

# Behavior Management of Students<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- to discuss disciplinary procedures for students who receive special education services;
- to introduce the behavioral model of behavior management;
- to examine the effect of the classroom environment and teacher behavior on student behavior;
- to provide suggestions for classroom arrangement and signal control to minimize student misbehavior; and
- to present both informal and structured intervention strategies to manage behavior problems in the classroom setting.

**M**anaging the behavior of students is a common concern among teachers. When teachers are asked what aspects of their job are the most difficult and in what areas they need additional training, the first response typically is managing behavior problems. This chapter will introduce you to some of the basic procedures for managing the behavior of students in educational settings. You should know and understand your school system's policies on discipline before selecting and implementing any behavior management procedure. All of the techniques covered in this chapter are based on the behavioral model and often are referred to as behavior modification. None of the specialized interventions, such as Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behavior or Shaping, that require an in-depth knowledge of behavior modification will be covered. If you are interested in developing an in-depth knowledge of behavioral procedures, you should enroll

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in a class in behavior modification or at least study a basic textbook on this subject, for example the popular text written by Alberto and Troutman (2003).

## LEGAL ISSUES

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97) indicates significant changes in disciplinary procedures and strategies for students receiving special education services. Specific emphasis in the IDEA amendments is placed upon behavioral intervention plans developed through the use of functional behavioral assessment. The purpose of these plans is to attempt to proactively alleviate behavior problems. Further emphasis is placed upon due process procedures to be used with students in special education who exhibit dangerous behaviors, such as possession of a weapon or possession or use of drugs and alcohol. Additionally, Section 615 of the IDEA Amendments specifically addresses procedural safeguards such as the stay-put provision, manifestation determination and hearing options for these students who exhibit disruptive behaviors. Finally, IDEA 97 offers clarification in regard to the ten day rule relating to suspension of students in special education, reporting criminal activity of these students to authorities and protection for students who are not yet eligible for special education services.

## Designing and Implementing Behavioral Intervention Plans

Behavioral intervention plans are now required for students who receive special education services and exhibit behavioral difficulties, particularly students exhibiting behavior of a volatile nature. It is important to note that a student receiving special education services under any area of exceptionality (LD, BD, MR) and exhibiting behavioral difficulties should have a behavioral intervention plan developed. Further, the focus of the behavioral plan should be on positive interventions such as verbal praise or tangible reinforcers. Intervention plans are designed to offer support, delineate interventions, and provide contingencies for dealing with behavioral problems. Plans are to be developed from a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) of the student. IDEA 97 offers no indication of specifically what a FBA should include or how to conduct such a procedure. However, numerous special educators and administrators are conducting FBAs based on the theoretical framework of Functional Behavioral Analysis developed in 1982 by Iwata and his colleagues (Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman & Richman, 1994).

Functional behavioral analysis was initially developed to determine the antecedent(s) of self-injurious behavior in individuals with moderate to severe levels of mental retardation. Iwata et al. (1994) found that determining the antecedents of self-injurious behavior was important in developing appropriate interventions for combating maladaptive behavior. There are several functions of behavior that have been determined, which include: escape, attention, and self-stimulation. These functions were determined through analogue assessment (a laboratory setting with controlled conditions) in which the setting was designed to elicit the maladaptive behavior under specific behavioral function conditions (provision of a task from which a student might wish to escape). Escape was generally described as a method for avoiding tasks that the individual found undesirable, such as an academic assignment. Attention, such as a teacher reprimand or peer comments, was generally determined to result from, and encourage, the behavior. A self-stimulatory activity within the context of individuals with moderate to severe mental retardation involved providing self-stimulation, self-injurious behavior, within a barren environment. The initial research in the area of functional analysis has been replicated numerous times demonstrating that the func-



tion of behavior can be detected via analysis and subsequently more effective intervention can follow. Iwata's research was extended beyond the relatively antiseptic bounds of analogue analysis to the natural classroom setting through the efforts of Sasso and his colleagues in 1992 (Sasso et al., 1992). These researchers were able to assess the self-injurious behavior of students in the special education classroom setting with accuracy similar to the analogue assessment. Additionally, Sasso and his colleagues implemented interventions related to consequences for behaviors, and were able to successfully decrease the level of self-injurious behavior. The examination of consequences provides an important component of a functional behavioral assessment, and the subsequent development of the behavioral intervention plan.

In relation to higher functioning students with behavioral problems, the functions of behavior appear to be most closely related to getting something, often peer or teacher attention, or getting out of something, such as a math or reading assignment. The process of examining the environmental conditions prior to the occurrence of a behavior, the antecedents, has proven useful in detecting the function of the behavior and more appropriately planning an intervention. Further, the consequences of the behavior must be examined. In assisting the IEP team in determining behavioral function, a number of commercial forms are available, such as:

the Functional Analysis Screening Tool,  
Functional Assessment Interview,  
Motivation Assessment Scale,  
Project Facile-Problem Behavior Questionnaire, and  
Functional Assessment Observation Form.

These assessments generally seek to determine where the behavior problems take place (lunch room, science class), when (morning, lunch, afternoon), frequency (seldom, always, 25% of the time, 75% of the time), and prior teacher interventions for these behaviors. If a student has been removed from school due to a severe behavioral difficulty, these assessments and a review of pertinent records such as disciplinary reports may comprise the only method of assessment. Thus the assessments may suffer from poor recall or an incomplete picture of the behavior. However, if a student is currently in the school environment a more accurate examination of the student's behavior can take place via classroom observation which can assess the frequency, context, and consequences of actions directly.

Following a thorough analysis of the student's behavior and the identification of the function of a behavior, a behavioral intervention plan can be developed. It is important to note that behaviors exhibited may serve more than one function, and a careful analysis of the behavioral data must be undertaken to develop a plan that addresses all functions served. For example, perhaps Johnny uses aggressive, loud behavior in Ms. Smith's Algebra class to avoid completing assignments due to an inability to perform the calculations. However, in Mr. West's physical education (PE) class Johnny uses similar behaviors to get peer attention. A well-designed plan would need to address the different functions of Johnny's behavior in the different settings. The behavioral intervention plan must address the specific antecedents of the behaviors and determine alternative behaviors students could employ to serve the functions of the problem behavior. For example, since Johnny is reinforced by peer attention in PE, an alternative strategy might be to allow him to get attention as a team captain or by assisting in chores such as giving out equipment. Other more global strategies that might be used with Johnny include; classroom management system, verbal warning, planned ignoring, time out room and denial of privileges. The best behavioral



intervention plans are characterized by a hierarchical structure for consequences, and careful thought regarding replacement behaviors. Further, the behavioral intervention plan should be evaluated to determine its effectiveness, and be revised if necessary.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

In the event that a student in special education is found in possession of a weapon or illicit substance, the behavioral intervention plan must be developed immediately by the IEP team, if a plan is not already in place. Thus, many school systems are acting in a proactive manner and developing behavioral intervention plans for all students with behavioral difficulties who receive special education services. Such a development in special education is a logical step as the IEP should address and implement programming based on the student's areas of deficit. Behavioral plans already in place are, however, subject to review if the existing plan does not adequately address the problem behavior. However, it should be noted that the lack of a behavioral intervention plan or an inadequate plan will not deter immediate placement in an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) if a student has committed a weapons or illicit substance violation.

### **Designation of an Interim Alternative Educational Setting**

IDEA 97 provided an extension of the school system's authority in relation to students in special education who are found in possession of a weapon or illicit substance, or who pose a significant danger in the school environment. First, these students and their parents are provided a formal written notice of the school rule violation(s) in relation to possession of weapon(s) or illicit substances. A written notice should also be provided in the event that school officials are seeking to have a student removed to an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) through the authority of a hearing officer. A petition for removal through a hearing officer may be viable if the student is dangerous to self or others. However, school officials will be required to prove they have attempted to minimize the risk of harm in the school setting and that the IEP in place is appropriate. The IAES must enable the student to continue to receive special education services and modifications as well as enable continued participation in the general curriculum. However, it is important to note that school officials may make a unilateral placement of a student in an IAES for weapons or drug infractions (a hearing officer's approval is not necessary). The IAES is determined by the IEP team and could include alternative school placement and even home placement, although the latter alternative is discouraged (Yell & Shriner, 1997).

### **Procedures in Manifestation Determination**

After the student is placed in the IAES by school officials for applicable offenses such as weapon or drug possession, an IEP team meeting must be convened to either conduct, or determine how to conduct, a functional behavioral assessment. Next, a behavior intervention plan must be developed based on the functional behavioral assessment. In the event there is an existing behavioral intervention plan it should be reviewed for adequacy in meeting the student's needs. The review or development of a behavioral intervention plan and manifestation determination must take place within ten days of the disciplinary action (i.e., placement in the IAES or officials' wish to exceed 10 days of suspension). The participants in the manifestation meeting consist of the IEP team and other qualified personnel such as psychologists, counselors, or probation officers (Yell & Shriner, 1997).



What is a manifestation determination? The manifestation determination seeks to judge if the behavior, such as possession of a weapon, was a result or byproduct of the student's disability or was unrelated to the disability. In order to determine manifestation the following items must be carefully and thoroughly reviewed in regard to the student:

1. evaluations and diagnostic results as well as information supplied by the parent,
2. observations of the student, and
3. the appropriateness of the student's current IEP and special education placement.

The manifestation determination also must examine if the disability impaired the student's understanding the consequences of the behavior. Finally, the student's ability to control the behavior, such as use of an illicit substance, must be determined in relation to the disability (Yell & Shriner, 1997).

The IEP team may determine that no relationship exists if a student's IEP and special education placement are appropriate. However, the team must also examine the effects of the disability based on evaluations, observations, and parent reports in arriving at the decision that there is no relationship between the disability and the actions. Finally, based on a review of the information the manifestation team must show that the student understood the ramifications of the actions and the disability did not impair control of the behavior. If the determination is made that a student's actions were not a manifestation of disability, the student may be subject to disciplinary procedures similar to students without disabilities. However, in the event that a long-term sanction such as suspension or placement in an alternative school are decided, IDEA 97 does not allow the cessation of services. This means that students must continue to receive the services specified in their IEP. School systems are using a number of alternatives for providing services such as alternative school placements and homebound placements. The IEP team also needs to examine change in placement through an IEP meeting.

If the IEP team determines that the behavior was a manifestation of the disability, the student would return to the previous educational setting after the 45 calendar days served in the interim setting for weapons or substance abuse violations. The IEP team could examine the need for a change in placement if the prior placement no longer appeared appropriate, and there is a need for more, or different, services. However, such a placement decision would require an IEP meeting.

Manifestation determinations also must be made in the event that a school wants to suspend a student enrolled in special education for more than ten days. The cessation of services is not an option in the event that a student is suspended or placed in an IAES. Therefore, students must continue to receive special education services, including the ability to participate in the general education curriculum.

### **Components of the Stay-Put Provision**

The stay-put provision addresses a student's placement during a dispute between parents and the school system about appropriate placement. Prior to IDEA 97 a student's stay-put placement was always the current educational setting. For example, if a student was in a self-contained Behavior Disorders classroom and the parents or school system disputed the placement, the student would remain in the self-contained Behavior Disorders classroom until the hearing officer made a decision about the case. The stay-put provision was not



changed by IDEA 97, with the notable exception in the case of a student bringing weapons or illicit substances to school. In the event that a student is sent to an IAES for one of these offenses and parents dispute the placement, the student remains in the IAES rather than returning to the special education placement. Thus, even in the event of a dispute, a student who is guilty of these serious violations will remain in the IAES for 45 days.

### **Ten Day Rule**

The length of suspensions allowed per year for students who receive special education services has been variably interpreted by different states and school systems. *Honig v. Doe* (1988), a U.S. Supreme Court case involving suspension of students who are in special education, indicated a ten day limit; however it was unclear if the ten days were cumulative per school year or per incident. Thus, there was significant variation with some systems imposing ten days per incident and others ten days per year. IDEA 97 indicates the ten day rule should be interpreted as per year. Further, in the event that a system wants to exceed ten days, a manifestation hearing must be held and other provisions, such as the behavioral intervention plan and a review of existing services and placement, would apply.

### **Reporting Criminal Activity**

There is nothing in IDEA 97 that prohibits a school system from making a report to the appropriate authorities in the event that criminal activity has taken place. For example, a student who receives special education services and is found in possession of drugs could be reported to the local police. Further, copies of the student's records as well as disciplinary record must be provided by the school system to the appropriate authorities (Yell & Shriner, 1997).

### **Provisions for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services**

The language in this particular section of the law is relatively vague in certain respects. However, students in the general education program may be eligible for the same protections afforded students in special education programs if the school system had prior knowledge, occurring before the disciplinary infraction, that the student might have a disability. Prior knowledge of a disability could consist of a written parent communication to the school indicating the need for the student to receive special education services. Indications might also include the behavior and performance of the student that was indicative of a disability. Further, prior knowledge is indicated if the parent or teacher requested an evaluation of the student or expressed concern. Finally, prior knowledge is indicated if school personnel of the local education agency expressed concerns to others within the agency. If one or more of these conditions are met the student may receive the protections of IDEA 97 in regard to discipline. However, if the school system had no prior indication of the presence of a disability the student is not provided protection and is subject to the same disciplinary actions as a general education student.

The importance of appropriately designing behavioral plans, developing IEPs that effectively address student needs, and determining appropriate placement cannot be overstated in view of IDEA 97. While these amendments provide the school systems greater latitude in working with students who are enrolled in special education and exhibit violent or potentially dangerous behavior, the amendments clearly focus on meeting the needs of students with behavioral difficulties.



## BEHAVIORAL MODEL

The behavioral model views the source of behavior problems as being within the environment rather than within a student. It is a model that has been applied successfully across very diverse populations. It can be used as readily with students who are gifted as with students who have disabilities. It is as suitable for high school students as for kindergarten students. The principles on which the approach is based are universal. The techniques derived from these principles do need to be modified so that they are developmentally appropriate for different students. It is not possible to discuss the wide range of modifications in a single chapter; however, classroom teachers are in the best position to judge which modifications would be appropriate for their students.

The behavioral model has three basic components:

1. **Antecedent**—any event that precedes behavior. It serves as a cue or prompt for the performance or inhibition of a response. Objects, signs or signals, and actions are the types of events that can function as antecedents.
2. **Behavior**—any response made to an antecedent cue or prompt.
3. **Consequence**—any event that follows behavior and serves to strengthen or weaken the future chance of that behavior. This includes positive events, which have incentive value, and negative events, which have punitive value. See **Table 11-1**.

The three letters A-B-C (Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence) represent the behavioral model. Behavior management based on this model can emphasize the use of antecedents, consequences, or both. When both antecedents and consequences are used together, their planned relationship to one another is called a **contingency**.

The following section discusses a number of antecedents that affect behavior management. These antecedents fit into two broad categories: the classroom and teacher behavior. Using antecedents to manage behavior is sometimes called **stimulus control**. Stimulus control strategies are most effective for preventing and managing minor behavior problems.

## The Classroom

### *Decontamination*

Decontamination of a classroom is the first preventive action that every teacher needs to take. Decontamination means inspecting your classroom carefully for two types of objects:

Table 11-1

Types and Examples of Consequences	
Types of Positive Consequences	Types of Negative Consequences
1. Consumables (a cracker)	1. The loss of something rewarding (loss of a privilege)
2. Material objects (a toy)	2. Unpleasant activities (running laps)
3. Activities (playing cards)	3. Undesirable circumstances (social isolation)
4. Social (praise)	4. Aversive stimuli (paddling)





*Teachers should inspect their classroom regularly for distractors or potential weapons.*

distractors and potential weapons. Distractors entice students to engage in off-task behavior. For example, toys that are present may attract a student's attention and prompt play behavior. Some types of classroom equipment, like a slide projector, may attract a student's attention and prompt exploratory behavior. Hazards also are distractors. For example, exposed electrical wires or a broken window pane may attract a student's attention and prompt dangerous exploratory behavior. Potential weapons are objects like knives, brooms, hammers, or letter openers that may appeal to a student who is upset and acting-out. You should inspect your classroom regularly for distractors and potential weapons. Remove or secure these objects so students do not have access to them.

### *Proximity Control*

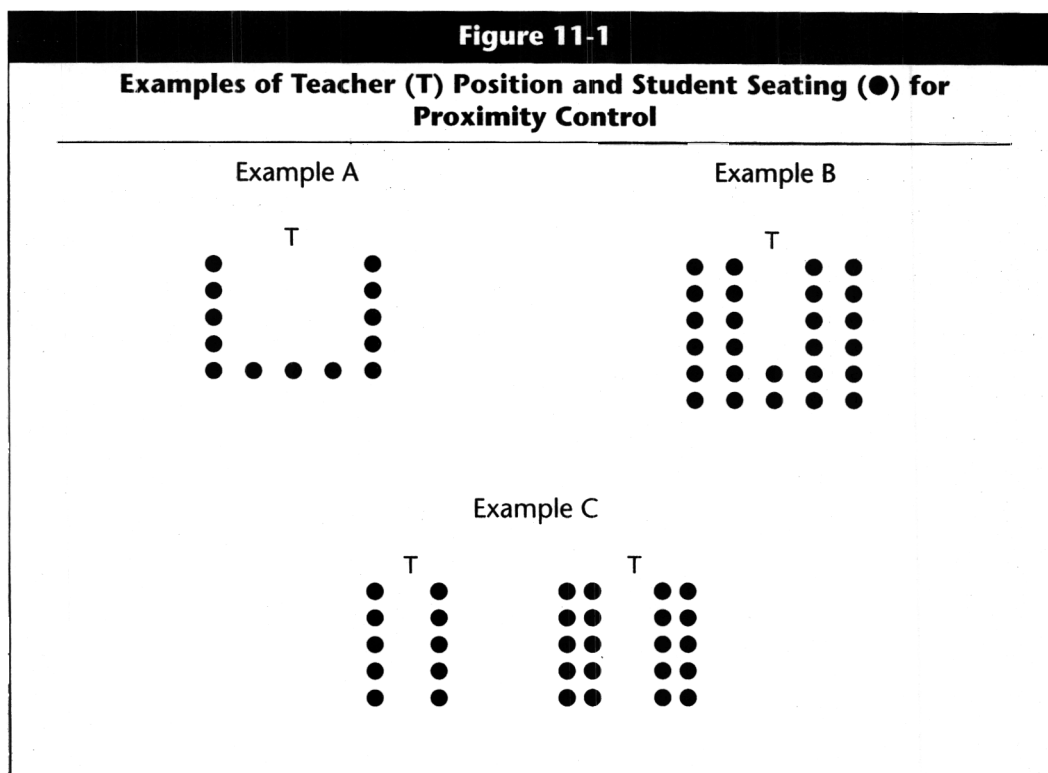
Proximity control depends on you, the teacher, serving as an inhibiting antecedent for inappropriate behavior. An everyday example of an inhibiting antecedent is a police car on an expressway. Drivers who are speeding slow down when they see the police car. The reason they slow down is that they anticipate negative consequences if they don't modify their behavior. They anticipate negative consequences because they have observed other drivers receiving a traffic ticket from the police for speeding. It is important to remember that an antecedent will not inhibit behavior if it does not have a history

of consequences associated with it. What effect would seeing a police car have on speeders if they seldom if ever see police writing traffic tickets for speeding?

Proximity control in the classroom can be visual or physical. A good classroom arrangement must allow for visual proximity control. This means you can visually monitor student activity from any position in the classroom. There should be clear lines of sight throughout the room and it should be obvious to students that you can see whatever they do. Take particular care when placing tall furnishings such as dividers, bookcases, movable chalkboards and file cabinets. Place these and other furnishings so they do not obscure your view of students and their behavior.

The second type of proximity control depends on physical proximity. Physical proximity requires that the teacher be as close to each student as possible, which increases a teacher's potential as an inhibiting antecedent. There are two common ways teachers use this technique: going to the side of a student who is misbehaving, and moving a student close to the teacher (e.g., next to the teacher's desk). The effectiveness of proximity control can be increased by using a planned seating arrangement. Such a seating plan makes it easy for you to use physical proximity with any student in the class. Such an arrangement allows you to quickly increase physical proximity until a misbehavior comes under control.



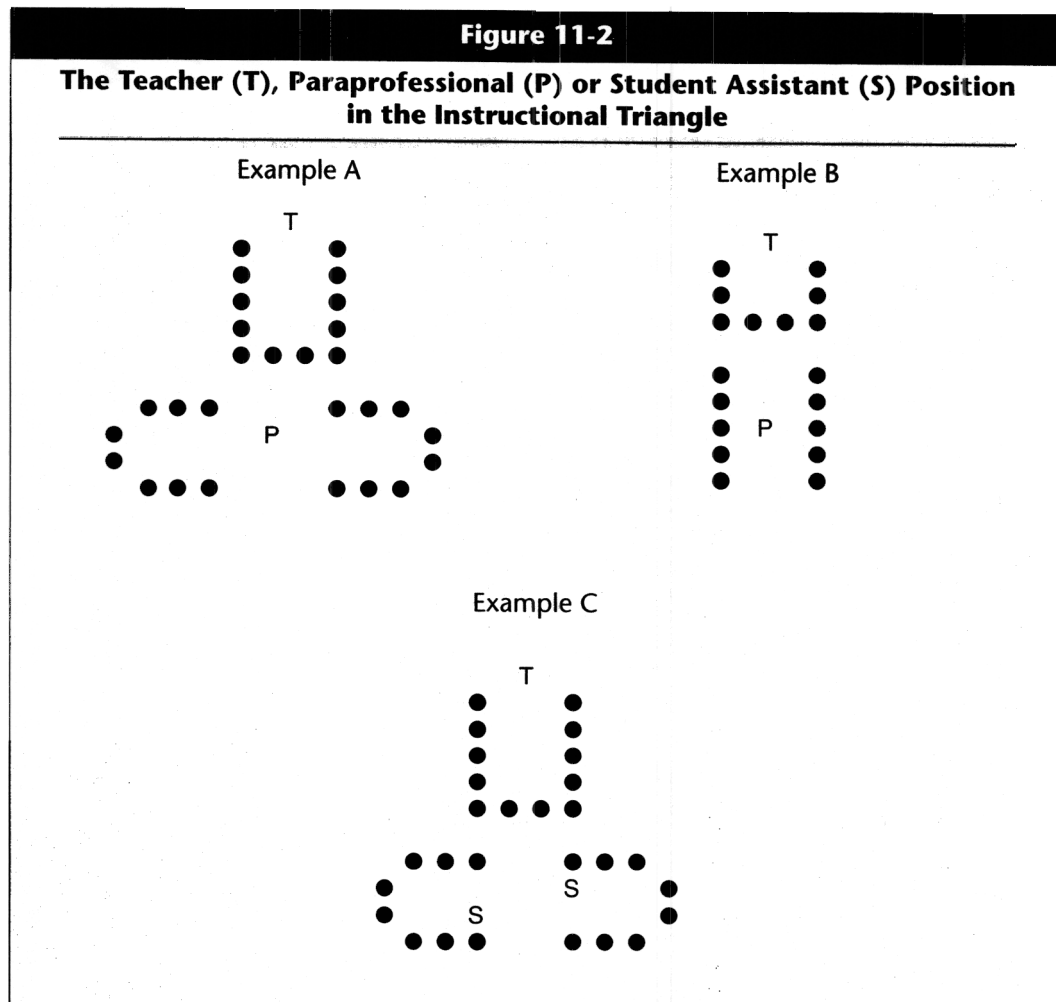


There are several seating arrangements that increase your physical proximity to all students. Some are appropriate for whole group instruction and others can be used for small group instruction (see **Figure 11-1**).

One possible arrangement is the U-shaped seating pattern which can be used with either individual desks or rectangular tables. The chalkboard or teacher's desk, as the instructional area, should be the focus of the open end of the U, as shown in example A of **Figure 11-1**. If the number of students is too large to arrange in a single U-shaped row, arrange them in a double or triple U-shaped row (see example B in **Figure 11-1**). When seating is in the U configuration, the teacher can move around in the center of the U, increasing proximity to all of the students in the class. A variation on the U can be used for different types of instruction in two separate areas. The U shape is altered by removing the closed end to form two parallel rows (I I) for seating as demonstrated in example C of **Figure 11-1**. Instructional areas can be set up at each end and the focus for instruction changed by moving from one end to the other. Use double or triple rows (see example C in **Figure 11-1**) to expand the number of students this arrangement will accommodate.

Hewett and Taylor (1980) suggested a wheel arrangement which is good for small group or tutorial instruction. We will call it the teaching triangle. Effective use of the teaching triangle requires either a paraprofessional or student assistants. The first step is to divide the students into three groups with each group varying in size from as few as one student to as many as ten students. If all the students are at about the same instructional level in each subject area, divide them any way that is convenient. If the students are not all on the same level, divide them into three groups where each group is at about the same level. If each student is at about the same level for each subject, the groups will remain the same across





subjects. If students are at varying levels in different subjects, the membership of the three groups will change by subject. Once the membership of the groups is decided, arrange the seating for three groups using three tables, one for each group, or three desk clusters. If the seating is clusters of desks, use the U-shaped arrangement discussed earlier.

The teaching triangle is based on the three groups: one table or desk cluster is for instruction, the second for application or practice activities, and the third for review work. The teacher stays with the instructional table or cluster while a paraprofessional or student assistant supervises the other two groups. If desk clusters in the U-shape are used, place the U-s open-end to open-end if possible (see example A in **Figure 11-2**).

This permits the paraprofessional to move in the center between groups and maintain good physical proximity. With the parallel row arrangement (see example B in **Figure 11-2**) each row can serve as one piece of the triangle. When using student assistants, assign one assistant to each of the non-instructional groups. The student selected should be the highest functioning student in each group. With the U-shaped seating arrangement, each student assistant should sit in a central position (see example C in **Figure 11-2**).



**Figure 11-3**

**An Example of the Instructional Triangle Applied to Reading Instruction,  
Where Each of the Three Groups Receives Instruction (I), Practice (P), and  
Review (R) on a Rotating Basis**

**First 20 minutes**

Reading Instruction  
Group 1 (I-1)

Reading Practice  
Group 2 (P-2)

Reading Review  
Group 3 (R-3)

**Second 20 minutes**

Reading Instruction  
Group 3 (I-3)

Reading Practice  
Group 1 (P-1)

Reading Review  
Group 2 (R-2)

**Third 20 minutes**

Reading Instruction  
Group 2 (I-2)

Reading Practice  
Group 3 (P-3)

Reading Review  
Group 1 (R-1)

To illustrate how this procedure works, let's assume a one-hour period for reading instruction. The instructional group will be (I), the practice group (P) and the review group (R). The three student groups will be (1), (2), and (3). The arrangement for the first 20 minutes is as follows: I-1, P-2, and R-3 (see **Figure 11-3**).

During the first 20 minutes you provide reading instruction to Group 1 while Group 2 gets practice activities based on the most recent reading instruction. Group 3 gets review activities based on earlier reading instruction to help maintain previously learned material. At the end of the first 20 minutes, the groups rotate. During the second 20 minutes the arrangement is as follows: I-3, P-1, and R-2. At the end of the second 20 minutes, the groups rotate again. During the third 20 minutes, the arrangement is as follows: I-2, P-3, and R-1.

The teacher provides small group instruction and the paraprofessional manages the practice and review groups throughout the one-hour period. If student assistants are used, they manage their respective groups while doing their own work. Tasks for student assistants may be briefer than tasks for other students to make it easier for them to perform their other duties. Student assistants need to be the highest functioning member of their group. Good students are less likely to suffer from shortened assignments and have the level of skill necessary to provide assistance.



## **Teacher Behavior**

There are several aspects of teacher behavior to consider when discussing antecedents to student behavior. These include setting behavioral expectations, teacher expectations, the use of signal control, reading antecedents, and using interference.

### *Behavioral Expectations*

Teachers must make clear their expectations for student behavior in the classroom. This can be done in a public manner, by posting a set of classroom rules, or by giving each student a personal copy of the class rules. Rules should state how students should conduct themselves rather than what they shouldn't do. There should be a limited number of class rules stated as briefly as possible. Usually, five to seven rules are enough to cover behavioral expectations. Simply having rules is not enough to get consistent compliance with them. However, you must set rules before there can be compliance with your expectations. Compliance depends on the consequences for both compliance and violation of the rules.

You must review your rules regularly to keep attention on them and to communicate that you think they are important. Review of the rules does not mean just occasionally reading the rules. Rather, call on students to cite rules to help them remember the rules. Also, ask students to discuss what rules mean for behavior and include examples of rule violations. Discussions of this kind are important to help students both know and understand the rules. Provide positive feedback to students for correct recall or explanation of a rule. A sample set of class rules might look like the following:

- 1. Get permission before speaking.**
- 2. Get permission before leaving your desk.**
- 3. Maintain a good sitting position.**
- 4. Be quiet and calm.**
- 5. Be courteous to others.**

### *Teacher Expectations*

Any teacher familiar with the self-fulfilling prophecy will be careful about personal expectations for individual students. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) were able to demonstrate this by telling teachers how students, high achievers and low achievers, would perform in class. His predictions were not based on the students' true abilities or potential, but on their random assignment to one of the two groups. His results showed that the students' performance matched the teachers' expectations for them. Research shows that your expectations for a student can affect students' performance. It is not your expectations per se that affect a student's performance. Rather, it is the effect your expectations have on your behavior that affects student performance. Good and Brophy (1978) examined the connection between teacher expectations and behavior. Their study showed that holding negative or positive expectations for students resulted in different patterns of behavior toward the students. In particular, they found low expectations associated with a higher level of criticism. Teachers asked low expectation students fewer questions, and these students received less prompting when they didn't know the answer to a question. They also received more negative feedback for an incorrect answer. When low expectation students gave a correct answer, they often received no positive feedback from their teacher. If they did get positive feedback, they received less than high expectation students. The pattern of teacher behavior



toward high expectation students was just the opposite. Other studies show teacher expectations also affect a teacher's non-verbal behavior. Teachers get physically closer to students for whom they have high expectations. Such students also get more face-to-face interaction with teachers and more signs of approval, such as smiles, from teachers.

A teacher's attitude toward a student can affect behavior toward that student. A negative attitude toward a student may result from a bad experience with the student, or from prior experience with a sibling or parent of the student. Often, this attitude is the product of informal remarks made by another teacher about the student. You must try to put aside personal prejudices about students regardless of how they arise and interact with all students in a professional manner. Professionalism requires positive expectations for every student. You need to watch and judge both your attitudes and behavior toward your students. If they are less than professional, you have a responsibility to change them.

Teachers are models for behavior. When you are unreasonable, unfair, mean, vindictive, blaming, or cruel, you are modeling those behaviors. Your behavior leads students to expect that those kind of behaviors are acceptable. The same, of course, applies to being reasonable, fair, kind, forgiving, supportive, or respectful. In short, your behavior is important. In fact, in many ways, your behavior is the most powerful behavior management tool available to you. Just remember that if you can't manage your own behavior, you probably will have limited success in managing your students' behavior.

### *Signal Control*

Signal control is the use of any type of brief antecedent stimulus to prompt or cue students about your behavioral expectations. Teacher signal control can use audible signals, body language, or verbal behaviors. One common method for giving an **audible signal** is the gavel technique. This is simply a single or double, forceful rap of an object on a desk or table. The object can be a gavel, the knuckles, a ruler or any object that will produce an audible signal. The hand technique is another option. This uses snapping the fingers or clapping the hands together to produce an audible signal. No doubt, you can think of other ways to produce audible signals. You must plan, in advance, on what signals you will use and use them consistently over time so they are clearly understood. To be effective, there must be consequences for either responding to or failing to respond to signals. Signals usually will not control behavior unless they are paired with a consequence.

An audible signal, often used to control attention to task and work rate, is a kitchen timer. The timer ticking and the bell serve as audible signals. For example, suppose you have four paragraphs on the chalkboard or on overheads. The students are to read and identify the misspellings in the paragraphs by writing the misspelled words on paper. Instead of allowing a fixed period for the whole task, use brief periods, for example, five minutes to complete each paragraph. Tell students that you are going to set a timer for five minutes and when the bell rings you will remove the first paragraph. Inform them that after the first paragraph is removed the timer will start again for the second paragraph. Continue in this manner through all four paragraphs. This technique will keep attention focused on the task and provide external pacing for work on the task.

Vocal signals also are audible signals. Commonly used vocal signals include either a name or a cue word. Use a name for a single errant student and a cue word if more than one student needs prompting. Examples of cue words include general terms like *class*, *group*, or *students*. Vocal signals should be given in a loud and forceful manner and can be paired with visual signals to increase their effect. For example, you can use an open hand with palm out as a stop signal. Two other hand signals are the vertical finger across the lips for quiet and the pointing finger to single-out an errant student. Accompany verbal signals to



a group with roving eye-contact. Accompany a verbal signal for a single errant student with fixed eye-contact. If eye-contact is not possible, use a fixed gaze instead. In short, clearly communicate intense visual attention along with the other signal or signals.

Another type of signal control uses **body language** to communicate. First, be sure to use an appropriate facial expression. The overall facial expression should be the so-called “poker face.” That is, your feelings should not be readable in your facial expression. Sometimes inappropriate behavior is amusing; however, it is dangerous to communicate this because it sends a mixed message. You also may be angry or distressed by inappropriate behavior. Giving this away through facial expression actually can reinforce inappropriate behavior and prompt further misbehavior. This is especially likely if one or more students are trying to manipulate your emotions for their own amusement. Even if manipulation was not the intent, your reaction may be amusing and stimulate further misbehavior.

Other aspects of body language are posture and gesture. If you are sitting, your body posture should be erect with shoulders squared before giving a signal. If you are standing, your body posture should be erect with feet spread as in the military position of parade rest. Place your hands on your hips to show readiness for further action. An alternate posture is to point, with the other arm at your side, at a single errant student. If you begin walking toward a student or group, your walk should be direct, at a quick pace and confident. Your hands can be either on your hips or at your sides. In a discipline situation, don’t clasp your hands in front of or behind your body. If a student is agitated and could become aggressive, your arms should be in a less threatening position. A non-threatening and defensive position for your arms is to fold them across the mid-body area.

Another use of body language is **blocking**. Use blocking when one student’s misbehavior is an antecedent or consequence for another student’s misbehavior. Move directly to the two students to increase proximity control. Place your body between the students to block the signals passing between them. If necessary, continue to increase physical proximity with one of the students. Get as close as necessary to inhibit the student’s behavior unless you think the student might strike you. Continue to block signals between the two students as you increase proximity to the targeted student.

Kounin (1970) has investigated factors that affect the use of what he calls **desists**. Desists are signals given with the intent of halting or inhibiting inappropriate behavior. His research shows that the most important factor in effective signal control is student perception of teacher competence. Students will perceive as competent a teacher who does the following:

- The teacher consistently targets the correct student.
- The teacher consistently targets the most serious misbehavior first.
- The teacher responds immediately to misbehavior.
- The teacher can handle more than one event at a time.
- The teacher’s signal control is clear and firm.
- The teacher’s management style is smooth:
  - The teacher maintains a comfortable classroom pace.
  - The teacher communicates a sense of purpose and progress.
  - The teacher only engages in necessary talk.
  - The teacher maintains focus on the task at hand.
  - The teacher can make smooth transitions from one activity to another.



A third type of signal control involves **verbal behavior**. One common verbal signal is instructions. There are many types of instructions, spoken or written, for academic tasks, non-academic activities, or conduct. Be sure that all instructions are clear and concise because ambiguous instructions create confusion, require unnecessary discussion, and waste time. Ambiguous instructions also may bore students. Students who become bored often seek ways to escape, which frequently means engaging in behavior that is disruptive.

Further, you should word oral instructions to minimize commotion in your classroom. Avoid using instructions that give general permission to students to get out of their seats and move around. For example, don't say, "*When you have finished, bring me your paper.*" This type of instruction can result in several students being up and moving about at the same time. Usually, it is better to say, "*When you finish, raise your hand, and I will come and pick up your paper.*" Now, no one has permission to be up and moving about.

Another type of verbal signal is questions. Teachers should use questions that reduce commotion in the classroom. For example, don't ask, "*Who knows how to spell 'diskette'?*" This is an invitation for everyone to respond and if they do, auditory bedlam results. It is better to ask, "*Ken, how do you spell 'diskette'?*" Now, only one person has an invitation to respond. Further, you should only acknowledge a response from Ken. You also should randomize your selection of students for directed questions. Random selection makes the target of the next question unpredictable, and uncertainty increases attention to the task at hand. Everyone attends better when no one knows who will be called on next.

Never use a question in place of a command. For example, don't say, "*Jack, will you stop poking Leon?*" When you ask this, you are setting yourself up for Jack to say, "*No.*" Then, what will you say? It is much better to say, "*Jack, stop poking Leon.*" In short, think about the likely effects of your instructions and questions on student behavior before you use them. Careful attention to how you word your instructions and questions can have a significant impact on student behavior.

Combine instructions and questions with audible, visual, or vocal signals. For example, use an audible signal for quiet like the gavel before giving an oral instruction. Before beginning a question use the extended open-hand with palm out as a signal not to answer at will. For an in-unison response, use the vocal signal "*everyone*" combined with a visual signal like out-stretched, open arms. For an individual response, use the name of the student as a verbal signal and the pointing finger prompt as a visual signal. Usually, established combinations of audible, visual, and vocal signals produce the best results.

There are many things teachers can do in the classroom to modify antecedent conditions that may affect both discipline and motivation for learning. A checklist like the one presented in **Figure 11-4** can be used to evaluate a classroom environment.

**Figure 11-4**

**Checklist for Evaluating the Classroom Environment**

**Classroom Environment Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The classroom has been decontaminated of all distractors, dangerous objects and potential weapons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The classroom arrangement permits good visual proximity control.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The classroom arrangement permits good physical proximity control.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Non-verbal signal controls have been determined.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Verbal signals for behavior management have been determined.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The behavioral expectations for the class have been determined and posted.



### *Reading Antecedents*

Teachers should be particularly alert for negative signs in students which usually signal that a student is in a state of emotional arousal. Negative arousal often is related to anxiety, helplessness, frustration, or anger. Signs suggesting negative emotional arousal may appear in facial expressions, body posture, or behavior. Nierenberg and Calero (1971) describe these signs as follows:

#### **Facial Expression**

- Tight, thin lips that are either straight or turned down at the corners.
- Narrowed eyes with eyebrows drawn slightly down and chin drawn in toward the neck.
- Widened eyes with nostrils slightly flared and chin slightly forward.
- Clenched teeth shown by tight, flexed jaw muscles.
- Pursed lips.

#### **Body Posture**

- Slumped shoulders with head and eyes down. If sitting, a student may cross his or her arms or if standing, the hands may be in pockets.
- Arms crossed with hands clenched into fists or arms crossed with hands tightly gripping upper arms.
- Standing with body leaning forward and hands spread wide apart and resting on or gripping the edges of a table or desk.
- Tightly clenched hands resting on a table or desk or forming the apex of a triangle supporting the head.
- One hand holding the other in a hand-wringing gesture.
- Sitting in a chair with ankles locked. The student will either grip the arms of the chair or one hand will hold the other hand down in the lap.
- Eyes closed with one hand covering and appearing to grip the nose.
- Head down with face covered by both hands.
- Standing, arms behind back with one grasped by the hand of the other as if restraining the arm.
- Sucking or chewing motions directed at the hand or fingers.

#### **Incidental Behavior**

- Rapid, shallow breathing.
- Sighing.
- Rapid, short up and down or back and forth movement of a leg or foot.
- Repeated kicking at the ground with the toe of one foot.
- Non-verbal sounds such as "tsk" or a groaning sound.
- Breaking something such as a pencil.
- Tearing or wadding up a sheet or paper.
- Exaggerated behavior such as slamming a book shut.
- Undirected utterance of an expletive such as "damn".
- Mumbling or talking to oneself.

These signs may not always signal trouble brewing, particularly if they occur in isolation and are brief. It is especially important to look for **congruence**, that is, several different signs that all suggest the same internal state. When there is a clear sign of negative



emotional arousal, you should head off further escalation of the condition. This can be accomplished using a technique known as interference.

### *Interference*

Interference is a technique that disrupts a state of emotional arousal in a student that may lead to inappropriate behavior. Interference is begun by making supportive, verbal contact with a student. You should be close to a student for the initial contact. Don't make verbal contact with a student from a distance. Loud, public, verbal contact may embarrass a student or otherwise aggravate the situation. Go to a student or ask the student to come to you. You must be close enough to a student to have a quiet, private conversation. However, don't get within hitting or kicking distance of a student. If a student should lash out, you don't want to be within striking distance.

Initial contact should be in a calm, non-threatening manner and not imply any pre-judgment of the situation. The contact should be in a form that invites a response. The contact usually will be either an information seeking question or an observational statement that invites a response like those that follow.

#### **Information Seeking:**

*"Are you having trouble with something?" or  
"Do you not understand something?"*

#### **Observational Statement:**

*"It looks to me like you are upset about something. or  
"Are you having a problem?"*

If there is no answer or comment from the student, begin a follow-up probe.

#### **Follow-up:**

*"Why don't you tell me about it." or  
"Maybe I can help."*

Frequently, in a classroom situation, a student's problem is the task at hand. There are several common sources of difficulty:

- The task may be too difficult.
- The task may be too long.
- The task instructions may not be clear.
- The necessary preparation such as a homework assignment was not done.
- A particular point in a task is causing difficulty.
- The need for some available resource such as a glossary or number line is not recognized.

If the source of the emotional arousal is one of the above or something similar, try to provide some help to get the student past the difficulty and engaged in the task constructively. Often, the solution is as simple as pointing out the need for some resource, explaining a direction, changing the task somewhat, or giving a prompt or cue. If the source of the problem is not task related, you will need to further explore the difficulty with the student through a supportive dialog. Do this immediately, if possible. Otherwise, offer to talk with the student about the problem at another time during the day.





*A supportive dialog with a student about a problem is often the simplest solution.*

Frequently, just having a sympathetic ear is enough to diminish the negative emotional arousal associated with a problem. Koopman, Hunt, and Cowan (1978) suggest that supportive dialog with a student about a problem is an important aspect of a teacher's role. Teachers should attend to several aspects of any communication with a troubled student. When you talk with a negatively aroused student, listen for the emotional content of the student's responses. These feelings may appear in either ver-

balizations or body language or both. Listen for emotionally laden words like *hate*, *mad*, and *unfair*. Watch for body language clues like those discussed in the section above. In addition, listen for the source of the feelings. That is, what event or actions appear related to the negative emotional arousal?

Help a student talk through a problem situation rather than impulsively acting on it. Be careful about the way you respond to a student because your response style can disrupt rather than aid communication. Table 11-2 presents appropriate and inappropriate response styles.

A supportive approach to a troubled student helps the student to be open and talk about the problem. The purpose is to help the student find an acceptable outlet for negative emotional arousal. It is also an opportunity for the student to think through the problem and understand it. In the process, you may learn something useful about the student's perspective. Any resulting solution to the problem is incidental and a bonus outcome.

There are several difficulties that may arise while trying to conduct a supportive dialog with a troubled student. The student may become defensive and question or challenge you, as in the following example.

*What about Charles? He isn't doing his work either.*

Your response should be to calmly **re-direct**

*Perhaps, but I'm trying to find out why you aren't doing your work.*

Or, a student may say *'If you don't get off my case, I'm going to lose it.*

The correct response is to remain controlled and supportive while **setting limits**

*"I just want to understand what the problem is, but if you can't control yourself, I'll have no choice but to send for the principal."*



Table 11-2

Response Styles	
<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Example</b>
Advice Giving Constructive advice is all right, if a student seeks it. Before giving advice, try to lead the student with questions or prompts.	"You need to be more tolerant."
Changing the Topic	"How's your sister doing these days?"
Criticizing	"You don't ever think anything through."
Disagreeing	"I don't believe there is any truth in that."
Labeling	"You special education students are all alike."
Lecturing	"When I was your age, I'd never let myself be talked into cheating."
Moralizing	"A decent person would never speak that way."
Threatening	"If you don't get your act together, you're going to wish you had."
<b>Use</b>	<b>Example</b>
Agreeing	"I understand why that would make you angry."
<i>I Feel</i> Statements	"I'm really sorry you're having problems. I want to help you, if you'll let me."
Information Giving	"The right way to deal with this is to petition the discipline committee."
Questioning	"Why do you think Mr. Wilson is out to get you?"
Reflecting	"If I understand you, you think that you were unjustly singled out."
Sharing	"I know being an adolescent is tough. When I was your age, I thought no one liked me either."

If you are rebuffed by a student, don't pressure the student to talk about the problem. Make a tactful withdrawal. Your offer to engage in a dialog alone may be enough support for the student. Back off and take a wait-and-see attitude.

A student may have an emotional outburst and become destructive or aggressive. In this event, your first responsibility is to assure the safety of your other students and yourself. You should always have a planned response available for this type of occurrence. It is just this type of situation that makes school-wide, support programs such as a crisis management team an important part of a school discipline policy. As a last resort, when there is a clear and inescapable danger, you may have to control the student's behavior directly. You should not do this unless physical management is permitted by your school system, and you have received training in the proper procedures to use.



## INFORMAL INTERVENTIONS

The following section discusses two behavior management techniques that employ simple consequences: attention and ignoring.

### Attention for Compliance

Perhaps the most commonly used informal intervention is attention for compliance. Attention means social reinforcement for compliance with classroom expectations. Verbal praise is easily the most readily available social reinforcer in any classroom. Besides being available, it is not costly and not difficult to dispense. Every teacher should make abundant use of social praise for compliance. Unfortunately, teachers usually don't use social praise frequently enough. Research shows that teachers use admonishment for non-compliance about ten times as often as praise for compliance. One would expect to find this ratio reversed in a classroom with a positive climate. Research shows that reinforcement for compliance is more effective than admonishment for non-compliance. Social reinforcement for compliant behavior increases the likelihood of compliance in the future. Social praise also draws other students' attention to a model for compliant behavior. The reinforced model shows other students what behavior is expected and shows that positive teacher attention is gained through compliant behavior.

For maximum effectiveness, use social praise consistently. However, give praise only to students whose behavior merits your praise. Social praise should always include both the name of the student and the specific behavior that earned the praise. For example: *"I really appreciate the way Jake and Wanda followed directions and put away their materials quickly."* rather than *"Good following directions."* Deliver praise immediately following compliance if possible. However, a delay cannot always be avoided. When there is a delay, verbally reconstruct the compliant behavior as you give praise. For example: *"Norma, I want to thank you. At the beginning of the period, you were very courteous when our visitor asked you a question."* rather than *"Norma, thank you for being courteous."* You should deliver praise sincerely rather than mechanically. Finally, don't get in a "praise rut" and use the same expression over and over. Put some variety in your choice of praise words. "Good" said 100 times in one day doesn't sound very genuine even if it is sincere. **Table 11-3** presents a few sample praise words. You should develop your own list to help you maintain variety.

Another way to give social praise for compliance is with tangible forms of praise or recognition. This recognition should not be a substitute for verbal praise in the classroom. Two recognition programs that can be used are an in-class program and a parent-note program.

Table

11-3

Sample Praise Words					
helpful	nice	pleasant	bright	fine	wonderful
beautiful	magnificent	splendid	terrific	witty	clever
valuable	great	impressive	outstanding	smashing	superb
excellent	good	fabulous	marvelous	fantastic	exceptional



With the in-class program the teacher selects one or two students each week for special recognition. Students can be recognized for best behavior or most improved behavior. You also can give recognition to a student of each type. For younger students create a "Student of the Week" or "Students of the Week" spot on a bulletin board. Place each student's name and the reason for the honor on the board. Placement on the recognition board should carry some special consequence such as a privilege that other students don't enjoy. The bulletin board approach may embarrass some older students and a verbal announcement of the award or telling them privately may be more appropriate.

The parent-note program makes use of a special award certificate for younger students (see **Figure 11-5**). You often can find these certificates in school supply stores or you can design your own. For older students a letter-of-commendation is more appropriate (see **Figure 11-6**).

Provide this type of recognition for meeting a pre-set standard or requirement that is suitable for your classroom, such as going all day without misbehavior. Recognition can be for conduct behavior, social skills, or academic performance. The certificate or letter should be directed to the student's parents and make a strong, positive statement about the student's behavior. Attempt to get parents to give additional reinforcement at home when their child gets a commendation. Reward at home for performance at school can enhance the effectiveness of your intervention.

**Figure 11-5**

**Sample of a Special Award Certificate for Younger Students**

<h2 style="margin: 0;">SUPER BEHAVIOR AWARD</h2> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">This award is presented</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">to: _____</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">for: _____</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">and can be exchanged for: _____</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____ Signed</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____ Date</p> </div> </div>	
---	--



**Figure 11-6****Sample of a Letter of Commendation for Older Students**

Dear Parent:

I am pleased to inform you that \_\_\_\_\_  
has been an exemplary student in my class. This note is a  
token of my sincere appreciation for good behavior, good  
work, and being a positive model for classmates.

Receipt of this note also earns: \_\_\_\_\_  
I'm confident that this excellent performance will continue  
in the future and that more notes like this will follow.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The only type of student with whom social reinforcement often is ineffective is the undersocialized aggressive student. These students have not had positive social stimuli established as secondary reinforcers. Patterson (1976) says this is due in part to an inconsistent history of social reinforcement during a child's social development. These students may be unresponsive to social reinforcement or have a negative reaction to it. They need to be reinforced with more concrete reinforcers such as consumables, materials, or activities. However, you should consistently pair non-social reinforcement with social reinforcement to increase the likelihood of social stimuli becoming effective reinforcers.

### **Ignoring**

There are several possible responses to non-compliance. One that is very effective with attention-getting behavior directed at a teacher is ignoring. Ignoring is a simple technique that is not easy to use effectively.

The first problem with ignoring is deciding when it is appropriate. It is only appropriate under two conditions:

1. the target behavior is temporarily tolerable, even if it should increase.
2. the target behavior is under the influence of a reinforcer that you can control.



Frequently this means the reinforcer is your response to the behavior. Don't make the assumption that because your response to the behavior is an admonishment that it isn't reinforcing. Teacher attention of any type can function as a reinforcer for some students. If the two above conditions are met, ignoring probably is the technique to use.

The second problem with ignoring is actually not attending to the behavior. It is likely that you have an habitual response to the behavior. Like any habit, attending to a student behavior is difficult to give up. Initially, you must make a conscious effort to ignore the behavior. You might even find it helpful to monitor and record your response to a student's behavior. In short, if you can't control your own behavior, you'll have difficulty controlling student behavior. Even properly done, ignoring may cause the behavior to increase at first. You might think of attention-getting behavior as operating on the principle of "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." However, if you persist in ignoring the behavior, it will begin to decrease. Even after it has begun to decrease, you may see occasional, brief increases in the behavior. Think of these as probes to check on the availability of the reinforcer, that is, your attention. If you use the technique for a reasonable period, and no decrease occurs, you probably made a mistake about what is reinforcing the behavior.

Finally, in some instances you may determine that the reinforcer for the behavior is not your attention but peer attention. If you can control the peers' attention to behavior, you still can use ignoring as an intervention for a problem behavior. One way to control peer attention to a problem behavior is to instruct the other students to ignore the problem student. For example, *"Class, Chuck is trying to be cute again and disrupt our lesson. Please do not look at him or laugh at him."* Follow these instructions up with verbal praise or some other reward for students who obey the instructions. This is more difficult to do than simply controlling your own response.

Another way to handle peer reinforcement is to make a group reward contingent on a single student's behavior. For example, tell the class that you will keep a record of the number of times that Chuck cuts up in class. Tell them if he doesn't misbehave more than some criterion number of times, everyone will get to do some enjoyable activity. After stating the contingency, remind the class to be careful not to encourage Chuck by laughing at him or commenting on his behavior. These types of interventions have a good chance of working if the behavior is reinforced by peer attention. Interventions to change a student's behavior that involve the peer group are called ecological interventions.

## STRUCTURED INTERVENTIONS

This section discusses interventions that are structured. Structured means that the interventions require some planning and monitoring and that both antecedents and consequences are used in the intervention. Four types of structured interventions are discussed: group consequences, individual consequences, contracting, and self-management

### Group Consequences

Planning a positive, group contingency for behavior management requires several steps (see Figure 11-7).

1. Decide on a set of behavior rules or expectations.
2. Determine the interval for the contingency. The longer the interval, the more valuable the reward should be. At first, it is better to use a short interval, such as a class period, and progressively lengthen the interval. In most cases, the



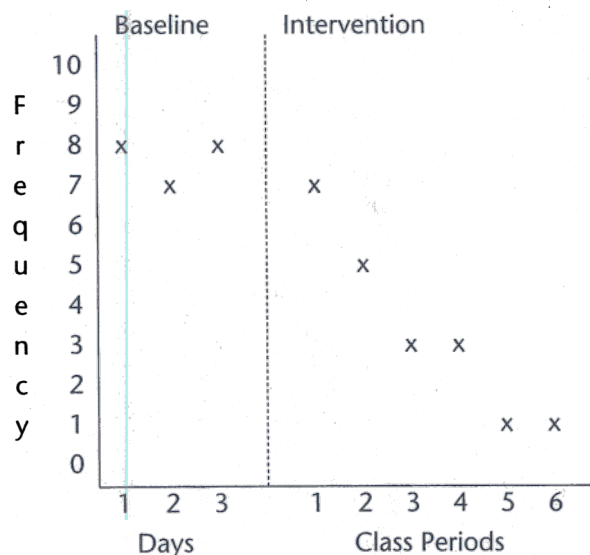
**Figure 11-7****Planning for Group Consequences**

1. What are the behavioral expectations for the contingency? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What will the length of the contingency period be? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What will the criteria be for changing the length of the contingency period? \_\_\_\_\_  
a. To make it longer: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. To make it shorter: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What group rewards will be available? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How will behavior be recorded? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Establish baseline data and graph it.
7. Using the baseline data, determine a criterion for reinforcement. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Will the behavior be changed in a series of steps? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, what will be the size of the steps and the criteria for changing from one step to another?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

interval should not exceed one week. Wait until a contingency is consistently met within an interval before increasing the length.

3. Develop a menu of rewards as consequences for good behavior. Rewards could be game time, music time, video time, or a treat. A menu of choices provides variety and reduces the possibility of satiation. Satiation occurs when a single reward is used repeatedly and loses its incentive value. You can generate a list of possible rewards in several ways. You can get ideas from your experience with students, by surveying students about what they would like, or by sampling. To do a rewards survey, create a checklist of possible reinforcers. Ask your students to rate each reward on a five point (1–5) scale. Label one (1) on the scale as “don’t like” and five (5) as “like very much.” Sampling requires exposing your students to potential rewards and observing their reactions.
4. Develop a record-keeping system. The most frequently used system is tally marks.
5. Take a baseline on the level of rule violation that currently exists. Take the baseline before announcing the reinforcement contingency because the reinforcement contingency will affect the baseline. To take a baseline, keep a private record on a tally sheet of violations of the class rules. These can be either rules that already exist or new rules you plan to introduce. Each recording period should be for the same interval selected to use with the contingency. If the contingency interval will be a class period, each class period will be a separate recording period. Plot the results of each recording period, or an average of all the recording periods for each day, on a graph (see



**Figure 11-8****Record of Class Rule Violations****Violation of Class Rules**

Note: The baseline represents the mean number of violations per class period over a three-day period. Intervention data is by class periods per day.

**Figure 11-8).** Continue doing this until the data line on the graph is relatively consistent across time. You now have a baseline.

6. Set a criterion for reinforcement. If the level of rule violations is low, the criterion can be set at whatever you think is an acceptable level. For example, the average number of violations per class period is ten and five is acceptable. In such a case, the criterion for reinforcement would be five or fewer infractions per period. On the other hand, if the number of infractions is large, the reinforcement criterion should use successive approximations. For example, the average number of violations per period in the baseline is 35, and 5 would be acceptable. It is unlikely that you can move the level from 35 to 5 in a single step. Thus, the initial criterion might be 30 or less. When that criterion is consistently met for several days, change it to 25 and so on until you reach the desired level.
7. Introduce the contingency to the group. Review the class rules with the students. Explain to them that you are going to keep a record on the chalkboard, or in some other public manner, of how often class rules are broken. Tell them the record will start over at the beginning of each class period, or whatever interval you will use. Tell the class that if the number of violations does not exceed 30, or whatever criterion was set, the class will get a reward. Tell them they can select a group reward from your reward menu at the end of each recording period. At this time, you should post a reward menu. If you are using successive approximations, tell the students that the



number of violations allowed may change later. You are now ready to carry out your group contingency.

8. Continue to plot the rule violation data on a chart to help you monitor the intervention. Show on the graph where the baseline data ends and the group consequence data begins with a vertical, phase-change line (see **Figure 11-8**). You may find it helpful to make this graph public. A public graph provides the class with a visual representation of their behavior. Such feedback often will enhance the effect of the intervention.

There are two common problems that may arise with group consequences. First, the intervention may not have the desired effect. That is, the data line on the graph does not begin declining after a trial period, for example, one week. If this happens, the reinforcers on the reward menu may not have enough incentive value for your students. The solution is to find some other rewards for the menu that are more attractive and try them. Another possible reason for a lack of success may be the use of a reinforcement interval that is too long. This happens when your interval is longer than most of the students' ability to delay gratification. For example, you are making reinforcers available at the end of each day, and most of your students can only handle a delay of one class period. The solution is to shorten the initial interval used in the contingency.

The second common problem is that the intervention is working for all but one or two students. The behavior of these students may keep the class from earning a reward. In this case, the rewards on the menu may not have enough incentive value for the problem students. One solution is to try adding some alternative rewards you think will appeal to the errant students. If this does not work, try using peer pressure. Bring peer pressure to bear by allowing the class, by majority vote, to suspend a student. When they vote to suspend a student, the student remains in the class, but rule violations by that student don't count against the group. Of course, if the group earns a reward, a suspended student is not eligible to share it with the class. You can either find some work for a suspended student to do or simply let the student sit and watch the group enjoy its reward. If you permit suspensions, they should only be for short periods, for example, one day. Do not permit suspensions for the same student more than once or twice per week and do not permit suspensions on consecutive days.

The use of the group consequences just described focuses on measurement of inappropriate behavior and reward for reduction in that behavior. It also is possible to turn the procedure around and measure appropriate behavior and reward for an increase in that behavior. Measuring appropriate behavior is logistically a bit more complicated. If you want to emphasize the positive; however, it is worth the extra effort. Assuming there is more appropriate behavior than inappropriate behavior, the least time-consuming way to measure appropriate behavior is to use time-sampling.

In **time-sampling**, you will observe and record behavior only at selected points during an interval such as a class period. Suppose you have a class period that lasts for 30 minutes (9:00 to 9:30), but you don't have the time to continuously observe and record behavior. What you would do is set a fixed number of observation points for the interval, for example, six. You must vary the schedule of observation times to avoid being predictable. This means you should randomly select six one-minute blocks from the observation interval, for example, 9:03, 9:09, 9:12, 9:20, 9:24 and 9:29. You then would observe and record student behavior only at the selected times. In this example, your observation time is reduced by 80 percent relative to continuous observation.

Once you have set up a recording procedure like this, proceed as before but develop a plan to increase behavior rather than to decrease it. Use the same planning form provided earlier for a positive intervention. The only thing that is different is the behavior and its direction.



## Individual Consequences

If you want to use individual consequences for appropriate behavior, you can use Surprise Tokens or Random Drawing. The Surprise Tokens method depends on reinforcers being delivered at times that are not predictable by students. A token is anything, for example, a poker chip or a check mark, that a student can exchange for a reward from a menu. Each reward on the menu has a price set in tokens. The menu should have several rewards of varying attractiveness priced accordingly. That is, the greater the attractiveness the higher the price. If possible, the target behavior should be a response that is incompatible with inappropriate behavior and one you prefer to the misbehavior. For example, the target behavior might be on-task behavior because it is difficult to be on-task and engaged in misbehavior at the same time. It also is a behavior that you want to consistently see in students. The same considerations discussed above, like time intervals between rewards and opportunities to spend tokens, apply here as well.

The key to this intervention is the use of variable intervals for awarding tokens. The easiest way to do this is to use a kitchen timer. You award tokens to anyone engaged in the target behavior when the bell rings. Each time you set the timer, set it for a different length of time. This procedure keeps students from being able to predict when the bell will ring and promotes consistent performance of the target behavior. Consistent performance is the only way to ensure one is performing the target behavior when the bell goes off. Initially, the timer intervals should be short. For example, set a range of from three to nine minutes and then randomly select time settings from this range. When the timer goes off, give a token to each student performing the target behavior when the bell rang. Like any structured intervention, Surprise Tokens requires some planning (see Figure 11-9).

**Figure 11-9**

### Planning for Surprise Tokens

1. What is the target behavior? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What will be used for tokens? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What will be the interval between spending opportunities? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What will the rewards be and what will they cost? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. What will the initial range, in minutes, be for randomly selecting timer intervals from? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What criteria will be used for increasing the interval range for the timer? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How much, in minutes, will the interval range be increased each time? \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:



With monitoring, you also can allow many students to reinforce their own behavior. That is, allow your students to give themselves a point or check mark, if deserved, when the timer goes off. When the target behavior is performed consistently, you can progressively increase the range from which you select intervals. For example, increase the range from three to nine minutes to six to twelve minutes and so on. At token exchange times, allow students to exchange their tokens for whatever rewards they can afford.

The Random Drawing is another procedure you can use to change behavior. This strategy makes use of a drawing to award prizes. Again, some of the earlier considerations, like selection of rewards and intervals, apply here also. The possible target behaviors for a Random Drawing are varied. You might use class rules or one or more behaviors like on-task, task-completion, having necessary materials, or having homework ready. Conduct the intervention by simply allowing students to place a slip of paper with their name on it in a box, jar, can, or other container. For example, place a student's name in the container whenever you decide to reward someone for rule compliance or turning in homework. Sometimes you may target a high frequency behavior that occurs at unpredictable times like hand raising to request help. For such behaviors, combine this procedure with the use of a kitchen timer and use variable intervals as described in Surprise Tokens.

One way to speed up the process is to have students prepare name slips in advance. They can keep these in an envelope or other container to have ready when you ask for one to put into the container. Another method is to cut a strip of names to make each name slip easy to tear away. Have each student tape a strip of names to the front of their desk or wherever you can reach them easily. You also can have each student prepare a master sheet of name slips and use it to make copies. This will decrease the amount of time spent in preparing name slips.

At the end of a game period, for example a day, hold a drawing. The student whose name is drawn receives the prize offered that day. If you want to increase the chances of winning, you can have first, second, and third place prizes. If you have multiple prizes, you can increase suspense by drawing for the first place prize last. You must exercise careful control over the drawing container, so students don't have an opportunity to sneak their name slips into it.

## Individual Contracts

A behavioral contract is another behavior management tool for working on the problems of an individual student. This is simply an agreement between you and a student about some desirable change in behavior. The target behavior should be by agreement, not dictated. Contracts will be most successful if the contract addresses only one specific and discrete target behavior, for example, "Be on time to class" rather than "Act responsibly." The goal for a target behavior should be attainable. Don't ask for large changes in behavior all at once. For large changes in behavior, use successive approximations conducted through a series of consecutive contracts. Finally, write contracts for periods ranging from between one class period and one month. Most contracts should be for short periods. The length of time used will depend on the developmental level of a student and the student's ability to delay gratification. The lower either the developmental level or ability to delay gratification is, the shorter the contract period should be and the smaller the behavioral change expectation. A behavioral contract has several parts:

1. The parties to the contract.
2. The target behavior.



3. The goal for the target behavior.
4. The time period for the contract.
5. The reward available for meeting the terms of the contract.
6. The penalty for failing to honor the contract (optional).

It is best to put a contract in writing. Both parties to the contract should sign it and have copies of it. If contracting is used regularly, develop a basic contract form so copies are easy to make (see **Figures 11-10** and **11-11**). A contract form lets you write a contract by simply filling in blanks.

**Figure 11-10****Sample Contract for Younger Students**

I've Got a Deal You Can't Turn Down

IF YOU \_\_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_\_

THEN I WILL \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 11-11****Sample Contract for Older Students****Performance Contract**

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree that I will meet the following terms and conditions:

no later than \_\_\_\_\_

at which time I will receive \_\_\_\_\_

from \_\_\_\_\_

If I fail to fulfill this contract, I understand and accept the following penalty:

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Self-Management

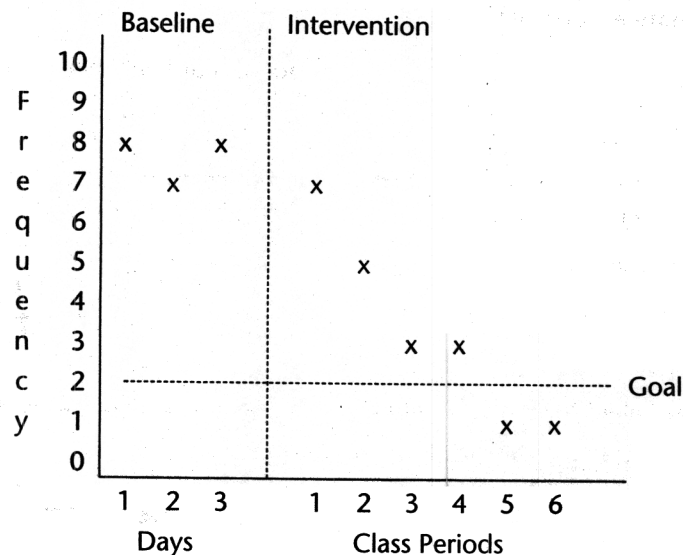
Self-management involves teaching students to monitor, judge, and reward their own behavior. When teaching self-management, you need to actively assist a student. Once a student understands and is able to apply the process, you can reduce your assistance and, eventually, completely withdraw from the process. There are five steps to self-management.

1. Choose a behavior to monitor. Teach the student how to write a brief **behavioral definition** for the behavior. A behavioral definition describes the objective and observable responses or effects of a behavior. For example, daydreaming is not observable but stopping work and looking out a window is observable. Likewise, anger is not observable but hitting someone or tearing something up is observable.
2. Use a recording technique. Teach the student to use **event recording** (a tally) for behaviors such as looking up from a task. Teach **permanent product recording** (a score) for behaviors like the number of spelling words missed on a test. Teach a student to use a watch or a self-rating scale (low 1 2 3 4 5 high) to measure behaviors involving time like gazing out a window.
3. Plot the data on a personal data graph. Help the student set a goal for the target behavior and represent this goal with a horizontal line on the graph (see **Figure 11-12**). The student can then compare current behavior to the goal. Research shows that simple graphic feedback from self-monitoring data can

Figure 11-12

### Personal Data Graph

#### Meeting My Personal Goal



Note: The horizontal line through the graph represents the personal goal the student has set for a target behavior that needs to be reduced.



significantly affect behavior. However, in many cases feedback alone is not enough. In this event, a student can use direct reinforcement.


4. **Apply self-reinforcement.** Teach the student to use self-reinforcement as an aid to reaching a personal goal. Teach students to select rewards that are under their control. For example, going to a movie or buying a music CD are rewards over which a student might have control. If the goal requires a large change in behavior, teach a student to use successive approximation steps towards the end goal. Show the student how to set weekly goals that represent progressive steps toward the end goal. Each of these weekly goals becomes the criterion for reinforcement for the week.
5. **Use contracting to teach self-management.** Use contracts to provide structure while teaching self-management skills. As skills develop, turn over parts of the process to the student and drop them from the contract.

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## SUMMARY



This chapter has introduced you to some basic techniques for behavior management based on the behavioral model. Read some of the references that were cited for additional details as there are many other more advanced behavioral techniques that could not be covered in this chapter. Consider enrolling in a course in behavior modification if you want training in these techniques. Finally, there are other models upon which behavior management techniques are based, for example, various psychological models such as Rational-Emotive Theory. Consider enrolling in a course in methods of teaching students with behavior disorders if you would like training in some of these techniques.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Develop a list of consequences that you might be able to use in a classroom. Organize your list by categories.
2. Draw a floor plan for a classroom that maximizes the use of proximity control.
3. Evaluate the teaching triangle and discuss the pros and cons of using it in a classroom.
4. Describe stimuli you could or do use for signal control (non-verbal signals, body language, verbalizations) in a classroom.
5. Develop a set of rules for the use of the signals describe in the above activity that draws on Kounin's work on the effective use of desists.



6. Develop a description of a student that illustrates the kind of signs that might be observed in a student becoming negatively aroused.
7. Develop two dialogues illustrating the wrong way and the right way to conduct a conversation with a student intended to interfere with what appears to be a state of negative emotional arousal. Include:
  - a. The initial approach to a student.
  - b. Response styles
8. Conduct role plays illustrating how to respond to a student in each of the following response modes: non-responsive, defensive, threatens, explodes.
9. Develop a set of behavioral expectations for a classroom.
10. Develop a personal list of praise words that would be appropriate for your students or students you plan to teach and that you would be comfortable using.



Date:



15. Design a group consequence for good behavior that could be used in a classroom.



16. Design either a Surprise Tokens or Random Drawing procedure that could be used in a classroom.
17. Design a contract form that would be appropriate for students at a particular grade level and use the form to negotiate a simulated contract with someone playing the part of a student.
18. Outline a teaching curriculum for instructing students in self-management.
19. Develop a code of professional conduct or behaviors to guide your interactions with students.
20. Develop a written description of the IDEA disciplinary regulations that would be appropriate for use with students or parents.



## INTERNET RESOURCES

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Mental Health Net  
<http://www.mentalhealth.com>

Applied Behavior Analysis  
<http://www.abainternational.org>

Intervention Techniques  
<http://www.behavioradvisor.com>

Behavior Disorders  
<http://www.ccbd.net>

Attention Deficit Disorder  
<http://www.add.org>

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