When and How to Use Structured Reward Systems – Whole Class and Individual Student, K-12

Presented by:
Randy Sprick, Ph.D.

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**Purpose:**

Establish a positive behavior.

Eliminate a negative behavior.

**Rationale:**

Some students may not know how to be successful.

Some students may need additional motivation because learning and using new behavior requires a lot of effort.

Some students may not value school success.

Some students may find their needs are more fulfilled when they engage in inappropriate behavior than when they behave appropriately.

**Other things to consider:**

*Does the student know your concern? Intervention A*

*Does the student know the goal? Intervention B*

*Is the behavior directly related to academic deficits? Intervention C*

*Have you tried simple data collection and debriefing? Intervention D*

*Have you systematically tried to build a positive relationship with the student? Intervention E*

*Have you analyzed and STOICally addressed the function of the misbehavior? Intervention F (Structure, Teach, Observe, Interact positively, Correct fluently)*

**Common Concerns About Using Reinforcers**

Isn’t this bribery?

Shouldn’t students behave appropriately without rewards and reinforcers?

Won’t students stop working as soon as the reinforcers are removed?

Why should students who misbehave get extra rewards and privileges?

Shouldn’t we avoid “reinforcing” students and focus more on “encouraging” students and “facilitating” learning?

Won’t other students object?

Will students become the kind of people who always ask, “What will you give me if I do that?”
Implementation Steps:

Step 1: Develop a plan.

A. Identify specific behavioral objectives.

B. If the behavior is not currently in the student’s repertoire, design lessons to teach the student the appropriate behavior.

C. Design a reinforcement system.

1. Choose a method for monitoring student behaviors and counting points.

   Counting a positive behavior

   Counting both a positive and a negative behavior

   Counting the absence or reduction of a negative behavior or increase of a positive behavior within specific time intervals

   Rating a positive behavior on a predetermined scale

   Recording the length of time a student engages in a particular behavior

   Counting completed work

2. Identify a menu of possible rewards and privileges

   Brainstorm with the student.

   Observe the student.
3. Determine how many points will be required for the student to earn each reward or privilege.

Reinforcers should be quickly learned in the initial phases of the intervention.

Reinforcement menus are useful so that the student has a variety of reinforcers from which to choose.

If the student shows no interest in small reinforcers but needs fairly immediate gratification, structure a reinforcement ladder.

Avoid putting time limits on what the student must do to earn reinforcers.

D. Specify consequences for misbehavior if necessary.

E. Determine whether and how to include the parents as active participants in the system.

F. Summarize the reinforcement system and review the procedures.

G. Identify ways to determine whether the intervention is helping the student reach her goals.

H. Identify procedures for increasing the sophistication of the system.

   Require more points to earn the same reinforcers—that is, increase the price.

   Increase the time intervals.

   Redefine the expectations.

I. Determine who will meet with the student.
Step 2: Meet with the student.

A. Describe the behavioral objectives, the planned reinforcement system, and any consequences for misbehavior that may be used.

B. Set up a schedule for any lessons and regular debriefings with the student.

C. Review everyone’s roles and responsibilities and write up the plan.

D. Conclude the meeting with words of encouragement.

Step 3: Implement the plan.

A. Provide continued support and encouragement.

B. Meet again during the first week of the plan to make any necessary modifications.

C. Periodically evaluate and revise the plan, eventually fading the system.

If the student is largely successful over a two week period:

- Change reinforcers to reflect increasingly natural reinforcers (i.e., privileges and responsibilities).
- Require more points for the same or different reinforcers.
- Increase the amount of time the student needs to work to earn the same reinforcers.
- Redefine the expectations.
- Increase the intervals of time between earning reinforcers by increasing the number of points required to earn more sophisticated reinforcers.
- Increase the sophistication of reinforcers.
Intervention Summary Form

Student: ________________________________      Date: ______________________________

OBJECTIVE

____________________________________________________________________________________

RESPONSIBILITIES

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

CONSEQUENCES

____________________________________________________________________________________

POINTS

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
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SIGNATURES

Student Signature: ________________________________________________________________

Teacher Signature: ________________________________________________________________

Interventionist Signature: ___________________________________________________________
Behavior Counting Form

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<th>Tuesday</th>
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<th>Thursday</th>
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## Scatterplot Data Collection

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**Behavior**

![Table](image)

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### Behavior Rating (see key below)

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<th>Use time efficiently</th>
<th>Classwork Complete</th>
<th>Homework Complete</th>
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<th>Student Initials</th>
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#### KEY

- **0**: Student did not consistently demonstrate a target behavior, required repeated reminders, and did not appear to be trying.
- **1**: Student demonstrated the target behavior most of the time or responded to reminders quickly and respectfully.
- **2**: Student demonstrated the target behavior consistently and did not need reminders.

### FOR COORDINATOR USE ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bonus Points</th>
<th>Homework/Reading (Write title of assignment. Include missing work. If no homework is due, student should read.)</th>
<th>Parent Initials</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian Comments</th>
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### Progress over the last 14 days

- Parent/Guardian: Sign to acknowledge that student showed you this Daily Monitor. Fill in a bubble to indicate whether homework was or was not completed.
References and Resources

Materials in the Safe & Civil Schools Library are now listed on SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. To view details on the Safe & Civil Schools Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Model, visit:

Books


Multimedia


Articles


The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) has endorsed three Safe & Civil Schools resources:

- Foundations
- CHAMPS
- Interventions

For more information, visit: www.casecec.org


Events

Visit www.safeandcivilschools.com for information about the annual Safe & Civil Schools National Conference along with details on presentations across the country that are open to the public.