

Field Experience Reflection Report

Behavior Intervention and Support (70-250)

Foundations of Behavior Intervention and Support (70-570)



Description of Experience

1) *Date and Time:* November 3, 2010 from eight o'clock am to eleven thirty am

2) *Context:* For my field experience, I observed the male section at the North Central Secure Treatment Facility in Danville. Mrs. Sue McDermott escorted me in through a metal detector and then onto the part of the building where the classrooms are set up. She explained to me the building set up and how there is an east and a west wing; east wing being where the girls were present and west wing being where the boys were present. After explaining the set up of the building I sat through a senior presentation of an eighteen year old boy Adam from Lehigh Valley who has been at the treatment center for nine months. From his seniority, he was allowed to pick a project of his own as long as he met the guidelines of an oral presentation rubric. On this rubric was the following: quality of content, presentation style, ability to hold audience interest, visual element (power point, poster, etc.), relevance of project to career goals is clear, and response to questions. All of the elements creating this rubric were based on a scale from one to six, one being unsatisfactory and six being excellent. Once Adam finished his project I sat in a brief team meeting that happens every day before the boys begin class. In this meeting, teachers discussed behaviors of the students from the day before and talked about improvements and discussed options to try to eliminate the problem behaviors, as well. In this meeting, there are five teachers who are in charge of the major subjects such as language arts, math/science, woodshop, history, and health/physical education. Since the boys do not follow a normal school schedule their classroom schedules can vary day to day from numerous times if they are off schedule by ten minutes. As a result from this time limit the boys are constantly kept busy and preoccupied even when rotating to different classrooms. The boys are grouped into four different levels based on behavior and educational performance. The first group is group "L"; in this group, the boys have a high school and college level of performance. The second group is group "I", where the boys have a high school to middle school level of performance. Next, is the third group "O", where the boys have a middle school level of performance. Lastly, is group "N" where the boys perform at a Kindergarten to second grade level. Once the teachers have their team meeting they go upstairs, give the boys a prep talk for a positive learning day, and then they are off into their groups. At all times the boys are watched by teachers and security; during transitions is when behavior has a tendency to be the worst. As a result of this, the boys must follow specific rules, such as standing in line, facing forward, and no talking to make sure problem behavior does not happen even in the slightest way so that safety and security is not compromised. At the end of the day, they have line ups in the hallway where the teachers reinforce them for having a positive day at school and then they are escorted up to the TV room. Once in the TV room the rest of their day is still scheduled even though they are not in class. In the evening is when the boys have free time, meal time, and counseling if the student needs treatment from a guidance counselor. The boys follow this rigorous schedule three days a week and get a four day weekend because of their rigorous schedule.

3) *Population*: Six to twelve boys per class.



Reflections


1) *My general impressions of students with behavioral challenges prior to my visit:*

Since my mother is a special education teacher I have been exposed to individuals with exceptionalities at a very young age. As a result of this, meeting individuals with exceptionalities or even interacting with them has never been awkward or uncomfortable for me. Throughout my own high school experience, in my free period, I would participate in art therapy with the children from my mother's class and enjoyed spending time with them, because they were after all my own peers. With my past experiences with such individuals, my interaction with them sparked my own desire to become a special educator. However, when I observed at secured treatment unit I was surprised because it was a new experience with different individuals that I was not expecting. All of the students that were in class I would consider my peers for the reason that some, if not all were my age or a year younger. I have always worked with children that had minimal functional and communicational skills, so being in an environment where the students with exceptional needs could function, communicate, and be independent was a different experience. My entire perspective changed concerning special education; after I witnessed the learning and living environment that the students were in where I observed I had a heightened curiosity about their life at the treatment unit. The students at the secured treatment unit are from the ages thirteen to nineteen and can stay at a minimum of nine months to a maximum of two years. I was concerned with the students' life after they leave the treatment facility and if the education they receive in the treatment unit was sufficient and pushed them to the best students they could be. Nonetheless, I had to remind myself that I was in an environment where security and safety came before education and treatment. After sitting in classroom to classroom with the different groups I realized that the treatment unit was the perfect place for such students. Both teachers and students had a bond that I do not think the students would have in a normal high school or middle school environment. For the reason that the students were confined to one place, they wanted to be in school and had a desire to be in the classroom learning.

2) *My impressions of the particular students at the site and nature of the educational program of my field experience after my visit:*

a) Behavioral expectations for the students are clearly stated and posted throughout the day and around the classrooms. The schools motto is "Don't assume anything; ask first". With the behavioral expectations, the student must comply so that participation throughout the day is sufficient and they can work in a safe environment. Each student has a daily school report where they must have a minimum of forty- six points or a maximum of fifty points by the end of the day. They get five points in each class and if they do not reach a minimum of forty-six the students do not get free time to play cards and watch TV or have free time in the library. Around classrooms poster are hanging up describing what a "5" looks like and reinforcing proper performance of

behavioral expectations. To receive a five the student must do the following: be silent in line movements, be respectful and use appropriate language one hundred percent of the time, come to class ready to work and bring all materials and assignments, follows all the school norms and expectations without any need for redirection, actively participates in class activities and uses his time wisely, and sits in assigned area with desk in the proper position. If the student does not comply with the school's behavioral expectations their consequence ranges on their problem behavior. For example, if a student receives a time out it is from junk behavior or if the student receives the residential supervision structure it is from consequential problem behavior when the student does not comply to the teachers stop-redirect-reinforce procedure. In spite of this, a student may ask to be given a time out in times where they are going through a difficult time or are stressed and not focused.

b)  Tool 1 was witnessed at some points throughout the day when I was present. The use of Tool 1 was used with a student who was shy, quiet, and seemed to be distant. When the teacher exhibited Tool 1 they always approached the student during free time or during transitions such as line ups before the students left the classroom. Once the teacher engaged interaction with the student the mood of the student was lightened and conversation was casual. For example, the use of Tool 1 that I witnessed was in Ms. Kitty's class during library time. Here, she went over to the student placed her hand on the students shoulder while smiling and making eye contact giving her full attention and asked the student how his little brothers birthday went. He responded with an in depth detail and she ended the conversation by asking him to show her pictures when the student receives them in the mail, and then she was off to assist another student.

Just like Tool 1, Tool 2 was used with the same consistency. For Tool 2 the teachers would always catch the student for being appropriate. Most of the time, the use of Tool 2 was used when the students were focused in the classroom and in lineups in between classes. In the history class, the students had to read out loud an excerpt from their work sheet and then solve the fill in the blanks on their worksheet. The assignment was a collaborative effort from the entire class and when the students got the correct answer the teacher would walk around giving the students verbal praises or a pat on the back clearly stating their acknowledgment for the students' appropriate behavior. During line ups Tool 2 was always expressed by the teacher with a good job or keep up the good work to promote the appropriate behavior that the students were showing when walking in the hallways. If ever a student was caught being appropriate for their positive behavior the teacher would immediately label their praise when reinforcing the students positive behavior.

The use of Tool 3 and Tool 4 was not witnessed since the tolerance levels of the teachers are slightly different than those of a normal school setting. Since the school environment holds safety and security above everything when the students acted out in any way that the teacher disapproved of they were escorted out by security in case their temper escalated into a violent or harmful tantrum. Junk behavior is not always handled this way, nonetheless, if the student was not complying to the planned ignoring pivoting the teacher had to be cautious when dealing with junk behavior in case the student did let their temper escalate. However the use of Tool 3 is used to ignore junk behavior from a

student that is off task. To use Tool 3 the teacher must first reinforce a nearby student for appropriate behavior. Once the student has been provided a positive consequence for their appropriate behavior the teacher then must pivot to the student who was once off task and provide a positive consequence to that student once they start showing appropriate behavior.

Tool 4 is when the teacher needs to first stop the student from continuing the problem behavior, re-direct the student, and then give a positive consequence. The use of Tool 4 is needed when the students behavior is harmful to others or when the student is trying to get attention and while doing so distracting other students from their work. For Tool 4 to be successful the teacher must have a calm attitude, stay physically close to the student, make eye contact with the student, and use appropriate touch. When the teacher spots a student doing problem behavior the teacher must tell the student to stop the specific behavior, re-direct the student to appropriate behavior by telling the student "I want you to do your in class assignment on Ben Franklin" with minimal prompts so that the teacher is not being intrusive in any way. Then, once the student is back on task after given directions the teacher must pause and wait for the student to be on task again, this is when the appropriate behavior should be specifically praised as soon as it happens by the teacher. As a result of the unstable emotions that the students have the use of Tool 4 must be done with caution. The teacher must have a clear understanding of how the student is feeling that day and be mindful of those emotions. If the student does not comply at first to the stop "x" and then redirected to the appropriate behavior by saying you want to the student to do the specified behavior then the teacher must be guarded when they keep reinforcing the student to display positive behavior as a result of the students unstable emotions and their history to unexpectedly lash out in defiance.

c) When using the 4 to 1 ratio the teacher must always plan to give four positive reinforcements for appropriate behavior for every time that student engages in problem behavior. If a student at the secured treatment unit was to engage in problem behavior the teacher would use Tool 4 to correct the problem behavior, but then every time the student was caught for their positive behavior the teacher would give a positive consequence within three to five seconds that the appropriate behavior was recognized with labeled praise. During my visit the 4 to 1 ration was achieved constantly throughout the day even in one instance the teacher had six positive consequences to the students one problem behavior.

d) For a behavioral contract, I was not able to witness one for a current student. However, a behavior contract would be used for a student that was constantly using inappropriate behavior while in the classroom. Behavior contracts are made with other teachers in the school and the student the teachers are having a problem with. Within the behavior contract behavior expectations should be clearly stated so that the student knows just what he should be doing in the classroom. Once the student understands the expectations he has to fill there must be a method for collecting data on the student's behavior. This can be marked by either plus and negative marks. Next, the teacher must pick a time of day; whether it's at the end of each day or each week to assess the progress of the student and his behavior. For example, a good reinforcement procedure would ask the student to earn a maximum of twenty five points and a minimum of twenty points

each week to be able to earn his reward for appropriate behavior. If the student does not meet the twenty to twenty five points there will be consequences, such as the student not earning his daily number of points. On the other hand for exceptional progress there also should be a bonus box for earning the highest amount of points each week continuously. Once the student has reached a bonus the contract can then be re-negotiated with the teachers and student to keep up the progress of appropriate behavior.

e) While doing my field experience I did not get to witness a Functional Behavior Assessment and/or a Behavioral Support Plan with a current student. In spite of this, if a student was to have an FBA it would be comprised of many components based on the student. There are four sections in an FBA the first being the strengths of a student. Strengths consist of what the student is good at or what the student likes to do. Second, are interests that include what types of things the student likes to do and what types of new things the student would like to try. Next, health and well being is taken into account since the physical state of a student is very important in the classroom setting. Within health and well being, any concerns are brought up along with emotional behavior and if the student is religious in any way. Lastly, the quality of life is talked about, as well. Here, the students relationships with friends and family are considered, intimate relationships are looked into, and any observation about the student regarding their satisfaction with opportunities and important decisions they may make in life.

The FBA is a process that involves research in an effort to explain the students problem behavior. With this process, the FBA summarizes assessment results, offers explanations for the students problem behavior, and guides the development of a behavior support plan. Without the FBA, it would be hard to prioritize and define the students problem behavior correctly to organize an efficient BIP. An FBA is needed in order to establish a BIP that has a contextual fit. A person centered BIP allows a more constructive implementation of strategies that relate to the students problem behaviors.

3) Questions that I have based on my field experience:

1. The first question I have is, what happens to such individuals that attend the secure treatment facility once they are done serving their time at the facility? Such as, do they get to attend college or with their education from the secured treatment unit will they ever be able to hold a well paying job?

2. My second concern is what happens to an individual that is not able to be independent after their stay in the secure treatment unit?

3. Next, I did not know if the students are receiving a respectable education and if they are, are the students being pushed to the best students they can be? Since the students have criminal records are their standards of learning not as high?

4. Besides the fact the students at the secured treatment facility, is there a difference in the education they receive versus a normal high school environment?

5. Is the secured treatment unit the best treatment for the students who attend the unit or are there different methods of learning and treatment that are more crucial in the healing and education of such individuals?

6. How much does the student's home life have an influence on their behavior, actions, and education and if their home life was different would they still end up in the secured treatment unit?