

## Reflection Paper

**Subject:** Special Education Behavioral Data

**Grade:** 5th Grade

**Module 4: Assessment for Active Learning :** Teacher implements instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by:

**Selected Indicator:** Using academic, behavioral and health data to select and/or design interventions, and assist in the development of individualized educational programs for students with disabilities.

### **Goal:**

My goal is to collect behavioral data and design interventions to develop effective behavioral plans and individualized education programs.

### **Initial Summary:**

Due to the type of special education students I teach I have structured my entire classroom to utilize various behavioral interventions and strategies. I have overall interventions that I use with all of my students to run my classroom successfully. However, after reviewing my student's point sheet data I have discovered that some students need more intensive interventions to address specific behaviors. My overall goal is to identify, through specific data analysis, the behaviors that students need to have re-shaped so that they can be successful with regular education students when they are no longer in a self-contained program. After using the collected behavioral data to design interventions I will be able to better design goals and objectives for their individualized educational programs.

### **Reflection:**

Through this module I wanted to learn how to use individual student's point sheet data to design behavioral interventions to better assist in developing individualized education programs for the students in my classroom. I expected that by trying new behavioral interventions to address student's individual behaviors that I would be able to reshape specific behaviors that the students need to develop before being included in mainstream classes. I also expected my students to be excited to earn incentives. They work hard to earn all of their points on their point sheet because they can cash them in for gym time, computer time, or any other choice activity.

In order to develop new learning, I read through an article related to data collection techniques. I also consulted closely with the district's behavioral

consultant and with another special education teacher who works with emotionally disturbed students. The article that I found extremely useful was called *Collecting Behavioral Data in General Education Settings: A Primer for Behavioral Data Collection* (Lee, Vostal, Lylo & Hua, 2011). This article gave step by step instructions on the most effective way to collect data. Starting with scheduling a time to collect, determining the behavior you want to target, collecting the data, then summarizing and interpreting data. One of the key points I took from the article is that it suggested graphing all of your data. By graphing, "It allows data collectors to pull information from many entries on a data sheet, or multiple data sheets into one source" (Lee, Vostal, Lylo & Hua, 2011, p. 28). Graphs serve as an excellent source of feedback on intervention effectiveness and graphs can be a source of reinforcements. The final reason why it is important to use a graph is because it will "provide a picture of behaviors" (Lee, Vostal, Lylo & Hua, 2011, p. 28). The final step, which is the most important, is to interpret the data that you have collected. The article stressed how if the data was not interpreted that it was a waste. Lee, Vostal, Lylo & Hua, (2011), recommended that all intervention be compared with a set of baseline data in order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. If the collected data was not interpreted and compared to the baseline data then it would not be possible to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. As far as intervention strategies, once the data was collected most of the strategies I used were from the behavior consultant and special education teacher. These individuals not only know the student's and their behaviors better than a general article or book, but they also have had first-hand experience on how to develop interventions to assist with individualized education programs and behavior intervention plans.

The indicator I chose to use allowed me to collect behavioral data to design interventions which would assist in the development of individualized education programs and behavior intervention plans for students with disabilities. The first step to starting the process of reshaping individual student's behaviors was to start with baseline data. I decided to work with two of my students to implement individual behavioral incentives. All of the students have different behaviors which keep them in a self-contained classroom. All of the baseline data and weekly data were determined by each student's point sheet. The point sheet consisted of 10 time blocks broken up throughout the day. The student would lose a point when they do an undesired behavior, such as talk out, make a disrespectful comment, distract others, or become off task/work avoidant. Weekly data was determined by averaging the student's daily data.

The first student I decided to focus on was one who had difficulty with work completion. He would refuse to do work or would not finish his work assignments. He used many techniques to try to escape work such as asking to use the bathroom or escalating to the point of being significantly unsafe and destructive within the classroom. The student's baseline data, from his original point sheet, showed that he only earned an average of 28% of his on-task point data a week. As long as the students focus on their work, and remain on-task, they are able to earn 100% of their points a week. This student was significantly lower than that of his peers. I decided to consult with the special education teacher who suggested putting an incentive in place for this student where he can earn something for completing a certain amount of assignments. I thought that this was a great idea, so I decided to make a 'work card' for this student where I would write the word 'WORK' in bubble letters and for every assignment the student completed he would be able to color in a letter. When he completely filled in his 'work card' he could exchange it for 10 minutes of computer time. I was completely shocked by how quickly the student was willing to work after this incentive was in place. After trying this intervention for the first week his average on-task point sheet data increased from 28% a week to 80% a week. The second week he increased his average on-task data to 86% and the third week he increased to 88%. However, the fourth week he decreased to an average of 74% of on-task points a week. The fifth week he increased again to an average of 78% of earning his on-task points. The sixth week the student's average on-task data increased again to 88%.

By putting this incentive in place this student started to produce more work than he had ever been able to do because he was motivated by using the computer. It was decided at a program placement team meeting to put this behavioral incentive into his behavior intervention plan because he continued to make steady progress and increased the amount of work that he was able to complete.

The second student who I chose to implement a behavioral intervention with was a student who had a significant issue distracting others. This student would sing, make faces, make noises, and do other various things that would distract him, and other students, away from their work. His behaviors would also take away from the time I used to deliver instruction. At the beginning of the year I tried many different behavioral interventions. At any point this student was able to go for a walk, do wall push-ups, wall sits, walk up the stairs, and other physical activities to help get rid of some of the energy that he had, which distracted the other students. The issue with these interventions is that the student never took advantage of using these strategies. When asked if he wanted to go for a walk he would refuse. I decided to consult with the special education teacher again, as well as with the district's behavior consultant. It was suggested that this student earn something, very similar to the student who earned computer time for completing assignments. It was suggested that this student start with a certain number of tallies and when he would do an undesired behavior, in his case 'blurt out', he would lose a tally. At the end of the day he could cash in his tallies for time listening to his favorite music artist. The student's baseline point sheet data indicated that 60% of his day was used distracting others during instructional time. When the 'blurt out' card was introduced the student started with 15 tallies that he could lose a day. The first day the student did well to control his distracting during the morning and still had all 15 of his tallies before lunch. After lunch and recess the student had extreme difficulty getting back into the momentum of instruction. He lost 4 blurt tallies within 1 out of the 10 time blocks. The remainder of the day he continued to blurt and lose points from his point sheet, as well as tallies. At the end of the first day the student had earned 2 minutes of music time and had used 40% of his day to distract others. Although his overall distracting had decreased throughout the day, he had still distracted others 13 times within a two hour period. As I continued with this intervention plan of taking blurt tallies the student seemed to not be motivated by the music anymore. He seemed to get more of a reward from distracting other students than receiving his music incentive at the end of the day. His second day he had earned 3 minutes of music time. The third day he earned no music time. The fourth day he earned 2 minutes of music time. The 5th day he didn't earn any music time again. By reviewing the data, it showed me that the expectation for the student not to talk out all day was too high. I needed to figure out a way to make this student successful. After talking with the behavioral consultant she suggested that I reinforce his positive, quiet behavior, more often than just once at the end of the day. She suggested that I reinforce him after recess and at the end of the day. I decided to revamp this student's intervention plan. With the new plan the student could earn a total of 14 minutes of music time a day. Seven minutes from the beginning of the day until after recess and seven after recess to the end of the day. By giving the student two opportunities to earn music time the behaviorist thought that he might see success faster and try harder with the program. The first day after trying the split music time, once in the middle of the day and once at the end of the day, the student earned all 7 minutes of his music time in the morning. However, we were still having issues after lunch. By the end of the day the student did not earn any music time. This continued like this for three days. On the fourth day the student again, earned music time in the morning, but not in the afternoon. It was now an obvious pattern that this student struggled to refrain from distracting others in the afternoon. The next step was again to go back to the drawing board to make this student successful. After brainstorming with the special education teacher again she suggested that instead of taking away 'blurt out' tallies that I give him blurt tallies. She also suggested focusing primarily with the afternoon seeing as he was having the most difficulty. I decided to give this a try. I broke this student's afternoon schedule into 5 minute increments. For every 5 minutes that the student was not 'blurting out' he would receive a tally. If he was caught 'blurting out' he would

receive a '0'. At the end of the day the student could exchange each tally for 30 seconds of music time. The student went from earning no music time in the afternoon to earning 3 minutes and 30 seconds of music time. This meant that he was able to not 'blurt out' for 35 minutes total. The second day the student earned 4 minutes of music time, which meant he was able to control his 'blurts' for 40 minutes. The third day he earned 3 minutes of music time, which meant that he was able to not 'blurt out' for 30 minutes. The fourth day the student earned 4 minutes of music time, which meant he was not blurting out for 40 minutes. The fifth day the student earned 3 minutes and 30 seconds of music time, which meant he didn't blurt out for 35 total minutes. The first full week the student earned a total of 18 minutes of music in the afternoon, which is a total of 15% of the total time he could have earned all week. Due to the progress I was seeing with this intervention strategy I decided to continue it. This student had started with not earning any music time to starting to earn anywhere from 3-4 minutes a day. The second week, the student increased his total music time to 20 minutes and earned a total of 16% of his total time he could have earned all well. The third week, the student increased to earning 26 minutes and 30 seconds of music time for the week. This increased the student's data to earning about 22% of his total music time for the week. The fourth week the student earned a total of 27 minutes of music time for the week. This maintained the student's data at earning about 22% of his total music time. Due to the continuing success of this behavior intervention it was decided that this strategy would be added into the student's behavior intervention plan and continued in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

After collecting and interpreting the student's data it was time to prepare the data for the student's individualized education program meetings. Many special education teachers have no issue knowing what they want to have their student achieve, however not a single individualized education program that came to me this school year had a way to measure the objective. By collecting, and continuously interpreting the data, I found it extremely easy to write measurable goals and objectives for my two students. After creating my measurable objectives, I decided to graph all of the data, from point sheets to individualized interventions. I found that while at the meetings with the graph it was not only easier to explain to parents the different trend lines, but it was also easy to show them the proof of what was or was not working for their child.

My new learning was directly related to my indicator because by reading the article, meeting with the behavioral consultant, and brainstorming with the other special education teacher I was able to discover new strategies on how not only to collect data, but interpret it to be useful for legal documents, such as individualized education programs and behavior intervention plans. My new learning of behavioral strategies and interventions has changed my teaching practices to be more positive and motivating rather than taking away points and constantly giving consequences. By giving the students an opportunity earn something for their hard work it provides external motivation, which is something that these types of student need in order to be successful in school and eventually be pushed back into mainstream classes. These interventions can be successfully utilized in the mainstream and are easy to implement and analyze by a general education teacher.