



RT/MTSS Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools

Managing Classroom Behaviors: A Toolkit

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Workshop Downloads at: <http://www.interventioncentral.org/positivebehavior>

Big Ideas in Classroom Behavior Management

1. **Teach expected behaviors.** Students need to be explicitly taught expected behaviors. They should then be acknowledged and reinforced when they show positive behaviors.

In other words, schools should treat behavior as part of the curriculum: teach it and reinforce it!

2. **Check for academic problems.** The connection between classroom misbehavior and poor academic skills is high.

Educators should routinely assess a student's academic skills as a first step when attempting to explain why a particular behavior is occurring.

If academics contribute to problem behaviors, the student needs an academic support plan as part of his or her behavior plan.

3. **Identify the underlying function of the behavior.** Problem behaviors occur for a reason. Such behaviors serve a **function** for the student. (See the list of possible functions on the next page.)

When an educator can identify the probable function sustaining a student's challenging behaviors, the educator can select successful intervention strategies that match the function—and meet the student's needs.

4. **Eliminate behavioral triggers.** Problem behaviors are often set off by events or conditions within the classroom.

Sitting next to a distracting classmate or being handed an academic task that is too difficult to complete are two examples of events that might trigger student misbehavior.

When the educator is able to identify and eliminate triggers of negative conduct, such actions tend to work quickly and--by preventing class disruptions--result in more time available for instruction.

5. **Focus on factors within the school's control.** Educators recognize that students often face significant factors outside of the school setting--e.g., limited parental support -- that can place them at heightened risk for academic failure and problem behaviors.

Schools can best counteract the influence of negative outside factors and promote student resilience by focusing on what can be provided *within* the educational setting such as skills instruction, tutoring, mentoring, and use of positive behavior management strategies.

6. **Be flexible in responding to misbehavior.** Educators have greater success in managing the full spectrum of student misbehaviors when they respond flexibly--evaluating each individual case and applying strategies that logically address the likely cause(s) of that student's problem conduct.



Problem Behaviors: Common 'Functions'	
Hypothesis	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SKILL DEFICIT. The student lacks the skills necessary to display the desired behavior (Gable et al., 2009). 	If the student has never explicitly been taught the desired behaviors, there is a strong likelihood that behavior-skill deficit is a contributing factor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERFORMANCE DEFICIT. The student possesses the skills necessary to display the desired behavior but lacks sufficient incentive/motivation to do so (Gable et al., 2009). 	Poor motivation is a real and frequent cause of behavior problems. However, schools should first carefully rule out other explanations (e.g., skill deficit; escape/avoidance) before selecting this explanation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCESS TO TANGIBLES/EDIBLES/ACTIVITIES. The student seeks access to preferred objects ('tangibles'), food, or activities (Kazdin, 2001). 	The student may use behavior as a means to gain access to reinforcing experiences, such as food treats, desirable objects to play with, or high-preference activities (e.g., computer games, texting).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEER ATTENTION. The student is seeking the attention of other students (Packenham, Shute & Reid, 2004). 	The student may be motivated by general attention from the entire classroom or may only seek the attention of select peers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADULT ATTENTION. The student is seeking the attention of adults (Packenham, Shute & Reid, 2004). 	The student may be motivated by general attention from all adults or may only seek the attention of select educators.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE. The student is seeking to escape or avoid a task or situation (Witt, Daly & Noell, 2000). 	If the student demonstrates academic ability (e.g., via grades or observed work) close to or at grade level, behavior problems may be tied to motivation issues or attention-seeking. Students with delayed academic abilities are more likely to be driven by escape/avoidance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMOTIONAL OR ATTENTIONAL BLOCKERS. The student possesses the skills to display the desired behavior "but is unable to deal with competing forces—anger, frustration, fatigue." (Gable et al., 2009; p. 197). (This category can also include symptoms associated with anxiety or ADHD.) 	Students fitting this profile typically have difficulty managing their emotions (e.g., anxiety, anger) across settings and situations. However, if evidence suggests that emotional outbursts are linked to <i>specific</i> settings, situations, or tasks, the student may instead be attempting to escape or avoid those particular situations--suggesting poor academic skills or interpersonal difficulties.



Tier 1: Class-Wide Management: MTSS-Behavior Intervention Pathways

Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes (1) teaching behavioral expectations to students; (2) providing strong instruction; (3) using proactive strategies to manage group behaviors; (4) building connections with students; and (5) responding flexibly and appropriately when individual behavior problems occur.

Teachers can use this checklist to build an 'intervention pathway' that promotes effective classroom management and ensures that they are using the right balance of behavior management practices with their students.

1. Behavioral Expectations. Students receive explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors--to include:

- [1.1] **Teaching Behavioral Expectations.** Students have been explicitly taught classroom behavioral expectations. Those positive behaviors are acknowledged and reinforced on an ongoing basis (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007).
- [1.2] **Posting Positive Classroom Rules.** The classroom has a set of 3-8 rules or behavioral expectations posted. When possible, those rules are stated in positive terms as 'goal' behaviors (e.g. 'Students participate in learning activities without distracting others from learning'). The rules are frequently reviewed (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).
- [1.3] **Training Students in Basic Class Routines.** The teacher has clearly established routines to deal with common classroom activities (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). These routines include but are not limited to:
 - Engaging students in meaningful academic activities at the start of class (e.g., using bell-ringer activities)
 - Assigning and collecting homework and classwork
 - Transitioning students efficiently between activities
 - Independent seatwork and cooperative learning groups
 - Students leaving and reentering the classroom
 - Dismissing students at the end of the period

2. Instruction That Motivates. Academic instruction holds student attention and promotes engagement--to include:

- [2.1] **Delivering Effective Instruction.** The teacher's lesson and instructional activities include these components (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008):
 - *Instructional match.* Students are placed in work that provides them with an appropriate level of challenge (not too easy and not too difficult).
 - *Explicit instruction.* The teacher delivers instruction using modeling, demonstration, supervised student practice, etc.
 - *High rate of student responding and engagement.* There are sufficient opportunities during the lesson for students to be actively engaged and 'show what they know'.



- *Timely performance feedback.* Students receive feedback about their performance on independent seatwork, as well as whole-group and small-group activities.
- [2.2] **Maintaining a Brisk Pace of Instruction.** The teacher presents an organized lesson, with instruction moving briskly. There are no significant periods of 'dead time' (e.g., during roll-taking or transitioning between activities) when student misbehavior can start (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Ball, 2008).
- [2.3] **Giving Clear Directions.** When delivering directions to the class, the teacher uses strategies that increase the likelihood that all students hear and clearly understand them (Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001). For large groups, such strategies might include using a general alerting cue (e.g., 'Eyes and ears on me') and ensuring group focus before giving directions. Multi-step directions are posted for later student review. For individual students, the teacher may make eye contact with the student before giving directions and ask the student to repeat those directions before starting the assignment.
- [2.4] **Offering Student Choice.** The teacher provides the class or individual students with appropriate choice-opportunities when completing in-class academic tasks (Jolivet, Wehby, Canale, & Massey, 2001). Offering choice options to students can increase academic motivation and focus while reducing problem behaviors. Examples include allowing students to choose (1) an assignment from among two or more alternative, equivalent offerings; (2) what books or other materials are to be used to complete an assignment; (3) who to work with on a collaborative task.
- [2.5] **Avoiding Instructional 'Dead Time'.** The teacher presents an organized lesson, with instruction moving briskly. There are no significant periods of 'dead time' (e.g., during roll-taking or transitioning between activities) when student misbehavior can start (Gettinger & Ball, 2008).

3. Group Behavior Management. The teacher uses active, positive techniques to manage the classroom--to include:

- [3.1] **Employing Effective Verbal Commands.** The teacher delivers clear directives to students that (1) are delivered calmly, (2) are brief, (3) are stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) use clear, simple language, and (5) are delivered one directive at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Matheson & Shriver, 2005). These directives are positive or neutral in tone, avoiding sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.
- [3.2] **Providing Active Supervision.** The teacher frequently moves through the classroom--strategically recognizing positive behaviors while redirecting students who are off-task (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). As needed, the instructor gives behavioral reminders or prompts, teaches or reteaches expected behaviors, and praises examples of appropriate student behavior.
- [3.3] **Using Group Prompts to Hold Attention.** The teacher gives brief reminders of expected behaviors at the 'point of performance'—the time when students will most benefit from them (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002). To prevent student call-outs, for example, a teacher may use a structured prompt such as: "When I ask this question, I will give the class 10 seconds to think of your best answer. Then I will call on one student."



4. **Student Relationships.** The teacher uses strategies to promote in students a sense of classroom connection and belonging--to include:

- **[4.1] Greeting Students at the Classroom Door.** A personalized greeting at the start of a class period can boost class levels of academic engagement (Allday & Pakurar, 2007). The teacher spends a few moments greeting each student by name at the classroom door at the beginning of class.
- **[4.2] Shaping Behavior Through Praise.** To increase desired behavior, the teacher praises the student in clear, specific terms whenever the student engages in that behavior (Kern & Clemens, 2007). The teacher uses praise statements at a rate sufficient to motivate and guide the student toward the behavioral goal: (1) The teacher selects the specific desired behavior(s) to encourage through praise; (2) The teacher sets a goal for how frequently to deliver praise (e.g., to praise a student at least 3 times per class period for working on in-class assignments). (3) The teacher makes sure that any praise statements given are behavior-specific.
- **[4.3] Maintaining a High Rate of Positive Interactions** Teachers promote a positive relationship with any student by maintaining a ratio of at least three positive teacher-student interactions (e.g., greeting, positive conversation, high-five) for every negative (disciplinary) interaction (e.g., reprimand) (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).

5. **Individual Behavior Management.** The teacher uses flexible, positive techniques to manage behaviors of particular students--to include:

- **[5.1] Giving Pre-Corrections as Behavioral Reminders.** The teacher heads off a problem behavior by proactively prompting or reminding the student to show appropriate behaviors (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Just before a time, situation or setting when problem behaviors are most likely to occur, the teacher 'pre-corrects' by reminding the student of appropriate behavioral expectations.
- **[5.2] Emphasizing the Positive in Teacher Requests.** Whenever possible, the teacher states requests to individual students in positive terms (e.g., "I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat") rather than with a negative spin (e.g., "I won't help you with your assignment until you return to your seat."). When an instructor's request has a positive 'spin', that teacher is less likely to trigger a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance (Braithwaite, 2001).
- **[5.3] Asking Open-Ended Questions to Understand the Problem.** The teacher asks neutral, open-ended questions to collect more information before responding to a student who is upset or appears confrontational (Lanceley, 1999). The teacher can pose 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', and 'how' questions to more fully understand the problem situation and identify possible solutions (e.g., "What do you think made you angry when you were talking with Billy?"). Teachers should avoid asking 'why' questions because they can imply that the teacher is blaming the student.
- **[5.4] Keeping Responses Calm and Brief.** The teacher responds to provocative or confrontational students in a 'neutral', business-like, calm voice and keeps responses brief (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002; Walker &



Walker, 1991). The teacher avoids getting 'hooked' into a discussion or argument with that student. Instead the teacher repeats the request calmly and—if necessary-- imposes a pre-determined consequence for noncompliance.

- **[5.5] Accessing an Array of Supportive Responses to Problem Behavior.** The teacher employs a continuum of ascending positive-behavior responses when problem student behaviors occur—e.g., (1) give a non-verbal reminder; (2) give a verbal reminder; (3) offer assistance or modify the task; (4) provide a safe space for de-escalation (Leach & Helf, 2016).
- **[5.6] Selecting Behavior Management Strategies Matched to Student Need.** The teacher is able flexibly to match behavior management strategies to the needs of specific students, demonstrating their understanding that one type of intervention strategy cannot be expected to work with all learners. (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).
- **[5.7] Employing Negative Consequences Sparingly.** The teacher makes limited use of 'contingent' (negative) consequences to reduce inappropriate behavior. The instructor accesses negative consequences only after first (a) trying supportive consequences, and (b) ruling out explanations for the misbehavior that lie beyond the student's control (e.g., a skill deficit prevents the student from showing the desired replacement behavior). (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012).
- **[5.8] Documenting Classroom Removals.** Students may be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons or to help them to calm down or deescalate problem behaviors. All classroom removals are recorded, including information such as date and time/duration of the removal and a brief narrative of the event (Noltemeyer & Ward, 2015).
- **[5.9] Holding 'Reentry' Conferences.** Soon after any significant in-class incident of student non-compliance, defiance, or confrontation, the teacher makes a point to meet with the student individually to discuss the behavioral incident, identify the triggers in the classroom environment that may have led to the problem, and brainstorm with the student to create a plan to prevent the reoccurrence of such an incident. Throughout this conference, the teacher maintains a supportive, positive, polite, and respectful tone (Fields, 2004).



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A Toolkit: 38 Classroom Ideas to Help Students to Make Better Behavioral Choices

Behavior intervention plans are highly individualized--because every student displays a unique profile of behaviors. However, teachers will find that their chances of helping a student to engage in positive behaviors increase when they include *each* of these 3 elements in their classroom behavior intervention plans:

1. Antecedents: Strategies to promote positive behaviors and prevent misbehavior
2. Positive consequences: Responses that increase positive/goal behaviors
3. Extinction procedures: Responses that extinguish problem behaviors

Every one of these elements plays a crucial role in promoting the success of a behavior plan. Antecedent strategies prevent the student from engaging in problem behaviors in the first place. Positive consequences motivate the student to show desired behaviors, such as academic engagement. Extinction procedures remove the 'pay-off' to the student for engaging in problem behaviors. While any one of the elements might be inadequate to change the student's behavior, the combination of antecedents, positive consequences, and extinction procedures can result in a strong, flexible plan and successful intervention outcome.

Teachers can use this guide to build their own behavior plans using its research-based ideas for antecedents, positive consequences, and extinction procedures.

1. Antecedents: Strategies to Prevent Misbehavior

Teachers have the greatest array of options to influence a student to engage in positive behaviors when they focus on *antecedents*: actions they take *before* the student behavior occurs. Proactive antecedent actions to encourage desired behaviors are often quick-acting, can prevent misbehavior and attendant interruption of instruction, and usually require less teacher effort than providing corrective consequences after problem behaviors have occurred. Teacher strategies to elicit positive student behaviors include making instructional adjustments, providing student prompts and reminders, and teaching students to monitor and evaluate their work performance. Here are specific antecedent ideas that teachers can use to 'nudge' students to engage in desired behaviors:

Antecedents That Prevent Problem Behaviors

- Behaviors: Teach Expectations** (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). Students must be explicitly taught behavioral expectations before they can be held accountable for those behaviors. The teacher should model positive behaviors, give students examples and non-examples of appropriate behaviors to clarify understanding, have students practice those behaviors with instructor feedback; and consistently acknowledge and praise students for successfully displaying positive behaviors.
- Instructional Match: Ensure the Student Can Do the Work** (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008). Student misbehavior frequently arises from an inability to do the academic task. When the student lacks skills necessary for the academic task, the instructor teaches the necessary skill(s). Additional strategies include adjusting the immediate task to the student's current skill(s) and pairing the student with a helping peer.



- ❑ **No: Substitute a Preferred Alternative** (Mace, Pratt, Prager, & Pritchard, 2011). If the student has a pattern of misbehaving when told that he or she cannot access a desired item or engage in a preferred activity, the teacher can use the 'no with preferred alternative' strategy. The teacher prepares by making a list of activities or items preferred by the student that are allowed during the academic situation or setting where problems arise. Then, whenever the student requests an item or activity that is not allowed, the teacher (1) tells the student that he or she cannot access the desired activity or item; (2) provides a brief explanation of why the requested item or activity is off-limits; and (3) immediately offers the student one or more items or activities from the prepared list that *are* allowable in the current situation or setting.
- ❑ **Pre-Session Attention: Provide Antecedent Attention.** If a student appears to misbehave to seek adult attention during an activity such as whole-group instruction, the teacher consistently gives the student a dose (e.g., 3 minutes) of positive individual attention *just before* the session begins (Wood et al., 2018). This pre-session attention can thus reduce that student's immediate attention-seeking behaviors.
- ❑ **Relocate the Student: Remove From Temptation** (US Department of Education, 2004). When the student's problem behaviors are triggered or supported by factors in the environment--such as a talkative peer or difficulty hearing or seeing the instructor--the teacher may choose to move the student to another, less-distracting location in the classroom. A good option is to seat the student within the teacher's 'action zone', close to the instructor and in the region of the room toward which that educator directs most instruction.
- ❑ **Schedule: Increase Predictability** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). When students know the "content, duration, and/or consequences of future events" (Kern & Clemens, 2007; p. 67), their level of engagement rises and problem behaviors decline—a good definition of motivation. A strategy to increase the predictability of events for individual students or an entire classroom is to post or otherwise provide a schedule outlining the day's classroom activities. In simplest form, such a schedule lists a title and brief description for each scheduled activity, along with the start and end times for that activity. Teachers may wish to add information to the schedule, such as helpful reminders of what work materials a student might need for each event. Students who have difficulty interpreting a written schedule may benefit from having their schedules read aloud and/or from having pictorial equivalents included in their schedules.
- ❑ **Work Break: Make It Available on Request** (Majeika et al., 2011). Sometimes misbehavior is an attempt by the student to engineer a break from an academic task. The teacher can choose an alternative method for the student to use to communicate that he or she would like a brief break, such as requesting that break verbally or pulling out a color-coded break card. Of course, the student will also require clear guidelines on how long the requested break will last and what activities are acceptable for the student to engage in during that break.

Antecedents That Encourage Goal Behaviors

- ❑ **Checklist for Academic Skills: Make the Complicated Simple** (Alter, Wyrick, Brown, & Lingo, 2008). When the student must apply several steps to complete a complex academic task, the teacher can give the student a checklist detailing each step and instructions for completing it. Before the activity, the student is prompted to preview the checklist; after the activity, the student uses the checklist to review the work.
- ❑ **Checklist for Challenging Situations: Script Transition Times** (McCoy, Mathur, & Czoka, 2010). Students often struggle with the complexity of managing multi-step routines such as transitioning between classroom activities or moving to different locations within the school. Teachers can assist by making up step-by-step



checklists that 'walk' the student incrementally through the routine. Instructors can use these checklists as guides to teach and measure student success in navigating transitions. Just as important, the student can use the checklist as a prompt and guide to follow the expected steps.

- ❑ **Check Out: Exit Slips** (Hirn & Park, 2012). As the student transitions from small-group or independent work to another activity, give the student an 'exit slip'. This slip can contain short-answer questions to prompt the student to reflect on the learning just completed. It can also include reminders for putting away materials, turning in completed work, or preparing for the next activity.
- ❑ **Choice-Making: Allow for Student Preference** (Green, Mays, & Jolivet, 2011). Students find it motivating to have opportunities to choose how they structure or carry out their academic tasks. Teachers can allow choice on any of a variety of dimensions of a classroom activity, such as where the activity takes place; who the child works with; what materials to work with (e.g., choosing a book from several options); when to begin or end the activity; or how long to engage in the activity.
- ❑ **Clock It: Time-Based Check-In** (Hirn & Park, 2012). While the student is working independently, the instructor checks in periodically (e.g., at 3- or 5-minute intervals) to ensure that the student remains actively engaged and to offer instructional support, praise, or encouragement.
- ❑ **Fix-Up Skills: Foster Work Independence** (Rosenshine, 2008). During independent work, the student should know procedures to follow if stuck (e.g., cannot complete an item; does not understand a word in a reading passage). The teacher creates a routine for the student in how to apply 'fix-up' skills for independent assignments: e.g., "If I don't understand what I have read, I should (1) reread the paragraph; (2) slow my reading; (3) focus my *full* attention on what I am reading; (4) underline any words that I do not know and try to figure them out from the reading" (McCallum et al., 2010).
- ❑ **Greet Students at the Start of Class** (Allday & Pakurar, 2007). As students arrive at the start of class, the teacher stands at the door and briefly greets each student by name. This modest effort has been shown to substantially increase student attention and focus. Teachers who commit to using student greetings rearrange their start-of-class routine to allow them consistently to be standing just outside or inside the classroom door as the students arrive.
- ❑ **Goal-Setting: Get a Commitment** (Martin et al., 2003). One tool to increase student motivation to perform an academic task is to have that student choose a specific, measurable outcome goal before starting that task. At the end of the work session, the student compares the actual outcome to the previously selected goal to judge success. For example, a student about to begin a writing task may choose the goal of locating 3 primary sources for a term paper. Or a student starting an in-class reading assignment might come up with two questions that he would like to have answered from the reading.
- ❑ **High-Preference Requests: Build Behavioral Momentum** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Use 'behavioral momentum' to increase compliance by first directing the student or class to complete several short, simple, high-preference directives that they readily complete (e.g., "Take out a sheet of paper", "write your name on the paper", "copy the assignment from the board") before presenting the student or class with a low-preference directive that they typically balk at (e.g., "Open your books and begin the assignment").
- ❑ **Maintain a High Ratio of Positive Interactions** (Sprick, Borgmeier & Nolet, 2002). To keep relationships on a positive footing throughout the classroom, the teacher self-monitors encounters with particular students and sets



the goal of having at least 3 positive interactions for each disciplinary interaction. Positive teacher-student interactions can vary in format: for example, greeting, praise, conversation, smile, thumbs-up sign. By maintaining at least a 3:1 ratio between relationship-enhancing vs. disciplinary interactions, the teacher bends the odds in his or her favor that every student in the class will view the instructor as fair and caring.

- **Opportunities to Respond: Let Feedback Be Its Own Reward** (Partin et al., 2010). When students are academically engaged, they are usually also behaving appropriately. The teacher's goal, then, is to capture positive student behaviors by structuring lessons and work assignments to require a high rate of opportunities to respond (OTRs). In a complete OTR cycle, the student has an opportunity to respond (e.g., the teacher asks a question, or the student encounters an item on independent work), produces a response (e.g., the student responds to the teacher question or answers the work item); and receives timely performance feedback (e.g., the teacher says, "Right answer!", or the student uses an answer key to check a response).

An efficient way to boost OTRs classwide is through group responding (Haydon, Borders, Embury, & Clarke, 2009). Strategies for group response include choral responding; show of hands; pre-formatted response cards (e.g., with YES and NO written on opposite faces of the card); and individual white boards.

- **Paraphrasing: Have the Student Repeat Directions or Other Key Information** (Mancil & Maynard, 2007). To ensure that the student understands challenging directions, the instructor has the student repeat those directions in his or her own words before starting the task. This paraphrasing strategy can also be used with any other key information (e.g., fix-up strategies) that the student needs for success on the task.
- **Positive Teacher Requests: It's How You Say It** (Braithwaite, 2000). Non-compliant students have a pattern of ignoring or defying teacher requests. However, instructors can increase the likelihood of student compliance by stating their requests in positive terms (e.g., "John, I can help you just as soon as you are back in your seat") rather than in negative terms (e.g., "John, I can't help you unless you are sitting in your seat").
- **Pre-Correction: Plant a Positive Thought** (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Some students need a timely reminder of expected behaviors just before they transition into situations or settings in which problem behaviors tend to occur. At this 'point of performance', the teacher gives the student a timely reminder of goal behaviors, using such prompting strategies as stating goal behaviors, having the student preview a checklist of goal behaviors, asking the student to describe goal behaviors; or praising another student for demonstrating goal behaviors.
- **Response Effort: Reduce Task Difficulty** (Friman & Poling, 1995; Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). The teacher increases student engagement through any method that reduces the apparent difficulty ('response effort') of an academic task - so long as that method does not hold the student to a lesser academic standard than classmates. Examples of strategies that lower response effort include having students pair off to start homework in class and breaking larger academic tasks into smaller, more manageable 'chunks'.
- **Rewards: Choose Them in Advance** (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Just as the student is about to enter a challenging situation or setting in which he or she will need to show appropriate behaviors, the instructor reminds the student of the behavioral expectations and has the student select a possible reward from a menu. The student is later given that reward if behaviors were appropriate.
- **Setting the Tone: Transition Signal** (Hirn & Park, 2012). When moving from a high-structure learning task (e.g., independent seatwork) to a less-structured situation (e.g., lining up for lunch; preparing for dismissal), the



teacher uses an audible tone or other signal to clearly mark that transition. Such a signal helps all students more quickly and appropriately to match behaviors to the current classroom activity.

- **'Two by Ten': Engage in Brief Positive Chats** (Mendler, 2000). If a teacher has a strained (or nonexistent) relationship with a particular student, that instructor may want to jump-start a more positive pattern of interaction using the 'two-by-ten' intervention. With this time efficient strategy, the teacher commits to having a positive 2-minute conversation with the student at least once per day across 10 consecutive school days. The active ingredient in the intervention is regular and positive teacher attention delivered at times when the student is engaged in appropriate behavior.
- **Verbal Commands: Keep Them Brief and Powerful** (Matheson & Shriver, 2005; Walker & Walker, 1991). Teacher commands are most likely to elicit student compliance when they (1) are delivered calmly, (2) are brief, (3) are stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) use clear, simple language, and (5) are delivered one command at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students. Effective teacher commands avoid both sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.

2. *Positive Consequences*: Responses That Increase Positive/Goal Behaviors

Consequences are those events following a student behavior that make it more or less likely that the behavior will occur in the future. This section looks at positive consequences, ideas that teachers can use to reinforce the student for being on-task and showing appropriate behaviors. Among strategies that promote behaviors are providing timely feedback, praise, and teacher attention; as well as allowing students to take temporary work breaks. To foster specific behaviors, the teacher can use any of the following strategies:

- **Performance Feedback: Information is Rewarding** (Conroy et al., 2009). When students receive timely feedback about their academic performance, this information can reinforce academic behavior and reduce misbehavior. Instructional feedback comes in many forms: e.g., teacher oral or written feedback; class discussion and review of an assignment; oral feedback from class peers; student self-directed completion of a rubric or problem-solving checklist during an independent assignment.
- **Praise: Catch Them Being Good** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Research suggests that teacher praise is one of the most powerful--yet underused-- of classroom management tools. When a student, group, or class displays an appropriate pro-social or pro-academic behavior, the teacher reinforces that behavior with a targeted praise statement containing two elements: (1) a specific description of the praiseworthy behavior, and (2) an expression of teacher approval (e.g., "You worked for the full independent-work period. Nice job!"; "I really appreciate the way that our student groups stayed on-task and completed their entire assignment.").
- **Scheduled Attention: Rechannel Adult Interactions** (Austin & Soeda, 2008). As every educator knows, teacher attention can be a potent motivator for student behavior. One strategy to increase positive behaviors is to 'catch the student being good' with regular doses of 'scheduled attention': (1) The teacher decides on a fixed-interval schedule to provide attention (e.g., every 8 minutes); (2) At each interval, the teacher observes the student; (3) If the student is engaged in appropriate behaviors at that moment, the teacher provides a dose of positive attention (e.g., verbal praise; non-verbal praise such as thumbs-up; brief positive conversation; encouragement). If the student is off-task or not behaving appropriately, the teacher briefly redirects the student to task and returns immediately to instruction until the next scheduled-attention interval.



3. *Extinction Procedures*: Responses That Reduce or Eliminate Problem Behaviors

Extinction means discontinuing the reinforcing consequences of behaviors to erase an individual's motivation to engage in those behaviors. In effect, extinction procedures 'cut off the oxygen' to problem behaviors. That is, explicit directions should be written into a behavior intervention plan to guide those working with the student to alter their responses to problem behaviors in a manner designed to remove reinforcement for the misbehavior.

An explicit plan to extinguish problem behaviors is an *essential* part of most student behavior plans (Hester et al., 2009). Without extinction procedures, educators are far too likely accidentally to continue reinforcing the very behaviors they are trying to eliminate. The teacher wishing to extinguish specific behaviors can try one or more of the following strategies:

- ❑ **Escape Breaks: Put Escape on a Schedule** (Waller & Higbee, 2010). The teacher can manage a student who uses disruptive behavior to escape or avoid academic work by scheduling 'non-contingent escape breaks'. First the teacher selects a reasonable work interval for the student-- this should be an interval slightly shorter than the average amount of time that student *currently* will work before misbehaving (e.g. 5 minutes). Next, the teacher decides how long the brief 'escape break' will last (e.g., two minutes). Finally, the teacher identifies motivating activities that the student can engage in during escape breaks (e.g., coloring; playing a math application on a computer tablet). When the intervention is in effect, the teacher directs the student to begin work and starts a timer. When the student's work interval is done, the teacher directs that student to take a break and again starts the timer. When the break is up, the student is directed to resume work. This process repeats until the work period is over. As the student's behaviors improve, the teacher can gradually lengthen the work periods until the student is able to remain academically engaged for as long as typical peers; at this point, the intervention is discontinued.
- ❑ **Choice Statements in 2 Parts: Frame the Alternative Consequences** (Walker, 1997). The teacher frames a request to an uncooperative student as a two-part 'choice' statement: (1) The teacher presents the negative, or non-compliant, choice and its consequence (e.g., "John, you can choose to stay after school today to finish this in-class assignment."); (2) The teacher next states the positive behavioral choice that the student is encouraged to select (e.g., "Or you can finish your work now and not stay after school. It's your choice."). If the student fails to comply within a reasonable time (e.g. 1 minute), the teacher imposes the disciplinary consequence.
- ❑ **Contingent Instructions: Move from 'Stop' to 'Start'** (Curran, 2006; Gable. Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009). When the instructor observes that a student is engaging in problem behavior requiring a response, the teacher delivers contingent instructions in a 3-part format.
 1. *STOP statement*. The teacher directs the student to STOP a specific problem behavior, e.g., "Joshua, put away the magazine."; "Annabelle, return to your seat."
 2. *START statement*. After a brief (1-2 second) pause, the instruction describes the appropriate replacement behavior that the student should START, e.g., "Open your book to page 28 and begin the end-of-chapter questions."; "Work with your partner to solve the math problem on the board."



3. *PRAISE for compliance.* As the student begins to engage in the desired behavior, the teacher concludes by PRAISING the student for compliance. e.g., "Thank you for starting your book assignment, Joshua.", "I see that you and your partner are solving the math problem, Annabelle. Good!"
- **If/Then Statements: Set the Conditions** (Majeika et al., 2011). When the student is engaging in a problem behavior, the teacher can use an 'if/then' statement to prompt that student to engage in the appropriate replacement behavior. For example, if a student is out of seat without permission, the teacher says, "Shelly, if you return to your seat, then I will come over and answer your question." Of course, when the student responds by displaying the positive behavior, the teacher follows through with the promised action and praises that student for compliance.
 - **Planned Ignoring: Turn Off the Attention** (Colvin, 2009). When the student engages in minor misbehavior to attract teacher attention, planned ignoring is a useful strategy. In planned ignoring, the instructor withholds attention when the student engages in the problem behavior. Ignoring problem behavior can remove the source of its reinforcement and thus help to extinguish it. Teachers should remember, though, that planned ignoring alone is seldom successful. Instead, planned ignoring becomes much more powerful when, at the same time, the teacher provides regular attention whenever the student engages in positive, replacement behaviors. In fact, the tandem efforts of (1) removing teacher attention from misbehavior while (2) rechanneling that attention toward positive behaviors is one of the most effective behavior management combinations available.
 - **Praise Peers: Shape Behavior Through Vicarious Reinforcement** (Majeika et al., 2011). Teacher approval can be a powerful motivator. The teacher can capitalize on this fact by publicly praising on-task peers sitting near the target (misbehaving) student. When the target student then engages in academic work, the teacher makes sure to praise that student as well.
 - **Precision Requests: Make Directives and Consequences Clear** (De Martini-Scully, Bray, & Kehle, 2000; Musser, Bray, Kehle, & Jenson, 2001). The *precision request* structures communication with the student in a concise, respectful format that preserves adult authority and increases the likelihood of student compliance. In preparation, the teacher decides on appropriate consequences for non-compliance. Examples of suitable consequences include loss of free time, phone call to a parent, loss of a point or token, or restriction of activities at recess. When making a precision request, the teacher follows these steps:
 1. *Make first request: "Please..."*. The teacher states a brief request that starts with the word 'Please' and -- whenever possible--frames the request as a goal behavior rather than as a behavior to stop (e.g., "Rick, please open your math book and begin the assignment written on the board"). The teacher then waits 5 seconds for the student to comply. If the student complies, the teacher praises the student (e.g., "Thank you for starting your math assignment").
 2. *Make second request: "I Need..."*. If the student fails to comply with the first request within 5 seconds, the teacher repeats that request. This time, the teacher starts the request with the phrase "I need..." (e.g., "Rick, I need you to open your math book and begin the assignment written on the board"). Again, the teacher waits 5 seconds for the student to comply. If the student complies, the teacher praises the student (e.g., "Thank you for starting your math assignment").
 3. *Deliver consequence for non-compliance.* If the student fails to comply to the second request within 5 seconds, the teacher follows through in delivering the pre-determined consequence for non-compliance.



- **Redirect the Student: Get Them Back on Track** (Dhaem, 2012; Simonsen et al., 2008). When the teacher observes the student begin to engage in problem behaviors, the instructor redirects that student back to task, either verbally (e.g., "Tom, stop talking and start your assignment") or non-verbally (e.g., giving that student a significant look and negative head shake). Redirects should be brief and calm in tone. NOTE: Teachers can also redirect without distracting the class by using 'tweets'--brief behavioral reminders written on post-it notes and placed on the student's desk.
- **Response Cost: Deduct for Misbehavior** (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002). Response cost is a strategy in which the teacher assigns an incentive (e.g., points, tokens, or classroom privileges such as free time) to the student at the start of the session. Each time that the student misbehaves during the session, that student loses a point, token, or increment of privilege (e.g., losing 5 minutes of free time). At the end of the session, the student is awarded any points, tokens, or privileges that remain. In preparation for response cost, the teacher must establish incentives that the student(s) would value--either setting up a classwide or individual point/token system tied to rewards or making available classroom privileges. The student(s) must also be trained in how the response cost system operates, including a clear understanding of what problem behaviors will result in response-cost deductions and what positive, replacement behaviors they are expected to display.

Response cost, like all punishment strategies, should be used only when it is clear that the problem behavior is fully under the student's control. Before using response cost, the teacher should ensure that the student has the required skills, training, and self-control to avoid the problem behavior and to engage in a positive, replacement behavior.

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