Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior

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Agenda

- Defining Challenging Behavior
- Classroom Set-up
- Antecedents - Preventing Challenging Behavior
- Instruction - Teaching a Different Way
- Consequences - Effectively Responding to Challenging Behavior
- Dealing with Escalating Behavior
- Questions
Defining Challenging Behaviors

Predictors and Life Effects
## Defining Challenging Behaviors - Behavioral Excesses
*(Too much of a behavior we do not want)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive- Verbal Aggression</td>
<td>Verbal behaviors to cause emotional harm</td>
<td>taunting, teasing, profanity, making fun of another student, scream at peers or teachers, verbal coercion in the form of threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive- Verbal General</td>
<td>Any other verbal behaviors to disrupt the classroom or school milieu</td>
<td>talking out, tantrums, crying, yelling, making noise, speaking loudly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive- Physical Aggressive</td>
<td>Bodily actions to cause physical or emotional harm to another</td>
<td>hitting, biting, kicking, grabbing, vulgar gestures, head butting, hair pulling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive- Physical General</td>
<td>Bodily actions to disrupt the classroom or school milieu</td>
<td>running, pounding, noise with materials, disrobing, tearing or destroying materials, stealing, throwing self to ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty-</td>
<td>Deliberate misrepresentation of actual events</td>
<td>lying, cheating, stealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic/ Self-stimulatory behavior</td>
<td>Any, typically repetitious behavior, that accesses automatic reinforcement (reinforcement not contingent on the behavior of others) including self-injurious behavior (SIB)</td>
<td>repetitive body movements, self-injurious behavior, chewing objects, flipping fingers, tapping his hand or objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Defining Challenging Behaviors - Behavioral Deficits
(Not enough of a behavior that we do want)

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<th>Behavior</th>
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<tr>
<td>Off-task</td>
<td>Failure to engage in requisite activities</td>
<td>failing to complete work, laying head on desk, not looking at, touching, or searching for a book, sitting and not responding to toys or books, not engaged in an activity he or she should be engaged in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-compliance</td>
<td>Failure to engage in requisite activities after specifically prompted by teacher or other adult</td>
<td>doing opposite of what was asked, refusal to follow an adult’s spoken direction within 10 seconds (5 seconds, 15 seconds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of seat/Out of area</td>
<td>Failure to remain in assigned area including school elopement</td>
<td>leaving the work area without permission, running away from school, any instance in which the student left a designated area without teacher permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation/No social interactions</td>
<td>Any behavior that reduces or eliminates a child’s interactions with others or with their environment</td>
<td>avoids interaction or prefers to play alone, the child is not engaged in social interaction of any kind with peers or adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discipline Works When ....

Prevention creates more Positive than negative consequences

Reinforcement (success)

12:1?
8:1?
4:1?

Punishment (Failure)
Changing Our View

- Take the problem \textit{away from the child} and ask:
  - \textit{Why} is this behavior occurring?
  - \textit{Examine the context} in which the behavior is occurring.

- What \textit{changes can I make to my behavior or the environment to prevent} the problem from occurring and teach the child new skills?
When confronted with challenging behavior…

1) **Recognize**
   - Your own unique set of past experiences, values, instructional practices, and institutional guidelines.
   - Any challenging behavior that persists over time is “working” for the child.

2) **Adjust**
   - Become “comfortable” with challenging behaviors
     - Realize the behavior is not personal
     - The student is trying to satisfy a need

3) **Focus**
   - On prevention

Strain and Hemmeter (1999)
Classroom Set-Up

Before the first child walks through the door…
Setting up for success

- Physical Environment
- Procedures
- Policies
Physical Arrangement

- Seating
  - Teacher’s desk
  - Students’ desks

- Sight lines
  - Teacher positions

- Traffic Flow
  - Associated activities (e.g., pencil sharpening, getting water, using the bathroom, beginning and end of day)
Environmental Arrangement

- Look closely at the physical environment of the classroom to maximize children’s cognitive and social learning potential
  - What needs to be changed to facilitate learning?
  - What changes will help engage the children in learning?
  - What impact would moving things around have on my classroom?
  - What kind of classroom do I want to have?
    - What happens when students sit in (a) rows (b) groups (c) a horseshoe shape
Physical Arrangement

- Space
  - Quiet Vs. Active
  - Centers
- Building Independence in Classroom
- Density of Areas
- Physical Boundaries
- Seating Arrangements
- Materials
Window Sill / Bookcase

CIRCLE
TIME

QUIET
READING
AREA

PLAY
KITCHEN
AND DRESS-UP CLOTHES

Coat Area

Partition

Art Table

Doorway

Window

Sink

BLOCKS
Procedures

What is a schedule?

- A group of symbols (e.g. objects, pictures, written words) that informs the child of the activities that will occur during a designated period of time
- To give the child information about the day
- To teach the child to be independent
- To facilitate interaction with peers, teachers, and family members about what the student has been doing or is going to do
Schedule

- Arrival Times
- Consistent Times
- Sequencing and Length of Activities
- Planned Clean-up/Transitioning Routine
- Productive Learning Times Early
- Explaining Changes
Procedures continued
Staffing Patterns

- Being in position to ‘make the call’
- Zone or Man-to-Man
  - If you have multiple adults in the room, having people in position at all times becomes extremely important.
  - Are you using staff in your classroom to decrease probability of challenging behaviors?
  - Ratio of adults to children

Proximity
Using Non-Verbal Prompts and Cues

- Non-verbal alerts are more effective and efficient.
- They can be used as rule reminders, and advanced organizers.
- Make them part of the routine and system-teach children what they are and what purpose they serve.
Non-Verbal and Verbal Correction Strategies

- Non-verbal Correction Strategies
  - Proximity Control
  - Facial Expressions
  - Hand Signals

- Group Verbal Correction Strategies
  - Describe the Behavior, Describe the Rule that is Being Broken, Describe the Consequence (3-D)
  - Boomerang praise (Praise and reward individuals making the right choice)

- Individual Correction Strategies
  - Correct in private
  - Use their name
  - Broken-record strategy
  - Can you do that? Will you do that? Thank you

- Speak low and slow
  - Breathe from the diaphragm

- Speak as little as possible
  - Your power and authority is negatively correlated with the amount you speak (the more you speak, the less power and authority you have.

- Wait for compliance
Characteristics of Effective Rules

- Expected behaviors are explicit
- Rules are stated positively
- Rules are stated succinctly
- Rules are stated in observable terms
- Rules are made PUBLIC…easy to see
- Ensure enforceability/reward
- Smaller numbers of rules (about 5)
- Consistency
- Rules need to be taught
- Model the rules for the students
1. **Respect Yourself**
   - in the classroom (do your best)
   - on the playground (follow safety rules)

2. **Respect Others**
   - in the classroom (raise your hand to speak)
   - in the stairway (single file line)

3. **Respect Property**
   - in the classroom (ask before borrowing)
   - in the lunchroom (pick up your mess)
Antecedents - Preventing Challenging Behavior
Antecedent Strategy

Pre-correction

At-A-Glance
- **What:** Asking a student a specific question about appropriate behavior, just prior to when that behavior is warranted, requiring the student to make a response indicating both knowledge of the skill and awareness of the impending expectation.
- **Who:** Students who have difficulty remembering to use a particular skill under certain circumstances.
- **Context:** Individual, small group, whole class.
- **Implementation Length:** Brief (less than 30 seconds).

Steps to Implement
- **Identify the context and environment that predict problem behavior.**
  - (Student pushes others on the way to lunch line-up each day.)
- **Determine the most appropriate replacement behavior for the identified context.**
  - (Walk to the line and stand single file.)
- **At the appropriate time, just before the behavior is warranted, ask the student a questions about what is expected.**
  - (“It’s almost lunch time, when we do line up today what will you do?”)
- **Listen to the student’s response and assess accuracy.**
  - If correct, provide praise (“Exactly – good for you!”).
  - If incorrect, reteach the lesson (“Think again. What would be a better way?”).
- **Fade pre-corrections to be less frequent and more subtle.**
  - (“Move from overt verbal questions to gestures. For example, fading away from the verbal prompt may include moving toward a prompt that simply includes catching the student’s eye and pointing to the door with a wink – requiring the student response to be a nod of affirmation.”)
Antecedent Strategy
Behavior Momentum

At-A-Glance

- **What:** A strategy for increasing the probability of compliant behavior by asking a student to do two or three things they typically want to do and then following these requests with a request for a behavior the student typically does not want to do.
- **Who:** Students who are unlikely to comply with directions particularly when the direction includes asking the student to engage in an activity that they do not like.
- **Context:** Individual (or large groups if it is done through activity scheduling)
- **Implementation Length:** 2-5 minutes

Steps to Implement

- **Identify the context and environment that predict problems responding to an initial direction.**
  
  (When the independent work in math starts, the student refuses to get his book out and begin working.)

- **Determine the most appropriate replacement behavior for the identified context.**
  
  (Sit down at his desk and get his math book out.)

- **At the appropriate time, make request of the student that they are likely to comply with.**
  
  (“Tommy would you please pass out paper and see if anyone needs their pencil sharpened?”)

- **Observe the student’s response and assess accuracy.**
  
  If correct, provide praise
  If incorrect, make a request with an even higher probability of getting compliance
  (“Tommy, would you open the classroom windows?”)

- **After giving verbal praise for compliance, make another high probability request**
  
  (“Tommy, will you pass out notebook paper to anyone in the class that needs it?”)

- **After offering more verbal praise for compliance, give a low probability directive.**
  
  (“Tommy, thank you for passing out supplies, please get started on your math worksheet.”)
Antecedent Strategy
Using Choice

- **At-A-Glance**
  - **What**: Students are provided opportunities to independently make decisions between two or more options that affect their daily routine.
  - **Who**: Students who may benefit from the connection between choice and environmental predictability.
  - **Context**: Individual, small group, whole class
  - **Implementation Length**: Brief

- **Steps to Implement**
  - **Provide student(s) with two or three preferred options to determine if one choice can be made and if student(s) follow through with the decision.**
    - (Given the opportunity to choose between puzzle, book, or blocks, student was able to choose one option and follow through with that decision during free time.)
  - **Present choice opportunities in a consistent manner as part of task directions.**
    - (Before handing out the math worksheet, the teacher states that each student will complete the first 10 problems then choose any 5 problems in section two.)
  - **Fade individual choice opportunities by providing the whole class opportunities during ongoing academic activities.**
    - (Vary existing environmental conditions, materials, and natural consequences without creating new instructional materials. For example, students choose where to sit in the room, choose one explorer from a list of explorers to do a report, choose order of language arts activities, or methods to complete task.)
Greeting Students at the Door

- Middle school teachers who greet each student by name along with a sincere and consistent positive statement increase students’ on-task behavior
  - “Student’s name, I’m glad you’re here today.”
  - “Thanks for being on time.”
  - “Thanks for being ready to learn”
  - “It’s good to see you.”

- On-task behavior increased from 37%- 66% for one student
Antecedent Strategy
Modifying Task Difficulty

At-A-Glance

- **What**: Students’ problem behaviors are often a result of frustration with academic work. By re-adjusting a student’s curriculum to less challenging work, students experience success and problem behaviors decrease.
- **Who**: Students who need to increase the amount of time that they are on task and the amount of work that they are completing; also, students who engage in other problem behaviors as a result of frustration with academic work.

Steps to Implement

Determine when new academic concepts might be particularly challenging and cause off-task and/or disruptive behavior for a student. Identify the severity of the behaviors caused by frustration and whether or not the student is completing any of the work.

Determine what academic concepts are related to this new concept but have been mastered by the students.

Formulate assignments that review the mastered material, provide a BRIEF review and assign review problems.

Provide set opportunities for students to complete academic assignments.

If the student continues to struggle, emphasize and praise them for the problems that they were able to complete.

FADE the review material as mastery of the new material increases.

Interspersal of Easy Problems

One step back to take two steps forward

Success Begets Success, Failure Begets Failure
Group Attention Getters

- Give me Five
- Class Name
  - “Bobcats”
- Signal Word
  - “Stop, Look and Listen.”
Antecedent Strategy Opportunities to Respond

Asking questions:
  Say the student’s name after you ask the question
Pacing
Prompting
Rates of response
  Appropriate feedback
  Praise
  Corrective feedback
Low rates of criticism
Antecedent Strategy- Charting and Self-Monitoring

- Charting is a way to display changes in student performance by providing a visual picture of past and current responding.
- Students are more involved in their learning achievement, which develops intrinsic motivation and self-determination.
- Charting is a simple, time-efficient, and low-cost method of allowing students to track progress and make predictions on future responding.
- Teachers also benefit from students collecting and graphing data, as it provides an easy and convenient way to make data-based decisions regarding instruction.
Instruction- Teaching a Different Way
Instruction - Replacement Behaviors

- Nature hates a vacuum
- Teachers spend a lot of time trying to extinguish, or reduce their students’ challenging behaviors but often don’t acknowledge the ‘behavior vacuum’ that they are creating.

Behavior Principle: Every maladaptive behavior that you would like to reduce must be replaced with an adaptive behavior to take its place.
Replacement Behavior Checklist

- Does it get them what they used to get with the old (maladaptive) behavior?
  - What if the old behavior used to get them out of doing school work? How can I let them out of that?
- Do other students use the same behavior in the same way?
- Does it work as quickly as the old behavior?
Components of Effective Instruction

- Give Rationale and Rules
  - Tell them why

- Model
  - Show them how with positive and negative examples

- Lead
  - Guided practice

- Test
  - Curriculum based – non-trained examples
    - i.e., Can they do it?
Four Important Concepts

- Teach Big Ideas
- Use Conspicuous Strategies
  - Tell them what you are going to tell them, Tell them, Tell them what you told them.
- Teach Background Knowledge
  - A standardized test asked 3rd graders in Florida reading comprehension questions about a story about sledding!
- Use Teachable Moments
- Review, Review Review
  - How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, Practice, Practice
Instruction- Teaching Through Examples and Non-examples

- Teach the rules of the concept you are teaching
- Use the examples to illustrate the salient differences
- Continue to point out what matters in the examples
- Role plays, Situational Teaching, Teaching in Context
Prompts
Types of Prompts

- **Physical**
  - Intrusive and only use when other prompts don’t work

- **Model**
  - They watch and copy what they see

- **Gestures**
  - Body movements or signals

- **Visual/pictorial**
  - Pictures that guide behaviors

- **Verbal**
  - Asking a question
Practical Application

Variables that Affect Compliance (Rhodes, Jenson, & Reavis, 1998- The Tough Kid Book)

- Do not use a question format
- Get close when giving a command
- Use a quiet voice, do not yell
- Look students in the eye (look in the left eye - establishes dominance)
- Give the student time
- Do not nag
- Do not give multiple requests (do use the broken record technique)
- Describe the behavior you want
Consequences- Effectively Responding to Challenging Behavior
Consequence Strategies - Not Recommended

- Yelling
- Making it up as you go along
- Ignoring
- Becoming emotional
Consequence Strategy
Token economy

- A lot of different systems for running a token economy
- The problem with many of them are the “tokens” themselves (chips, marbles)- lost, stolen, etc…
- The punch card system is the most effective system I have found.
Consequence Strategy - Token Economy

- **What**: A system in which students earn symbolic reinforcers (tokens) in exchange for specific, appropriate behaviors. These tokens can then be exchanged (or spent) on preferred tangible objects or time doing preferred activities.

- **Special Materials Needed**: Tokens (marbles, poker chips, index cards and hole puncher, strips of construction paper, stickers, pen and paper for check marks, smiley faces, etc…) and preferred items and materials for preferred activities

- **Introduction/Preparation**

- Prior to introducing the token economy to students, determine what behaviors will earn tokens, what type of token will be used, and what rewards can be purchased.

  - (Students will earn tokens for following directions, acting friendly and paying attention. Each student will have an index card representing their point card, and points (tokens) will be awarded using a heart-shaped hole puncher. Each point a student earns will equal a minute of time free activity time at the end of the day).

- Monitor for appropriate behaviors and award tokens immediately. Pair the awarding of tokens with verbal praise. Provide set opportunities for students to trade in their tokens.

- Continue to consistently award tokens throughout the school day. Award tokens to individuals and to the entire class.
Earning Points

- Watch carefully for compliant behavior (sitting calmly, working quietly, standing in line), following directions, paying attention, doing something friendly

- A point is one punch in a card using a hole puncher. These are spent throughout the day for privileges. A point is spent when the teacher circles it in ink. There is no set amount of points for a child to earn. Variable Interval (VI)

- Pair token reinforcement (points) with verbal reinforcement (leads to FADING)
Spending Points

- Privileges
  - AM break, Recess, Kids Choice Lunch
  - Points that are not spent can be banked and used for an auction or special event on Fridays
    - “Where Good Behavior Is A Sound Investment!”
A Scaled-Down Token Economy (for older students)

- With older students (Grade 8 and above) the token economy cannot be as intensive
- I typically use “Bonus Bucks”
- What are Bonus Bucks?
  - A random reinforcer that qualifies them for a chance to earn privileges.
  - Students receive Bonus Bucks for pro-social behaviors, they write their name on the bonus bucks and at the end of the class period you have a quick drawing to earn a reinforcer (reduced homework, sit at the teacher’s desk for the following day, etc…)
- The more Bonus Bucks, the better the chance for reinforcement.
Consequence Strategy

Response Cost

- Response cost is a punishment intervention strategy in which the student loses a pre-defined amount of a reinforcer based on demonstrating an inappropriate behavior.
  - These reinforcers may be minutes at recess, tokens, previously awarded stickers, etc. .
  - Used in conjunction with a token economy
  - Requires some prior planning by the teacher, but it can be implemented quickly, conveniently
  - It typically avoids confrontations with students and it can be effective more quickly than other behavior reduction procedures (e.g. planned ignoring).
Fines

- 10 Physical Aggression
- 10 Lying
- 10 Stealing
- 5 Buy Back
Consequence Strategy - Choosing Reinforcers

- Keep reinforcers novel
- Use the least amount of reinforcement necessary
- Never discount the most valuable reinforcer that you have at your disposal
  - YOU!!!
- Continue to refine your reinforcers
Consequence Strategy- Differential Reinforcement

- Systematic manner of applying both reinforcement and extinction for specific behaviors
  1. **Reinforce** appropriate behavior
  2. **Withhold reinforcement** (extinction) when desired behavior does not occur.

- Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior (DRO)
  - Anything but…(that behavior)

- Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible or Alternative Behavior (DRI/ DRA)
  - Do this (a specific desired behavior), Not that (a maladaptive behavior).

- Differential Reinforcement of Low Rates of Behavior
  - A little of this is ok but too much is not
**Consequence Strategy**

**Behavior Contracts**

- **What:** A formal written agreement of behavior expectations between the teacher and student which specifies
  - (1) clear behavior objectives
  - (2) positive and negative consequences
  - (3) goal
  - (4) review dates to evaluate performance
  - (5) The contract is signed by the teacher, student, and others who participate.

- Determine the most appropriate replacement behavior.
  (Student raises their hand and waits to be called on before talking.)

- Establish a meeting time and place to create a written behavior contract.

- Write the contract using age-appropriate wording and a form of an “If…then…” statement.

- For the first contract, modify the criteria so that the student is more likely to have initial success.
  (Student will raise their hand instead of talking out during Math class on a daily basis for one week.)

- Mutually determine an appropriate reinforcer for meeting the criteria.

- Specify the criteria in writing so that the student and teacher are clear on expected behavior, rewards and duration of the contract.

- (“Let me write this down so that we’ll both remember. If you raise your hand instead of talking out during all of Math class for the entire week, then you will be in charge of running the game at recess on Friday.”)