

Using Coaching to Support Classroom-Level Adoption and Use of Interventions Within School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Systems

MELISSA STORMONT AND WENDY M. REINKE, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Many schools today have a prevention-based focus for working with academic and social behavior problems through the use of tiered approaches (Bohanon, McIntosh, & Goodman, 2011; Horner & Sugai, 2005). Through the use of levels of support, including a continuum of increasingly intensive support based on responsiveness to evidence-based core practices, resources are used more wisely and children are not provided interventions they do not need. The establishment of such tiers or levels of support takes extensive knowledge, effort, and time. Accordingly, experts in the area of schoolwide positive behavioral intervention and supports (SW-PBIS) caution school professionals against expecting change to occur quickly and emphasize that to implement SW-PBIS with integrity, educators need to allocate resources, make it a priority, and be patient (Bohanon et al., 2011; Horner & Sugai, 2005).

Understandably, waiting years to establish foundational systems prior to establishing Tier 2 and 3 supports may seem impractical to school professionals. However, it is imperative to remember one of the key principles of this prevention-based approach. Specifically, how do we know if a student is not responding to the least intrusive intervention (universal supports) if we are not sure the least intrusive intervention is in fact being implemented with integrity? There are strong measures for schoolwide implementation of PBIS at the universal level and promising tools for the secondary and tertiary

schoolwide level (see www.pbis.org). But research indicates that less is known about factors that influence classroom-level implementation of key features of SW-PBIS. For example, in schools with high levels of implementation fidelity of SW-PBIS according to the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET), fidelity measures at the classroom level indicated that teachers' implementation of key features of PBIS within their classrooms was not as high (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, in press). Thus, more support may be needed for teachers to generalize the key features of SW-PBIS that may be seen in non-classroom settings.

Overall, it seems clear that more effort should be devoted to providing schools with strategies for strengthening universal and secondary supports specifically within classroom settings. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of how a coaching model could be used to support teachers' use of evidence-based strategies at the universal and Tier 2 levels of support specifically for students with externalizing behavior problems. First, a brief overview of consultation and coaching will be provided, followed by a brief review of universal and Tier 2 strategies teachers might use, along with a description of the ways that coaches might support teachers in the use of these strategies in classroom settings.

Consultation

The fields of education and school psychology have a long history of providing professional development

opportunities, including consultation, to teachers. One of the common purposes for consultation has been to increase teachers' use of specific skills to support children with social behavior needs. School psychologists and outside researchers have often served as the experts assisting teachers in developing new skills or using specific practices at higher rates (e.g., Noell et al., 2005; Stormont, Smith, & Lewis, 2007). Consultation models for children with behavior problems have included joint planning and consultation with teachers around targeting behavior needs, completing assessments to verify problems, and developing and monitoring interventions (Jones, Wickstrom, & Friman, 1997). However, research has found that teachers need more support for both integrating new practices within their current classroom routines and sustaining the use of such practices over time (Domitrovich, Gest, Jones, Gill, & Sanford DeRousie, 2010). It is important to also note that an individual teacher may not have an accurate perception of his or her own fidelity of implementation of new practices (Noell et al., 2005). Fortunately, when consultants provide more sustained support for integrating the use of new practices within their classrooms, teachers' fidelity of implementation improves dramatically (Jones et al., 1997; Noell et al., 2005; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Martin, 2007; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008). Models of effective consultation build in additional and ongoing support. Recently, this additional ongoing support has been referred to as coaching.

Coaching

Coaching is a critical support for integrated and sustained use of newly adopted practices (Jones et al., 1997). According to Fixsen and colleagues (2005), coaching is a core component of effective program implementation. Fixsen et al. provide three key reasons underlying the need for coaching: (a) “Newly learned behavior is crude compared to performance by a master practitioner,” (b) “Newly-learned behavior is fragile and needs to be supported in the face of reactions from consumers and others in the service setting,” and (c) “Newly-learned behavior is incomplete and will need to be shaped to be most functional in a service setting” (p. 44). The form coaching takes has varied in the literature, but it tends to include a combination of the following: planning, teaching, modeling, and practicing new skills, direct supervision of implementation of target practices in the classroom, and performance feedback (Fixsen et al., 2005; Jones et al., 1997; Noell et al., 2005; Reinke et al., 2007, 2008; Stormont et al., 2007).

In the following sections, we describe how coaching can be used within systems of schoolwide positive behavior support to help increase successful implementation of evidence-based practices within the classroom setting. School-based teams can determine the process for training coaches, determining which teachers need support, and deciding what specific support should look like. It is vital that teams, rather than individuals, drive the process and that they make sure the specific supports provided fit within the culture of the school (Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, & Johnson, 2008). However, the focus of this article is not on team processes but rather on the process of supporting teacher implementation of specific practices. Coaches can support teachers in implementing both universal classroom management practices and

specific Tier 2 interventions in the classroom. Strategies for both of these levels follow.

Strengthening Universal Supports in Classrooms

When children receive multiple office disciplinary referrals, especially when many originate from a specific classroom, it is important to conduct direct observations in classrooms to ensure that universal supports are solidly in place. At minimum, teachers should have taught the schoolwide behavior expectations, rules should be posted, expected behavior should be prompted before transitions, and when beginning in a new setting, praise should occur at rates higher than reprimands, and procedures should be in place for correcting inappropriate behavior (Conroy, Sutherland, Haydon, Stormont, & Harmon, 2009; Stormont et al., 2008). If observations indicate the presence of frequent behavior problems, it is likely that teachers will need support in providing more explicit instruction in behavioral expectations and practice.

Direct observation can easily document whether target universal supports are in place. *Figure 1* is an example of a form a coach can use to support data collection and feedback. After direct observation of teachers, the coach can then schedule a time to provide feedback and coaching in the use of specific practices. Research on coaching suggests that visual feedback combined with verbal feedback is the most effective form of feedback (Hagermoser Sanetti, Luiselli, & Handler, 2007). Research also suggests that it may be important to target a few behaviors at a time to support teachers’ sustained use of new strategies or interventions (Reinke et al., 2007; Stormont et al., 2007).

Based on data collected through direct observation, coaches can then offer teachers specific feedback and suggested strategies they can use in their classrooms. For example, research has clearly documented that

specific feedback on rates of precorrective statements and behavior-specific praise increased teachers’ use of such supports (e.g., Reinke et al., 2007; Stormont et al., 2007; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). The research on combining precorrective statements and praise has clearly demonstrated that the use of these strategies, which includes providing specific statements outlining desired behavior before a problem occurs (precorrection) and then acknowledging the desired behavior when demonstrated (behavior-specific praise), can be very effective in reducing problem behavior in children (e.g., Stormont et al., 2007). Even though it does not take an extensive amount of instruction, modeling, or practice for teachers to correctly demonstrate effective use of precorrective statements and behavior-specific praise, teachers need to actively plan to use these if they are using them at low rates (Stormont & Reinke, 2009). A coach could help teachers’ problem-solve strategies they could use to remind them to use precorrective statements and specific praise, such as keeping a notecard with sample statements and reminders, placing a specific number of paperclips on a clipboard or in pocket as a reminder of the goal number of precorrective and praise statements, and giving students tickets or some other tangible reinforcer as a permanent product for the number used.

The *Classroom Check-up (CCU)* (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick, 2011) is a model for providing universal coaching to teachers needing additional supports with classroom management. The CCU uses individualized performance feedback and Motivational Interviewing Strategies designed to help coaches build a collaborative partnership with a given teacher and support him or her in implementing effective classroom management practices. The CCU (a) targets teachers’ motivation to maintain current practices that are important for

Figure 1 UNIVERSAL COACHES' DATA FORM

Date/Time:

Setting:

Target Behavior Supports	Yes/# Observed	No
Precorrective statements are provided		
Behavior specific praise is provided		
Reprimands (low number is desired)		

Meeting with teacher scheduled:

Visual and verbal performance feedback provided:

Goals for next session:

student success, (b) reduces teacher-student interactions that are likely to exacerbate problem behaviors, and (c) increases teacher behaviors that promote student competence and success. The CCU involves a series of steps: (1) assessing the classroom using direct observation, (2)

providing the teacher with performance feedback based on the classroom assessment, (3) developing a menu of possible interventions collaboratively with the teacher targeting areas in need of improvement, (4) choosing the intervention, (5) having the teacher

self-monitor implementation of the intervention, and (6) providing ongoing performance feedback when needed on the use of new practices. The CCU has been shown to increase teacher use of praise, in particular behavior-specific praise; reduce disruptive student behaviors; and

decrease teacher use of reprimands (Reinke et al., 2008).

Determining Responsiveness

As coaches work with teachers to increase their use of universal classroom supports, they can also begin to gather data on students who may not be responding to these universal classroom supports. Gathering direct observation data for children with challenging behavior as well as their peers can help to determine whether (a) these students truly exhibit behavioral challenges at a level higher than their peers and (b) the implementation of universal classroom level supports is sufficient to meet their needs (Horner, Sugai, & Todd, 2001). If children's behavior problems decrease when teachers use the universal supports consistently, then the coach should continue to work with the teachers on establishing sound universal practices. However, if one or more students within the classroom exhibit challenging behaviors despite implementation of universal classroom strategies with high fidelity, the coach and teacher may determine these students need additional supports.

Tier 2 Supports

Coaches who work closely with classroom teachers can help to identify appropriate Tier 2 strategies for students who are not adequately responding to universal classroom interventions. It is important to note that students who are identified as needing additional support do not all look alike or have the same needs (e.g., Dodge, 2006). Therefore, it is imperative to clearly identify the type of Tier 2 supports a student requires to optimize the likelihood of positive outcomes. Determining the function or purpose that a student's challenging behavior serves can help identify the appropriate interventions (Crone & Horner, 2003). For instance, some children may exhibit behavior problems to gain adult attention. These students would benefit from a

Tier 2 intervention that allows them to gain adult attention through socially appropriate means. Other students' problem behaviors may be maintained because these behaviors allow them to escape something they find to be aversive (i.e., academic activities, social situations). If the purpose of the student's problem behavior is to avoid something, it is likely that gaining adult attention will not meet this need and therefore would be ineffective.

Additional assessment may be needed to help identify all of a student's specific needs for support. For example, direct observations may indicate that a student is aggressive to avoid social interactions and thus may benefit from a social skills intervention to teach and practice appropriate interactions with peers. For a student who exhibits problem behavior to escape reading activities, an assessment of the student's reading skills may indicate that an academic intervention would be beneficial. It is not uncommon for students in need of Tier 2 intervention to have more than one area of concern that warrants a targeted intervention. *Figure 2* provides a template for assessing and identifying Tier 2 intervention supports that align with student needs.

With the support of a coach, there are a variety of evidence-based strategies that a classroom teacher can implement with students in need of Tier 2 supports. We focus on providing supports to students with externalizing behaviors (for a review of Tier 2 supports for students exhibiting internalizing problems, see Stormont, Reinke, Herman, & Lembke, 2012). A coach can work directly with the classroom teacher to:

1. Determine the function of externalizing problems exhibited by a student.
2. Collaboratively identify an evidence-based strategy that could be implemented to support the student.
3. Outline specific steps and provide support for successful

implementation of evidence-based practice.

4. Provide ongoing support to the teacher to ensure high fidelity of implementation of the selected strategy.

We separate strategies by behavioral function and briefly describe how they might be used in the classroom context. We highlight two evidence-based strategies for each function. Note that there are a number of additional evidence-based practices, but our purpose here is to simply illustrate how coaches can support teachers' identification and use of specific interventions.

Behavior maintained by attention.

This section provides a description of a group contingency program and self-monitoring for students with attention-maintained problem behaviors. The practices outlined incorporate the teaching of expected behaviors and reinforcing these behaviors with adult and/or peer attention. Group contingencies involve setting common expectations for a group of students and then providing a common positive outcome when the students engage in the expected behavior. A coach can assist teachers in determining which of the following would fit their classrooms and individuals who need Tier 2 supports. Token economies are used when students earn tokens (e.g., points, stickers, chips) contingent on the expected behavior that can then be redeemed for a reinforcer (e.g., desired item, preferred activity). Both group contingencies and token economies are supported by research and are often used in combination (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969; Yarbrough, Skinner, Lee, & Lemmons, 2004). One potential use of a Tier 2 group contingency program involves the development of a daily behavior card and a menu of classroom-level rewards. For each student in the program, a set of three to five behavioral goals is identified. If a schoolwide discipline system is in

place, such as PBIS, the goals can be directly aligned with schoolwide expectations (e.g., be safe, be respectful, be responsible). The student then earns points based on how successful he or she was in meeting the goals. The student is informed of how many points or percentage of points must be earned to receive a reward for him- or herself and the class. At the end of the day, if the student has earned the predetermined number of points or percentage of points, then a reward is provided to all students in the classroom. The reward is selected from a menu of teacher-approved classroom rewards. Students with externalizing problems often have few friends, and their peers tend to avoid them. Including classroom peers in the reward creates a positive association with the student receiving the Tier 2 support. In addition, peers can be prompted to be models of appropriate behavior and can be encouraged to provide positive feedback to the student for successful school behaviors. The overarching goal is to increase the student's use of effective behaviors while interrupting the cycle of peer rejection. A coach can help a teacher determine if peers will be models and provide feedback.

Some students who exhibit disruptive classroom behaviors, such as persistently calling out or interrupting instruction, can benefit from classroom strategies that make them more aware of these behaviors by self-monitoring while also encouraging them to inhibit these behaviors in the future. A simple Tier 2 strategy for supporting these students is one in which the classroom teacher points out the problem behavior when it occurs while the student tracks the behavior (see Stormont et al., 2012). To use this strategy, a simple tracking form is placed on the student's desk. Then, each time the student calls out or disrupts instruction, the teacher calmly states, "That's a mark," or uses an agreed-upon signal that indicates to the student that a tally

mark should be made. In addition, a replacement behavior with the same purpose (e.g., raising a hand, showing a card) must be taught to replace the disruptive behavior. At the end of each day, the number of marks is totaled. A goal is selected based on the initial number of times the student talks out (or disrupts the class). The goal is that the number of talk-outs or verbal disruptions progressively decreases over time. The student receives a reward each time the goal is met. Typically, callouts or verbal disruptions in the classroom are attention maintained. Therefore, identifying a reward that is aligned with receiving attention appropriately can be very effective (e.g., 5 min of time with principal or preferred adult). A coach can help the teacher in developing specific goals and in determining appropriate rewards.

Behaviors maintained by escape. Having a place for students to take a break or using a pass system can be useful for students with escape-maintained problem behaviors. As with the strategies for working with attention-maintained behaviors, these practices incorporate teaching expected behaviors and reinforcing these behaviors by allowing the student to avoid an aversive task or situation, but within limits. One effective strategy is to have a systematic place where the student can take a break. The space can be easily set up in a classroom or outside the classroom. For instance, a teacher may create a corner area in the classroom reserved for taking a break or relaxing by placing a bean bag, pillows, or simply a chair in that space (Stormont et al., 2012). Students must be taught how and when to use the space as well as how to return to classroom activities. Coaches can play a vital role in supporting teachers by working with the student to effectively use this support without disrupting classroom instruction and building student skills so they use the space less over time.

Another classroom approach to supporting children with escape-maintained behaviors is to set up a

system in which the student is allowed to pass a certain number of times when asked to complete the activity they are attempting to avoid (e.g., three passes per day). When the student wants to avoid an activity, they can choose to pass, which allows them to avoid the task, at least for the moment. Once the passes are used up, the expectation is that the student completes the task, or at least a portion of it. For this intervention to be effective, using a pass needs to be a more efficient and effective means for the student to avoid the task than displaying the problem behaviors. First, the student must be taught the appropriate replacement behavior (i.e., choosing to use a pass by raising hand and telling the teacher politely). Second, a system for reinforcing the student for using the passes needs to be in place (e.g., teacher uses verbal praise: "Thank you for using your pass"). In addition, a system for reinforcing incremental increases in completion of the nonpreferred task needs to be in place. For instance, each time the student chooses to complete the task rather than use a pass, the student receives verbal praise in combination with a point that is linked to a reward. The following case illustrates how a coach could support a teacher in using this strategy.

Kayden is a third-grade student who places his head down on his desk and begins to cry (behavior). This behavior is most likely to occur when he is asked to read aloud (antecedent) in class. The coach and teacher completed a short functional assessment and determined that the purpose of this behavior is to avoid reading (consequence). The teacher noted that Kayden reads a grade level below his classmates. He is currently receiving additional supports through tutoring twice a week for 30 min. The coach and teacher determine that a Tier 2 classroom intervention would help support Kayden in having more successful experiences with reading. The teacher is interested in developing a system for allowing Kayden to "pass" when asked to read aloud. The coach and teacher determine what tasks need to occur in order to begin using this strategy in the classroom.

Figure 2 DIFFERENTIATING TIER 2 SUPPORTS TO OPTIMIZE STUDENT OUTCOMES
 Adapted from Stormont, M., Reinke, W., Herman, K., & Lembke, E. (2012). *Academic and behavior supports for at-risk students: Tier 2 interventions*. New York: Guilford Press.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____			
Behavior	<u>Antecedent</u>	<u>Consequence</u>	Possible Function/Purpose
What does the problem behavior look like?	What happens right before the problem behavior occurs?	What happens after the problem behavior?	Does the student receive attention , obtain something , or avoid/escape something?
Student Supports Needed (check off all that apply):	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Peer attention <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid aversive activity <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid aversive social	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic support <input type="checkbox"/> Support with Organizing <input type="checkbox"/> Choices <input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce Replacement Behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach Social Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Teach Cognitive Coping <input type="checkbox"/> Teach Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Home-School Communication

Figure 3 TIER 2 INTERVENTION FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Target Intervention: _____

Coach Checklist	Yes/No	Date
Teacher understands intervention purpose		
Teacher is willing to implement teacher components		
Teacher demonstrates mastery of steps through direct observation		
Teacher implements key steps each week for three weeks		Wk1: Wk2: Wk3:
Teacher maintains fidelity of implementation. If fidelity drops below 80% or less, provide coaching until above 80% and observe for three weeks		

Intervention steps:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

1. First, the pass system needs to be developed. The teacher agrees to create three passes that will be laminated and placed at the front of Kayden’s desk each day.
2. Second, the coach will train Kayden in the use of the pass system by meeting with Kayden to teach, model, and practice the replacement behavior (use of pass). In addition, the coach will review expectations for when the three passes are used up in one day (i.e., Kayden will read one brief sentence).
3. Once Kayden is trained and agrees to the use of the pass system, the teacher will implement the system, praise Kayden for using the passes, and provide a simple reward if Kayden decides to read rather than use a pass (e.g., provide praise and give him a sticker or small reward).
4. The coach visits the classroom to observe during reading to evaluate if the system is working.

5. *These data are then shared with the teacher along with performance feedback on how the teacher implemented the strategy. At this point, the teacher and coach discuss the need for modifications to the intervention based on the data gathered. If Kayden continued to struggle with reading aloud in the classroom despite providing only brief opportunities followed by praise and additional reinforcement, a look at the need for additional academic supports, one-on-one reading rather than group reading, and/or additional review with Kayden about the pass system may be warranted.*

Collaborative Coaching

Having a clear partnership between the coach and teacher will allow for ongoing review of data, high-quality implementation of the strategies, problem solving, and adaptations when necessary. The coach needs to be aware of the available resources, values, and skills of the teacher with whom they work. A collaborative partnership makes successful planning and implementation most likely. Overall, it is essential that teachers have the motivation, skills, and supports to implement the Tier 2 interventions children need (Stormont et al., 2012). Buy-in is always a critical factor to consider when implementing new practices. After coaches ensure teachers understand both the need for the intervention and their role in supporting the child, then it is also important that teachers demonstrate mastery of the intervention components and receive more support in terms of modeling and performance feedback on specific components prior to independent implementation. Once demonstration of mastery is established, teachers need to receive ongoing performance feedback to sustain their use of specific practices. This process is presented in a step-by-step fashion in *Figure 3*.

Summary

To increase the capacity of schools to serve more children within the context of prevention tiers of support, finding resources and building the infrastructure to support the use of coaching teachers in the area of social behavior supports are vital. Overall, research clearly underscores the importance of providing more support when implementing new practices (Fixsen et al., 2005). Increasingly, teachers are expected to know how to implement strategies to support all children, including those at risk. However, without either the background for why such strategies would be important to implement or the skills needed to implement the strategies, teachers are not likely to use them. Furthermore, even when teachers understand the importance of specific supports and demonstrate that they can use them effectively, new behavior is fragile and needs ongoing support to be sustained (Fixsen et al., 2005). The purpose of this article was to provide examples of how coaching can be used to support universal and Tier 2 supports within the classroom setting.

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