CHAPTER 6

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Challenges

The teacher's primary task is to structure or order the environment for the pupil in such a way that work is accomplished, play is learned, love is felt, and fun is enjoyed—by the student and the teacher.

—James Kauffman and Timothy Landrum (2009)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

6.1 Articulate social, emotional, and behavioral challenges and discuss how they are observed and are related.

6.2 Articulate social challenges faced by students and provide examples of why social skills are important in today's society.

6.3 Explain how emotional challenges interfere with academic learning.

6.4 Explain the behavioral challenges that result in school suspension and the need for positive behavioral supports to keep students in school.

6.5 List and explain at least five strategies to improve social competencies.

6.6 Explain at least three strategies for students with emotional challenges, including strategies for self esteem.

6.7 Explain five strategies for students with behavioral challenges, including the importance of the behavior intervention plan.

6.8 List and explain five behavior management strategies, including contracting, reinforcement, cognitive behavior modification, and time out.

STANDARDS Addressed in This Chapter:

CEC

As approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

- 1.0—Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 1.2—Beginning special education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments

- 2.0—Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.
- 2.1—Beginning special education professionals through collaboration with general educators and other colleagues create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments to engage individuals with exceptionalities in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.
- 2.2—Beginning special education professionals use motivational and instructional interventions to teach individuals with exceptionalities how to adapt to different environments.
- 2.3—Beginning special education professionals know how to intervene safely and appropriately with individuals with exceptionalities in crisis.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 4: Assessment

- 4.3—Beginning special education professionals in collaboration with colleagues and families use multiple types of assessment information making decisions about individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies

- 5.0—Beginning special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.1—Beginning special education professionals consider an individual's abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

- 6.0—Beginning special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.
- 6.1—Beginning special education professionals use professional ethical principles and professional practice standards to guide their practice.
- 6.2—Beginning special education professionals understand how foundational knowledge and current issues influence professional practice.
- 6.3—Beginning special education professionals understand that diversity is a part of families, cultures, and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services.

In this chapter, we discuss social, emotional, and behavior challenges. These challenges can interfere with a student's learning and the quality of his or her entire life. We also describe strategies and interventions to help students with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.

6.1 Overview of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Challenges

Many students with mild disabilities and students with learning disabilities have social, emotional, or behavioral challenges that are apart from their academic difficulties. These challenges may involve:

- **Social challenges,** which are difficulties in interrelating with others, in making and keeping friends, and in meeting the social demands of everyday life
- **Emotional challenges,** which involve feelings about oneself. For example, the student may feel so chronically sad or depressed or have such a low self-concept that these feelings interfere with the individual's outlook on life and the ability to learn.
- **Behavioral challenges,** which are problems manifested by aggressive, antisocial, and similar behavior

Social, emotional, and behavioral challenges occur in children in all populations, and they are found in students from diverse economic, racial, cultural, and language groups. Often the social, emotional, and behavioral challenges are interdependent; they overlap with each other, or they are interrelated problems. For example, students who feel poorly about themselves may engage in specific behaviors that can lead to social isolation. A student who is very depressed may engage in withdrawal behavior, which leads to poor peer relationships and social isolation. Some examples of students with social, emotional, or behavioral challenges are described below:

- Marty struggled in school in acquiring academic skills. In fact, Marty and his family spent so much of their time and energy in improving his academic skills that Marty had no time available for making friends or building a social life. Marty's concentration on academics was successful in that he graduated from high school and went on to technical school to become a successful computer programmer. However, with no time given for Marty to make friends and learn how to interact with peers, Marty now finds that he still has no friends as an adult.
- Katie had emotional challenges throughout her elementary school years. Katie is now in college, but she still struggles with depression, a poor self-concept, and a high degree of test anxiety.
- Jerod takes a very long time to complete an assignment. A comprehensive evaluation indicates that Jerod has an obsessive-compulsive disorder. He wants to make sure that his work is "perfect" before he turns it in. Jerod's need for perfection is part of his obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Imagine going to work every day and being faced with tasks that are too difficult for you. Even the most resilient person would eventually give up and start looking for another job. Yet students do not have this option. They are supposed to stay in school and face tasks every day that are too difficult for them to accomplish. No wonder many students become extremely frustrated and give up. They know they have many strengths and things they can do well. Yet they are struggling with hard academic tasks, and they do not understand why they are struggling so much. Investigations of the relationship between academic underachievement and externalizing behavior show that students may act out to avoid aversive academic tasks (Farley et al., 2012, Lane and Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). Students with behavioral problems present a major challenge to school personnel because they often present both academic and behavioral deficits (Farley et al., 2012; Nelson, Benner, & Moody, 2008). Teachers should explore the "cause" of negative behaviors in school and then plan interventions that consider those causes. Teachers must be sensitive to the stresses that many students with learning problems face—they are expected to try to do academic tasks that are extremely difficult for them. They may respond by giving up, acting out, or putting their head down on their desk and trying to rest. They are tired—doing work that is difficult is tiring and what may appear as work refusal may be exhaustion from demanding tasks.

It is also important to find strengths that students have while assisting them in the areas in which they struggle. Two examples of such students are described in Student Stories 6.1, "Students with Challenges."

STUDENT STORIES 6.1

Students With Challenges

- **Mark.** Mark has a learning disability that affects his reading. His classroom teacher expects pupils to read aloud in a round-robin type of reading exercise. During reading class, Mark clowns around and engages in numerous attention-seeking behaviors until the teacher gets tired of his behavior and sends Mark to the office. The consequence of the teacher's action is that Mark does not have to read.
- **Wendy.** Wendy displays behavioral challenges. During her seventh-grade math lessons, she tears up her math papers and throws them in the trash. Her classroom teacher is sure Wendy can do the work but she just will not do it. In reviewing her records, Wendy's teacher notes that her latest individual achievement test scores show that her math skills are at a third-grade level.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What could Mark's teacher do in place of expecting him to read aloud in a round-robin type of reading?
2. What should Wendy's math teacher do now that she has the information about Wendy's achievement test scores?

Did You Get It?

When Solomon, a child with a learning disability and a secondary behavioral disorder, refuses to work, cooperate, and interact at the end of the day, what is the last thought his teacher should consider?

a. He is probably exhausted from the challenges he has faced.
b. It's not easy for him.
c. He's got a lot to carry on his young shoulders.
d. He's acting out and pushing buttons.

6.2 Social Challenges

social skills
Skills necessary for meeting the basic social demands of everyday life.

Social skills consist of skills that are necessary to meet the basic social demands of everyday life. Deficits in social skills are among the most crippling types of problem that a student can have. In terms of total life functioning, a social disorder may be far more intimidating than an academic dysfunction. A social disorder affects almost every aspect of life—at school, at home, and at play (Silver, 2006). Social challenges involve the student's ability to interact with others. When students are not aware of the nuances of social situations, they are unsure of how to act or how to make friends. It is estimated that one third of students with learning disabilities also have problems with social skills (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2004; Bryan, 1997; Voeller, 1994). Some individuals with learning disabilities are less socially skilled than their same-aged peers (Gresham et al., 2006). If they are asked to use cognitive social behaviors, they are less able to do so than their peers. If they are asked to solve a social problem, they may jump to a solution quickly rather than use problem-solving strategies to arrive at the best answer to the problem. If pressured, they tend to engage in antisocial behaviors (Schumaker & Deshler, 1995). Students with learning disabilities accounted for 52% of all students with disabilities who experienced disciplinary actions during the 2007–2008 school year. Learning

disabilities is the second most common disability found among incarcerated juveniles (Cortiella, 2011).

Some students who have social difficulties do quite well in academic domains, while other students have both social and academic difficulties. Also, it is important to recognize that not all students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities encounter difficulties with social skills (Gresham et al., 2006). In fact, for many, the social sphere is an area of strength. These students are socially competent at making and maintaining friends, and they work at pleasing teachers and parents (Haager & Vaughn, 1997).

Difficulties in the social arena are also characteristic of students with autism, and nonverbal disabilities (see Chapter 7, "Autism Spectrum Disorders and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder").

Students who have problems with social relationships may lack sensitivity to others, have a poor perception of social situations, and suffer social rejection. They may exhibit a wide range of poor social traits, such as impulsiveness, low tolerance for frustration, and problems in handling day-to-day social interactions and situations (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2001; Wong & Donahue, 2002; Bryan, 1997).

Having a social challenge puts a child at a great disadvantage. In school and in other environments, students need well-developed social and interactive skills in dealing with peers and adults. Although these students want to be accepted socially, they often do not know how to engage in appropriate social behaviors. Our job as educators is to help students learn how to improve their ability to respond appropriately in social situations. A story of a student with social difficulties is described in the feature Student Stories 6.2, "Bill: A Student With Social Challenges."

Myrleen Pearson/Alamy

Children need well-developed social and interactive skills in dealing positively with peers and adults.

STUDENT STORIES 6.2

Bill: A Student With Social Challenges

Bill feels isolated—he doesn't feel like he belongs to any social group at school. One day, a group of students is huddled together planning something. They ask Bill if he wants to join them. Bill is pleased that he has been asked to join a group. It seems that the group is plotting a bomb threat at the school. They ask Bill if he would call in the bomb threat the next day. They assure Bill that he won't get caught and they will allow him into their group permanently if he will do just this one thing for them. The next morning Bill calls in the bomb threat. A police investigation occurs and Bill is arrested, has to appear in court, and is suspended. When Bill tries to tell the police officers what happened, the police question the other students who obviously don't admit that they had anything to do with the event.

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

1. What interventions other than suspension could have been provided for Bill?

Did You Get It?

Of the 23 students in your class, 15 have a learning disability. According to statistics, if your class is demographically representative, you have approximately how many children in your class with both a learning disability and some deficit in social skills?

a. 1
b. 3
c. 5
d. 7–8

6.3 Emotional Challenges

Emotional challenges often interfere with academic learning. When students are troubled by emotional challenges, it is arduous for them to focus on academic tasks. Students may be preoccupied with other problems that prevent them from successfully completing the academic tasks.

6.3a Relationship Between Learning Difficulties and Emotional Challenges

The emotional development of typically developing students can be very different from the emotional development of students with learning problems. Successful achievers have a multitude of gratifying experiences to develop important basic feelings of self-worth, and they have hundreds of opportunities for self-satisfaction, as well as the enjoyment of pleasing others. When students are achieving, the parent-child relationship is mutually satisfying because normal accomplishments stimulate parental responses of approval and encouragement. As a result of students' own feelings of accomplishment and their awareness of the approval of those around them, achieving students develop a sense of self-worth and a prideful identity. Successful achievers establish healthy identifications with their mothers, fathers, and other key figures in their lives, building feelings of self-worth, a tolerance for frustration, and a consideration for others (Lavoie, 2007; Silver, 2006).

In contrast, the emotional development of students who encounter learning problems follows a very different pattern. If the central nervous system is not intact and is not maturing in a normal manner, disturbances in motor and perceptual development lead to dissatisfaction with one's self. Failed attempts at mastering tasks induce feelings of frustration, rather than feelings of accomplishment. Instead of building self-esteem, the thwarted attempts produce an attitude of self-derision and, at the same time, these thwarted attempts fail to stimulate the parents' normal responses of pride. Parents, therefore, may become anxious and disheartened, reactions that can result in either rejection or overprotection.

With such a developmental scenario, it is not surprising that many students with mild disabilities and students with learning disabilities develop emotional challenges. These students may react by either internalizing or by externalizing their emotional problems. An internalizing reaction may take the form of a conscious refusal to learn, a resistance to pressure, clinging to dependency, quick discouragement, a fear of success, sadness, and withdrawal into a private world. An externalizing reaction can take the form of overt hostility, acting-out behaviors, excessive anger, fighting with other children, and defiance toward teachers.

internalizing
Disorders that are inward, such as refusal to learn, resistance to pressure, withdrawal, clinging to dependency, or sadness.

externalizing
Conduct disorders that encompass a broad range of antisocial behaviors such as aggressive acts, theft, vandalism, arson, lying, truancy, and running away.

The environment should be a place in which the student can be successful. It is important to restructure tasks to assure success. These students do have many strengths and interests, and teachers and families must find those areas of strengths and capitalize on them. By recognizing students for their accomplishments, teachers reduce feelings of inadequacy, decrease anxiety, and increase student beliefs in themselves.

It is not unusual for students with serious emotional or behavioral problems to also have a coexisting learning disability (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009). If the problems are so severe that they interfere with further learning and life activities, the student may be referred for psychological or psychiatric counseling (Silver, 2006).

6.3b Characteristics of Emotional Challenges

In this section, we describe several characteristics of emotional challenges.

Depression Many students with emotional challenges suffer from depression and a general pervasive mood of unhappiness. Depression may be a reaction to the stress and frustration of school demands, to the lack of friendships and social interactions, or may stem from a biochemical predisposition. Signs of depression include (1) loss of energy, (2) loss of interest in friends, (3) difficulty in concentration, and (4) feelings of helplessness, which occasionally are expressed through suicidal talk (Silver, 2006; Rutter, 2003; Gorman, 1999).

Lack of Resiliency Although a person's feelings of self-worth may be threatened by continual failure, it is interesting to note that not all individuals who face difficulties in life develop low self-esteem. Some have remarkable resiliency and are able to preserve self-confidence and self-worth (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Brooks & Goldstein, 2002; Freiberg, 1993; Keogh, 2000). Their resilience seems to come from a mix of internal and external factors (Sorensen et al., 2003). Resilience has been described as "a buffering process"—it doesn't

eliminate risks or the adverse conditions that one might face but it helps individuals deal with those conditions effectively (Brooks & Goldstein, 2004). What are the factors that enable individuals to keep on trying, and how can the school help build resilience? Self-worth is gained through mastery of a skill or task, through perceived respect from peers, and through feelings of competence. Students who believe that they have competencies in areas other than academic work are less likely to be devastated by school failure. To maintain their sense of self-worth, students need a support system from teachers, from parents and families, and from peers who acknowledge that these students possess specific competencies. The support system preserves student self-worth by keeping failure to a minimum; increasing the visibility of nonacademic talents, skills, and competencies; and emphasizing *learning* goals over *performance* goals. For example, the student can be given credit for performing a task in the correct manner (a learning goal) even though the final answer may not be accurate (the performance goal).

It is fascinating to observe individuals who have achieved greatness and maintained a sense of belief in their self-worth and in what they were doing despite having faced years of rejection and ridicule. Examples include Gertrude Stein, the famous poet, who submitted poems to editors for about 20 years before one was finally accepted for publication; Vincent van Gogh, who sold only one painting during his lifetime; and Frank Lloyd Wright, who was rejected as an architect during much of his life. So, too, many individuals with learning disabilities have overcome failure and rejection because they strongly believed in themselves. The stories of adults with learning disabilities who have succeeded against the odds are inspiring, and their resilience is evident in their success (Hart, 2009; Gerber & Brown, 1997; Gerber & Reiff, 1991; Smith, 1991).

Anxiety Students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities display more symptoms of anxiety than their peers. The demands and pressures of school and high-stakes testing provoke increased anxiety and even panic. These students feel that events beyond their control are happening to them. When they encounter these situations, they feel hopeless and become frozen and panicked during these periods of intense pressure. Anxiety may cause students to miss class, to tune out, and to become disorganized. Feelings of anxiety are real and must be understood by teachers and families (Gorman, 1999). One student had such high anxiety when she took a high-stakes assessment test that she spelled her last name incorrectly. Some test-taking tips are provided in Chapter 9, "Adolescents and Adults With Learning Disabilities and Related Mild Disabilities."

It is important to accent students' strengths to build their belief in their self-worth.

Steve Skjold/Alamy

Did You Get It?

Loss of interest in what was previously valued; in friends and acquaintances; and possible suicidal thoughts, talk, and ideation can and should all be considered signs of

a. depression.
b. learning disabilities.
c. behavioral disorders.
d. panic disorder.

6.4 Behavioral Challenges

Students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities sometimes exhibit co-occurring behavioral challenges. These behavioral challenges must be considered in planning instruction (Farley et al., 2012; Burns et al., 2009; Haydon et al., 2009; Buck et al., 2000; Scott, 2003). When students struggle with learning, they may become so frustrated that they act out or refuse to work. Because they cannot get attention for strong academic skills, they may seek to get attention for inappropriate behaviors.

6.4a Suspensions of Students

Some students engage in behaviors in an attempt to be accepted by peers, or they impulsively engage in a behavior, not realizing the consequences of their behavior. Thus, they get into trouble. Students with disabilities have higher rates of suspension than youth without disabilities. An analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education based on the 2009–2010 school year showed that 13% of students with disabilities in kindergarten through grade 12 were suspended compared to 7% of students without disabilities in urban middle schools (Losen & Skiba, 2012). Studies of students with learning disabilities and students with attention deficit disorders show that these students have a higher risk of being suspended. When academic tasks become very difficult, these students may respond with disruptive behaviors that result in suspensions (Johns & Carr, 2012; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006).

If the student is suspended or expelled, the IEP (Individualized Education Team) team must make a manifestation determination. This means that the IEP team must decide whether the presenting problem behavior is a result of the student's disability and whether the current IEP is being implemented. If the behavior is a result of the disability or if the services on the IEP were not being met, services must continue for students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled because of their behavior.

manifestation determination
The process that the IEP undertakes in order to determine whether a student's behavior is the result of a disability.

Of concern is the number of students reported to either be suspended from school for more than 10 school days or to be removed to an interim alternative educational setting for drugs or weapons. According to the Civil Rights Data Collection's 2009–2010 statistics based on data from 72,000 schools in 7,000 districts that serve approximately 85% of American students, it was reported that 1 in 5 black males and 1 in 10 black females received an out-of-school suspension (Lewin, 2012). In 10 states in urban middle schools more than 25% of black students with disabilities were suspended in 2009–2010 (Losen & Skiba, 2012). In a Texas study reported in 2011, almost 60% of the students in grades 7 through 12

STUDENT STORIES 6.3

Alex: A Student with Manifestation Determination

Alex, a seventh grade student with autism, was going to be expelled because he was spending too much time in the bathroom. The IEP team convened and determined that spending too much time in the bathroom was not related to Alex's disability of autism. As a result of a complaint by the parent, a more thorough investigation of the situation occurred. Alex loved to watch water spinning and going down the drain. When Alex would go into the restroom, he would repeatedly flush the toilet so he could watch the water spin. This behavior was specifically noted in elementary school reports and evaluations. Further exploration also found that Alex was to receive social work services for 60 minutes weekly. Alex was receiving no social work services because the previous social worker had left and was not replaced this year. In this case, Alex could not be expelled and had to be provided appropriate services.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What should the IEP team have done prior to convening the manifestation determination?
2. Develop a plan to reduce the amount of time that Alex spends in the bathroom.

had received an in-school suspension, an out-of-school suspension, or had been expelled. Out of all of the students who were suspended, students who qualified for special education constituted 75%. About 76% of the students identified as having a learning disability had at least one disciplinary action (Fabelo et al., 2011; Johns & Carr, 2012).

One-third of youth with learning disabilities are suspended or expelled from school at some point (Cortiela, 2011). In certain school districts, students who have disabilities are 2 to 3 times more likely to be subjected to discipline than those students without disabilities (Cortiela, 2011).

Unfortunately, a result of suspension is that students fall further behind academically. Suspension disengages them from the school system and increases the likelihood that they will drop out of school. Suspension also allows the student to escape the situation and does nothing to teach the student appropriate behavioral skills. It is our responsibility as educators to work to keep our students in school.

6.4b Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavioral Supports

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA-2004) requires that if the child's *behavior* interferes with his or her learning or the learning of others, the IEP team will consider strategies and supports to address the child's behavior. Moreover, if a child with disabilities displays behavior that impedes his or her learning or that of others, the IEP team must be able to evaluate the child's behavior through a *functional behavioral assessment* and to design *positive behavioral supports* to change the student's troublesome behavior (Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education, 2008, Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1998; Smith, 2000; Sugai & Homer, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). (See the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice website at *http://cecp.air.org*, the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports website at *http://www.pbis.org*, the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education website at *http://www.fape.org*, and Dr. Mac's Amazing Behavior Management Advice Site at *http://www.behavioradvisor.com*.)

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) involves determining the cause, or antecedent event, that triggers the child's behavior. The concept of functional behavior assessment is not new. It is based on the applied behavior analysis procedure called *ABC:* antecedent, behavior, consequence (see Figure 6.1).

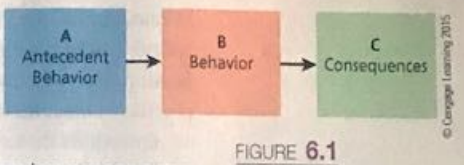

FIGURE 6.1
Functional Assessment: ABC Behaviors

Figure 6.2 illustrates these three behavioral events.

Functional behavioral assessment requires a thorough look at factors that may be contributing to behavioral concerns. Some examples of behavioral concerns are

- When the teacher asks Charlie to read (antecedent event), he begins to disturb others in the classroom by hitting them.
- Jerry swears and uses inappropriate language when asked to do an independent math task.
- Sylvia refuses to copy from the chalkboard in the classroom. Upon further investigation, it is learned that Sylvia has a vision problem and cannot see the board. Rather than admitting that she cannot see, Sylvia refused to copy from the board.
- Cultural factors also must be considered as part of a thorough functional assessment. For example, the teacher, Mr. Jones, demands that the student look at him and give him eye contact when he speaks to the student. Yet in that student's culture, eye contact is a sign of disrespect.

functional behavioral assessment (FBA)
Evaluating a child's behavior problems by analyzing the behavioral unit.

Five important outcomes gained from the functional assessment process are (O'Neill et al., 1997; Fox & Gable, 2004):

1. A clear description of the problem behavior
2. Identification of the events, times, and situations that predict when a problem behavior will and will not occur
3. Identification of the consequences that result in the maintenance of the behavior
4. Development of summary statements or hypotheses that describe the problem behavior, in what situations it occurs, and what maintains the behavior
5. Collection of direct observation data that support the summary statements

Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) Positive behavioral supports are strategies to change a student's troublesome behavior and to increase positive behavior or to replace an undesirable behavior. For example, Charlie is only asked

positive behavioral supports
Positive methods that assist students in learning new ways of behaving.

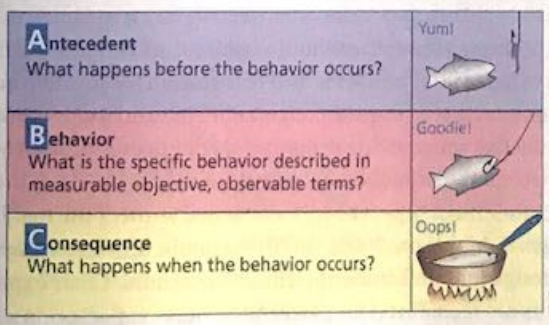

FIGURE 6.2
Example of ABC: Antecedent Event, Behavior, and Consequent Event

to read aloud after he has practiced and prepared to do this task. Charlie's response can be modified by rewarding him when he responds in a more suitable fashion. Jerry signs a contract to respond using appropriate language. These positive behavioral supports are based on strategies of behavior management.

Questions that should be asked to develop positive behavioral supports include (1) What happened? (2) What happened before? (3) What happened after? (4) How can the student's response be changed? What can the adult do to assure that the adult is encouraging the student to engage in appropriate behavior? The steps for developing positive behavioral supports include (1) collecting and reviewing the student's background information and data, (2) functional behavioral assessment, and (3) writing a plan to change the student's behavior (Buck et al., 2000). A website for positive behavioral supports can be found at *http://www.pbis.org/main.htm.*

IDEA-2004 stipulates that if a child's behavior impedes the child's learning or the learning of others, the IEP shall consider strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, to address the behavior. Positive behavioral support as a general term refers to the culturally appropriate applications of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavior change (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Strategies to implement positive behavioral interventions include

- A desirable replacement behavior should be taught to the student. For example, if the student throws a math book, an alternative math assignment could be given so that the student is successful in completing a math assignment.
- Modify the environment to increase the effectiveness of the replacement behavior. For example, the student would receive a consequence for throwing the book such as being removed from the math class but the student would still be expected to complete the math assignment in a different setting.
- Throughout the process, the student must be taught the appropriate behaviors and must be recognized positively for engaging in those behaviors.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a nationwide project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Center to establish school-wide systems that are based on positive recognition of appropriate behavior. Current updates on that project can be found on the website at *http://www.pbis.org/main.htm.*

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) Throughout the country, schools are being encouraged to promote positive learning climates for their students. School-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) is a proactive school-wide approach that addresses the entire school as well as individual students. It focuses on prevention of behavioral problems and recognition for positive actions of students. In this approach, school-wide data is collected and used to make decisions and plan an effective school wide program, students are taught the behavioral expectations within the school and are recognized for meeting those expectations, and a continuum of supports are established to meet the needs of students (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009). In PBIS schools, universally designed interventions are designed for all students within the school. Clear expectations are set and students are recognized for performing those expectations. Students are

school-wide positive behavior support
A process used within the entire school that is based on identification of problem behaviors through data collection, clear expectations for appropriate behavior, and recognition of positive behaviors.

taught the expectations. They may get special tickets that are good for a drawing or can be cashed in for special prizes. For those students who need more than the universally designed interventions, secondary interventions are put into place. The student may need more individual attention, may need additional interventions, or may need a closer look at the reasons for the behavior. There will be those students who fail to respond to either universal or secondary interventions and those students will need tertiary interventions. They may need to be referred for a comprehensive case study evaluation that includes a thorough functional assessment. They may need additional support services such as those offered by a school social worker or a school psychologist.

6.4c Specific Functions of Behavior

Behavior is communication, and our job as educators is to ascertain what the student is telling us. By recognizing the function of the student's behavior, the educator can change either the antecedents or the consequences in order to meet the need of that student. Function-based interventions can make meaningful and lasting change (Gage, Lewis, & Stichter, 2012; Lane et al., 2006; Liaupsin et al., 2006). In order to assess the function of the behavior, it is important for the general educator and the special educator to work collaboratively. Oftentimes it is difficult for a teacher to see the function of the behavior because he or she may be too close to the situation and can't always see what is driving the behavior. However, another individual may be able to see the function of the behavior more clearly.

The general educator may not have the time to collect the necessary data on how many times a student engages in a specific behavior and at what times of day and during what specific academic activities a behavior is occurring. If the special educator can take the time to observe in the classroom and collect the data, it assists the team in determining appropriate behavioral interventions.

The major purposes of behavior are described below.

Purpose of Behavior 1: Access Some examples of engaging in a specific behavior to gain attention, power, and control are:

Example 1: Jerry likes to get attention from the teacher and has learned that he can get attention by getting out of his seat without permission. Each time Jerry gets out of his seat, the teacher tells him to sit down (thus giving Jerry attention for inappropriate behavior). A teacher can meet this need for attention by changing the consequence. If the teacher gives Jerry attention when he is sitting in his seat, the teacher is meeting his need for attention.

Example 2: Sammy wants access to power and control, and he gets that power and control by bullying other students. With the increase in bullying in the schools, it is critical that educators look at the function of bullying behavior and recognize that students may be engaging in such behaviors in order to gain power and control. In this example, the teacher can change antecedents that result in Sammy getting power and control for appropriate behavior rather than the inappropriate behavior of bullying. The teacher can build in choices in assignments. Sammy can do his assignment with a blue pen or a red pen, or Sammy can choose any 10 math problems, or Sammy can be provided opportunities to do assistive work with another student.

Purpose of Behavior 2: Escape/Avoidance Engaging in a specific behavior to avoid doing a task because the student fears embarrassment or failure. Students may engage in specific behaviors because they think that the task is too difficult for them or there is too much of the task. Questions that teachers should ask when they suspect that the student is trying to escape a task are

Is the task at the appropriate level for the student? Is the student embarrassed in front of his or her peers? Most students do not want their peers to know that they cannot complete a task so rather than embarrass themselves, they may engage in inappropriate behaviors that allow them to escape the task.

Can the student read the assignment? Does the student understand the vocabulary used in the assignment? The teacher should look at a task in advance to review the vocabulary and see if the student understands those vocabulary words.

Is there too much to do at one time? Often students are overwhelmed at the sight of a task, such as when there are too many words on a page or too many math problems on the page.

Does the student have emotional feelings about the task? The student may have had a negative experience in a history class previously and therefore wants to avoid doing any task related to history.

Is the physical appearance of the worksheet overwhelming to the student? Is the worksheet crowded with too many different directions or difficult-to-read type?

Does the student understand the directions for the task? Does an assignment take into account the way the student learns best? If the student has an excellent visual memory but is weak in processing auditory information and remembering what he or she hears, the student probably will be frustrated if the student is in a classroom where the teacher uses straight lecture.

In the case of escape/avoidance, the teacher can change the antecedent, specifically the type of assignment, so that the student is able to complete the task. For example, Maria has difficulty with written expression and refuses to write in her journal because written work is difficult for her. The teacher could allow Maria to record her thoughts for the journal into a tape recorder and they could later transcribe the information.

Purpose of Behavior 3: Sensory Stimulation Some students engage in behaviors as a result of sensory overstimulation or not enough sensory stimulation.

Examples: There is too much noise, or the child needs movement, or the child has an oral need to suck on something, or the child is overly sensitive to the feel or texture of certain clothes. Difficulties with touch processing might contribute to clumsiness and awkwardness (Myles et al., 2004). The student might be overstimulated by bright lights or too many details on a sheet of paper (Myles, Adreon, & Gitlitz, 2006). For a description of how FBA drives the behavior intervention plan, see the sample behavioral intervention plan for Jerod in Student Stories 6.4.

Did You Get It?

Suspension or expulsion from school of a child with a disability results in a process known as "manifestation determination." This action is and must be initiated by

a. parents or guardians.
b. school administrators.
c. the IEP team.
d. Child Protective Services (CPS).

6.5 Strategies to Improve Social Competencies

Students who are socially competent learn social skills effortlessly through daily living and observation. Students with social challenges need conscious effort and specific teaching to learn about the social world, its nuances, and its silent language. Just as we teach students to perform academic work (to read, write, spell, do arithmetic, and pass tests), we should teach students with social challenges how to live with and relate to other people.

6.5a Improving the Student's Self-Perception

Scrapbooks can help the students put together information about themselves. The students should include pictures of themselves at different stages of growth, pictures of their families and pets, a list of their likes and dislikes, anecdotes about their past, accounts of trips, awards they have won, and so on. One group of secondary students with social challenges enjoyed making a PowerPoint presentation entitled "About Me."

6.5b Improving Nonverbal Communication

Spoken language is only *one* means of communication. People also communicate by means of a "silent language" that relies on gestures, stance, or facial expressions. Students with social challenges need help interpreting communication messages conveyed by this silent language. We list here some ways of providing this help.

1. **Pictures of faces.** Collect pictures of faces and have the students ascertain whether the faces convey the emotion of happiness or sadness. Other emotions to be shown include anger, surprise, pain, and love.
2. **Gestures.** Discuss the meanings of various gestures with the students, such as waving good-bye, shaking a finger, shrugging a shoulder, turning away, tapping a finger or foot, and stretching out arms.
3. **DVDs, CDs, and story situations.** Find pictures, short DVDs, or story situations in which the social implications of gesture, space, and time are presented, and help the students to identify the emotional content of communication.
4. **What the voice tells.** Help students learn to recognize implications in the human voice, beyond the words themselves, by having the students listen to a voice on a tape to determine the mood of the speaker. Is the speaker happy, sad, or angry? Role playing with different emotions is also effective.

6.5c Cognitive Learning Strategies for Social Skills

Often students with social challenges respond impulsively in social situations. They act without considering what is required, without thinking through the possible solutions, or without thinking about the consequences of various courses of action. Through instruction in the strategies of self-verbalization and self-monitoring, students can be taught self-control to keep from giving immediate, nonreflective responses. Students can learn to ask themselves questions such as "What am I supposed to be doing?" In other words, they are taught to stop and think before responding. Teachers can model social learning strategies by talking out loud with such thoughts as "Does this problem have similarities to other problems I have encountered?" or "What are three possible solutions?" The students then practice these skills of self-verbalization, or thinking aloud.

Cognitive learning strategies instruction is effective for helping students acquire social skills (Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz, 1996; Lenz & Deshler, 2003). Social strategies instruction can change patterns of responses in social situations. When students learn to develop new cognitive responses to social problems, they begin to think about the consequences of social actions. Cognitive learning strategies can teach students: (1) to stop and think before responding, (2) to verbalize and rehearse social responses, (3) to visualize and imagine the effect of their behavior, and (4) to preplan social actions. Including Students in General Education 6.1, "Social Skills," presents several social skills strategies.

Including Students in GENERAL EDUCATION 6.1

Social Skills

- **Judging behavior in stories.** Read or tell an incomplete story that involves social judgment. Have the students anticipate the ending or complete the story. A short video of a social situation provides an opportunity to discuss critically the activities of the people in the video. For example, discuss the consequences of a student's rudeness when an acquaintance tries to begin a conversation, or the consequences of a student making a face when asked by her mother's friend if she likes her new dress, or the consequences of a student hitting someone at a party.
- **Grasping social situations through pictures.** A series of pictures can be arranged to tell a story that involves a social situation. Have the students arrange the pictures and explain the story. Comics, readiness books, beginning readers, and magazine advertisements are all good source materials for such activities. The series can also include pictures that are on transparencies.
- **Learning to generalize newly acquired social behaviors.** After students learn socially appropriate behaviors, they must learn to generalize these behaviors to many settings, such as an inclusive classroom, the home environment, playgrounds, and other social situations. Students need many opportunities to practice and maintain newly acquired skills. Collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers is needed to make plans for generalizing in inclusive classrooms.
- **Learning conversation skills.** Students must learn how to converse with others. They must learn how to extend greetings, introduce themselves, find a topic to talk about, listen actively, ask and answer questions, and say good-bye.
- **Friendship skills.** Students must learn how to make friends, give a compliment, join group activities, and accept thanks.
- **Game-playing skills.** Social skills can be taught to students through the activity of playing games with others. The instruction involves social modeling, behavioral rehearsal, and behavior transfer while playing games.

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Did You Get It?

After Annabelle is taught appropriate, positive, and constructive behaviors and she begins to acquire them, the next, critical step is

a. learning situational specificity of these new behaviors.
b. challenging the validity of these new behaviors.
c. generalization of the behaviors across situations and settings.
d. discussing these behaviors in-depth and formally contracting to display them regularly

6.6 Strategies for Students With Emotional Challenges

Student accomplishments can increase the ability to learn and strengthen emotional outlook. Successful experiences build feelings of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-respect. Teachers should help students accomplish an educational task so that their feelings of self-worth and self-esteem are enhanced. The beginning of a mutual reinforcement cycle is also the beginning of effective treatment (Silver, 2006). Teaching Tips 6.1, "Strategies for Improving Self-Esteem," offers ways to build self-esteem.

TEACHING TIPS 6.1

Strategies for Improving Self-Esteem

- Build a *rapport* with the student. Teachers can provide a type of therapy through skilled and sensitive clinical teaching. Try to gain the student's confidence and show sincere interest in the student.
- Provide students with tasks at which the students will be successful.
- Provide positive feedback and rewards for student successes.
- Find the student's areas of interest or hobbies and try to build lessons on these interests.
- Show enthusiasm with the student's successes.
- Make learning fun and enjoyable.
- Find ways to visually show that the student is learning by using charts or graphs.
- Use an approach such as *bibliotherapy,* a technique to help students understand themselves and their problems through books with characters that are learning to cope with problems similar to those faced by the students. By identifying with a character and working out the problem with the character, students are helped with their own problems. Books designed to explain the learning problem to the students are also useful.
- Engage the students in *circle time* activity in which *participants* are seated in a circle and are encouraged to share their feelings, learn to listen, and observe others. The program seeks to promote active listening, focus on feelings, give recognition to each individual, and promote greater understanding. Sample magic circle topics include "It made me feel good when I . . . ," "Something I *do very* well is . . . ," and "What can I *do for* you . . .?"
- Use art, dance, music, and other *creative media* as therapy techniques for promoting emotional involvement.

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Did You Get It?

"_____" utilizes characters and situations from literature, characters who are dealing with the same issues as your student, and situations commonly encountered by your student to increase self-esteem and self-awareness.

a. Characterization awareness
b. Literatherapy
c. Literary infusion
d. Bibliotherapy

6.7 Strategies for Students With Behavioral Challenges

Many students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities display disruptive or antisocial coping behaviors when they are faced with challenging and frustrating work. In this section, we discuss a variety of instructional strategies for students with behavioral challenges. Including Students in General Education 6.2, "Behavioral Challenges," offers some strategies for helping students with behavioral challenges in general education classes.

Including Students in GENERAL EDUCATION 6.2

Behavioral Challenges

- Seating placement. Seat the student in a place with minimal extraneous distraction and where you can readily ascertain if the student is attentive. Place the student away from windows and doors.
- Plan varied activities. Modify the classroom routine to enable the student to get up and move around the classroom periodically. Have the student pass out papers or put books away.
- Provide structure and routine. Establish a routine and follow it each day. If something unusual occurs, prepare the students by explaining what event will happen and when the event will occur.
- Require a daily assignment notebook. The assignment notebook helps the students to organize time, know what is to be done, and designate when it has been accomplished.
- Make sure you have the student's attention before you begin. Use an attention signal, such as a hand sign or eye contact to gain the student's attention.
- Make directions clear and concise. Directions should be consistent with daily instructions. Simplify complex directions and avoid multiple commands. State directions in a positive way. "I need you to start your math" is an example of a positive, short direction.
- Break assignments into workable chunks. If workbook or assignment sheets are cluttered and confusing, adapt them by breaking them into smaller parts. Less material will be on the page, and the material will be better organized. Give extra time as needed. Some students may work at a slower pace and may require extra time to complete the task. Teach students how to manage the time that is provided.
- Provide feedback on completed work as soon as possible.
- Encourage parents and families to set up appropriate study space at home.
- Make use of learning aids. Many students enjoy using computers, calculators, and other learning aids.
- Find something that the child does well and encourage that interest.

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6.7a Developing an Effective Behavioral Intervention Plan

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed conducting a functional behavioral assessment to determine a behavioral intervention plan. Sometimes school personnel do a thorough job of functional assessment, but then create a "one size fits all" behavioral intervention plan. The behavioral intervention plan should be based on the individual needs of the student. Student Stories 6.4, "A Behavioral Intervention Plan for Jerod," gives an example of how a behavioral assessment can be used to develop a behavioral intervention plan.

6.7b Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

Children may feel threatened, or even defeated, by the demands placed on them in school. Students crave a sense of competence and achievement, which can be theirs when educators provide the right structure for success (Johns, 2004). A positive classroom environment is important in the process of conducting a positive behavioral intervention plan. Teaching Tips 6.2, "Strategies for Creating a Positive Environment," offers methods for achieving this goal.

Errorless Learning Techniques Errorless learning techniques offer students the chance to succeed by accentuating what the students do well. Two strategies that result in errorless learning are fading and backward chaining. These instructional strategies require conducting a task analysis on the activities that are expected.

fading
A gradual removal of supports

backward chaining
The teacher gradually constructs a backward chain, or a chain in reverse order from that in which the chain is performed.

In the strategy called *fading*, the teacher gives the student maximum cues to begin with and then fades those cues away until the student is able to do the task on his or her own (Johns, 2004). For example, if the student is learning cursive writing, the teacher can provide a model of the letter to be written and the student merely traces over the letter. The teacher then reinforces the student for writing the letter. When the student is able to do this, the teacher can then prepare a model with dotted lines and the student traces over the dotted lines. The teacher then reinforces the student with praise. The last step is for the student to write the letter on his or her own. Let's look at an example of fading used to increase middle school and high school students' compliance with classroom rules. When students switch from class to class, it is sometimes difficult for them to comply with different teachers' rules. Perhaps one teacher expects students to raise their hand before speaking; another teacher is not concerned with that behavior. Middle school and high school teachers should have their rules posted in an obvious spot in the classroom. This is an excellent visual prompt for students. During the first two weeks of school, each teacher reviews the rules of his or her classroom. When students comply with the rules, the teacher remembers to thank them for doing so. After the first two weeks, the teacher fades his or her verbal prompt and simply points to the rules and reminds the students of the importance of following the posted rules. The teacher again thanks students for following the rules and may write a short personal note to students who have followed the rules. After the first month of school, the teacher leaves the rules posted but no longer provides a verbal reminder. However, the teacher continues to positively reinforce students who follow the rules but does not do so as often as he or she did the first month of school.

On page 177, you will find an explanation of the importance of a behavior intervention plan and reference to the plan that has been created for Jerod.

TEACHING TIPS 6.2

Strategies for Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of Students

1. **Model positive and peaceful behavior.** The teacher is a positive role model for the students—do as I say and as I do. At least 70% of comments that the teacher makes to students must be positive comments (Johns & Carr, 2009). Work to ensure that the student is treated respectfully because reprimanding a student in front of his or her peers is not respectful. Praise should be specific to the behavior desired. For example: "Thank you for raising your hand"; "I like the way you waited in line quietly"; "Thanks for walking in the halls." If the student gets something wrong, the teacher should utilize the opportunity to reteach the skill rather than reprimand the student.
2. **Provide routine, structure, and organization within the classroom.** Students need routine and structure so that they know what will happen and when it will happen. The teacher should provide a written or picture schedule that is posted in a highly visible place so students know what will happen and when. If the schedule is going to be changed during the day, the teachers should prepare students for that change and reward them for making the adjustment. For students with problems with organizational skills, teachers should help them become better organized. A good motto is "A place for everything and everything in its place." The more we can provide labels for where items go, the better it is for the student. At the same time, we are teaching the student a useful life long skill.
3. **Establish clear expectations in the classroom.** Teach expectations for classroom behavior, and be firm, fair, and consistent in fulfilling the expectations. Rules or expectations should be kept short and simple, and they should be based on observable behaviors. For example: "Raise your hand before speaking"; "Keep your hands to yourself"; "Walk quietly in the hall." Post rules as a reminder for students. Picture cues are effective for students who have difficulty reading; post written hallway rules with simple pictures alongside them as a visual reminder. Spend time teaching the students the meaning of the rules and providing examples. Provide reinforcement to those students who *do* follow the rules. Expectations are meaningless if they are not backed up with reinforcement for compliance and consequences for noncompliance (Johns & Carr, 2009; Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005).
4. **Create an environment of caring and success.** Set the students up for success by utilizing errorless learning techniques (discussed in the next section). Our job as educators is to show students that we genuinely care about them and that we are their cheerleaders for success. Establish high expectations and show them that they have many strengths on which they can capitalize. It is critical that we provide supports to our students, learn about their lives, and reflect frequently on our role in developing a caring relationship with our students. The way that the teacher interacts with students during the initial stages of relationship building is a determining factor in promoting either a positive or a negative relationship (Mihalas et al.,2009).
5. **Understand and respect the diverse cultures and backgrounds of students in the class.** Help students foster pride in their cultural backgrounds. Create lessons in diversity based upon the students' backgrounds, neighborhoods, and life experiences (Johns, Crowley, & Guetzloe, 2002).
6. **Make the classroom as physically appealing and beautiful as possible.** The classroom should be an inviting place where the students want to be. Little things such as real or silk plants can give the classroom a beautiful look. Rocking chairs offer the students an opportunity to move while they read. A reading corner with comfortable chairs may be more inviting for a student to go to read. Lamps will give the room a softer light.

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In *backward chaining,* the teacher gradually constructs a backward chain, which is a chain in a reverse order from that in which the chain is performed. The last step is established first; then the next to the last step is taught and linked to the last step (Martin & Pear, 2003; Johns, 2004). An example of backward chaining occurs in teaching a student to tie shoes. The teacher does all of the steps except pull the bow. The student does that and is praised for doing so. The student then does the last two steps, and so forth.

STUDENT STORIES 6.4

A Behavioral Intervention Plan for Jerod

Jerod is a fifth-grade student with learning disabilities who is very resistant to completing math assignments. When the teacher presents him with a worksheet to complete in math (antecedent), he rips the paper up and throws it on the floor each time (behavior); the teacher then sends Jerod to the office (consequence). The function of the behavior is escape—Jerod actually has done a good job of communicating that he doesn't like to do math worksheets, and he has learned that if he rips the paper up he will be sent to the office. The functional assessment showed that Jerod does have the skills to do fifth-grade level math work but worksheets are difficult for him because of visual-motor perception difficulties. He is easily overwhelmed by a paper with many math problems. However, Jerod has strong computer skills and loves to read books about Superman.

The Behavior Intervention Plan for Jerod

A behavioral intervention plan is created. The replacement behavior desired is the completion of written math assignments at the fifth-grade level. The goal is for him to complete 20 math computation problems with 95% accuracy. The goal is then broken down into benchmarks.

1. Jerod will complete 5 math computation problems with 95% accuracy.
2. Jerod will complete 10 math problems with 95% accuracy.
3. Jerod will complete 15 math problems with 95% accuracy.
4. Jerod will complete 20 math problems with 95% accuracy.

As part of the plan, the teacher agrees to give Jerod only 5 math problems at one time. Each of the math problems will be enlarged so they are easy to read. Jerod is told that when he completes the 5 math problems he will be able to spend 5 minutes reading his book on Superman. A self-management system is also developed in which Jerod is allowed to graph on the computer using the Excel program to show how many math problems he completes each day. When Jerod does 5 math problems successfully, the teacher will add a new problem, gradually working up to Jerod doing 10 math problems.

In this behavioral intervention plan, the Premack principle (first you do this and then you can do that—the process of doing a non-preferred activity followed by a preferred activity) for reinforcement is used, and Jerod's work is rewarded when he successfully completes the math problems. Self-management is built into the system by using Jerod's strength in computers as Jerod graphs his own progress.

In the event that Jerod refuses to do the assignment and throws the assignment on the floor, Jerod will lose the privilege of reading his Superman book, but he will not be sent to the office.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important that a self-management system be built into any behavioral intervention plan?
2. If this plan was not making a positive difference for Jerod after three weeks, what might you do?

Let's look at another example. The teacher is concerned that two young children are not able to play cooperatively together. The teacher wants them to be able to throw a ball back and forth. The teacher decides that she will engage in the game with the two students. She throws the ball back and forth to the students, never expecting the students to throw to each other. She then praises them for playing ball together. She has done all but the last part of the chain. After the students have become accustomed to doing that, she then throws the ball to each student and they throw it back to her. She then throws the ball to one of the students and expects one of the students to throw the ball to the other student and the other student is to catch it. She then praises both students. In the next step, she throws the ball to one of the students—he catches it and throws it to the next student and then throws the ball to the teacher. In the next step, the teacher begins the game by throwing the ball to one student who throws it to the other student and they throw it back and

forth—teacher is praising the students for playing together. In the last, the teacher removes herself completely from the game and the students throw it back and forth.

6.7c Restructuring Academic Work to Make It User Friendly

The following ideas are designed to restructure academic tasks to make them less intimidating and more fun for the student.

Build choice into assignments to give students power and control. For example, allow students to choose *where* they work on the assignment or *what color* pen is used. Structure two or more different assignments and allow students to choose which assignment they want to do. Allow students to choose the order in which they perform the assignment. Research shows that building in choices about curricula results in higher rates of on-task behavior and work completion (Strout, 2005; Jolivette et al., 2002). Further, when a preferred task is assigned rather than a non-preferred task, students have a higher level of engagement (Cole et al., 1997). In a study of students' academic choices and their impact on academic performance, it was found that students who had significant cognitive or behavioral problems benefited more under conditions of student choice than experiments with general education students. For general education students, factors that may moderate the impact of student choice include the nature of the task, the background of the students, and feedback during the performance of the task (Von Mizener & Williams, 2009).

Use response cards. Response cards serve to increase student opportunity to respond and provide a high degree of academic engagement. For example, teachers often ask questions when instructing a group. Students who know the answers raise their hands, whereas students who don't know the answers look down and hope the teacher does not call on them. Instead, the teacher can utilize a variety of response-card strategies. For example, the teacher can give each student a small white board, an index card, or a small blackboard. When the teacher asks the question, all of the students write down what they believe is the answer. After sufficient wait time, the teacher asks the students to hold up their answer. When instructing with new material, elicit four to six responses a minute from students who should then be able to respond with 80% accuracy. Increasing opportunities to respond has a positive effect on academic outcomes and classroom behavior (George, 2010; Blood, 2010; Haydon et al., 2009; Lambert et al., 2006; Council for Exceptional Children, 1987; Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, 2003).

Use traveling assignments for worksheets. Instead of giving a student a worksheet with 100 math problems, cut the worksheet into strips and tape the strips up around the room. Students take a clipboard around the room and answer the questions. This activity has the advantage of breaking the task down into small steps and allowing students to move as they complete the assignment.

6.7d Self-Management Strategies

self-management
Using behavior strategies to take charge of one's own activities

Teach students to manage their own behaviors at any early age. Self-monitoring during independent seatwork can improve student accuracy in computation of basic math skills (Hodge et al.,2006). Learning self-management fosters

independence for students and discourages the sense of helplessness. The following steps can help students with self-management (Little, 2000).

- Identify the behavior(s) that the student will monitor or evaluate. Make sure that the behavior description is written in Measurable, Observable, and Objective terms (MOO).
- Clearly state the expectations by which students will judge their own performance.
- Use a contract for self-monitoring, in which students define positive behavior, how it will be monitored, and how it will be rewarded.
- Make random checks to gauge the accuracy of student-completed forms.
- Provide specific praise and corrective feedback.

Another effective self-management strategy is goal setting. Following are steps for teaching this strategy.

goal setting
The teacher models setting a goal. Teacher helps student in setting a goal. Students set the goal and monitor progress toward the goal.

1. First, teachers model the strategy by writing a goal for themselves for a short period. Depending on the level of the student, the teacher may want to set a goal for a half day.
2. Then the teacher assists the student in writing a goal for a half day. At the end of the designated time period, the teacher and the student evaluate if each has met the established goal. As the student gets accustomed to the process of goal setting, the teacher can then have the student write a goal for the entire day.
3. Eventually students should write a goal for the week and monitor their progress each day.

6.7e Positive Strategies for Passive-Aggressive Behaviors

Some students may exhibit passive-aggressive behavior. For example, aggression is exhibited through their refusal to do something. They can make adults angry because they just do not do what is expected of them. What is passive-aggressive behavior?

passive-aggressive behavior
A student shows aggression by refusing to do something.

- Simultaneous, combined passive and aggressive behavior that is both conforming and irritating to others
- Behavior that is more destructive to interpersonal relationships than aggression
- Acts of passive aggression that are covert, insidious, and could last a lifetime
- Anger that is expressed indirectly (Long & Long, 2002)

When a student thinks the specific academic tasks are too difficult, or the student just decides that he or she is not going to do the task, the teacher may react by becoming very angry. Even though the student has not acted out overtly, the student's behavior has brought out overt aggression on the part of the adult. The following strategies can help teachers proactively deal with passive-aggressive behavior:

Recognize that the student is engaging in passive-aggressive behavior. For example, Randy pretends that he does not understand what is to be done or that he did not hear the directions. Teachers should be very clear in giving directions so that the student understands what to do. It helps to provide visual cues along with directions.

Avoid engaging in "begging" behavior. For example, the student sits and will not do the task. The teacher knows that the student is able to do the task. The teacher asks the student to get the task done multiple times. The student further avoids doing the task, seeing that the teacher is getting upset. Provide clear directions no more than two times. When the student does what the teacher wants the student to do, the teacher should praise the student for the effort.

Acknowledge normal feelings of anger. Long & Long (2002) suggest these steps: (1) Recognize that you are feeling angry toward the student but do not express your anger through aggressive and passive-aggressive behavior to the student; (2) Talk to yourself reminding yourself that you will not allow the student to get to you and that you should stop and count to 15 to yourself to calm yourself down. It is important to remember that if the student is not going to do a task, you cannot make him or her do it; and (3) establish some specific routines that increase the likelihood that the student will perform the task. The following interventions help deal with feelings of anger.

- **Use an "I" message.** For example, the teacher might say "I am having difficulty dealing with your behavior right now. I need to wait a few minutes. We need to discuss this situation but not right now."
- **Request that the student start a task.** If a student engages in passive-aggressive behavior when the teacher tells the student to get the entire task done, the student may become overwhelmed and, in all probability, will not complete the task. Instead, just ask the student to start the task.
- **Provide power and control by giving assignments that incorporate choices.** Give two assignments and ask the students to choose one. Or the students can choose when or where they do a certain task.
- **Utilize behavioral momentum.** Prior to giving a difficult task, the teacher can give the student an easy task to do (one that the teacher knows the student will be able to do successfully). When the student completes the task, the teacher reinforces the student for completing the task. The teacher then gives another task to the student that is easy for the student to do. When the student completes the task, the teacher provides a reinforcement. The teacher then gives a more difficult task. Students will be more confident that they can do the task because they have gained momentum by successfully doing the simpler tasks. This technique is called behavioral momentum.

behavioral momentum
Before giving a student a difficult task, give the student at least two easy tasks. The student gains confidence by completing the easy tasks and gains momentum to accomplish a more difficult task.

Did You Get It?

A teaching technique in which a teacher initially provides frequent cues, only to diminish those cues incrementally as the student becomes more task aware and adept is

a. attenuation.
b. fading.
c. prompting regression.
d. hint mitigation.

6.8 Behavior Management Strategies

Students with behavioral challenges can benefit from behavior management strategies. Many teachers intuitively use many behavior management procedures, but precise application of behavior management requires that the procedures are systematic and that the behaviors to be changed are observable and measurable. In the following sections, we describe several behavioral management activities.

6.8a Contingency Contracting

The *contingency contract* is a written agreement between the student and the teacher. An example of a contingency contract is shown in Figure 6.3. The idea that something desirable can be used to reinforce something the student does not wish to do is the essence of contingency contracting. This method is also called "Grandma's Rule" because grandmothers are alleged to promise, "If you finish your vegetables, you can have your dessert." For example, Dave, who likes to play ball, is allowed to play after he finishes his spelling work. Another name for this procedure is the Premack principle, which is based on the premise that a nonpreferred activity is reinforced with a preferred activity. As an example, the student does not like doing math problems but loves to color in a coloring book. If the student completes 5 math problems, he can color for 1–2 minutes. For an older student who likes to draw or listen to his iPod, the student can do a set number of math problems and then can have 5 minutes to draw or listen to music.

contingency contracting
A behavioral management strategy that entails a written agreement between the student and the teacher stating that the student will be able to do something he or she wants if he or she first completes a specified task

premack principle
The principle where a student must complete a non-preferred activity and then is allowed to do a preferred activity for a specified period of time

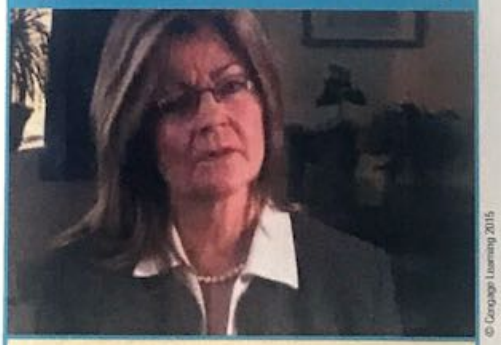
time-out
A behavior management method in which a child is removed from a group for a short period of time

6.8b Time-Out

Time-out is a procedure in which a disruptive student is removed from the instructional activities and placed in a designated isolated area for a short period of time. Isolation does not have to be complete to be effective, but it does need to remove the student from the group. Time-out can be a powerful technique to manage disruptive behaviors in children, but it should be used cautiously. If implemented properly, time-out offers an effective means of managing behavior. Several conditions will increase the likelihood of success with this method (Johns & Carr, 2009; Alberto & Troutman, 2003):

- Time-out should be brief, from 1 to 5 minutes, with young children requiring the least amount of time. A common rule of thumb is no more than 1 minute for every year of the child's age.
- During a time-out, the teacher and the other children should ignore the student.
- Actively assist the student's return from time-out by directly engaging the child in ongoing activities (Groteluschen, Borkowski, & Hale, 1990; McGrady, Lerner, & Boscardin, 2001).
- Time-out is only effective if the teacher also reinforces the child when the child is engaging in the appropriate behavior. As an example, the teacher

TeachSource Video Case Activity



Watch the TeachSource Video Case entitled "Classroom Management: Handling Students With Behavior Problems." In this video case, a team of school professionals is trying to better understand Peter's behavior.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think were the antecedents of Peter's behaviors in both of the classrooms?
2. Because behavior is communication, what do you think Peter was trying to communicate with his behavior?
3. What were some of the positive interventions that were utilized with Peter?

FIGURE **6.3**
Contingency Contract

Bryce is a sixth grade student who refuses to take his assignment notebook home with him at night and to return it to school. He takes his books home but not his assignment notebook and as a result he doesn't know what to do and his parents don't know what to do to assist him. Bryce is in general education classes and the remainder of his day is in a special education classroom. His special education teacher has exposed him to a variety of types of assignment notebook and Bryce likes the one he has but doesn't take it home. He leaves the special education classroom at the end of the day with the notebook and his books but the notebook does not get home. It is found that he hides it in his locker on his way to the bus. Bryce loves to draw but has been losing his drawing time because he has to complete makeup assignments. The special education teacher, the general education teachers, the principal, Bryce, and his mother meet to create a contract for Bryce as follows:

CONTRACT BETWEEN BRYCE AND HIS TEACHERS

This contract is an agreement that each evening Bryce agrees that he:

1. will take his assignment notebook home with homework assignments recorded and the books he needs
2. complete all of his homework assignments, and return the assignments the next day completed.
3. Books and the assignment notebook will be returned.

Each day that Bryce returns the above completed items to his special education teacher first thing in the morning, his special education teacher agrees to give him the following:

1. 20 minutes of free drawing time.

Each week that Bryce has returned all of the items each day, Bryce will receive a coupon to excuse him of his choice of one homework assignment from his classroom teachers.

Signed:

Student _____

Parent _____

Special Education teacher _____

Classroom teachers _____

_____

_____

_____

Building Principal _____

Date:

This contract will remain in effect for the remainder of the school year.

may have decided to use time-out because the student is engaging in an inappropriate behavior with a peer—the student has taken an item away from a peer or the student has made a negative comment to a peer. Time-out will not work unless the teacher also reinforces the student when the student shares an item with a peer or engages in appropriate and respectful conversation with a peer (Johns & Carr, 2009).

- Seclusionary time-out—time out where the student is removed to a separate room—should be used very cautiously and only as a last resort when other means of time out have been exhausted. An increasing number of states have laws and regulations that govern its use and those must be followed. Be sure to research those laws and regulations as well as your school board's policy before implementing any type of seclusionary time out.

6.8c Cognitive Behavior Modification

cognitive behavior modification
A self-instructional approach to learning. It requires individuals to talk to themselves out loud, give themselves instruction on what they should be doing, and reward themselves verbally for accomplishments.

Cognitive behavior modification is a self-instructional approach to learning. It requires that individuals learn to motivate themselves through (1) talking to themselves aloud, (2) giving themselves instruction on what they should be doing, and (3) rewarding themselves verbally for accomplishments (Meichenbaum, 1977). Cognitive behavior modification stresses techniques that give students the tools to control their own behavior (Robinson, 2007; Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009).

The self-instructional cognitive behavior modification program involves the following steps:

1. First, the teacher models or performs a task while talking to himself or herself aloud as the students observe.
2. The students then perform the same task while talking to themselves, under the teacher's guidance.
3. The students quietly whisper the instructions to themselves while going through the task.
4. The students use inner (or private) speech while performing the task.
5. Finally, the students self-monitor their performance by telling themselves how they did. For example, "I did well" or "Next time I should slow down."

Cognitive behavior modification has often been used with adults in such settings as weight-loss programs. Students with learning problems can use the procedure for all kinds of learning, schoolwork, and homework. The goal of cognitive behavior modification is not only to change the person's behavior, but also to increase the person's awareness of his or her behavior and the thinking associated with the behavior.

6.8d Using Reinforcements

reinforcement theory
A behavioral concept of learning based on using rewards or reinforcement.

behavior management
Using behavioral strategies to direct an individual's activity in an appropriate manner.

reinforcement
An event following a response that increases the likelihood that the person will make a similar response in similar situations in the future.

Reinforcement theory offers a major tool for behavior management. The use of reinforcements provides an important strategy for teaching students appropriate behavior and for managing behavior. Reinforcements are used to increase or to change behavior. By identifying reinforcements that a student wants, teachers can construct a reward system that will promote the desired behavior. Positive and immediate reinforcements are the most effective in fostering the desired behavior. Stars, stickers, raisins, tokens, points, praise, flashing lights, or simply the satisfaction of knowing that the answer is correct are common reinforcers. Examples of reinforcements:

- After Annette reads five pages, she receives *two tokens that are exchangeable for a small toy.*
- In teaching reading to Serena, the desired behavior is having her say the sound equivalent of the letter *a* every time a stimulus card with the letter *a* is shown. For each correct response, Serena immediately receives a positive reinforcement, such as *a piece of low-sugar cereal, stars, points, praise,* or *attention.*

To use reinforcements successfully, the teacher must

1. Identify potential reinforcers that will motivate the student and accelerate performance on a specific task.
2. Identify the student's responses or behaviors that should trigger the reinforcer. Responses and behaviors must be observable and clearly defined.
3. Arrange the environment so that the student receives reinforcement for the desired behavior. A reward system should be devised so that

reinforcements are offered on a predetermined schedule for the desired behaviors.

4. Eventually, have the student make independent instructional decisions, such as making corrections and establishing reinforcement values. Including the student in the modification of the reward system is helpful as the student is moved to a system of naturally occurring reinforcers.

Teaching Tips 6.3, "Finding Reinforcers," offers ideas on finding appropriate reinforcers.

6.8e Home-School Coordination

home-school coordination
A behavior management strategy for helping a child learn. Progress at school is reinforced at home.

Programs of home-school coordination are intended to improve the behavior of students by combining school and home efforts. Behavioral goals are established for the student, and each day the teacher indicates the goals the student has met. These behavior-management sheets are sent home, signed by the parent to acknowledge the teacher's comments, and then returned to the school. The student is reinforced at home for the positive behaviors displayed at school. As educators work to establish a positive relationship with the parents, it is important that they recognize the efforts of the parents—when the

TEACHING TIPS 6.3

Finding Reinforcers

The success of behavior management depends upon finding the appropriate reinforcer to increase the target behavior. What is viewed as desirable by one student may hold little interest for another. To find a successful reinforcer, observe the students to see what they choose to *do* in their free time or request such information from the students and their parents. Reinforcers can be *extrinsic,* which is something external, such as food or toys, for older students it might be time to listen to music on the iPod, time to look at an appropriate teen magazine, or time to talk with a friend; or reinforcers can be *intrinsic,* which is something internal, such as the satisfaction of mastering a task. The reinforcement can be social, such as praise or approval from a teacher or parent. A personal note from the teacher can be very reinforcing to an older student and can assist in establishing a positive relationship. It can be a token to be exchanged for a later reinforcement or it can take the form of a privilege. A good reinforcement for any individual is simply the one that works for that individual. Several suggested reinforcements are

- *Foods:* edible seeds, low-sugar cereal, popcorn, raisins, and fruit or fruit roll-ups. If food is used as a reinforcer, the amount should be kept to a minimum. Before considering the use of food, it is imperative that we work with the family to determine whether the child may have specific food allergies to different products. The use of food should always be paired with positive verbal reinforcement—praise—so that the use of food can be faded as soon as possible. Low-calorie and healthy foods are always preferred if they are reinforcing to the student.
- *Play materials:* Baseball cards, toy animals, toy cars, marbles, jump ropes, gliders, crayons, coloring books, clay, dolls, kits, balls, puzzles, comic books, balloons, games, and yo-yos may be appropriate for younger students. Older students may like stress balls, fidgets that twist, pencils or pens that have a particular smell, or baseball or basketball cards.
- *Tokens:* Marks on the blackboard or on the student's paper, gold or silver stars, marbles in a jar, plastic chips on a ring, poker chips, tickets, and washers on a string. Older students like to earn raffle tickets for a drawing at a specific time.
- *Activities or privileges:* Having computer time, presenting at show and tell, going first, running errands, having free time, helping with cleanup, taking the class pet home for the weekend, leading the songs, seeing a video, listening to music, and doing artwork. Older students like getting to leave for lunch a few minutes early or getting to leave for home a few minutes early. Arrangements must be made ahead of time for such privileges. If the school allows cell phones, they may want to earn the privilege of getting to text message for five minutes.

Professional Resource Download

parent helps with homework, when the parent gets the student to school on time each day, when the parent answers notes from the teacher. Parents need to be reinforced for their efforts and appreciate a "Thank you, I really appreciate your support." Below find a true example of an experience one of the authors had:

Michael, a freshman in high school, had come to an alternative school for students with significant behavioral disorders. His mother, a single parent, was working two jobs to support the family of four. Through recognition of Michael's appropriate behavior and many opportunities for his success, Michael became a model student—he had perfect attendance, he thrived academically and emotionally. The author, the principal of the school, would often call his mother to brag about how Michael was doing. The author stressed how much she appreciated all of the cooperation she received from the mother. When Michael's mother would come in for conferences, the author would talk about how she admired the mother for managing to do all that she did. The author established a positive relationship with the mother.

Michael did so well that he was systematically integrated back to his home high school. The time came for the IEP where Michael was returned to his school full-time with consultation services by a resource special education teacher. Michael did well for a few weeks and then started acting up and exhibiting increasing behavior problems; the home school called for a new IEP because they wanted to return him to the alternative school. Further investigation showed that the school was giving positive recognition to Michael but no one had established a positive relationship with Michael's mother. No one was calling her when Michael was doing well. Because her need for positive support was not being met, she began to sabotage his new placement, wanting him to go back to the alternative school. It was critical for the school's guidance counselor and the resource special education teacher to frequently contact the mother to support her. That was all that was needed to resolve the issue.

A sample home-school behavior-management sheet is shown in Figure 6.4.

FIGURE **6.4**
Home-School Behavior Management Sheet

Student: _____ Teacher: _____

Week beginning: _____

Use (S) for satisfactory performance.
Use (U) for unsatisfactory performance.
Use (N) for items that do not apply.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
1. Homework turned in					
2. Began work within 3 min. of assignment					
3. Followed directions					
4. Followed class and school rules					
5. Paid attention to teacher					
6. Raised hand to speak					
7. Other					

If 80% of applicable boxes are checked, the student will receive 20 min of computer time.

Teacher's initials: _____

COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE

	Teacher	Parent
Monday	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____

- Parent signs chart daily
- Child takes chart home daily
- Child returns chart to school daily
- Child receives daily reward

I Have a Kid Who...

MARIO, *a Student With Behavioral Challenges*

Mario recently moved to Jefferson School and he is in the fifth-grade classroom of Mrs. Holden. There is no record that he has received any special education services before. During the first week of class, Mario urinated on another student in the classroom. He also had an incident where he soiled his pants while outside after lunch. He complained to the teacher that the lights were too bright in the classroom. Mrs. Holden went to the principal to see if the principal could get any background information from Mario's previous school. When the call is made, the principal learns that a case study evaluation was in progress but had not been completed because Mario moved. His previous school reported that Mario would become very upset when anyone would get close to him or when he would get dirty. The previous school had received a psychiatric report that Mario has Asperger's syndrome and ADHD.

The school personnel at his new school decide to initiate a case study evaluation. During the parent interview, Mario's mother reports that he is one of two children in the home and his father is unknown to him. Mario's mother is very concerned about how Mario is doing both at home and at school. Mario will not comply with his mother's requests, and he is obsessed with the notion that if he gets dirty, his arms will fall off. He has a special interest in Superman and likes to watch those videos most of the time, if allowed to do so.

While waiting for the case study evaluation, Mrs. Holden continued to work with Mario. On at least five occasions, when a fellow student touched him accidentally, he screamed for three minutes. Mario completes little work in the classroom—only about 20% of all assignments across all subject areas except for math. Mario does like to read but does not like math and refuses to do any math work. His achievement test scores from his previous school show that he is able to do fifth-grade work in reading recognition and comprehension. His math skills are at a third-grade level.

Within the next three weeks, Mario soils his pants 5 more times. Each time he becomes upset, goes into the bathroom, and won't come out until the principal calls his mother to come and get him. Mrs. Holden is frustrated and puzzled. She awaits the IEP eligibility meeting, hoping she will get some help with Mario.

QUESTIONS

1. If you were Mrs. Holden, what would you do to help Mario until the case study evaluation is done?
2. What might Mario's behavior be communicating to Mrs. Holden?
3. How could Mrs. Holden accentuate Mario's strengths within the classroom?

Did You Get It?

"Tommy, if you are able to go each week without becoming verbally abusive to your peers, I will allow you to have extra time to use the binoculars on Friday, something I know you like to do. If you agree, let's draw up a contract." The technique used by the teacher talking to Tommy is _____ contracting.

a. opportunistic
b. exigency
c. contingency
d. circumstantial

Chapter Summary

- An increasing number of students come into today's classrooms with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. These challenges may be related to each other and behaviors exhibited by students may either be internalizing problems or externalizing problems.
- It is critical that we teach students appropriate social skills in order for them to function in today's society.
- There is a relationship between learning difficulties and emotional challenges.
- Behavioral challenges often result in suspensions that disengage students from schools and to prevent such disengagement, schools must utilize functional behavioral assessments and positive behavior supports.
- There are a number of effective strategies to improve social competencies.
- Strategies for students with emotional challenges include strategies for building positive self-esteem.
- Strategies for students with behavioral challenges include the development of behavior intervention plans.
- Effective behavior management strategies include reinforcement, contracting, cognitive behavior modification, and appropriate use of time out.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Why do you think challenges in social skills are called "the most crippling type of problem that a student can have"? What are common indicators of social challenges?
2. Describe functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral supports.
3. What is reinforcement? How can effective reinforcers be identified? What types of reinforcers might be appropriate for adolescents?
4. What academic strategies can be utilized to reduce behavioral problems?
5. Discuss "resiliency." Why is the quality of resiliency important to individuals who have difficulty in learning?

Key Terms

backward chaining (p. 175)
behavior management (p. 183)
behavior momentum (p. 180)
cognitive behavior modification (p. 183)
contingency contracting (p. 181)
externalizing (p. 163)
fading (p. 175)
functional behavioral assessment (FBA) (p. 167)
goal setting (p. 179)
home-school coordination (p. 184)
internalizing (p. 163)
manifestation determination (p. 165)
passive-aggressive behavior (p. 179)
positive behavioral supports (p. 167)
premack principle (p. 181)
reinforcement (p. 183)
reinforcement theory (p. 183)
school-wide positive behavior support (p. 168)
self-management (p. 178)
social skills (p. 160)
time-out (p. 181)