

**The Essentials of Behavior Management:  
A Teacher's Guide**

Rev. 5.4

David B. Center  
Professor and Chair, Emeritus  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta

Copyright, 1995  
<http://davidcenter.com>

## Table of Contents

Introduction: Read Me First.....	i
I. PART ONE: The Basics:	
1. Biological Influences.....	1
a. Bio-Medical Model.....	1
b. Medication.....	1
c. Allergies.....	4
d. Temperament.....	4
e. Informal Temperament Scale.....	13
f. Activities.....	15
2. Environmental Antecedents for Behavior.....	16
a. Behavioral (Operant) Model.....	16
b. School Climate.....	17
c. Discipline Policy.....	18
d. Procedures that Facilitate a Positive Climate:	
1. Recognition of Diversity.....	19
2. Recognition of Accomplishment.....	21
3. Flexibility of Response.....	22
4. Curriculum.....	24
5. Comfort and Safety.....	30
e. Parent Involvement.....	30
f. Community Involvement.....	31
g. Conclusions.....	31
h. School Climate Checklist.....	33
i. The Classroom:	
1. Decontamination.....	34
2. Proximity Control.....	34
j. Teacher Behavior:	
1. Behavioral Expectations.....	37
2. Teacher Expectations.....	39
3. Signal Control.....	40
k. Interference.....	43
l. Curriculum Adjustment:	
1. Introduction.....	47
2. Developmental Curriculum.....	49
3. Adapting Instruction.....	52
4. Conclusion.....	54
m. Environment Checklist.....	55
n. Activities.....	56

3. Environmental Consequences for Behavior.....	58
a. Behavioral (Operant) Model.....	58
b. Informal Interventions:	
1. Attention for Compliance.....	59
2. Ignoring.....	62
c. Structured Interventions:	
1. Group Consequences.....	63
2. Individual Consequences.....	67
3. Individual Contracts.....	70
4. Self-Management.....	70
d. Physical Management:	
1. Preparation.....	73
2. Acting.....	73
e. Activities.....	76

II. PART TWO: Specialized Techniques:

4. Individualized Behavioral Interventions (Operant).....	77
a. Introduction.....	77
b. Selecting Behavioral Intervention.....	77
c. Individual Behavioral Strategies:	
1. Differential Reinforcement.....	84
2. Over-Correction.....	86
3. Response Cost.....	86
4. Time-Out from Reinforcement.....	87
5. Presentation of an Aversive Stimulus.....	87
d. Monitoring and Accountability.....	88
e. Behavioral Intervention Planning.....	92
f. Intervention Planning Forms and Examples.....	97
g. Activities.....	121
5. The Comprehensive Classroom Token Economy (Operant).....	122
a. Introduction.....	122
b. Promoting Educational Development.....	122
c. Positive Consequences for Behavior.....	124
d. Behavior Management.....	125
e. Balancing the Economy.....	130
f. Records.....	140
g. A Level System.....	143
h. Feedback.....	147
i. Instructional Use.....	150
j. Planning Form.....	152
k. Activities.....	155

6. Behavior Therapy Model (Respondent).....	156
a. Introduction.....	156
b. The Respondent Model.....	156
c. Some Cognitive Factors.....	158
d. Assessment.....	160
e. Checklists and Rating Scales.....	161
f. Observation Scales.....	161
g. Observational Recording.....	161
h. Emotional Self-Management:	
1. Introduction.....	163
2. Teaching Common Indicators.....	165
3. Self-relaxation Techniques.....	165
i. Planned Individualized Intervention:	
1. Introduction.....	167
2. Respondent Extinction.....	168
3. Counterconditioning.....	171
j. Intervention Planning Forms and Examples.....	177
k. Activities.....	193
7. Psychological Influences.....	194
a. Psychological Models.....	194
b. Crisis Counseling.....	194
c. Decision Training for Social Competence.....	198
d. Conflict Resolution.....	202
f. Group Psychology.....	208
g. Activities.....	215
Bibliography.....	216
Appendix:	
a. Profile of Negative Classroom Behavior.....	221
a. Culminating Activity.....	233
b. Index of Negative Student Behavior.....	237

## Introduction: Read Me First

The focus of this manual is on classroom applications. Only the second chapter deals with some issues that are more broad in their scope than an individual classroom. The discussion of theory and research is minimal. However, it does include a few critical references for further reading. Some of the references are a bit old, but they represent, in my judgment, the best discussions of their respective topics. The intent was to keep the focus practical and to keep the information flowing smoothly.

The acronym SOPE<sup>3</sup> summarizes the secret of successful behavior management in school settings. Briefly, this acronym's message is as follows.

**SO:** Set objective. You must determine what you need to do and set a clear objective to follow. The objective should specify the problem behavior. It should also specify the degree of change you want in this behavior.

**P:** Plan. Once you have clearly stated your objectives, you must develop a plan of action to accomplish each objective.

**E<sup>1</sup>:** Execute the plan. Execution is everything. A great plan poorly executed is worthless. Be sure you know how to do what you have planned. Finally, monitor yourself to ensure that you carry out the plan properly.

**E<sup>2</sup>:** Evaluate the effects of the plan. Collect data on the behavior of your students. First, monitor the level of the problem behavior before you put your plan into action. Second, monitor the level of the behavior after you put the plan into action. Compare the pre-intervention and intervention data with the level of behavior stated in your objective.

**E<sup>3</sup>:** Experiment. If the plan doesn't produce the results you want, change the plan. Execute the changed plan and evaluate the results. If the results are still short of what you need, change the plan again. There are no perfect plans, nor magic plans, only trial-and-error plans.

The material in this manual is progressive and cumulative. That is, it progresses from techniques for minor problems to techniques for serious problems. Further, successful intervention for serious problems usually requires powerful but time consuming specialized techniques. Use these specialized interventions only when basic techniques have failed.

Chapters One and Two cover two basic considerations for good behavior management. First, knowing and making allowances for inherent, individual differences among students reduces the need for behavior management. Second, good behavior is a natural outcome of appropriate setting events. The following describes where to find the information you need for managing problem behaviors.

**Mild Problems:** A mild problem is misbehavior that occurs in most classrooms. You would probably describe a mild problem as a nuisance. You can efficiently handle most mild classroom problems with techniques covered in Chapters One, Two and Three. Chapter One includes techniques that try to make use of biological influences on behavior. The techniques in Chapter Two focus on the use of antecedent control. That is, these techniques are based on the setting events and signals or cues to students that support self-management of behavior. The techniques in Chapter Three cover some fairly simple behavior modification procedures that can be applied either to groups or individually.

**Moderate Problems:** A moderate problem is misbehavior that exceeds that found in typical classrooms. However, it doesn't create a serious classroom disturbance or a significant impediment to learning. If only a few students exhibit this level of problem behavior, you can handle these behaviors with the addition of techniques discussed in Chapter Four to those techniques covered in the earlier chapters. Chapter Four describes some structured interventions that are time consuming but usually effective. One of these techniques or some combination of them will usually be successful when added to your basic procedures. This is particularly true when only one or two students do not respond to the basic interventions. However, you should only employ individualized behavioral interventions as a last resort. You might also find some of the methods discussed in Chapter Seven useful adjuncts to a behavior management program in this type of classroom. Particularly useful at this problem level would be conflict resolution and group psychology techniques. In some cases, Crisis Counseling and Social Decision Making might be useful for selected students.

**Serious Problems:** Serious problems are highly disruptive, dangerous or significantly interfere with learning or are at the moderate level in the majority of your students. When serious problems are the norm in the classroom, replace your basic techniques from Chapter Three with the classroom token economy discussed in Chapter Five. This highly structured intervention is time consuming. However, it is a very effective approach when properly planned and executed. Don't develop a comprehensive classroom token economy unless your circumstances require it. It will actually save you time if you are using significant amounts of instructional time for behavior management. Students who don't respond to a classroom token economy should get an individualized intervention. Chapter Four describes structured individual interventions based on operant principles and Chapter Six describes individual interventions based on respondent principles. Respondent interventions are best suited to problems with an emotional basis such as those caused by significant anxiety. The earlier caution about using individual interventions applies here as well. You should also draw on the information in Chapter Seven, particularly the information on conflict resolution and

group psychology, in developing a comprehensive classroom token economy. You should consider using Crisis Counseling as one of your back-up strategies in the token economy. You might also consider incorporating social decision making as a part of your affective curriculum.

---

---

*This book is dedicated to the memory*

*of*

*Dr. William. R. (Bill) Center*

*Time was his only enemy and it has slain him.*