RTI Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools

Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors: A Toolkit for Mental Health Professionals

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Big Ideas in Classroom Behavior Management

1. **Teach expected behaviors.** Students need to be explicitly taught expected behaviors. They should then be acknowledged and reinforced when they show positive behaviors.

   In other words, schools should treat behavior as part of the curriculum: teach it and reinforce it!

2. ***Check for academic problems.*** The connection between classroom misbehavior and poor academic skills is high.

   Educators should routinely assess a student's academic skills as a first step when attempting to explain why a particular behavior is occurring.

   If academics contribute to problem behaviors, the student needs an academic support plan as part of his or her behavior plan.

3. ***Identify the underlying function of the behavior.*** Problem behaviors occur for a reason. Such behaviors serve a **function** for the student. (See the list of possible functions on the next page.)

   When an educator can identify the probable function sustaining a student's challenging behaviors, the educator can select successful intervention strategies that match the function—and meet the student's needs.

4. ***Eliminate behavioral triggers.*** Problem behaviors are often set off by events or conditions within the classroom.

   Sitting next to a distracting classmate or being handed an academic task that is too difficult to complete are two examples of events that might trigger student misbehavior.

   When the educator is able to identify and eliminate triggers of negative conduct, such actions tend to work quickly and--by preventing class disruptions--result in more time available for instruction.

5. ***Focus on factors within the school's control.*** Educators recognize that students often face significant factors outside of the school setting--e.g., limited parental support -- that can place them at heightened risk for academic failure and problem behaviors.

   Schools can best counteract the influence of negative outside factors and promote student resilience by focusing on what can be provided *within* the educational setting such as skills instruction, tutoring, mentoring, and use of positive behavior management strategies.

6. ***Be flexible in responding to misbehavior.*** Educators have greater success in managing the full spectrum of student misbehaviors when they respond flexibly--evaluating each individual case and applying strategies that logically address the likely cause(s) of that student's problem conduct.

Problem Behaviors: Why Do They Occur? Educators can gain information to better understanding the cause of challenging behaviors by observing and talking with the student. The table below lists the *most common* reasons why a problem behavior is occurring:

Problem Behaviors: Common Reasons	
Hypothesis	Considerations
• LACK OF SKILLS. The student lacks the skills necessary to display the desired behavior (Gable et al., 2009).	If the student has never explicitly been taught the desired behaviors, there is a strong likelihood that behavior-skill deficit is a contributing factor.
• PEER ATTENTION-SEEKING. The student is seeking the attention of other students (Packenham, Shute & Reid, 2004).	The student may be motivated by general attention from the entire classroom or may only seek the attention of select peers.
• ADULT ATTENTION-SEEKING. The student is seeking the attention of adults (Packenham, Shute & Reid, 2004).	The student may be motivated by general attention from all adults or may only seek the attention of select educators.
• ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE OF A TASK OR SITUATION. The student is seeking to escape or avoid a task or situation (Witt, Daly & Noell, 2000).	Students with delayed academic abilities may find an academic task unpleasant and act out to avoid it.
• LACK OF MOTIVATION. The student possesses the skills necessary to display the desired behavior but lacks sufficient incentive to do so (Gable et al., 2009).	Poor motivation is a real and frequent cause of behavior problems. The student may not see a 'pay-off' for doing the work. However, schools should first carefully rule out other explanations (e.g., skill deficit; escape/avoidance) before selecting this explanation.
• EMOTIONAL OR ATTENTIONAL BLOCKERS. The student possesses the skills to display the desired behavior "but is unable to deal with competing forces—anger, frustration, fatigue." (Gable et al., 2009; p. 197). (This category can also include symptoms associated with anxiety or ADHD.)	Students fitting this profile typically have difficulty managing their emotions (e.g., anxiety, anger) across settings and situations. However, if evidence suggests that emotional outbursts are linked to *specific* settings, situations, or tasks, the student may instead be attempting to escape or avoid those particular situations--suggesting poor academic skills or interpersonal difficulties.

The Secret Ingredients for Creating a Better Behavior Intervention Plan: Antecedents & Consequences

Behavior intervention plans are highly individualized--because every student displays a unique profile of behaviors. However, teachers will find that their chances of helping a student to engage in positive behaviors increase when they include *each* of these 3 elements in their classroom behavior intervention plans:

1. Antecedents: Strategies to promote positive behaviors and prevent misbehavior
2. Positive consequences: Responses that increase positive/goal behaviors
3. Extinction procedures: Responses that extinguish problem behaviors

Every one of these elements plays a crucial role in promoting the success of a behavior plan. Antecedent strategies prevent the student from engaging in problem behaviors in the first place. Positive consequences motivate the student to show desired behaviors, such as academic engagement. Extinction procedures remove the 'pay-off' to the student for engaging in problem behaviors. While any one of the elements might be inadequate to change the student's behavior, the combination of antecedents, positive consequences, and extinction procedures can result in a strong, flexible plan and successful intervention outcome.

Teachers can use this guide to build their own behavior plans using its research-based ideas for antecedents, positive consequences, and extinction procedures.

ADHD:ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder):GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder)

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1. Antecedents: Strategies to Prevent Misbehavior

Teachers have the greatest array of options to influence a student to engage in positive behaviors when they focus on *antecedents*: actions they take *before* the student behavior occurs. Proactive antecedent actions to encourage desired behaviors are often quick-acting, can prevent misbehavior and attendant interruption of instruction, and usually require less teacher effort than providing corrective consequences after problem behaviors have occurred. Teacher strategies to elicit positive student behaviors include making instructional adjustments, providing student prompts and reminders, and teaching students to monitor and evaluate their work performance. Here are specific antecedent ideas that teachers can use to 'nudge' students to engage in desired behaviors:

Antecedents That Prevent Problem Behaviors

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Behaviors: Teach Expectations (**Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007**).** Students must be explicitly taught behavioral expectations before they can be held accountable for those behaviors. The teacher should model positive behaviors, give students examples and non-examples of appropriate behaviors to clarify understanding, have students practice those behaviors with instructor feedback; and consistently acknowledge and praise students for successfully displaying positive behaviors.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Instructional Match: Ensure the Student Can Do the Work** (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008). Student misbehavior frequently arises from an inability to do the academic task. When the student

lacks skills necessary for the academic task, the instructor teaches the necessary skill(s). Additional strategies include adjusting the immediate task to the student's current skill(s) and pairing the student with a helping peer.

- ☐ ODD: **No: Substitute a Preferred Alternative** (Mace, Pratt, Prager, & Pritchard, 2011). If the student has a pattern of misbehaving when told that he or she cannot access a desired item or engage in a preferred activity, the teacher can use the 'no with preferred alternative' strategy. The teacher prepares by making a list of activities or items preferred by the student that are allowed during the academic situation or setting where problems arise. Then, whenever the student requests an item or activity that is not allowed, the teacher (1) tells the student that he or she cannot access the desired activity or item; (2) provides a brief explanation of why the requested item or activity is off-limits; and (3) immediately offers the student one or more items or activities from the prepared list that *are* allowable in the current situation or setting.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **Relocate the Student: Remove From Temptation** (US Department of Education, 2004). When the student's problem behaviors are triggered or supported by factors in the environment--such as a talkative peer or difficulty hearing or seeing the instructor--the teacher may choose to move the student to another, less-distracting location in the classroom. A good option is to seat the student within the teacher's 'action zone', close to the instructor and in the region of the room toward which that educator directs most instruction.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Schedule: Increase Predictability** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). When students know the "content, duration, and/or consequences of future events" (Kern & Clemens, 2007; p. 67), their level of engagement rises and problem behaviors decline—a good definition of motivation. A strategy to increase the predictability of events for individual students or an entire classroom is to post or otherwise provide a schedule outlining the day's classroom activities. In simplest form, such a schedule lists a title and brief description for each scheduled activity, along with the start and end times for that activity. Teachers may wish to add information to the schedule, such as helpful reminders of what work materials a student might need for each event. Students who have difficulty interpreting a written schedule may benefit from having their schedules read aloud and/or from having pictorial equivalents included in their schedules.

- ☐ ODD:GAD: **Work Break: Make It Available on Request** (Majeika et al., 2011). Sometimes misbehavior is an attempt by the student to engineer a break from an academic task. The teacher can choose an alternative method for the student to use to communicate that he or she would like a brief break, such as requesting that break verbally or pulling out a color-coded break card. Of course, the student will also require clear guidelines on how long the requested break will last and what activities are acceptable for the student to engage in during that break.

Antecedents That Encourage Goal Behaviors

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Checklist for Academic Skills: Make the Complicated Simple** (Alter, Wyrick, Brown, & Lingo, 2008). When the student must apply several steps to complete a complex academic task, the teacher can give the student a checklist detailing each step and instructions for completing it. Before the activity, the student is prompted to preview the checklist; after the activity, the student uses the checklist to review the work.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Checklist for Challenging Situations: Script Transition Times** (McCoy, Mathur, & Czoka, 2010). Students often struggle with the complexity of managing multi-step routines such as transitioning between classroom activities or moving to different locations within the school. Teachers can assist by making up step-by-step checklists that 'walk' the student incrementally through the routine. Instructors can use these checklists as

guides to teach and measure student success in navigating transitions. Just as important, the student can use the checklist as a prompt and guide to follow the expected steps.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Choice-Making: Allow for Student Preference** (Green, Mays, & Jolivette, 2011). Students find it motivating to have opportunities to choose how they structure or carry out their academic tasks. Teachers can allow choice on any of a variety of dimensions of a classroom activity, such as where the activity takes place; who the child works with; what materials to work with (e.g., choosing a book from several options); when to begin or end the activity; or how long to engage in the activity.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Fix-Up Skills: Foster Work Independence** (Rosenshine, 2008). During independent work, the student should know procedures to follow if stuck (e.g., cannot complete an item; does not understand a word in a reading passage). The teacher creates a routine for the student in how to apply 'fix-up' skills for independent assignments: e.g., "If I don't understand what I have read, I should (1) reread the paragraph; (2) slow my reading;(3) focus my *full* attention on what I am reading; (4) underline any words that I do not know and try to figure them out from the reading" (McCallum et al., 2010).

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Goal-Setting: Get a Commitment** (Martin et al., 2003). One tool to increase student motivation to perform an academic task is to have that student choose a specific, measurable outcome goal before starting that task. At the end of the work session, the student compares the actual outcome to the previously selected goal to judge success. For example, a student about to begin a writing task may choose the goal of locating 3 primary sources for a term paper. Or a student starting an in-class reading assignment might come up with two questions that he would like to have answered from the reading.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **High-Preference Requests: Build Behavioral Momentum** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Use 'behavioral momentum' to increase compliance by first directing the student or class to complete several short, simple, high-preference directives that they readily complete (e.g., "Take out a sheet of paper", "write your name on the paper", "copy the assignment from the board") before presenting the student or class with a low-preference directive that they typically balk at (e.g., "Open your books and begin the assignment").

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Opportunities to Respond: Let Feedback Be Its Own Reward** (Partin et al., 2010). When students are academically engaged, they are usually also behaving appropriately. The teacher's goal, then, is to capture positive student behaviors by structuring lessons and work assignments to require a high rate of opportunities to respond (OTRs). In a complete OTR cycle, the student has an opportunity to respond (e.g., the teacher asks a question, or the student encounters an item on independent work), produces a response (e.g., the student responds to the teacher question or answers the work item); and receives timely performance feedback (e.g., the teacher says, "Right answer!", or the student uses an answer key to check a response).

  An efficient way to boost OTRs classwide is through group responding (Haydon, Borders, Embury, & Clarke, 2009). Strategies for group response include choral responding; show of hands; pre-formatted response cards (e.g., with YES and NO written on opposite faces of the card); and individual white boards.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Positive Teacher Requests: It's How You Say It** (Braithwaite, 2000). Non-compliant students have a pattern of ignoring or defying teacher requests. However, instructors can increase the likelihood of student compliance by stating their requests in positive terms (e.g., "John, I can help you just as soon as you are back in your seat") rather than in negative terms (e.g., "John, I can't help you unless you are sitting in your seat").

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **Pre-Correction: Plant a Positive Thought** (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Some students need a timely reminder of expected behaviors just before they transition into situations or settings in which problem behaviors tend to occur. At this 'point of performance', the teacher gives the student a timely reminder of goal behaviors, using such prompting strategies as stating goal behaviors, having the student preview a checklist of goal behaviors, asking the student to describe goal behaviors; or praising another student for demonstrating goal behaviors.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Response Effort: Reduce Task Difficulty** (Friman & Poling, 1995; Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). The teacher increases student engagement through any method that reduces the apparent difficulty ('response effort') of an academic task - so long as that method does not hold the student to a lesser academic standard than classmates. Examples of strategies that lower response effort include having students pair off to start homework in class and breaking larger academic tasks into smaller, more manageable 'chunks'.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **Rewards: Choose Them in Advance** (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Just as the student is about to enter a challenging situation or setting in which he or she will need to show appropriate behaviors, the instructor reminds the student of the behavioral expectations and has the student select a possible reward from a menu. The student is later given that reward if behaviors were appropriate.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **Verbal Commands: Keep Them Brief and Powerful** (Matheson & Shriver, 2005; Walker & Walker, 1991). Teacher commands are most likely to elicit student compliance when they (1) are delivered calmly, (2) are brief, (3) are stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) use clear, simple language, and (5) are delivered one command at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students. Effective teacher commands avoid both sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.

2. Positive Consequences: Responses That Increase Positive/Goal Behaviors

Consequences are those events following a student behavior that make it more or less likely that the behavior will occur in the future. This section looks at positive consequences, ideas that teachers can use to reinforce the student for being on-task and showing appropriate behaviors. Among strategies that promote behaviors are providing timely feedback ,praise, and teacher attention; as well as allowing students to take temporary work breaks. To foster specific behaviors, the teacher can use any of the following strategies:

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Performance Feedback: Information is Rewarding** (Conroy et al., 2009). When students receive timely feedback about their academic performance, this information can reinforce academic behavior and reduce misbehavior. Instructional feedback comes in many forms: e.g., teacher oral or written feedback; class discussion and review of an assignment; oral feedback from class peers; student self-directed completion of a rubric or problem-solving checklist during an independent assignment.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:GAD: **Praise: Catch Them Being Good** (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Research suggests that teacher praise is one of the most powerful--yet underused-- of classroom management tools. When a student, group, or class displays an appropriate pro-social or pro-academic behavior, the teacher reinforces that behavior with a targeted praise statement containing two elements: (1) a specific description of the praiseworthy behavior, and (2) an expression of teacher approval (e.g., "You worked for the full independent-work period. Nice job!"; "I really appreciate the way that our student groups stayed on-task and completed their entire assignment.").

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **Scheduled Attention: Rechannel Adult Interactions** (Austin & Soeda, 2008). As every educator knows, teacher attention can be a potent motivator for student behavior. One strategy to increase positive behaviors is to 'catch the student being good' with regular doses of 'scheduled attention': (1) The teacher decides on a fixed-interval schedule to provide attention (e.g., every 8 minutes); (2) At each interval, the teacher observes the student; (3) If the student is engaged in appropriate behaviors at that moment, the teacher provides a dose of positive attention (e.g., verbal praise; non-verbal praise such as thumbs-up; brief positive conversation; encouragement). If the student is off-task or not behaving appropriately, the teacher briefly redirects the student to task and returns immediately to instruction until the next scheduled-attention interval.

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3. Extinction Procedures: Responses That Reduce or Eliminate Problem Behaviors

Extinction means discontinuing the reinforcing consequences of behaviors to erase an individual's motivation to engage in those behaviors. In effect, extinction procedures 'cut off the oxygen' to problem behaviors. That is, explicit directions should be written into a behavior intervention plan to guide those working with the student to alter their responses to problem behaviors in a manner designed to remove reinforcement for the misbehavior.

An explicit plan to extinguish problem behaviors is an *essential* part of most student behavior plans (Hester et al., 2009). Without extinction procedures, educators are far too likely accidentally to continue reinforcing the very behaviors they are trying to eliminate. The teacher wishing to extinguish specific behaviors can try one or more of the following strategies:.

- ☐ ODD:GAD: **Escape Breaks: Put Escape on a Schedule (**Waller & Higbee, 2010). The teacher can manage a student who uses disruptive behavior to escape or avoid academic work by scheduling 'non-contingent escape breaks'. First the teacher selects a reasonable work interval for the student-- this should be an interval slightly shorter than the average amount of time that student *currently* will work before misbehaving (e.g. 5 minutes). Next, the teacher decides how long the brief 'escape break' will last (e.g., two minutes). Finally, the teacher identifies motivating activities that the student can engage in during escape breaks (e.g., coloring; playing a math application on a computer tablet). When the intervention is in effect, the teacher directs the student to begin work and starts a timer. When the student's work interval is done, the teacher directs that student to take a break and again starts the timer. When the break is up, the student is directed to resume work. This process repeats until the work period is over. As the student's behaviors improve, the teacher can gradually lengthen the work periods until the student is able to remain academically engaged for as long as typical peers; at this point, the intervention is discontinued.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD: **Choice Statements in 2 Parts: Frame the Alternative Consequences** (Walker, 1997). The teacher frames a request to an uncooperative student as a two-part 'choice' statement: (1) The teacher presents the negative, or non-compliant, choice and its consequence (e.g., "John, you can choose to stay after school today to finish this in-class assignment."); (2) The teacher next states the positive behavioral choice that the student is encouraged to select (e.g., "Or you can finish your work now and not stay after school. It's your choice."). If the student fails to comply within a reasonable time (e.g. 1 minute), the teacher imposes the disciplinary consequence.

ADHD:ODD: **Contingent Instructions: Move from 'Stop' to 'Start'** (Curran, 2006; Gable. Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009). When the instructor observes that a student is engaging in problem behavior requiring a response, the teacher delivers contingent instructions in a 3-part format.

1. *STOP statement.* The teacher directs the student to STOP a specific problem behavior, e.g., "Joshua, put away the magazine."; "Annabelle, return to your seat."
2. *START statement.* After a brief (1-2 second) pause, the instruction describes the appropriate replacement behavior that the student should START, e.g., "Open your book to page 28 and begin the end-of-chapter questions."; "Work with your partner to solve the math problem on the board."
3. *PRAISE for compliance.* As the student begins to engage in the desired behavior, the teacher concludes by PRAISING the student for compliance. e.g., "Thank you for starting your book assignment, Joshua.", "I see that you and your partner are solving the math problem, Annabelle. Good!"

☐ ADHD:ODD:**If/Then Statements: Set the Conditions** (Majeika et al., 2011). When the student is engaging in a problem behavior, the teacher can use an 'if/then' statement to prompt that student to engage in the appropriate replacement behavior. For example, if a student is out of seat without permission, the teacher says, "Shelly, if you return to your seat, then I will come over and answer your question." Of course, when the student responds by displaying the positive behavior, the teacher follows through with the promised action and praises that student for compliance.

☐ ADHD:ODD: **Planned Ignoring: Turn Off the Attention** (Colvin, 2009). When the student engages in minor misbehavior to attract teacher attention, planned ignoring is a useful strategy. In planned ignoring, the instructor withholds attention when the student engages in the problem behavior. Ignoring problem behavior can remove the source of its reinforcement and thus help to extinguish it. Teachers should remember, though, that planned ignoring alone is seldom successful. Instead, planned ignoring becomes much more powerful when, at the same time, the teacher provides regular attention whenever the student engages in positive, replacement behaviors. In fact, the tandem efforts of (1) removing teacher attention from misbehavior while (2) rechanneling that attention toward positive behaviors is one of the most effective behavior management combinations available.

☐ ADHD:ODD: **Praise Peers: Shape Behavior Through Vicarious Reinforcement** (Majeika et al., 2011). Teacher approval can be a powerful motivator . The teacher can capitalize on this fact by publicly praising on-task peers sitting near the target (misbehaving) student. When the target student then engages in academic work, the teacher makes sure to praise that student as well.

☐ ADHD:ODD: **Precision Requests: Make Directives and Consequences Clear** (De Martini-Scully, Bray, & Kehle, 2000; Musser, Bray, Kehle, & Jenson, 2001). The *precision request* structures communication with the student in a concise, respectful format that preserves adult authority and increases the likelihood of student compliance. In preparation, the teacher decides on appropriate consequences for non-compliance. Examples of suitable consequences include loss of free time, phone call to a parent, loss of a point or token, or restriction of activities at recess. When making a precision request, the teacher follows these steps:

1. *Make first request: "Please...".* The teacher states a brief request that starts with the word 'Please' and --whenever possible--frames the request as a goal behavior rather than as a behavior to stop (e.g., "Rick, please open your math book and begin the assignment written on the board"). The teacher then waits 5

seconds for the student to comply. If the student complies, the teacher praises the student (e.g., "Thank you for starting your math assignment") .

2. *Make second request: "I Need...".* If the student fails to comply with the first request within 5 seconds, the teacher repeats that request. This time, the teacher starts the request with the phrase "I need..." (e.g., "Rick, I need you to open your math book and begin the assignment written on the board"). Again, the teacher waits 5 seconds for the student to comply. If the student complies, the teacher praises the student (e.g., "Thank you for starting your math assignment") .

3. *Deliver consequence for non-compliance.* If the student fails to comply to the second request within 5 seconds, the teacher follows through in delivering the pre-determined consequence for non-compliance.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:**Redirect the Student: Get Them Back on Track** (Dhaem, 2012; Simonsen et al., 2008). When the teacher observes the student begin to engage in problem behaviors, the instructor redirects that student back to task, either verbally (e.g., "Tom, stop talking and start your assignment") or non-verbally (e.g., giving that student a significant look and negative head shake). Redirects should be brief and calm in tone. NOTE: Teachers can also redirect without distracting the class by using 'tweets'--brief behavioral reminders written on post-it notes and placed on the student's desk.

- ☐ ADHD:ODD:**Response Cost: Deduct for Misbehavior** (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002). Response cost is a strategy in which the teacher assigns an incentive (e.g., points, tokens, or classroom privileges such as free time) to the student at the start of the session. Each time that the student misbehaves during the session, that student loses a point, token, or increment of privilege (e.g., losing 5 minutes of free time). At the end of the session, the student is awarded any points, tokens, or privileges that remain. In preparation for response cost, the teacher must establish incentives that the student(s) would value--either setting up a classwide or individual point/token system tied to rewards or making available classroom privileges. The student(s) must also be trained in how the response cost system operates, including a clear understanding of what problem behaviors will result in response-cost deductions and what positive, replacement behaviors they are expected to display.

  Response cost, like all punishment strategies, should be used only when it is clear that the problem behavior is fully under the student's control. Before using response cost, the teacher should ensure that the student has the required skills, training, and self-control to avoid the problem behavior and to engage in a positive, replacement behavior.

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How To: Use the Power of Personal Connection to Motivate Students

A positive relationship with the teacher is often a crucial factor in motivating a struggling student. The power of positive teacher-student interactions is illustrated in one recent study, which found that--when instructors took just a few seconds to greet inattentive students by name at the start of class--the percentage of time those students spent academically engaged during the first 10 minutes of instruction soared from 45% to 72% (Allday & Pakurar, 2007).

Teachers who are 'proactively positive' in their classroom interactions can foster strong student connections with a minimum of effort. However, in the push to increase the academic rigor of classrooms to implement the Common Core State Standards, teachers can sometimes forget to use simple but effective tools such as praise (Kern & Clemens, 2007) that motivate students even as they strengthen teacher-student relationships. In this discussion, we review efficient strategies to use in connecting with students, along with pointers for integrating those practices into teachers' instructional routines.

Connecting With Students: Strategies. Here are recommendations for building student relationships that work--but do not require a great deal of time or effort

- *Greet students at the start of class*. As students arrive at the start of class, the teacher stands at the door and briefly greets each student by name (Allday & Pakurar, 2007). This modest effort has been shown to substantially increase student attention and focus. Teachers who commit to using student greetings rearrange their start-of-class routine to allow them consistently to be standing just outside or inside the classroom door as the students arrive.

- *Promote positive interactions via the 3-positives:1-negative ratio.* To keep relationships on a positive footing throughout the classroom, the teacher self-monitors encounters with particular students and sets the goal of having at least 3 positive interactions for each disciplinary interaction (Sprick, Borgmeier & Nolet, 2002). Positive teacher-student interactions can vary in format: for example, greeting, praise, conversation, smile, thumbs-up sign. By maintaining at least a 3:1 ratio between relationship-enhancing vs. disciplinary interactions, the teacher bends the odds in his or her favor that every student in the class will view the instructor as fair and caring.

- *Use targeted praise.* Teachers can enhance the positive climate of the classroom, motivate learners, and shape student performance in the desired direction by using frequent praise-statements (Kern & Clemens, 2007). To maximize its impact, praise should describe in specific terms the behavior that is praise-worthy and be delivered as soon as possible after the observed student behavior .

- *Emphasize the Positive in Teacher Requests* (Braithwaite, 2001). The teacher avoids using negative phrasing (e.g., "If you don't return to your seat, I can't help you with your assignment") when making a request of a student. Instead, the teacher request is stated in positive terms (e.g., "I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat"). When a request has a positive 'spin', that teacher is less likely to trigger a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance.

- *Provide teacher attention for positive behavior: The 'two-by-ten' intervention.* If a teacher has a strained (or non-existent) relationship with a particular student, that teacher may want to jump-start a more positive pattern of interaction using the 'two-by-ten' intervention (Mendler, 2000). With this time-efficient strategy, the teacher commits to having a positive 2-minute conversation with the student at least once per day across 10 consecutive school days. The active ingredient in the intervention is regular and positive teacher attention delivered at times

when the student is *not* misbehaving. After the 10-day intervention, teachers often find that their relationships with formerly problematic students have improved markedly.

Teachers know that building relationships with students is not a process that occurs by magic--but instead requires thoughtful planning and effort. However, the four ideas presented here are a good starting point for instructors who seek efficient ways to promote interpersonal connections that motivate and inspire students.

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How to Increase Student Compliance with Educator Requests

Students who are non-compliant or defiant can disrupt classroom instruction. Here are a series of steps that educators can follow that increase the odds that a student will cooperate (Dhaem 2012; Matheson et al., 2005; Walker, 1997).

1. **Preparation: Identify and eliminate triggers.** Student non-compliance can be triggered by events or conditions in the classroom. Whenever you are able to identify predictable triggers to problem behavior, take steps to eliminate them.

   For example, a student is "triggered" to confrontational and uncooperative behavior when directed to read aloud in front of peers. The educator reworks the reading activity so that the student no longer has to engage in public reading, preventing the confrontational behavior from being triggered.

2. **Preparation: Set up appropriate consequences for non-compliance.** For students who you verify can do the task requested but have a pattern of choosing not to comply, collaborate with the teacher in advance to select one or more appropriate consequences for non-compliance. Possible consequences for an episode of non-compliance might be loss of 5 minutes of free time, mandatory after-class TA or teacher conference while other students go to lunch, or parent phone call.

   Communicate to the student that compliance with educator requests is important and let him or her know up front what the selected consequences are for non-compliance.

3. **Deliver request: Adopt a professional, positive manner.** Educators are more likely to gain compliance when they approach the student in a positive manner.

   Make eye contact with the student. Address the student in a calm, neutral or positive tone of voice. Use simple clear language. State directives one at a time. (Include one verb per directive, such as *"John, **open** your book to page 23."*) When possible, state what the student should do (positive behavior), instead of what the student should stop doing. For example, *"John, please return to your seat"* is a stronger statement than *"John, please stop walking around the room."*

   Allow sufficient wait-time for the student to comply (e.g., 30 seconds). Provide brief praise if the student complies.

4. **Deliver request: Repeat, repeat, repeat.** If the student fails to comply to your first stating of the request, remain calm and restate your request several times. After each repetition, allow a short wait-time for compliance.(One expert—Dhaem, 2012) calls this the 'broken record' approach.) While restating, continue to focus on the current request. Do not bring up other issues, such as student attitude or past misbehavior. These can only sidetrack you and might trigger a negative student reaction.

   Provide brief praise if the student complies.

5. **Deliver request: Use a 2-part choice statement.** If the student still fails to comply, restate your request a final time as a 2-part choice statement.

- First, present the negative, or non-compliant, choice and its consequence (e.g., *"Angela, you can choose for me to call your parent to tell her that you won't work on today's assignment."*).

- Next, you state the positive behavioral choice that the student is encouraged to select (e.g., *"Or you can finish your work now, Angela, and avoid the phone call home. It's your choice."*).

Allow sufficient wait-time for the student to comply (e.g., 30 seconds). Provide brief praise if the student complies.

If the student fails to comply, you impose the negative consequence selected in advance (Step 2).

Additional Considerations. Throughout your interaction with the student, remember to keep your tone neutral or positive. Once the consequence is delivered, do not continue to 'nag' the student.

Also, you should not impose a negative consequence if you judge that the student is for whatever reason **unable** to comply. Instead provide support to the student (e.g., offering academic assistance) to overcome the obstacle to learning

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How to...Conduct a Task Analysis & Create a Behavior Checklist

Consultants sometimes find that the positive 'behavior' they would like to target for an intervention plan is actually a global term that refers to a cluster of related behaviors. For example, the goals "participates in discussion groups", "solves math word problems", and "is prepared for classwork" each contain multiple smaller behaviors that must all be done successfully in order for the larger goal to be accomplished.

A *task analysis* is the procedure that consultants can use to convert a comprehensive goal into a series of discrete, specific, teachable behaviors that can then be formatted as a convenient checklist. This article outlines best practices (Kazdin, 2013) for conducting and making use of a task analysis.

How to Approach the Task Analysis? There are several ways that you as a consultant can proceed in conducting a task analysis.

- *Use common sense.* First, you can adopt a common-sense approach and simply help the educator you are working with to divide an overarching behavioral goal into its logical skill-components.

- *Observe successful models.* Alternatively, you can observe successful behavior models that match your behavior goal and convert your observations into a task-analysis. For example, if you need to create a checklist for a 4th-grader on how to join a play group appropriately during recess, you might observe several typical students on the playground who have mastered that skill and use your resulting notes on their techniques to task-analyze positive group-joining behavior.

- *Ask an expert.* Finally, for behaviors that are more specialized, you can ask an expert to assist you in defining and organizing those behaviors into a sequence. For example, if you need to task-analyze proper hand-washing for a student's behavior plan, you might first consult with the school nurse about a recommended protocol for washing one's hands.

Conducting the Task Analysis. The process for converting a larger behavioral goal into a list of sub-skills via task analysis can seem simple and straightforward. But it does require attention to ensure that no important skill components are omitted, that those components are sequenced in the proper order, and that the client is capable of mastering the requirements of each component. Here are the steps to conducting the task analysis:

1. *Break the larger behavioral goal into component elements.* The initial step in carrying out a task analysis is to divide the more global behavior into its skill components. Each sub-skill should be specific and stated in clear, observable terms. Here is a good question to ask as you write each sub-skill: "*Is this component defined so clearly that I can verify through direct observation that the client is or is not performing it?*"

2. *Sequence the skill components* . When you have listed each of the sub-skills that make up the larger behavior goal, place them into the order or sequence in which the client is to engage in them.

3. *Adjust the units of behavior as needed.* After a checklist has been generated, you can adjust its components to encompass larger or smaller units of behavior--depending on such factors as the client's age, cognitive ability, and familiarity with the behavioral expectations contained in the checklist. For example, a task analysis for the global goal ""is prepared for classwork" might include a component for maintaining a neat work area. For an older student, you might phrase this skill component more generally as "the student has cleared the desk and laid out work materials". However, for a younger student who has not yet learned how to set up a neat work

area, that task analysis might instead present the orderly-workspace requirement in 3 smaller behavior units: "The student has (1) cleared the desk of unnecessary materials; (2) placed the course textbook on the desk; and (3) arranged pen and paper for note-taking."

Putting Behavior Checklists to Use. As a consultant, you will find many uses for behavior checklists. Both students and educators can employ checklists as an aid before, during, and after any situations in which they should be using a sequenced set of behaviors.

For example, *students* may:

- preview checklists as a pre-correction strategy just *before* they transition to settings or situations in which they must conform to a specific set of behavioral expectations;
- use checklists to evaluate their behaviors periodically *during* activities to record in real time the degree to which they are following behavioral expectations;
- rate their behaviors on a checklist *after* an activity to provide a summary evaluation of the degree to which they were able successfully to display those behaviors.

Adults too can benefit from behavior checklists. For example, educators may:

- use checklists as a concise means to train students in behavioral expectations;
- look over checklists that outline the intervention elements that they are to use with students-- just *before* they move into an activity, setting, or situation in which they must deliver that intervention. This prompting strategy can help them to remember to correctly implement all intervention elements;
- rate their behaviors on a checklist *after* an activity to track their success in implementing a student intervention;
- create checklists that script the steps of a student's behavioral intervention plan and use those checklists to train other adults who work with the student to follow that plan with integrity.

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Task Analysis Example: Class Presentation Checklist

	Checklist Item
❑	TO PREPARE FOR A CLASS PRESENTATION:
❑	I have determined the overall purpose and specific objectives of my presentation.
❑	I have selected a specific topic.
❑	I understand my audience and what it knows about the topic.
❑	I have arranged my material in a way that makes sense for my objectives.
❑	I have outlined my presentation.
❑	I have created visual aids.
❑	I have practiced (and timed) my presentation.
❑	I have checked out the room in which I will be giving my presentation (set-up, sight lines, equipment, etc.).

Task Analysis Example: Math Word Problem: 7-Step Self-Check

Checklist Item
1. **Reading the problem.** I read the problem carefully. When I do not understand part of the problem (such as a vocabulary word), I try to figure it out before going forward.
2. **Paraphrasing the problem.** I put the math problem into my own words--and keep at this step until I feel that I am describing the problem correctly.
3. **Drawing the problem.** I make a drawing that presents the problem as one or more pictures.
4. **Creating a plan to solve the problem.** Now that I understand what the problem is asking me to do, I make a plan to solve it.
5. **Predicting/Estimating the answer.** Using my estimating skills, I come up with my best guess for what the answer will be.
6. **Computing the answer.** I solve the problem, showing all of my work so that I can remember the steps that I followed.
7. **Checking the answer.** I check my work for each step of the problem to make sure that it is correct. I also compare my actual answer to make sure that it is close to my estimate.

The Aggression Cycle: How to Manage Angry Classroom Outbursts

Anger is complicated, especially in classrooms. Anger is classified as a secondary emotion, one that is most often set off by more primary emotional responses such as shame, embarrassment, frustration, powerlessness, or fright (Bartholomew & Simpson, 2005). Anger does play a potentially positive role in our emotional lives, as it can create a feeling of power that energizes the individual to take action rather than remain passive. However, anger can also be counterproductive, particularly when a student habitually responds with hostility and aggression in the face of the everyday frustrations and challenges typically found in school settings.

Teachers know that, when a student experiences a significant anger episode, that anger can quickly escalate to aggression, resulting in classroom disruption and potential safety concerns. Though outbursts of anger can appear unpredictable and chaotic, however, they usually follow an identifiable pattern called the "aggression cycle" (Reilly et al., 1994; Videbeck, 2014). This cycle has five phases: (1) Trigger; (2) Escalation; (3) Crisis; (4) Recovery; and (5) Post-Crisis. How a teacher chooses to respond to an episode of significant student anger or aggression should vary, depending on what phase of the aggression cycle the student happens to be in when that the instructor intervenes.

The table below describes the 5 phases of the aggression cycle and provides advice for how a teacher should respond at each phase. This handout can be a useful tool for educators as they develop behavior-intervention plans for students with serious anger or aggression issues. It is especially important to remember that the aggression cycle rewards **proactive** intervention: the teacher who manages to eliminate an anger trigger (Phase 1) or to successfully defuse student anger (Phase 2) can head off a major outburst or aggression episode.

Aggression Cycle: Guide for Teachers (Reilly et al., 1994; Videbeck, 2014)	
Phase	**What to Do**
PHASE 1: TRIGGER. The student has a negative experience or event to which they respond with anger. This initiates the aggression cycle. The student may first experience an event or situation that embarrasses, shames, frustrates, or frightens them; anger then follows as a secondary emotional response.	**PHASE 1: Manage or Eliminate the Trigger Event.** The teacher's primary goal during this initial phase is to address the trigger itself by: • *responding to the event.* If the trigger experience or event has already occurred, the teacher moves quickly to correct the situation or address the student's needs so that their initial primary negative emotion (e.g., embarrassment or frustration) does not spiral into anger. For example, the instructor might provide immediate help to the student struggling with an in-class assignment or reprimand and move the seat of a peer who is teasing that student. • *eliminating the trigger.* When possible, the teacher identifies in advance and takes steps to prevent those triggers that can lead to student anger. For example, if a student often responds with embarrassment and then anger when directed to read aloud in front of others, the instructor might revise reading tasks to remove this performance requirement.
PHASE 2: ESCALATION. The student shows visible signs of irritation or hostility, such as looking flushed or tense, grumbling, or muttering under their breath. The student's level of agitation increases and may include arguing, leaving their seat, and refusing to respond to peers or adults. While not visible to observers, the student is likely to be preoccupied with	**PHASE 2: Interrupt the Anger.** The teacher interacts with the student in a calm and non-judgmental manner. The instructor takes steps to reduce the student's level of anger, through such strategies as: • *pulling the student aside for a conference.* The teacher asks the student open-ended questions to determine what precipitated the anger event and then explores a solution to the problem. • *directing the student to use relaxation techniques.* The teacher prompts the student to use one or more strategies to calm themselves, such as taking deep breaths and releasing slowly or counting backward from 10.

their anger at this point, interfering with their ability to comply with rules and respond rationally to adult requests or directives.	• *removing the student from the setting.* The teacher directs the student to take a brief (non-punitive) break from the setting (e.g., moving to a quiet part of the classroom; visiting a counselor).
PHASE 3: CRISIS. The student's behavior intensifies, posing a potential risk of safety to self and/or others. The student may express anger through disruptive, confrontational verbal behavior such as insults, threats, arguments, or confrontation. Or the student's behavior may include physical aggression toward property or other people. At this stage, the student's anger and other strong emotions may limit or overwhelm their ability to process language accurately and respond rationally.	**PHASE 3: Maintain Safety and Defuse Anger.** The teacher works toward 3 goals, to include: • *ensuring the safety of the student and others.* The teacher takes immediate steps to keep the student, peers, and adults in the vicinity safe that may include summoning additional adult support or removing the student or peers from the room. The student remains under constant adult supervision during this stage. • *preventing further anger escalation.* The teacher avoids actions likely to intensify the student's anger and aggression, such as yelling at the student, issuing threats or ultimatums, or engaging in arguments about 'who is right'. • *calming the student.* The teacher makes a conscious effort to reduce the level of the student's anger and arousal, such as speaking in a calm voice, respecting the student's personal space, and communicating that student and adults will work together to resolve the problem in a positive way. Because the student's heightened emotional state may reduce their ability to engage in and comprehend dialog, the teacher (and other adults) keep their statements simple and short, check for student understanding, and repeat key statements as often as needed.
PHASE 4: RECOVERY. The student regains control of their emotions and behavior. As the student transitions from a state of anger and high arousal to normal functioning, the recovery process might include periods of crying, emotional withdrawal, expressions of remorse, or even sleeping.	**PHASE 4: Support Student Recovery.** The teacher or other adults maintain a supportive environment to more rapidly help the student to regain composure and self-control. During the recovery phase, adults refrain from attempts to analyze, assign blame, or impose disciplinary consequences for the behavioral incident—as such actions run the risk of prolonging or rekindling the anger state.
PHASE 5: POST-CRISIS. The student has fully recovered control of emotions and behavior.	**PHASE 5: Engage in Reflection and Problem-Solving.** The teacher conferences with the student to discuss the incident and develop a future response plan. The tone of the meeting is positive and focused on preventing future incidents, not on assigning blame. The meeting includes: • *analysis of the behavioral incident.* The teacher and student discuss the incident, identifying what triggered the event and how the student responded. • *creating a plan for future incidents.* The teacher and student develop and write out a plan for how that student might respond proactively when faced with future situations with similar triggers. • *providing student training as needed.* If the teacher determines that the student needs specific training to manage emotions or respond to challenging events more appropriately, the Post-Crisis phase should include that training. For example, an instructor who notes that a student has difficulty in identifying when they are angry may provide training in how the student can use an 'anger meter' to gain awareness of and self-monitor their anger levels.

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How To: Calm the Agitated Student: Tools for Effective Behavior Management

Students can sometimes have emotional outbursts in school settings. This fact will not surprise many teachers, who have had repeated experience in responding to serious classroom episodes of student agitation. Such outbursts can be attributed in part to the relatively high incidence of mental health issues among children and youth. It is estimated, for example, that at least one in five students in American schools will experience a mental health disorder by adolescence (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). But even students *not* identified as having behavioral or emotional disorders may occasionally have episodes of agitation triggered by situational factors such as peer bullying, frustration over poor academic performance, stressful family relationships, or perceived mistreatment by educators.

Since virtually any professional working in schools might at some point find him/herself needing to 'talk down' a student who presents as emotionally upset, all educators should know the basics of how to de-escalate the agitated student. The advice offered in this checklist is adapted for use by schools from research on best practices in calming individuals in medical or psychiatric settings (Cowin et al., 2003; Fishkind, 2002; Richmond et al., 2012). These strategies are intended to be used in a flexible manner to increase the odds that an educator can respond efficiently and effectively to students who present with a wide range of emotional issues.

CAUTION: The guidelines presented below are intended for use with a student whose agitated behavior is largely verbal, shows no signs of escalating beyond that point, and does not present as potentially physically aggressive or violent. Educators who suspect that a student may present a safety risk to self or others should *immediately* seek additional assistance. Schools should also conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs), assemble appropriate Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) and--if needed--create Crisis Response Plans to manage the behaviors of students who show patterns of escalating, potentially violent behaviors.

- ☐ *Create a 'safe' setting.* An educator attempting to calm an agitated student cannot always select the setting in which that interaction plays out. When a student outburst occurs in the classroom, however, the educator should attempt to engage the student in a semi-private conversation (e.g., off to the side of the room) rather than having an exchange in front of classmates. As part of the protocol for conducting a de-escalation conference, adults should also ensure that they are never left alone with agitated students.

- ☐ *Limit the number of adults involved.* Having too many educators (e.g., teacher and a teaching assistant) participating in a de-escalation conference can be counter-productive because of possible confusion and communication of mixed messages to the agitated student. If more than one adult is available in the instructional setting, select the one with the most experience with de-escalation techniques to engage the student one-to-one, while the additional educator(s) continue to support the instruction or behavior management of other students.

- ☐ *Provide adequate personal space.* Stand at least 2 arm's length of distance away from the agitated student. If the student tells you to 'back off' or 'get away', provide the student with additional space.

- ☐ *Do not block escape routes.* When individuals are agitated, they are more likely to experience a 'fight-or-flight' response that can express itself in the need to have escape routes available. When engaging a student in a de-escalation conference, do not position yourself between the student and the door. If the student says, "Get out of my way", step back to give that student additional personal space and reposition yourself out of his or her potential escape path.

- ☐ *Show open, accepting body language.* Convey through stance and body language that you are calm and accepting of the student--and will treat that student respectfully and maintain his or her safety. Stand at an angle

rather than facing the student directly in a 'confrontational' pose. Keep hands open and visible to the student. Stand comfortably, with knees slightly bent. Avoid 'clenched' body language such as crossing arms or balling hands into fists.

- ☐ *Keep verbal interactions respectful.* It is natural for educators to experience feelings of defensiveness, embarrassment, anxiety, or irritation when attempting to talk down a student from an emotional outburst. However, you should strive to appear calm and to treat the student respectfully at all times. Avoid use of teasing, reprimands, or other negative comments and abstain as well from sarcasm or an angry tone of voice.

- ☐ *Communicate using simple, direct language*. When people are emotionally upset, they may not process language quickly or with complete accuracy. In talking with the student, keep your vocabulary simple and your sentences brief. Be sure to allow sufficient time for the student to think about and respond to each statement before continuing. In particular, if the student does not respond to a statement, avoid falling into the trap of assuming too quickly that the student is simply 'ignoring you". Instead, calmly repeat yourself--several times if necessary. So long as the student's behavior is not escalating, give him or her the benefit of the doubt and use gentle repetition to help the student to focus on and respond to you.

- ☐ *Coach the student to take responsibility for moderating behavior.* At the point in an encounter with an agitated student when you feel that you have established rapport, you can use a positive, assertive tone to prompt the student to take responsibility for controlling his or her own behavior (e.g., "John, it is hard for me to follow what you are saying when you raise your voice and pace around the room. If you sit down and calmly explain what the problem is, I think that I can help.").

- ☐ *Reassure the student and frame an outcome goal.* You can often help to defuse the student's agitation by reassuring the student (e.g., "You're not in trouble. This is your chance to give me your side of the story") and stating an outcome goal ("Let's figure out how to take care of this situation in a positive way" ; "I want to understand why you are upset so that I can know how to respond"). Also, if you do not know the agitated student whom you are approaching, introduce yourself and state both your name and position.

- ☐ *Identify the student's wants and feelings*. Use communication tools such as active listening (e.g., "Let me repeat back to you what I thought I heard you say ...."), open-ended questions (e.g., "What do you need right now to be able to calm yourself?"), and labeling of emotions ("Rick, you look angry. Tell me what is bothering you") to better understand how the student feels and what may be driving the current emotional outburst.

- ☐ *Identify points of agreement.* A powerful strategy to build rapport with an agitated student is to find points on which you can agree. At the same time, of course, you must preserve your professional integrity as an educator and therefore cannot falsely express agreement on issues that you in fact disagree with. Here are suggestions for finding authentic common ground with the student in response to different situations. (1) Agreement with student's account: If you essentially agree with the student's account of (and/or emotional reaction to) the situation, you can say so (e.g., "I can understand why you were upset when you lost your book on the field trip. I would be upset too."); (2) Agreement with a principle expressed or implied by the student: If you are unsure of the objectivity of the student's account, you might still discern within it a principle that you can support (e.g., If the student claims to have been disrespected by a hall monitor, you can say, "I think everybody has the right to feel respected."); (3) Agreement with the typicality of the student response: If you decide that the student's emotional response would likely be shared by a substantial number of peers, you can state that observation (e.g., "So I gather that you were pretty frustrated when you learned that you are no longer sports-eligible because of your report card grades. I am sure that there are other students here who feel the same way.";(4) Agreement to disagree: If you cannot find a point on which you can agree with the student or validate an aspect of his or her viewpoint, you should simply state that you and the student agree to disagree.

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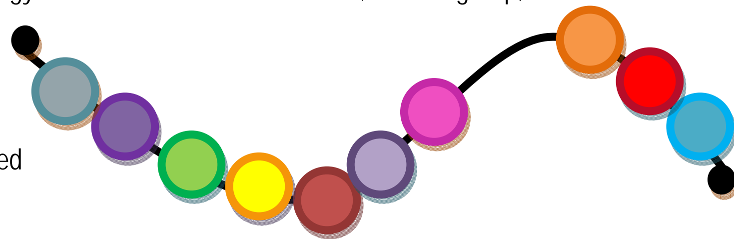
How To: Reduce Time-Outs With Active Response Beads

Students with behavioral disorders or ingrained patterns of non-compliant or defiant behaviors may receive in-class or out-of-class time-out as a disciplinary consequence. However, use of time-out (from reinforcement) has the serious drawback that students miss instruction while in time-out. Furthermore, because students are often directed to time-out when emotionally upset, there is a significant likelihood that they will resist the time-out placement, thus creating the potential for teacher-student power-struggles, classwide disruptions, and other negative outcomes.

Active-Response Beads-Time Out (ARB-TO: Grskovic et al., 2004) is an intervention to replace in-class time-out that is easy to use. It promotes students' use of calm-down strategies when upset, enhances behavioral self-management skills, and minimizes exclusion from academic activities.

Preparation. The teacher makes a sufficient number of sets of Active Response Beads (ARBs) to use in this intervention--depending on whether the strategy is to be used with one student, a small group, or the entire class.

The materials needed to create a single Active Response Bead set are:



- ten 3/4-inch/1.9-cm beads with hole drilled through middle
- A 38-cm/15-inch length of cord

To make a set of Active Response Beads, the teacher strings the 10 beads on the cord and ties a knot at each end.

Training. The teacher meets for at least 2 sessions with the student(s) who will be using the Active Response Beads-Time Out strategy. The teacher introduces ARB-TO as a way to self-manage emotions and classroom behaviors to increase classroom success and reduce number of time-outs. In each training session, the teacher and student practice steps of the ARB-TO procedure (outlined below). Training concludes when student(s) demonstrate understanding and compliance with the procedure.

Procedure. The ARB-TO can be used whenever the student displays defiant, non-compliant, acting-out, or escalating behaviors (e.g., refuses to engage in classwork, leaves seat without permission, talks out, makes rude or inappropriate comments or gestures, or engages in less-serious acts of aggression or property destruction). NOTE: Educators should be aware that the teacher's role in providing prompts, feedback, and praise to the student throughout the ARB steps is crucial to the intervention's success.

Here are the 4 ARB-TO steps:

1	**Teacher Initiates ARB-TO Strategy**
	Teacher: The teacher directs the student to "go get an ARB". **Student:** The student walks to the teacher's desk (or other classroom location), picks up a set of Active Response Beads and returns to seat.

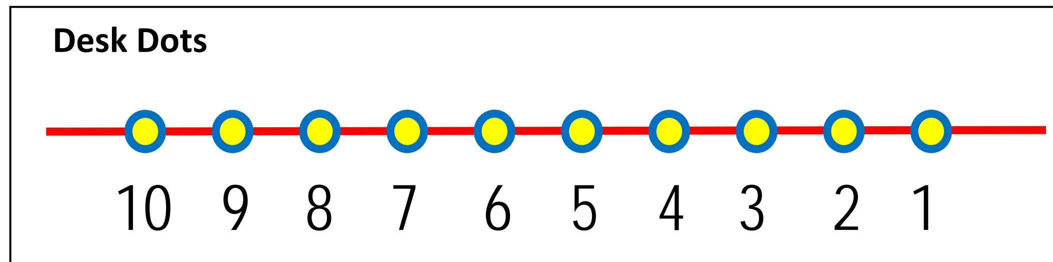
2	Student Uses Active Response Beads
	Teacher: The teacher praises compliance and directs the student to begin the ARB-TO procedure: "Thanks for getting your ARB . You need think-time for [describe problem behavior]. Put your head on the desk and use your ARB." **Student:** The student puts head on desk and counts down slowly from 10 to 1. The student starts counting in an audible voice. With each number in the count, the student: • takes a deep breath and slowly releases; • moves a bead along the cord from the left to the right side of the ARB; • gradually reduces voice volume--to conclude in a whisper on the last number. Upon completing the count, the student raises head from desk.

3	Student Returns ARB to the Teacher
	Teacher: The teacher praises successful use of the ARB-TO strategy and prompts the student to return the ARB to the teacher "Good job using the ARB. Please bring it up to me." **Student:** The student gives the teacher the ARB and returns to seat.

4	Teacher Redirects the Student to Academic Task
	Teacher: The teacher again praises use of ARB-TO, directs the student to resume the academic task or rejoin the academic activity, and offers support as needed. "Thanks for using the ARB and for returning it to me. Please continue with your assignment/ rejoin our activity. I will be over to check on how you are doing in a moment." **Student:** The student resumes the academic task or rejoins the learning activity.

Adaptations. Here are two adaptations of the ARB-TO procedure to increase convenience and extend student skills:

- *Replace Beads With 'Desk Dots'.* Teachers may want to use the student self-directed calm-down strategy



  represented by ARB-TO but also wish to avoid managing sets of beads or having emotionally upset students leave their seats to retrieve bead sets. A low-key adaptation of the ARB-TO is the substitution for the beads of a series of 10 dots numbered in descending order printed on a slip of paper and affixed to the student's desk. The student is then trained, when directed by the teacher, to apply the ARB-TO count-down/calm-down procedure using dots.

- *Train Students to Self-Manage Use of ARB-TO.* As students become familiar with, and comfortable using, Active Response Beads-Time Out, the teacher can give those students their own bead sets. Students would then be encouraged to monitor their own emotional states and use the beads (or Desk Dots) when needed as a calming device--without teacher prompting.

Reference

Grskovic, J. A., Hall, A. M. Montgomery D. J., Vargas, A. U., Zentall, S. S., & Belfiore, P. J. (2004). Reducing time-out assignments for students with emotional/behavioral disorders in a self-contained classroom. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 13*(1), 25-36.