Curriculum Guide for Educational Therapy and Interventions for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

James Jenson, Agnes Marino, Darlena Pierce, Layne Smith, and Amy Truesdale

Grand Canyon University

Instructor: Ira J. Williams, Ed.D.

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Introduction

This paper provides several strategies that classroom teachers can implement with youngsters who have emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). All of the selected therapies and interventions provide information on activities and assessment criteria that can be used to help the instructor implement these procedures designed to strengthen the social, cognitive, behavioral and emotional needs for EBD students.

Strategy

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Strategies to Help Students Make Wise Behavioral Choices

Goal

Effective school-level prevention of behavior problems requires that teachers be provided with the skills and tools to facilitate positive student behavioral change. Students must be taught skills (e.g., anger management, communication skills, and cognitive problem-solving skills) that enable effective modification to their response patterns (Robinson, 2007).

Objective

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI) for altering behavior in school is based on Luria’s idea that students have failed to integrate language as a control for behavior (Robinson, 2007). Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior (e.g., high levels of aggression or impulsivity) respond in impetuous ways to various situations, rather than relying on logic and reasoning to make sensible decisions. Instead of taking the time to analyze the situation and make a well-thought-out decision, they react in a manner based on immediate circumstances and...
minimal forethought. CBIs are based upon the verbal self-regulation, the use of language as an internal control on rational thought that influences the development of overt behavior (Robinson, 2007).

**Activities**

Several performance-related skills designed to assist students with self-managing behavior, including defining the problem, focusing attention, self-reinforcing, developing coping skills, and improving error correction steps. With a basic plan, teachers can design lessons that meet the needs of their classrooms and students, such as relying on shorter duration lessons or including booster sessions presented throughout the school year (e.g., biweekly, monthly). Students are more likely to maintain the important skills if the information is presented in short sessions and continue throughout the school year on a periodic basis (e.g., monthly refresher lessons) (Robinson, 2007).

**Assessment**

Robinson (2007) conducted a meta-analysis that indicated the efficacy of CBIs for remediating behavioral excesses (e.g., physical and verbal aggression) and deficits (e.g., social competence skills) in the school environment. Effective school-level prevention of behavior problems requires that teachers be provided with the skills and tools to facilitate positive student behavioral change. Students must be taught skills (e.g., anger management, communication skills, and cognitive problem-solving skills) that enable effective modification to their response patterns. Thus, if instructional programming focuses on teaching required skills and is economical in terms of time and resources, teachers will be more likely to implement and use such programs appropriately and effectively (Robinson, 2007).

**Strategy**
Peer-Mediated Intervention Studies on Academic Achievement for Students with EBD

Goal

Peer-mediated intervention goal is to produce positive outcomes in four major areas: (a) social behavior, (b) academic performance, (c) interest in school and academic content, and (d) self-concept.

Objective

Research has shown that peer-mediated interventions have consistently resulted in positive academic outcomes for tutors as well as tutees among children with disabilities. It provides an environment that reduces student-to-teacher ratios, where instructional strategies of individualization, response supervision, error correction, and reinforcement are more likely to take place (Ryan, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

Activities

Peer-mediated interventions require students to implement teacher-selected instruction for their peers. There are a wide variety of techniques that fall under the peer-mediated instruction category, including: peer modeling, peer monitoring, peer network strategies, peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, reverse-role tutoring, class wide peer tutoring (CWPT), peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS), class wide student tutoring teams (CSTT) (Ryan, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

The entire class simultaneously participates in tutoring dyads. During each tutoring session, either students participated as both tutor and tutee, or they can participate as only the tutor or tutee. Small teams composed of students with different levels of ability use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn. Older students are matched with younger students to deliver instruction. Tutors are typically at least 2
years older than the tutees. There does not need to be large differences in skill levels between the tutor and tutee (Ryan, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

Students who need remedial support are paired with select tutors (perhaps highly skilled peers, peers also in need of remedial work, or cross-age tutors). Each member of the dyad may receive and provide tutoring in the same content area, or tutors can provide instruction in a content area in which they are highly skilled (Ryan, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

The teacher draws the student’s attention to the peer model and identifies the desired behaviors the student should emulate. Peers provide reinforcement for appropriate responses within the natural environment. The purpose is to reinforce appropriate behaviors of students with disabilities by their peers (Ryan, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

**Assessment**

Peer-mediated interventions have a well-established record of effectiveness. Research has shown to result in positive academic outcomes for tutors as well as tutees among children with disabilities. These interventions have resulted in large academic gains across subject areas, including math, reading, spelling, and history. It highlights the importance of teachers becoming more knowledgeable and skilled in the use of these peer-mediated strategies for students with EBD. Teacher training programs certifying special educators who work with students with EBD should strive to train teachers how to implement these promising practices in their classrooms (Ryan, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

**Strategy**

*Prevention Strategies for At-Risk Students and Students with EBD in Urban Elementary Schools*

**Goal**
Social competence is broadly defined as the ability to perform adequately in social situations as judged by teachers, parents, peers, and others. Evidence of social competence would include evaluation of the effectiveness of one's behaviors in enabling appropriate interactions and participation as well as the appropriateness of the behaviors to the setting. The goals of a prevention program for students with or at risk for EBD would demonstrate improvements in behavior management programs, social skills instruction, and peer tutoring in reading (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999).

**Objective**

For students with EBD and other behavior problems research suggests a strong relationship between the occurrence/nonoccurrence of behaviors and (a) environmental variables (e.g., classroom structure, teacher organization, engaging instruction) as well as (b) teacher consistency and positiveness in applying management systems (e.g., teaching rules, modeling good behavior, reinforcing positive peer interaction and problem solving, and providing contingent rewards). Findings further suggest that improvements in appropriate classroom behaviors and peer interaction contribute to improved social competence as judged by teachers (i.e., weekly ratings) (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999).

**Activities**

A critical element was group training in the use of the interventions for school staff. This included presentation of the procedures (e.g., behavior management strategies, social skills curriculum), group practice, distribution of implementation materials, and setting the structure for initial implementation (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999).

The specified interventions were as follows:

- Classroom behavior management programs
• Social skills at least weekly

• Tutoring: peer tutoring, individual tutoring from teachers, peer tutoring, individual tutoring

School-wide implementation of programs where staff members worked as a team with a clear goal of improving student performance (socially and academically) is important. Unified efforts in individual schools (e.g., discipline teams, school wide social skills programs, universal class rules, school wide discipline) indicated a clear understanding of the relationship between student behaviors and teacher behaviors and environmental factors (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999).

Assessment

Two of the three schools initially targeted implemented components of the prevention program on a school wide basis (peer tutoring in reading and social skills), indicating a willingness to provide prevention programs to address current challenges in urban schools. Of importance also were the positive outcomes noted in improved student social and behavioral performance across multiple schools and classrooms (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999).

Strategy

Proactive strategies for avoiding behavioral outbursts in the classroom.

Goal

The goal of the following strategies is to avoid emotional outbursts or meltdowns by students suffering from behavioral or emotional disabilities.

Objective

Making the classroom an accepting and safe environment where all students can learn is
paramount to avoiding misbehavior by any student. Giving students a voice in the direction that learning takes also gives them a sense of power over the education. “When students are offered opportunities to make simple but meaningful choices in their classroom routine, their behaviors can improve. Examples of choice include permitting students to select who they work with on a project, negotiate when an assignment will be due, and choose what book to read for an assignment” (Wright, 2001).

**Productive Interventions**

- Create manageable amounts of work by chunking larger tasks into smaller “bite-size” portions.
- Create a “team” approach with all the adults who come in contact with the student in question. Make sure all the individuals understand which behaviors are being targeted, the level of expectation, and positive reinforcements that are appropriate for use with this child.
- Directly teach desirable behaviors in the environment or situation in which the behavior is expected. Frequently role-play these scenarios.
- Examine the physical set up of the classroom and rearrange as necessary to provide the student with EBD proximity to the teacher and whatever other “helps” the student may need (i.e. carrels for lessening distractions, bulletin board with classroom rules posted, 100's chart, grammatical charts, etc.).
- Make reviewing the student’s daily schedule a morning routine and always forewarn the student of any changes (i.e. assemblies, early release, field-trips, etc.).
- Teach relaxation techniques that can be performed at the student’s desk (i.e. counting backwards, deep breathing, visualization of positive feelings/thoughts, etc.). if these are
not effective allow the student to take a break during which they can regain their
composure. This could be visiting the restroom and splashing water on their face or
walking to the counselors’ office for some one-on-one.

**Strategy**

*Functional Behavioral Assessment*

**Goal**

“The focus when conducting a functional behavioral assessment is on identifying
significant, pupil-specific social, affective, cognitive, and/or environmental factors associated
with the occurrence (and non-occurrences) of specific behaviors. This broader perspective offers
a better understanding of the function or purpose behind student behavior” (CECP, 2001).

**Objective**

By understanding what causes, or triggers a student’s outburst, teachers are better able to
avoid problem behaviors. An FBA will also help the school counselor and psychologist better
address specific triggers during counseling sessions. Two offsprings of an FBA are behavioral
contracts and behavior intervention plans.

The behavioral contract (BC) is a written agreement between the student and the teacher.
It may contain specific positive behavioral expectations or specific negative behaviors that are to
be avoided or a combination of the two. Privileges for compliance and consequences for non-
compliance are spelled out as is the period for reassessment. The BC works best with older
elementary students on up through high school as they are better able to verbalize their
understanding of rules and consequences.

A behavior intervention plan (BIP) is a plan of action written by a team of staff members
who are familiar with the student in question. The BIP targets specific behaviors and recognizes
triggers with what the child expects because of the behavior. The BIP also gives strategies for the teacher to try and both consequences and rewards for the student’s behavior.

**Strategy**

*Focus on Change*

**Goal**

The focus is on changing inappropriate behavior by teaching new behaviors and providing plenty of opportunity to practice the appropriate behavior. Teachers should avoid focusing on students’ inappropriate behavior and, instead, focus on desirable replacement behaviors (Lewis, Heflin, & DiGangi, 1991, p.26).

**Objective**

Provide the student with direct instruction of the appropriate behavior. Include in this program direct instruction of problem-solving skills, which will encourage the growth of self-confidence, and other skills necessary for success within the broader community outside of the educational setting.

**Direct Instruction**

Direct instruction must be individualized. While there are many social skills curricula available, more will address all skills that the individual students will require therefore the teacher will need to supplement with bits of other curricula or with teacher-developed lessons.

**Practice Opportunity**

Some pro-social behaviors that need practicing are: following directions, settling conflicts without becoming physical, taking turns, working in groups or with a partner, and working independently without constant supervision.

Giving students plenty of “rehearsal time” will set them up for success when presented
with challenging social situations. Frequent role-playing between the teacher and student, and later between the student and his or her peers will help the student improve their social skills and thereby control of their behavior. For a student who suffers from fears of phobias the role-playing will help desensitize the student to the stress-inducing situation. For the student who tends to be explosive in certain situations the role-playing will help the student recognize the building anger and defuse it using relaxation techniques.

**Strategy**

*Educational Interventions: Strategies to Help Students build language confidence*

**Goal**

The goal is to provide interesting and stimulating activities for third and fourth grade students to develop an interest in words.

**Objective**

To help students understand that a word is something that can be pronounced, has meaning, and can be used with other words to make a sentence.

**Activities**

Students are asked to give examples of words and write them on the board. Students are then asked the following questions: What is a word? Do you all know the same words? How many words do you think you know? Where do you keep all of the words you know? These questions are to get the children to start thinking about words. Student now work with their partner to write down as many words they can think of in 10 minutes or a specified time decided on by the teacher (Oregon University, 1971).

Once the time is up, the list are read and the teacher writes them as a visual so everyone can see the list. Now the teacher tell the students that each person has a private store of words
that we use when we talk, write, read, or listen to others talk. This is called a WORD BANK. Just like the money Bank, we can add to our word bank, each time we learn a new word. The teacher then allows the students to decorate a box with a picture of a piggy bank. When a student learns a new word, s/he must pronounce it to the teacher, define the word and use it in a sentence before placing it in their box. As an added incentive, the children receive a treat of some sort (Oregon University, 1971).

Assessment

Each student will be assessed on their ability to follow directions and how they participated in today’s activities. They will also be assessed on how well they cooperated with their partnership. The teacher will create a chart to track each student’s new discoveries of words.

Strategy

Strategies for Tier 2 Intervention in early mathematic skills

Goal

Research has found that there were continual deficits of arithmetic combination in elementary-age students. The goal is to teach counting strategies, addition and subtraction up to 18 to first and second grade.

Objective

Tutoring sessions will be delivered in same-ability, small instructional groups consisting of three to four students within a grade level (first or second grade) from across classes. There is an average of 64 fifteen min. tutoring session for fist graders and a average of 62 fifteen-min tutoring sessions for second graders that were conducted across 18 weeks.

Activities
First graders are tutored in number comparisons. First graders, will be individually administered, the numbers will range from 0 through 99. Second graders will be tested as a group with numbers from 0 to 999, number sequence first graders from 0 to 99 and second graders from 0 to 999, place value first graders values range from 1 to 99. Finding ten’s and one’s and second graders values range from 1 to 999, finding hundred’s, ten’s and one’s, and addition and subtraction ranging from 0 to 18 with problems eight to a row, and five rows of problems. Students in both grades will compute and write their answers to as many as possible in 1 min. Second graders will be tutored in the same areas but on the next area of difficulty. Weekly activity-level progress monitoring will be conducted. They will be given four oral or written problems to find out how they respond to the instruction on each lesson taught that week.

Assessment

Each student will be administered pre and post testing, spring and winter quarterly tests. These tests include number comparisons (the difference of two numbers are they bigger or smaller), number sequences (identify a missing number from a group of three numbers), place value (knowledge of place value), and addition/subtraction combinations (assesses the ability to write the answers to addition and subtraction facts). These scores will be used for the groups the students will be placed.

Second, this intervention holds promise for improving mathematics for students with performance in number-sense and arithmetic combinations.

Strategy

Making Connection in Mathematics

Goal
Re-teach fundamental mathematics with an intervention to provide extended time in core curriculum and be aligned with the general education classroom’s daily instruction. Recent reports of student performance on national and international assessments of mathematics proficiency provide a false sense of accomplishments in mathematics achievement overtime and across grades. Although results from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) suggest that students in Grades 4 and 8 are making measurable progress toward achieving high standards, 70% of eighth-graders scored below proficient in mathematics. Even though an increase over past performance was noted, these results indicated significant discrepancies between students’ actual abilities and legislative expectation (Ketterlin-Geller, Chard & Fien, 2008).

These reports make it important that students need to develop mathematical reasoning and should be a goal of K-12 education in the United States. Because it is a fundamental skill for employment and higher education, the federal government identified mathematics, along with reading, as a domain in which all students will reach proficiency by the 2014 (Ketterlin-Geller, Chard & Fien, 2008).

**Objective**

Re-teach and reinforce fundamental structures that build students’ understanding of concepts and their skill in using these concepts gradually. The intervention will be for students from 3-6th grades.

**Activities**

Those students that are determined at risk will be put into interventions that will reinforce fundamental concepts and skills. The students will have an opportunity to discuss new math ideas; a cast of comic book characters that model mathematical language will introduce them.
The teacher will implement the intervention by having the students read the parts of the characters much like reading a play. This feature is designed to scaffold students’ discourse about mathematical ideas.

**Assessment**

The assessment that will be used is the district math assessment which is a Curriculum Based Assessment given to every student to initially screen, this can determine at risk status. Risk relates to the students knowledge of math concepts. The students’ scores will be classified into three groups: no risk, some risk, and significant risk. The students with significant risk will receive supplemental interventions. The student will be put in an intervention for 30 minutes 4 times a week. The students will start with reviewing the use of addition with single digits and then double digits, followed by single digit subtraction and then double digit. The student will learn skills such as place value and money.

**Conclusion**

As teachers and curriculum specialists design cognitive behavioral curricula to provide EBD students with self-effacing skills youngsters to respond in socially acceptable and effective ways, they must incorporate examples that approximate or parallel actual problems faced by students in school and other settings. The opportunity to practice skills in nonthreatening environments increases the probability that skills will be maintained and generalized; therefore, teaching students problem-solving skills enables them to address anger resulting from situations that cannot be predicted. It accomplishes the objective of providing students with the ability to self-manage their behavior.

Many students, especially those with EBD, encounter problems in various domains. The results of this review suggest that CBIs, Peer Mediation, Proactive Strategies for Avoiding
Behavioral Outbursts in the Classroom, Focus on Change, Strategies to Help Students Build Language Confidence, Strategies for Tier 2, Intervention in Early Mathematic Skills and Making Connection in Mathematics, provide templates to confront areas of need such as communication, problem solving, and ultimately behavior control.

References


