

Common Reason for Behavior Failure: Student has not learned the behavior
Common Reasons for Academic Failure: They do not want to do the task or task is too hard

Intervention Name: **Classwide Antecedent Modifications**

Brief Description:

The context of the environment in which behaviors occur is not usually considered when analyzing a child's behavior. Instead, more attention is typically given to the consequences following that particular behavior (especially when it is a disruptive behavior being analyzed). While consequences of behaviors matter, what occurred BEFORE the problem behavior needs to also be considered when creating an intervention. Altering the antecedent of the target behavior has the substantial advantage of being proactive. As such, with appropriate modifications of the antecedents, a problem behavior (e.g. disruptive behavior or task demand refusal) can be avoided. This brief presents a series of classwide antecedent alterations that will change typical antecedents of problem behaviors to antecedents that prompt appropriate behaviors. See Kern and Clemens (2007) for an excellent through review of this class of intervention.

What "Common Problems" Does This Address?

This classwide intervention is appropriate for settings where there are classwide behavior problems (e.g. disruptive behavior or task refusal). In such settings, antecedents that typically produce problem behavior (e.g. academic task demands too difficult results in students "acting out" and refusing to do academic activities) are altered and transformed into antecedents that produce appropriate behavior (e.g. appropriate academic task demands or choice of task sequence = increase of time on task) will greatly reduce problem behavior and increase academic engagement.

The goal of this class of intervention is to reduce inappropriate behavior (and increases appropriate behavior) by altering antecedents. This intervention can have a behavioral or academic focus depending on the modifications made. Developing and teaching a child explicit classroom rules will address problem behaviors that are the result of the child never learning the appropriate behavior (i.e. the child is continuously told what NOT to do instead of what to do). Setting appropriate task demands and structuring the class to increase interest will help prevent inappropriate behaviors that result from the child not wanting to do a task or sees that a task is too hard.

Procedures for Classwide Antecedent Strategies (Kern & Clemens, 2007):

- a. Set classroom rules.
 - i. Develop, model and post clear classroom rules
 1. If some children don't have the skill to follow a rule, try using direct instruction to teach the skill.
 - ii. Reinforce (e.g. praise or token) appropriate behavior as quickly as possible; minimize reinforcement (e.g. remove attention) for inappropriate behavior.
 - iii. Have a consistent classroom schedule.
- b. Appropriate task-demands.

- i. All instructional material should be appropriate for the student's current level.
 1. See the [Instructional Match Intervention Brief](#) for more guidance on this topic.
- c. Structure the class to increase interest.
 - i. Use a brisk pace with ample opportunity for student response.
 1. Consider classwide response system such a choral responding or response cards to increases classwide response opportunities.
 - ii. Include easy tasks among more difficult tasks.
 - iii. Allow for student choice.
 - iv. Use high interest materials/topics.

Critical Components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:

- Clear development of classroom rules
- Identification of student instructional level
- Appropriate task demands
- Accurate selection of reinforcer/s, and high interest material

Materials

- Reinforcers as necessary

References

- Kern, L., & Clemens, N. H. (2007). Antecedent Strategies to Promote Appropriate Classroom Behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 44, 65-75.