Developing a Classroom Management Plan Using a Tiered Approach

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Randi, a special education teacher, has worked in an inclusive sixth grade classroom with Colleen, a general education teacher, since August. Although the class has been running fairly smoothly, it is September and some behavior issues have arisen. Transitions between lessons have been taking longer, general noise level during group work is up, and students have been teasing peers or making negative comments during group discussions. In addition, a small group of students is not completing assignments on time. The two students who have individualized education program (IEP) goals directly related to behavior are also experiencing difficulties. One student has shut down and refuses to do work, and the other student has been getting into fights during lunch break. Although Colleen and Randi had rules and consequences in place at the start of the year, they have decided they need to develop a comprehensive classroom management plan.

Every year teachers plan for the management of students' behavior within their classrooms. Preparation may include developing a set of class rules, specifying procedures for daily tasks, or developing a consequence hierarchy (e.g., first infraction = X consequence, second infraction = Y consequence, etc.). Effective classroom management is essential for teaching, and it is not surprising to any teacher to find that management issues are frequently cited among reasons for leaving the field (Browers & Tomic, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Poor classroom management results in lost instructional time, feelings of inadequacy, and stress. In addition, special educators often have the responsibility of behavior change as a primary goal of instruction. In these situations, teachers move beyond the need to "manage" behavior and must address challenging behaviors head on to identify ways to transform the maladaptive behavior into something appropriate and effective for students.

In this article, we present a response-to-intervention (RTI) framework that both special and general education teachers can use in evaluating existing class structures and developing comprehensive classroom management plans for the purpose of managing challenging behaviors. (See box, "What Is RTI All About?") We applied the concept of a three-tiered model of support at the classroom level for individual (or team) teachers. Ultimately, this three-tier support structure would be a part of a schoolwide PBS model, but for many teachers or teams who are still addressing behaviors at a classroom level instead of schoolwide the RTI model provides an excellent structure to think about behavioral interventions. Special educators who teach in self-contained, resource, or collaborative classrooms can use the guidelines to create comprehensive classroom management plans. The framework provided includes evidence-based practices that teachers can apply at each tier of support. The plan incorporates guiding questions that direct teachers in selecting those practices that will best meet their context (i.e., grade level) and student

population (i.e., students with and without disabilities, students at risk for school failure, students whose first language is not English).

Three-Tiered Model of Classroom Behavioral Supports

Before teachers can begin to implement a multileveled approach to classroom behavioral support, they should identify and evaluate existing classroom structures. This process provides a basis for determining where additional supports are needed. Specific, guiding questions include the following:

- What is the core, behavioral curriculum provided? How are behavioral expectations communicated to students through existing practices?

- What interventions or additional behavioral supports are in place? If students demonstrate challenging behaviors, what are the responses to these behaviors?

- What individualized, intensive behavioral supports are used for the most challenging of classroom

What Is RTI All About?

The term *response to intervention* (RTI) applies to educational approaches that embrace multilevel prevention and intervention systems (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). RTI includes the use of assessment data, progress monitoring, and evidence-based practices to identify students in need of support, monitor their progress as they receive targeted interventions, and adjust levels or type of interventions depending upon students' responsiveness. The RTI framework allows general and special educators alike a process for addressing students' needs across a range of levels.

The underlying assumption of RTI is that when teachers apply effective instructional practices, the majority of students will make satisfactory gains, whereas some other students will require additional levels of support (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Applying this concept to classroom behavior, the application of effective behavioral supports in a classroom (e.g., high expectations, engaging instruction, clearly identified routines and procedures) should enable the majority of students to behave within classroom norms. Students who do not respond to preventative, proactive behavioral supports will require additional levels of support. This is the concept underlying School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS). Sugai and Horner (2009) suggested that RTI is a broad conceptualization of tiered support, whereas SWPBS is a specific, research-based application of the concept. Parallels between the concepts of RTI and Positive Behavior Support (PBS) have been identified in the literature (e.g., Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007). Both RTI and PBS models account for three levels of support, including three tiers of support:

- Tier 1 or universal support for all students with a focus on prevention.

- Tier 2 or targeted group support that includes evidence-based practices and monitoring.

- Tier 3 or individualized support based on individualized assessment processes.

behaviors? For those few students who demonstrate chronic, challenging behaviors, what consistent strategies are used across all classes and teachers?

These questions reflect the three tiers:

Tier 1: Preventative Classroom Management

Tier 2: First-Line Interventions

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Interventions

See Figure 1 for an overview of a "Comprehensive Classroom Management Plan: Three Tiered Model of Support Checklist."

After reviewing the three guiding questions, Randi and Colleen decide that the standard classroom rules need to be updated to reflect specific concerns regarding respect for peers and pre-

paredness for class. In addition, they realize that they have no way to recognize or reward those students who are doing well. They want to work on the overall classroom environment—shift the focus from nagging to bragging—but they aren't sure where to begin.

behavior. Researchers have revealed that the more transparent and clear teachers are about their behavioral expectations, the more successful students are in meeting those expectations (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2006; Zirpoli, 2008). Specific strategies that are effective in promoting desired behavior include the following:

1. High teacher expectations (Marzano, 2010; McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

2. Stimulating instruction with high levels of student engagement (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001).

3. Clearly communicated rules and norms (Kerr & Nelson, 2006; Sprick & Daniels, 2010; Tanol, Johnson, McComas, & Cote, 2010).

4. Established routines and procedures (Evertson et al., 2006).

5. Positive teacher-student rapport (Marzano, 2003).

6. Efficient use of classroom time (Lee, 2006).

To develop or evaluate a current core curriculum of behavioral supports, teachers can begin by evaluating their (a) instructional practices, (b) rules and procedures, and (c) overall classroom climate. (See box, "Six Effective Behavior Supports.")

Instructional Practices. Students who are occupied in instruction are less likely to have behavior problems (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002; Sutherland & Oswald, 2005; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Teachers can create

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Tier 1: Preventative Classroom Management

What does a high-quality core curriculum in behavioral support look like? Anything a teacher does that establishes behavioral expectations in a classroom creates the core curriculum of

highly engaging instruction by providing frequent opportunities for students to respond. Research has shown that practices such as the use of response cards (Randolf, 2007), choral responding (Hayon, Mancil, & Van Loan, 2009; Kretlow, Wood, & Cooke, 2011), and peer tutoring (Kamps et al., 2008;

Figure 1. Comprehensive Classroom Management Plan: Three-Tiered Model of Support Checklist

Teacher(s) Name(s): _____

Classroom: _____

School Year: _____

Tier 1: Preventative Classroom Management

Guiding Question

What is the core, behavioral curriculum provided? (i.e., How are behavioral expectations communicated to students through existing practices?)

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Tier 1 Strategies: Select the tools that are either in place or can be put in place to address this tier of support.

❏ High Student Engagement
❏ Response Cards
❏ Choral Responding
❏ Peer Tutoring
❏ Organized Classroom
❏ Clear Communication (e.g., visual displays of instruction, step-by-step procedures)
❏ Ample Background Knowledge and Skill Instruction Provided

❏ Established Routines and Procedures
❏ High Expectations
❏ Teacher Modeling of Positive Behaviors
❏ Positive Student-Teacher Rapport
❏ Positively Stated Rules
❏ Frequent Academic Assessment (e.g., curriculum-based assessments)

Tier 2: First-Line Interventions

Guiding Question

What interventions or additional behavioral supports are in place? (i.e., What is the response if students demonstrate challenging behaviors?)

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Tier 2 Strategies: Select the tools that are either in place or can be put in place to address this tier of support.

❏ Changes to Academic Instruction (e.g., tutoring program, literacy lab, review supports)
❏ Positive Reinforcement System
❏ Token Economy
❏ Behavior Contracts (e.g., Daily Behavior Report Card, weekly contracts)
❏ Remedial Intervention or Tutoring Support

❏ Contingency System (e.g., loss of privileges, time out, behavior contracts, group contingency)
❏ Surface Management Techniques (e.g., planned ignoring, signal interference, proximity, tension decontamination through humor, hurdle help, direct appeal, antiseptic bounce, rewards)
❏ Home-School Note System

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Interventions

Guiding Question

What individualized, intensive behavioral supports are drawn on for the most challenging of classroom behaviors? (i.e., For those few students who demonstrate chronic, challenging behaviors, what strategies are used?)

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Tier 3 Strategies: Select the tools that are either in place or can be put in place to address this tier of support.

❏ Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs)/Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)
❏ Self-Monitoring Strategies
❏ Daily Student Evaluation
❏ Social Skills Instruction

❏ Support Groups (e.g., anger management, grief, study skills)
❏ Goal Setting/Monitoring
❏ Crisis Management or Safety Plan
❏ Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers

Sutherland & Snyder, 2007) increase student engagement. These instructional strategies increase practice opportunities and provide immediate academic feedback for students. Visual supports can also encourage student engagement. Graphic organizers, flow charts, and temporal sequence charts (e.g., first do this, then do that) serve to clarify teacher direction and expectations. Students who know what is expected of them are more likely to follow directions and less likely to be off task or to ask for clarification from the teacher or their peers.

To ensure that the instruction provided meets students' academic levels, many teachers use formative assessments, such as curriculum-based assessments, to conduct pretests and regular assessments of students' progress throughout a unit of study. Teachers who track student performance over time can see if students are making gains. Failure to make gains suggests a mismatch between instruction and student need. Certainly, behavioral concerns can interfere with a student's ability to learn, but teachers should rule out the possibility that the instruction is too challenging, too easy, or is being delivered in such a way as to present difficulties for a student.

Rules and Procedures. Well-designed and clearly communicated rules and procedures set the stage for effective student behavior. When creating rules, teachers can apply the concept of *behavioral pairs* (Kauffman, Mostert, Trent, & Pullen, 2006). To identify a behavioral pair, the teacher first defines the behavior of concern that the student is presenting. Then, the teacher identifies an incompatible, desired behavior that the student can learn as a replacement behavior. The identification of behavioral pairs allows teachers to focus on the positive, desired behaviors they need to teach or reinforce.

A classroom's practiced and rehearsed daily procedures create the backbone of effective classroom management. Common routines and procedures include: arrival/entering the classroom, attendance, submitting classwork and homework, transitions between classroom activities, missed classes, bathroom breaks, participating in class discussions, and cooperative learning groups. Teachers who frequently and consistently employ these types of routines are teaching and reinforcing their behavioral expectations. Teachers can provide refresher lessons periodically to remind students of specific expectations and to add new nuances to established routines.

Classroom Climate. In Marzano and Marzano's (2003) meta-analysis of more than 100 studies, they found that teachers who had positive relationships with their students had 31% fewer discipline problems and rule violations over the course of the year than teachers who did not. Research consistently demonstrates that students show a clear preference for strong teacher guidance over permissive classroom environments (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

Teachers establish expectations through the rules and procedures, as discussed previously, but also by communicating explicit learning goals. Students should know what is expected of them and how they will be assessed.

A final way of communicating a strong teacher presence is to calmly, clearly, and consistently reinforce rules or expectations. Yelling, elevating pitch, moving too close to students, lecturing, displaying strong emotion, avoiding the offending student behavior, and back-talking (no, I didn't; yes, you did) all communicate teacher insecurity. Positive classroom climate communicates to students that the teacher is calm and confident in his or her ability to respond to student needs—whether by reinforcing the rules, redirecting misbehavior, or addressing an extreme situation. Simple strategies such as proximity, eye contact, or the incorporation of students' names or interests during instruction can contribute to an overall positive classroom climate.

Core behavioral supports can go a long way in preventing misbehavior and promoting desired classroom engagement. For many students, the atmosphere promoted by these types of behavioral supports diminishes the need for additional behavior management strategies. Yet, some students or groups of students will require additional supports. For these students more explicit instruction in behavior is required.

In considering their Tier I supports, Randi and Colleen decide to make their instruction more engaging and clear for their students. They decide to use response cards to increase student participation as well as visuals to show the steps groups need to follow during research time. They also select one classroom procedure to rehearse and review each day. Students will have the opportunity to role-play situations to ensure that they know what is expected of them. Finally, both teachers decide to work on making one positive statement to all students.

Tier 2: First-Line Interventions

When challenging behaviors appear, similar to when students begin to struggle with the standard curriculum, teachers should provide additional supports. In the case of classroom behavioral supports, teachers can look to a range of intervention options that complement the standard core practices in their classrooms. Specific strategies for teaching the behavioral curriculum include positive reinforcement systems, token economies, and rule checklists. Tier 2, or First-Line Interventions, can be categorized as (a) surface management techniques and (b) reinforcement systems.

Surface Management Techniques. In 1952, Redl and Winemann first introduced the concept of "techniques for antiseptic manipulation of surface behaviors." Commonly referred to as surface management techniques, these approaches can be extremely effective for dealing with minor behavioral infractions that arise in day-to-day classroom activities. Although the specific terminology can be adjusted to reflect current lingo, surface management techniques are still used universally in classrooms. Figure 2 provides an overview of standard surface management techniques.

Figure 2. Surface Management Techniques

Planned Ignoring	If an attention-seeking behavior, such as pencil tapping, is ignored, the child may first increase the intensity of the tapping but may eventually stop due to lack of reinforcement.
Signal Interference	Nonverbal signals, such as the ringing of wind chimes or flicker of the lights, and verbal signals, such as the reminder of the rules, can signal students to change their own behavior.
Proximity and Touch Control	The presence of the teacher nearby can remind students to refocus, refrain, and reengage.
Involvement in the Interest Relationship	Changing examples to reflect student interests or shifting the activity can reel students back into classroom discussions. Personal attention can also serve to reengage students (e.g., "Ben, what did you think of the story?").
Hypodermic Affection	For some students, the deliberate delivery of kindness or individualized attention can boost their sense of well-being and reduce their need to act out within the classroom. The term "hypodermic" implies that this sincere attention is more than skin deep! A student who is having a bad day can be disarmed by the genuine concern of a teacher.
Tension Decontamination Through Humor	Behavior management can quickly turn into a power struggle between teacher and student. One way to defuse this is through the use of humor.
Hurdle Help	Providing instructional support rather than a reprimand or redirect can sometimes help this situation. Statements like "Let's look at the first problem together" or "Tell me where you are on this assignment" serve to shift the focus to the instruction and off of the behavior.
Interpretation as Interference	A student who is acting out or frustrated might not have a clear picture of the situation or attribute inappropriate motives to others. Clarifying statements, such as "She did this in response to your action" serve as an "interpretation" of the event and can help the student develop a more rationale view of a situation.
Regrouping	Simply moving the players around can be an effective strategy for addressing unwanted behaviors. Teachers should take care to remove emotion from this strategy since negative attention can be reinforcing to some students. A statement such as, "I am moving you because the two of you are always talking!" is less effective than, "Today, we are switching partners in order to practice our new strategy."
Restructuring	Teachers can change an activity that is not going as planned in order to avoid or reduce undesired behaviors.
Direct Appeal	A reminder of the rules can be all a student or group of students need in order to get back on track.
Limitation of Space and Tools	Making sure that students have limited access to materials during modeling and instruction and having specific procedures in place for distribution, use, and collection of materials are two strategies for reducing the misuse of classroom materials.
Antiseptic Bouncing	This technique is the nonpunitive removal of a student from the classroom. Like its punitive counterpart, "time out," antiseptic bouncing should be used with caution. Antiseptic bouncing involves sending a student out of the room on a neutral errand.
Permission and Authoritative Verboten ("No!")	Sometimes permitting a behavior is the fastest way to stop it. Some low-level behaviors can be tolerated, particularly if a disproportionate amount of time is spent attempting to eliminate it. The opposite of permission, the authoritative verboten, can also be effective in communicating to students that a particular behavior is not permitted. The key to an effective "no" is to eliminate the lecturing, nagging, or rationale building that often occurs with it.
Promises and Rewards	Although rewards can be effective in reinforcing desired behaviors, caution should be used when using promises and rewards as a surface management technique. The inadvertent message rewards communicate, "If you behave, you will get a prize," can serve to undermine an overall classroom climate of productivity. In terms of overall classroom support, rewards are best delivered randomly or at unexpected times.

Reinforcement Systems. Reinforcement systems provide consistent consequences to specific behaviors for the purpose of increasing the target behavior. In contrast to the surface management techniques that teachers use to address occasional behaviors that occur in classrooms, reinforcement systems are the planned instruction and reinforcement of desired behaviors. Reinforcement systems *teach* and *reinforce.* Specific, evidence-based reinforcement systems include token economies (Filcheck, McNeil, Greco, & Bernard, 2004; Hakenberg, 2009), behavior contracts (Anderson, 2002; Cook, 2005), and group-contingencies (Hulac & Benson, 2010).

In token economies, students earn tokens (e.g., stickers, coins, marks on a chart) that can be used to obtain an item or a preferred activity. As soon as a student engages in the desired behavior, he or she receives a token. This immediate feedback is the hallmark of the strategy. After the student has acquired the requisite number of tokens, those tokens can be exchanged for an item or preferred activity. Specific reinforcement systems can include the use of raffle tickets as the token and entry into a raffle for items such as "lunch with the teacher" or bathroom passes.

Behavior contracts specify contingent relationships among behaviors. If the student engages in *X* behavior, then *Y* will occur. Behavior contracts work best when they focus on the desired behavior. For example, if the problem behavior is not bringing in homework, then the desired behavior is bringing in completed homework. The contract should establish minimum expectations and tracking method—Amy will complete at least four out of five of her daily Spanish homework assignments each week as indicated on her daily tracking chart; Each week that Amy maintains four out of five assignments, she will be allowed to choose her seat in class (or some other reinforcer that Amy values). Benefits of behavior contracts include the following: (a) clear goals for both student and teacher, (b) development of a tracking system, and (c) shift in responsibility from teacher to student in terms of daily management. The Daily Behavior Report Card is a specific example of a behavior contract. For the daily report card, specific target behaviors are identified. Then,

the expectations for the behavior are established. Examples of daily behavior report cards and tools to create customized cards can be found at this web site: http://www.interventioncentral.org/.

Home-School Note systems are a variation on the Daily Behavior Report Card. In a Home-School Note program, teachers collect data on a particular, agreed-on behavior. If the student meets the daily expectation, then a positive note is sent home. Parents agree to provide positive consequences when their child receives a "Good News Note." Appropriate target behaviors for a Home-School Note program include academic productivity, classroom rule compliance, homework completion, peer interactions, teacher-student interactions, and personal responsibility for materials

Finally, in "group contingency" management systems, students either receive or lose privileges based on the behavior of an individual, several individuals, or the whole class. Research has shown that group contingencies can be an effective and efficient method for reducing disruptive behavior (Heering & Wilder, 2006). Although many teachers have concerns about the possible negative repercussions for students who fail to meet expectations and therefore "ruin it" for the group, many studies have demonstrated group support and benefits tied to group contingencies (Heering & Wilder, 2006; Kelshaw-Levering, Sterling-Turner, Henry, & Skinner, 2000).

The *Good Behavior Game* is a research-based, group contingency intervention that has been shown to reduce disruptive and aggressive behaviors (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007). To set up the *Good Behavior Game*, teachers first assign students to teams, typically three teams per class, with an equal proportion of gender, academic ability, and behavioral needs in each group. The teacher then clearly defines the "good" or desired behaviors and the disruptive behaviors. Teachers will track the number of disruptive behaviors exhibited by team members on a publicly posted chart. Teams that

remain below the preset number of checks (e.g., fewer than four checks) during the game period win the game. All teams can win during each game period and consistent winners can receive additional rewards at the end of the week.

Reinforcement systems can be implemented as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 type of support. The degree of intensity would indicate the appropriate tiered level. For example, a classwide token economy or a homework contract could be implemented at a Tier 2 level, indicating minimum to moderate amounts of teacher support required.

More intensive behavioral supports are those that are highly individualized and require more teacher time to set up, monitor, and maintain.

Although Randi and Colleen are confident that making their instruction more interactive and focusing on desired, positive behaviors will go a long way in changing the classroom climate, they know that a small group of students will need something more. They decide to implement a raffle ticket system for completed work. Students can earn one ticket for completed work and a bonus ticket for "quality." They also are going to set up a help system, and students who need extra help on an assignment can earn a ticket for working with a teacher to complete their work. The teachers think this will help both special education and general education students who are struggling to complete work. A raffle will be held each week, and students can win items from the school store.

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Interventions

The identification of Tier 3 behavioral supports always begins with a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The purpose of the FBA is to move beyond the environmental scan

of Tier 1 and the surface management or reinforcement strategies of Tier 2 to focus on an *individual* student's behavioral needs. Through the FBA process, teams collect data to identify the function of a problematic behavior and then generate strategies to address the identified need. In short, the FBA seeks to answer two fundamental questions:

- "Why is this student behaving like this?"
- "What socially acceptable behavior can we teach to address this same need?"

Since FBAs are required under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students with disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviors, the majority of school districts will have their own set of FBA tools and processes. You can find excellent materials and information about conducting FBAs at the *Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice* web site: http://cecp.air.org/fba/.

As a result of conducting an FBA, educators generate hypotheses about the communicative function of the behavior. For example, one FBA's findings may indicate that a student is displaying escape or avoidance behaviors, whereas another FBA determines that a student's behaviors are attention seeking in function. The FBA team will then generate specific strategies to address the hypothesized need.

An important difference between the strategies selected in response to an FBA with those created at the Tier 2 level is that the FBA-generated strategies will be tied to a specific students' profile and data collection process and will require additional data collection for monitoring. In addition, Tier 3 strategies tend to be more time intensive and reflective of individualized services. Although educators can identify almost any behavioral support

The identification of Tier 3 behavioral supports always begins with a Functional Behavioral Assessment.

through the FBA process and therefore consider the support a Tier 3 strategy, researchers have identified several strategies as effective in teaching replacement behaviors for students with intensive behavioral needs. Two of these strategies are social skills instruction and self-monitoring.

Social Skills Instruction. For many students with behavioral challenges, it is difficult to reinforce desired behaviors because students are either not exhibiting these behaviors with any frequency or the students do not possess the behaviors from the beginning. These desired behaviors include basic skills in social and peer interactions. Specific skills that can be taught include alternatives to aggression, dealing with feelings, dealing with stress, negotiating interpersonal communication such as joining a group or conversation or convincing others of your point, and planning skills such as goal setting or decision making.

Three tenets of social skills instruction are:

1. All behaviors are learned; therefore, appropriate, adaptive behaviors can be taught and learned by all students.

2. Social skills instruction should be customized to meet individual students' communication and behavioral needs.

3. Social skills instruction cannot be considered successful until the skill is generalized to new settings (Schoenfeld, Rutherford, Gable, & Rock, 2008).

- Identification of a target behavior.
- Soliciting buy-in from the student on the advantages of self-monitoring.
- Defining the method for monitoring and collecting data on the behavior.
- Teaching the student to self-monitor.
- Implementing the self-monitoring system with reinforcement.
- Fading the teacher monitoring (Ganz, 2008).

Educators can customize self-monitoring systems to meet individual students' needs. For example, a young student may benefit from tokens or other physical manipulatives to track his or her behavior; in contrast, an older student can make use of a graph to document progress. Self-monitoring systems are relatively low-cost and effective tools to increase desired student behaviors.

Finally, Randi and Colleen needed to address the behaviors of the two students with IEPs. First they conducted an FBA for both students. Using data from the analysis, they decided to teach and implement a self-monitoring system for the student who was not completing his work. To get the student excited about the new process, they enlist the art teacher with whom the student has a close relationship. He will serve as the "reinforcer," and when the student meets his individual goals, he will report his success to the art teacher. For the student who is fighting on the playground, Randi and Colleen

Why a Tiered Framework for Behavior?

An RTI model provides a framework for teachers to evaluate classroom practices and make decisions about the level of intervention or support needed. Effective instruction and clear expectations can go a long way in many classrooms. Some teachers jump to a Tier 2-level support when it may not be warranted. Other teachers may have Tier 2 supports in place, such as a reinforcement system, but have neglected the foundation of a core "curriculum" of prevention. That is, the classroom lacks rules, routines, and procedures to support appropriate behaviors. Similar to RTI for academic achievement, a high-quality core curriculum must be in place before examining student-specific concerns.

Without a solid "core" of behavioral support in the classroom, students do not have the guideposts necessary to learn, practice, and develop desirable skills. Students with disabilities require specialized instruction for academic and behavioral needs. A tiered-model of behavioral support ensures that students with disabilities, whether in inclusive or self-contained settings, will receive appropriate levels of support. The tiered behavior framework allows teachers to clearly communicate with administrators, parents, and colleagues how they are providing those behavioral supports for students in their classrooms.

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Social skills instruction should be customized to meet individual students' communication and behavioral needs.

Although many different social skills curricula exist, a fundamental instructional approach cuts across most programs—model, lead, reinforce, practice, and monitor.

Self-Monitoring Instruction. The majority of self-monitoring interventions include the following steps:

work with the school counselor to set up a social skills group with several other sixth-grade students from other classes. The counselor will work with the students on anger management, appropriate social interactions, and other issues that may be individual to the students.

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