



The Science of Behavior and Human Motivation Theory

Have you ever heard someone say “I don’t believe in rewards because they reduce a child’s ability to develop intrinsic motivation”? This kind of thinking can be a barrier to the fidelity of implementing PBIS. While we cannot “make” a child learn or behave, we can create environments that increase the likelihood that children can learn and behave. In other words, **behavior is functionally related to the teaching environment.**

When considering a child’s behavior in school, the teaching environment is all that happens before, during, and after a child acts. The **Science of Behavior** tells us to construct environments that increase the likelihood that a child will act appropriately. This will include providing clear antecedents to teach, model and prompt appropriate behavior followed by reinforcing consequences that include positive specific feedback directly to the child. Additionally, teaching and modeling **new social skills** and determining the **function of a child’s behavior** will help educators support students in engaging in expected behavior.

Human Motivation Theory (HMT) is an additional approach to understanding and supporting a **child’s behavioral development.** HMT presents the idea that **human motivation runs along a continuum** from **amotivation** to **extrinsic motivation** to **intrinsic motivation.** When a child is not intrinsically motivated or internally regulated to engage in an expected behavior or routine, he/she will initially benefit from clear and consistent external antecedents (environment, prompt, model, reinforce) to learn and practice what is expected. As a child makes positive internal cognitive and emotional connections (regulation) to the response to his/her behavior, he/she will **move along the continuum** toward intrinsic motivation and internal regulation to engage in the expected behavior. For **further understanding of HMT,** click [here](#) to see a visual graphic.



Understanding Behavior to Intensify Systems of Support

- The Science of Behavior & Human Motivation Theory
- Using Data to Identify the Function of Behavior
- Sharing PBIS Outcomes with Your School Board
- Knowing When to Intensify Student Support
- MO-SWPBS Summer Institute
- In the Spotlight: South Elementary CICO



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USING DATA TO IDENTIFY THE FUNCTION OF BEHAVIOR

What the Function?!?

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support is based on the **Science of Behavior**. That is, an antecedent occurs which signals or triggers a behavior, resulting in a consequence. Over time, students learn that under certain antecedent conditions, certain types of behavior are likely to result in a certain class of consequences. We can look at this pattern of **Antecedent—Behavior—Consequence** over time for individual students to begin making predictions of how a specific student is likely to behave under specific antecedent conditions. For example, when Julia is near Jose (antecedent), Jose acts silly (behavior) causing Julia to laugh (consequence). If Jose's silly behavior reaches the level of disrupting instruction, it becomes unwanted behavior (at least from the teacher's perspective). We call behavior that is contextually inappropriate **unexpected behavior**.

By identifying **patterns of antecedents, behaviors, and consequences** related to unexpected behaviors, we can infer a possible purpose or **function** driving the unexpected behavior. Remember, typical functions driving behaviors in schools include gaining adult or peer **attention**, gaining **access** to an object or activity, or gaining **sensory stimulation**, or **avoiding** adult or peer attention, avoiding access to an object or activity, or avoiding access to sensory stimulation.

Furthermore, by understanding the antecedent conditions under which the unexpected behaviors occur and the function driving that behavior, we can begin to predict when future unexpected behaviors may occur. And **if we can predict it, we can prevent it!**

So, how can teachers/teams identify the possible function of behavior? First, it is critical to understand that we are **NOT** discussing the process used to determine whether students are eligible for **Special Education (SPED)** or to inform the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)! A SPED referral occurs the moment a staff or family member expresses a concern that a student may have a disability and sets in motion several procedural protections for the student. Among these, parental permission must be obtained to begin formal testing, including administration of a complex Functional Behavioral Analysis (complex FBA).

This contrasts with the **function-based thinking (FBT)** used to differentiate instruction for individual students, and the informal, simple **Functional Behavioral Assessment (simple FBA)**, which SW-PBS teams use to match students who might benefit from more intensive tier 2 and tier 3 support with interventions matched to the inferred function. Both FBT and the informal or simple FBA are used to more effectively **support students not suspected of having a disability**. Neither is used to determine eligibility for Special Education or to inform behavioral goals in an IEP. And while parental permission is not required for FBT or the simple FBA, it is recommended that families be informed at the beginning of the year that an informal, simple FBA is part of the school's or district's process for providing students with the supports they need to succeed, and that families be notified prior to conducting the simple FBA on their student. (Continued)



A **teacher uses FBT** to infer a possible function when they reflect on what tends to happen just before and what tends to happen happens just after the unexpected behavior. Does the unexpected behavior occur after the teacher signals a transition or specific activity? Immediately following the behavior, is the student sent from the room or do other students laugh at the behavior? While it is possible to infer antecedent conditions and function from just one behavior event, it may require multiple observations before an accurate inference can be made. For example, think of a student who is disruptive during algebra class, and consequently sent to the office. Removal from class may remove the student from algebra (function: avoid activity), or it may remove the student from a teacher with whom the student has a poor relationship (function: avoid adult attention). These are two very different functions and suggest two very different strategies. **Looking at patterns of behavior over time**, including antecedent conditions in which the unexpected behavior does *not* occur, can lead to a more accurate inference, and **more targeted and effective differentiation**.

FBT is intended to be very **informal**, although it may be helpful to jot down the antecedent, behavior and consequences for several behavior events. In addition, until the teacher becomes fluent in FBT, it may be helpful to write a summary statement. A **summary statement** can be used to **predict future behavior**, and therefore can be used to **identify strategies to prevent future behavior**.

A process that results in a **more accurate inference than FBT** is an informal, **simple FBA**. A simple FBA, such as the **FACTS parts A and B**, bases the inference of function on more information than the classroom observations involved in FBT. It also takes more time and the coordination of more staff members and is therefore reserved for students who may benefit from more **intensive tier 2 and tier 3 support**, but who have **not been identified as possibly having a disability**. An informal, simple FBA involves gathering and reviewing three main sources of information: a **student records review; staff, student, and family interviews**, and a **context analysis**. Both the student records review and the interviews provide information about student strengths and weaknesses, which can provide clues as to the **possible function driving the behavior**. The interviews and context analysis can help the team to determine the **environmental conditions** under which the unexpected behavior does and does not occur, which can provide additional clues as to both the antecedent conditions and the possible function of behavior. Once the team is confident that they have inferred the correct function of behavior, they can write up a summary statement that includes the antecedent conditions under which the unexpected behavior is likely to occur, the unexpected behavior, the usual consequence, and the inferred function. This information can be used to **match the student to a tier 2 intervention**.

Finally, if it is determined that the student might benefit from **more intensive tier 3 support**, the team may want to **confirm their summary statement with behavior observations** in the student's natural habitat (i.e., the classroom environment where the unexpected behavior tends to occur).

You can find **more information** about FBT and informal, simple FBAs from your regional consultant, by consulting the **Tier 2 and Tier 3** workbooks and the resources pages of the **MO SW-PBS Website**, or in the **MO SW-PBS Handbook**.

MO SECONDARY TEAMS (MOST) CHAT



Thursday, November 21
9-10 am

Topic: Student Motivation



REGISTER NOW

	Role In Special Education	Purpose	Trigger	Family Engagement	Process
Function Based Thinking (FBT)	N/A	Differentiation at Universal level for all students	Minor or major unexpected behaviors observed over time	Family notification of standard operating procedures at the beginning of the year and when concern arises preferred. Family engagement is preferred, but not required.	Reflect on Antecedents, Behavior, and Consequences over time to infer possible function
Simple Functional Behavioral Assessment	N/A	Select Tier 2 or create Tier 3 Intervention	Meets criteria reference from review of existing data for Tier 2 or Tier 3 Intervention; Nominated by staff, family or student; Identified by Universal Screener for behavior	Family notification of standard operating procedures at the beginning of the year and when concern arises preferred. Family engagement is preferred but not required.	Review existing data and interviews; develop inference; confirm inference through observation
Complex Functional Behavioral Analysis	Required for evaluation for special education eligibility	Identify students for eligibility for Special Education; Inform behavioral component of IEP	Concern is expressed that the student may have a disability	Family permission and involvement is required by law.	Form hypothesis and test under different environmental conditions



WHY AND HOW TO SHARE PBIS SYSTEMS, PRACTICES & DATA OUTCOMES WITH YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

A **Stakeholder** is any party who may have an interest in an organization's action or will be affected by its outcomes. A school board is one of the stakeholders in a school district. By sharing information about PBS with your school board, you **engage multiple/diverse perspectives** that open up **two way communication** about your practices.

Sharing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) systems, practices, and data outcomes with a school board can help ensure that PBIS is implemented and sustained effectively and **consistently across the district**.

Good information to share is: **Who** is participating in PBS? **What** is their ability to implement and sustain the PBS initiative? Are the **core features** of PBS being implemented? Is the initiative **achieving valuable student outcomes** and is it **worth sustaining**?

By sharing this information and evaluation data with your school board, you develop a **communication system that leverages the strengths of multiple systems** in order to ensure success for ALL children in their home, school, and community.

Knowing When to Intensify Student Support

When considering whether or not it is time to **intensify universal supports** at the schoolwide or classroom level for any student it is important to consider the following:

- **Has the student received Tier 1 universal support at the schoolwide level with fidelity, consistency and equity?**
 - How do you know? What data has been taken to verify implementation?
- **Have the Effective Teaching & Learning Practices (ETLPs) been implemented in all classrooms and across all content domains in which the student receives instruction with fidelity, consistency and equity?**
 - How do you know? What data has been taken to verify implementation?
- **When observing classroom instruction, is the target student's unexpected behavior verifiably more frequent or intense than other students in the classroom?**
 - How do you know? What data has been taken to verify the nature of the unexpected behavior?

If the observation data indicates:

- the **ETLPs are not being delivered with fidelity, consistency and equity**, the first step should be to **provide the teacher performance feedback, training or coaching** to support implementation of the ETLPs.
- **numerous children in the classroom are exhibiting unexpected behavior** at the rate or intensity of the "target student" the first step should be to **provide the teacher performance feedback, training or coaching** to support implementation of the ETLPs.
- **the ETLPs are being delivered with fidelity, consistency and equity** and the behavior of the target student is outside the norm of other students, it may be **time to target and intensify** the manner in which the ETLPs are being delivered to that student.

Helpful Resources:

- [Tier 1 Effective Teaching & Learning Practices](#)
- [Intensifying the Effective Teaching and Learning Practices \(ETLPs\)](#)

The theme for **SI 2025** is **“Thriving Together - Building Connections for Teacher Well-Being and Student Success.”** According to a recent RAND study (Steiner et al., 2022) almost half the teachers surveyed cited **supporting student learning** and **managing student behavior** as two sources of **work-related stress**. When implemented with fidelity, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support framework mitigates those factors by **building the knowledge and skills** to effectively manage and support student behavior proactively, rather than punitively. **Effective classroom management** reduces the time spent correcting behavior and **increases instructional time and student engagement**.

Spending a few days at the lake with fellow educators will be the perfect cure for that end-of-year stress. We hope you will **SAVE THE DATE** and plan to join us on **June 3-4, 2025** at the **Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO**.



CALL FOR PROPOSALS IS NOW OPEN!

Everyone in a school or district plays an important role when implementing PBIS. We hope you will **consider sharing** how you build capacity among your staff, students, and families focused on creating and sustaining cultures where everyone thrives. The **deadline** for submission is **November 29, 2024**. Please use this hyperlink to access the proposal form: [2025 Breakout Proposal Form](#). You can also access the proposal form on our website: [Call for Proposals](#)

We are excited to give your school or district a platform to **share your story** with other implementers. If you have any questions regarding proposal submissions, please consult with your **Regional SW-PBS Consultant**, or email **Jody Baker** at bakerjod@missouri.edu.

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South Elementary School in Kennett, MO, was recently highlighted by its MO SW-PBIS consultant as an example of a well **established and successful Tier 2 intervention** team in its use of **Check In-Check Out (CICO)** as an intensified support for at-risk students. As a 3-5 attendance center, serving approximately 450 students, South Elementary has been recognized as a Tier 2 School of Excellence by MO SW-PBS for the past 4 years. Supporting students' positive behavior is the **bedrock of South's Mission**, "...to foster and promote a safe, respectful, and responsible school environment that enhances student learning through teaching and recognizing positive behavior and educational standards."

Principal, Michelle McMullan, has shared the **Tier 2 team's systems, practices and artifacts** that guide them in providing advanced tier student support.

South's Tier 2 team comprises a variety of staff roles, including 3 teachers, 2 counselors, 2 school social workers, and the **Project Aware** Coordinator, who each serve a designated role on the team. CICO was initially piloted by the team among special education students, and has evolved as a targeted intervention available to any student in the school. In the 23-24 school year, 12 South students were provided the CICO intervention. **Data** indicates 9 students showed a positive response to intervention but did not graduate, 6 students graduated, and 3 required additional support.

The Tier 2 team has created a **system to train and support teachers** in understanding and implementing CICO. The intervention starts with parents being notified about their child's participation in CICO. The Tier 2 Coordinator then reviews the CICO process with the coach, student, and his/her teachers. Additionally, a CICO training video shares the rationale, procedures, and pertinent information about CICO that staff can access at any time.

A child's goals (no more than 3) are individualized to his/her needs, but typically align with the school's expected behaviors of being **Safe, Responsible, and Respectful**. While following a standard process for CICO, the team believes its success has stemmed from allowing **flexibility to meet the child's individualized needs** along the way. This may include noticing the time of day or location when a child may need more or less support, and intensifying intervention appropriately. The team recognized that everyone has "bad days or times" and strives to set attainable goals so children feel successful.

Finally, the team notes that while it does not expect kids in CICO to have 100% days, it strives to help them grow. South's Team understands that kids who struggle behaviorally also often face academic challenges, and likes to have opportunity to **share positive weekly progress reports with families**. The team also makes sure that coaches and staff involved with a student form **positive, supportive relationships** with him/her and can make connections for additional resources if needed.

Congratulations South Elementary on working hard to support your students! To view **examples of practices and artifacts** used by the South Elementary Tier 2 team, click [here](#).

References

Steiner, E. D., Doan, S., Woo, A., Gittens, A. D., Lawrence, R., Berdie, L., ...Schwartz, H.L.. Restoring teacher and principal well-being is an essential step for rebuilding schools: findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-4.html.

The mission of Missouri School Wide Positive Behavior Support is to assist schools and districts in establishing and maintaining school environments where the school culture and behavioral supports needed to be an effective learning environment are in place for all students.



MO SW-PBS
Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support