Understanding the Basics of Behavioral Intervention

Barbara Haas-Givler, MEd, BCBA
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Autism & Developmental Medicine Institute
Geisinger Health System
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

Behavior and Learning Connection

- What does the learner understand?
- Is the work too hard or too easy?
- Does the learner know how to learn?
- What environmental changes are necessary for student success?
- Is the student motivated and reinforced?
- Are there effective teaching strategies and behavior management techniques?

What does ABA stand for?

APPLIED-interventions used with individuals in their natural settings and target behaviors significant for the person’s social and day to day living

BEHAVIORAL – interventions are based on behavioral principles

ANALYSIS-therapeutic decisions are based on on-going data collection

ABA is not

ABA is not just for students with autism spectrum disorders
ABA is not one program
ABA is not just for schools or therapy settings
ABA is not the Lovaas method
ABA is not Discrete Trial Training (DTT)
DTT is not the Lovaas Method

ABA

ABA is NOT- just for special education

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AND BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS—have been around for a long time – weight loss programs, smoking cessation, incentives and bonus plans.

Behavior

BEHAVIOR IS NOT ALL BAD!
Behaviors

- Point to object or picture
- Take hand and pull someone
- Manual sign language
- Hand picture to adult
- Ask a question
- Name an object or picture
- Read words
- Answer a question
- Ask for help
- Follow directions
- Eat food

- Cry or scream
- Repeating phrases
- Avoid eye contact
- Hands on ears
- Bite hand or shirt
- Hand-flapping
- Say “no”
- Jump up and down
- Push away items
- Hit or bite another person

Behavior

Behavior is:
- CAUSED (antecedents/triggers)
- OBSERVABLE (recordable)
- COMMUNICATION
- SERVES A FUNCTION (why)

Challenging or Problem Behavior

Function is not usually the problem
Same behavior may have several functions
Interferes with learning new skills
Socially isolates the learner

Functions of Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gain object, activity or attention</th>
<th>Escape/Avoid object, activity or attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain Sensory</td>
<td>Escape/Avoid Sensory</td>
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Functional Behavior Assessment - Outcomes

Identify and Define
- Challenging or inappropriate behavior
- Function of the behavior(s)
- Strategies to prevent or antecedent strategies
- Strategies for alternative/replacement behaviors
- Consequences that will not maintain inappropriate behaviors
- Input for IEP
  - Specially designed instruction (SDI)
  - Input for Behavior Plans

A-B-C’s of Behavior

Antecedents – setting events
- What happened immediately before the behavior(s)?
- What triggered the behavior(s)?
  - Person, place, activity, sound, smell, demand/request
  - Slow triggers
  - Quick triggers
  - Hunger, thirst, pain, fatigue
A-B-c's of Behavior

Behavior or the response

Observable, recordable
Collect data - make decisions

Consequences

- What happened after the behavior
- Includes corrective feedback
  - “Right” “Good Job”...
  - “No” “Wrong” “It isn’t…”

Consequences are not all bad!!!
Consequences occur after the behavior

Reinforcement

Attention (depends on the student!)
Stickers
Token economy
Rewards
Toys or games
Escape
Avoidance

Punishment

Simple correction
Overcorrection
Restitution
Time out
Response Cost
Corporal Punishment (not recommended)

The ABCs OF Behavior

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ANTECEDENTS</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>What happened before?</td>
<td>What happened?</td>
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Traditional Emphasis

Emphasis Needed
Strategy Selection

Learn a new skill
  – appropriate or acceptable replacement behavior
Increase behavior
  – on task time
Decrease behavior
  – Perseveration on topic
Honor the function
  – Request a break
Cannot honor the function
  – Remain in room during fire drill

Targeted Strategies – Increase Communication to Protest and Request

Target (increase)
Appropriate means to request or protest rather than scream, cry, grab, hit, cover ears, turn away

Strategies
• Functional Communication Training (FCT)
• Alternative Augmentative Communication system (AAC)
• Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
• Sign language
• "Break" card
• Parent/staff note signs that child is frustrated
  – Redirect, distract, interrupt
• Practice/rehearse - various times, places and with many adults during the day

Visual schedules

Targeted Strategies - Transition

Target (increase)
Transition
  • Person to person
  • Place to place
  • Activity to activity

Preferred to preferred
Non-preferred to preferred
Preferred to non-preferred activity

Strategies
• Visual Schedule
  – actual items, pictures, photos along with printed words
• Preferred items as distractors
• Preferred adult gives direction/request
• Create jobs that move the child in hallways
• Pre-specified reinforcers
• Transition Helpers or fidget toys

Visual timers

Social Skills Challenges

Play Skills
Pragmatic language skills
Anxiety
Speech intelligibility
Attention span
Organizational Skills
Motivation
Prompt dependency
Restricted interests

www.timetracker.org
www.timetimer.org
Social Skills Strategies

Capitalize on strengths
Personalize Strategies
Practice/role play all roles
– variety of settings, children and adults
Real time support/feedback
– most to least support
What’s popular with peers?
– Games, shows, language

Targeted Strategies – Play Skills

Target
Increase play with toys and appropriate play materials

Strategies
• Pair preferred object with non-preferred activity
• Visual schedules
• Offer choice
• Morph restricted interests into more appropriate or accessible activities or objects
• Introduce new toys gradually – not with other children
• Siblings or other children “model” play
• Layers of reinforcement

Targeted Strategies – Social

Target
Increase appropriate interaction with peers and adults

Strategies
• Structured activities and games
  – Lunch bunch
  – Play dates
• Video or photo activities and interactions to reinforce positive
• Seating arrangements
  – Away from triggers if possible
  – Near a good peer model
• Proximity to staff
• Role play: “characters” acting out
• Assign a job during social activity
• Social stories
  – www.thegraycenter.org

Play dates

Plan and structure
Just right timing
Include a snack
Make a list – together
Something for everyone
“Social engineer”
– Kids from school
– Kids from community
  • Scouts, dance, religious
Photo or video
Monitor don’t hover

Social Stories

That was Easy
Meet and Greet
A trip to the beauty parlor
Care and Share
Trip to the Doctor
Homework
Going to a restaurant
Getting a gift
Self-flush toilets
That’s a disappointment
Telling someone to stop

Successful Approaches

• Clear, effective communication
• Structure and routine
• Consistency
• “Pair” with reinforcers
• Attention to signs of anxiety and triggers
• Awareness of language skills and reinforcers
• Redirection and distraction are effective tools
• Visual supports and schedule are often essential
• Offer choices – which one do you want to do first?
• Teach and offer opportunity to request a break
• Reinforce the behaviors that you want to increase
• It’s not always what you say but how you say it
• Control what you can e.g., your responses, environment