

Increasing and Decreasing Behavior

What Teachers Need to Know

Maroney 2016



Behavior Change Intervention =

- ◆ Increase a desired behavior
- ◆ Decrease an undesired behavior
- ◆ Teach a new behavior
- ◆ Change the topography of a behavior

There are 4 possible outcomes of behavior change intervention





When is it OK to change someone's behavior?



Teachers are frequently trying to change student behavior for various reasons. When is imposing behavior change on someone else OK and Not OK?

Instruction versus Motivation

- ◆ Behavior change requires the use of interventions/strategies for **INSTRUCTION** to teach behaviors/skills and for **MOTIVATION** to encourage the use of behaviors/skills.
- ◆ Is this IEP objective instruction or motivation?

IEP - When given a spelling test, the student will receive a star for every word spelled / written correctly.

Even the best student will not earn any stars unless the teacher also provides effective instruction on spelling skills.

Increase Desired Behavior - Reinforcement

- ◆ Positive Reinforcement
- ◆ Types of Reinforcement
- ◆ Effectiveness of Reinforcement

The most commonly used intervention to increase desired behavior is reinforcement.



Increase Desired Behavior – What is Positive Reinforcement

- ◆ Positive Reinforcement – something seen as positive by the student which is given to the student after he/she performs a desired behavior in order to increase the chances the student will perform that same behavior again.
- ◆ During class discussion, Marcus (who has a little crush on his teacher) raises his hand, waits to be called on, and gives a correct answer. The teacher says with a big smile, “Thanks Marcus for that correct answer and for raising your hand and waiting your turn.”

What will Marcus and the other students who want to please the teacher do in future discussions?

Increase Desired Behavior – Types of Positive Reinforcement

- ◆ Verbal statements, non-verbal gestures and facial expressions, physical actions (pats on-the-back, hugs), written comments or graphics (Great Writing!, ☺), tangible (stickers, notes, pencils), tokens (coupons, tickets), social (smiling, talking, interacting), activities (playing a game, eating lunch together)
- ◆ Praise, recognition, and appreciation are tremendously effective and don't cost a dime
- ◆ Reinforcement can be given to an individual student or to a group

The powerfulness of teacher praise, recognition, and appreciation should not be forgotten.

Increase Desired Behavior – Effectiveness of Positive Reinforcement

- ◆ Reinforcement must be given *after* the student performs the desired behavior
 - ◆ Mr. Jose says, "If all students earn a B or above on their spelling quiz, the class will have 5 extra minutes recess time today." Everyone, except Sally (who is so very sweet) earns a B or above. Mr. Jose, says, "That's close enough, it's a beautiful day, let's all have 5 extra minutes of recess."
 - ◆ What has Mr. Jose just taught his students?
 - ◆ Is Mr. Jose using positive reinforcement to increased desired behavior?
- ◆ The teacher must make sure the student knows which behavior is being reinforced.
 - ◆ "Thanks Adam, Olivia, and Anna for coming into the room and taking your seats quietly."

Increase Desired Behavior – Effectiveness of Positive Reinforcement

- ◆ There is no one reinforcement that works for every student or works every time. Learn what is reinforcing to your students and change things up.
- ◆ Some students enjoy free time on the iPad, others do not.
- ◆ Free time on the iPad may be very reinforcing in September, but not so much in November. Repeated use of a reinforcer will decrease it's value.

Visit sharonmaroney.net for a list of Classroom Reinforcers that are Cheap, Fun, & Healthy

Using Reinforcement to Decrease Undesired Behavior

- ◆ Reinforce Another Behavior
 - ◆ Megan's undesired behavior is getting out of her seat. She does this at least 8 times during reading class.
 - ◆ Ms. Lu's intervention is to give Megan teacher praise and a big smile when she is in her seat during reading. Ms. Lu will do this at least 8 times each class - then 6, then 4, or as needed for Megan to stay in her seat at the same level as the other students.
- ◆ OR Reinforce Lower Rates of the Undesired Behavior
 - ◆ Megan will earn a sticker during every reading class she is out of her seat less than 5 times - then less than 3, then only with teacher permission.
- ◆ AND Remove reinforcement related to the undesired behavior
 - ◆ Ms. Lu does not interact with Megan when she is out of her seat, she does interact with Megan when she is in her seat. Ms. Lu teaches the other students to do the same.

Increasing and Decreasing Behavior via Instructional Strategies

- ◆ Teaching the how, when, where, for how long, and to what degree of desired behavior to students
- ◆ Prompting, modeling, and guiding students to demonstrate the desired behavior
- ◆ Fading prompts and supports to teach students to perform behaviors independently
- ◆ Teaching Complex Behaviors by break it into steps (task analysis), teaching a behavior chain (chaining),

Stages of Student Learning

- ◆ Acquisition
- ◆ Mastery
- ◆ Application
- ◆ Generalization

↓

Students learn new behavior in the same stages as they learn academic skills. Behavior instruction must be focused and long term so students can independently and accurately use desired behaviors across settings, people, and circumstances, now and in the future. That's generalization.

Decreasing Undesired Behavior via Punishment



- ◆ Punishment-Based Strategies
 - ◆ Reprimands
 - ◆ Suspension, Exclusion
 - ◆ Removal of Desirable Stimuli
 - ◆ Response-Cost
 - ◆ Time-out
 - ◆ Presentation of Aversive Stimuli
 - ◆ Overcorrection

While punishment can decrease undesired behavior, punishing interventions must only be used after positive interventions have been tried.

Punishment

If the goal is to increase desired student behavior, a teacher's best tools are instructional and motivational strategies.

- ◆ If the punishment used does not decrease/extinguish the behavior, it is NOT punishment.
 - ◆ If students are given in-school suspension for the same undesired behavior, in-school suspension is not an effective punishment for those students. Something different must be tried.
- ◆ Punishment does NOT teach the desired behavior
 - ◆ Student misbehavior is a teachable moment. If you want students to do something - teach them how, when, why.
 - ◆ If they are using an undesired behavior, teach what you would like them to do instead.

Punishment



- ◆ Punishment confuses the teacher-student relationship
 - ◆ Students learn and behave best from teachers they see as interested and caring (not punishing).
- ◆ Punishment teaches students that the use of punishment is OK by persons in authority or power.
- ◆ Punishment cannot be used until AFTER positive interventions have been tried and documented, as required by IDEA.

Resources

- ◆ Visit Sharon Maroney's Teaching Threads Website for several resources related to behavior intervention.
- ◆ <http://www.sharonmaroney.net/>

