Working with Teachers on CW-PBIS Implementation: Lessons Learned

Diane Myers, Ph.D.
Texas Woman's University
June 20th, 2018

Classroom management is hard.
• Around half of all teachers leave within their first five years of teaching.

• Of course, there are other factors – but managing and responding to student behavioral issues is an area where we have some empirically-supported solutions that can be implemented by educators.

Why is classroom management hard?
• Training is often insufficient and inefficient.
  • EPPs provide limited focused instruction and are not drawing from research.
  • PD often "train and hope" with limited follow up.

• We do not follow the same instructional best practices for teachers that we do with students.

Why is classroom management hard?
• The more a learner practices a behavior, the more efficient and effective the behavior becomes at meeting the learner’s needs.
  • Applies to teachers and students.

  • Behavior change can be slow.
    • Applies to all behaviors (academic and social).
    • Errors will be made when learning new behaviors.

• We sometimes give mixed messages about the behaviors we expect.

SWPBIS: Foundations
• Schools traditionally provide behavior support only to those students who demonstrate problem behaviors.

• SWPBIS is based on the public health model of preventive, multi-tier intervention:
  • Tier 1 (universal): Delivered to everyone
  • Tier 2 (targeted): Received by at-risk groups
  • Tier 3 (individualized): More intensive

Talking to teachers about behavior
• Traditional classroom management training shortchanges teachers on foundational knowledge of behavior mechanisms.

• Understanding how behavior works is critical to planning CWPBIS systems and responding appropriately to behavior errors.

• Applied examples clarify concepts.
Talking to teachers about behavior

- Teachers need to understand the following concepts in order to be effective classroom managers:
  - How antecedents increase or decrease the likelihood of certain behaviors;
  - How consequences impact the future rate of behavior;
  - How setting events impact the value of consequences;
  - Extinction; and
  - Function.

Just a little more

- Remind teachers that social behavior change is not different from academic change.
  - It may be slow.
  - There may be many errors.
  - Teachers need to prompt, provide feedback, and reteach as necessary.
  - Behavior is predictable and lawful.

Talking to teachers about culture.

- This can be challenging.
- You will hear broad generalities.
- You will hear “I don’t see color.”
- Be brave. Difficult conversations may be unpleasant, but if they don’t happen, we will never move forward.

How are we shaped by our culture?

Classroom culture

- Consistent consequences
- Physical arrangement
- Daily routines
- Interactions with teachers and peers
- Positive relationships
- Teacher—student
- Student—student
- Culturally relevant instruction and materials
- Clear expectations
- Acknowledgment for appropriate behavior
- Ability to access academic and behavioral supports

EBP in classroom management: What all instructors should be doing in the classroom

1. Maximize structure
2. Identify, define, and teach expectations
3. Increase academic engagement
4. Establish a continuum of supports to encourage appropriate behavior
5. Establish a continuum of supports to discourage inappropriate behavior

Just a little more

- Culture and relationship-building are inextricably linked; consider presenting together.
- Remember, cultural relevance is in the eye of the beholder.
- Be patient and kind, but capitalize on “teachable moments” during training.
Talking to teachers about structure and expectations.

- These topics are pretty comfortable for teachers.
- Make connections to behavior basics: these are antecedent strategies.
- These strategies will increase the likelihood of appropriate behavior (but won’t reinforce the behavior).

**Coming out of CWPBIS training with a matrix is critical.**

- Identifying expectations (and how those expectations look within routines) leads to operational definitions of the behaviors.
  - Can be measured
  - Students (and teachers) know what’s expected.

Talking to teachers about actively engaging students.

- Teachers are also comfortable with this topic.
- Good chance to have increased participation.
- Ensure that teachers see connection between their behavior and their students’ behaviors.
  - How do aspects of instruction impact behavior?
  - Changing our behavior = easiest way to impact student behavior.

**Take every opportunity to remind teachers that academic behaviors and social behaviors are both behaviors.**

- Teachers are skilled at introducing, teaching, and helping students build fluency and master with academic skills.
- This same skill set applies to behavior.

Why give rewards?

- Seriously, why are we rewarding kids just for doing what they’re supposed to do?
- Need to make connection between reinforcement and appropriate behavior.
  - Then, we can shift toward natural reinforcement.
  - Right now, the natural reinforcing aren’t enough to maintain the behaviors we want.

**Consider using the three-tiered response.**

- Everyone likes being told he or she is doing a good job. Don’t you?
- Learning occurs as a process of reinforcement.
- Sometimes, extrinsic motivation is necessary.

- Also, be prepared to address the “red, yellow, green” system and response cost.
- Finally, be sure to address what to do with those who perceive Sr+ as unfair.
**Talking to teachers about responding to inappropriate behavior**

- Remind teachers that academic behaviors and social behaviors are both behaviors.
  - Learners will make mistakes.
  - Teachers will need to provide feedback and check for understanding.
  - Some students will continue to struggle despite our best efforts.
  - Behavior errors are errors. Treat accordingly.
- Emphasize attention for what is done correctly.

**Considerations when responding to problem behavior**

- Punishment cannot be used in isolation; we must also teach and reinforce the appropriate behaviors that we expect from our students.
- We cannot assume that traditional punishments will reduce problem behaviors.
- Frequent use of punishment can lead to a hostile learning environment.

**Considerations when responding to problem behavior**

- Spend most of your time preventing problem behavior from occurring.
- Always think about what you can change to decrease the likelihood of inappropriate behaviors.
- Be predictable and consistent.
- Look for opportunities for reinforcement.

**Last words of advice**

- Model the practices you’re teaching whenever possible.
- Remind teachers that “those kids” will benefit from Tier 1 (i.e., CWPBIS interventions).
- Tier 2 and Tier 3 apply same behavioral principles.
- Similar interventions (e.g., antecedent manipulation, token economies), but implemented more frequently, individually, intensively.

**Last words of advice**

- Frame “bullying” as a behavior.
- Be sure teachers understand that any PBIS system is about changing the environment and changing adult behavior.
- Remind teachers that generalization is the goal of all teaching.
  - Students behaving well in your classroom is good.
  - Students exhibiting appropriate behaviors in all settings is the goal of CWPBIS.

**Thank you!**

- I would love to hear about any experiences you have when training (or receiving training!) on CWPBIS or related content.
- Please email with questions, comments, or feedback: dmyers1@twu.edu