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For any teacher, managing student behavior in the classroom can be difficult and complex, but when successful, teachers may find behavior management professionally rewarding. Often, however, managing student behavior is personally involving and professionally frustrating. Students of all ages will sometimes engage in behavior that includes disrespect for authority, hyperactivity and inattention, lack of self-control, and sometimes aggression. Behavioral excesses and deficits detract from learning opportunities and preclude positive peer relationships. Despite the best efforts, teachers and school administrators are continuously looking for behavior management programs that can be implemented school-wide for all students along with specific interventions that can help those students who need more attention.

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

Cognitive-behavioral interventions (CBI) can be a viable approach for teachers to re-mediate behavioral deficits and excesses by providing students with the tools necessary to control their own behavior. CBIs involve teaching the use of inner speech ("self-talk") to modify underlying cognition's that affect overt behavior (Mahoney, 1974; Meichenbaum, 1977). Since theorists consider the internalization of self-statements fundamental to developing self-control, deficient or maladaptive self-statements are viewed as contributing to negative beliefs about oneself, which can contribute significantly to childhood behavior problems, including aggression. Kendall (1993) noted that cognitive-behavioral techniques for the remediation of social deficits can incorporate cognitive, behavioral, emotive, and developmental strategies, using rewards, modeling, role-plays, and self-evaluation. As such, a student's cognition about social situations encountered throughout the school day can be examined and modified through verbal self-regulation (i.e., using self-talk to guide problem solving or some other behavior).

CBI incorporates behavior therapy (e.g., modeling, feedback, reinforcement) and cognitive mediation (e.g., think-aloud) to build what can be called a new "coping template." For example, not hitting or pushing a peer when teased can be mediated by inner speech such as "That makes me mad, but first I need to calm down and think about this." The fundamental assumption of a CBI is that overt behavior (e.g., hitting or pushing a peer when teased) is mediated by cognitive events (e.g., "I'm going to let him have it") and that individuals can influence cognitive events to change behavior. Cognitive strategies incorporate a "how-to-think" framework for students to use when modifying behavior rather than any explicit "what-to-think" instruction from a teacher. Most important is that CBIs are student-operated systems, thus allowing students to generalize their newly learned behavior much more than teacher-operated systems that rely on external reward and punishment procedures (Harris & Pressley, 1991).

Adult or expert modeling is considered basic to the cognitive-behavioral perspective. Meichenbaum & Goodman's (1971) seminal study compared the effects of modeling

alone with the effects of modeling and self-instructional training, a type of CBI, on decreasing impulsive behavior. The results supported the superiority of a combined approach. Thus, it is important for teachers to model the behavioral and, especially, the cognitive skills they are teaching. For example, teachers can "think out loud" as they talk about how they might handle their own anger ("What she just said makes me really angry, but I won't say anything now. I'll talk to her later"), evaluate the outcome ("I'm glad I didn't say anything. It turned out to be just a misunderstanding"), and learn from experience. A teacher's explanation of the cognitive strategies they use and their metacognitive awareness of those strategies (i.e., thinking about their thinking) serve as a powerful model for students to emulate.

RESEARCH ON COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

There is an emerging research base on CBIs. Cognitive-behavioral strategies have ameliorated social deficits, including aggression and disruption (cf. Etscheidt, 1991; Smith, Siegel, O'Connor, & Thomas, 1994). More recent studies of the characteristics of aggressive children and the effects of CBIs indicate that teaching students cognitive strategies can decrease hyperactivity/impulsivity and disruption/aggression and strengthen pro-social behavior (see Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (CPPRG),1999; Robinson, Smith, Miller, & Brownell, 1999).

AN EXAMPLE OF A CBI

In 1991, Susan Etscheidt wanted to know if a specific CBI could decrease the aggressive behaviors of students with EBD as compared to students who did not receive the instruction. She also wanted to determine if the addition of a positive consequence (e.g., listening to music at the end of class) would further enhance the effectiveness of the CBI.

Etscheidt's program components were adapted from the Lochman, Nelson, and Sims (1981) Anger Coping Program, which provides students with a way to change aggressive responses into appropriate alternatives by modifying their thinking processes regarding the circumstances surrounding certain situations. The instruction also assists students in developing, evaluating, and selecting appropriate alternative responses. Etscheidt's goals included increasing self-awareness; identifying a student's reaction to peer influences; providing avenues to identify problem situations; and using problem-solving techniques to identify, evaluate, and select alternative solutions for a specific social situation.

In Etscheidt's program, students used the following sequential strategy when approaching a problem situation:

1. Stop and think before acting. Students are taught to restrain aggressive responses through the use of covert speech.

2. Identify the problem. The students are required to distinguish the specific aspects of a problematic situation that may elicit an aggressive response.

3. Develop alternative solutions. Students generate at least two alternative solutions to a problematic situation, either thinking about something else until able to relax and/or moving to another location in the room to avoid further provocation.

4. Evaluate the consequences of possible solutions. Students assessed the benefits of each possible solution.

5. Select and implement a solution. The students carried out the selected alternative.

Etscheidt employed three comparison groups. The first group received the CBI, the second group received the CBI and the positive consequence, and the third group (control) received neither the CBI nor the positive consequence.

The results indicated that the two groups who received the CBI demonstrated more self-control than the control group students. In fact, the students in the control group exhibited significantly more aggressive behaviors than those who received the training. Finally, Etscheidt found that the addition of a positive consequence did not significantly increase the effectiveness of the CBI.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Researchers at the University of Florida are studying the effects of a CBI, the Tools for Getting Along: Teaching Students to Problem Solve curriculum, on 4th and 5th grade students who exhibit behavioral problems. It has been found that the curriculum can help students reduce their aggression and classroom disruption and the effects can be maintained. The curriculum was designed to help students learn to find positive solutions to social problems. The curriculum was designed using a problem-solving framework focused on understanding and dealing with frustration and anger, since anger is a frequent correlate of disruptive and aggressive behavior and can be preceded by frustration. The lessons include anger management and problem-solving

concepts similar to Etscheidt's program in which students use a sequential strategy when approaching a problem situation. Also included are direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, and independent practice for skill development, along with opportunities for skill generalization.

Teachers who use Tools for Getting Along help students develop self-management of behavior through the purposeful manipulation of overt speech and eventually, the use of covert verbalizations. The use of paired or small-group learning, opportunities to enhance generalization by having students solve real life problems, and a self-monitored point system to reward participation are also encouraged. For example, a "Tool Kit" provides students with cumulative review, practice, and periodic opportunities to relate learned concepts to their experiences at home or school. Teachers instruct students to self-assign points for completing the Tool Kit and participating appropriately in class.

Formal lessons range from 30-40 minutes and are taught 2-3 times per week. Following an overview of the general, step-by-step problem-solving approach in Lesson One, three lessons are devoted to problem recognition, a necessary first step in any problem-solving skill sequence. In the curriculum, problem recognition includes recognizing anger in oneself and others and understanding how anger and frustration can create and/or exacerbate problems. Lessons Five and Six detail step two strategies to prevent the escalation of frustration and anger and to engage students' cognition (i.e., "calm down and think"). The remaining lessons cover the steps of problem definition, solution generation, strategy selection, and outcome evaluation. A total of 20 lessons cover the 6 problem-solving steps. Each lesson begins with a cumulative review and ends with an opportunity to practice learned skills.

There is a need for innovative methods to teach children to control their own behavior especially when adults are not around to monitor their activities. As teachers continue to teach in diverse classrooms, behavior management will always be a significant part of the school day. Cognitive-behavioral interventions can be used by teachers to provide students with methods to successfully control their own behavior. CBI may offer a viable method for assisting students to become more independent, thus creating better learning environments with higher levels of safety.

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