The Effects of a Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan on a Kindergarten Student in an Inclusive Public School Classroom

By Amanda Zeafla

When a student exhibits high levels of inappropriate or disruptive behavior, it can jeopardize the learning and safety of every student in the classroom. It is critical that teachers or IEP team members act quickly to identify the causes and functions of the behavior(s) of concern (BOC) through the process of a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and then use this data to develop a personalized behavior intervention plan (BIP). This case study analyzes the effects of a positive behavioral intervention plan developed for a kindergarten student in an inclusive public school classroom. The BIP included methods for teaching appropriate replacement behaviors, supportive accommodations, and interventions including an “IF/Then” behavior chart and access to stress management materials and activities. Results after two weeks of intervention reveal a positive trend towards the goals of the behavior intervention plan and a significant reduction in the occurrence of the behaviors of concern.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

While a student teaching in an inclusive kindergarten classroom, I worked with a five-year-old male student who quickly began exhibiting bouts of disruptive and sometimes violent inappropriate behaviors early on in the school year. Typical classroom and behavior management tactics and consequences, such as positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors, timeouts and loss of privileges, and removal from activities, which yielded success with other students proved to be ineffective for this particular student. Recognizing my additional background in Special Education, my cooperating teacher asked me to develop some sort of behavioral intervention plan for this child as his current behaviors not only disrupted the learning environment for all students in the classroom, but they sometimes put the safety of other students at risk as well.

METHOD

FBA Procedure:
- Conducted over the course of 3 days to gather baseline data about the nature of the behavior(s), the frequency & intensity, and the setting/situation in which they occurred.
- Baseline data was collected regarding the student’s overall compliance rate relative to explicit directions and the number of times each identified behavior of concern (BOC) occurred each day.
- BOC: refusal to work, crumpled/toe paper, threw items, flipped desk/chair, kicked/hit teacher, hiding, damaged school property, and shouting out inappropriately. (Each behavior occurrence was recorded in only 1 category).
- Baseline data was shared with Student D’s parents.

HYPOTHESIS

When given an assignment or activity to complete, especially those requiring fine-motor skills (anecdotal to behavior of concern), Student D refuses to follow directions or complete work and may crumple or tear his paper followed by hiding from the teacher and engaging in behaviors such as shouting inappropriately, damaging school property, and throwing items (behavior of concern) in order to escape completing the task, to gain attention of teacher and peers, and to gain power over the teacher(s) (perceived function of the behavior).

FBA RESULTS

The baseline data revealed a negative trend for the compliance rate and the four most frequently observed BOC included shouting out disruptively, refusal to work, hiding, and throwing items. Analysis of the observation data revealed possible antecedents that led to the manifestation of the BOC (such as requests to complete work) as well as the currently identified consequences that were maintaining the behavior (such as removal from the general education classroom to an emotional support classroom).

HYPOTHESIS

When given an explicit direction to complete a specified activity or task during instructional time in the general education classroom, Student D will complete the required task or direction promptly without engaging in any inappropriate actions (i.e. crumpling or tearing his paper, hiding from the teacher, damaging school property, shouting out inappropriately, tipping or flipping his desk or chair, or hitting or kicking the teacher or other students) for at least four consecutive school days.

DISCUSSION

As evidenced by the data, this behavioral intervention plan has yielded some degree of success for Student D. He has made progress towards achieving the initial goal of the BIP. The first chart portrays data regarding Student D’s compliance rate relative to explicit directions. It shows a negative trend during the baseline period and an overall positive trend for the intervention period. The second bar graph represents the number of occurrences of each behavior of concern (BOC) for each day of the intervention phase. Week 1 shows that the first day of intervention resulted in zero instances of BOC, followed by a sharp increase in the problem behaviors in the following days. It also reveals an increase in the occurrences of more severe and disruptive BOC, such as kicking/hit teachers, shouting out inappropriately, damaging school property, and flipping his desk chair. These behaviors appear to reach a climax on the following Monday (Week 2 of Intervention).

The initial sharp increase in the behaviors of concern upon implementation of the intervention plan following the first day is not surprising. Even before the intervention was implemented, on occasion, Student D would have “very good days” with little to no incidences of problem behaviors. The success of the first day may ultimately be attributed to a combination of the intervention being implemented and situational circumstances outside of our control (i.e., things that occurred with the Student D outside of school which influence his daily behavior and response to demands to work). With the intervention plan in place, it has made it more difficult for Student D to achieve the function of his problem behaviors using his typical behaviors of concern, so he has had to resort to more severe (and previously less frequent) BOC in order to achieve the same function. However, myself and my cooperating teacher remained determined and continued to implement the accommodations and interventions outlined in the BIP. We worked especially hard to avoid engaging in power struggles with Student D and to avoid giving in to previously identified reinforcing consequences such as removal from the classroom. In time, our perseverance enabled the behavioral intervention plan to yield success as evidenced by the data in the Week 2 bar graph that shows a significant reduction in the occurrences of the behaviors of concern and in the following Directions line graph which shows Student D’s compliance rate increasing significantly during the second week of the intervention phase. The fourth graph (top right-hand corner) represents the average number of occurrences of each behavior of concern during each week (Baseline, Week 1, and Week 2). Although skewed by the outlier data of Monday during Week 2 of intervention, this chart represents a general overall convergence towards zero for the number of occurrences of each BOC behaviors of concern. Extenuating circumstances prevented me from continuing to progress monitor the effects of the behavioral intervention plan during the remainder of my student teaching experience, but follow-up conversations with my cooperating teacher in the weeks and months that followed indicate that Student D has continued to make very significant progress towards achieving and maintaining the goals of his behavioral intervention plan.