

Reducing Disruptive Behavior with Multi-component Intervention Encountering Compliance and Non-Compliance

A tutor is in a position of authority, but it is often obvious to the student that the tutor does not have the power of the teacher. However, tutors must also expect a certain level of behavior from the students that they are working with. When a tutor sets limits for a student, they are helping the student learn to set limits for themselves. When inappropriate behavior is encountered, here are some helpful tips to help influence positive behavior:

- **Focus on the area to improve**

Choose the behavior that is the most disruptive and the one you know the student can change. This will allow the student to experience success.

- **Develop a plan**

The plan should spell out how the student is expected to behave, why it is necessary to change the behavior, and consequences and rewards.

- **Don't begin with a negative attitude**

Sarcasm and put-downs will not encourage students to change their behavior.

- **Don't make empty threats**

Once you have decided on consequences for behavior, you must follow through every time.

The multi-component intervention combines many behavioral management strategies with the goal of decreasing disruptive behavior. The various components typically include token economy and response cost, precision requests, positive reinforcement, and antecedent strategies. The rationale for using a multi-component intervention is based on the assumption that while all the components may be effective when used in isolation, they may be more effective in reducing disruptive behaviors if they are combined. They can also be employed in a variety of tutoring settings.

Specific Strategies Used in Multi-component Interventions

Token Economy and Response Cost

Token economies have been one of the most effective ways to improve classroom behaviors and can be employed in tutoring sessions as well. The basic premise of token economies is that students will be told that they will receive points for the amount of time they can follow the classroom rules. (Other tokens can also be given to students after successfully completing a target behavior). Students should be awarded with points fairly frequently in order to establish a connection between the desired behavior and rewards. Eventually, the frequency should be thinned to a variable interval schedule.

Token economies with response costs can be used to reward good behaviors and to punish bad behaviors. With the response cost procedure, students can lose points for noncompliance with classroom rules. Points are taken away as a consequence for engaging in disruptive behaviors and being non-compliant with teacher requests.

Precision Requests

Precision requests can be used to initiate student compliance, to stop disruptive behavior and to redirect student to appropriate behaviors. Tutors are trained to correctly communicate instructions using a series of steps. The initial command is given using the word “**please**.” The tutor then waits approx. 5 seconds for compliance. If the student complies within the time period, he/she is reinforced. If the student does not comply, a second request is given using the word “**need**” or “**You need to**.” Again, if the student complies with the 5 seconds, he/she is reinforced. If the student does not comply with the request, a reductive technique, such as a timeout or saying “I’m sorry, you’ll have to return to the classroom now,” is administered. Ask only twice. Never give a consequence that you are not willing to make sure happens. In addition, the importance of the five-second waiting period and using the words “please” and “need,” requests should be stated in a calm, quiet, and unemotional tone of voice. Eye contact and close proximity should be maintained throughout the precision request.

Mystery Motivators

Mystery motivators are another element of many multi-component intervention plans. A mystery motivator uses the principles of positive reinforcement to initiate compliance. Very simply, an envelope labeled with a question mark is placed in a visible spot in the tutoring environment. Inside the envelope is a card stating what the student will win (e.g., a pencil, stickers, an opportunity to sit in the tutor’s chair, etc.)

Antecedent Strategies

Antecedent strategies include teacher movement, which allows for increased opportunities of compliance. When using antecedent strategies, tutoring session rules should be stated positively and definitively regarding expected behaviors.

Other examples:

- *use lots of eye contact

- *touch shoulders as you pass by

- *use lots of opportunities to make positive comments/reinforce what is done

correctly

- *monitor continuously- scan, move about

Active Ignoring

Active Ignoring is briefly removing all attention from the misbehaving child.

Active Ignoring weakens such behaviors as whining and fussing, mild tantrums, loud complaining, and continuous begging and demanding. Guidelines to follow:

- *Briefly remove all attention from your student.
- *refuse to argue, scold, or talk
- *Turn your head and avoid eye contact.
- *this should be done in a calm, emotionless way
- *pretend to be absorbed in some other activity- or work with another student
- *over reward other students who are following directions during this time.
- *give your student lots of attention when his bad behavior stops. Tell them specifically what they are doing that you appreciate.

Give Choices

Better behavior can be achieved through giving students real choices. A real choice does not include a threat.

- *these give the child a sense of power
- *keep choices limited and avoid yes/no responses
- *give students time (you have 30 seconds to make your choice) then move away
- *give directions one at a time
- *remain non-emotional

Encourage Student

* "I know you can... I'll be back in 2 minutes to see how you are doing and how much you have completed." Then make sure you follow through.