


**Practicing What We Preach:
Providing Effective Behavioral
Consultation in Schools**


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A Familiar Example

- Ellen, a BCBA, has been providing consultation in Jeff's classroom for 6 months. She has written multiple behavior plans for students, trained Jeff on classroom management strategies, and given him countless data sheets and guides. Jeff never implements the programs, though, and generally throws away the documents she provides as soon as she leaves the room. He has not changed any of the classroom procedures since Ellen began consulting.


Credit: Natalie Motl

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A Familiar Example

Why is he so stubborn?

What a waste of my time!




If he's happy with the way things are, fine, I'm done!

I'm so sick of these lazy teachers!

He's so disrespectful of my work.

Doesn't he know I'm trying to help?

Credit: Natalie Motl

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More Examples

- A therapist is working with Sammy on identifying numbers. When the therapist takes out the number flashcards, Sammy begins to cry. What is a possible explanation for Sammy's behavior?
- a) Previously, crying has resulted in the task being removed.
- b) Numbers make Sammy sad.
- c) Sammy hates the therapist and wants to make him/her miserable.

Credit: Natalie Motl



More Examples

- Jack's mother calls and asks him to do the dishes. When she arrives home that evening, she finds Jack playing video games and the dishes piled in the sink. What is a possible explanation for Jack's behavior?
- a) Jack is rude and loves to ruin his mother's evening.
- b) The contingencies in place made it more likely that Jack would play video games instead of doing the dishes.
- c) Jack lacks the motivation to do chores.

Credit: Natalie Motl



More Examples

- Jamie always does her homework, studies for tests, and works hard to get straight As. What is a possible explanation for Jamie's behavior?
- a) Jamie is responsible, motivated, and is overall a great person.
- b) Good grades and high scores serve as strong reinforcers for Jamie.
- c) Jamie is naturally gifted and comes from a long line of overachievers.

Credit: Natalie Motl



Practicing What We Preach

- Why do we explain our clients' behavior in terms of
 - Stimulus salience
 - Environmental contingencies
 - Learning histories
- But when it comes to teachers we appeal to
 - Inner drives
 - Emotions
 - Mentalisms
- ?



Outline

- Challenges to school consultation
- Four barriers to providing effective service
- How barriers are formed
- How we can overcome or minimize barriers



Challenges: ABA in Schools

- The obvious:
 - Group contingencies
 - Peer-mediated reinforcement
 - Conflicting repertoires at home
- The less evident:
 - Multiple stakeholders
 - Differing priorities and values
 - Access to target clientele



Challenges: Consultation

- Limited time
- Limited finances
- Reliance on others for implementation
- Reliance on indirect observation or report
- Reactivity



Challenges: Misconceptions

- ABA = DTT
- ABA is only for “be
- ABA is only for auti



Challenges: Prior History

Let me explain "reinforcement" to you...

That's not really problem behavior, you just need to ignore it.

LITTLE MISS BOSSY

This is really easy to solve - you don't need me.

Get back to me when you have more data.



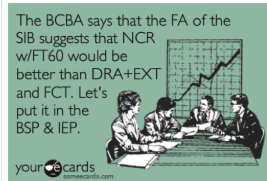
Barriers to Effective Behavioral Service

- Incompatible Verbal Repertoires
- Inconsistent or Insufficient Training
- Poor Stimulus Control over Implementation
- Competing Contingencies



1. Verbal Repertoires

- We teach BCBA's to
 - Speak precisely
 - Speak technically
 - Avoid mentalism
 - Avoid lay interpretations of language
- To non-behaviorists we appear
 - Arrogant
 - Confusing
 - Out of touch



Translating the Jargon

- Learn the language of the schools
- Identify possible pitfalls early
- Build rapport through shared terminology
- Introduce new terms slowly



Verbal Behavior as Equivalence Classes

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    graph TD
      Extinction --- Ignore
      Extinction --- Disregard
      Ignore --- Disregard
    
```

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Verbal Behavior as Equivalence Classes

“Put the tantrum on extinction and continue prompting the target response”

“Ignore what the child is doing and pretend I don’t notice... until I actually don’t”

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Training Fluent Relations

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    graph TD
      Extinction --- Punishment
      Extinction --- Withholding_reinforcement[Withholding reinforcement]
      Extinction --- Removing_reinforcement[Removing reinforcement]
      Extinction --- Removing_Access[Removing Access]
      Punishment --- Withdrawing_Attention[Withdrawing Attention]
      Punishment --- Presenting_Aversives[Presenting Aversives]
      Withholding_reinforcement --- No_Escape[No Escape]
      Withholding_reinforcement --- No_Access[No Access]
      Removing_reinforcement --- No_Access
      Removing_Access --- No_Access
    
```

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Verbal "Danger Zones"

- Extinction (distinct from ignoring)
- Punishment (distinct from punitive or corporal)
- Reinforcement (distinct from reward or bribery)
- Behavior (not just problematic)
- Learning (not just academic)



Combining Precision with Accessibility

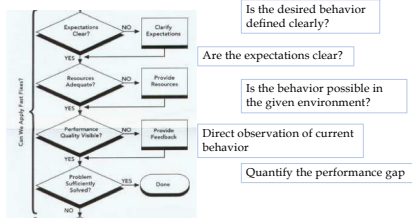
- Broaden the relational frames
 - Equivalent, opposite, similar, necessary for, etc.
 - Multiple synonymous terms
 - Real-life examples
 - Real-life *non*-examples
- Decrease functional fixedness
- Train BCBA's to fluency with terminology and meanings



2. Insufficient Training



Assessing Skills and Deficits



Is the desired behavior defined clearly?

Are the expectations clear?

Is the behavior possible in the given environment?

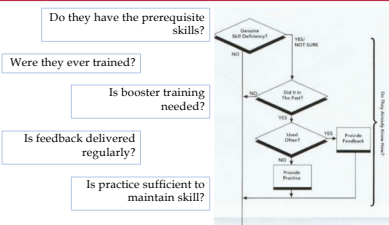
Direct observation of current behavior

Quantify the performance gap

Flow chart from Mager & Pipe (1997)



Assessing Skills and Deficits



Do they have the prerequisite skills?

Were they ever trained?

Is booster training needed?

Is feedback delivered regularly?

Is practice sufficient to maintain skill?

Flow chart from Mager & Pipe (1997)



BCBA Training Deficits

- Most BCBA's are trained in autism and child behavior
- Consultation requires
 - OBM repertoires
 - Staff & parent training skills
 - Knowledge of legal and educational policy
 - Academic curriculum awareness
 - Management of social / emotional / psychiatric issues



BCBA Training Deficits



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Gaining the Expertise

- Stay in contact with the literature
- Interdisciplinary case re
- Bidirectional learning
- Special content CEs
 - Psychology: www.apa.org
 - Special Education: www.sar
 - Mental Health: www.sar
 - Brain Injury: www.biaus
 - Dual Diagnosis: www.th



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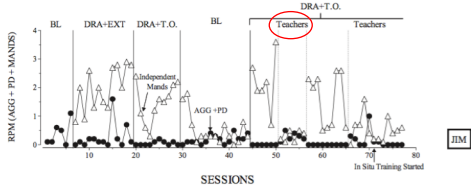
Building a Consultative Repertoire

- Practice what you preach!
 - Behavioral skills training
 - Train for generalization
 - Collect data on effectiveness
 - Procedural integrity checks
 - Conduct pyramidal training
- Admit what you don't know
- Never underestimate the power of rapport and trust



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3. Poor Stimulus Control



Greer et al. (2013)

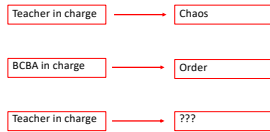


Helping or Hurting?

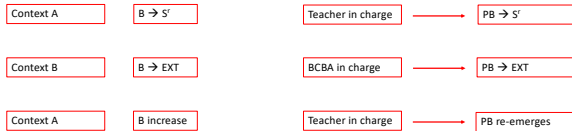
Standard Practice

- BCBA develops behavior plan
- BCBA implements behavior plan
- BCBA assesses efficacy of behavior plan
- BCBA trains teacher to implement plan
- BCBA collects follow-up data

What the Student Sees



Resurgence



Additional Concerns

- BCBA as S^d for student responding
- Downplay teacher's expertise
- Loss of opportunities to shape implementation



Establishing Stimulus Control

- BST & competency-based training
- Chaining of implementation task analysis
- Systematic fading of supports
- Regular feedback and check-ins

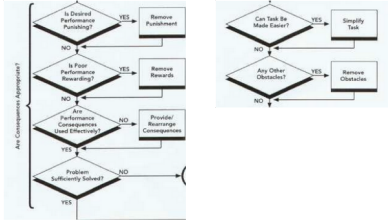


Designing Programs that Last

Standard Practice	Alternative Practice
BCBA develops behavior plan	BCBA & teacher develop plan collaboratively
BCBA implements behavior plan	Teacher implements plan with BCBA feedback
BCBA assesses efficacy of behavior plan	BCBA collects data on effectiveness
BCBA trains teacher to implement plan	Teacher & BCBA assess effectiveness of plan
BCBA collects follow-up data	Teacher trains additional implementers



4. Competing Contingencies



Mager & Pipe (1997)



FBA: Not Just for Kids Anymore

- Functions of teacher noncompliance
 - Escape (from extra work)
 - Escape (from troublesome students)
 - Avoidance (of added challenges)
 - Attention (in the form of assistance)
- Working through the barriers *with* the teacher maintains rapport and promotes independence

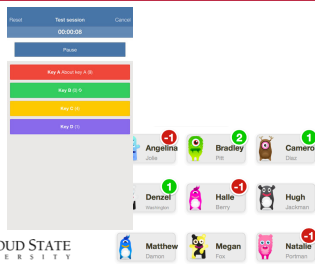


"Luck is when good classroom management skills meets a day when the disruptive students are absent."



Antecedent Manipulation

- Decrease response effort
 - Automated data collection
 - Permanent products
 - Prioritize programs
 - Employ group contingencies
- Provide sufficient resources
 - Secure buy-in and assistance
 - Ensure administrative support
 - Provide templates & examples



Programming Reinforcement

- Ensure expected outcomes match stated goals
- Program reinforcement for students
- Enlist administrative support for success
- Praise consistently!



Minimizing Punishment

- Prepare for the extinction burst
 - Use natural breaks in schedule
 - Inform students of the rules
- Ensure success does not lead to more responsibility

The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and the good wheel gets lashed to make sure it's still working.



some cards



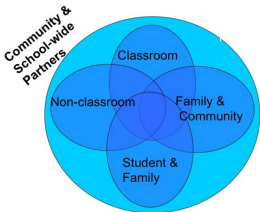
Building the Behavioral Trap

- Improved behavior = less aversive classroom
- Improved behavior = improved student outcomes
- Improved behavior = fewer reports / referrals / paperwork



Engaging Key Stakeholders

- Principal
- Guidance office
- Specials' teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Parents
- Students



Summary

- Apply same systematic rigor to adult clients as children
- Analyze contingencies impacting our own behavior
- Change the environment, don't blame the person!



Thank you!

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