Impact

Ernie Vigil, shown here with his mother Darlean Urban, had some turbulent years in high school until he turned things around. Today, he's graduated, pursuing his career goals, and raising his son. See story below.

Choosing a Better Road: Ernie's Story

by Jesse Gallegos

Ernie Jarvis Vigil remembers when, as a freshman at Robertson High School in Las Vegas, New Mexico, he started hanging out with seniors and found himself partying all the time. His mom, Darlean Urban, describes it as "he pretty much lost control." "During my freshman year, I was found carrying a knife and was suspended from school for two weeks," Vigil, now 19, recalls. "When I turned 16, I went back to school drunk and spent the weekend in jail. I spent my birthday in jail," he says. Darlean used the authorities as a means to help her son. "It was my decision not to take him home that day. I called the cops," says Darlean. "I felt that was what I had to do, so he wouldn't do it again. He had a juvenile probation officer, and for the next six months it was really hard." But that didn't seem to deter him. "It was a point in my life where no one was going to tell me what I was going to do," says Ernie, who used the excuse of his mom and dad getting a divorce for his belligerent behavior. Those are just some of the stories Ernie remembers, stories he hopes he will never forget because at some point he changed his life.

In his junior year, he and his girlfriend had a little boy, Esteban. "I started thinking what I had to do in my life. I told myself that I wanted my child to do things I didn't get a chance to do because of my own decisions. I wanted him to play basketball and be in other sports," says Ernie. "When I had my baby, I started to pay more attention in school. I was already living with my girlfriend. I was handling a job, school, a girlfriend and myself. I knew I had to take care of myself before I took care of anyone else."

From the Editors

In today's K-12 schools, educators must effectively work with increasingly diverse populations in their classrooms. This includes educating students identified as having emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) in the general education classrooms and ensuring their inclusion in all aspects of the school community. This can be a challenging task for several reasons. To effectively educate students with EBD there must be collaboration between all the instructional and administrative staff in the school; everyone must be "on the same page" in implementing prevention and intervention efforts. In addition, there must be a willingness on the part of teachers to explore new teaching methods that more actively engage students with EBD. Ongoing staff development and training are needed to update and maintain educator skills in working with students with EBD. And sufficient resources must be available at the school and district level to sustain programming. This Impact describes how these and other challenges are being addressed around the country, and offers strategies that have been demonstrated to improve positive educational and social outcomes for students with EBD in today's K-12 schools.

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Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Promoting Positive Outcomes

by Camilla A. Lehr and Jennifer McComas

Public schools are designed to provide instructional programs that foster the educational success of all students and shape citizens who can contribute in positive ways to society. Working to promote successful school experiences for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) can be a particularly challenging task because of the necessity for multi-faceted and cohesive programming to effectively meet multiple needs.

Promoting successful school experiences for students with emotional/behavioral disorders can be a particularly challenging task because of the necessity for multi-faceted and cohesive programming to meet multiple needs.

Identification of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

An emotional/behavioral disorder can be described in the following way:

- Emotional or Behavioral Disorder (EBD) refers to a condition in which behavioral or emotional responses of an individual in school are so different from his/her generally accepted, age appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that they adversely affect performance in such areas as self care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behavior, or work adjustment.

- EBD is more than a transient, expected response to stressors in the child's or youth's environment and would persist even with individualized interventions, such as feedback to the individual, consultation with parents or families, and/or modification of the educational environment.

- The eligibility decision [for special education services] must be based on multiple sources of data about the individual's behavioral or emotional functioning. EBD must be exhibited in at least two different settings, at least one of which is school related.

- EBD can co-exist with other [disabling] conditions.

- This category may include children or youth with schizophrenia, affective disorders, anxiety disorders, or who have other sustained disturbances of conduct, attention, or adjustment.

(National Association of School Psychologists, 2004, p. 1)

Information from the *Twenty-fourth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) indicates that states served 5,775,722 students ages 6 through 21 under IDEA in 2000-2001. Nearly 474,000, or about 18%, of those students were identified as students with EBD. This is less than 1% of the entire student population in 2000-2001. The *Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health* (U.S. Public Health Service, 2000) proposes the actual number of students with EBD is much higher. This suggests that many of the children and youth who could qualify for service under IDEA may not be identified and may not receive adequate supports to assist them with emotional and behavioral challenges they face both in and out of school settings.

On the other hand, we find that children and youth who are African American are disproportionately over-identified as having EBD. Many concerns have been expressed about minority children being misplaced in special education, especially in certain disability categories. Researchers have determined the level of risk for various subgroups associated with being identified as having EBD. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education, analyses suggest that Black children are 2.88 times more likely than White children to be labeled as having mental retardation and 1.92 times more likely to be labeled as having an emotional/behavioral disorder (Losen & Orfield, 2002). Although students with disabilities are entitled to receive supports and services tied to their individual needs, the concern is that too often minority students are educated in separate settings, subject to lower expectations, and excluded from educational opportunities. While minority populations are often at greater risk of living in poverty, many individuals argue that the effect of poverty does not adequately explain the racial disparities in identification of EBD. Research suggests that unconscious racial bias, stereotypes, inequitable implementation of discipline policies, and practices that are not culturally responsive may contribute to the observed patterns of identification and placement for many minority students.

School and Post-School Outcomes

Much of what we know about students with EBD has been gathered through the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS). This study collected data on the lives of youth with disabilities in their high school years and in their transition to adulthood during the early 1990s (Wagner et al., 1991). Overall, outcomes

for youth with EBD were found to be "particularly troubling." These youth showed a pattern of disconnectedness from school, academic failure, poor social adjustment, and involvement with the criminal justice system. Data from the Office of Special Education Programs shows that youth with EBD are at greatest risk of dropping out of school as compared with students in other disability categories; in 1999-2000, 51% of students with EBD age 14 and older dropped out of school (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Furthermore, we know that as a group, a higher percentage of these youth are incarcerated or are not employed as compared to other students with disabilities after high school.

Instructional Settings

Where are students with EBD served? In general, they experience general educational instruction to a lesser degree than youth with disabilities as a whole. On average, 16% of youth with EBD take all of their courses in special education settings (compared with 9% of youth with disabilities as a whole who take only special education courses). Many also attend alternative schools, which are generally designed to serve students placed at risk of school failure due to circumstance or ability (e.g., behind in credits, suspended, pregnant or parenting). In addition to these settings, a high proportion of youth who are incarcerated have disabilities. One conservative estimate suggests that about 32% of youth in juvenile corrections have disabilities (Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone, 2001). Nearly 46% of the incarcerated youth with a disability were identified as having EBD. Most often, the transition back into the traditional school setting for these students is unsuccessful, and they go elsewhere (e.g., alternative schools, back into juvenile corrections, or drop out altogether).

Risk Factors Contributing to Student Outcomes

Findings from the current National Longitudinal Transition Study – 2 (NLTS2) suggest that students with EBD differ from the general population of youth in ways other than their disability (Wagner & Cameto, 2004). For example, as compared with the general population of youth, youth with EBD are more likely to live in poverty, have a head of household with no formal education past high school, and live in a single parent household. Nearly 38% of the NLTS-2 sample had been held back a grade, 75% had been suspended or expelled at least once, and about two- thirds were reported to have co-occurring attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Students with EBD also experience greater school mobility than other youth with disabilities; 40% had attended five or more schools since kindergarten. Moving to multiple schools can be considerably disruptive and significantly decrease the chances of continuity across instructional programs. In addition, frequent moves increase the difficulties associated with establishing positive long-term relationships with adults and peers, and can heighten feelings of alienation and limit the sense of belonging.

Shifting From Deficits to Strengths

We know quite a bit about students with EBD (e.g., characteristics, numbers, factors placing them at increased risk of school failure, where they are served, outcomes). Fortunately, we also know much about effective strategies that we can use with these students to improve their success in school and after they leave school. Shifting from a deficit model that focuses on multiple risk factors and moving toward a focus on strengths is a difficult, yet necessary, step for those who hope to foster resilience, enhance competence, and facilitate successful school experiences for students with EBD.

Beginning with a Solid Foundation

With the move toward greater inclusion and providing instruction in the general education curriculum, there is an increased need for general education teachers to be well-informed about how to effectively educate students with EBD. It is essential for teacher education programs to train general educators to work

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with the increasingly diverse populations in their classrooms (including students with varying disabilities, abilities, socioeconomic standing, and cultural backgrounds). Necessary skills include the ability to actively engage students in coursework that is relevant to student backgrounds and interests, effectively organize a classroom environment, and manage student behavior using strategies that are evidence based (e.g., techniques to increase active student responding, small group or peer tutoring, applied principles of reinforcement, use of immediate feedback). In addition, opportunities for staff development must be provided on a regular basis to update and maintain skills.

Providing Supports at Varying Levels: The Three-Tiered Model

Students with or at risk for EBD can be provided with supports at a variety of levels. A three-tiered model that provides a framework for thinking about the provision of supports includes prevention at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (Sugai & Horner, 2002):

School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Investing in Student Success

by Robert Horner, George Sugai and Claudia Vincent

Problem behaviors, such as aggression, defiance, truancy, property destruction, disruption, and self-injury remain a major challenge in schools and a dramatic barrier to academic achievement. Historically, schools have assumed that social skills should be learned at home, and that children who behave inappropriately at school should be identified and given a strong disciplinary message that such behavior will not be tolerated. When the "get tough" response does not result in an immediate elimination of the problem behavior, next steps are exclusionary (e.g., suspensions), in some cases moving children to "special" contexts. Students identified with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) are especially at risk of exclusion from general education settings, even though they are likely to benefit most from the typical social interactions occurring in general education classrooms (Panacek & Dunlap, 2003).

Exclusionary approaches have never been effective, and as the number of students with problem behavior has increased, schools face an overwhelming demand from teachers and families to respond. In a variety of ways policymakers, school boards, administrators, and teachers are being asked to make schools safe, positive, predictable places of learning. Increasingly and ironically, schools that do not invest in building a positive social culture have difficulty achieving the academic standards that are now expected.

School-wide positive behavior support (SW-PBS) is an approach that begins with a school-wide prevention effort, and then adds intensive individualized support for those students with more extreme needs. SW-PBS has five core strategies:

- Focus on preventing the development and occurrence of problem behavior, which is more effective, cost-efficient, and productive than responding after problem behavior patterns have become ingrained.

- Teach appropriate social behavior and skills. Because children come to school from many different backgrounds, schools must define the core social expectations (e.g., be respectful, be responsible, be safe), and overtly teach the behaviors and skills associated with these expectations. When all students in the school are taught the same social skills, a social culture is established where students not only have personal knowledge about social expectations, they know that everyone in the school knows those same social expectations.

- Acknowledge appropriate behavior. Students should receive regular recognition for appropriate behavior at rates that exceed rates of recognition for rule violations and problem behaviors. Negative consequences alone will not change problem behavior. Instead of ignoring problem behavior, a continuum of consequences (e.g., correction, warning, office discipline referral) for problem behavior should be maintained and used to prevent escalation and allow instruction to continue in class.

- Gather and use data about student behavior to guide behavior support decisions. Data on what problem behaviors are being observed and how often, where and what time of the day they are occurring, and who is engaging in these problem behaviors enable schools to develop the most effective, efficient, and relevant school-wide behavior support plan.

- Invest in the systems (e.g., teams, policies, funding, administrative support, data structures) that support adults in their implementation of effective practices.

Over the past six years, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has invested in technical assistance to states and districts choosing to implement SW-PBS. Over 2900 schools across 34 states are now implementing or in the process of adopting SW-PBS. Implementation is occurring primarily in elementary and middle schools, but the approach is now being adapted, applied, and studied in over 200 high schools. A 90-school study using a randomized, wait-list, control group design is currently being funded by OSEP to assess the a) impact of technical support on the ability of schools to adopt SW-PBS practices with high fidelity, b) impact of SW-PBS practices on the social and academic outcomes for students, and c) sustainability of SW-PBS practices and outcomes over time. Evaluations that have accompanied implementation of SW-PBS efforts identify the following seven key "lessons learned" that have relevance for future policy and practice (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Horner, Sugai, Todd & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, 2004):

- Most schools in the U.S. are not implementing the evidence-based practices associated with SW-PBS. As part of the technical assistance process, schools have been assessed prior to adopting SW-PBS practices. On average, schools are using less than half the basic features, and none of the schools evaluated have demonstrated effective implementation prior to receiving technical assistance.

- When technical support is provided, schools are successful in adopting the evidence-based practices associated with SW-PBS. Typically, school teams composed of five to seven individuals

receive three, one- to two-day training events each year for two years. Schools throughout the country have documented the ability to adopt SW-PBS practices with high fidelity when they receive this level of support.

- Once schools adopt SW-PBS practices to criterion they are likely to sustain those practices over long time periods. Longitudinal studies indicate that SW-PBS practices have sustained up to 10 years following implementation, even with turn-over in administrators and core team members. In a recent evaluation of schools in Illinois, 86% of schools adopting SW-PBS in 2002-03 sustained or improved their level of implementation in 2003-04.

- When SW-PBS is implemented to criterion, results indicate the following improvements in academic and social behavior outcomes: a) 20-60% reduction in office discipline referrals for students with and without Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), b) increases in the time students spend in instruction, c) decreases in the amount of time administrators and teachers spend addressing problem behaviors, and d) improvement in the perception of school safety and mental health through decreases in "risk factors" and increases in mental health "protective factors." In addition, preliminary results indicate that SW-PBS implementation is associated with a decrease in the number of students identified for tertiary interventions because of intense support needs (Eber, 2005).

- When investments are made in both behavior support and effective instruction, improvements in academic performance are experienced. During 2002-03, 52 elementary schools in Illinois using SW-PBS to criterion were compared with 69 schools that were just adopting SW-PBS and were not at criterion. On average, 62.19% of third graders in schools using SW-PBS met or exceeded the state reading standard. By comparison, an average of 46.6% of third graders in schools not using SW-PBS met the same standard.

- Investing in development of local systems is an effective strategy for moving from small "demonstrations" to larger-scale applications. Implementation of SW-PBS involves not simply training for school teams, but training of a) local coaches or facilitators who work closely with teams to build and sustain evidence-based practices, and b) local trainers who are able to conduct team training on a distributed format within two years. By investing in building the capacity of local states/districts to train and evaluate SW-PBS, the cost of training the third and fourth generations of teams is reduced. External trainers and national technical assistance becomes less necessary. For example, in Illinois a state system of trainers and coaches now supports over 444 schools implementing SW-PBS. In Maryland, a state system of trainers and coaches supports over 321 schools implementing SW-PBS.

- Implementation of SW-PBS is cost effective. Schools are able to adopt SW-PBS and establish local coaching and training infrastructure within a two-year initiative process. The cost to schools to sustain SW-PBS requires no additional dollars. This approach is about using existing resources better, not adding new costs. The cost of problem behavior in schools is a hidden drain on school resources. For example, when Kennedy Middle School implemented SW-PBS they documented improved student behavior, with an annual reduction of 850 office discipline referrals and 25 student suspensions from the pre-implementation level. This change translated into a time savings of 30 administrator days and 121 student school days.

In summary, schools will not achieve the academic standards we now require if they fail to build the positive social culture needed for sustained academic engagement. Traditional punishment and exclusionary strategies are not effective practices for improving student behavior. SW-PBS is an innovative combination of evidence-based practices that emphasize investing in a) prevention, b) teaching of basic social expectations, c) acknowledging appropriate behavior, d) preventing problem behavior from interrupting instruction, e) collecting and using data for active decision-making, and f) establishing the organizational and policy structures that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of practice adoption, implementation, and durability. SW-PBS is being used on a significant scale across the country with strong evaluation outcomes in both behavioral and academic domains.

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Fostering Student Success: Five Strategies You Can (and Should) Do Starting Next Week

by Larry Kortering and Patricia Braziel

Youth with emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) have a difficult time completing a high school education. Specifically, a recent report from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education (2002), puts their school completion rate (including that of students with standard diplomas and alternative certificates) at less than 50%. The lack of a high school education, combined with

> *Fostering success in high school for youth with EBD is challenging and complex. This article outlines five practical strategies that should be a part of any secondary education program.*

the nature of their disability, greatly jeopardizes the likelihood they will become productive adults (Bullis, 2004). In addition, research shows that these youth seldom access services beyond those offered in high school (Hight, 1999), making their secondary special education program their final opportunity to secure an education, services or training.

Fostering success in high school for youth with EBD is challenging and complex. This article does not address this complexity, but rather outlines five practical strategies that should be a part of any secondary education program: access to vocational assessments, explicit links between learning and adult life, opportunities to control their destinies, involvement in the non-academic side of schooling, and engagement in the learning process. These strategies are low cost, ready for implementation, and come from our research over the past 12 years that has focused on improving secondary programs from the perspective of students. The research has included interviews with hundreds of youth with learning or behavior disabilities, surveys with over 5,000 high school youth, and related experiences in high school general education classrooms and various teacher workshops.

The strategies involve three assumptions about youth with EBD. First, nearly all report a desire to get a high school education (Kortering, Braziel & Tompkins, 2002). Second, they are informed consumers of high school services; they have a distinct perception of what works, services that will help them succeed, and what they want to learn (Kortering, Tompkins, & Braziel, 2002). Third, to help these youth become productive adults, we must help them access and succeed in the general education classroom. With these assumptions in mind, the remainder of this article outlines the five strategies to foster student success.

Access to Vocational Assessments

The first strategy is use of vocational assessments. Their proper use provides a basis to understand youth with EBD in terms of individual talents, weaknesses, and ambitions. Youth also enjoy participating in these assessments because they have the opportunity to focus on an exploration of themselves and to know that a school professional is interested in helping them. Generally, a minimal vocational assessment would include a background survey about their family, personal interests and ambitions, an interest inventory to establish insight into their likes and dislikes relative to career options, aptitude testing to determine if they have special talents that otherwise would go unnoticed, and personality assessment to better understand their preferences and personal style in school and work settings (see Kortering, Sitlington, & Braziel, 2004 for a further description).

Links Between Learning and Life

Our research consistently shows that the most prominent motivation for wanting to be in school is youths' perceptions that in some way it is preparing them for what they consider a productive adulthood. This adulthood, in their view, could entail getting them ready for college or related training, entry-level employment or simply providing them with the means to enjoy life as an adult. Teachers must nurture this motivation by providing direct links between in-school learning and their desire to have a productive life after high school. These links must be convincing in the sense that they leave school at the end of the day with the perception that what they did in school enhanced the likelihood of becoming a productive adult. Youth who fail to see this connection often turn to other options, namely the decision to drop out of school.

Opportunities to Control Destiny

The easiest strategy is to help educators learn how to provide youth with EBD opportunities to control their destiny in the classroom, a sort of self-determined learning if you will. Such opportunities range from the freedom to simply choose which problems to do (e.g., let them chose to do even or odd or any 20) to having the freedom to select how to do an assignment (e.g., with peers or not, alternative forms of test taking or demonstrating knowledge). We rou-

tinely have high school teachers reporting surprise at how responsive students become when given such opportunities.

Non-Academic Involvement

The most powerful low-cost strategy to keep youth with EBD in school is to get them involved in the non-academic side of schooling including sports, clubs, Reserve Officers Training Cadets (ROTC) or related activities. The power of this recommendation comes from giving youth a chance to participate (and often succeed) at something that, while non-academic, is school related. It also provides youth with an opportunity to work with adults and peers in an environment that generally proves less threatening. Participating in such activities helps youths to develop a sense of belonging and positive relationships, while contributing to their personal development.

Engagement in the Learning Process

The final strategy focuses on helping general educators actively engage youth with EBD. This recommendation is the most difficult to implement. Success in general education is generally the only means to obtain the level of education that allows access to suitable employment (i.e., jobs with benefits, advancement, and adequate wages) or post-secondary training. Yet, these youth consistently fail to access needed content information in their high school academic classes. Aside from the nature of their disability, these youth report that their engagement in learning hinges on access to supportive teachers who provide interesting and relevant opportunities to learn (Kortering, Braziel & Tompkins, 2002). The proper response requires that special educators help teachers move away from the traditional "talk and chalk" and "overhead" approach toward a Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This move, as it relates to UDL by offering an accessible curriculum, enhances a youth's ability to demonstrate knowledge while accessing content in a more engaged manner that should evolve into usable learning strategies for post-school learning or work environments. With attention to UDL, teachers can reexamine their teaching with a new focus on multiple representations of course information (e.g., visual graphics to display information), means of student engagement (e.g., hands-on learning opportunities for key concepts), and student expression (e.g., allowing students options to demonstrate their learning).

Conclusion

In closing, we have learned that students with EBD who fail to get a basic education have very limited options as they attempt to transition from school to a productive adulthood. As teachers, we need to appreciate their unique challenges while working to do whatever it takes to help them obtain an education, including doing the five fairly simple things described in this article that can help engage them in learning.

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Resources of Interest

The following resources on topics related to this Impact issue may be of interest to readers:

• *Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (www.air.org/cecp). The center's Web site has an extensive collection of free resources of use to teachers, mental health practitioners, child welfare workers, juvenile justice personnel, and families involved with young people who have serious emotional disturbance. Topics include functional behavioral assessment, positive behavioral intervention plans, prevention and early intervention strategies, promising practice in children's mental health, strength-based assessment, wraparound planning, strengthening the safety net, cultural competence, juvenile justice, and more.*

• *Safe and Responsive Schools Project (www.indiana.edu/~safeschl). The project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is dedicated to enabling schools and school districts to develop a broader perspective on school safety and violence prevention, stressing comprehensive planning, prevention, and parent/community involvement.*

• *Teaching and Working with Children Who Have Emotional and Behavioral Challenges (2000). By M. Quinn, D. Osher, C. Warger, T. Hanley, B. Bader, & C. Hoffman. A guidebook designed to aid teachers, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses, principals, paraprofessionals, and parents in their work and interaction with children who have emotional and behavioral problems. It promotes a strengths-based approach that considers the whole child, and addresses the needs of all students, not just those with difficulties. Available from Sopris West (product code W24889) at www.sopriswest.com and 303/651-2829 or 800/547-6747.*

Creating Caring Schools

by Howard S. Adelman and Linda Taylor

School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students. But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge. – Carnegie Council Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents (1989)

"Leave no child behind" is a statement of caring. Caring has moral, social, and personal facets, and when all facets are present and balanced, they can address problems, nurture individuals, and facilitate the process of learning. Good schools are ones where the staff works cohesively not only to teach effectively, but to provide supports that address barriers to student learning. Good teaching paired with comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive learning supports combine to prevent learning, behavior, and emotional problems; address problems quickly and effectively when they arise; and ensure the promotion of positive social and emotional development. Good schools do all this in ways that create an atmosphere that encourages mutual support, caring, and a sense of community. Schools whose improvement plans do not assign these matters a high priority are unlikely to be experienced as caring institutions.

While such a caring environment enhances the outcomes for all students, staff, and families, it is especially important for students who need additional support to succeed in school, such as students with emotional/behavioral disorders. A caring school anticipates there will be students with such needs for support by introducing programs designed to promote mental health and prevent problems, creating programs that are easily accessible when students show the first signs of needing more assistance, and having interventions that maximize the likelihood that students will be successful in their classrooms and out-of-class activities.

Fragmented and Marginalized Efforts

Looked at as a whole, most districts offer a wide range of programs and services oriented to student needs and problems. Some are provided throughout a district, others are carried out at or linked to targeted schools. Some are owned and operated by schools; some are from community agencies. The interventions may be for all students in a school, those in specified grades, those identified as "at risk," and/or those needing compensatory or special education.

Student and teacher supports are provided by various divisions in a district, each with a specialized focus such as curriculum and instruction, student support services, compensatory education, special education, language acquisition, parent partnerships, and intergroup relations. Such divisions are commonly organized and operate as relatively independent entities. In large districts, this often is the case for counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other specialists. And, at the school level, there is currently a tendency for these student support staff to function in relative isolation from each other and other stakeholders, with a great deal of the work oriented to discrete problems. In some schools, a student identified as at-risk for grade retention, dropout, and emotional/behavior problems may be assigned to three counseling programs operating independently of each other. Such fragmentation not only is costly, it works against developing cohesiveness and maximizing results (Adelman & Taylor, 1997).

Although various divisions and support staff usually must deal with the same common barriers to learning (e.g., poor instruction, weak parent partnerships, violence and unsafe schools, inadequate support for student transitions and for students with disabilities), they tend to do so with little or no coordination and sparse attention to moving toward integrated efforts. Furthermore,

in every facet of a school district's operations, an unproductive separation often is manifested between those focused directly on instruction and those concerned with student support. It is not surprising, then, how often efforts to address students' learning, behavioral, and emotional needs are planned, implemented, and evaluated in a fragmented, piecemeal manner. Moreover, despite the variety of student support activities across a school district, it is common knowledge that many schools offer only bare essentials.

Caring Requires Rethinking Supports

Policymakers have come to appreciate the relationship between limited intervention efficacy and the widespread tendency for programs to operate in isolation. Concern has focused on the plethora of piecemeal, categorically funded approaches, such as those created to reduce learning, behavior, and emotional problems; substance abuse; violence; school dropouts; delinquency; and teen pregnancy. Some major initiatives have been designed to reduce the fragmentation. However, policymakers have failed to deal with the overriding issue, namely that addressing barriers to development and learning remains a marginalized aspect of school policy and practice.

The degree to which marginalization is the case is seen in consolidated school improvement plans and certification reviews. It is also seen in the lack of attention to mapping, analyzing, and rethinking how the resources used to address problems are allocated. For example, educational reformers have virtually ignored the need to reframe the work of pupil services professionals and other student support staff. Such reframing would expand their roles to include leadership in developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning at

school sites in a way that fully integrates learning supports with instruction. This lack of attention to rethinking resource use seriously hampers efforts to provide the caring assistance teachers and students so desperately need.

Needed: A Policy Shift

Clearly, current policies designed to enhance support for teachers and students are seriously flawed. And, the situation is unlikely to improve in the absence of concerted attention to ending the marginalized status of student learning supports (Adelman & Taylor, 2000, 2002). Increasing awareness of the policy deficiencies has stimulated analyses that indicate current policy is dominated by a two-component model of school improvement. That is, the primary thrust is on improving instruction and school management. While these two facets obviously are essential, effectively addressing problems requires establishing a third component that addresses barriers to learning in ways that enable students to learn and teachers to teach. Such an "enabling" component provides both a basis for combatting marginalization and a focal point for developing a comprehensive framework to guide policy and practice. To be effective, however, it must be established as essential and fully integrated with the other two components.

Various states and localities are moving in the direction of a three-component approach for school improvement (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004a). In doing so, they are adopting different labels for their enabling component. For example, the Iowa and California Departments of Education call it a "learning supports" component. This is also the terminology used by the New American Schools' Urban Learning Center comprehensive school reform model. Some states use the term "supportive learning environment." The Hawaii Department of Education calls it a "comprehensive student support system (CSSS)." In each case, policy shifts have recognized that, over time, schools must

play a major role in establishing a continuum of interventions ranging from a broad-based emphasis on promoting healthy development and preventing problems, through approaches for responding to problems quickly after onset, and extending on to narrowly-focused treatments for severe problems.

Reframing How Schools Address Barriers

School-wide approaches to address barriers to learning are especially important where large numbers of students are not doing well and at schools that are not yet paying adequate attention to considerations related to equity and diversity. Leaving no child behind means addressing the problems of the many who are not benefitting from instructional reforms. Because of the complexity of ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school, policymakers and practitioners need an operational framework to guide development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive enabling or learning supports component. Pioneering efforts have operationalized such a component into six programmatic arenas (Adelman & Taylor, 1997, 2000, 2002; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004a, 2004b). Based on this work, the intervention arenas are conceived as:

- Enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning (i.e., improving instruction for students who have become disengaged from learning at school and for those with learning, behavior, and emotional problems).

- Supporting transitions (i.e., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes and many other transitions).

- Increasing home and school partnerships (i.e., enhancing school capacity to provide families with opportunities for learning, special assistance, and participation).

- Responding to and, where feasible, preventing crises (i.e., school-wide and classroom efforts to prevent, respond to, and minimize the impact of crises).

- Increasing community involvement and support (i.e., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers).

- Facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed (i.e., providing special assistance as necessary, including direct services and referrals).

As a whole, this six-area framework provides a unifying umbrella to guide the reframing and restructuring of the daily work of all staff who provide learning supports at a school.

Conclusion

A caring school enables learning by addressing barriers. Collaboration and collegiality are key facets in all this. The programs that emerge from a well-designed and developed enabling component are fundamental to enhancing a supportive and caring context for learning by all students. The implications for student and staff well-being, for learning, and for the future of every student are more than evident.

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Ten Alternatives to Suspension

by Reece L. Peterson

The suspension or expulsion of students with emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) has been problematic and controversial. Requirements of IDEA, and case law before that, have indicated that long-term suspension or expulsion violate the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) guarantee for students with disabilities. Schools have struggled to meet these requirements, but the problems with suspension and expulsion are larger than issues of EBD or disability.

Today, many schools are rightfully concerned about the numbers of all types of students who are being suspended or expelled for their behavior. This concern is driven by the over-representation of some minority groups among those who are suspended or expelled from school (Wu, Pink, Crain & Moles, 1982; Townsend, 2000; Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002). Equally important is the emerging research that indicates that these consequences are not likely to change the inappropriate behavior of the students involved, nor do they serve to deter other students from engaging in the same behaviors (Skiba, Peterson & Williams, 1999, 1997). Instead, these consequences make the suspended student's academic progress more difficult, and they may increase the likelihood of the student dropping out of school or having other negative outcomes.

As a result, many schools are beginning to examine their school discipline policies with an eye to making them both more effective and less reliant on traditional exclusionary consequences. These changes may also help schools to better serve students with EBD. Schools that try to improve their discipline system ask the questions "What do we use in place of exclusionary consequences in our discipline policies?" and "What are some disciplinary consequences which might be more effective?" The examples that follow illustrate the kinds of actions that could be built into a school's formal disciplinary code of conduct as part of an array of consequences for inappropriate behavior. Each of these examples has at least some research demonstrating positive behavioral-change outcomes for students, and is an opportunity to maintain or re-engage students in school rather than pushing them out of school. While additional information beyond that provided here will be needed for appropriate implementation, the examples below describe multiple promising alternatives to suspension:

- Problem solving/contracting. Negotiation and problem-solving approaches can be used to assist students in identifying alternative behavior choices. The next step should involve developing a contract that reminds the student to engage in a problem-solving process, and which includes reinforcers for success and consequences for continuing problem behaviors.

- Restitution. In-kind restitution (rather than financial restitution, which often falls on the parents) permits the student to help to restore or improve the school environment either by directly addressing the problems caused by the student's behavior (e.g., in cases of vandalism students can work to repair things they damaged), or by having the student improve the school environment more broadly (e.g., picking up trash, washing lockers).

- Mini-courses or skill modules. Short courses or self-study modules can be assigned as a disciplinary consequence. These should be on topics related to the student's inappropriate behavior, and should be designed to teach the student to have increased awareness or knowledge about the topic, thus facilitating behavior change. These modules might include readings, videos, workbooks, tests, and oral reports on a range of topics such as alcohol/drug use or abuse, strategies for conflict resolution, anger control strategies, social skills (e.g., getting along with peers, making behavior appropriate for the setting), and appropriate communication skills (e.g., appropriate and inappropriate language, how to express disagreement).

- Parent involvement/supervision. Parents should be invited to brainstorm ways they can provide closer supervision or be more involved in their child's schooling. Better communication and more frequent contacts between teachers and parents, as well as coordinated behavior-change approaches, are very useful and could be formalized into a disciplinary consequence.

- Counseling. Students may be required to receive additional supports or individual counseling from trained helping professionals (e.g., counselor, school psychologist) focused on problem solving or personal issues interfering with learning.

- Community service. Programs that permit the student to perform a required amount of time in supervised community service outside of school hours (e.g., volunteer at another school or an organization) should be created.

- Behavior monitoring. Closely monitoring behavior and academic progress (e.g., self-charting of behaviors, feedback sessions for the student) will permit rewards to be provided for successful performance.

- Coordinated behavior plans. Creation of a structured, coordinated behavior support plan specific to the student and based on a hypothesis about the function of the target behavior to be reduced should be created. It should focus on increasing desirable behavior, and replacing inappropriate behaviors.

- Alternative programming. Provide short- or long-term changes in the student schedule, classes or course content or offer the option of participating in an independent study or work-experience program. Programming should be tailored to student needs, and permit appropriate credit accrual and progress toward graduation. Change of placement or programming must be made by the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team for students with EBD or other disabilities.

- Appropriate in-school suspension. In-school suspension should be provided and include academic tutoring, instruction on skill-building related to the student behavior problem (e.g., social skills), and a clearly defined procedure for returning to class contingent on student progress or behavior. The environment should be carefully managed to guard against using in-school suspension as a way to avoid attending classes.

Many of these will be familiar to teachers who have worked with students who have EBD and there is a promising research base for these alternatives. Other alternatives might also be generated. Some schools are already using some of these, but few are using very many of these, and fewer yet use these systematically as a coordinated behavior improvement strategy built into their disciplinary codes of conduct.

To make these alternative options work as a disciplinary consequence, some "prerequisites" may also be needed. A school climate supportive of positive behavior, efforts to build positive interactions, appropriate instruction, and ongoing close supervision may prevent behavior problems from growing to crisis proportions and requiring disciplinary consequences. Here are several examples of programs that support the previous alternatives to suspension:

- Creating a caring school community and climate. Programs that attend to patterns of good communication and problem solving, having clear patterns of authority and decision making, procedures for developing and implementing rules, helping students feel they belong and are welcome, good curriculum and instructional practices, and having a clean and positive physical environment.

- Efforts to build adult-student relationships. Programs offering opportunities for students to develop individual relationships with staff.

- Increased parent involvement. Programs that involve a variety of parents and community members in functions and activities within the school, and maintain communication about their children.

- Character education/ consistent school values. School curriculum and organization features that promote the development of fundamental values in children. Typically these list desirable goals for student behavior.

- Early identification and intervention. Programs that permit systematic screening of students for potential behavior problems, and which provide interventions for the students identified as at "risk."

- Mediation programs. Programs that teach students about non- violent conflict resolution and permit students to use and experience these in school. Peer-mediation is one example.

- Bullying prevention and intervention. Programs that teach students about bullying behaviors and how they can be reported to teachers. Specific interventions are created for both bullies and victims.

- Conflict de-escalation training. Programs that teach staff and students to recognize and to disengage from escalating conflict.

- School-wide discipline program. Programs that develop a common terminology and consistent approach to discipline across school staff. Responsibilities of students and staff are identified, consistency in rule enforcement is increased, and consequences are identified for positive and negative behaviors occurring anywhere in school.

- Positive office referrals/recognition. Programs that "catch students being good" and identify, reward, and celebrate individual students for appropriate behavior (e.g., attendance, being on-time, improving grades, meeting behavior goals).

Each of these "prerequisites" is also supported by a body of research which indicates positive, promising effects on student behavior in school. If they are to be effective, these "foundations" must be implemented in such a way as to become a normal part of that school's culture. They enable the "disciplinary alternatives" listed earlier to be effective by providing the context and skills for appropriate behavior. They may permit a substantial reduction in the use of suspension and expulsion as disciplinary options, and have the side effect of decreasing staff stress related to behavior, and increasing academic achievement for all students. They may also provide a way to reduce the involvement of students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the problems associated with suspension and expulsion.

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Using Self-Monitoring Strategies to Address Behavior and Academic Issues

by Rachel L. Loftin, Ashley C. Gibb, and Russell Skiba

Students with behavioral and academic difficulties typically have limited awareness and understanding of their own behavior and its effects on others. Self-monitoring interventions equip students to recognize and keep track of their own behavior (Hoff & DuPaul, 1998; Rhode, Morgan, & Young, 1983). Using these strategies, students can learn to identify and increase positive, pro-social behaviors, the behaviors necessary for success in general education settings. Self-monitoring interventions are among the most flexible, useful, and effective strategies for students with academic and behavioral difficulties (Mitchum, Young, West, & Benyo, 2001). They have demonstrated efficacy for targeting a range of academic abilities (Rock, 2005), self- help skills (Pierce & Schreibman, 1994), behavioral problems (Todd, Horner, & Sugai, 1999), and social behaviors (Strain & Kohler, 1994). Self-monitoring is useful for students from preschool to adulthood and can be taught to individuals at a variety of levels of cognitive functioning. Self-monitoring interventions foster independent functioning, which allows individuals with disabilities to rely less on prompts from others (Koegel, Koegel, Harrower, & Carter, 1999).

This article provides an overview of the five steps involved in planning a self-monitoring intervention:

1) Identify the target behavior.

2) Select/design a self-monitoring system.

3) Choose reinforcers and how the student will earn them.

4) Teach the student to use the system.

5) Fade the role of the adult in the intervention.

The steps will be described through use of a case study that illustrates how self-monitoring techniques can increase appropriate classroom behavior in a general education setting. In the case study, the self-monitoring intervention was implemented with "Scott" (pseudonym), an 11-year-old with an emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD). Prior to intervention, Scott required almost constant verbal reminders to remain quiet and working. He disrupted the class with frequent, off-topic comments and never raised his hand before speaking. Scott seemed to enjoy the peer attention he received for making such comments. His teacher decided to try a self-monitoring strategy to increase hand-raising and appropriate comments.

Identify Target Behavior

The initial step for developing a behavior plan, such as a self-monitoring intervention, is to identify the target behavior. It is helpful to identify a simple action to measure, such as behavior that occurs during a certain time of day or performance related to a specific subject and to define the unit in observable, measurable terms. Scott's teacher decided to target only appropriate hand-raising, even though disruptive comments were also an issue. She defined appropriate hand-raising as any instance in which Scott raised his hand and, when called on, offered a comment or question that pertained to the topic currently under discussion. To start, she used the intervention during social studies class.

While undesired behaviors, such as talking out in class or hitting peers, can be the target of successful interventions, the plan will have a more positive tone and may be more willingly accepted by the student if positive behaviors are identified. Teaching the student to engage in the desired behavior in place of an undesirable one will provide a means for obtaining the result the student wants (in Scott's case, attention from teacher and peers), while reducing or eliminating the undesired behavior (speaking out in class) (Marquis et al., 2000). Rather than having Scott keep track of days when he disrupted class, his teacher elected to have him monitor appropriate hand-raising. With this approach, she was able to reinforce, not punish, his behavior.

Select the Self-Monitoring System

To fit seamlessly into a classroom, home, or work setting, self-monitoring interventions may be structured in a variety of ways. The design of the self-monitoring device is largely determined by the student's needs and setting in which the intervention will occur. Checklists and charts are common materials used to record behavior, while golfer's wrist counters and other mechanical devices may also be used. For Scott, a simple chart was adopted. He kept the chart in his desk and made a tally mark in the corresponding box each time he successfully raised his hand and, when called on, offered an appropriate comment in class.

Choose Reinforcers and Criteria

Once the target behavior is defined and the system is selected, reinforcers and criteria for earning them are determined. Some students are very motivated by self-monitoring alone. They enjoy pushing the button on their wrist counter, giving themselves checks, or crossing things off to-do lists. Many students, however, require extra teacher attention or other reinforcers to be successful with a self-monitoring intervention. To ensure success when first beginning an intervention, frequent reinforcement is recommended. Offering a choice among preferred reinforcers increases the likelihood of a successful

intervention (Dyer, Dunlap, & Winterling, 1990). Scott enjoyed using school computers but rarely had an opportunity to do so because of a classroom policy about losing computer privileges for disruptive behavior. Scott and his teacher decided that extra computer time with a peer would be an appropriate and motivating reinforcer for successful participation in class. Extra time with a friend also allowed Scott to receive peer attention that he tried to gain when talking out in class.

Although it was not used for Scott's intervention, many self-monitoring interventions include self-recruited praise, or teaching the student to bring his data to a teacher or other adult to earn positive attention or other reinforcement. For example, in the classroom a student may use a system in which she gives herself a check for every five minutes she spends on-task. When she has four checks, she brings the paper to her teacher and is complimented on work well done. Self-recruited praise is especially useful for students whose disruptive behavior is used to gain attention from teachers. However, it is important to determine that a student finds praise reinforcing. Many students, particularly adolescents, may prefer not to receive overt teacher attention; using teacher attention in such a situation as a reward could actually worsen behavior.

Teach the Student to Use the System

Scott met with his teacher to discuss the target behavior and the self-monitoring system. After she defined the system, he had an opportunity to ask questions about the new arrangements. Together, teacher and student discussed potential problems with the intervention and came to an agreement about how to handle problems that might arise. When Scott's teacher was confident that he understood the intervention, she described several examples and non-examples and asked Scott whether they would count as appropriate hand-raising. This collaboration in the planning stages helps prevent potential problems that can occur when

the adult and child disagree about use of the system. Student involvement in planning may also increase student investment in the intervention.

Once a system is in place, the teacher compares the student's information with his or her own observations of the behavior and provides feedback on the accuracy of data collection. Practice sessions can provide an opportunity for teacher and student to gain reliability with the system. When students consistently self-monitor with great accuracy, the teacher can end reliability checks. For Scott, practice checks with the teacher occurred daily for four days. At that time, he was over 90% reliable and began to use the system independently.

Fade Prompts and Reinforcers

Gradually, reinforcers should be faded and the expectations for behavior raised. As he was successful with independently and accurately recording behavior, Scott's teacher stopped reminding him to use his system and set higher goals for earning computer time with his friends. By the end of the school year, Scott was on the same computer plan as other students in the class, and his teacher no longer checked his planner to make sure he accurately self-monitored. When work becomes more difficult or behavioral expectations shift, it may be helpful to provide more assistance or reinforcement. Promoting the maximum level of independence at which the student can be successful is the primary goal.

Conclusions

Self-monitoring strategies are individualized plans used to increase independent functioning in academic, behavioral, self-help, and social areas. Rather than focusing on reducing a student's undesired behavior, self-monitoring strategies develop skills that lead to an increase in appropriate behavior. When self-monitoring skills increase, corresponding reductions in undesired behaviors often occur, even without direct

intervention (Dunlap, Clarke, Jackson, Wright, 1995; Koegel, Koegel, Harrower, & Carter, 1999). This collateral behavior change allows teachers and parents to address multiple behaviors with one efficient intervention.

For Scott, self-monitoring led to an increase in hand-raising and appropriate class participation and a decrease in talking out in class. As a result, his teacher spent less time disciplining him. When Scott's class participation improved, his academic performance improved as well. This collateral gain is a clear illustration of the efficiency of the self-monitoring intervention. Increasing the use of one skill, Scott's teacher was able to change multiple behaviors: participation, talking out, and academic performance.

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Teaching for Generalization in Support of Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders

by Trevor Stokes

Sometimes, the goal of teachers in their classrooms is the children's mastery of academic lessons and tasks, such as arithmetic completion, creative writing, developing knowledge, or learning an efficient problem-solving repertoire. Sometimes, the goal of teachers is the children's mastery of personal lessons and tasks, such as recruiting help appropriately, developing self-control, being socially competent among peers, or

> *Generalization occurs when the effects of educational or therapeutic behavior-change programs are shown across time, people, settings, and related behavior without the necessity of active interventions in all of those circumstances.*

making appropriate personal decisions. In all of these endeavors, generalization of learning is the guiding value because the effects of teaching must move beyond the particular classroom and across people, settings, behaviors, and times. Securing this carryover of the outcomes of successful teaching is essential for the well-being of children. Facilitating this spread of effects is the aim of programming for generalization (Stokes & Baer, 1977). Principles of learning provide guidelines on how a teacher may maximize positive effects directly and insure productive generalization by children with emotional and behavior disorders.

Emotional and Behavior Challenges

When presented with a range of emotional and behavior challenges within the classroom, it is natural that teachers may be perplexed. What causes these problems? How can they be viewed or classified? How can they be ameliorated? The truth is that maladaptive and dysfunctional emotions and behaviors don't just suddenly appear. They develop over time and spill over between environments such as home and school and in reciprocity affect one another.

Contributing causes are often difficult to determine and frequently there are multiple factors that lead to the current presentations of disturbing emotions and behaviors in the classroom (Stokes, 2002). Some individual child factors that influence the appearance of classroom problems are the occurrence of mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression; the occurrence of stressful life events, such as family turmoil in divorce or moving homes; or the absence of effective coping skills and decision-making abilities. Within families, children are affected by factors such as turbulent family lifestyles, violent homes, inadequate supervision, and maladaptive or extreme discipline practices. Within the school and community, children are influenced by factors such as being uninvolved with their available community of friends and teachers, being susceptible to negative peer influences, or being influenced by unmonitored contact with the media.

Many of these causes in a child's development are outside of the school, yet they influence emotions and behavior in a generalized manner, showing up at school, and therefore becoming a reality for teachers in their classrooms. Understanding these influences that affect a child can help a teacher devise ways of providing effective instruction within the context of a child's history

and current circumstances. The teacher can also counterbalance maladaptive influences by providing a safe, friendly, and exciting environment for learning. The positive effects of the teacher's style and instruction, and the supportive learning environment, can then be seen in the classroom and also spread back into the home and beyond, accomplishing generalization.

It is useful to be able to group or classify disorders of emotion and behavior. Sometimes this is done formally by the assignment of a diagnosis consistent with psychiatric and psychological standards (DSM-IV-TR). Sometimes, a less formal rubric is sufficient. Stokes, Mowery, Dean and Hoffman (1997) characterized some of the maladaptive repertoires of children as displaying aggression toward self or others; depression of activity engagement or mood; and regression in cognitive, social, and emotional behavior. Within the classroom, there are multiple examples of these repertoires. Aggression can be seen in coercive activity such as crying, screaming, hitting, self-abuse, and other tantrums and disruptive behavior. Depression and withdrawal may be seen with or without indicators of emotional distress, such as mood change, sadness, pouting, and disorganized behavior. Regression is seen as children display academic skills at a level below established competency levels, show increased anxiety and emotional distress, are confused or unable to concentrate productively, engage in angry and emotional outbursts, have poor communication and social skills, exhibit low levels of engagement and participation in the classroom, and show dependency and immaturity.

Thus aggression, depression, and regression are indicators of psychological distress and are likely to present a dedicated and nurturant teacher with

the need to be strategically supportive of wellness and development even while appreciating the adverse circumstances of a child. Recognition of these emotional and behavior repertoires is a signal for a teacher that there are problems afoot and therefore there is a need for special attention to the goal of generalized development.

Principles of Teaching for Generalization

Generalization was characterized by Stokes and Baer (1977) as occurring when the effects of educational or therapeutic behavior-change programs are shown across time, people, settings, and related behavior without the necessity of active interventions in all of those circumstances. The spread of effects is purposefully and efficiently obtained. This usually will not occur simply because such an outcome is the hope of the teacher or therapist. As an important goal in any classroom, generalization should both be considered and actively programmed from the beginning of teaching. Three principles are pertinent in guiding the tactics of teaching for generalization: Contact natural communities of reinforcement, teach diversely, and engage mediators of performance (Stokes & Baer, 1977; Stokes & Osnes, 1989).

Contact Natural Communities of Reinforcement

The first principle advises that the best action is to directly reinforce relevant behavior in the classroom by making the child feel good following accomplishments and schoolwork completion. It is also advantageous to ensure that pleasant consequences within the classroom occur frequently and naturally for children. Generally, praise, approval, recognition, and interpersonal attention will suffice in this regard. These consequences of behavior typically operate within classrooms or can be made to be active with minimal effort.

Any person's environments are naturally plentiful with consequences that influence the occurrence of relevant behaviors in the classroom and in the community. For example, greetings, when appropriately presented, have a high probability of being returned with a pleasant reciprocal greeting that functions to reinforce the interaction initiated. There is little need to program such behavior change artificially, because certain behaviors are reliably followed by certain consequences without any specific programming relevant to their occurrence. For example, at the point of evaluation of a child's work, correct completion should routinely receive a positive evaluation by the teacher, and that feedback may serve as an effective reinforcer. Social behavior and academic achievement are particularly relevant here because of the positive natural reaction received from teachers and childhood peers. Of course, there may at times be a need to "seed" the environment with people who respond appropriately.

Sometimes, however, a naturally occurring community of positive consequences lies dormant and needs to be acted upon to be effective. Teachers can help children learn how to activate and come into contact with those functional positive consequences. An example of this is when students are concerned they have improved their work efficiency or output, yet teachers have not noticed. In this case, the student may actively recruit feedback, thereby initiating an evaluative interaction by asking a question such as "How did I do?" A child can learn these techniques through simple demonstration and role-playing with a teacher. Initiating this recruitment of positive feedback may be difficult for some students whose reputation precedes them, and whose teachers may not be predisposed to positively evaluate their work because of the student's history of poor work completion or inappropriate behaviors. However, in most circumstances, when the student's work is of a high quality, the teacher when so prompted will naturally respond with positive evaluations, as long as the

recruiting of attention does not occur at an excessive rate. In this case, the children become active agents of their own behavior change, taking initiative and responsibility for themselves when neglected.

Alternatively, when naturally occurring consequences support maladaptive behavior, such as through peer support, then it is advisable for teachers to interrupt and prevent these natural consequences from their usual occurrence and function, thereby minimizing effects of dysfunctional support of performance counter to academic progress.

Thus, contacting natural communities of reinforcement involves allowing the natural consequences of emotions and behavior to develop and maintain them. In addition, it involves initiating effective functional contacts with maintaining consequences and decreasing contact with maladaptive maintaining consequences.

Teach Diversely

The second principle emphasizes teaching with a diverse curriculum incorporating many examples of a lesson to foster the development of a generalized understanding, knowledge, and skill useful in multiple settings. This practice ensures that learning is not too focused and is accomplished by employing multiple teachers, learning circumstances, and settings, as is often seen in schools. Similarly, academic tasks should be taught using multiple and diverse exemplars, so that after a sufficient range of problems are successfully mastered, then the student is more able to solve any of the range of similar problems without direct teaching of all lesson concepts. Teaching should also incorporate different presentations, sampling the array of similar items and materials employing multiple concepts. There are also advantages in making conditions of teaching flexible and less predictable by allowing variation of teaching circumstances, presentations, and the timing of positive consequences and feedback.

Functional Assessment of Classroom Behavior Problems

by Robert A. Gable

Few educators would dispute the fact that not all children come to school ready to learn. The reasons for the "readiness gap" are many and varied. For example, the school-age population is becoming increasingly more heterogeneous. Because of their diverse backgrounds and experiences, students differ in their ability to respond to a traditional classroom milieu. The overall routine, student expectations, and/or the quality of teacher/pupil relationships sometimes are at odds with family patterns of

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interaction or with community norms. Some children struggle with social/interpersonal or self-management skills that are prerequisite to performing successfully in school. Others may have been subjected to harsh parental discipline or suffered the consequences of physical abuse, marital conflicts, or economic hardships. Finally, student-specific stressors (e.g., anxiety or depression) can exact a heavy toll as well. In sum, school personnel face numerous challenges to ensuring positive educational outcomes for students.

At its inception, our system of public schooling was established to give children the opportunity to get an education, a task it has always performed well (Van Acker, 2004). However, across time various forces have converged to dramatically change that role. No longer is it enough simply to offer students educational opportunity; today, the expectation is that all students will benefit from that schooling and achieve positive outcomes (Van Acker, 2004). Among the most ubiquitous signs of that shift in responsibility is the importance attached to high-stakes testing and student academic progress. Accordingly, both administrators and classroom personnel are focusing increased attention on the overlapping relationship between classroom learning and student behavior problems.

Classroom Learning and Behavior Problems

When a student manifests a learning problem, teachers rely on a set of relatively straightforward strategies. Either independently or in consultation with colleagues, they attempt to precisely identify the problem. Teachers routinely conduct either an informal or formal assessment, analyze carefully the accumulated data, and then make specific adjustments in the curriculum or instruction, or both. For example, if Ellen is experiencing difficulty applying a particular algorithm to solve a math problem, her teacher might conduct an diagnostic interview to pinpoint the exact nature of the problem – "Ellen, let's look at these three problems; I'd like you to do each of them for me, thinking aloud the steps you would take to solve the problem." With the knowledge gleaned from observing closely as Ellen completed each problem, the teacher is able to plot a course of instruction designed to eliminate the error in learning. In contrast, when a behavior problem arises, such as when Ellen refuses to comply with a request to "stop wasting

time and get back to work," her teacher is more likely to impose some kind of negative consequence, such as a verbal reprimand or discipline referral. Most students respond positively to these kinds of admonishments. However, for some students, such actions fail to produce the desired outcome and may actually exacerbate an already difficult situation (Gable et al., 2004).

Today, there is growing recognition that traditional disciplinary practices often do not result in positive changes in behavior, especially for students who evidence major behavior problems. Indeed, there is compelling evidence that the imposition of negative sanctions for unacceptable behavior can trigger increased levels of non-compliance, defiance of authority, or school vandalism – problems that school officials are working hard to ameliorate. Increasingly, school personnel are finding that it is more effective to respond proactively to repeated bouts of student misbehavior by means of what is known as *functional behavioral assessment* (FBA).

The FBA process is predicated on three simple propositions: we can't fix it until we know why it's broken, no one gives up something for nothing, and one size does not fit all. In other words, we can not determine how best to respond to a problem until we know the reason(s) behind it; we can not realistically expect students to stop engaging in a behavior that serves a particular function unless we give them an alternative response; and finally, since students engage in inappropriate behavior for many different reasons, it is shortsighted to assume that the same solution will apply equally to every problem. Viewed together, these relatively straightforward principles set the stage for new ways to address the diverse needs of students with challenging behavior.

Functional Behavioral Assessment in Schools

The 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) stipulates that under certain conditions school personnel must address student behavior by means of FBA and positive behavioral intervention plans and supports. Schools are obligated to initiate an FBA when drugs, weapons, or potentially dangerous behaviors exist and when student misbehavior impedes the learning of the student or classmates. Recent changes in IDEA (2005) reaffirm that expectation.

The logic behind functional behavioral assessment is disarmingly simple, namely that practically all student behavior satisfies a need or serves a function (e.g., to avoid a difficult assignment, gain attention of classmates, express frustration), and is related to the context in which it occurs (e.g., English

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or geography classrooms). It follows that knowledge of student motivation is essential to determining the best way to eliminate behavior that hinders instruction. If we can predict it, we can control it (Gable et al., 2004).

The language of federal legislation implies, if not specifies, that functional behavioral assessment is a team problem-solving process. Its success hinges on the judicious use of various strategies (e.g., records review, direct observation, structured interviews) to identify the reason(s) behind student misbehavior

and the crafting of a two-fold intervention plan. The plan seeks to a) reduce or eliminate the inappropriate behavior and b) promote a more acceptable replacement behavior. Emphasis is on identifying those variables that, singly or collectively, are most predictably linked to the occurrence (and nonconcurrence) of the behavior. By identifying the conditions under which the behavior most likely occurs, school personnel can take steps to address the problem, such as removing environmental triggers that elicit the behavior (e.g., changing instructional grouping), directly and systematically teaching the student a more acceptable response (e.g., demonstrating and role-playing requesting assistance), and/or offering an incentive for the student to respond more appropriately (e.g., time on the computer). Whatever the plan, it must include large measures of patience and optimism. Most problems can be resolved, but few will go away quickly or easily.

Steps to Conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment

The school-based team usually conducts the functional behavioral assessment according to the following 10 steps (Gable et al., 2004):

- Determine that the severity of the problem calls for a formal FBA.
- Define the problem in measurable, observable, and objective terms.
- Collect data with which to identify the likely function(s) of the behavior (e.g., to get attention, avoid an aversive social situation, express anger or frustration).
- Pull together all the information they have compiled and subject it to a thorough analysis.
- Generate a hypothesis (motivation) statement regarding the probable function(s) of the behavior – under conditions X (e.g., a difficult assignment), the student does Y (e.g., acts up), in order to Z (e.g., be sent out of the classroom).

- Test the accuracy of the hypothesis, usually by systematically manipulating some aspect of the curriculum or instruction (changing the instructional assignment or subject matter).
- Develop and implement a behavioral intervention plan (BIP).
- Monitor the fidelity of implementation of the plan (e.g., by means of a checklist).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.
- Review critically the impact of the original plan and make adjustments, as needed.

More information about FBA can be found on the Web site of the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (www.cecp.org).

Conclusion

In schools across the country, there is mounting pressure on education personnel to achieve positive outcomes for all students. It is reassuring to know there are numerous evidence-based practices that teachers can introduce to create an effective teaching/learning environment. On those few occasions that these strategies fail to produce the desired effect, one proven option is to conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral intervention plan and, in so doing, give students a renewed opportunity to obtain a meaningful education.

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Supporting Social Skill Development in Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

by Kimberly C. Crawford and Howard Goldstein

Laughing with the other children at the lunch table. Collaborating on a classroom project. Discussing plans for the Friday night slumber party. As teachers, administrators, and service providers, we observe these interactions among students on a frequent basis. They are commonplace for most children. Take a moment to ponder how our social interactions in school led up to our ability to exhibit social competence as adults.

With the appropriate support, children with emotional/behavioral disorders will learn the necessary skills to foster friendships.

This competence contributes to our quality of life; our lives are built on positive interactions and relationships with the people around us. What about students who have not developed the skills necessary for successful social interactions? We may notice some students who sit alone at the lunch table, who are forced by peers to work alone, or who never receive an invitation to the slumber party. What impact will this have on their school experience and overall quality of life?

In this article, we describe the importance of supporting the success of students with emotional/behavioral disorders in school and life through interventions focusing on development of social skills. With appropriate assessment and intervention in this significant area of development, students can learn how to participate in positive interactions and build friendships. Thus, we must make a conscious and defined ef-fort to provide these services to students with emotional/behavioral disorders.

The Development of Social Skills

As infants and toddlers, children learn social communication primarily through interactions with caregivers. Their social interactions typically start with recognizing and orienting to a caregiver's voice. Although many children have opportunities to socialize with peers at home or in childcare settings, friendships have yet to be formed (Goldstein & Morgan, 2002). However, by age three, they are often using their expansive vocabulary to have adult-like conversations. This is when friendships begin to be cultivated. Relationships between peers begin to develop during the preschool years as natural opportunities for socialization and communication are readily available in the preschool classroom and other settings (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Development of positive social relationships is a typical goal for programs that serve young children. By the time children enter kindergarten, there are certain widely-held expectations for their behavior and social competence. By the end of the preschool period, there are great demands on children in terms of their ability to communicate verbally, inhibit negative behaviors, and take the perspective of others (Goldstein and Morgan, 2002). However, development of social communication skills is not automatic for some children, particularly those with emotional/behavioral disorders such as autism spectrum disorders (ASD) (McConnell, 2002).

Children with emotional/behavioral disorders, including children with ASD, interact in some fashion with their peers. However, children with ASD spend less time interacting, have low-quality interactions when they join peers, and spend more time engaged in purposeless or no activity and at greater physical distances from peers (Lord & Magill-Evans, 1995). Sigman and Ruskin (1999) found that children with ASD spend a larger proportion of time engaged in nonsocial play and a smaller proportion of time in direct social play with others. The social interactions of children with other emotional/behavioral disorders also may exhibit these characteristics, along with aggression or other socially unacceptable behaviors. Without explicit intervention in social-communicative development, these children are likely to continue demonstrating social skills deficits throughout their lifetime (Goldstein, Kaczmarek, & English, 2002; McConnell, 2002). There is a need to utilize current and develop new interventions to increase the social competence of children with emotional/behavioral disorders.

Social Competence Evaluation and Intervention

There is a vast list of skills that falls under the area of social competence. This list includes communicative behaviors such as making requests, gaining the attention of another, and commenting. It also involves other interactional behaviors such as sharing, taking turns, and playing cooperatively. Thus, a key factor in creating an intervention program tailored to the needs of a particular student is assessment of social competence. Kaczmarek (2002) describes an interdisciplinary model of assessment and discusses a conceptual framework within which multiple measures can be used to assess a child's social appropriateness, communicative appropriateness, and social-communicative effectiveness. This model involves direct observation in the child's natural envi-

ronment and in analogue and role-play situations, during which social skills and task-coding taxonomies can be used to record observed behaviors. Another component of this model is gathering information about the child from family members, teachers, and peers; through this method, a comprehensive picture of a child's overall level of social competence can be acquired. Other methods of evaluation and assessment involve the use of rating scales, such as the *Social Skills Rating System* (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). Sociometric measures that assess peers' feelings of acceptance for other children (Foster, Inderbitzen, & Nangle, 1993) and other peer ratings can be utilized. Through the evaluation process, appropriate goals and intervention strategies can be established.

An assortment of interventions targeting social skills in children with emotional/behavioral disorders have been investigated, particularly with children with ASD (Rogers, 2000). Although much of this discussion involves strategies found to be effective with children with ASD, these strategies have been shown to be effective with children with other types of emotional/behavioral disorders as well (Goldstein, Kaczmarek, & English, 2002). Over the past 30 years, interventions with multiple age groups have focused on various strategies, including adult instruction, peer-mediation, video modeling, self-monitoring, and combinations of these strategies. Adult-mediated intervention involves social skills training using direct instruction and/or naturalistic strategies. Adult instruction methods have taught children to initiate and maintain interactions with typically-developing peers (Belchic & Harris, 1994; Kohler, Anthony, Steighner, & Hoyson, 2001; Kamps et al., 1992). Peer-mediation strategies have addressed the same skills, but have capitalized on social responding on the part of the child with ASD, as typical peers are taught to initiate persistently (Goldstein, English, Shafer, & Kaczmarek, 1997; Odom & Strain, 1984; Gunter, Fox, Brady, Shores, & Cavanaugh, 1988; Oke & Schreibman,

1990). Self-monitoring techniques using methods such as monitoring responses to initiations from peers also have shown positive results (Strain, Kohler, Storey, & Danko, 1994). Other self-monitoring techniques utilize video feedback (Kern et al., 1995; Wert & Neisworth, 2003), or a package of strategies such as peer training, and use of pictures, written text cues, and video feedback (Thiemann & Goldstein, 2001).

There are numerous options available for social skills intervention. The type of intervention strategy that is chosen for a particular student should be based on their level of social competence, the specific social skills that will be targeted, the setting in which intervention will take place (e.g., inclusive classroom), and available participants (e.g., peers developing typically).

When Should We Start?

The time to start providing support in social skills development through explicit instruction and intervention is *now*. With the appropriate support, children with emotional/behavioral disorders can learn the necessary skills to begin to foster friendships. Interactions with their friends will allow them to learn even more sophisticated social skills, which, in turn, will enable them to continue to develop relationships. These children will then be able to have a more rewarding school experience and, over time, a higher quality of life.

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Project SUPPORT: A Transition Program for Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities in Oregon

by Deanne Unruh

Adjudicated youth face numerous difficulties and unique challenges in their growth from adolescence into adulthood when compared with their peers not involved in the juvenile justice system. Their transition outcomes demonstrate dismal success for this high-risk population. These outcomes are highlighted by *TRACS (Transition Research on Adolescents returning to Community Settings),* a recently completed five-year longitudinal study that examined transition outcomes for incarcerated youth after leaving Oregon's juvenile correctional facilities and returning to communities (Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel, 2002). In this sample, almost 60% of the youth returned to the juvenile justice system or were committed to the adult correctional system. Only a quarter enrolled in school, and fewer earned any high school completion document after exiting custody. And employment rates were disturbingly low, averaging less than 30%. Those with a special education disability (58%) were three times more likely than those without a disability to return to the correctional system, and two times less likely to become involved in work or school. On a positive note, formerly-incarcerated youth with disabilities who were working or going to school during the first six months of release were 3.2 times *less likely* to return to custody and 2.5 times *more likely* to remain working or in school 12 months after exiting the correctional facility. Youth engaged in work and/or school fared better in their transition than those not so engaged – a finding with clear implications for development of a transition model for this population.

Project Description

Motivated by the TRACS findings, three state agencies – the Oregon Youth Authority, which is Oregon's juvenile jus-

tice agency, the Oregon Department of Education, and Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services – along with staff from the University of Oregon worked to develop a statewide transition program for juvenile offenders with disabilities leaving the juvenile correctional system and returning to the community. The program, Project SUPPORT, began in 1999.*

The purpose of Project SUPPORT is to provide incarcerated youth who have either a designated special education disability and/or mental health disorder with pre-release training and coordinated planning to support their transition into the community. Program goals are to increase engagement in employment and/or school enrollment (high school/postsecondary) and decrease recidivism. Key characteristics of program participants are: a) average age at entry is 17.4 years; b) 80% are male; c) 31% are members of an ethnic/minority group; d) 92% have a DSM-IV diagnosis and 45% have a combination of a DSM-IV and special education diagnosis; e) 78% have a history of school absenteeism and suspension; f) 76% have a history of substance abuse; and g) over 60% have a history of living in foster care or a group home, running away from home or placements, and an anger management deficit.

A transition specialist (TS) is the key staff person in Project SUPPORT. Each TS works directly with the youth and parole officer (PO) to develop a project transition plan that is coupled with the youth's parole plan. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, facility treatment and education staff, and community-based agencies are key partners to assist in the successful community reintegration process. The transition plan is developed from each youth's strengths, barriers, interests, and life goals. Services are not a prescriptive set of activities provided

each youth, but rely on the TS's ability to make decisions and connections with each youth based on information and guidance provided by the youth, PO, family or guardians, and other community agency staff.

Services typically occur in three phases: In-facility services, immediate pre/post-release activities, and ongoing community support. The in-facility phase activities completed by the TS are:

- Build positive relationship between TS and youth
- Define youth's interests, needs, and life goals
- Develop transition plan
- Initiate pre-employment skill building
- Ensure appropriate assessments and ID are available for immediate access to services in community
- Liaison with PO and facility treatment and education staff

In the immediate pre/post release phase, the most intensive service phase, TS activities are:

- Prepare and transfer IEP to community education placement
- Develop and implement employment options for youth in community
- Set up needed social services in community (e.g., mental health, AODA)
- Support youth to access services once released (e.g., transportation training)
- Develop youth's independent living skills (e.g., budgeting, finding housing)
- Support and follow parole plan
- Liaison with PO and other community support staff

Ongoing support phase activities are:

- Support youth to maintain engagement activities (e.g., employment, education, hobbies)

- Further develop youth's independent living skills (e.g., taxes, driving)
- Assess youth for return of former negative behaviors (e.g., drugs, gangs)
- Continue to liaison with PO and other community support staff

(For a further project services description see Unruh, et al., 2004 ,2005.)

Participant Outcomes

Project SUPPORT participants have demonstrated positive results. At two, four, and six months after release from a youth correctional facility, approximately 68% of all participants are positively engaged in school and/or employment and have *not* returned to youth or adult corrections. This rate demonstrates a much higher rate of engagement than the TRACS sample, which showed an engagement rate of 35% by juvenile offenders not receiving these specialized services (Bullis, et al., 2002).

In addition to overall outcomes, the story of Anthony, a composite case study of a "typical" project participant's experiences, serves to illustrate outcomes on an individual level. Anthony entered Project SUPPORT a month prior to leaving the youth correctional facility. He began working with a TS to help him design a plan for his release from custody. Anthony was incarcerated for multiple crimes including theft, stealing a car, and assault. Most of the crimes were committed while he was under the influence. He identifies his main transition needs as learning how to do everyday things, staying away from friends that use drugs, and controlling his anger.

Upon release Anthony's transition was not smooth. The TS helped him maintain his health insurance and also apply for food stamps. He began working with Vocational Rehabilitation, which helped him find a landscaping job and purchased his tools for the job. But, he was soon fired because of an argument with his boss. He revealed that he has stopped attending his Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, had been hanging out with some of his old friends, and had been under the influence of drugs prior to this incident. The PO and TS required that he start attending alcohol and drug treatment sessions.

It has been nine months since his release and Anthony is working in a plant nursery. The TS assisted him with a financial aid application and he was able to get assistance to attend a community college landscape design program. Anthony is struggling with staying clean, but has met new friends through work that help him stay away from his drug-involved friends. Anthony described the TS support in this way: "When you get out you're like now what do I do? [The TS] will give you infinite possibilities. I certainly couldn't have started college without her. I wouldn't know the slightest thing to do. She helped me, [but] it's also you help yourself" (Project SUPPORT participant).

Lessons Learned

Lessons were learned both at a systems-level and targeted population-level during project implementation:

- Facilitate ongoing self-directed planning and decision-making. The interests, aptitudes, and needs of youth define specific employment, further education, and independent living supports. Services need to begin in the facility, for example by exploring various employment and career interests with the youth, and continue in the community to assist the youth in making positive choices aligned with the youth's strengths and needs.
- Employability skill training goes beyond the youth being employed. The TS needs to work collaboratively with employment support services (e.g., vocational rehabilitation or Workforce Investment Act) to develop employment and training opportunities. Once the youth is employed, continued monitoring and skill development is a requisite to ensure the youth maintains employment across jobs over time.
- Additional support services are needed for successful community reintegration. Basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, positive social network) are requisite to maintain a youth's stable employment or school engagement. Services to support these basic needs are necessary to sustain a youth's successful community transition.
- Develop systems-change collaborations to access the available community resources. Project participants need diverse supports. Community agencies, juvenile justice, vocational rehabilitation, and local schools need to work together to develop systems to share information and ensure immediate access to services upon release from correctional facilities.

Conclusion

Project SUPPORT is a promising model for working with juvenile offenders with disabilities. The role of the TS is critical to this model, but just as essential is the development and maintenance of collaborative services across agencies. The implementation of this service model is a difficult task, but when long-term collaborative relationships are maintained lifelong positive outcomes for this high-risk population can be achieved.

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Successful Living is Healing: Cleveland's Positive Education Program

by Thomas G. Valore

Positive Education Program (PEP) in Cleveland, Ohio, was established in 1971 to provide special education and mental health services to students with severe emotional and/or behavioral challenges. Today, PEP annually serves more than 3,000 children, birth through 21 years of age, and their families through an array of services. PEP's model of service delivery is effective. For all four years to date where *Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale* measures were administered to all PEP Day Treatment Center students, scores showed statistically significant improvements from entry to most recent testing at a high level of confidence.

Articles discussing program effectiveness usually address classroom structure and behavior management techniques, both of which are critical components of PEP programs. The purpose of this article, however, is to highlight elements that are not typically discussed, but are essential to building success in students: beliefs, people, and a strength-based approach. Given the complexities of the topic, this article can only provide a brief overview highlighting some of the salient points on each.

Beliefs

Beliefs are the way we think about our colleagues, kids, and families, and beliefs determine how we will behave toward them. PEP is grounded in the Re-ED (Re-education of Emotionally Disturbed Children) philosophy developed by Dr. Nicholas Hobbs in the early 1960s and refined continually since. Re-ED is ecologically based. Re-EDer's believe that a child experiencing problems within their home, school, or community is seen to have an imbalance in their ecology or ecosystem. The ecological approach requires that professionals partner with the child, family, and other significant people to build on and fortify strengths and employ solutions to problems in order to restore the ecology to a "tolerable level of discord." PEP is committed to and is guided by the 12 Re-ED principles (Hobbs, 1982, 1994), which can be categorized under three basic belief statements (Cantrell, Cantrell, Valore, Jones, & Fecser, 1999, p. 9):

- We are emotional beings who need each other.

  TRUST is essential....

  FEELINGS should be nurtured....

  GROUPS are a major source of instruction....

  COMMUNITIES' benefits must be experienced....

- Growth can be enhanced.

  INTELLIGENCE can be taught....

  COMPETENCE makes a difference....

  SELF-CONTROL can be learned....

  PHYSICAL experiences help us define ourselves....

- Today can be used to build health.

  NOW is when life is to be lived....

  TIME is an ally when used to make positive changes....

  CEREMONY gives stability....

  JOY should be built into each day....

The Re-ED principles are taught and disseminated to staff, students, and families, as well as shared with agencies with whom PEP collaborates. The principles provide guidance, and fuel the compassion and passion of staff to help children and families improve their lives.

People

People are our most important and valuable resource. Troubled and troubling children can benefit from decent and trustworthy adults in their lives to help them grow and learn. In Re-ED, this person is the teacher-counselor, a title so valued by Re-EDer's that it is respectful for staff to recognize each other with that title regardless of their formal position (a Re-ED aphorism quoted frequently is "We are all teacher-counselors"). Hobbs wrote extensively about the teacher-counselor. He believed that professional training was important, but also speculated that there were natural qualities certain individuals possessed, based on subtle learning that occurred early in life. This subtle learning manifests itself in the presence of kids. This adult appears to have a natural affinity toward kids, who respond in kind. Although this natural connection is an important ingredient for working with kids, skill development is necessary for prevention or action when problems arise. Hobbs summarized the role:

> But most of all, a teacher-counselor is a decent adult; educated, well trained; able to give and receive affection, to live relaxed, and to be firm; a person with private resources for the nourishment and refreshment of his own life; not an itinerant worker but a professional through and through; a person with a sense of the significance of time, of the usefulness of today and the promise of tomorrow; a person of hope, quiet confidence, and joy; one who has committed himself to children and to the proposition that children who are disturbed can be helped by the process of reeducation. (1966, p.1106)

In Re-ED, interdisciplinary teamwork is paramount. Parents and professional consultants empower and support the teacher-counselor by sharing their knowledge and expertise about a child through collaborating in formal treatment staffings, IEP planning and evaluation meetings, and other means of communication.

Strength-Based Approach

Attention to strengths builds success. Although building successful therapeutic relationships is a staff goal for all members of the child's ecology, it is critical with the student. PEP staff carefully cultivate trusting and caring relationships with students. The Re-ED principle, "Trust is essential," resonates with the four components necessary for success that are identified in the resiliency literature (Seita, Mitchell, & Tobin, 1996). Staff work hard to build a shared and caring relationship (connectedness), and help students know that staff will be there every step of the way (continuity). Staff also ensure that students feel very respected (dignity) and provide them with multiple successful experiences (opportunity).

Often considered our most powerful behavior support strategy, academic programming is significant in building success in students. PEP staff do not wait for the student's behavior to improve so they can teach, they teach so that the student's behavior improves. Accurate assessment and goal setting, precise planning, active instruction, purposeful engagement, and continuous evaluation can almost guarantee student success and increase their motivation to further engage in the learning process. Hobbs believed that school is the "business of children," and that we need to engineer their success.

Group work in Re-ED programs has been a foundation of intervention since 1962 when the first two Re-ED schools opened their doors. Hobbs placed strong emphasis on the power of the group "in helping each member of the group grow in competence, confidence, self-esteem, and ability to meet the demands of living in home, school, and community" (1982, p. 332). At PEP, classrooms function as a unit throughout the day, meeting, playing, eating, and learning together. To develop a positive cohesive group culture, the teacher-counselor is keenly aware of group process and uses 12 cohesion-building strategies (Valore, 1992) to cultivate those processes throughout the day. The use of group meetings is probably the most powerful of these strategies. During meetings students remind each other of their goals, share successes, discuss existing challenges, and explore solutions, including how each member can help one another. Once this culture is established, it becomes an ongoing force that continually helps to guide and maintain the group's therapeutic culture. It is this cohesive, positive, and healthy culture that influences group members to change their behavior and interactions in their ecologies.

Conclusion

Implementing these important elements will have a powerful effect on the student and his or her ecology. Hobbs challenges us to create a healthy and successful helping ecology:

> The constant challenge is to design a daily program so engaging, so varied and new yet orderly and stable...so meshed with the growth of the child's mind, so rich in human interchange...so joyous, so aware... that the [troubled] child finds himself immediately committed to a new way of living at once more satisfying to himself and more satisfactory to the people in his life. (1982, pp. 88-89)

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Meet Josh

Hi, my name is Josh Goldner. I am 19 years old and a senior at PEP's Midtown Center for Youth in Transition. At Midtown, I have been able to focus on my vocational and transitional skills while earning my high school credit.

Since I was eight years old I bounced from one foster home to another. My behaviors in school prevented me from experiencing any success and led to my placement at many different schools. After several unsuccessful placements, I was enrolled in PEP's Midtown. Here, I learned to manage my behaviors so that I can work towards my goal of becoming an independent adult.

I believe I have been successful at Midtown because my teacher-counselors took the time to listen and understand me. Trust in adults has always been an issue with me, but I quickly realized that the staff had my best interest in mind, even when I didn't see it that way. I learned to work my program and fully participate in my education, which mainly focused on my strengths. My academic workload was tough but manageable. My teacher-counselors stood by me, always reinforcing their belief that I could be successful. After awhile, I just started believing it.

I am set to graduate this year and enroll in a post-graduate auto body-tech training program. Also, my former foster dad recently adopted me. Overall, my experience at PEP has been life changing. My goals that once seemed impossible are now within my reach.

Turning Around a Minnesota School At-Risk: Dayton's Bluff Elementary

by Jennifer McComas

Walking through the school building today, it is hard to believe that in 2000 Dayton's Bluff Elementary School was rated among the worst elementary schools in the St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) district. Blatant disrespect toward adults and aggression toward peers was rampant, and chaos ruled the hallways and classrooms. Test scores at

The transformation at Dayton's Bluff provides a ray of hope for promoting success for students at risk for and identified with EBD.

Dayton's Bluff were the lowest in the district and teacher morale was so low that on any given day up to 80% of the teaching staff might call in sick. The school is located in an extremely impoverished neighborhood in the capitol city of Minnesota. Over 90% of the student population (365 students, grades K-6) qualifies for free or reduced price meals because their family income is near or below the federal poverty standard. Affordable housing in the city is scarce and the large contingent of low-income families is highly mobile, perpetually searching for cheaper housing. Such mobility means that nearly 50% of the students do not attend the same school for the full school year. This staggering level of poverty and mobility, coupled with the lack of teacher stability, necessary instructional control, and effective behavior management put essentially the entire student population at risk for developing emotional or behavioral disorders.

During the summer of 2001, the district redesigned the school by replacing the principal, other building administrators, and about 80% of the teachers. The school building was rejuvenated and an array of student- and family-centered support services were aligned and located in the school. Within just two years, students worked collaboratively in classrooms, and greeted each other with smiles and handshakes and the teachers and administrators with hugs. Dayton's Bluff students, as a whole, showed the largest year-to-year gains in the district. Today, teachers not only come to work every day, but they arrive early and stay late, pouring their energy into creating a fun and rigorous learning environment where respect for all is evident everywhere.

In addition to the structural and personnel changes, a combination of fundamental components aimed at programming for student academic and social, emotional, and behavioral success was implemented to bring about the astounding transformation. These components include:

- Use of the Responsive Classroom® model, an approach that brings together social and academic learning and "fosters safe, challenging, and joyful classrooms and schools" (see www.responsiveclassroom.org).

- Collaboration between regular and special education staff.

- Assessments of student instructional levels and use of instructional strategies tailored to those levels.

- Positive relationships between adults and students.

- A common language and ethic throughout the school of equity, justice, and success for every student.

Adoption of the Responsive Classroom® principles throughout the entire school, including in the special education classes, is reportedly responsible for

a large portion of the transformation. The Responsive Classroom® model provides a structure that helps children learn social skills along with academic content. The day begins with the Morning Meeting during which the children sit in a circle to hear a message about the day's events or topics of study and they hold an informal conversation in which everyone participates. A set of rules for behavior is posted in every room and hallway along with the systematic and universal steps for regaining self-control and turning around problem behavior. The seven steps consist of a series of consequences for misbehavior that systematically escalate in severity from "take a break," to "fix it" plans, to dismissal from school. The consistency with which the system is implemented by every adult in the school is remarkable. It has produced demonstrable changes in student behavior and conduct, with students taking responsibility for their behavior, and dismissal from school a rarity. The model also involves "buddy classrooms." Experienced teachers are typically paired with less-experienced teachers. Teachers work together to assess and reflect on their performance and provide each other with constructive feedback regarding their interactions with students. For example, if a teacher experiences frequent conflict with a particular student, the teacher's buddy teacher might observe the teacher and point out the types of behaviors the teacher exhibits that reliably precede the student's outbursts. Then the two teachers work together to identify alternative strategies for interacting with the student and monitor progress in terms of reducing conflict and strengthening the relationship between the teacher and student.

This transformation has positively affected the entire student body at Dayton's Bluff, including students identi-

fied as having an emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD). All staff members in the school receive intensive training in the principles and procedures associated with the Responsive Classroom® model. "Collaboration is key to our teachers finding creative ways to grow at their craft and help our students exceed the standards" says Von Sheppard, principal of Dayton's Bluff Elementary School. The EBD teacher collaborates with regular education teachers who teach students on her caseload, and she co-teaches in regular education classrooms. The uniformly high expectations for academic performance and standards of behavior are held for all students, regardless of whether they are identified as having EBD. Students with EBD have responded with the same academic and behavioral improvements demonstrated by the general student population. The common policies and procedures used across regular and special education classrooms promote academic and behavioral success for all students.

The importance of social skills instruction is equal to that of academic success for all students. The academic success that regular and special education students at Dayton's Bluff experience is largely a product of the individualized instruction all students receive. Individualized assessments are conducted with each student to determine the specific instructional needs of each across the content areas. Instruction in reading, writing, and math is conducted in "workshop" style that involves a "mini-lesson" of approximately 5-10 minutes followed by a period of time during which students receive guided practice and feedback on applications of the mini-lesson. Data are regularly collected and analyzed to determine students' growth and to identify areas in need of individualized instructional strategies. Students with EBD respond particularly well to the brief instructional periods followed by opportunities to practice what they've learned and experience success in school.

The common language of respect that is spoken throughout the entire school, with the same high expectations for academic performance and pro-social behavior held for all students, demonstrates a cohesiveness that contributes to the success of all students in the school. All students experience the same consequences for misbehavior, including those students who have a history of significant behavioral problems in school, and all students are provided multiple opportunities to correct their own behavior within the systematized program. Rob O'Hara-Graff, an EBD teacher who joined the staff this year, explains, "Our students who have low esteem and/or make poor choices have a chance to see fairness in how everyone is treated alike, that they will not be condemned for making a mistake, and will be encouraged to succeed by everyone." Mr. O'Hara-Graff has also commented that the first thing he noticed at Dayton's Bluff was the common language throughout the building. He finds that the consistent joint efforts between regular and special education staff represent a strong united front in the development of appropriate behavior of all students.

The equity and fairness that is a hallmark of the Responsive Classroom® model contributes to the development of positive relationships between students and staff. The high level of consistency with which the staff members implement the program builds trusting relationships between students and adults in the building. It is much more common for students to be sent to the principal's office to read something they've written or share an accomplishment in math than to face disciplinary action. When disciplinary action is necessary, the staff members approach the problem as a partner with the student to understand and solve the problem rather than as heavy-handed, controlling, punitive authority figures. This approach promotes mutual respect, responsibility, and pride, and reduces the incidence of learned helplessness.

Strong leadership from the principal and ample opportunities for professional development are also critical elements for the type of widespread success observed at Dayton's Bluff. The principal holds high expectations for teacher performance and provides constant guidance and feedback for effective implementation of the essential components of the program. Teachers are provided with intensive training as well as ongoing "booster" sessions tailored to their individual needs. The model is working so well that most students, including students with the most severe EBD, are experiencing academic success and are able to turn their behavior around within one or two opportunities to regain control. Given the focus on teaching social skills along with academics, and the resultant improvements observed, there is every reason to believe that these students will stand alongside their regular education peers in leading productive, successful lives.

The transformation at Dayton's Bluff provides a ray of hope for promoting academic and behavioral success for a large population of students at risk for developing, and identified with, EBD. The investment in "people-power" that prioritizes small class sizes and strong professional development programs over cutting-edge technology has resulted in successful primary and secondary prevention that supports the tertiary prevention resources provided by the district for students identified with EBD. The comprehensive, multi-dimensional program addresses needs across domains for all students, including those with EBD, increasing the likelihood that they will experience success in school, remain in school through graduation, and successfully transition into adulthood.

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Implementing School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

by Timothy J. Lewis

The challenges students with emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) present to schools and communities have been well documented (Lockwood, 1997; Myers & Holland, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The impact of EBD on the students themselves paints a bleak picture, with poor academic and social outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 1998; Wagner, 1991). The literature is clear that our best hope of helping students with EBD is effective prevention and early intervention practices (Kamps, Kravits, Rauch, Kamps, & Chung, 2000; Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999). Unfortunately, to date, school systems have not built the capacity to implement prevention efforts (Kauffman, 1999) and, at the opposite extreme, many engage in disciplinary practices such as "zero tolerance" that actually exacerbate the problem (Mayer, 1995; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). One approach to prevention and early intervention that's proving successful is school-wide positive behavior support(SW-PBS).

Teamwork in SW-PBS

One of the central strategies of SW-PBS is the use of school teams to build an effective schoolwide system that implements practices the literature has identified as effective to provide prevention and early intervention for all students, particularly those who may be at-risk (Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000; Sugai et al., 1999). Schools must have administrators as part of the teams, in addition to representatives of grade levels, curriculum departments or other school teams, and specialists. The teams' primary function is to draft policy and discuss all materials and actions with their respective constituencies to increase "buy-in" and make sure developed policy reflects building faculty and staff values.

The teams work within a three-tiered continuum of behavioral and academic supports:

- First tier: Universal supports for all students within a school or district. This is the primary level, and its essential features include positively stated expectations, strategies to teach expectations, high rates of reinforcement for complying with expectations, and clear routines to increase the likelihood of success (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

- Second tier: Secondary or small group/targeted level of supports focusing on students who require additional intervention to achieve outcomes. This level uses strategies such as small group instruction in self-management and social skill development as well as academic support in groups.

- Third tier: Individual supports implemented with students who have chronic patterns of problem behavior. The focus is on the completion of a functional behavioral assessment that leads to an individualized positive behavior support plan.

Across the three tiers of support, SW-PBS emphasizes a common set of practices, language, and processes to increase maintenance and generalization of each level of support. School teams apply a problem-solving process across all the levels that emphasizes three essential features. First, teams use data to guide decision-making and to evaluate their efforts to impact student behavior. That data indicates where problems occur, which students account for the majority of behavioral issues, and what means of addressing them are presently is in place. Second, teams identify empirically-validated practices to match need. Finally, school teams work to develop comprehensive systems of support to insure all adults are aware of and fluent in implementing targeted practices. The systems of support include faculty and staff training, resource allocation, development of routines, and codifying all procedures into school policy. The basic building blocks of school-wide universal supports to individual student plans include a) teaching pro-social behaviors that will replace problem behavior, b) multiple opportunities to practice expected pro-social behaviors, and c) specific and positive feedback upon instances of student mastery and use of the appropriate skill.

While the essential features of SW-PBS are drawn from previously research-validated practices, the ability to "measure" the impact of prevention efforts remains difficult in that if universal efforts are effective, students do not come to the attention of school staff. Currently, research is under way tracking students who enter school "at-risk" and examining the long-term impact of SW-PBS efforts.

The following case study provides an illustration of how one school used the logic and process of SW-PBS to address a kindergarten student who was displaying a common pattern among students ultimately identified as having EBD – high rates and high intensity of problem behavior.

Case Study in SW-PBS at the Individual Level

"Moesha" (pseudonym) was a five-year-old kindergarten student who was receiving no specialized services. She was referred to the SW-PBS team by her classroom teacher and the assistant principal based on an escalating pattern of non-compliance, aggressive behavior directed toward peers and adults, and tantrums that escalated, on one occa-

sion, to the point of necessitating police intervention. At the time of her referral to the support team, Moesha was also referred for preliminary assessment to determine the appropriateness of a special education referral, for case review by the district mental health coordinator, and, as a result of police involvement on that prior occasion, for informal conversations with juvenile justice. All of the referrals are common in the pathway to identifying a student as having an EBD.

Moesha's elementary school had been implementing SW-PBS for three years prior to this case study. The school had a universal set of expectations, social skill lesson plans to teach the expectations, clear routines, and evidence to show an overall impact on student behavior through a decrease in behavioral incident reports. The school also had begun to implement secondary/small group interventions such as targeted social skill groups and mentoring. At the start of the current school year the school had developed a process for identifying and supporting individual students.

In Moesha's case, behavioral incidence data, assistant principal and teacher interviews, and a classroom observation were conducted to determine patterns and maintaining variables of the problem behavior. Based on data it was hypothesized that Moesha engaged in minor problem behavior to access teacher and peer attention, and tantruming to escape "disciplinary action" (i.e., going to timeout room near the principal's office). Moesha's plan consisted of two principle components. First, a self-management chart was developed for Moesha to provide a visual representation of her compliance with the school-wide expectations. Teachers and other faculty and staff also provided high rates of praise and attention if they observed Moesha engaging in behaviors related to the school-wide expectations. All of these efforts were designed to meet Moesha's need for teacher attention, while providing multiple instances of specific feedback related to the school-wide social skills.

The second component of the intervention involved Moesha reporting to the assistant principal's office when she had earned a pre-determined number of points on her self-management card. This visit was to provide additional attention and celebration for Moesha and an opportunity to visit the office under positive versus punitive circumstances. In addition to visits for mastery, the principal and assistant principal provided practice opportunities to be escorted to the office in case her behavior escalated to the point of her needing to be removed from the classroom. Clear and consistent instructions were given during times Moesha was on-task and engaging in appropriate behavior regarding expected behavior while the administrator escorted Moesha to the office. Once in the office, Moesha was to sit down and review what she needed to do if she was asked to leave the classroom and what would happen once she arrived in the office (i.e., sit down, relax for awhile, and then they would talk about what happened and create a plan so it won't happen in the future).

At the time of the initial meeting, Moesha was averaging three to five visits to the office per week for major behavioral problems. The teacher also reported daily instances of minor problem behavior. At the time of the writing of this article, the school reported Moesha did not have a single office visit for problem behavior in over three months. All referral inquiries for additional services have also been withdrawn, except ongoing support for the family that consists of regular contact and updates on Moesha's progress, as well as sharing of techniques to reduce the likelihood of problem behavior and increase structure in the home.

Conclusion

While it is certainly too soon to state unequivocally that this school has effectively prevented the development of a more severe and chronic pattern of behavior in Moesha, it has built the capacity to implement what the literature indicates are best practices. At present, the school is fading the self-management plan, has enrolled her in a small social-skill group to work on peer interaction skills, and continues to teach, practice, and celebrate Moesha's and all students' mastery of pro-social skills.

Empirical studies are clearly warranted before the field can unequivocally point to SW-PBS as effective in the prevention and intervention with students who have EBD. However, students like Moesha can ill afford to wait for the research outcomes. What SW-PBS does provide is a mechanism for schools to adopt already validated prevention/intervention practices in a comprehensive and systemic way.

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Improving Social Development School-Wide: The BASE Program

by J. Ron Nelson

The large number of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) has been a long-standing concern to school psychologists, educators, parents, and the public at large (Achenbach, Levent, & Rescorla, 2002). Estimates provided in the *Surgeon General's Report on Student and Mental Health* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) indicate that 21% of youth within the general population have a mental health related disorder that manifests into a range of problem behaviors. Further, demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status, geographic location, and community size (e.g., rural vs. urban) appear to have little influence on base rates and types of problem behavior (McDermott & Schaefer, 1996). Within this context, the Center for At-Risk Children's Services at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln has worked with K-12 schools across the country to create a school-wide social development program called Behavior and Academic Support and Enhancement Program (BASE), which is designed to improve the social and academic outcomes of students with or at risk of EBD. The remainder of this article describes BASE, outcomes for students, and lessons learned along the way.

Description of BASE

BASE, rooted in social learning theory (Bandura, 1997), is implemented by all staff and students in a school. It uses a long-term, consensus-based, participatory approach to alter the climate and culture of the entire school. The goal is to increase and reinforce the number of prosocial cues and models in the school, to increase student social and academic competence, and to decrease the frequency and severity of problem behavior over time. Specifically, BASE has five primary activities:

- Adjust ecological arrangements of the common areas of the school.
- Teach all students and staff three simple skills/rules.
- Actively supervise the common area routines.
- Use the Think Time Strategy.
- Develop a continuum of administrative disciplinary responses.

Activity 1: Adjust Ecological Arrangements

Adjustments are made to the ecological arrangements of the common areas of the school (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, restrooms, playground) to eliminate or reduce social cues or situations that might increase problem behavior (setting events, antecedents). The following guidelines are used to improve the scheduling and use of space:

- The density of students is reduced by using all entrances and exits to a given area; the space between groups, lines, and classes is increased; and the age-range of students is increased as the density of students increases.
- Wait time (e.g., time standing in the lunch line) is kept at a minimum.
- Travel time/distance are decreased as much as possible (e.g., all entrances are used during morning arrival).
- Physical signs are used to mark transition zones that indicate movement from less to more controlled space or indicate behavioral expectations for the common areas of the school.
- The sequence of events in the common areas is designed to facilitate the type of behavioral momentum desired (e.g., going to recess before rather than after lunch may result in students being better prepared for instruction).

Activity 2: Teach Three Skills/Rules

All students and staff in the school learn three simple, contextually-relevant social skills or rules via a common language that is applied school-wide (setting events, antecedent): a) be safe, b) be responsible, and c) be respectful. These social skills are operationalized for all major aspects of school (e.g., hallway behavior). A three-phase process is used to teach students the social skills. In the first phase, students are taught the social skills with high levels of supervision. This supervision continues through the first two to three weeks of school, and includes high rates of social reinforcement and corrective feedback if necessary. The second phase involves conducting periodic reviews during the first two months of the school session, with reduced levels of supervision. In the third phase, "booster sessions" are conducted throughout the remainder of the year as needed (e.g., after holidays).

Activity 3: Actively Supervise Common Areas

Active supervision of the common area routines is used to prevent problem behavior and to respond effectively when it occurs (setting event, antecedent). Established patterns of supervision are developed to enable staff to provide a more complete and balanced coverage of the common areas. Staff are trained in the supervision of common areas and in the implementation of responses to problem behavior to promote student self-regulation skills. These responses replicate the Think Time Strategy in the common areas (see below).

Activity 4: Use the Think Time Strategy

The Think Time Strategy (Nelson & Carr, 2000) is a cognitive-behavioral timeout strategy designed to enable the teacher

and student to stop a negative social exchange, and provide the student feedback and an opportunity to plan. Used in the classroom and common areas for minor deportment problems, it can a) reduce the intra- and interpersonal effects of student-teacher interactions, b) deliver a stable response to problem behavior across all staff, c) provide the student a quiet period to enable the student to "save face" and regain self-composure, d) provide the student with feedback and an opportunity to plan for subsequent performance, and e) enable the teacher and student to cut off a negative social exchange and initiate a positive one. The U.S. Department of Education's Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools has designated the Think Time Strategy as a promising program.

Activity 5: Develop a Continuum of Administrative Responses

A continuum of administrative disciplinary responses is developed to increase student self-regulation, perspective taking, and problem-solving skills (i.e., antecedent, consequence). The continuum of responses addresses challenging problem behavior that is referred to the administrative team.

Student Outcomes with BASE

Elementary, middle, and high schools across the country have adopted BASE in an effort to improve the social behavior and academic outcomes of all students, including those with EBD. Schools adopting BASE have experienced decreases in problem behavior, increases in prosocial behavior, and improvements in academic achievement (Nelson, 1996; Nelson, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2002). For example, Nelson and colleagues (2002) used a quasi-experimental design to assess the effects of BASE over a two-year period in seven elementary schools. Comparisons with the remaining 28 elementary schools in the district indicated consistently moderate to strong

positive effects on the formal administrative disciplinary actions (i.e., decreased office discipline referrals, suspensions, and emergency removals) and academic achievement (i.e., increase in reading, spelling, mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) of the participating schools. Comparisons between a sample of students with or at risk of EBD (n = 207) and a matched (age and grade) group of criterion students indicated small to moderate positive effects on the social competence and academic performance of the target students.

Staff responses to the program have been positive. They are perhaps best summed up by Dr. DeAnn Currin, principal of Elliott Elementary School in Lincoln, Nebraska, when she observed:

> If children with behavior disorders are able to focus on learning in the classroom, everyone else can too. The social development program which leads to clear expectations, positive behavior instruction, consistency, and non-confrontational signals for attention keeps all children on track. The program enables children with emotional and behavioral disorders to focus on learning in the classroom and the teacher to focus on teaching.

Lessons Learned Over the Years

We have learned a great deal over the years implementing BASE in elementary, middle, and high schools. On the surface, it appears that implementing a school-wide social development program such as BASE would be quite simple. However, there are a number of common obstacles that arise that must be overcome. First, problems with inappropriate instructional materials, learning environments, or a school culture that is unwilling to accept the diversity and individuality of the students (especially those who exhibit problem behavior) and families all take precedence over high-level discussions about creating a school-wide social development

program. Second, the problem behavior and associated discipline-related issues addressed by a school-wide social development program are often difficult because staff have different levels of expertise, perspectives, and commitment. Third, many school staff fail to understand the importance of teaching students the social skills specific to the school setting (e.g., arrival procedures). We have found that staff may often be unaware of the social skills specific to their school setting and the associated discipline policies and practices. Finally, the amount of staff development required to implement and sustain a school-wide social development program is often under-estimated. The life expectancy of a school-wide program will be approximately two years unless ongoing professional development occurs.

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The Impact of Explicit Reading Instruction on Student Achievement: Study Findings

by Katherine B. Falk and Joseph H. Wehby

Students identified with emotional/ behavioral disorders (EBD) typically exhibit learning difficulties that further impede their success in school and contribute to dismal school and post-school outcomes. In fact, rates of student disengagement in school, absenteeism, course failure, and dropout are highest for students with EBD when compared to students with other kinds of disabilities (Wagner et al., 2003). More specifically, students with EBD often encounter difficulties in the area of reading (Maughan, Pickles, Hagell, Rutter, &

> *Students with emotional/behavioral disorders typically exhibit learning difficulties that further impede their success in school and contribute to dismal school and postschool outcomes.*

Yule, 1996; Rock, Fessler, & Church, 1997). Deficits in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, and comprehension become increasingly difficult to remediate as students progress through school and, as a result, inhibit students with EBD from experiencing school success. Unfortunately, there is an insufficient research base investigating strategies to improve the reading achievement of students with EBD. In a review of the literature, Coleman and Vaughn (2000) identified only eight studies that focused on reading interventions with students with EBD. While several studies have been added to that list since then, the research on this issue remains limited.

Information regarding effective reading strategies is necessary to prevent students with EBD from falling even further behind their peers in the most basic of reading skills. In addition, there has been some evidence that improvements in reading achievement effect decreases in problem behavior in the school setting (DuPaul, Ervin, Hook & McGoey, 1998; Locke & Fuchs, 1995). While no generalizations can be made about this association due to the limited research base, the fact that some findings reveal collateral improvements in behavior due to reading intervention suggests that effective academic instruction may be a vital component to addressing behavioral problems in school settings. Given the degree of negative school outcomes for this population of students, extending empirical investigations to focus on the reading and academic needs of students with EBD is essential.

In spite of the limited research base, the studies that have investigated reading interventions with students with EBD have yielded promising results (Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes, 2000; Falk & Wehby, 2001; Wehby, Falk, Barton-Arwood, Lane, & Cooley, 2003; Wehby, Lane, & Falk, 2005). Although the small number of studies and methodological issues associated with them make it difficult to generalize the findings for recommendation, it appears that, at the very least, students with EBD respond to reading instruction that is explicit and systematic. In addition, the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) has established that effective reading programs for all learners should include instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Studies that have incorporated explicit methods of teaching skills in these areas have demonstrated increases in reading achievement for students with EBD.

One instructional method that is explicit in nature and has proven effective with diverse learners is Direct Instruction (Adams & Englemann, 1996; Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997). Direct Instruction is a highly scripted teaching method that includes frequent questioning by the teacher, enabling students to constantly interact and be engaged with the lesson and allowing teachers to provide immediate corrective feedback. In particular, Direct Instruction has evidenced significant statistical improvement with students with disabilities (Lloyd, Forness, & Kavale, 1998), although specific work with students with EBD remains sparse.

In an attempt to extend the research in this area, one particular study (Barton-Arwood, Wehby, & Falk, in press) examined the effect of the *SRA Horizons* reading program supplemented with the *PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Strategies)* (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathew, & Simmons, 1997; Mathes, Grek, Howard, Babyak, & Allen, 1999) peer-tutoring intervention on a group of third grade students with EBD. *Horizons* is a Direct Instruction program that focuses on the areas of phonemic awareness, explicit phonics, comprehension, fluency, and spelling. The lessons are fast-paced and include materials and stories that are both colorful and engaging. Visual prompts that highlight atypical word spellings as well as letter combinations and silent letters in the text are heavily included in the beginning of the program yet are gradually faded out. Additionally, the *PALS* reading program is a peer-tutoring program in which higher and lower functioning readers are paired together to lead one another through various reading activities. These activities focus on letter-sound correspondence, blending sounds, sight words, and reading stories. The lessons are initially scripted

Supporting the Dream of Becoming a Poet

My name is Wes Goodson. I am a junior at Madison Special Education School in Nashville, Tennessee. School has been very challenging for me because I have dyslexia and other learning disabilities. I do love learning, and my favorite classes are reading and writing. I really enjoy the classics, and I have listened to the audio recordings of many classic stories and novels. Poetry is my greatest interest, and I have written dozens of poems using a digital recorder and a teacher as a scribe. My poem "The Candle" has been published in a collection of poetry called "Breaking Ground." I am inspired by the writing of Edgar Allen Poe, and I think he is one of the greatest writers of all time.

I have always been interested in reading and writing, but it has always been very difficult for me. During the last two years at my school, I have been involved in a reading program called SRA Corrective Reading. In this reading program, I have learned to recognize words by learning the skill of decoding them. The first section of SRA is all about decoding, and I have learned the skill of breaking unfamiliar words down into parts and sounds. This makes words easier to work with, and it has made my vocabulary get much bigger and better. In the fall of 2004, I tested out of the decoding program, and I am now working in the SRA comprehension program. This takes the decoding skills a step further, because now I have to comprehend short passages, and answer questions about what I have read. In SRA comprehension we do really fun skill-building drills like deductions and analogies. Since I have been involved in SRA corrective reading, I have learned to enjoy reading and writing even more. I am now getting the skills I need to read and write independently. This is something I have not been able to do in the past, and I look forward to being able to put my new skills to use.

All in all, SRA corrective reading has helped me to become a better reader and a better writer. Since becoming a writer is a dream that I have, I hope that I will be able to continue to improve my skills. Here is a copy of my best poem. It is called "The Candle," and I believe it shows how far I have come.

The Candle
by Wes Goodson

Love is as a living candle
that lights one's very soul.
The candle can never be blown out
but as hatred takes its toll,
the candle runs the risk of falling
into the darker side of the soul.

The hateful half of the human soul,
is like a horrid, pitch black hole.
Where demons dwell
and wait to take control
of the lovely light within your soul.

But there is luck without luck
in the candle of your soul.
For it will never be extinguished
but it may turn cold.

For if it fall among the halls
of the demons from within,
they will keep it for themselves
and let the heat grow dim.

For within the hole inside your soul
it is chilling, icy cold.
And this dark ice will never be nice
to a light so bright and warm.
For the ice does not wish to melt
and the darkness will hold its own.

For the lovely light of love
with beauty bright and warm
will not keep its brilliant light
in a realm so miserable and glum.

It will not go out, of this I am sure.
But the brilliant light will suffer
much worse askewer.

For the lovely light of beauty true
shall suffer in ways its owner never knew.
For the once white, hot light of love
is now a bonfire in a tub.
Flaring dark and evil flames
and hating the world above.

So keep hate far from your soul
and your candle will not fall to the demon's goal.

So love your life and live it with love,
and keep your candle warm and snug.

Planning Behavior Improvement at Nebraska's Beatrice High School

by Reece L. Peterson, Courtney Miller, and Russell Skiba

Seven years ago Beatrice High School in Beatrice, Nebraska, became one of the field sites for the Safe and Responsive Schools Project (SRS), a project developing a process by which schools would use data to plan and implement school-wide student behavior improvement and violence prevention activities. The

> *Seven years ago Beatrice High School became one of the field sites for the Safe and Responsive Schools Project. Beatrice focused on improving the behavior and safety of its students.*

federally-funded project was a collaboration of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Indiana University, in partnership with several field site schools in those two states. At Beatrice, a school in a rural community of about 13,000, the effort has focused on improving the behavior and safety of its students by employing a school-wide team to plan and implement specific activities.

The SRS project started with a working plan and a framework for planning related to behavior using three levels of action: Creating a Positive Climate (activities designed to promote good behavior and prevent problems), Early Identification and Intervention (efforts to intervene early and quickly when signs of problem behavior were detected), and Effective Responses to Chronic Behavior Problems (efforts to manage the behavior of students with chronic behavior problems). As plans were developed they were usually coordinated with or incorporated into specific

schools' comprehensive school improvement planning. While the focus of planning was not specifically on students with emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD), more effective ways to meet the needs of students with EBD were considered and addressed at all three levels of action. An emphasis on establishing a positive behavioral environment was seen as supporting these students and possibly preventing some of the altercations they had with classroom teachers. Because there was concern about suspending students with EBD too frequently, earlier and alternative intervention options that did not interrupt their schooling were desired by participating schools.

At Beatrice High School, a SRS team was formed which included the principal, assistant principal, counselor, special education teacher, school psychologist, and several other teachers. The team immediately started to gather data from existing sources (office referral, and suspension and expulsion data) and made plans to gather survey data as well. Three safety questionnaires (one for students, one for school staff, and one for parents) were administered. The team completed and discussed a needs assessment which identified components that were in place or lacking at each of the three framework levels: Creating a Positive Climate, Early Identification and Intervention, and Effective Responses. The team then prioritized its concerns or areas in which they wanted to improve, and began to formulate the plans to address each level of action.

The Beatrice High School team identified two top areas to address: increasing parental involvement (Creating a Positive Climate), and establishing a building-wide behavior/discipline program (Effective Responses). The team wanted to involve parents more in the daily workings of school life and

explored two possible avenues to achieve this. These avenues were the creation of a Parent Coordination Council through which parents may serve as volunteers to monitor students during faculty meetings, before/after school, in the gym at lunch time, and during the day in the student lounge; additionally the team hoped to train parents to use a Web-based communication module to improve teacher communication with parents. Both were implemented and have had varying degrees of success. Overall, all staff have felt that having parents more visible around school has been a strong benefit to the school. It has extended the level of adult supervision of students in school, and spread responsibility for maintaining good student behavior beyond administrators and teachers. Although the Web-based communication was used effectively by some parents, others did not find it helpful. Nevertheless, it did provide an alternative means of parent-educator communication, and everyone feels that improved communication with parents helped students both academically and with behavior.

The team also wished to address a building-wide behavior/discipline program, evaluating and possibly revamping the high school's current discipline system. The plan involved the implementation of an "after-school school" in lieu of out-of-school suspension, and changes to the building's in-school suspension program. The team implemented a revision of the office referral discipline procedures, which attempts to more appropriately match the consequence with the student's offense, and the use of a "time-out" strategy, allowing students to problem solve in a different environment and resolve the conflict without an office referral. The resulting new time-out procedure (referred to as Out-of-Classroom Intervention; OCI)

became operational the next school year. The purpose was to afford students and teachers a break from the situation and to allow for a brief cool-down period for instances that did not warrant an office referral. Teachers were allowed to send a student to OCI if the classroom educational process was being interrupted because of the student's actions and presence in the classroom, and if the teacher deemed that no administrative involvement was necessary. Students sent to the designated OCI room then completed a problem-solving form with a paraeducator. Students who successfully completed the problem-solving form and complied with the OCI rules were then allowed to return to their next scheduled class. In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of this procedure, the completed problem-solving forms were analyzed and the frequency of referrals per teacher and per student, referring stu-

A outgrowth of this project was the development of the Safe and Responsive Schools Guide, materials created in part as a result of the Beatrice High School experience that are now available for use by other schools.

dent behaviors, and whether the forms were filled out appropriately by the students. In addition, teachers were given a survey in an effort to assess their knowledge of the OCI procedure, their use of it, and their feedback regarding its implementation. After reviewing the data obtained from the problem-solving forms as well as from a teacher survey about the program, the team has continued to further improve and "tweak" the effectiveness of the OCI procedure.

The team also implemented a program called BASE (Beatrice After-School Education). BASE is a student management program that works with students who chronically violate school policy and have not been able to adjust appropriately to basic behavior guidelines as set forth in district policies. BASE is used as a program assignment for students who have received an out-of-school suspension, as a tutoring program for students who are behind in class assignments, and as an alternative program for students who do not regularly attend school or have been assigned a long-term suspension. BASE begins at 4:00 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursdays. The team continues to evaluate the effectiveness of the BASE program by monitoring the numbers, sources, and types of referrals, and has made several minor modifications. So far the BASE program has been useful particularly for out-of-school suspended students, including students with EBD or other disabilities, as an alternative to suspension or expulsion. It has provided a vehicle to maintain school ties and to continue educational services on the one hand, but on the other hand has made a BASE "suspension" more aversive, interrupting the student's social time with peers after school and ending the often unsupervised, "free time" of a traditional out of school suspension.

Subsequently, while continuing to refine the Parent Council, OCI, and BASE, the team focused on improving climate issues in the school as a result of the data from the safety questionnaire. The team was particularly concerned about how well students were being appreciated for their positive behavior, and decided to implement celebration events for students with perfect attendance, for students with no tardiness, and for students whose grades or behavior had improved during the semester. These celebration events included a half-day pizza party to recognize these deserving students and other forms of recognition at the end of each semester. These have also brought recognition by all staff of

positive student behavior in a range of ways throughout the school day and year.

While Beatrice High School continues to refine its own planning process to better meet the needs of all of its students, a couple of lessons have been learned. Improving climate and behavior are a process, not a one-time event. And good local ideas can emerge and are enhanced when placed within the structure of a comprehensive planning framework.

An outgrowth of this project was the development of the *Safe and Responsive Schools Guide,* materials created in part as a result of the Beatrice High School experience that are now available for use by other schools. The guide, as well as a variety of checklists, forms and fact sheets addressing many of the topics covered above can be found on the Safe and Responsive Schools Web sites at http://www.unl.edu/srs and http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl.

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Implementing Problem-Solving in Colorado: Wellington Junior High

by Suzanne E. Kemp

One of the most important social tasks facing children is for them to develop problem-solving skills. The inability to resolve conflicts and understand and negotiate successfully the complexity of an expanding social world often results in social isolation, aggression, and school failure. Training in problem solving is a way to enhance children's relationships and adjustment. These inter-

Students feel more in control of their behaviors and are better able to manage themselves. Through these proactive behavioral and academic interventions many previously failing students are experiencing success in school.

ventions typically involve three steps: a) conceptualizing conflict situations, b) developing solutions, and c) implementing selected strategies. Examples of conflicts include reacting to a bully's threats, entering an ongoing conversation, making friends, being falsely accused of misbehaving, wanting to spend time with someone, suspecting a classmate of stealing, and being teased. Children's ability to resolve these types of conflicts appropriately and successfully helps them shape their feelings about themselves and the school experience as well as enhance the quality of their peer relationships. This article describes one school's experience with a problem-solving model for addressing problem behavior.

Wellington Junior High School is located in north central Colorado and has a student population of 350. It is a "multi-categorical" school, which means that it serves all students with disabilities in all settings. Students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom and curriculum and, if necessary, receive modified instruction in reading, math, and social skills. The teachers, students, and administrators at the school fully embrace a problem-solving approach as consistent with the school's inclusionary philosophy and practices. The decision to implement a formal problem-solving model began as an intervention for a few students who were identified as having emotional disorders (ED), and now, five years later, all of the student body are actively engaged in this process. All staff teach problem solving to every student, not just those with ED. The use of school-wide problem solving functions as a common approach for all staff across all environments, thus eliminating confusion between teachers and students and enhancing consistency.

The school does not adhere to a specific problem-solving curriculum. Rather, it bases its program loosely on the social problem-solving training framework described by Gesten, Weissberg, Amish, and Smith (1987). This framework provides a structure for the staff to use when deciding on what problem-solving components may best fit their student population and school community. The framework provides guidance in the areas of program design and structure, assessment issues and strategies, and teacher training and selection. General education teachers are the primary staff to engage students in problem solving. The multi-categorical teachers are the secondary staff who provide more intensive problem-solving training for students with the most

challenging behaviors. A referral to an administrator would only occur as a last resort if these two levels failed to produce changes in a particular student's behavior.

Teachers agree to be flexible in the specific language they use to communicate with students during problem solving so as to best capitalize on the personalized rapport they have established with particular students. However, all staff consistently follow some basic steps. The first step of problem solving is often the most difficult to complete: early identification of the potential problem. Jennifer Highstreet, a multi-categorical teacher at Wellington Junior High, explains that one of the areas in which general education teachers require the most training is identifying early warning signs before a student's inappropriate behavior escalates. Early identification is important because students are more responsive to following directions when they still have some control over their behavior. The second step is to move the student to an established "safe" spot. The goal here is to provide the student with a quiet place where he or she can regain control before returning and problem solving with the teacher. Students are instructed to re-enter the classroom silently, take a seat, and resume engaging in the current activity. As soon as the teacher is available, he or she begins the problem solving dialogue by asking the student two questions: a) What was going on that caused you to go to the safe spot and b) how are you going to address the issue in the future? The wording, length, and detail of the discussion are flexible and based on teacher discretion. However, all teachers spend time helping the student identify their own frustration triggers. The goal is to have students recognize when they are experiencing increased frustration and be able to

remove themselves before staff need to intervene. According to Ms. Highstreet, the goal is to have the entire problem solving process last 10 minutes or less. The majority of students, including many identified with ED, are able to meet this goal.

The inability of some students to benefit from this process – either because they are repeat offenders or exceeding the 10-minute timeframe – results in a more formal collaborative process between the general education teacher and one of the multi-categorical teachers. This discussion focuses on identifying possible antecedents to the problem, what occurs during the problem-solving process, outside issues, and other pertinent topics. A new behavior intervention plan is collaboratively developed to address the student's problems. It may also be determined at this meeting that an assessment of the behavior and situation is warranted. The assessment answers the question of why a child behaves a certain way, so that educators can modify some aspect of the curriculum (e.g., instruction, materials, tasks) or environment (e.g., providing cues for students to engage in appropriate behaviors and reinforcing them). It results in positive, rather than punitive, techniques to resolve student problems. It is possible to identify what purpose a student's behavior serves by observing and recording events that precede the behavior (antecedents) and events that follow the behavior (consequences). For example, a teacher tells Mary to stop talking to Judy (antecedent), Mary whistles (behavior), and the teacher tells her to stop whistling (consequence). It is reasonable to assume that Mary's whistling serves the function (or purpose) of getting her teacher's attention. The more Mary misbehaves, the more attention she gets from her teacher. As this example illustrates, some children find it preferable to get negative attention rather than no attention. Based on this information, the teacher can make immediate changes in the environment or curriculum to remedy the misbehavior.

Ms. Highstreet has conducted a variety of inservice training sessions helping general education teachers to independently conduct this type of informal assessment. As a result, the general education teachers have learned to identify antecedents, describe consequences they are employing, manipulate the curriculum or environment, and understand the most common functions of behavior (e.g., attention and escape). Therefore, they are often the ones who collect this information and process it with a multi-categorical teacher in order to develop a behavior intervention plan that allows the student to experience increased success in their classrooms.

The general education teachers at Wellington Junior High School have successfully implemented this school-wide problem-solving model with collaboration from the multi-categorical teachers. This approach has resulted in teachers spending more time teaching academics and less time managing students' inappropriate behaviors. The inclusion of all teachers learning how to identify antecedents, consequences, and purposes of behavior for students with particularly challenging behaviors has prevented the need for specialists conducting formal multi-faceted functional assessments and reduced the need for involving school administrators in the disciplinary process. Students have indicated that they feel more in control of their behaviors and are better able to manage themselves. Through these proactive behavioral and academic interventions many previously failing students are experiencing success in school.

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Resources of Interest

The following resources on topics related to this Impact issue may be of interest to readers:

• *National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org). The center has been established by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, to give schools capacity-building information and technical assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices. The Web site includes information on school-wide positive behavior support at primary, secondary, district-wide, and state-wide levels, as well as in relation to families and the law.*

• *Check & Connect Model (http:// ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect). The Check & Connect model promotes student engagement with school, reduces dropout, and increases school completion. It is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. The Web site offers information regarding the model, current projects and initiatives, related publications, and upcoming presentations and workshops.*

• *Suspending Disbelief: Moving Beyond Punishment to Promote Effective Interventions for Children with Mental or Emotional Disorders (2003). By T. Seltzer, J. Bliss, P. Tantamjarik, and J. Duda. A paper examining congressional intent in the IDEA regarding children with behavior problems, specifically in relation to the provisions on functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral interventions and supports. The report compares that intent with actual implementation of the mandate. Available from the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law online at www. bazelon.org/publications or at 202/467-5730 x 110.*

[Ernie, continued from page 1]

A student receiving special education services at Robertson High, he was diagnosed with emotional disorders. But he had one special teacher who he looked up to, Gloria Pacheco. "She was always motivating me," says Ernie. "I love that lady. She pulled me through. She helped me through everything. Even today, she acknowledges me in town."

As Ernie says of the plan, "In my opinion, the Self-Directed IEP/ITP is about exactly that, taking responsibility and accepting responsibility. It is my plan, so I work hard at doing the best I can."

Pacheco introduced Ernie to the Self-Directed IEP/ITP, an individualized education and transition planning program that encourages students to actively participate in decision-making and self-advocacy to help make a successful transition into the adult world. "When he did this, it made a big impact on his life," says Darlean. His bad habits started tapering off and eventually he graduated from Robertson High School in 2004. "In my opinion it was the Self-Directed IEP that empowered Ernie to take control of his life. The way he did that was by looking at where he was and realizing where he wanted to go. He defined the steps he had to take," says Pacheco. As Ernie says of the plan, "In my opinion, the Self-Directed IEP/ITP is about exactly that, taking responsibility and accepting responsibility. It is *my* plan, so I work hard at doing the best I can."

Dr. James Alarid, the dean of the School of Education at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, along with Ginger Blalock, a professor of special education at the University of New Mexico; Carole Brito, a research associate at the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations; Paula Kohler, an associate professor at Western Michigan University; Sue Gronewold, an education administrator for the New Mexico Public Education Department; and Marilyn D'Ottatavio, the transition coordinator for the Albuquerque Public Schools, help in training teachers across New Mexico to use the Self-Directed IEP/ITP. "I think this is the answer. We need to empower kids to carve out their own direction," says Alarid. "The good transition ages are between 16 and 22 years of age. We can help facilitate choices regarding post-secondary experiences and community college placement. It is important to help transition individuals from high school to the real world with the idea that they have an opportunity to become as independent as possible and be rewarded with a much better life. We have to be able to support them through the process."

In April of 2004, Ernie and Darlean gave a presentation for educators at a National Center on Secondary Education and Transition meeting in New Orleans explaining how he was able to make it through school by focusing and becoming independent. They're invited to present this June in Washington, D.C. at the 2005 National Leadership Summit on Improving Results.

Pacheco says there was always something special about Ernie. "He was a difficult young person," says Pacheco. "But he had a spark in his eye. As with all my students, I do not give up on them. The little baby boy that he has is his shining star. It gives purpose to his life. God works in mysterious ways."

As a senior in high school, Ernie took a basic math class at Luna Community College in Las Vegas and he intends to attend that school in the fall in hopes of receiving his mechanic's certificate. "I'm a hands-on guy. I'm always working on my truck. I do my own work on it, except for painting it. I've already changed my engine on it around ten times. What I don't know about mechanics, I'm willing to learn. I want to own my own business some day. It's better to run your own show." He says school is one of his priorities. "I will go back to school no matter what," says Ernie. "But I would prefer to get a full-time job and go to school at the same time." He already proved he could juggle both school and work. At the end of his senior year he worked at a plumbing company in Las Vegas as a tech helper for six months before being laid off during the winter months. Today, he has gotten a full-time job at an auto parts store. He also says that taking care of his son is on the top of his list. "My little boy is my number one priority. I get to see him around three times a month. He throws a fit

"I think this is the answer. We need to empower kids to carve out their own direction," says Alarid.

until he calls me on the phone. It kills me when I have to take him back or hang up the phone with him," says Ernie. While everything is not exactly as he'd like it to be, Ernie has made a start in the right direction. And like most people, he looks forward to even better things to come, one day at a time.

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[Lehr, continued from page 3]

- Primary prevention. Includes strategies and programs that are designed to prevent the development of problems, target all students, provide students and school staff with a strong foundation for teaching appropriate behaviors, and have a low cost per individual. Examples include school-wide positive behavioral supports, school climate improvement projects, and collaboration between family, school and community.

- Secondary prevention. Includes programs that decrease the frequency or intensity of problems, are designed to address alterable factors that place students at risk (e.g., angry or violent behavior), and have a moderate cost per individual. About 10-15% of students may need more intensive supports at this level. Examples include conflict-resolution lessons, peer-tutoring programs, and social-skills instruction.

- Tertiary prevention. Includes programs designed to remediate established problems, reduce the duration, and preclude negative outcomes. Programs are highly individualized and student centered, provide an effective and efficient response to students most in need, and have a higher cost per individual. About 1-5% of students will have chronic problems that require more intensive supports. Examples include wrap-around services, individual functional behavior analysis, and individualized behavior management plans.

Educators and administrators at elementary, middle, and high schools can use this model to guide prevention and intervention efforts.

Building Competence Across Domains

In addition to offering interventions across different levels, interventions must address relevant domains of competence for students with EBD. Effective interventions not only prevent problems, but also assist in building skills and competencies. Skill areas and examples of interventions especially relevant to students with EBD are listed below:

- Academic. Using effective strategies to promote academic achievement, including explicit and systematic instruction in reading; using alternatives to out-of-school suspension to increase opportunities for learning.

- Social/behavioral. Implementing school-wide social development programs; using functional behavior assessment to understand and change behavior.

- Emotional. Implementing school-wide and individual strategies to promote mental health; providing instruction and opportunities for self-advocacy, counseling.

- Vocational. Providing access to vocational assessments; providing relevant opportunities to learn outside of school (e.g., work programs, extracurricular opportunities).

- Transition. Providing mentoring supports to facilitate transition and adjustment to school; using orientation and welcoming procedures to ease transition between schools; incorporating self-determination skills for transition from school to work.

Conclusion

Complex problems such as facilitating success for students with EBD are rarely solved with simple, uni-dimensional strategies. One issue critical to the selection and program planning process involves examining the resources available for program implementation. Sustained, cohesive programming is essential, in contrast to offering isolated programs that do not reach out to include collaborative efforts with others throughout the school, or with parents and community members. Students with EBD have many strengths, and their teachers are talented individuals. Nonetheless, effective, cohesive, programming is necessary and presents specific challenges that require understanding the issues faced by students with EBD, advanced skills in program implementation, and a comprehensive approach that is cohesive, multi-faceted, and multi-tiered.

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Thus, teaching diversely involves sampling the diversity and depth of exemplars of lessons within the multiple situations that a child is likely to come into contact with, so that the wide-ranging generalized repertoires of emotion and behavior are supported.

Engage Mediators of Performance

The third principle recommends teaching to enable personal repertoires that take advantage of children's abilities to transfer and carry skills across environments, allowing for later production in the classroom or at a different time and place. Some of these techniques are variations of the memory enhancement provided by "a string on the finger" as a cue to remember to do something in particular. The difference here is that the skill carried and produced across times and settings is usually more complex (e.g., problem-solving rules) and readily influenced by being in circumstances similar to original learning (e.g., a test given in another though similar classroom can be completed by using a set of guiding rules for problem solution instructed by a teacher). In this strategy, the skill is transported in the child's repertoire and the performance is facilitated by the cues already present in new circumstances.

Many of these mediated generalization techniques relate to self-control and cognitively-recalled self-instructional strategies taught with a general purpose of moving them between settings as the new environment cues the child both by the commonality of the circumstances and by signaling that it is now advantageous to produce that skill under those generalized circumstances. For example, a child actively participating in their own education can practice evaluating and recording their own performance, and can practice guiding self-instructions about the sequence of components of the task in their original learning environment. These techniques can then be carried within the child's repertoire across settings for production at a later time under other circumstances when

appropriate. Similarly, social skills and problem solving in difficult or aggressive circumstances can be taught and practiced with peers who are also likely to be present in other situations requiring those skills. The presence of those peers in generalization circumstances may signal or cue performance of an effective de-escalating or coping repertoire.

Thus, engaging mediators of performance involves teaching a repertoire of skill that can be carried by the student. This teaching is in a manner that insures that emotions and behaviors are strongly influenced by what a child notices and does later in those other situations. That repertoire mediates a generalized outcome.

Conclusion

Improved academic, emotional, and behavioral repertoires of children that result from effective classroom teaching should be durable and widespread. It should never be assumed that what is seen in one environment will automatically be present in another situation or time, although sometimes that happens. To ensure that generalization occurs, teaching should incorporate tactics that have been shown to enhance generalized performance. Generalization should be attended to actively as a teachable and essential goal of procedures facilitating positive change, from the outset rather than as an afterthought with minimal action (Stokes & Baer, 2003).

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Resources of Interest

The following resources on topics related to this Impact issue may be of interest to readers:

• *On a Collision Course? Standards, Discipline and Students with Disabilities. Policy Research Brief 8(4), (1996). By M. Sinclair, M. Thurlow, S. Christenson, & D. Evelo. A review of educational reforms emphasizing the need for higher academic standards for all students and zero tolerance policies, the ways in which these reforms may challenge youth at high risk for school failure, and strategies for policy implementation that can help high risk students remain in school and meet these higher standards. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 612/624-4512 or publications@icimail.umn.edu.*

• *The Characteristics, Experiences, and Outcomes of Youth with Emotional Disturbances: NLTS2 Data Brief (2004). By M. Wagner and R. Cameto. This NLTS2 Data Brief takes a fresh look at selected characteristics of youth with emotional disturbances and their households that distinguish them from other youth with disabilities and/or from youth in the general population. It also describes aspects of their school histories, indicators of their academic performance and social adjustment at school, and activities outside of school. Available from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, Institute on Community Integration, at http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1687.*

• *Pacer Center (www.pacer.org, 952/838-9000). PACER Center works to enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. Their Web site has practical resources on parenting children with emotional/behavioral disorders.*

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and teacher-guided until students grow comfortable enough with the routine of the lessons to lead each other through independently. The combined intervention lasted for an hour of instructional time each day and was implemented across pairs of students over a 27-week period. Throughout the course of the study, students demonstrated increases in phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation, nonsense word fluency, sight word reading, and oral reading fluency. Moderate to significant gains were also noted in percentile scores between pre- and post-test on subtests of the *Woodcock Johnson Reading Mastery Tests-Revised* and the *Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing.* Such findings indicate that explicit instruction targeting a variety of reading skills is beneficial for students with learning and behavioral deficits.

While the research is limited in this area, even less is known about reading practices that are effective with older students with EBD who have a history of academic failure. There have been several studies, however, that have evidenced increases in reading achievement with older students with EBD with a program known as *SRA Corrective Reading* (Engelmann et al., 1999). *SRA Corrective Reading* is a Direct Instruction program developed particularly for older students who display significant difficulties in reading and who have not responded to other reading programs. The program includes scripted lessons focusing on two strands of decoding and comprehension as well as the materials and instructions for conducting ongoing assessment with the students. Students are placed into various levels of the program based on an initial placement assessment and may practice a range of reading skills from letter-sound correspondence and blending, to reading expository text, to more advanced comprehension and reasoning strategies.

Strong, Wehby, Falk, and Lane (2004) implemented *SRA Corrective Reading* with six junior high students attending a self-contained school for students with EBD. Based on the placement assessments, the B1 level of the *SRA Corrective Reading Decoding Series* was selected. This particular strand focuses on practicing a variety of word-attack skills as well as leading students in group reading in which they read stories out loud and answer a series of comprehension questions after short sections of the text. This instruction was implemented for 30-40 minutes each day. In this intervention, *SRA Corrective Reading* was also supplemented with a repeated reading strategy in order to provide students with additional fluency practice in text. With repeated reading, students read aloud short passages of text several times through in order to improve oral reading fluency. In this particular intervention, students were paired with a research assistant to read passages taken from the *Great Leaps Reading Stories* (Campbell, 1999). For the first reading, the students read the passage aloud with the research assistant. For subsequent readings, the students took turns reading aloud and providing corrective feedback to one another. After four readings, the students were given a new passage of the same difficulty level; these readings were timed in order to get a measure of both oral reading rate and accuracy. This portion of the intervention required 20-30 minutes of instructional time. After 19 weeks of intervention, the results of the intervention revealed that students exhibited growth in fluency and comprehension during the *SRA Corrective Reading* intervention and that the addition of the repeated readings effected further increases in these two areas.

As evidenced in these various studies, Direct Instruction offers a promising approach to increasing the reading achievement – and potentially the behavioral outcomes – of students with EBD. Although limited in scope, the research that does exist in this area has demonstrated that the type of explicit and systematic instruction found in Direct Instruction can improve the poor academic and school outcomes that this population of students so often experiences.

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