

Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners

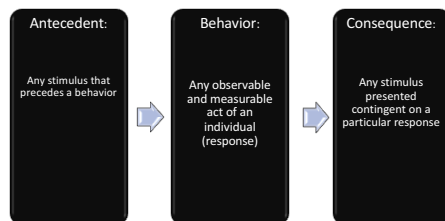
Diane Myers, Ph.D.
Texas Woman's University
October 11, 2018



Behavior basics



The three-term contingency



Alberto & Troutman, 2013; Brandi ©

Reinforcement

- Reinforcement **increases** the likelihood of a behavior in the future.
 - Whether a consequence is reinforcing or not depends on the **learner**.
 - Only the future rate of a behavior determines if a consequence is reinforcing.
- Reinforcement can be **positive** or **negative**.
 - **Positive**: Something is **added** to the environment.
 - **Negative**: Something is **removed** from the environment.



What's going on here?

- Rafael is often late to class. When he arrives, his peers often clap and make statements like, "Glad you finally showed up, Rafa." Rafael smiles and sits down, but not until he has high-fived a few friends.
 - What, behaviorally, is going on here?
- Roger doesn't care for his math teacher. During class, he often swears and tears up his work, which results in him getting sent to the principal's office, where he chats with the secretary and other rule-breakers.
 - What, behaviorally, is going on here?



Why do we care?

- What do the concepts of reinforcement and punishment have to do with student behavior?
- A few things:
 - Knowing the **mechanisms** behind how behavior works can help you shape behavior: tricks can fail you, but the science never will.
 - Understanding that **reinforcement** and **punishment** are scientific phenomena that affect rates of behavior will help you select consequences based on your observations (rather than on what you think will work).
 - If we know certain consequences increase the likelihood of behaviors we want to see, we can plan to have those consequences follow the behaviors we want to see.



Function

- Function: the key to depersonalizing behavior.
 - What is the student trying to get?
 - What is the student trying to avoid?
- Knowing the function of a student's inappropriate behavior will help you select an appropriate intervention and teach a new behavior that meets the same function.



Empirically-Supported Practices

Establishing and teaching routines and expectations

Structure and expectations

- What does "structure" in the classroom mean?
 - Physical structure (e.g., furniture, décor)
 - Embedded structure (e.g., routines)
- What are some routines that everyone should know?
- Classroom expectations:
 - Select 3-5 positively stated expectations (can be same as SW)
 - Define expectations within the context of routines

Classroom Routines					
Expectations	Work	Quizzes and tests	Dismissal		
Respect	Offer ideas Complete all tasks	Sit with feet on the ground Get up and stretch if necessary	Study for all assessments Read through and double-check all work	Get ready for the next class Lock belongings in locker	Check on homework Get ready for the next class
Responsibility	Compliment others' ideas Listen and make eye contact	Work silently Read quietly if finished ahead of others	Keep eyes on your own paper Study with others	Keep phone off and in bag Move out of the way quickly in the hall	Let others know when you are ready to leave Hold doors for those with bags
Ready to Learn	Keep materials organized Move desks quietly	Keep aisles clear	Use scrap paper	Move chairs quietly	Walk in the hallways

The matrix alone is not enough!

- How do we ensure that students will follow the routines within our matrix?
- Expectations and routines must be taught **like academics**.
- Consider a model, lead, test format (i.e., I do, we do, you do).
 - Provide multiple opportunities for practice and feedback.
 - Determine how you'll assess students' understanding of content.



Establishing and teaching expectations, summary

- Begin by defining your expectations within the context of your classroom routines.
- Post your rules-within-routines matrix and refer to it often, including using it as a way to identify behaviors that do not meet expectations
- Teach behavioral expectations as you would academics: have an outcome, determine how you will measure students' progress toward that outcome, and make connections to future instruction.



Behavior-specific feedback: Praise



What is behavior-specific praise?

- Behavior specific praise looks like:
 - Identifying the learner(s).
 - Identifying the specific behavior being acknowledged.
 - A statement that occurs directly after (i.e., as a result of) the behavior.
- What are some examples?



Example or non-example?

- For the following, identify if the praise statement is specific *and* contingent.
 - Rod, I like how you're sitting quietly.
 - Todd, you're doing a great job.
 - Class, you all did very well staying on task yesterday.
 - Ned, you're really doing a great job taking notes.
 - Maude, your skirt is lovely.
 - I like how Sherry and Terry are raising their hands.
 - That's the way to do it, Nelson! Keep it up!
 - Ralph, you're being really successful with that independent work.



More about delivering praise.

- Why is specific, contingent praise more effective than general praise statements?
- Deliver praise in your natural demeanor.
- Praise should sound sincere.
- Not all students will find praise reinforcing.
 - Why might this be the case?
 - What are some options for providing praise to these students?



Alberto & Troutman, 2013; Simonson & Myers, 2015

Behavior-specific feedback: Error correction



Think about the following scenarios.

- During class, a student makes a loud and off-topic comment (e.g., "It's a good day for gettin' rowdy!" or "Who else stayed up all night playing Fortnite?"). What is a standard teacher response?
- A student mispronounces a word while reading along (e.g., says "seven" when the word is "severe"). What is a standard teacher response?



Error correction

- First response to minor behavior error should be **specific and contingent error correction**.
 - Identify problem behavior.
 - Identify expected behavior.
 - Reteach if necessary.
 - Provide feedback.
 - Reinforce as soon as appropriate behavior is displayed.



Remember: Academic and social behavior

- It is critical for us to remember that **all** behaviors are learned through consequences: academic and social behaviors are both **behaviors**.
- Learning academic behaviors can take a long time. Students may require remediation, extra instruction, and different approaches.
 - The same is true for social behaviors.
 - Keep an instructional mindset.



Questions and discussion.



Thank you!

dmyers1@twu.edu

