

# Behavior Modification in the Classroom

Nancy Mather and Sam Goldstein (2001)

Behavior modification assumes that observable and measurable behaviors are good targets for change. All behavior follows a set of consistent rules. Methods can be developed for defining, observing, and measuring behaviors, as well as designing effective interventions. Behavior modification techniques never fail. Rather, they are either applied inefficiently or inconsistently, which leads to less than desired change. All behavior is maintained, changed, or shaped by the consequences of that behavior. Although there are certain limits, such as temperamental or emotional influences related to ADHD or depression, all children function more effectively under the right set of consequences. *Reinforcers* are consequences that strengthen behavior. *Punishments* are consequences that weaken behavior. Students' behaviors are managed and changed by the consequences of classroom behavior. To manage behavior through consequences, use this multi-step process:

1. The problem must be defined, usually by count or description.
2. Design a way to change the behavior.
3. Identify an effective reinforcer.
4. Apply the reinforcer consistently to shape or change behavior.

Consequences of behavior are directly related to the events that either come immediately before or after them. Table 4.2 provides examples of behavioral outcomes as they relate to various events.

Table 4.1. Popular models and techniques for dealing with discipline referrals	
Model	Techniques emphasized
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<b>Focusing on Prevention</b>	
Preventative classroom management	Effective teaching practices, frequent monitoring, clear rules and procedures, social praise, and so forth
Prosocial behavior	Systematic reinforcement, modeling of prosocial behavior, verbal instruction, role playing
Moral education	Classroom moral discussions of real-life dilemmas, hypothetical situations, and literature; role playing; student participation in school government
Social problem solving (SPS)	Direct teaching of SPS skills (e.g. alternative thinking, means-ends thinking), self- instruction training, dialoguing
Effective communication models	Values clarification activities, active listening, communication and interpersonal skills training for students and teachers
<b>Focusing on Correction and Control of Misbehavior</b>	
Behavior modification	Direct instruction; reinforcement techniques, including social praise, material reinforcers, and tokens; punishment-oriented techniques, including verbal reprimand, response cost, and time-out; group contingency techniques such as the Good Behavior Game; behavioral contracting

Assertive discipline	Teacher assertion, systematic use of behavior modification techniques, continuous monitoring
Reality therapy	Confrontation questioning, classroom meetings, classroom moral discussions, social problem solving, behavioral contracting, logical consequences, time-out, preventative techniques such as democratic governance
<b>Focus on Treatment</b>	
Social skills training	Direct instruction, modeling and rehearsal, coaching, self-instruction, manipulation of antecedents and consequences
Aggression replacement training	Social skills training techniques, self- instruction (e.g. anger control training), moral discussions
Parent management training	Parent training in application of behavioral techniques
Family therapy	Variety of therapeutic and educational techniques, depending on the particular model
Behavior therapy	Variety of cognitive, behavioral, and operant techniques
<p><i>From Bear, G.G. (1990). Models and techniques that focus on prevention. In A. Thomas &amp; J. Grimes (Eds.), Best practices in school psychology (p. 652). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of School Psychologists; Copyright 1990 by the National Association of School Psychologists. Reprinted by permission of publisher.</i></p>	

Reinforcement and punishment follow a clear set of basic principles:

1. reinforcement or punishment always follows behavior,
2. reinforcement or punishment follows the target behavior as soon as possible,
3. reinforcement or punishment fits the target behavior and must be meaningful to the child, and
4. multiple reinforcers, or punishments are likely more effective than single reinforcers or punishments.

### Reinforcement

Classification	Exhibited behavior	Consequences	Probable future effect on behavior
Positive reinforcement	Jane cleans her room.	Jane's parents praise her.	Jane will continue to clean her room.
Positive reinforcement	Carmen brushes her teeth after meals.	Carmen receives a nickel each time.	Carmen will continue to brush her teeth after meals.
Positive reinforcement	Rob works quietly at his seat.	The teacher praises and rewards Rob.	Rob will continue to work quietly at his seat.
Negative reinforcement	Jason complains that older boys consistently beat him up, and he refuses to attend school.	Jason's parents allow him to remain at home because of his complaints.	Jason will continue to miss school.

Negative reinforcement	Balin complains of headaches when it is time to do homework.	Balin is allowed to go to bed without doing his homework.	Balin will have headaches whenever there is homework to do.
Extinction	Jim washes his father's car.	Jim's car washing behavior is ignored.	Jim will stop washing his father's car.
Extinction	Carmen puts glue on Joe's seat.	Carmen is ignored.	Carmen will stop putting glue on Joe's seat.
Punishment	Marta sits on the arm of the chair.	Marta is spanked each time she sits on the arm of the chair.	Marta will not sit on the arm of the chair.
Punishment	Takeo puts Gwen's pigtails in the paint.	The teacher administers the paddle to Takeo's posterior.	Takeo will not put Gwen's pigtail in the paint.

*From Walker, J.E., & Shea, T.M. (1991). Behavior management: A practical approach for educators (5th ed.). New York: Macmillan; adapted by permission.*

Although reinforcement and punishment can be equally effective in reducing specific target behaviors in the classroom, reinforcement is by far more effective in helping children develop alternative, more functional behaviors. When Jeremy was in third grade, his teacher instituted a procedure in which he would receive a tally mark if she looked over and saw that he was tipping back in his chair. She placed 4 Xs under each chair leg to remind him not to lean back. A more positive approach would be to let Jeremy earn a tally mark each time she looked over and saw that all four legs were down. This would reinforce the desired behavior. It is important to always begin with a number of reinforcing strategies before resorting to punishment as a means of reducing unwanted or aversive classroom behaviors.

### Schedules

Schedules define and identify the amount of work required or the time that must elapse between reinforcers. Some schedules are continuous, providing a reinforcement or punishment every time the target behavior occurs. Fixed or variable interval schedules are time related, and fixed or variable ratio schedules are related to how much work is completed. Fixed schedules result in higher rates of performance than continuous schedules. In classroom settings, most teachers use fixed ratio interval schedules. They are effective because the child knows exactly what is expected and the requirements of performance are clearly spelled out. Keep in mind that variable schedules are not as good for shaping new behaviors but are excellent for maintaining well-learned behaviors.

A simple system to evaluate the most common classroom problems (e.g. talking out, being out of the seat, not focusing or paying attention, disruptive behavior) appears in Figure 4.4. Information obtained is usually observed at 15-second intervals. If any of the behaviors occur, whether once or more than once, a single notation is made for that interval.

### Positive reinforcement

The appropriate application of positive reinforcement has repeatedly been demonstrated to increase both on-task behavior and work completion (for reviews, see Barkley, 1990; DuPaul & Stoner, 1994; Goldstein, 1995; and Walker & Walker, 1991). In the early elementary school grades, teachers exhibit a significant degree of positive reinforcement for desired behaviors (White, 1975). That is, when a desired behavior is exhibited, teachers frequently respond with a consequence that is likely to increase the reoccurrence of that behavior. Jeremy's first-grade teacher offered frequent praise when he was sitting quietly in his seat.

By middle elementary school and through secondary school, however, teachers begin paying increasingly greater attention to undesirable behaviors and less attention to appropriate behaviors. Unfortunately, paying attention to the undesirable behavior causes it to cease in the short run but occur more frequently in the long run.

Children with ADHD may often be more interested in tasks other than those on which the teacher is focusing (Douglas, 1972). This leads to significantly more nonproductive activity and uneven, unpredictable classroom behavior. Interestingly, the overall rates of negative teacher-child interactions involving typical students are also higher in classrooms containing children with ADHD (Campbell, Endman, & Bernfeld, 1977). According to reports, teachers are more intense and controlling when interacting with children with ADHD. Within school settings, children with ADHD appear to experience negative consequences because of their temperament and a performance history that often involves beginning but not completing tasks. Many teachers in this circumstance unfortunately tend to focus on the misbehavior rather than on the reduction or termination of the behavior. This may further disrupt the classroom by disturbing other students.

This naturally occurring pattern of teachers paying less attention to desirable behavior and more attention to undesirable behavior, as children progress through school, places children with ADHD at a greater disadvantage than their classmates. In the first few grades, when teachers appear to be making a conscientious effort to positively reinforce their students, the child with ADHD often does not receive his or her share of reinforcement. In the later grades, as teachers exhibit less positive reinforcement, perhaps because they feel that it is not needed, the child with ADHD is placed at even greater risk.

Positive reinforcement programs should begin at the level at which children can succeed and be positively reinforced. All too often, teachers set up wonderful behavioral programs but set initial criteria for success too high. The child with ADHD in this system rarely reaches success. Problem behavior must be defined operationally and then a level of baseline occurrence must be obtained. At first, provide reinforcement when the child is at or slightly better than baseline. For example, in first grade, Jeremy was out of his seat 10 times during a work period, so his teacher provided reinforcement when he was out of his seat no more than eight times. As the child succeeds, the necessary criteria for reinforcement can be gradually increased, requiring fewer out-of-seat behaviors during a given time period.

### **Response discrepancy observation method**

You may also want to determine the amount of time a student exhibits on- and off-task behavior. One simple behavioral observation method is called *response discrepancy* because it allows you to record a discrepancy between the target student and a typical class peer (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1992). Figure 4.5 presents a form to use for this system. To begin, match the target student with a same-sex peer who exhibits typical classroom behavior. Next, check off the type of activity: class, small-group activity or independent activity. The observation period lasts 15 minutes, and behavior is recorded at 10-second intervals (for a total of 90 intervals). The left side of the box is used for the target student and the right side is used for the classroom peer. At the end of each 10-second interval, record a + for on-task activities or - for off-task activities for each student. Ignore behaviors between the recording points. At the end of the 15-minute observation period, compute the percentage of on-task behavior for each student. This may be accomplished using the formula provided in Figure 4.6 (Rhode et al., 1992).

**Figure 4.6. Operational definitions of behaviors in the TOAD system**

<b>Talking Out</b>	Spoken words, either friendly, neutral, or negative in content, are directed at either the teacher without first obtaining permission to speak or unsolicited at classmates during inappropriate times or during work periods
<b>Out of Seat</b>	The child is not supporting his or her weight with the chair. Up on knees does not count as out-of-seat behavior.
<b>Attention Problem</b>	The child is not attending either to independent work or to a group activity. The child is therefore engaged in an activity other than that which has been directed and is clearly different from what the other children are doing. This includes the child's not following teacher directions.
<b>Disruption</b>	The child's actions result in consequences that appear to be interrupting other children's work. These behaviors might include noises or physical contact. They may be intentional or unintentional.

Figure 4.4. The Talking Out/Out of Seat/Attention Problem/Disruption (TOAD) System. (From Goldstein, S., & Goldstein, M. [1990]. *Managing attention disorders in children: A guide for practitioners* [pp. 93-94]. New York: John Wiley & Sons. This material is used by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

**Figure 4.5. Behavior observation form.**

Interval	T	O	A	D	Interval	T	O	A	D	Interval	T	O	A	D	Interval	T	O	A	D
15					15					15					15				
30					30					30					30				
45					45					45					45				
60					60					60					60				
15					15					15					15				
30					30					30					30				
45					45					45					45				
60					60					60					60				
15					15					15					15				
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45					45					45					45				
60					60					60					60				
15					15					15					15				
30					30					30					30				
45					45					45					45				
60					60					60					60				

From Rhode, G., Jenson, W.R., & Reavis, H.K. [1992]. *The tough kid book: Practical classroom management strategies* [p. 271]. Longmont, CO: Sopris West; Reprinted with permission of Sopris West, Inc.

When Jeremy was in third grade, a volunteer completed this type of observation for Jeremy and a peer while they were engaged in a small-group activity. Jeremy had been on task for 34 of the intervals. He had been off task for 56 of the 90 intervals. His total time on task was  $34 / 90 \times 100$  or approximately 38% of the time.

In contrast, Jeremy's peer had been on task for 78 of the 90 intervals and had been off task for 12 of the intervals. His total time on task was then  $78/90 \times 100$  or approximately 87%. As a general guideline, if a student is on task less than 60% of the time and the peer's average is 85% or more, the target student's attention to the task is problematic. If both students' on-task behavior is below 60%, the problem may be more related to classroom management (Rhode et al., 1992). When compared with his peer, Jeremy appears to be much more distractible and off task.

As a general rule, observe a student in two different settings or two different types of activities. Some students are only off task and distractible when presented with tasks they find uninteresting. Other students are distractible only during specific subjects, such as in a math class. Keep in mind that students' attention varies depending on the type of task, the difficulty of the material, the type of activity, the setting, and the classroom management skills of the teacher.

Positive reinforcement should follow immediately after good behavior. It should be specific and initially continuous, slowly moving to an intermittent schedule. Material reinforcers provide the child with something tangible. Social reinforcers are more versatile, and, even if material reinforcers are used, a kind word from the teacher should always accompany them. It is also easier to increase behavior than decrease it. Thus, when choosing a target behavior, it is preferable to focus on behaviors to be increased rather than on those to be decreased. Shea and Bauer (1987) described the following process to apply positive reinforcement effectively:

- Select a target behavior to increase, define the behavior, and choose a reinforcer.
- Observe the child and watch for the behavior.
- Reinforce the target behavior every time it is exhibited.
- Comment in a positive way about the behavior when providing reinforcement.
- Be enthusiastic -and interested.
- Offer assistance.
- Vary the reinforcer.

Rhode, Jenson, and Reavis (1992) provided a well-defined model for reinforcement in the classroom. This model, presented in Table 4.3, is an excellent summary of reinforcement contingencies.

Be certain to select reinforcers that are age appropriate and not necessarily time-limited. Most important, do not deny students their basic rights (e.g. lunch, bathroom use, playground time) and then define these rights as positive reinforcers. At times, the use of a reinforcement list or menu can facilitate choosing a reinforcer that is meaningful to the child. You can provide a list of enjoyable or free time activities and ask the child to rank them by preference. You can ask the child what he or she might do with free time, where he or she might like to sit, what he or she might like to learn about, and also what kinds of activities make him or her feel needed, proud, and important in the classroom. Finally, one question to consider inquiring of every student is "What is the very best reward in this class that you could get for good work and behavior?"

### **Selection of reinforcements**

Some consequences that teachers provide for children are irrelevant and neither strengthen nor weaken the behavior they follow (Bushell, 1973). Many teachers believe that placing stars on a chart as a reward or providing a prize are consequences that work with all children. Some children are motivated by these consequences; others are not. Furthermore, children with ADHD may find these consequences salient one day but lose interest in them quickly the next day. Therefore, the fact that certain consequences follow a child's behavior may neither strengthen nor weaken the chances for that behavior to reoccur. Bushell (1973) referred to consequences that are irrelevant as *noise*, neutral consequences that have no effect on the behavior. Teachers must evaluate whether chosen consequences are positively reinforcing or simply noise. A reinforcement menu or inventory completed jointly by you and the child ensures that the former rather than the latter will occur. Sample reinforcement menus across grade levels appear in Figure 4.7.

Ms. Adams met with Jeremy when he was in her second-grade class to select some reinforcers that would increase his time on task. Jeremy quickly offered several suggestions. He wanted time to look through books about dinosaurs, to read joke books, and to play with blocks. He also wanted time for drawing and art projects. Ms. Adams explained that each morning they would decide what assignments needed to be completed before break. When he completed the assignments, he could choose his reward. Ms. Adams also adapted the assignments. Jeremy was expected to write in his journal, but he could answer the questions about his reading orally.

Paine, Radicchi, Rosellini, Deutchman, and Darch (1983) found that the five most frequent reinforcement ideas suggested by elementary school students were additional recess, free time in class, material reinforcers, field trips, and games in class. Intermediate grade students more frequently favored activities that involved interaction with teachers, including acting as an assistant in grading papers, carrying on a discussion, or playing a game on a one-to-one basis. As previously discussed, reinforcers take on different values for different individuals.

You must develop a hierarchy of the behaviors that you would like to see the child exhibit. For example, in response to out-of-seat behavior, many teachers may initiate a reinforcement system to increase in-seat behavior. Although the child may earn multiple reinforcers for remaining in his seat, this does not guarantee that he will engage in constructive or appropriate behavior while remaining seated. Often, multiple reinforcers and multiple levels of reinforcement must be initiated. For example, in first grade, Jeremy was provided with one reinforcer for sitting and a second reinforcer for working while sitting.

Robinson, Newby, and Ganzell (1981) used a token reinforcement system for successful completion of four tasks, two involving learning to read and using vocabulary words and sentences and two involving teaching these tasks to other students. Tokens were exchanged for access to a pinball machine or electronic game. Using a reversal design, the token intervention program resulted in a nine-fold increase in the mean number of tasks completed over the baseline level and significant improvement in performance on the school district's standardized weekly reading level examinations. A reduction in disruptive behavior was also anecdotally reported. This reinforcement system was managed by a single teacher working with 18 children, all of whom had received diagnoses of ADHD. Walker and Shea (1991) also described an in-depth model of structuring a token economy successfully in the classroom.

**Table 4.3. IFEED-AV rules**

<b>Immediately</b>	The I stands for reinforcing the student immediately. The longer the teacher waits to reinforce a student, the less effective the reinforcer will be. This is particularly true of younger students or students with severe disabilities. For example, reinforcer effectiveness is limited if the student has to wait until the end of the week to receive it.
<b>Frequently</b>	The F stands for frequently reinforcing a student. It is especially important to frequently reinforce when a student is learning a new behavior or skill. If reinforcers are not given frequently enough, the student may not produce enough of a new behavior for it to become well-established. The standard rule is three or four positive reinforcers for every one negative consequence (including negative verbal comments) that the teacher delivers. If, in the beginning, there is a great deal of inappropriate behavior to which the teacher must attend, positive reinforcement and recognition of appropriate behavior must be increased accordingly to maintain the desired three or four positives to each negative. The reinforcer can be a simple social reinforcer such as, "Good job. You finished your math assignment."
<b>Enthusiasm</b>	The first E stands for enthusiasm in the delivery of the reinforcer. It is easy to simply hand an edible reinforcer to a student; it takes more effort to pair it with an enthusiastic comment. Modulation in the voice and excitement with a congratulatory air convey that the student has done something important. For most teachers, this seems artificial at first. However, with practice, enthusiasm makes the difference between a reinforcer delivered in a drab, uninteresting way and one that indicates that something important

	has taken place in which the teacher is interested.
<b>Eye contact</b>	It is also important for the teacher to look the student in the eyes when giving a reinforcer, even if the student is not looking at him or her. Like enthusiasm, eye contact suggests that a student is special and has the teacher's undivided attention. Over time, eye contact may become reinforcing in and of itself.
<b>Describe the behavior</b>	D stands for describing the behavior that is being reinforced. The younger the student or the more severe the disability, the more important it is to describe the appropriate behavior that is being reinforced. Teachers often assume that students know what it is they are doing right that has resulted in the delivery of reinforcement. However, this is often not the case. The student may not know why reinforcement is being delivered or may think that it is being delivered for some behavior other than what the teacher intended to reinforce. Even if the student does know what behavior is being reinforced, describing it is important. First, describing the behavior highlights and emphasizes the behavior the teacher wishes to reinforce. Second, if the behavior has several steps, describing it helps to review the specific expectations for the student. An example is, "Wow, you got yourself dressed - look at you! You have your socks on, your shoes are laced, your pants are on with a belt, and your shirt has all the buttons fastened and is tucked in." This is much more effective than saying, "Good job dressing."
<b>Anticipation</b>	Building excitement and anticipation for the earning of a reinforcer can motivate students to do their very best. The more "hype" the teacher uses, the more excited students become to earn the reinforcer. Presenting the potential reinforcer in a mysterious way also builds anticipation.
<b>Variety</b>	Just like adults, students get tired of the same things. A certain reinforcer may be highly desired, but, after repeated exposure, it loses its effectiveness. It is easy to get caught up in giving students the same old reinforcers time and time again. However, variety is the spice of life for everyone. Generally, when teachers are asked why they do not vary their reinforcers, they indicate that it worked very well once. It is necessary to change reinforcers frequently to make the reinforcement more effective.
<p><i>From Rhode, G., Jenson, W.R., &amp; Reavis, H.K. (1992). The tough kid book: Practical classroom management strategies (p. 34). Longmont, CO: Sopris West; Reprinted with permission from Sopris West, Inc.</i></p>	

## Negative reinforcement

Negative reinforcement requires the child to work for the removal of an in-place, unpleasant consequence. The child's goal is to get rid of something that is unpleasant rather than to earn something that is desirable. In a negative reinforcement model, instead of working to earn a positive consequence, the child works to distance him- or herself from an aversive consequence. Negative reinforcement is often used in the classroom to manage problem behaviors. Teachers inadvertently pay attention to a child who may not be complying and withdraw their attention contingent on the child's compliance. Surprisingly, this strengthens rather than weakens the noncompliant behavior. The next time a similar situation occurs, the child again will not comply until confronted with the aversive consequence (i.e. the teacher's attention). Negative reinforcement is often seductive and coercive for teachers. It works in the short run but in the long run is likely to strengthen rather than weaken the undesirable behavior.

Many of the same variables that affect positive reinforcement—immediacy, frequency, consistency—also affect negative reinforcement. Behaviors that in and of themselves may not be negative become negative reinforcers when paired with certain events. For example, a teacher approaching a child who is not working quickly becomes a negative reinforcer, even though the action itself, the teacher walking up to the child, does not have a negative connotation (Favell, 1977). Clark and Elliott (1988) found that negative reinforcement was rated by teachers as the most frequently used classroom intervention. Children with ADHD often experience negative reinforcement because of their temperament, which makes it difficult for them to complete tasks; their consequent learning history reinforces them for beginning but rarely for finishing.

Reinforcement Menu: Kindergarten	Reinforcement Menu: Third Grade	Reinforcement Menu: Tenth-Grade Geometry
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Main Courses	Main Courses	Main Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play the piano</li> <li>• Paint</li> <li>• Look out of the window</li> <li>• Use the toys at the back of the room</li> <li>• Work with puzzles</li> <li>• Use model clay</li> <li>• Move a chair to another place</li> <li>• Choose a carpet piece to sit on</li> <li>• Use the computer</li> <li>• Cut and paste</li> <li>• Talk to a classmate</li> <li>• Drink</li> <li>• Hug</li> <li>• Use colored chalk</li> <li>• Swing feet</li> <li>• Walk around in the back of the room</li> <li>• Watch a science video</li> <li>• Sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go to the library to work on a special project related to a study unit</li> <li>• Arrange the game shelf and pick a game to play</li> <li>• Listen to a story with earphones</li> <li>• Work in the art corner</li> <li>• Read and record a favorite story with expression and clarity</li> <li>• Work on scrapbook for history project using magazines in the room</li> <li>• Leave 5 minutes early for lunch</li> <li>• Be line captain</li> <li>• Be in charge of taking attendance</li> <li>• Get a drink at any time without asking permission</li> <li>• Be in charge of passing out papers and other class materials</li> <li>• Be excused 15 minutes early to clean erasers and chalkboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge someone to a game of chess</li> <li>• Use the computer</li> <li>• Do extra credit problems to raise grade</li> <li>• Make up a quiz and give it to the class</li> <li>• Sit at the teacher's desk while doing homework</li> <li>• Prepare the bulletin board using display of student's choice</li> <li>• Write a letter</li> <li>• Read</li> <li>• Play charades</li> <li>• Discuss past or forthcoming athletic or social events</li> <li>• Have a creative exhibit period (i.e. show-and-tell for older students)</li> <li>• Be excused 15 minutes early to clean erasers and chalkboard</li> </ul>
Daily Specials	Daily Specials	Daily Specials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday: Visit first grade</li> <li>• Tuesday: Finger paint</li> <li>• Wednesday: Play a game with teacher</li> <li>• Thursday: Make a mural</li> <li>• Friday: Use the computer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday: Watch a video</li> <li>• Tuesday: Use the computer</li> <li>• Wednesday: Be a group leader</li> <li>• Thursday: Add another piece to class mural</li> <li>• Friday: Help plan the Friday group activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday: Appear as a guest lecturer in another math class</li> <li>• Tuesday: Do a special crossword puzzle involving geometry concepts</li> <li>• Wednesday: Play a math game with another student</li> <li>• Thursday: Construct a special paper model using geometrical figures</li> <li>• Friday: Solve mysteries involving mathematical solutions</li> </ul>

Figure 4.7. Sample reinforcement menu. (Toward Positive Classroom Discipline, 3rd ed. by H.F. Clarizio 0 1987. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458.) Figure 4.7

A number of simple, effective ways exist to deal with this problem. If you are using negative reinforcement, pay attention to the student until the assignment is completed. Although this too is negative reinforcement, it teaches the child that the only way to get rid of the aversive consequence (i.e. your attention) is not just to start but to complete the task at hand. As an example, you may move the student's desk next to your desk until that particular piece of work is completed.

A second alternative involves the use of differential attention or ignoring. The term *differential attention* applies when ignoring is used as the negative consequence for exhibiting the undesirable behavior, and attention is used as a positive consequence for exhibiting the competing desirable behavior. This is an active process in which the teacher ignores the child engaged in an off-task activity but pays attention immediately when the child begins working. Many teachers avoid interaction with the child when he or she is on task for fear of interrupting the child's train of thought. It is important, however, to reinforce the child when working so that a pattern of working to earn positive reinforcement rather than working to avoid negative reinforcement is developed.

Secondary school teachers at times complain that if they ignore the adolescent with ADHD during an hour-long class, they never have the opportunity to pay positive attention as the student may never exhibit positive behavior. Waiting, however, even if one has to wait until the next day, is more effective in the long run than paying attention to off-task behavior.

You need to make a distinction between off-task behavior that disrupts and off-task behavior that does not disrupt. Differential attention works effectively for the latter. However, when a child is off task and disturbing his or her neighbor, you may find that being a negative reinforcer holds an advantage in stemming the tide of an off-task behavior that involves other students as well. Differential attention alone has been demonstrated to be ineffective in maintaining high rates of on-task behavior and work productivity for students with ADHD (Rosen, O'Leary, Joyce, Conway, & Pfiffner, 1984). In part, we suggest that many factors other than teacher attention maintain and influence student behavior.

Differential attention is a powerful intervention when used appropriately. Once the strategy of ignoring inappropriate behavior is employed, *it must be continued despite escalation*. If not, you run the risk of intermittently reinforcing the negative behavior, thereby strengthening its occurrence. For example, if you decide to use differential attention for a child's out-of-seat behavior but become sufficiently frustrated after the child is out of his or her seat for 10 minutes and respond by directing attention to the child, the behavior will be reinforced rather than extinguished. The 10 minutes of ignoring will quickly be lost in the one incident of negative attention. If the teacher yells, "Sit down," the child has received the desired attention by persisting in a negative behavior.

Madsen, Becker, and Thomas (1968) evaluated rules, praise, and ignoring for inappropriate behavior in two children in a typical second-grade classroom and in one child in a kindergarten class. The results indicated that in the absence of praise, rules and ignoring were ineffective. Inappropriate behavior decreased only after praise was added. Others have demonstrated the importance of praise in a general education classroom (Thomas, Becker, & Armstrong, 1968). Specifically, whenever teacher approval was withdrawn, disruptive behaviors increased.

Overall, however, the research on differential attention with children with ADHD has been inconsistent. Rosen and colleagues (1984) evaluated the results of praise and reprimands in maintaining appropriate social and academic behaviors in second- and third-grade children with ADHD. Children's on-task behavior and academic performance deteriorated when negative feedback was withdrawn but not when positive feedback was omitted. Students' on-task behavior remained high, even after 9 days of no praise from the teacher. Acker and O'Leary (1988) demonstrated that the use of only reprimands for behavior management without positive consequences does not lead to dramatic improvement in on-task performance when praise is added. Dramatic deterioration in on-task behavior was observed when reprimands were subsequently withdrawn, even though the teacher was still delivering praise for appropriate behavior.

Children with ADHD perform as well as typical children with a continuous schedule of reinforcement but perform significantly worse with a partial schedule of reinforcement (e.g. reinforcement is provided only sometimes), which is typically found in most classrooms (Douglas & Parry, 1983). Praise is important for the development of other attributes in human beings, such as self-esteem, school attitude, and motivation toward academics (Redd, Morris, & Martin, 1975). In addition, the opposite is also true: A large amount of punishment can negatively affect emotional development and self-esteem.

### Modeling

Through modeling, observation, and then imitation, children develop new behaviors. Modeling can be as simple as having a child watch another child sharpen a pencil. By watching the model, a child can learn a new behavior, inhibit another behavior, or strengthen previously learned behavior (e.g. saying "thank you"). To use modeling effectively, you must determine whether a child has the capacity to observe and then imitate the model. In classroom settings, a student's response to modeling is influenced by three factors: 1) the characteristics of the model (e.g. is this a student whom the other students like and respect?), 2) the characteristics of the observer (e.g. is this child capable of observing and imitating the behavior), and 3) the positive or negative consequences associated with the behavior. Children are more likely to respond to teacher modeling when they view their teachers as competent, nurturing, supportive, fun, and interesting. Children are also more likely to imitate behavior that results in a positive consequence.

Younger children have been reported as more frequently imitating others than older children. Children consistently model someone whom they value or look up to. They also imitate the behavior of a same-sex child more often than that of a different-sex child. They model someone whom they perceive as successful and socially valued regardless of whether the teacher perceives that child as successful and socially valued. Finally, if a child observes a model being reinforced or punished for certain behavior, this influences the likelihood that the child will then model that behavior.

Modeling is a powerful tool, often underutilized by teachers. When teachers are cheerful and enthusiastic, their attitudes are contagious. When they are respectful of students, students respect each other. When teachers are patient, fair, consistent, and optimistic, their students exhibit these traits as well. Teacher behavior sets the tone for the classroom environment.

In 1970, Kaplan described a ripple effect in transactions between teachers and misbehaving students that affected not only those students but also the entire classroom. Teachers who were firm reduced the problem behaviors both from the first child who misbehaved and from those students who saw the initial problem behavior. When teachers enforced rules, the ripple effect worked in their favor. When they failed to follow through with rules, the ripple effect worked against them. Furthermore, the misbehaving student's social standing in the classroom was also an issue. When teachers successfully managed the behavior of high-status troublemakers, their control tended to benefit the entire classroom. Likewise, the ripple effect when high-status offenders were not managed increased negative behaviors among others. Finally, when managing a disruptive behavior, it is important to focus on tasks and behaviors rather than on approval. In the latter situation, teachers may focus on their relationship with the disruptive student when trying to get that student to behave. This strategy, unfortunately, is usually ineffective over the long term.

### Shaping

Waiting for the appropriate target behavior or something close to that behavior to occur before reinforcing the behavior is referred to as shaping. Shaping can be used to establish behaviors that are not routinely exhibited. Walker and Shea (1991) described the steps to effective shaping:

1. Select a target behavior and define it.
2. Observe how often the behavior is exhibited.
3. Select reinforcers.
4. Decide on close approximations and reinforce successive approximations to the target behavior each time it occurs.
5. Reinforce the newly established behavior.
6. Reinforce the old behavior on a variable schedule, and begin reinforcing the new behavior on an every-time or continuous schedule. The key to successful shaping is to reinforce closer approximations and not reinforce lesser approximations.

Any behavior that remotely resembles the target behavior should initially be reinforced. Prompts can be used and then faded. Shaping can be used for all kinds of behavior in the classroom, including academics. Steps toward successive approximation, however, must be carefully thought out; otherwise, behaviors that are not working toward the desired goal may inadvertently be reinforced.

### **Punishment**

Punishment suppresses undesirable behavior but may not necessarily eliminate it (McDaniel, 1980). In some cases, suppression may be of short duration, and when the punishment is removed, the behavior may reoccur. Punishment can involve presentation of an unpleasant consequence or the loss of a pleasurable consequence following the occurrence of the undesirable behavior. Punishment is designed to reduce the probability that the behavior that precedes it will reoccur. Although punishment is an efficient way of changing behavior, it can become seductive and reinforcing for classroom teachers and can be overused. The greatest problem with punishment is that it does not provide an appropriate model of acceptable behavior. Furthermore, in many classrooms, punishment is accompanied by an emotional response from the teacher. Although most teachers consider punishment as involving a reprimand, time-out, or loss of an activity such as recess, in many classrooms, physical punishment designed to embarrass children into submission is still used, even though it has a high emotional cost. Shea and Bauer (1987) made a strong case for minimizing the use of punishment, especially more severe punishment, such as embarrassment or spanking, because these interventions are likely to erode self-esteem and further impair an already strained teacher-student relationship. When punishments are used, these guidelines should be followed:

1. All students are aware of which behaviors are punished and how they are punished.
2. Appropriate models for acceptable behavior are provided.
3. Punishments are offered immediately, consistently, and fairly.
4. Punishments are offered impersonally.
5. A natural or logical consequence should be used as often as possible.
6. The student being punished must understand the relationship between his or her behavior and the punishment.

Loss of the privilege during which the inappropriate behavior is exhibited is fair. Warning, nagging, threatening, and debating, however, should be avoided. In other words, act, don't yak. Punishment can exert a complex, negative effect in the classroom and on teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, when less punishing interventions are combined with

positive reinforcers, they tend to be effective in the long run. In 1946, Anderson and Brewer reported that teachers using dominating behaviors of force, threat, shame, and blame had classrooms in which children displayed nonconforming behavior at rates higher than in classrooms in which teachers were more positive and supportive. Personal hostility from teachers and punishments in an atmosphere containing minimal positive reinforcement and emotional warmth are unproductive. To be effective, punishment must be related in form to the misbehavior. It must be consistent, fair, and just; must be delivered impersonally; and must not involve the assignment of extra work that is unrelated to the act for which the student is being punished. Opportunities must also be offered for the student to exhibit and receive reinforcement for more appropriate behavior.

Reprimands are the most frequent punishment used by teachers. Contacting parents, losing privileges, and time-outs come next in frequency. Reprimands include a statement of appropriate alternative behavior. Students respond well to short reprimands followed by clear, directed statements. Effective reprimands are specific, do not humiliate the child, are provided immediately, and are given with a firm voice and controlled physical demeanor. They are often backed up with a loss of privilege, including a statement encouraging more appropriate behavior. Attempt to describe the behavior that you observe, rather than how you feel about the certain behavior. Instead of telling a student that he or she is rude for interrupting, make a statement such as, "You have interrupted me three times. I will answer your question as soon as I finish the explanation." This should be delivered in a calm way and in a way that does not embarrass the child in the presence of others. Jeremy had complained to his mother that his teacher was always yelling at him to keep still or be quiet. Feeling particularly upset one afternoon, Jeremy wrote his fifth-grade teacher the letter presented in Figure 4.8. Fortunately, after reading this letter, his teacher understood that yelling was an ineffective way to deal with Jeremy's behavior.

When you yell at me I feel embarrassed, scared, and like ditching school. Can you stop yelling at me and tell me nicely to stop. My medication isn't working sometimes and I get a little hyper. Maybe if you remind me to calm down.

I'm having trouble because there isn't enough time to do my work. I have too much homework, and there is never time to play. I get in trouble at home and at school if I don't get my homework done. When you remind me to do my work it helps a little. But some days it is just too noisy.

I am hiding from everyone when I go in my shirt. The only one that knows I'm crying in my shirt is Andrew. I don't want anyone to see me cry. If I leave the room now I might feel better.

Sincerely,  
Jeremy

**Figure 4.8. Jeremy's Letter**

Abramowitz, O'Leary, and Futersak (1988) compared the effects of short and long reprimands in an alternating treatment design. Over the course of the study, short

reprimands resulted in significantly lower off-task rates than long reprimands. Prudent reprimands that are immediate, unemotional, brief, and consistently backed up with consequences are clearly preferred to lengthy reprimands that are delayed, loud, emotional, and not matched to consequences. Abramowitz and O'Leary (1991) suggested that immediate reprimands result in much lower rates of off-task interactions with peers but do not change rates of off-task behaviors that do not involve peers. The authors hypothesized that non-interactive, off-task behavior may be an avoidance response to difficult schoolwork. Interactive, off-task behaviors may be reinforced by peer attention and modified more effectively by the timing of feedback. Consistent reprimands are clearly superior to inconsistent reprimands for minimizing calling out and other disruptive behaviors (Acker & O'Leary, 1988). When misbehaviors followed with reprimands versus ignoring are evaluated, however, reprimands are not particularly effective in managing off-task behavior. Reprimanding every incident of off-task behavior did not prove to be any more effective than reprimanding one quarter of misbehavior incidents. Increasing consistency in these low-rate situations does not appear to lead to significant differences (Pfiffner, O'Leary, Rosen, & Sanderson, 1985).

Furthermore, the intensity or aversiveness of the initial delivery of the reprimand may be critical for children with ADHD (Futtersak, O'Leary, & Abramowitz, 1989). In this study, children were exposed to teachers who delivered either consistently strong reprimands from the outset with immediate brief and firm close proximity to the child or reprimands that increased in severity over time. Results supported the hypothesis that gradually strengthening initially weak reprimands was less effective for suppressing off-task behavior than the immediate introduction and maintenance of full-strength reprimands. In addition, reprimands are more effective when delivered with eye contact and in close proximity to the child (Van Hauten, Nau, MacKenzie-Keating, Sameoto, & Colavecchia, 1982).

### **Response cost**

Response cost is a punishing technique that translates to the equivalent of losing what you possess or have earned. Earned consequences are considered reinforcers. When they are lost, this is response cost. The child places in jeopardy what he or she has earned as the result of inappropriate behavior. In many situations, response cost in the form of a penalty or fine is combined with positive reinforcement. To be effective, more reinforcers must be earned than lost. Response cost is often used to reduce off-task behavior and improve compliance with directions.

Response cost may be the most powerful means of managing consequences for children with ADHD or other disruptive behavior problems (Rapport, Murphy, & Bailey, 1982). In a traditional model of response cost, many children with ADHD may immediately go bankrupt. Alternative systems have included adjusting the ratio of the number of reinforcers provided for each positive behavior versus those lost for negative behavior as well as increasing the number of opportunities to exhibit positive behavior and receive reinforcement. In the former case, six points might be provided for the appropriate behavior but only one point lost for the negative behavior. In the latter case, increased opportunities are provided, making it easier for children to earn a greater number of points, thereby decreasing their chances of going bankrupt when they exhibit negative behavior. A slightly altered form of response cost has been found to be quite effective with children with ADHD (Rapport, Murphy, & Bailey, 1982). Under this system, the child is initially provided with a maximum number of points or tokens to be earned during a school day and must work throughout the school day to retain those reinforcers. Some impulsive children seem to work harder to keep their plates full rather than attempt to fill an empty plate. Possibly because they have a long history of not working well for positive reinforcement, a system in which they are provided

with all of their reinforcement initially and must work to keep, a response cost system may appear more motivating or attractive to them.

A substantial body of research documents the effectiveness of response cost in the classroom (Kazdin, 1982). One of the earliest studies (Rapport, Murphy, & Bailey, 1982) compared response cost and stimulant medication for task-related behavior in a group of hyperactive boys. The response cost procedure resulted in significant increases in on-task behavior and academic performance. Stimulant medication was notably less effective. Pfiffner and colleagues (1985) found that response cost in the form of lost recess was more effective than reprimands in maintaining on-task behavior. Response cost has also been compared with reward alone. Both conditions resulted in a twofold increase in academic output or reduction in inappropriate classroom behavior and a corresponding increase in on-task behavior. Children often do not show a differential preference for either reward or response cost procedures (Hundert, 1976; Iwata & Bailey, 1974), but they appear to maintain treatment gains better during fading and withdrawal of response cost than they do in response to traditional rewards (Sullivan & O'Leary, 1990).

A response cost system can be as simple as chips in a cup, marks on a chart, or marbles in a jar. A more complex means of managing response cost includes electronic devices such as the Attention Training System (Gordon & Davidson, 1981; Rapport, 1987). The Attention Training System is a remote-controlled counter that sits on the student's desk. This device provides the student with a digital readout showing the number of points he or she has earned. Using a remote control device, points can be added or removed from anywhere in the classroom, contingent on the child's on- and off-task behavior. By not having to move within physical proximity of the child, the teacher avoids becoming a negative reinforcer when the child is off task. DuPaul, Guevremont, and Barkley (1992) demonstrated the efficacy of response cost contingencies for managing classroom behavior and academic productivity using the Attention Training System. Response cost contingencies led to marked improvements on task-related attention and a reduction in ADHD symptoms during work time.

For response cost to be effective, the procedure must be used for most, if not, all, of the classroom day (Morgan & Jenson, 1988). The number of students in the program must be manageable, and highly motivating rewards must be provided. If not thought out well and managed effectively, response cost can backfire and increase classroom problem behaviors (Burchard & Barrera, 1972).

Response cost can be difficult to implement. Though it may be as simple as chips in a cup placed on the student's desk, many teachers inadvertently become negative reinforcers when they approach the child to remove a consequence, thereby building failure into a potentially useful model. When students who become bankrupt quickly or who are oppositional from the start are placed in a group contingency situation with built-in failure (e.g. everyone must earn the reinforcer or no one has access to it), the result is often greater rather than fewer classroom problems. Morgan and Jenson (1988) suggested the following guide-lines for using response cost in the classroom:

1. Use the procedure for most, if not all, of the classroom day for the target behavior.
2. Make certain the number of students with whom you are using the program is manageable.
3. Make certain there are more opportunities for success than for failure.
4. Build in additional incentives, including additional reinforcers that can be earned at the end of the week, by retaining a minimum number of reinforcers through the week.

5. Consider incorporating self-monitoring techniques in which students can administer response cost independently when they recognize a rule violation.

### Time-out

Time-out from reinforcement excludes children from the opportunity to participate with others and receive any kind of positive reinforcement. Time-out is by far the best known disciplinary technique among teachers. It is also the most likely to be overused and misused in the classroom. Although a brief time-out of a few minutes duration can exert a positive influence on classroom behavior when applied appropriately, many teachers apply time-out ineffectively as often as effectively (Walker & Walker, 1991).

The least restrictive form of time-out consists of removal of certain reinforcing activities or objects from the misbehaving child for a short period. Time-out, in a restricted environment outside of the classroom is the most extreme form of this type of discipline. The child cannot see the classroom nor interact with others.

The effectiveness of time-out is well established; however, additional research is needed to identify specific situations, parameters, and procedures associated with the success of time-out for children with ADHD. Clearly, time-out holds a low probability of directly affecting children's ADHD symptoms for the better. Time-out can be quite effective for noncompliant children, but for children with ADHD, you must distinguish between noncompliant behaviors and behaviors resulting from ADHD.

In general, for time-out to be effective:

1. students should be separated from reinforcement,
2. the time should be short,
3. confrontation should be avoided,
4. verbal interaction should be limited, and
5. a time-contingent release should be provided (Bean & Roberts, 1981). *Time-contingent release* refers to the amount of time and the contingencies (e.g. sitting quietly) required to earn release. These contingencies should be explained and provided to the child prior to entering time-out. Children warned less in time-out also respond better (Roberts, 1982).

The length of time-out is also critical in determining effectiveness. A 4-minute time-out was found to be significantly better than a 10-second or 1-minute timeout among a group of elementary school students (Hobbs, Forehand, & Murray, 1978). Long periods of time-out constitute seclusion and lose their punishing value. It is also important for the time-out activity to be less reinforcing than the setting or activity from which the child is being removed. If a particular activity the child is leaving is non-reinforcing, this child may in fact learn to misbehave as a means of going to time-out to do something else. Work should not be missed due to time-out. Time-out should be boring, uninteresting, and something the child places last on his or her list of chosen school activities. The effectiveness of time-out depends on a number of factors, including the child, your ability to apply the intervention consistently, the child's understanding of the intervention, the rules governing the intervention, characteristics of the time-out area, duration of timeout, and the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of time-out quickly. If time-out does not work in the first few interventions, an alternative strategy should be considered. Eight parameters should define the use of time-out (Scarboro, & Forehand, 1975):

1. A warning that time-out may come should be offered.

2. The child should be consistently removed and placed in time-out when the behavior reoccurs.
3. A specific location should be defined for time-out.
4. A specific duration for time-out should be set.
5. The consistent schedule for time-out use should be defined.
6. A defined behavior should lead to time-out.
7. Clear contingencies should be defined for the child to be released from time-out.

Time-out can be effective in typical classroom settings because it restores order by removing the child who is disrupting class, by reducing the opportunity for peer approval that maintains some children who disrupt, by reducing the opportunity for students to manipulate situations, and by allowing the student to demonstrate appropriate behavior before exiting time-out. In elementary classroom settings, time-out should be from 2 to 5 minutes. If a student is not in control, an additional minute should be added. Teachers should not force resistant students into time-out but should seek help from the principal or other school personnel. Finally, as soon as possible after time-out is over, something positive in the student's behavior should be reinforced. Table 4.4 contains a list of dos and don'ts for time-out. Table 4.5 contains a thorough list of procedures for implementing seclusionary time-out.

There are many things you can do to minimize the need to use time-out. Make sure that classroom activities are more reinforcing than time-out. Provide students with ample but not excessive opportunities to comply. Provide disruptive students with additional positive consequences for not requiring time-out in a given time span.

<b>Table 4.4. The "Dos and Don'ts" of time-out</b>	
<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Do explain the total procedure to the child before starting time-out.	Don't start the procedure without explaining time-out to the child first in a calm setting that is not emotionally charged.
Do prepare a time-out setting for the child that is clean, well-lit, and ventilated.	Don't just pick any place. Make sure it isn't too dark, too confining, dangerous, or not ventilated.
Do pick a place or situation for time-out that is boring or less reinforcing than the classroom.	Don't pick a place that is scary or that could be more reinforcing than the classroom.
Do use a set of structured verbal requests with the child, such as the recommended precision request format.	Don't threaten the child repeatedly with a time-out.
Do remain calm, and don't talk with the child when he or she is being taken to time-out.	Don't get into a verbal exchange with the child on the way to time-out or while the child is in time-out.
Do place the child in time-out for a set period that you control.	Don't tell the child to come out of time-out when he or she is "ready to behave."
Do require the child to be quiet for 30 seconds at the end of the time-out period, before being let out.	Don't let a child out of time-out when he or she is crying, screaming, yelling, or having a tantrum.
Do use a short period of time (e.g. 5-10 minutes).	Don't use exceedingly long periods.

Do require the child to complete the request that led to time-out or missed academic work.

Don't allow the child to avoid compliance to a request or miss academic work by going to time-out.

*From Morgan, D.P., & Jenson, W.R. (1988). Teaching behaviorally disordered students: Preferred practices (p. 36). New York: Macmillan; reprinted by permission.*

**Table 4.5. Seclusionary time-out procedures**

1. Seclusionary time-out should not be used unless all other procedures have been tried and failed. This should be a last effort technique.
2. Seclusionary time-out should never be used without a parent's written consent.
3. Seclusionary time-out should be used only if it is listed as an approved and agreed-on technique in a student's individualized education plan (IEP) by the IEP team. The student should only be placed in time-out for approved behaviors on the IEP, such as aggression, severe noncompliance, or destructive tantrum-throwing.
4. Seclusionary time-out is defined as removing a student from a reinforcing classroom setting to a less reinforcing setting. This setting can be another classroom, a chair or desk outside the classroom, or a room specifically approved for time-out. If a room is used for time-out, it should be used only for time-out and no other purpose (e.g. storage, counseling students, special academic work area).
5. The time-out setting should be well-lit, well-ventilated, non-threatening, and clean. It must also have an observation window or device.
6. The entire time-out procedure should be explained to the student before it is implemented, prior to the occurrence of misbehavior that results in its use.
7. If misbehavior occurs, identify it. For example, tell the student in a calm, neutral manner, "That's fighting; you need to go to the time-out room." Tell the student to remove his or her jewelry, belt, and shoes. Tell the student to empty his or her pockets (in order to check for such items as pens, pencils, paper clips, knives, and so forth). The student's socks should be checked for these types of items also. If the student does not comply with these requests, call for help and then remove the items and check the pockets yourself. No other conversation should ensue.
8. When a student is placed in the time-out room, he or she must be constantly monitored by a staff member. The student must never be left alone.
9. When a student is placed in the time-out room, the following information should be placed in a time-out log:
  - Name of the student
  - Date
  - Staff member responsible for monitoring student
  - Time in and time out
  - Target behavior warranting the procedures
10. The student should be placed in the time-out room for a specific period of time. A recommended formula is 1 minute per year of age (e.g. 10 minutes for a 10-year-old child).
11. If a student is screaming, throwing a tantrum, or yelling, he or she should be quiet for 30 consecutive seconds before being released from the time-out room. This 30 seconds does not begin until the original designated time-out period has lapsed.
12. Communication between the supervising staff member and the student should not take place when the student is in the time-out room (i.e. do not talk with the student, threaten the student, or try to counsel the student at this time).
13. Do remain calm while taking a student to the time-out room. Do not argue with, threaten, or verbally reprimand the student.
14. If a student refuses to go to the time-out room, add on time to the specified time-out duration (e.g. 1 minute for each refusal, up to 5 minutes).
15. If a student refuses to come out of the time-out room, do not beg or try to remove the student. Simply wait outside, and sooner or later the student will come out on his or her own.
16. If the student makes a mess in the time-out room, require him or her to clean it up before he or she leaves.
17. Once the time-out period has ended, return the student to the ongoing classroom activity, making sure the student is required to complete the task he or she was engaged in prior to the time-out period. This ensures that students do not purposely avoid unpleasant tasks by going to the time-out room.
18. All staff members should be trained, and this training documented, before time-out procedures are started.
19. To ensure the effectiveness of time-out, the reinforcement rate for appropriate behaviors in the classroom should meet the recommended rate of three or four positive responses to each negative response (and never fewer than four positive responses per contact hour).
20. Data should be collected on target behaviors. If time-out is effective, these behaviors should decrease shortly after the technique is started. If they do not, check that the procedure is being used correctly, and the reinforcement rate for appropriate behavior in the classroom is high enough; consider another technique for possible use.
21. The use of time-out should not be threatened (e.g. "If you do that again, I will put you in the time-out room"). Rather, the technique should be combined with a precision request, such as "I need you to stop kicking your desk." If the student persists, the time-out procedure should be used, and when the student comes out of the time-out room, the precision request should be restated ("I need you to stop kicking your desk").
22. The student should be reinforced for not needing time-out.

*From Rhode, G., Jenson, W.R., & Reavis, H.K. (1992). The tough kid book: Practical classroom management strategies (p. 65). Longmont, CO: Sopris West; Reprinted with permission of Sopris West, Inc*

**Consequential versus Rule-Governed Behavior** Due to their inhibitory problems, children with ADHD may function quite well under appropriate external or environmental consequences but struggle to develop the internal self-monitoring skills to govern their own behavior. This latter issue was referred to by Barkley in 1981 as "problems following rule-governed behavior." Children with ADHD may acquire behavior at a rate similar to others but take longer to learn to self-manage that behavior in the absence of external consequences and cues. Thus, even when appropriate reinforcers are located, the child with

ADHD requires a greater number of successful trials to make the transition to self-management. In part, this speaks to the difference between behavior modification and behavior management. Teachers are repeatedly taught that if they provide consequences appropriately, within a reasonable period of time, children's behavior will change. Success is usually based on the child's continuing to demonstrate the desired behavior when consequences are removed. When this model is applied to children with ADHD, many interventions are often deemed to be failures. For the child with ADHD, demonstrating a behavior in the presence of consequences is not synonymous with having developed the self-management skills to use the behavior. Focus on behavior management. That is, the intervention is deemed successful if the child's behavior is modified in the presence of consequences. As consequences are removed and the child's behavior regresses, this should not be interpreted as failure but rather as too quick a change in the schedule of reinforcement. The child has yet to make the transition from consequentially managed behavior to rule-governed behavior for that particular task.

**Three Keys to Using Punishment Effectively** Timing, intensity, and consistency are the three keys to using punishment effectively and appropriately in the classroom. The punishing procedures should be initiated as soon as possible after the aversive behavior is exhibited and should be as closely related to the misbehavior as possible. Furthermore, if punishments are too mild, they will not be effective and may slowly habituate the child to tolerate or adapt to more intensive or lengthy punishments. If too intense, however, punishments are not only abusive but likely create other problems. Be conservative when using punishing techniques but make certain their intensity is appropriate. To be effective, punishments must be consistent and predictable. Following punishment, you should return the child to the situation without expecting overt guilt, making efforts to reassure or reinforce the child. A consistent schedule of punishments should also be used. A continuous schedule of punishment for a specific targeted behavior is best. Finally, it is valuable to attempt to find out what drives the misbehavior and work toward managing the environment to minimize causative factors. As noted previously in this chapter, children who are experiencing LD may misbehave out of frustration. This may also be the case for children who are experiencing anxiety or depression. By identifying the child's goals and misbehavior, you can present more appropriate opportunities and methods to reach the child's goals. When used appropriately, punishment can make a positive difference; however, punishing interventions should always follow efforts at using reinforcing interventions to model and shape appropriate classroom behavior.

### **Conclusion**

The effective use of behavioral and cognitive strategies in the classroom may appear daunting even to experienced teachers. However, changing your behavior and strategies is often the most efficient and effective means of improving all types of classroom behaviors, both disruptive and non-disruptive. Through practice comes proficiency. The building block of emotions and behavior likely contains the largest and most diverse set of problems encountered in the classroom. By first understanding these problems and seeing the world through the eyes of your students, and, by then developing and using a set of intervention strategies on a regular basis, problems of emotions and behavior can be effectively managed and changed in the classroom.

### **Source**

Mather, N., & Goldstein, S. (2001). *Learning Disabilities and Challenging Behaviors: A Guide to Intervention and Classroom Management*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. pp. 96-117.

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