Building Quality ABA Educational Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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→ Click on ‘Resources’ Link
→ Click on ‘Presenters Notes’

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Introductions

Behaviour Management for Children with Autism in the Classroom

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Challenging Features of ASD
Diagnostic criteria
Common challenges in a school setting

Terms you might hear:

Autism: Developmental disorder usually diagnosed within the first 3 years of life. It is manifested in impaired social, cognitive and communication skills, along with restricted repetitive behaviours.

“High Functioning Autism”: Meet criteria for diagnosis of autism, but presentation is not as severe as classic autism.

Asperger’s Disorder: Impaired social skills and restricted repetitive behaviours, but communication intact.

PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified): have some of the features of autism, but do not meet all the criteria.
Description of the disorder

SOCIAL
Rejecting   Tolerant   Awkward

COMMUNICATION
Non-verbal   Echolalic   Atypical

PLAY/LEISURE
Self-Stimulation   Perseverative play   Restricted range of interests

BEHAVIOUR
Aggressive   Tantrums   Passive

Associated Impairments
- Difficulty with perspective taking and understanding others point of view
- Naive, gullible
- Difficulties coping with criticism, feel victimised
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of common sense and problem solving
- Obsessive about topics
- Inflexible and having difficulty coping with change
- Motor skill issues
- Easily stressed and over anxious

What Are We Seeing?
Running off
Aggression
Being the “policeman”
Tantrums
Refusing to do work
Minimal participation
Non-Compliance
Being the “class clown”
Protesting/Whining
Self Stimulatory Behaviour

Common School Challenges
- Understanding complex instructions
- Unstructured situations
- Difficult tasks
- Social situations, especially playground
- Co-operative tasks
- Group learning
- Test taking
- Difficulties coping with criticism, feeling victimized
- Changes in routine
- Working independently
- Fine Motor tasks
- Gross Motor tasks

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

Principles of ABA
Use with individuals who have autism

Principles of ABA
A scientific approach to understanding and changing behaviour for any population

Make a hypothesis
Conduct a systematic trial
Evaluate outcome
**Principles of ABA**

Focus is on observable behaviours, not inferred mental processes

- Allows us to make predictions about effects of environmental events on behaviour
- Only way to definitely evaluate whether change is occurring
- Objectively reduces bias and misinterpretation

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**Application to Individuals with Autism**

Principles of Behaviour Analysis can be applied to teaching individuals with autism

There is a huge evidence base for the effectiveness of behavioural methods in changing behaviour in this population

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**Principles of ABA**

\[ \text{A} \rightarrow \text{B} \leftarrow \text{C} \]

- Antecedent
- Behaviour
- Consequence

We can control what happens at A and C, in order to change B

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**Behaviours are learned**

- When a behaviour is followed by a negative consequence, it is less likely to occur in future
- When a behaviour is followed by a positive consequence, it is more likely to occur again in future

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**Learning How to Learn**

- Engagement
- Attending
- Responding to Instructions
- Compliance
- Understanding the connection between responses and reinforcement
- Waiting
- Discriminating Instructions
- Staying on task for progressively longer periods of time
- Changing responses based on feedback

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**Intervention of behaviour occurs when:**

1. There is a behaviour to excess that needs to be reduced
   
   ...OR...

2. Skills are lacking that we need to teach
A Discrete Trial

A → B ← C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“come here”</td>
<td>child comes</td>
<td>“woah! You did it!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where’s the door?”</td>
<td>points to table</td>
<td>“no, that’s not it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School bell rings</td>
<td>child stays outside</td>
<td>child gets told off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School bell rings</td>
<td>child comes in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“SHHH” gesture</td>
<td>child is quiet for story</td>
<td>story continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“say blow”</td>
<td>“blow”</td>
<td>blows bubbles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reinforcement

“Anything that increases the probability that the behaviour will occur again.”

Where’s your motivation?

e.g. work for love or money?

Reinforcement building

Guidelines of reinforcement

- Reinforcers should be CONTINGENT
- CATCH ‘EM BEING GOOD (10:1)
- Initially reinforcement should occur immediately
- Initially reinforcement should be provided consistently
- Reinforcement should be faded as soon as possible
- Utilise differential reinforcement
- Use age-appropriate reinforcers
- Social reinforcement should be paired with tangibles

Warning !!

Can’t assume what we do is ‘reinforcing’

“A reinforcer isn’t a reinforcer unless it is reinforcing”

i.e. actually increases behaviour

Little Man Tate - tokens

Developing Reinforcers

- Expose to item/activity
- Force rotation to increase variety
- Teach how to use and enjoy
- Pair neutral items with strong reinforcers
- Make yourself a part of the reinforcer
- SELL, SELL, SELL!!

Annie reinforcement building
INSPIRATION!!

Steal these ideas!
Steal other’s ideas!
Unpredictability and novelty greatly enhance reinforcement value!
Don’t be afraid to look ‘silly’!
ALWAYS THINK ABOUT DEVELOPMENT!

Various reinforcement clips

Token Economy

► A ticket or sticker that can be exchanged for a variety of reinforcing items or activities
► Way of delaying the time until student cashes in for reinforcement
► Have fun with development!

More tokens !!!!!!

Functional Behaviour Assessments (FBA’s)

• FBA’s are used in classrooms around the world
• FBA’s are an ABA based tool for understanding behaviour and changing behaviour

• Steps in an FBA:
  - Identify the Antecedents/Behaviours/Consequences
  - List the costs and payoffs
  - Hypothesise on the Function of the behaviour
  - Develop a behavioural plan: Proactive and Reactive
  - Implement the plan, using effective teaching strategies, & evaluate

Step 1: Identify the A-B-C’s

A  ► B  ◄ C
Antecedent  Behaviour  Consequence

Behaviour Management

Functional Behaviour Assessment
Proactive & Reactive Plans
Managing Behaviour in a School Setting
Step 2: List Costs and Payoffs

- Look at the consequences
- What are the costs and payoffs to the child
  - If the costs outweigh payoffs → behaviour will reduce
  - If payoffs outweigh costs → behaviour will increase/maintain

Step 3: Identify the Function

To hypothesise about the likely function of a child’s behaviour is, we need to go back to the A-B-C model.

**PAYOFF:**
- What does the child gain from engaging in the behaviour?
- Out of all the payoffs, what is the most likely to be maintaining the behaviour?
- Therefore, what is the most likely function?

Step 4: Develop a Behaviour Plan

- 2 components to a behavioural plan
  - PROACTIVE – teaching that occurs away from/prior to behaviour
  - REACTIVE – how you deal with behaviour once it has occurred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90%</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEACH APPROPRIATE SKILLS</td>
<td>REACT</td>
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</table>

Step 4: Develop a Behaviour Plan

- **Functions of Behaviour**
  - Attention/Obtain a desire: engage in a behaviour to gain attention (positive or negative), or to access an item.
  - Avoidance/Escape/Reduction of Demands: try to avoid or delay the onset of a demand.
  - Power/Control: child wants to control the situation/you, may be oppositional.
  - Communication: engage in behaviours as they cannot communicate their needs.
  - Frustration/Stress Release: engage in a behaviour in order to release their frustration.
  - Self-Stimulation: engage in repetitive behaviours for own pleasure.

Reactive Strategy Guidelines

1. The absence of disruptive behaviours should be reinforced.
2. The presence of appropriate behaviours should result in even stronger reinforcement.
3. Disruptive behaviours should result in the loss of reinforcement.
4. Disruptive behaviours should result in as little attention as possible. Remain ‘neutral’.
5. If the disruptive behaviour presents a danger to the child or to anyone else then the least intrusive procedure should be implemented.
6. Pick your battles! (it takes two to argue)
7. This is not the time to teach!

Proactive Strategy Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACH</th>
<th>TEACH</th>
<th>TEACH !!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach skills that meet the function of the behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify appropriate replacement skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Break the skill down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use effective teaching strategies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Proactive Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>REPLACEMENT SKILL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Peer Relationships, Appropriate Initiation Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talents/ Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance/</td>
<td>Negotiation, Request Break, Compliance Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of Demands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power/ Control</td>
<td>Choice Making Skills, Compliance Training,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility Training, Appropriate Areas of Control</td>
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</tbody>
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Behaviour Management Guidelines

- Minimise stigma
- Pick your battles !!!
- Clear, calm, neutral
- Consistent
- Decisive
- Planned in advance !!!
- Catch ‘em being good

What’s so bad about bribery?

Bribery = Student is disruptive and then is promised reinforcement if behaviour stops

Problem → it reinforces disruptive behaviour
Problem → child will only comply if promised reinforcer
Problem → it works . . . but not for long

Wanna know the loophole????

Behaviour contract – get in before the disruptive behaviour

“First XXXX, then YYYY”

Specific Behaviour Change Strategies

Reactive Strategies

- Reinforcement (absence)
- Corrective Feedback
- Time-Out
- Extinction
- Logical Consequences

Time out

Time Out = “time out from reinforcement”
Not always necessary to move the student
Not recommended for avoidance or self-stimulatory behaviours!!! **Why not???**
Minimal attention to be given to the student while in “time out”
Extinction

- Pay no attention to the student when a minor problem behaviour occurs, e.g. screeching when you talk to someone else.
- Ignore the behaviour, not the child
- Very difficult (almost impossible) to implement effectively in classrooms
- Not appropriate for Self-stimulatory or avoidance behaviours
- The behaviour will get worse before it gets better
- Examples:
  - Using a whining voice
  - Burping
  - Tapping pen to get reaction
- Works best if paired with reinforcement for absence of behaviour

Logical Consequence

- Consequence that fits the situation
- Use for mild problem behaviours
- Usually involves removal of the toy/activity that is the centre of the problem, e.g. twirling a puzzle piece
- Tell the student what they need to do instead
- Prompt them if necessary to ensure learning
- Examples:
  - Forget hat → not allowed out to recess
  - Playing with book → remove book
  - Hand in poor quality work → repeat task

Video Critique

Watch these video segments
What approach is the teacher using to change behaviour?

Mary Michael, Patrick

Specific Behaviour Change Strategies

Proactive Strategies

- Reinforcement Plan
- Token Economy
- Systematic Desensitisation
- Antecedent Manipulation

Systematic Desensitisation

- Used to alleviate fears and phobias
- Helpful for addressing anxiety based behaviour
- Break down the stressful situation into small steps - create a hierarchy
- Expose the student to the least stressful step on the hierarchy and reinforce them for tolerating it
- Work your way up through the hierarchy systematically
- Examples: haircuts, cutting fingernails, dentist

Antecedent Manipulation

- To anticipate and prevent behaviour by changing a situation
- Change the A in the ABC
- Useful when you want to prevent a dangerous behaviour, e.g. absconding from home/school
Antecedent Manipulation

Examples:
- Seating (e.g. closer to teacher, on aide’s lap during mat time)
- Reducing distractions (partitions, materials, peers)
- Back to the computers/windows
- Marks on floor
- Picture schedules
- More time
- Modified assignments
- Different grading scales
- Cuing attention (e.g. ready cue, call name, proximity)
- Reduced demands
- Student takes turn early, to avoid waiting
- Take clock off wall
- Student leaves group early to prevent disruptive behaviour

Antecedent manipulation does not mean accommodation

Must have a plan to fade

Warning!!

Video Critique

Watch these video segments
What approach is the teacher using to change behaviour?

Mary Michael, Patrick

FBA

- Conduct Steps 1-4 of an FBA for Max
  1: A-B-C
  2: Costs & payoffs
  3: Identify function
  4: Proactive & reactive plans

Step 5: Implement and Evaluate

Hypothesis testing – we’ve taken our best guess at the function of the behaviour
If plan works ➔ we were right
If plan fails ➔ back to the drawing board
  ➔ Maybe the function wasn’t right
  ➔ Maybe the function has changed
  ➔ Maybe the reinforcement for change wasn’t strong enough

Managing Behaviour in the School Setting

- Follow the school policies
- Check in with the teacher
- Minimise stigma
- You don’t have to win the battle, you have to win the war
- Keep everybody safe
- Consider parents/others in vicinity
- Request help for crisis situations
Josef is in Grade 2. He is very intelligent and very chatty! During math times, Josef will wriggle, fidget, touch the teacher’s feet and whiteboard and pens, call out repeatedly and fall onto nearby peers. He laughs when the children tell him to “Stop it!”.

- Reprimands from his teacher stop him for a brief time, but then he starts up again. The teacher feels like she is constantly forced to nag him about his behaviour.
- He is at his worst when the teacher is giving verbal instructions, and at his best when the class is discussing something of interest to him.
- Josef enjoys reading, singing, speaking in public, and having a break from work.

Conduct a FBA and determine how to deal with this behaviour proactively and reactively.

Frustration Tolerance

1) Information Gathering
   - Identify situations that are stressful to the child
   - Arrange situations in a hierarchy

2) While child/situation is as relaxed as possible, expose her to the least stressful situation
   - Provide reinforcement contingent on calm behaviour
   - When child can remain calm for 3+ times, move on to next situation
   - Proceed through hierarchy

3) Teach your child relaxation/stress management procedures
   - Once your child has learned relaxation strategies, prompt her to use them in the moment when minimally stressed
   - Fade prompts rapidly

Objectives of teaching stress management:
- Teach an alternative management response to stress
- Increase child’s tolerance to situations that can provoke stress
- Discriminate the difference between calm and agitated states
- Learn a relaxation technique
- Use relaxation techniques in a variety of places and situations
- Decrease inappropriate behaviours displayed in times of frustration
- Teach self-awareness of emotions and behaviour & learn to regulate emotional response

Considerations
- Lengthy & labour intensive program
- Relaxation is taught away from stressful situations
- Will not fix current behaviours
- Long term benefits, especially in teens
Step 1. Collect information
- Stress Hierarchy
- Calming items/places
- Behavioural escalation

Step 2. Teach the concept of calm
- Label ‘calm’ in the moment

Step 3. Teach Relaxation
Determine a relaxation style:
- Deep breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)
- Guided imagery
- Activity (e.g. rocking chair)
- Object (e.g. stress ball)
- Self-talk
- Yoga

Step 4. Expose to mild stressors
Prompt relaxation response: Priming, Imitation, Direct Instruction
Reinforce calm behaviour

Step 5. Increase independent responding
Fade prompts

Step 6. Systematically expose to higher levels of stress
Mild ➔ Moderate ➔ High

Step 7. Systematically expose to more natural environment
Lighting, distractions, etc.
Using relaxation techniques ‘in vivo’