

Preventing and Responding to Problematic Behaviors

Andrew L. Egel, Ph.D.

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Differential Reinforcement

- A procedure in which a specific, desirable behavior is followed by a reinforcer while other behaviors are not. The result is an increase in the desirable behaviors and extinction of the other behaviors.

Reducing Problem Behavior Through Differential Reinforcement

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviors (DRO):

Reinforcing a student for emitting any behavior other than the inappropriate behavior for a specified time period.

Example: A student is reinforced for any behavior other than talking out of turn during reading group.

Reducing Problem Behavior Through Differential Reinforcement con't.

Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behaviors (DRI):

Reinforcing a student for exhibiting a behavior that cannot be exhibited at the same time as the inappropriate behavior.

Example: Reinforcing a student for in-seat behavior when reducing out-of-seat behavior. The two are incompatible; they cannot occur at the same time.

Reducing Problem Behavior Through Differential Reinforcement con't.

Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviors (DRA):

Reinforcing a more appropriate behavior that the teachers or parents wish a student to learn, instead of exhibiting the inappropriate behavior.

Example: Reinforcing a student's use of an alternative communication system rather than his/her engaging in a tantrum when making requests.

Managing Behavior During Ongoing Daily Routines

- Behavior=communication
 - All behaviors (adaptive or maladaptive) are a form of communication. The question is, what is your student communicating when s/he engage in problem behavior?
 - Students often engage in problem behavior for the following reasons:
 - Gaining attention, Escape/avoidance of something unpleasant, sensory consequences
 - Helpful to identify communicative intent when developing intervention plan so that your plan matches the communicative intent of your student's problem behavior.
 - Maintained by attention; teach appropriate way to gain attention
 - Maintained by escape/avoidance; teach appropriate way to escape/avoid (ask for a break, ask for more time, ask for help).

Managing Behavior During Ongoing Daily Routines con't.

- Behavior, even behavior that looks very similar, can serve very different functions. That means that the same behavior exhibited by different students may have different functions.

Managing Behavior During Ongoing Daily Routines, con't.

- Problem behaviors are less likely to occur in highly reinforcing environments.
- Reinforcement
 - Definition
 - Presentation of a stimulus following a response that increases the likelihood that the response will occur again.
 - A behavior or response happens.
 - Something is immediately added to the environment that was not present before behavior occurred.
 - Behavior occurs more frequently in the future

The more reinforcement provided (“catching your student being good”), the less likely it is that problem behaviors will occur.

Examples of Reinforcement

Stimulus	Response	Reinforcement	Effect
Teacher: "Time to put your shoes on."	Student puts his shoes on	Teacher: "You put your shoes on!! Now you can go outside and play."	Increased likelihood that student will put his shoes on next time he is asked.
Teacher: "Take out your math sheet and complete the problems on the page."	Student takes out math sheet and completes problems correctly.	Teacher: "Thanks for finishing your math. You can watch your favorite movie until the timer goes off."	Increased likelihood the student will complete math problems next time she is asked.
Teacher: "Eat your vegetables and you can have your favorite dessert."	Student eats vegetables.	Teacher: "Great job eating your vegetables!" Here is your favorite dessert."	Increased likelihood the student will eat his vegetables next time he is asked.

Managing Behavior During Ongoing Daily Routines, con't.

- Reinforcers are used to help motivate students to learn new skills. Students with ASD are not typically motivated by social feedback so we need to provide an additional incentive or “payoff” for them.
- Reinforcers teach that the response they gave you is correct based on your request/instruction.
- Select reinforcers that you think the student will “work” for. You can identify preferences by asking students what they want or by watching and seeing which materials they choose to interact.
- Choose a reinforcer that is more interesting when you are involved with them, such as blowing bubbles, wind up toys, polishing nails. This creates opportunities for increased engagement and social exchanges.

Using ABC to Assess Function/Communicative Intent of Behavior

- Observe what happens **before** unwanted behavior occurs (Antecedents).
 - Did you give your student enough warning before transitioning to the next activity?
 - Are you repeating questions over and over again, making too many language demands?
 - Was your student focused on a favorite activity and their play was interrupted?
 - Is the environment overstimulating?

Using ABC to Assess Function/Communicative Intent of Behavior, con't.

- Observe what happens **after** unwanted behavior occurs (Consequences).
 - Does your student's behavior allow him to avoid/delay doing something that is difficult?
 - Does your student's behavior result in attention from other adults, peers, etc.?
 - Does your student's behavior allow her to gain access to a tangible reinforcer?

Example of ABC

ABC of Adaptive Behavior

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Difficult puzzle	Ana asks for "help"	Mother helps, Ana finishes puzzle
Full stomach	Max says, "I'm done"	Teacher excuses him from the table

ABC of Problem Behavior

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
TA sits with Billy	Steve pulls hair of student sitting next to him	TA sits with Steve
Teacher hands out math quiz	Joan throws paper to the floor and screams "I am not going to do this!"	Teacher sends Joan to the office

ABC Behavior Chart

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Teacher:** _____

Date	Time/ class	<u>Antecedent/Trigger:</u> What happens RIGHT BEFORE the behavior of concern	<u>Behavior:</u> Describe what happened-detail the behavior of concern	<u>Consequence/Response:</u> What happens as a result of the behavior	Adult working w/student

ABC Behavior Chart

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Teacher:** _____

Date	Time/class	<u>Antecedent/Trigger:</u> What happens RIGHT BEFORE the behavior of concern	<u>Behavior:</u> Describe what happened-detail the behavior of concern	<u>Consequence/Response:</u> What happens as a result of the behavior	Adult working w/student
2/22	10am/ Lang arts	Teacher giving assignment to class	Student yells : "Stop talking so loud"	Teacher tells him to listen quietly	TJ
2/22	10:15 Lang arts	Teacher correcting papers at his desk	Student yells: "Jerry what is your answer to number 3"	Teacher tells him to stop yelling out in class.	TJ
2/22	10:45 Lang arts	Teacher announces that it is time for a spelling test; hands out the test	Student: Rips up spelling test and yells out "I am not going to take this."	Teacher tells him he will get an "F" if he does not take the exam	TJ
2/22	12:00	Teacher asks students to line up for lunch	Student: Crawls over to the door and yells out "I forget how to walk."	Other students laugh at him.	TJ

Case Study #1

- Dylan is presented with a packet of work to complete independently. Dylan begins to whine and refuses to work. He argues with the teacher and throws his work on the floor. His teacher says “It’s okay Dylan, I know this hard for you. Let’s take a break.” As a result, Dylan whines, argues, refuses to work and throws his work on the floor the next time he is presented with a packet to complete independently.
- What is the function/communicative intent of Dylan’s behavior?

Case Study #2

- Jill whines and cries. Mr. Smith goes over and rubs her back, verbally comforts her, and offers her a snack. Jill whines and cries more often in the presence of Mr. Smith.
- What is the function/communicative intent of Jill's behavior?

What is Included in a Behavior Support Plan?

1. Procedures for teaching new REPLACEMENT skills.
2. Strategies for RESPONDING so that new skills are maintained and acknowledged.
3. Strategies for modifying the curriculum, environment, activity, or interactions to PREVENT the occurrence of the behavior.

Replacing

- Teach alternatives to challenging behavior
- Replacement skills must be efficient and effective (work quickly for the student)
- Consider skills the student already has
- Make sure appropriate behavior is consistently reinforced

Possible Replacement Skills

- For behavior maintained by attention (positive reinforcement)
 - Raising hand
 - Ask to talk to teacher/peer
 - Ask to work with peer
 - Ask for “high five” from teacher/peer
 - Ask teacher for help
 - Ask for a turn
- For behavior maintained by escape/avoidance (negative reinforcement)
 - Request a break
 - Ask for a different/modified assignment.
 - Ask to sit in the rear of the classroom
 - Say “no”
 - Say “all done”

Responding

- What adults will do when the challenging behavior occurs to ensure that the challenging behavior is not reinforced and the new skill is learned.
- A good basic strategy is to redirect the student to use an alternative skill or a new skill.
- Make sure rewards for appropriate behavior equal or exceed the rewards for challenging behavior.

Examples of Responding

- Redirect student to use replacement skill.
- Praise/reinforce when replacement skill is used.
- State exactly what is expected.
- Cue with appropriate preventions strategy

Preventing

- Prevention strategies reduce the likelihood that the student will need or want to use the challenging behavior.

Prevention Strategies

- How can the environment be changed to reduce the likelihood that the behavior will occur?
- What procedures can I select that fit in with the natural routines and structure of the classroom or family?
- How can I build on what works?
- What can be done to help the student deal with or avoid behavior triggers?

Possible Prevention Strategies

- Advanced reminder of transition times/Safety signal
 - Important because it does not require an abrupt switch from one activity to another which may lead to disruptive behavior.
 - Verbal reminder, set a timer, use picture cues, etc.
- Anticipate situations that are likely to lead to problem behaviors
 - Identify requests that lead to disruptive behavior and show in advance what your student will receive after they complete your request.
- Make sure that your instructions are in the form of a statement rather than a question (e.g., “Are you ready to put your shoes on?” vs. “It is time to put your shoes on”) unless you are truly offering a choice.
- Offering choices using pictures or actual objects.
- Select reinforcer prior to activity (“when you put the toy away, you can go outside”).

General Strategies for Responding to Problem Behaviors

- Provide attention when your student is behaving appropriately, not when he is engaging in problem behavior
 - Don't respond by telling your student to "calm down" or "stop crying".
 - Remember, your student is engaging in the behavior to communicate with you.
- Make sure you stay quiet and calm while prompting your student to complete what you requested.
 - When a student is upset there is a temptation to talk more; explaining or giving more directions. Verbal bombardment can be overstimulating and escalate behavior.
 - By prompting your student to comply with your request, you also teach your student that their behavior will not result in a delay in their having to follow your direction
- Give clear visual instructions (pictures, gestures) to show your student what she can do. Use very short directions.
- Instructions should be positive
 - Ask your student to do something rather than asking them not to do something

Preventing and Responding to Behaviors maintained by Attention (Socially mediated positive reinforcement)

- Create a rich, reinforcing environment and provide lots of attention (praise, smiles, hugs, tickles) for all appropriate behavior
- Teach an appropriate means of requesting attention (e.g., vocalization, ASL sign, PECS) and provide the attention contingent upon this new replacement behavior
- NEVER reinforce the problem behavior. In other words, IGNORE all instances of the behavior by not providing 1) eye contact, 2) verbal redirection/reprimand, or 3) physical contact.

Example 1: How Not To Respond

- Whenever Molly pulls her peers' hair during circle time, the TA, Susan, diverts her attention from the student she is sitting with, explains the classroom rules and how it's not nice to pull hair, and sits next to Molly for the remainder of the activity.
- One would hypothesize from this profile that pulling hair serves an attention function for Molly. Every time she pulls a peers' hair during circle she receives attention from Susan. Susan has inadvertently reinforced this behavior by providing attention every time it occurs.

Example 2: Positive ways to respond

- Provide Molly with lots of attention in the form of verbal praise, hugs, social gestures (thumbs up, smiles, high-fives) throughout circle time contingent upon non-occurrences of hair pulling
- Teach Molly an appropriate means for requesting attention from Susan and other preferred people in her environment. Because Molly is non-verbal at this time, teaching her to tap someone on the shoulder and/or vocalize and gesture or sign “come here” would some functional means for Molly to gain the attention of others.
- Post “Classroom Rules” that includes “no hair-pulling” and discuss the rules only when the students in the class are behaving appropriately (i.e., not in response to incidents of problem behavior)
- When/if hair-pulling does occur, IGNORE the behavior COMPLETELY. Do NOT make eye contact with Molly, do not speak to Molly, and do not sit next to Molly. Be sure that the other student is free of Molly’s grasp and provide that student with lots of attention. Perhaps, teach this student to tell Molly to “stop it”.
- Note: With Attention seeking behaviors such as Molly’s, the teachable moments are throughout the day, NOT following the problem behavior.

Preventing And Responding To Behaviors Maintained By Student Escaping/Avoiding Something Unpleasant (Socially Mediated Negative Reinforcement)

- Create a visual schedule, allowing the student the opportunity to anticipate future activities
- Create reinforcement contingencies wherein the student receives positive reinforcement in the form of a preferred activity, or tangible following completion of a less preferred or non-preferred activity.
- Imbed choices within less preferred activities
- Use a timer to indicate how long a student must engage in the less preferred activity before he can move on to a preferred activity
- NEVER allow the student to escape or avoid a demand!
- When appropriate, teach the student to request a break from a less preferred activity or teach them to appropriately refuse a less preferred activity