Research Highlights

Topic: Positive Behavior Support

Sailor, W., Freeman, R.L., Britten, J., McCart, A., & Smith, C.L. (2000). Using information technology to prepare personnel to implement functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral support. *Exceptionality, 8*(3), 217-230.

BOTTOM LINE

The Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997 included for the first time vocabulary specific to students who present problem behavior regarding their placement, instruction, and disability determination. These changes created an immediate need for new models of staff and teacher training programs to learn about functional behavior assessment (FBA) and positive behavior support (PBS). This article reviews information and training on FBA and PBS that have been accelerated through advances in instructional technology and interactive media.

TIPS

- Positive behavior support (PBS) and functional behavior assessment (FBA).

- Acquire accurate and up-to-date information including competencies, philosophical barriers, and school discipline policies.

- Contact the Online Academy at the University of Kansas Center for Research and Learning (http://www.onlineacademy.org) for instructional technological modules to guide: best instructional practices and methods, curricular adaptations, curriculum assessments, and school-family-community partnerships.

- Contact the University of Kentucky (www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/homepage.html) for information on their CDRom focusing on conducting a functional behavior assessment.

- Reap benefits from online instruction including broad geographical access, adaptability to different learning styles, and opportunity for comprehensive knowledge.

- Instructional formats to teach application of FBA and PBS strategies have not been immediately available to practitioners who instruct students with behavioral difficulties.

- In order for training in FBA to be effective, practitioners must have a comprehensive understanding and related skills of applied behavior analysis, basic behavior modification techniques, and collaboration.

- There needs to be an approximate 80% "buy-in" from practitioners, administrators, and parents in order to achieve successful systems level outcomes in positive behavior supports.

- There needs to be an empirical research base with results translated into practices that will result in reliable implementation of FBA and PBS.

- Identified barriers to traditional staff development models include:
  - geographic location
  - scheduling issues
  - substitute teachers costs
  - incorporating a sequence of instructional activities into preexisting professional development requirements
  - staff turnover.

- The Online Academy at the University of Kansas is based on the following three foundations including the:
  - use of practices validated through research studies
  - creation of online modules
  - development of a systems framework that permits both individualized preservice and in-service training.

- Instructional online modules start at an awareness level and progress to more sophisticated knowledge and application level.

- Instructional online modules include:
  - lessons
  - lists of readings
  - resources
  - audiostreamed information with graphics
  - specific practice exercises
  - self-or instructor assessment of acquired skills
  - sources for more information.

- The University of Kentucky developed a module on FBA using a CD-ROM format. A companion CD-ROM is being developed for behavioral interventions.

- The FBA CD-ROM module includes:
  - an overview of the process
  - a systematic tutorial on the steps when conducting an FBA
  - case studies that allow participants to perform these steps with actual students.

- Further research on the effectiveness of instructional technology and interactive media has on practitioners' abilities to conduct FBAs and develop behavior support plans in PBS efforts.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Garmston, R.J., & Weldman, B.M. (1999). *The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Lewis, T.J., Sugai, G., & Colvin, G. (1998). Reducing problem behavior through a school-wide system of effective behavioral support: Investigation of a school-wide social skills training program and contextual interventions. *School Psychology Review, 27,* 446-459.

Liaupsin, C.J., Scott, T.M., & Nelson, C.M. (2000). *Functional behavior assessment: An interactive tutorial.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Ruef, M.B., Turnbull, A.P., Turnbull, H.R., & Poston, D. (1999). Perspectives of five stakeholder groups: challenging behavior of individuals with mental retardation and/or autism. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 1,* 43-58.

Turnbull, A., Edmondson, H., Griggs, P., Wickham, D., Sailor, W., Beech, S., Freeman, R., Guess, D., Hale, N., Lassen, S., McCart, A., Riffel, L., Schmerchek, D., Turnbull, H. R., Warren, J., & Wilcox, B. (2002). A blueprint for schoolwide positive behavioral support: Full implementation of three components. *Exceptional Children, 68*(3), 337-402.