Traditional Behavior Management

- We used to only look at the FORM of behavior (hitting, kicking, spitting, cursing, etc.) and figure out how to PUNISH it away.

  THIS WORKED!!

- The problem: students had nothing to replace the extinguished behavior with, except for more inappropriate actions.

Form versus Function

- The form of behavior (e.g., a tantrum) may stay the same, although it can have more than one function, or purpose: to access an item, to maintain an adult’s attention, or to escape from performing an expected response.

- We determine the need or desire behind the behavior by observing what happens before and after, and what the student gets from the action.
Function Allows for Support

- When we look for the **FUNCTION** of the behavior, and not just the FORM, we are able to teach **REPLACEMENT** behaviors that allow students to still get their needs met, but in a socially acceptable way.

Behavior is Functional, Not **GOOD** or **BAD**

- Behavior is useful = it pays off for the student in some way... (this is why they do the action again)
- We may see the behavior as being "good" or "bad", but the student does it because it is effective to get him what he desires/needs.
- It is adaptive, not maladaptive ~ because it works!

The Function of Behavior

- A social skill is the use of a strategy that gets your wants and needs met.
- Every social interaction you have with a child *teaches* him/her something.
- A student can shape our behavior by displaying noncompliance/defiance and watching/noticing the reaction.
The Basics of Behavior

- Behavior communicates need
- What do students get or avoid when they engage in problem behavior?
- Children engage in behavior/s to "get" what they find reinforcing or to "avoid" what they find aversive.

TO GET:
- What reinforces
- Attention
- A possession
- Stimulation

TO AVOID:
- What is aversive
- Attention
- Task/expectation
- Stimulation

More Basics of Behavior

- There is a functional relationship between the teaching environment and behavior.
- Functional Relationships
  - When “X” happens, there is a high degree of likelihood that “Y” will result
  - Examples: “I can wait patiently for you to finish sharpening your pencil or I can shove you out of my way.”
Functional Relationships - Following the Behavior

"If I call my neighbor a Butthead the teacher will give me a look (attention), but if I want to leave class (escape) I need to call the teacher a #$%^&." 

- The environment **allows** the student to stop or be removed from the situation and the student behavior maintains or increases.
- The **KEY**: the situation the student is avoiding is aversive to that student.

**Functions of Behavior**

- Problem Behavior
  - Obtain/Get Something
  - Escape/Avoid Something
  - Social
  - Tangible/Activity
  - Adult
  - Peer

(Chris Borgmeier, PhD
Portland State University)

**Functional Assessment of Behavior**

- "A process for gathering information used to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of behavioral support" (O'Neill et al., 1997)
  - Operational definition of behavior
  - Identification of events that are functionally related to behavior
  - Identification of consequences that maintain behavior
  - Hypothesis about function of behavior
  - Direct observation to confirm/support hypothesis

**A process for developing an understanding of a person’s challenging behavior and, in particular, how the behavior is governed by environmental events."
FBA Tools:
- Interviews/questionnaires with persons who are most familiar with the child
- Rating scales
- Checklists
- Direct observation of students in target routines and settings (A-B-C)
- Analyze situations that predict challenging behavior
- Trial periods with strategies (Functional Analysis)

FBA Interview
- Define behavior (what you see - >)
- Gather information on setting events
- Identify triggers (predictors of behavior)
- Identify maintaining consequences
- Identify communication functions
- Describe efficiency of problem behavior
- Identify possible reinforcers
- Describe previous efforts

Operational Definition
- Describe the behavior
  - Frequency-how often?
  - Topography-what does it look like?
  - Locus-where?
  - Duration-how long?
  - Latency-time between prompt and behavior?
  - Force or intensity-strength?

**Can you see it when I describe it?**
BRIEF Assessment of the Function of Behavior

- If we can predict behavior, we can prevent it.
- Think about it like this: FBA is an assessment which supports the creation of a social lesson plan.
- The lesson plan is the teaching of a replacement behavior that gets the same need or desire met.
- Two things we do best: assess and teach!

ERASE problem behavior

Explain - What is the problem? 
(Clear definition that could be acted out)

Reason - What is he/she getting out of it or avoiding? 
(What is the Function/Pay off of the Behavior? It could be several reasons)

Appropriate - What do you want him/her to do instead? 
(What are children who are being appropriate doing?)

Support - How can you help this happen more often? 
(How can we get the student to do what others are doing?)

Evaluate - How will you know if it works? 
(Simple and quick)

Dr. Terry Scott, University of Florida

Science of Behavior

- Follow the rules and it is NOT like looking for a needle in a haystack!

- Our goal: make an educated guess about why the student is doing what he is doing (create a hypothesis) so we can guide the student to use new, and hopefully more effective, means of getting needs and desires met.
Three Key Concepts of FBA

1) Setting Events
2) Triggering Antecedents
3) Maintaining Consequences

Setting Events

- Events which happen outside of where we observe (distant events):
  - Argument with parent or sibling at home
  - Previous upset
  - No breakfast
  - Exclusion on playground
  - Past failure with subject matter
  - Unsupervised situations
  - Bus ride
  - Failure to take medication

You know it's going to be a bad day when...

The straw that broke the camel's back

Triggers Proceed the Behavior

- Events in the environment “trigger” challenging behavior.
- They serve as cues because the student can predict the outcome.
- They increases the probability that the problem behavior will occur.

Examples:
- Person
- School task
- Told to do something
- Told to wait for something
- Time of day
- Limited access to preferred activities
- Verbal confrontation
- Sensory stimulation
Maintaining Consequences

- Results of the behavior which increase the likelihood that the child will repeat the behavior.
- The environment "gives" something to maintain or increase the behavior; it is reinforcing to that student.
- There are no universal reinforcers or aversives.

Decode the Behavior

- Our job: change the triggers in the environment and our reactions to the behavior.
- Focus on changing environments, not children
- Match intensity of support to intensity of behavior
  - Academic support
  - Targeted group intervention
  - Individual intervention
  - Comprehensive, wraparound support (integrated with family, mental health services)

FBA Outcome

- Develop a hypothesis statement regarding the likely function/s of the problem behavior and the context (social and environmental conditions) in which it is most likely to occur.
- When this occurs.... (demand)
  The student does.... (hits)
  To get/avoid... (avoid compliance)
FBA: Common Hypotheses

- Receive attention from adults &/or peers
- Receive tangible objects or access to preferred activities
- Avoid interaction with adults & peers
- Avoid tasks or responsibilities
- Obtain or avoid sensory input

*Escape motivated behavior is often masked as attention seeking

Not Sure About the Hypothesis?

- What would make the challenging behavior stop?
- Is there something you could give the child or let him/her have access to?
- What happens if you let the child leave?
- Is there something that can be removed?

Function-Based Interventions: Positive Behavior Improvement Plans

- Teach replacement behavior that results in same/similar outcomes as the problem behavior
- The environment should not allow problem behavior to result in previous outcomes
- Replacement behavior should work BETTER than problem behavior
OLD WAY
- General interventions for all behavior challenges
- Interventions are reactive
- Focus on behavior reduction
- Quick Fix

NEW WAY
- Interventions are matched to the purpose of the behavior
- Interventions are proactive
- Focus on teaching new skills
- Long-term supports

Positive Behavior Intervention Plans
- Describe what behaviors are expected of the student and how they will be taught and supported.
- Explain the changes in the environment that are designed to alter a student’s behavior
  - What adults will do differently in an effort to alter what the child does, both before and after the behavior
  - What academic, schedule (etc.) changes will be made to support new behavior

Positive Behavior Intervention Plans
- Preventative strategies
- Environmental manipulation
- Neutral, ineffective responses by adults
- Consistent consequences
- Meaningful incentives
- Teach and practice replacement behaviors with opportunities for feedback
- Generalize to all environments
Planning Should Make Problem Behavior:

- **Less effective**, by neutralizing setting events and removing antecedents that prompt problem behavior
- **Less efficient**, by selecting replacement behaviors that require less effort to access reinforcers than problem behavior
- **Less relevant**, by decreasing access to consequences that maintain problem behavior and increasing access to consequences that maintain acceptable behavior

(Sugai, Lewis-Palmer & Hagan, 1998)

Prevention Strategies

- How can I change the environment to reduce the likelihood that problem behavior will occur?
- What can I do to make the challenging behavior irrelevant?
- How can I remove or alter triggers and/or maintaining consequences?
- How can I minimize the effect of the environment?

Environmental Strategies: EXAMPLES

- Choice
- Calming activities
- Increased attention
- Nurturing support
- Additional supports during transitions/routines
- Visual strategies
- First/Then strategy
- Break down steps of expectation
- Social stories
Teach Replacement Behaviors

- Teach alternatives to problem behaviors that are socially acceptable and still get the need met.
- When you can’t honor the function of the behavior: teach tolerance of delays
- Teach during calm times
- Practice throughout the day
- Provide reminders to use
- Prompt/assist as needed

Teachable Replacement Skills

- Ask for a break
- Say “all done”
- Ask for help
- Ask for a turn
- Ask for a hug
- Identify and express feelings
- Use support to follow rules
- Anticipate transitions
- Say “No”
- Take turns
- Invite others to play
- Use a picture schedule
Simple Plan Example

The Old Way:
Joe is expected to sit for math.
Joe throws pencils and curses.
Teacher sends Joe to the buddy room so she can do the activity.

The New Way:
Joe is pretaught to request a break.
Joe is expected to sit for math.
After completing 5 problems, Joe asks for a break.
Teacher allows Joe to sit at the table with a puzzle so she can finish the activity.

Function? What about Joe’s learning?

Differential Reinforcement for Lower Rates of Behavior (DRL)

- Student is reinforced for exhibiting progressively lower rates of the undesired behavior
- Examples:
  - A student is reinforced every day they talk out fewer times than the day before
  - A student receives a note home for not hurting anyone today

Practice Time!!

- Each group = a Learning Team
- Read your scenario
- Complete Competing Pathways together
- Share with the group