

**POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS IN
CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS**

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POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS IN CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

Effective and Practical Strategies for Teachers
and Other Service Providers

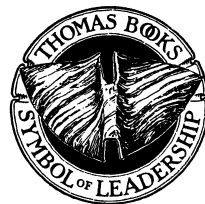
By

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To Jean, for her love and positive behavior supports during these many years of marriage. They are more appreciated than she will ever know.

K.S.

To my loving son, Terrence, whose love and sense of justice inspire me daily.

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M.P.

PREFACE

Scope

The scope of this book is to provide an overview of positive behavior supports that is written in an informational format that teachers and other service providers can immediately put to use. We have tried to write in a non-technical style that is directed toward practitioners rather than for other academics. This book is focused on positive behavior supports in school settings. It is generic across age levels, and it should be of interest to those working in the schools as teachers, classroom assistants, school psychologists, administrators, counselors, and so on.

Plan

In this book, each chapter follows the sequence of:

Key Point Questions
Window to the World Case Studies
Best Practice Recommendations
Discussion Questions
School-Based Activity Suggestions

Purpose

This book is intended to give teachers and other service providers the knowledge and skills for providing positive behavior supports in school settings, thereby improving the academic and social skills of their students. The rubber meets the road in how to teach but also in how to implement positive behavior supports so that classrooms and schools can deliver effective instruction to students. An advantage of this book is that it covers methodology that is seldom covered in detail in most texts addressing positive behav-

ior supports and, thus, can easily be used in courses preparing teachers and others.

College instructors are likely to choose our book based on:

1. The consistent format throughout the book.
2. The “readability” of the book for students.
3. The comprehensive coverage of positive behavior supports.
4. The direct applicability to applied settings.

In addition to college instructors, we hope that others providing instruction, supervision, and training to teachers and other direct service providers will find this book useful.

K.S.
M.P.

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

Key Point Questions

1. What is Applied Behavior Analysis?
2. What are Positive Behavior Supports?
3. How are Positive Behavior Supports different than other approaches?
4. Why are Positive Behavior Supports important?
5. What are barriers to the implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis and Positive Behavior Supports?
6. How do Applied Behavior Analysis and Positive Behavior Supports relate to student learning?

Window to the World Case Study 1

Mr. Denecke is known at his high school as a model teacher. The students in his classes do well academically, are happy to be there, and are engaged in related activities outside of the classroom (homework and clubs). Parents are always pleased when their children are in his classes, and they often pester the principal to make sure that they have him as their teacher. University professors always try to place student teachers with Mr. Denecke. This semester he has Ms. Kueffner as a student teacher. The first week of her placement, the principal, Ms. Naylor, is in the classroom and notices a list that Ms. Kueffner is working on. She looks at the list and observes it is a list of what behaviors

Mr. Denecke is engaging in that are enhancing the learning of his students. It is quite an extensive list of behaviors: praising students for desirable behaviors, greeting students as they enter the classroom, going over the class rules at the start of class, having a mix of activities in the class period, not wasting a minute of instructional time, immediately correcting any student violation of classroom rules (no matter how minor) and then quickly getting back to instruction, making sure that assignments and expectations are clear to all students, and so on. This list gives Ms. Naylor an idea, and she asks for a copy of the list.

Window to the World Case Study 2

Teaching at the same school as Mr. Denecke is Mr. Walton. He is a first-year teacher and is struggling to say the least. Students in his class are disruptive, disrespectful to him, and not doing their work, and needless to say, not much learning is going on. Ms. Naylor has been quite concerned and is not sure whether he will make it as a teacher. (Mr. Walton is wondering why he gave up a career as a legal assistant to become a teacher, even though teaching was what he had always wanted to do.) After seeing Ms. Kueffner's list from Mr. Denecke's class, Ms. Naylor observes Mr. Walton's class and makes a list of what he is doing wrong (ignoring inappropriate student behavior, starting class late, being drawn into conversations that are off topic, getting into arguments with students about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, making consequences for students but not following through on them, etc.), as well as a list of what he is doing right (a very short list such as having good content knowledge and well-designed lesson plans). Ms. Naylor covers several class periods for Mr. Walton so that he can observe Mr. Denecke's class and make his list of what Mr. Denecke is doing right. She and Mr. Walton then meet and go over their lists and discuss specific behaviors that Mr. Walton can engage in to change his classroom. In addition, Mr. Walton and Mr. Denecke meet several times at lunch so that they can plan changes to Mr. Walton's class and his teaching style. Within several weeks, there is a dramatic change for the better in Mr. Walton's teaching and the academic engagement of his students. Though there are still struggles, Mr. Walton continues to improve, and by the end of the school year, both Mr. Walton and Ms. Naylor are quite satisfied with his performance,

and, most importantly, his students are doing very well in learning the academic material.

Key Point Question 1. What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

The foundation of Positive Behavior Supports is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). ABA is derived from the work of B. F. Skinner (1953, 1971). Skinner was a psychologist who advocated that the focus of education should be on the behavior of students rather than on internal states (O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2001). Behavior may be defined as observable actions that a student does. Sitting in a seat, completing a math problem correctly, raising one's hand to answer a question, cursing, and running out of the room are all observable behaviors (verbal behaviors are classified as behaviors as well). These are all student behaviors that can be changed (for better or worse). Being motivated, trying hard, and being unruly are not observable behaviors and thus cannot be directly changed.

John Watson is often credited as being the first behavioral psychologist. In his 1913 manifesto, he wrote that, "Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior." For Positive Behavior Supports (and education as a whole), the key words are "prediction" and "control." Good teachers are effective at predicting what will work in their classroom (such as using active responding strategies, reinforcing classroom rules, using cooperative learning strategies, etc.) and then controlling the classroom environment so that these behaviors occur. Sometimes teachers have concerns with the concept of control and view control as being a bad thing. However, not positively controlling the classroom only leads to anarchy and poor student learning. For instance, by doing things such as having set routines, classroom rules, and praising students for completing assignments the teacher is "controlling" student behavior. Having a teacher controlling a classroom environment in this way is good teaching and is not deceitful or wrong. In other words, the focus is on the cause and effect relationship between the environment and the behavior of the student (Nye, 1992). This cause and effect is not a one-way process because there is the issue of countercontrol where the behavior of the student also influences the environment (e.g., the behavior of the teacher).