuing to occur it is being reinforced…

- A **REINFORCER**: is an item, activity or event that follows a behavior and results in an **INCREASE** in that behavior.

Functions that Behavior Serves (page 8)
Common Functions of Problem Behavior in School Settings

Obtain/Access:
- Peer attention
- Adult attention
- Desired activity
- Desired object/items

Avoid/Escape:
- Difficult Task
- Boring Task
- Easy Task
- Physical demands
- Non-preferred activity
- Peer or Adult attention

Understanding Challenging Behavior as a Response Class

- **Response Class**: A group of behaviors that serve the same function.

During independent work, Marcus often talks-out, crumples up his papers, and puts his head down on his desk, resulting in escape from difficult academic tasks.

- In this example, talking-out, crumpling papers, and “putting head down on desk” are all part of the same **response class**.

From FBA to BSP

- The most important purpose of conducting FBA is to inform the development of comprehensive Behavior Support Plans that directly address the **FUNCTION** of student behavior.

  - **Start with** FBA results, specifically the **Summary Statement**.

Essential Components of FBA Summary Statements

- The summary statement should include an observable description of:
  - **Targeted Routine**
  - Any identified **Setting events** / “Set-ups”
  - **Antecedents** / “triggers” for problem behavior
  - Operationally defined **Problem Behavior**
  - **Consequences** that follow the problem behavior
  - **Primary Function** of problem Behavior
    - Multiple Functions = Multiple Summary Statements

Example

**Summary Statement for Ben’s Behavior**

In Social Studies, when asked to read independently, Ben (a strong reader) often gets out of his seat, walks around the room, and jokes with peers. Ben’s peers laugh and talk to him as he walks by. This behavior is most likely to happen on days when Ben’s parents bring him to school (i.e., he doesn’t ride the bus with friends).

Routine: Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting event</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben brought to school by parents</td>
<td>Asked to read independently</td>
<td>Out of seat, walks around room, jokes with peers</td>
<td>Peers laugh and talk to Ben</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Function**: Access peer attention

Activity 1

**Summary Statement for Jason’s Behavior**

When Jason is asked to outline a book chapter in Language Arts, he often argues, refuses to work and uses profanity which results in being sent to the office for ‘disrespect’. This behavior is more likely if Jason has an altercation with a peer on the bus on the way to school.

Routine: Language Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting event</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer altercation on bus on the way to school</td>
<td>Asked to outline chapter</td>
<td>Arguing with teacher, refusing to work, profanity</td>
<td>Teacher sends her to the office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Function**: **ESCAPE TASK**
Activity 2
What is wrong with / missing from this summary statement?
Sarah often leaves her seat without permission, walks around the room and talks with peers. Sarah’s peers laugh and talk with her. This behavior is more likely if she has forgotten to take her medication before school. The function of Sarah’s behavior is to gain access to teacher attention and to escape tasks.

Developing a Competing Behavior Pathway

Summary Statement:
We already have this!!!

Targeted Routine
- Setting Event
- Antecedent
- Problem Behavior
- Maintaining Consequence
- Alternative Behavior

Desired vs. Alternative Behaviors

- Desired Behavior
  - Long term goal = Follow classroom routines without problem behavior and with minimal supports
    - Often requires teaching complex skills that the student is lacking (e.g., academic skills, social/communication skills, organizational skills)
- Alternative Behavior
  - An immediate attempt to reduce problem behavior
    - Serves the same FUNCTION as the problem behavior
    - Allows team to implement support plan aimed at teaching new skills and increasing desired behaviors
  
  Should be a behavior that the student already engages in or can be quickly learned with minimal instruction

Why the Alternative Behavior?
Why not go straight to the Desired Behavior?

Desired Behavior
Natural Consequence

Targeted Routine
- Setting Event
- Antecedent
- Problem Behavior
- Maintaining Consequence
- Alternative Behavior

But… start with the Alternative Behavior.

Nadia
Routine: Language Arts

- None identified
- Asked to complete independent writing tasks
- Crying, pushing papers off desk
- Raised hand & asked for break

Why not go straight to the Desired Behavior?

1. This is what we’re asking the student to do.
2. This is what the student wants now.
3. Look how different this is from what’s happening now.
4. The student is going to need to gain writing skills before being able to do this like peers.
5. So… in the meantime we use the alternate behavior.

Success, teacher acknowledgment

Complete writing task
Send to hall to ‘calm down’

Function: Escape task

1. This is what the student wants now.
Three Essential Characteristics of Alternative Behavior

• Alternative Behavior:
  – Serves the same function as the problem behavior (reliably results in the same type of consequences as the problem behavior)
  – Is easier to do than the problem behavior
    • Requires less (or at least no more) physical effort than the problem behavior
  – Is socially acceptable

Identifying Appropriate Alternative Behavior

• When Pam is asked to work on long-division problems in math class, she argues, refuses to work, and uses profanity in order to avoid/escape the difficult task.

Which is the best alternative behavior?

• Move to sit by another student
• Request adult attention
• Request an easier task/worksheet
• Ask if she can play on the computer instead
• Ask for a reward for completing the task

Identifying Appropriate Alternative Behavior

• During independent reading time in language arts, Audrey makes noises, talks out, and walks around the room. The FBA has shown that this behavior is maintained by adult attention.

Which is the best alternative behavior? Why/Why Not?

• Ask to sit at the teachers desk during reading
• Raise hand and ask for a break
• Request help/adult attention
• Ask for a reward for completing the task
• Request an easier task

Critical Components of Behavior Support Plans

• #1: Competing Behavior Pathway
• #2: Function-Based Behavior Support Strategies
• #3: Implementation Plan
• #4: Evaluation Plan

Behavior Support Strategies
Identifying Behavior Support Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Event Strategies</th>
<th>Antecedent Strategies</th>
<th>Teaching Strategies</th>
<th>Consequence Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate or Neutralize Setting Events</td>
<td>Prevent/Modify &quot;Triggers&quot;/Prompts for Alt/Des</td>
<td>Teach Alternate/Desired Behavior</td>
<td>Reinforce Alt/Desired Behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why Do We Consider Function?

- Function-Based Strategies
  - directly address the function of the problem behavior and are expected to improve behavior
- Neutral Strategies
  - unrelated to function of the problem behavior; might be a good behavior management strategy, but may or may not be effective in improving behavior
- Contraindicated Strategies
  - provides access to maintaining consequence following problem behavior and is likely to make the problem worse

Identifying Function-Based Intervention Strategies

Function-Based strategies…

- **DIRECTLY** address the function of the problem behavior by:
  
  #1. Providing a way to access the maintaining reinforcer by engaging in appropriate behavior or...
  
  #2. Preventing access to the reinforcer following problem behavior

Function Based Interventions: Competing Behavior Pathway

- **Desired Behavior**
- **Natural Consequence**
- **Maintaining Consequence**

Review

- **Setting Events** indirectly “set-up” the problem behavior by **temporarily** altering the **value** of maintaining consequences

- **Antecedents** occur immediately before and act as “**triggers**” for problem behavior

**Question:**

What if the FBA information does not specify a setting event??
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### Setting Event Strategies

These strategies are designed to:

- **Eliminate** identified setting events

  Or

  - Build in a neutralizing routine to defuse the effects of a setting event

### Example: **Eliminating** Setting Events

- When asked to write in his daily journal in first period, Sam is most likely to engage in escape maintained problem behavior on days that he forgets to take his medication before school.

- Sam’s team members (including his parents) have decided that Sam will go to the school nurse’s office each morning to take his medication.

*By ensuring that Sam takes his medication, the team will be eliminating the setting event.*

### Neutralizing Routines

- Diminish the effects of setting events that have already occurred
- Act as “separating events” that occur between the setting event and the triggering antecedent

### Example: **Neutralizing Routines**

- When asked to transition to a new activity, Charlie sometimes has tantrums (crying, screaming, flopping) that result in adult attention. This is most likely to occur when Charlie has not interacted with an adult for several minutes.

- Charlie’s team members have decided that she will:
  a) Be given a class “job” which will require her to interact with staff frequently
  b) Receive frequent, intermittent teacher attention for appropriate and neutral behavior

- The purpose of this routine is to help neutralize the effects of having the conflict at home.

### Antecedent Strategies

These strategies are designed to **prevent** problem behavior by:

1. **Eliminating/Modifying** antecedents that “trigger” the behavior

   **AND**

2. **Prompting** Alternative/Desired behavior (pre-correction)
Selecting Antecedent Strategies: Modifying Triggers

When identifying preventive antecedent strategies:
- Eliminate or alter the antecedent so student will no longer need to use problem behavior

The BEST antecedent MODIFICATIONS directly address:
#1. The identified ANTECEDENT
#2. The FUNCTION of the problem behavior

Antecedent Interventions Directly address the identified antecedent

- When asked to read aloud in class. Kyle makes inappropriate comments and pushes his book off his desk
  - Antecedent = Asked to read aloud in class
    - Potential options that more directly address the antecedent
      - Give student passage in advance to practice pre-reading
      - Do not ask student to read aloud in class
      - Let student read 1 sentence directions that he is familiar with, instead of entire paragraphs from the text
  - Now, why is Function important?

Antecedent interventions must address the function the problem behavior serves

• When asked to read aloud in class, Kyle makes inappropriate comments and pushes his book off his desk to avoid public speaking (not related to reading difficulty; related to extreme social anxiety):
  - Does the Intervention address the Function of Behavior
    - Give student passage in advance to practice pre-reading
    - Do not ask student to read aloud in class (or respond publicly)
    - Let student read 1 sentence directions that he is familiar with, instead of entire paragraphs from the text

Identifying Antecedent Strategies

• When asked to work on long-division problems in math class, she argues, refuses to work, and uses profanity to avoid/escape the difficult task.
  - Which is the best antecedent modifying strategy to prevent problem behavior?
    - Provide student with an easier reading assignment
    - Remind student of school rules related to respectful behavior
    - Allow student to wear headphones during independent reading
    - Ask student to work quietly 1:1 with a ‘reading buddy’
    - Have student check in with the teacher at the beginning of class

Identifying Antecedent Strategies

• When asked to read independently at his seat. Ronnie makes inappropriate noises and makes faces at peers. Based on the FBA data collected, the team agreed that the function of Ronnie’s behavior is to obtain peer attention.
  - Which is the best antecedent modifying strategy?
    - Provide student with an easier reading assignment
    - Remind student of school rules related to respectful behavior
    - Allow student to wear headphones during independent reading
    - Ask student to work quietly 1:1 with a ‘reading buddy’
    - Have student check in with the teacher at the beginning of class

Antecedent Strategies: Prompting the Alternative/Desired Behavior

After the alternative behavior has been taught, Prompts and Pre-corrections are used to support and help remind the student to use alternative/desired behavior.

Example:
- Pam’s problem behavior is maintained by escape from difficult math assignments.
  - When handing out assignments, Pam’s teacher will remind her that she can raise her hand and request an easier task (alternative behavior).
  - Pam’s math assignments will include specific visual prompts to help her successfully complete the tasks (desired behavior).
Teaching Strategies

Alternative & Desired Behaviors

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Always Start with the Alternative Behavior

Targeted Routine

Setting Event → Antecedent → Problem Behavior → Maintaining Consequence → Alternative Behavior

You have already selected a function-based alternative behavior!!!

Teaching Strategies: Alternative Behavior

Never assume that the student already “knows” how and when to use the alternative behavior

- Develop an observable definition of the behavior
  - Identify and teach examples & non-examples of HOW and WHEN to use the alternative behavior

- Provide MULTIPLE opportunities to Review & Practice throughout the day

Example: Teaching Alternative Behavior

Ronnie makes inappropriate noises and makes faces at peers which results in access to peer attention. The team has decided to teach Ronnie to ask to work with a peer tutor.

Ronnie will need:

a) To be explicitly taught what “asking to work with a peer” does and does not look like, and when to use this skill

b) Pre-arranged frequent opportunities to review and practice in natural contexts
Teaching Strategies: Desired Behavior

• Common Skill Deficits That Can Lead to Problem Behavior:
  – Academic deficits
    • Avoiding difficult tasks
  – Social Skills deficits
    • Attention seeking
    • Avoiding peer attention
  – Organizational skills deficits
    • Escape from academic task demands
    • Avoidance of adult attention

To teach desired skills we may need to consider:
- Additional assessment to identify specific skill deficits
- More focused instruction in class
- Appropriate instructional grouping
- Additional support and practice at home
- Special Education support for academic skill deficits

Example: Teaching Desired Behavior

• When Pam is asked to work on long-division problems in math class, she argues, refuses to work, and uses profanity in order to avoid/escape the difficult task.

• In addition teaching her to appropriately ask her teacher for an easier task, Pam’s team has decided to:
  – Provide additional small-group instruction in multi-digit multiplication & division to help Pam learn to successfully complete math problems independently

Consequence Strategies

These strategies help make problem behavior ineffective by:
1. Reinforcing Alternative & Desired behaviors
   AND...
2. Minimizing reinforcement for problem behavior

Consequences: Reinforcing the Alternative Behavior

• When the student engages in the alternative behavior, provide the student with an outcome that matches the FUNCTION of the problem behavior.

Example:
If student raises hand and requests a break from a difficult task → quickly respond, by allowing the student to take a break.
### Consequences: Reinforcing the Alternative Behavior

- It is extremely important that the alternative behavior is reinforced:
  - Immediately
  - Consistently and...
  - Regularly (MULTIPLE opportunities to practice)

- This is necessary for the alternative behavior to successfully compete with the problem behavior.

### What are REASONABLE Expectations?

- If the student is currently out of seat and off task for the most of the class period and is not turning in any completed assignments.
  - Probably NOT reasonable to expect:
    - To earn reinforcer, student will be on task for entire class period, and complete all assignments for one week.
  - More reasonable INITIAL goal:
    - Student will: a) be in seat and on task for at least 20 minutes of the class period, and b) turn in assignments that are at least 30% completed for 2 consecutive days.

### Consequences: Reinforcing Desired Behavior

- The goal is to ultimately have the student move from the alternative behavior to the desired behavior.

- Start with reinforcing REASONABLE approximations of the desired behavior
  - Considerations:
    - What is the student currently doing?
    - How does this compare to what we want?
    - Will rewards be delivered often enough to strengthen and maintain behavior?
    - Do we have a powerful reinforcer? Consider FUNCTION!

### When possible use consequences for desired behavior that match the FUNCTION of the problem behavior.

- If the function of behavior is to Gain Peer Attention, for being in her seat and working quietly for 30 minutes the reinforcer might be:
  - 15 minutes to work with a peer buddy

- If the function of behavior is to Avoid Difficult Tasks, for staying on task and completing over 50% of an assignment the reinforcer could be:
  - a “Free Homework Pass”

### Reinforcing Alternative/Desired Behavior

- When Pam is asked to work on long-division problems in math class, she argues, refuses to work, and uses profanity in order to avoid/escape the difficult task. (Alt Behv: ask for easier task.)

- Which are the best reinforcement strategies (2)?
  - Student earns teacher praise for staying on task.
  - Student is given an easier task when asks appropriately.
  - Student can earn one “free homework pass” after completing all math assignments for three weeks.
  - Student can earn “skip 5 problems” card for each 5 long-division problems completed.
  - Student earns 5 extra recess minutes for completing all worksheet items.

- Reward for alternative behavior serves same function?
- Reasonable expectations for desired behavior?

### Reinforcing Alternative/Desired Behavior

- During independent seatwork, Ronnie makes inappropriate noises and makes faces at peers. The function of Ronnie’s behavior is to obtain peer attention. (Alt Behv: ask to work with peer.)

- Which are the best reinforcement strategies (2)?
  - Student is allowed to sit by a preferred peer for 15 minutes, if he is quiet and on task during seatwork every day for a week.
  - Student will receive a “free homework pass” if he has no problem behavior during independent seatwork.

- When student is on task with no problem behavior for 15 minutes, he will be allowed to sit at back table and read with a peer.
  - Student is allowed to work with a peer when he makes noises and faces.
  - Student is allowed to work with a peer when asks appropriately.
Identifying Consequence Strategies: Reinforcing Alternative/Desired Behavior

- During independent reading time in language arts, Audrey makes noises, talks out, and walks around the room. The FBA has shown that this behavior is maintained by adult attention. (Alt Behv: Ask to work with teacher.)

Which are the best reinforcement strategies (2)?

- Student can play a game with the teacher if she works quietly (no more than 2 talk-outs) during independent reading
- Student is allowed to work with a peer when she has been quiet for 15 minutes
- Student can eat lunch with the teacher if no talk-outs for one month
- Student earns a homework pass for on-task behavior

Consequences: Responding to Problem Behavior

- Responses to Problem Behavior should focus on two things:

  #1. Redirecting to the Alternative Behavior

  #2. Extinction of the Problem Behavior

Responding to Problem Behavior: Redirection

- At the earliest signs of problem behavior, quickly redirect to the alternative behavior

Example:
- During independent work, Annie often talks out to get teacher attention. If ignored, Annie will begin yelling and throwing materials.
  - When Annie first starts talking out, her teacher will immediately remind her how to appropriately get adult attention and will praise Annie’s use of the alternative behavior.

Question:
What type of reminder might Annie’s teacher use?

Responding to Problem Behavior: Extinction

- Do NOT allow the problem behavior to “work” or “pay off” for the student.

  Escape/Avoid
  - Eliminate/minimize the amount of missed instructional time or work provided to a student for engaging in problem behavior
    - But... make sure student is capable of doing work... or provide support/instruction so student can complete the work

  Attention (Adult/Peer)
  - Eliminate/minimize the amount of attention for engaging in problem behavior
    - Limit verbal interactions/explanations
    - Create a signal to cue the student to use the alternative behavior instead
    - Teach peers to ignore problem behavior/walk away

Identifying Consequence Strategies: Responding to Problem Behavior

- When Pam is asked to work on long-division problems in math class, she argues, refuses to work, and uses profanity in order to avoid/escape the difficult task. (Alt Behv: Ask for easier task.)

Which are the best strategies for responding to problem behavior (2)?

- Student is not allowed to participate in art project with peers
- Student stays in from recess to finish work with teacher
- Student writes an essay on what it means to be ‘respectful’
- When student begins to argue, she is quickly prompted to ask for an easier task
- Student is sent to the office for arguing with teacher

Do strategies include:
1. Redirection?
2. Extinction?
Identifying Consequence Strategies: Responding to Problem Behavior

During independent seatwork, Ronnie makes inappropriate noises and makes faces at peers. The function of Ronnie’s behavior is to obtain peer attention.

Which are the best strategies for responding to problem behavior (2)?

- The teacher speaks to the student in the hall and reminds him of the classroom rules
- Peers explain to the student that he is being disrespectful
- The student is reminded that his parents will be called if he continues to behave inappropriately
- Peers are taught to ignore the inappropriate behavior
- When the student begins to engage in the problem behavior, he is immediately prompted to appropriately ask to work with a peer

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