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ABSTRACT
        This paper reviews literature on methods of
specifying target behaviors as a preliminary step in the provision of
specialized instructional programming for low-performing, at-risk
students. Careful specification of target behaviors can ensure that
collaborating teachers in a consultation program have a shared
understanding of the exact nature of the referral problem. Past
practices for problem identification generally involved conducting a
conventional interview with the consultee. Shortcomings associated
with this approach are discussed. A rationale is introduced for
employing an alternative process termed a behavioral interview, which
yields clearer specification of the problem behavior. Six verbal
skills that appear to be central to successful problem identification
in a behavioral interview include: behavior verbalizations, behavior
setting verbalizations, evaluation verbalizations, summary
verbalizations, empathy verbalizations, and deflection
verbalizations. To the extent possible, the interview should be
standardized to ensure that target behaviors are adequately
identified and to decrease sources of error and bias. Specialized
training is required before prospective consultants begin the
process. References are listed. (JDD)

Use of the Behavioral Interview for Target
Behavior Specification in Collaboration and Consultation[1,2]

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Running head: INTERVIEW

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Abstract

Target behavior specification is an intrical part of the fabric of collaboration and consultation. The success of the collaborative relationship depends heavily upon a shared understanding of the exact nature of the referral problem. This paper compares traditional and present practices for the identification of problem behaviors; advantages and disadvantages of each interviewing approach are presented. Next, a rationale for employing a behavioral interview for target behavior specification in collaboration and consultation is offered. Finally, standardization issues, training techniques, and future developments regarding the identification of target behaviors are discussed.

Use of the Behavioral Interview for Target

Behavior Specification in Collaboration and Consultation

There is current concensus in education that an

increasing number of students fail to qualify for but would

benefit from specialized instructional programming. Will

(1986) estimated that some ?0-30% of the school-aged

population evidence learning or behavioral difficulty in

schools. This mounting problem of school failure is

compounded by the fact that funds typically utilized in

support of separate service options are dwindling (Will,

1986). Consequently, there is a need for increased

cooperation between regular and special educational

personnel to accomodate special needs students trapped in a

flawed educational system.

Authorities point out one possible solution for serving

handicapped, low performing, at-risk students is through

collaboration and consultation (e.g., Haight, 1984). This

service delivery option represents a partnership between

regular and special education that is aimed at removing

existing barriers that separate the two disciplines.

Collaboration and consultation is conceptualized as a joint

problem-solving process in which the consultant works with

consultees to specify the problem, design and implement an

intervention plan, and evaluate the overall success of

consultation (Anderson, Kratochwill & Bergan, 1986).

Currently, attempts to remedy problems associated with

diminished resources for a diverse school-aged population

have resulted in the growing popularity of collaboration and

consultation.

In order to ensure an effective and successful

collaborative relationship, the consultant must possess a

variety of essential skills. However, scant information is

available on exactly what consultation skills, singly and

collectively, constitute best practices. West and Cannon

(1988) are among the few who have sought to identify

specific consultation skills needed by both regular and

special educators. They presented a list of 47 consultation

skills that relate to interpersonal communication and which

encompass the art of probing, paraphrasing, conflict

resolution, problem solving, interviewing, and observation.

Among those receiving the highest ratings were collaborative

problem solving and interviewing.

Upon examination of the competencies related to

collaboration and consultation, some experts assert that

problem identification is the most critical component of the

consultation process and upon which hinges the success or

failure of the consultant-consultee relationship (Bergan &

Tombari, 1976; Brown, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1982;

Kratochwill, 1985; Kratochwill & Van Someren, 1985; Wilson &

Evans, 1983). Problem identification involves the verbal

specification of behavioral or academic difficulties that

the consultee wishes to solve during the consultation

process (Kratochwill, 1985). Typically, problem

Identification is established through the interview
phase of collaboration and consultation. Indeed, the ack
of clear specification of behaviors targeted for
intervention can be a major obstacle because students cannot
receive adequate services if faulty or incomplete
information is collected. Understandably, it becomes
critical to examine how target behaviors are selected, and
what effect, if any, the process has on the outcome of a
consultation.

The purpose of this paper is to address the issue of
target behavior specification as it relates to school-based
collaboration and consultaton. First, past practices for
problem identification are described and shortcomings
associated with these approaches are discussed. Second, a
rationale is introduced for employing an alternative process
namely, a behavioral interview. Third, practices for target
behavior specification follow along with a full description
of characteristics that distinguish current from previous
efforts. Finally, issues that correspond to
standardization, training techniques; and, future directions
for problem identification are discussed.

Past Practices for Problem Identification

To date, target behavior selection procedures have been
the subject of primarily descriptive investigations.
Limited attempts have been made to determine precisely the
processes utilized for specifying intervention targets.
Instead, much of the available literature has simply

reiterated the importance of proper target behavior
identification. Only recently, has there been an attempt to
examine the various methodologies employed by practitioners
for specification of target behaviors.

Traditionally, problem identification was accomplished
through the conduct of the conventional interview (Brown,
Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1982; Kratchowill, 1985; Gable,
Hendrickson, Algozzine, & Scully, 1988; Goldfried & Kent,
1972; Kanfer, 1985). This type of interview allowed the
consultee, in a given situation, to express his or her
perceptions of the problem (Heron & Harris, 1987). However,
the consultant used the traditional interview not only to
specify problems, but also to obtain a deeper understanding
of the consultee's situation (Heron & Harris, 1987).

Characteristics of the traditional interview. Early
authors portrayed the traditional interview as a serious
verbal exchange directed toward a specific purpose other
than simple satisfaction in the content of a conversation
(Bingham & Moore, 1941). The traditional format utilized a
conversational approach which viewed the assessment of
target behaviors as a process of collecting information
through questioning. Later, more specific descriptions of
the traditional interview technique emerged, including the
declaration that an interview is an interactional procedure
in which the interviewer and the interviewee participate in
for the purpose of solving a problem (Kahn & Cannell, 1961).
Fenlason, Ferguson, and Abrahamson (1962) posed that the

Interview be viewed as an interpersonal verbal and nonverbal interaction with each participant working toward a common goal. That common goal was to successfully design strategies to assist the special needs student in overcoming learning or behavioral difficulties.

In all, the interview process has been conceptualized differently than a simple conversation or verbal exchange in that it typically involves more interaction besieging a rather narrow topic in the interviewee's experience (Murphy, 1985). Murphy further described the process as being goal-oriented, with detailed roles and responsibilities that distinguish the interviewer and interviewee. To illustrate, sample dialogue of a traditional interview between a consultant and a consultee is presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Two broad catagories of traditional interviews outlined by Richard, Dohrenwend, and Klein (1965) included standardized and nonstandardized formats. The first of the two procedures is utilized when information is collected from more than one source. This is primarily accomplished by using a format in which the sequencing and wording of the interview questions remain constant from respondant to respondant; whereas, the nonstandardized process does not specify in advance the desired interview content (Murphy, 1985). The nonstandardized format is most useful when the

interviewer is ignorant of all the relevant forces intruding upon the interviewee. For example, the consultant might employ a series of nonstandardized interview questions in order to obtain information concerning the respondent's feelings. Regardless of the category, it is the interviewers responsibility to ask questions that facilitate accomplishing the goals of the interview. In practice, the categories of interviewing formats (i.e., standardized or nonstandardized) may be combined, since they do not represent mutually exclusive procedures.

Support for implementation of the traditional interview has been identified in the literature (Murphy, 1985). One important reason for conducting an interview according to a conventional format is to acquire relevant and accurate information from the interviewee; and second, to define the concerns of the consultee. The third purpose of the interview is to aid the interviewer in the compilation of data on student strengths and weaknesses and teacher expectations as part of the diagnostic process. Finally, the interview provides opportunity to share information between the interviewer and the interviewee. Essentially, it is the primary purpose of the traditional interview that prescribes which interviewer behaviors are most appropriate in assisting the interviewee (Murphy, 1985).

Shortcomings of the traditional approach. In examining various aspects of the traditional interview process it becomes evident that some shortcomings exist.

Indeed, the traditional diagnostic approach to target

behavior selection presents serious limitations,

nonetheleast of which relates to the implication that there

is a "presence of commonality" among the students targeted

for collaboration and consultation. Critics contend that the

concepts of individualization regarding student deficits and

recognition of the uniqueness of student characteristics are

often overlooked (Kanfer, 1985). This assumption of

commonality implies the use of common intervention questions

regarding student difficulties without regard to individual

student differences. Thus, both the format and the presence

of common verbalization characteristics command the focus of

the intervention. For example, if the consultee verbalizes

that "John has a very poor self-concept. I've had at least

a dozen or so students just like him before, nothing works

with those kinds of kids " then the focus of the

intervention will be limited. Unfortunately, these

assumptions of commonality rather than the specific problems

evidenced by those target students, determine the objectives

of the intervention and ultimately the identification of

target behaviors. Not surprisingly, the traditional

interview has been criticized for its failure to produce

information useful to the formulation of an individualized

intervention plan.

Gorden (1969) and Garrett (1942) provide further

discussion on factors that diminish the usefulness of the

traditional interview. They cited possible factors that

serve to reduce the validity of the content of the interview
that include poor consultee motivation and the psychological
inability of the consultee to produce useful information.
Other elements that may inhibit quality communication
include: inadequate responses due to lack of understanding
of the questions, inadequate rapport, or a belief by the
consultee that the questioning goes beyond the limits of the
focus of the interview. If the consultee perceives that
they are being patronized then their response level may
become inhibited and a primary function of an effective
interview is threatened (i.e., collaboration) (Murphy,
1985).

Additional opinion relating to shortcomings associated
with the traditional interviewing approach suggests that
many consultee's who refer children for services describe
problem(s) in global and vague terms (Kratochwill, 1985).
Failure of the conventional interview to identify deviant
behavior, in specific, measurable, and observable terms may
result in unsucessful treatment development and
implementation (Gable et al., 1988). Ultimately, due to
flaws associated with the traditional interview, the need
for clarification and integration of target behavior
specification is increased.

Consultants who rely on a conventional approach to
target behavior specification usually seek to remedy vague
and global consultee responses through the process of
operational specification of verbal exchanges during the

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interview (Kratochwill, 1985). For example, the consultant

may verbalize the following: "What is it specifically that

John does when you feel he's exhibiting a poor

self-concept?" Even so, attempts to control teacher verbal

behavior in an unstructured manner may not be sufficient to

produce valid student target behavior identification.

Besides, evidence suggests that what is assessed through

actual classroom observation may differ significantly from

the consultees' original verbal complaint (Kazdin, 1985).

As can be seen, the problems associated with a traditional

interview serve to substantiate the need for a solution.

Rationale for the Utilization of a Behavioral Interview

In that problem identification is a critical element in

the fabric of collaboration and consultation (Bergan &

Tombari, 1976), and in recognition of the shortcomings of

the traditional interview, alternative processes for

identifying problem behaviors are sorely needed. Indeed,

Conoley et al. (1981) asserted that when consultants and

consultees arrive at a shared understanding of the exact

nature of the consultees distress, there is a 95% chance of

satisfactory resolution of the problem. Conversely, when

this initial phase is unsuccessful, the likelihood decreases

substantially that the consultant and the consultee will be

able to work together successfully to overcome problems of a

special needs learner.

Recently, various alternative approaches to selecting

target behaviors have emerged in the literature (Kanfer,

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1985). One method that has been identified for target behavior specification in the consultation process is the problem identification interview, also known as the behavioral interview (Kanfer & Grimm, 1977). Kratochwill (1985) concluded that traditional versus behavioral interview procedures can be differentiated along "various methodological and conceptual dimensions including the assumptions, implications, uses of data, and various characteristics of the assessment process" (p. 3). A major aim of the behavioral interview is to build and maintain a level of communication that is characterized by mutual respect, responsibility and commitment (Gable et al., 1988). Thus, the collaborative aspect of the relationship is not only communicated by the consultant but it is also reinforced.

Other authorities have discussed the benefits of implementing a behavioral interview (Brown, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1985). They indicated that success in problem specification is achieved through stating problem solving goals, utilizing predictor variables to measure consultant effeciency, employing proven interview skills, and by adhering to behavioral principles to promote successful implementation of the intervention plan. Hay, Hay, Angle, and Nelson (1979) lend further support to use of the behavioral interview in underscoring the fact that it facilitates collection of an extensive amount of information about a student's level of functioning in a wide range of

potential problem areas. Indeed, a growing number of
authorities assert that the behavioral interview will
increase significantly the likelihood of proper target
behavior specification. In their discussion of the
behavioral interview, Haynes and Jensen (1979) stated that
"the structure, content, and process of the interview can
influence the behavioral analysis of a client; the attitude
and behavior of the client; and, consequently the
effectiveness of an intervention program" (p. 98). Thus,
significant decisions can be made with regard to problem
identification based on the information elicited from this
interview approach. It should be noted, however, that the
use of a behavioral interview has evoked some criticism
because of the general prejudice of behavior analysts
against measures of self-report (Haynes, 1978). In other
words, the reliabilty of verbal behavior as an assessment
tool comes into question, as it may vary from actual
classroom observation data. Even so, such criticism does
not diminish the usefuiness of a behavioral interview as
opposed to a traditional interview.

Present Practices for Problem Identification

Present practice for specifying problem behaviors in a
collaborative contact is characterized primarily by reliance
on the problem identification or behavioral interview
(Keane, Black, Collins, & Vinson, 1982). Use of the
behavioral interview in consultation ensures that teachers
or support personnel (e.g., school psychologist), because

they are the primary problem solving participants, assume a

collaborative role for assessment and intervention of

academic or behavioral difficulties. Interestingly, target

behaviors selected by the interview participants through the

use of behavioral interview appear to be similar to target

behaviors chosen for classroom behavior modification by

school psychologists (Kratochwill, 1985). Thus, it can be

inferred that a behavioral interview has greater reliability

than a traditional interview. These target behaviors often

relate to behaviors which are percieved by the consultee as

aversive and disruptive to the classroom setting

(Kratochwill, 1985). When the behavioral interview is

employed, the selection of target behaviors also becomes

more explicit (Kratochwill, 1985). It is the specific

verbal skills included in the behavioral interview that

clearly serve this important function. Kanfer (1985)

identified this function as the process of the consultant

moving from the consultee's complaint to the implementation

of an effective intervention plan mutually determined by the

consultant and the consultee.

Those who support a consultation service option

emphasize use of a behavioral interview format in order to

yield clear specification of the problem behavior (Kazdin,

1985). As Evans (1985) pointed out, the complaints of the

consultee regarding the student "even if

behaviorally-referenced, rarely fit into neat,

mono-symptomatic frameworks" (p. 22). In other words,

behaviors are often complicated in that they are related to
each other, as well as to major forces in the environment;
rarely do student deficits appear in isolation. Acceptable
as well as problem behavior appears to be "nested" or
clustered together (Wilson & Evans, 1983). By employing a
behavioral interview that attempts to deal with multiple
responses, identification of other significant non-targeted
behavior may result (Wilson & Evans, 1983). In all, the
verbal statements that are inherent in a behavioral
interview account for the participants failure to account
for the person-environmental variability of target behavior.

<center>Characteristics of a Behavioral Interview</center>

Some characteristics of a behavioral interview may be
related to changes in students' behavior that is achieved
through the consultation process. Indeed, it is in the
behavioral interview that the consultant listens to the
consultee's complaints and then systematically attempts to
elicit a specific description of the actual events that
appear to shape the students learning and behavioral
problems so that together they can specify target behaviors
which are amenable to proven intervention techniques (Kanfer
& Grimm, 1977). Gable and his collegues (1988) identified
six verbal skills that appear to be central to successful
problem identification. They include the following
categories of verbal behavior:

    1. Behavior Verbalizations. These are introductory
       remarks utilized to introduce discussion, obtain

behavioral discriptions of student behavior,

or to determine intensity of behavior.

2. <u>Behavior Setting Verbalizations</u>. Questions that

are employed to establish antecedents,

consequents, and sequentials.

3. <u>Evaluation Verbalizations</u>. Statements that

establish assesment procedures (i.e., data

collection) and problem analysis and evaluation.

4. <u>Summary Verbalizations</u>. These are used to

review information about a behavior or the

conditions under which behavior occures, and to

review recording procedures. Statements may also

reiterate decisions that were made previously.

5. <u>Empathy Verbalizations</u>. Comments which are

intended to maintain a sense of understanding and

trust in order to enhance the participants

rapport.

6. <u>Deflection Verbalizations</u>. Statements intended

to redirect credit for the program plan or

intervention. This facilitates ownership and

involvement.

Certain behavior verbalizations or statements are employed

by the consultant upon initiating the interview process;

whereas, others occur either during or at the close of the

conversation (i.e., the summary verbalizations). Verbal

behavior that may be utilized throughout the interview as

necessary include deflection or empathy statements. A

sample dialogue utilizing a behavioral interview between a

consultant and a consultee is presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 About Here

In discussion of the concept of the behavioral

interview, Kanfer (1985) offered the view that the process

is a recursive one. He described the procedure as "a

continuous interplay between information gathering,

formulation of intervention objectives, and feedback from

each step which shapes and refines the hypotheses about the

optimal target behavior choice " (p. 7). Unlike the

traditional interview, the behavior interview focuses on

individual response patterns. Also, the behavioral

interview persumes that intervention techniques can be

chosen according to variables that affect or interact with

selected target behaviors, rather than on a single

consultee's complaint (Kanfer 1985). As can be seen, the

behavioral interview consists of a multi-stage process that

requires the consultant to employ systematically both

problem-solving and decision-making skills.

In summary, by engaging in specific verbal behavior,

the consultant can increase the likelihood of proper target

behavior specification, and ultimately help to ensure a

successful contact. Kratochwill (1985) reiterated this

notion by concluding that "the structure within which the

consultation process occurs has an important bearing on

target behavior identification and ultimately on the success
of treatment" (p. 51). The structural factors to which he
is referring to as being responsible for influencing target
behavior selection include: the verbal behaviors of the
consultant, the verbal behavior and problem description of
the consultee, and the conceptual framework for behavioral
assessment that occurs during consultation. However, he
specifically advocates that the degree to which target
behaviors will be appropriately identified hinges, to some
degree, upon the consultant implementing the behavioral
interview in a standardized manner (Kratochwill, 1985).
Despite its importance in target behavior identification,
the interview procedure is often conducted in too informal
and haphazard a manner (Kratochwill, 1985).

Standardization of a Behavioral Interview

As has already been described, the behavioral interview
is comprised of a rather elaborate set of verbal strategies
that the consultant employs to control the consultee's
verbal behavior. It is the consultants' responsibility to
guide the consultee through the six major categories of
verbal behavior during the course of consultation
interviews. The importance of this multi-step process was
illustrated by Kratochwill (1985). He asserted that "the
degree to which target behaviors will be adequately
identified depends, in part, on asking certain types of
standardized questions " (p. 51). It follows that if the
purpose of behavioral consultation is to design an

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Intervention strategy and ensure its subsequent successful
and faithful application, then the necessity for increased
validity and reliability of the interview cannot be ignored.
Clearly, uniform and systematic verbal interactions aid in
eliminating one of the major barriers in consultation
namely, loss of integrity in implementation (Kratochwill &
Van Someren, 1985).

In consultation practice, the procedure for
standardization of verbal behavior between the consultant
and the consultee involves a number of strategies including
"the development of formal interview protocols, standard
instructions for administering the interview, a recording
protocol and scoring criteria, among other features"
(Kratochwill and Van Someren, 1985, p. 227). The reasons
for adhering to a standarized approach to the consultation
interview are well established. Kratochwill (1985)
described four advantages standardization may have over
traditional approaches for target behavior identification.
First, the use of normative data and a standardized
observational system can assist the consultant in target
behavior identification. Second, standardization of the
consultation interview allows for consultants to be trained
systematically in the skills necessary to be successful in
eliciting certain verbal responses from consultees. A third
reason for implementing standardized strategies is that
problem identification is crucial to the success of an
intervention and a standardized approach has been shown to

be superior in achieving this goal. Lastly, standardized

consultation permits replication in future practice. In

sum, standardization of the interview process can aid in

strengthening the validity and reliability of behavioral

assessment.

Cautions in the use of the behavioral interview.

Although it is gaining in support as an interview technique,

Haynes and Jensen (1979) warned against unsystematic

application of a behavioral interview in collaboration and

consultation. They argue that, compared to other assessment

techniques, the behavioral interview is susceptible to

numerous sources of error and bias. Some of the possible

sources of error include: (a) differences in race, sex,

age, or social class between the interviewer and client, (b)

the retrospective nature of the interview process and error

associated with such data, (c) the social sensitivity and

type of information elicited, (d) the content, format, and

structure of the interview, (e) bias in the reports of

mediator-clients, and (f) bias presumed to be inherent in

all self-report measures (Haynes & Jenson, 1979).

However, according to Krotochwill (1985), by

standardizing the behavioral interview, the sources of error

and bias can be systematically decreased. Standardization

is achieved through reliance on verbal questions which

remain constant from interview to interview. Standardization

combined with multiple interviews and sources of information

strengthens the psychometric properties of the consultation

interview; and in turn, information collected can then be considered more reliable and valid (Haynes, 1978).

Training Techniques for the Use of a Behavioral Interview

Realizing the importance of the behavioral interview and the need for its standardization, authorities argue that perspective consultants should be well trained in the use of the behavioral interview prior to initiating a contact (Anderson et al., 1986; Brown et al., 1982; Keane et al., 1982). Training in behavioral interviewing may prove valuable in facilitating the role of the consultant and also in developing skills needed for intervention by the consultee. Interview process skills needed by the consultee include being aware of the procedures involved in obtaining consultation and understanding the nature of the collaborative relationship (Anderson, Kratochwill & Bergan, 1986). Training techniques that have been found to be effective in promoting these skills include modeling, role playing, and feedback as well as didactic instructional techniques (e.g., written material, lecture, and discussion) when combined with one or more of the other methods (Anderson et al., 1986).

As has been suggested, a major purpose of the consultative relationship is to achieve operational specification of verbal exchanges that occur during the interview in order to identify target behaviors and ultimately to ensure a successful intervention. Thus, training procedures for the consultant consist of teaching

the use of standard questions to obtain specific information
for problem specification. Brown and his collegues (1982)
conducted a study to evaluate the effects of a training
program designed to teach interview skills for problem
identification. They utilized an instructional package
consisting of a structured interview, written outlines,
videotaped modeling, corrective feedback, and role-simulated
interviews to teach consultants skills for carrying out a
behavioral interview. The results of the study suggest that
consultants can be taught to provide verbalizations during
an interview that could lead to specific problem
identification. Thus, a major implication of the study is
that the use of the behavioral interview as an assessment
skill must be specifically taught. Procedures reported in
this study represent one method of training which may be
useful in problem identification; but as the authors
conclude, variations from their format of training may yield
success as well.

Keane et al. (1982) provided further support for
specialized training in the behavioral interview. Their
study compared methods for training consultants in the
behavioral interview. One group received instructions and
were exposed to a model both via videotape, while the second
group received the same videotape plus three hours of
behavioral rehearsal (i.e., modeling, role-playing, and
feedback). The results of this study indicated that
individuals with minimal background and training in

behavioral assessment can acquire, following several
formats, the necessary skills for conducting the behavioral
interview.   The authors demonstrated that the behavioral
rehearsal group performed more skillfully in the content and
style areas of their role-played interviews and, most
important, in the generalization of newly acquired
interviewing skills to environmental situations.   Although
much is yet to be learned, systematic training helps control
the variability in performance typically associated with a
consultation interview (Hay et al., 1979). Training
consultants in the conduct of the behavioral interview
complements previously discussed standardization practices
in providing for improved reliability of the behavioral
interview.

Future Directions

Recently, among professionals engaging in collaboration
and consultation, it has been argued that a reexamination of
the target behavior selection process is called for
(Kratochwill, 1985).   The future success of school
consultation rests in part with continued investigation of
the various components including verbal behavior of both the
consultant and the consultee (Kratochwill, 1985).   Related
to this line of inquiry is the notion of an expanded
assessment framework as a consideration for improving future
consultation practices (Kratochwill, 1985).   The
introduction of such a framework would facilitate the use of
multiple and repeated assessment to measure the same or

different problem areas. Multiple assessment strategies
might include direct observacion (associated with multiple
behavioral samples), self-report, self-monitoring,
checklists, psychometric scores, and review of student
records (Gable et al., 1988). Utilization of multiple
assessment may serve to improve the consultation approach in
that it may broaden the scope of what should be considered a
target behavior, expand understanding of academic or
behavioral problems, and our knowledge of where and how they
can best be treated (Kratochwill, 1985).

West and Cannon (1988) underscored another area for
future improvement of collaboration between regular and
special educators which may be indirectly related to target
behavior identification. They concluded that there is a "
paucity of research in general and special education
regarding the skills or competencies needed by regular and
special educators engaging in collaborative consultation"
(West & Cannon, p. 56). Indeed, studies devoted to
essential consultation skills of regular educators are
virtually nonexistant. The danger, as described by Conoley
et al. (1981) is in viewing the consultation process simply
as a knowlegeable consultant giving answers and advice to a
puzzled consultee. Rather, they assert that the role of the
consultant is to facilitate "the creative, coping skills of
the consultee and to learn from the consultee about the
unique aspects of the problem and the consultee's situation"
(p. 113). Thus, preservice and inservice training of both

regular and special educators could contribute substantially to the effectiveness of collaboration and consultation.

Obviously, the future of school-based collaboration and consultation is both promising and filled with numerous challenges. Regardless of the issue, more empirical support is needed to strengthen and refine alternative strategies. With regard to the main subject of this discussion, it should be underscored that reliable and valid identification of target behaviors is complicated by the complexity of the consultation process. Despite this methodological obstacle, further research is needed on techniques for pinpointing behaviors targeted for intervention by the consultant and the consultee.

Conclusion

In all, one of the most critical responsibilities besieging a consultant is the accurate assessment of target behaviors of a variety of individuals performing in numerous settings/situations. Heron and Harris (1987) asserted that interview assessments are conducted for one or two reasons: (a) to assist with problem identification or (b) to evaluate the effectiveness of an ongoing intervention. Typically, in a collaborative relationship the consultation interview is utilized as the primary assessment tool for specifying target behaviors. Within the educational setting, problem identification remains an essential element to the success or failure of collaboration and consultation (Bergan & Tambari, 1986). Close examina ion of how problem behaviors

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are targeted for intervention supports the fact that the
consultants' choice of target behaviors is frequently an
incomplete representation of the consultees concerns (Mash,
1985). Thus, preceeding discussion has addressed the
processes which underline the task of appropriately
identifying measurable target behaviors. Past practices for
specifying problem behaviors relied heavily on the
traditional interview. Although traditional techniques may
have some utility, experts advocate exploration of
alternative processes for identifying precisely target
behaviors (Kanfer, 1985; Kratochwill, 1985). Currently, the
behavioral interview in conjunction with multiple and
repeated assessment is the preferred means of target
behavior specification (Gable et al., 1988).

A decade ago, few classroom teachers were called on to
collaborate with their collegues to solve student problems.
Today, with growing recognition of the importance of
collaborative relationships, the process of making decisions
about appropriate intervention targets is an important one
which deserves continued scrutiny. Some processes have been
proposed to guide in the selection of target behavior that
have too often been ambiguous or incompatible (Wilson &
Evans, 1983). One promising solution to this dilemma is use
of the standardized behavioral interview. As has been
emphasized, the likelihood of achieving a successful
intervention and, in turn, strengthening the bond between
regular and special educators, appears closely aligned with

the systematic application of a behavioral interview for

target behavior specification.

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Table 1
Consultant-Consultee Traditional Interview

Consultant	Consultee
How did you decide which reading level to use?	There's three levels, all students fit into one of them.
Why is that series used?	Um, I don't know. The district has always used it.
I think that series only goes up to a fifth grade level. What happens if a student reads on a sixth grade level?	I only have one, John, who is above a fifth grade level.
What do you do with him?	Well, he doesn't need as much instruction as the others, so I let him continue at his own pace.
Could you talk with me more about your use of the Scott-Johnson series with your first reading group today?	Yea, I use it even though they can't read all the words. It's the lowest level.
Have you looked at other series that might be easier for them to read?	Yea, but then they'll never try to learn new words.
Which ones have you looked at?	Oh, I picked up the Jones, the Reader, and the HJC series.
Any reason why you chose those to look at?	No, they were the only ones I saw lying around in the textbook office.
Did you try any of them with your first reading group?	Yea, but they were too easy. The kids knew all the words.
Which one did the the students know all the words in?	In all of them. I just felt like the kids didn't even have to try.

Table 2
Consultant-Consultee Behavioral Interview

Consultant	Consultee
I understand that John has been very disruptive to your class. What does he do that is most disruptive? (Behavior verbalization)	He is really a problem student. He just destroys my class. I've tried everything, nothing stops his calling out or aggressive behavior.
John sounds just like a student I had last year. I know how you feel, I almost pulled my hair out. (Empathy) Which bothers you the most about John - calling out or aggression? (Behavior verbalizations)	Um, aggression. He's always beating up on somebody.
What usually happens when John starts a fight? (Behavior setting verbalizations)	It usually happens during seatwork or at transition times.
What do you do when John starts a fight? (Behavior setting verbalizations)	Send him to the office.
How do the other students act when John starts a fight? (Behavior setting verbalizations)	Oh, they get all wound up. Then it takes forever before everyone is settled down again.
Boy, it really sounds like you have your hands full. (Empathy) It sounds to me like he's pretty disruptive during less structured times. Is that right? (Evaluation verbalizations)	Yep, you got it.
I'll visit Monday morning during John's seatwork and stay until lunch to watch John during transition also. I'll take some data and rely on you to tell me whether or not his behavior is typical. Okay? (Evaluation verbalizations)	That would be great. I'm sure he'll be up to performing. I just hope we can come up with a solution after that.

Consultant	Consultee
Oh, I think we can. In fact, you know something you said earlier in the hall reminded me of a procedure Mrs. Hall tried last year that might work for us. (Deflection verbalizations)	Oh, good. I'll look forward to our next meeting.
Okay, well what I believe we agreed that the problem with John is aggression and that I'm going to come watch John on Monday at 10:30 am. (Summary vebalizations)	Exactly.