

BEHAVIORAL CONSULTING FRAMING PAPER

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Promoting and Sustaining Staff Behavior Change

“School and district staff members, like others in the workforce, are becoming more and more involved in seeking and taking advantage of opportunities to improve their professional skills and increase their effectiveness” (Butler, 2002. p.1)

This chapter addresses various types of sustained support that must be provided for educators if meaningful schoolwide change is to be achieved. Guskey (1986) and Lewis (2001) point out that change occurs slowly, and is a difficult, gradual process for teachers. For meaningful schoolwide change to occur, the staff members must receive constructive, *on-going* training and support. Effective schoolwide discipline cannot be achieved through a one- or two-day staff development/in-service workshop, or through the distribution of a discipline handbook (Sugai & Horner, 1999). *It usually takes a commitment of one to three years of on-going training and support to establish an effective schoolwide discipline program.* Experience has taught us that if the establishment of an effective schoolwide discipline program is not among the top school improvement goals, it is not likely to receive the material, time and staff resources to make it effective. Schoolwide discipline needs to be a priority if a *sustained, focused effort is to occur.*

Educators are much more likely to effectively perform their roles, in promoting student learning and associated schoolwide discipline, if they receive appropriate training, supervision, *and* continued support. *Training, during pre-service, in-service workshops or consultations, alone has been shown to be insufficient to result in successful classroom applications of teaching or classroom management skills. There must be follow-up support and feedback if program implementation is to be sustained.*

Implementing Staff Development Strategies

Pre-Service Education

Baer and Bushell (1981) pointed out that apprenticeship, or practice teaching, under the supervision of a veteran teacher has considerable power. If the concepts taught during pre-service are not modeled, explained, and reinforced by the master teacher, they are not likely to survive. Follow-up support and feedback for implementing what was taught is critical.

Successful Training Activities During Consultations and Workshops

“Lecture formats generally serve as jumping-off points rather than as complete training packages” (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1994c). Active participant involvement and feedback improve subsequent performance when combined with lecture. Numerous studies have shown that modeling and supportive feedback during training, provided through workshops or consultations, enhance the likelihood of successful program implementation (e.g., Adams, Tallon, & Rimell, 1980; Flanagan, Adams, & Forehand, 1979; Krumhus & Malott, 1980). However, even when the training, provided through individual consultations or workshops, has included modeling and role-playing with feedback, studies (e.g., Fox & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1983; Montegar, et al., 1977; Souweine, Sulzer-Azaroff, & Frederickson, 1977) clearly show that such combined training is insufficient to sustain the practice of skills that were learned during the in-services or workshops. The skills learned were only maintained when supervisors, such as school principals, commended and paid attention to staff for continuing to implement the skills.

Again, *follow-up support and feedback for program implementation is critical*. For this reason, lecture, modeling, role-playing, and feedback during training must be followed up with on-the-job support and feedback if meaningful classroom and schoolwide change is to occur.

What needs to occur to provide the necessary support? First, it is helpful to identify available resources, such as who can be called upon for support. There also are specific supportive activities that need to occur. These topics are applicable for all staff: regular teachers, substitutes, aides, and others.

Identifying and Providing Resources and Support

Support and Resources

A key to promoting change is to analyze the school environment for support and resources. The program must have the necessary resources, and it must be assured that those involved will receive recognition, or a variety of reinforcers, from different sources if the program is to be successful. (A lack of support for teachers and staff was identified in Chapter 2 as a factor contributing to student discipline problems.)

The school environmental analysis should be conducted at several levels, including supervisors, instructors, support staff, and students. Their cooperation is crucial, as these people control many important contingencies and may possess important data that could be made available for the assessment. Similarly, at the district level, those in charge, such as the superintendent and the head of security, need to be contacted for their approval and support. Their administrative roles must be clarified, along with a determination of the extent of the help they will provide. The currently operating programs and policies also need to be described. Such information should permit those initiating the behavioral interventions to decide on the feasibility of incorporating their program within these current structures. Otherwise, it is best to negotiate a mechanism for collaboratively modifying those policies and procedures.

It is important to contact juvenile authorities and become familiar with local and state laws governing juveniles. Also solicit the cooperation of parents and community leaders. Often these people are willing to help by supplying prizes, gift certificates, admission passes, funds, time, and other rewards that can be used as incentives.

Table 3.1, an adaptation of one developed by Mayer et al. (1983c) and Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer (1994a), outlines suggested activities for determining environmental support and resources.

Table 3.1 Suggested Activities for Assessing Environmental Support and Resources

I. District Level

- A. Inform and request support from each of the following:
 1. Superintendent
 2. Person(s) with the major responsibility for overseeing data and programs in the area addressed (e.g., vandalism, attendance, discipline, etc.)
 3. Director of special services and/or others recommended by the superintendent
- B. Locate supplemental resources such as the instructional materials center or other repository of extra books and materials
- C. Become acquainted with any district-wide programs and policies that have been or are operating in the targeted area

II. School Level

A. Inform, request support, and discover information about each of the following:

1. *Principal*. The principal's leadership role, his or her view of instructional and professional staff and school's strengths and weaknesses; programs supported; years in school; related background information; how principal is viewed by staff; degree to which he or she uses praise; behaviors that the principal positively recognizes; particular staff member he or she reinforces or recognizes more than others; availability to staff; and degree of rapport and interaction with students
2. *Vice- or Assistant-Principal* (when applicable). Obtain same information as for the principal, plus how that role differs from the principal's
3. *Secretary*. Attitude toward principal, instructional, and professional staff; years at school; attitude of staff toward secretary; strengths and weaknesses; interests; control over communications; and, nature and degree of administrative responsibilities held
4. *Psychologist/Counselor*. Attitude toward staff and project; knowledge of behavioral approach; days per week at school; role; and, background
5. *Custodian*. Role and attitude of staff and students toward custodian and vice versa
6. *School Staff*. Are there cliques? Views of psychologist, principal, and faculty leaders; gathering places for breaks, lunch etc.; and, current philosophical orientation
7. *Special staff and Services*.
 - a. *Remedial Reading Teachers*. Time spent at school; training and experience, approach used in remediation; materials available; relation to staff; and, willingness to cooperate
 - b. *Librarian*. Level of training; time available; relation to staff; and, availability of high interest/low vocabulary materials
 - c. *Resource Specialist*. Level of training; number of days or time spent at school; relation to staff; any behavioral approaches used; and, available materials
 - d. *Available Aids/Volunteers*. Degree of responsibility and training
 - e. *Student Council and Student Officers*. Degree of leadership and responsibility
 - f. *School Security Personnel*. Responsibilities; relation to students; number; training; and, visibility
 - g. *School Nurse and Attendance Clerk*. Responsibilities and available information

B. Any school-wide programs and policies that have been or are operating in the targeted area

III. Community Resources

A. Inform, request support, and discover information about each of the following:

1. *PTA*. Size; involvement; support funds; chairperson's telephone number; degree to which members are interested in supporting a project in targeted area; and, other leaders in the group
2. *Library*. Location and availability of films, records, tapes, internet access, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc.
3. *Community Recreation*. Local programs; involvement; size; time; and location
4. *Description of Immediate Neighborhood*. Perception of school; socioeconomic status; and, neighborhood service organizations that may be willing to help
5. *Local Educational Supply Stores*. Those available
6. *School Advisory Council*. Role
7. *Local businesses willing to provide resources*
8. Local law enforcement's ability to be involved in schoolwide prevention efforts

Prompts, Reminders, and Cues

A commonly used first strategy to promote change with staff members is to tell them what they need to do. Sometimes, when told how to do something, they (e.g., teachers, substitutes, and aides) do it. At other times, they need to be shown how to do it, or the presence of a supervisor or trainer may remind the teacher or prompt the skill. However, even when prompts are used, such as instructions, modeling, or the presence of a supervisor or trainer, some staff members may still not perform the skill. They may be so wrapped-up in what is going on at the moment, that they do not recall needing to engage in the newly learned skill. Or the

suggested strategy may be too different from what the teacher has used or too complex for the teacher to understand. For whatever reason, it is sometimes necessary to change the suggested strategy, or to provide additional prompts, such as holding up a colored piece of paper (Hall, Lund, & Jackson, 1968) or nodding (Zeilberger, Sampen, & Sloan, 1968) to remind staff members to apply the skill (e.g., to apply reinforcement). The task is to select a contextually appropriate intervention and to use the least intrusive prompt that works.

Methods that have been used successfully to prompt educators to follow-through and implement the intervention include:

- *Do not assume that the “best” intervention of the client should always be recommended.* The recommended intervention must be contextually appropriate. For as Horner (1994) has stated:

The goal is not to find the one true intervention, but to find an intervention that is effective and will be implemented by the people in the setting. An intervention is contextually appropriate if it fits with the skills, schedules, resources, and values of the people who must implement the plan (p. 403).
- *Provide a checklist of the skills they are to practice, with a request that they check-off each skill when it is practiced.*
- *Use prompts as an integral part of the program.* For example, when certificates, tokens, daily report cards, or positive notes are available as part of the program, they often prompt the delivery of praise or other reinforcers.
- *Provide precise guidelines as to when to use the skill.* For example, Farber and Mayer (1972) describe a high school teacher who was having a difficult time delivering praise to his students’ appropriate behavior. He complained about feeling unnatural and awkward. It was suggested that he try: (1) praising at least one student during the first minute of class for starting classwork; and (2) spending two five minute periods, while the students were working, circulating about the room reinforcing students for doing their work. This detailed structure facilitated his being able to provide praise. Later he even commented about how much nicer his classroom environment had become, and continued to use praise in his classes.
- *Use an acceptable and comprehensible language to gain support. Do not use technical language with people who do not understand it.* The purpose of technical language is to precisely communicate among professionals. If the educators being worked with do not use the language, its use would result in their confusion, uneasiness, and frustration.

Reinforcement for Implementing Staff Development Activities

Once the behavior occurs, it is important to reinforce it. Reinforcement occurs when a consequence to a behavior results in the behavior being maintained or increased in frequency. Once new skills are taught to teachers, and if reinforcement is provided for using the skills, the use of the skills begins to increase and is eventually maintained or becomes habit. The use of reinforcement, thus, is an integral part of staff development strategies affecting school-wide change.

There is a lot that has been learned regarding the use of reinforcement for staff development activities:

- *Student progress alone is usually not sufficiently reinforcing for teachers or aides to maintain program implementation.*
- *Student progress, feedback on students’ progress, and social praise and recognition for program implementation appear most effective in maintaining program implementation.* Provide social praise such as, “Your smile and praise for Mary’s work completion sure did please her. Don’t you think so?” “Your students seem to be doing so much better since you started to ...” “Your pat on John’s back was just what he needed to give him that extra boost

to get his work finished.” “Mike’s mother called and said she sure was pleased to see that positive note you sent home with her son. She said it helped make her day.” Such comments add needed teacher recognition and meaning to the students’ progress.

- *Reinforce Frequently.* It is strongly recommended that programs not start until it is certain that staff will be provided with reinforcement at least twice a week during the early phase of program implementation. This immediate and frequent reinforcement is necessary until the new behaviors are well established; otherwise they are likely to disintegrate. The resultant failure will then punish attempts to implement the approach. Later on, the frequency of praise, phone calls, and so forth, can be reduced gradually. As Sulzer-Azaroff and Mayer (1994c) noted, “this occasional intermittent reinforcement and the support provided by the consultees’ peers, enables you to reduce the amount of time you need to devote to any one consultee while supporting the durability of change” (p. 92).
- *Use a variety of reinforcing sources.* Do not depend on a single person to provide reinforcement for staff improvement or program implementation. Draw upon parents, students, other teachers and administrators, counselors and psychologists, and classroom visitors.

Parents. Parents often serve as a powerful source of reinforcement for teachers. By capitalizing on this source, teacher growth and change can be enhanced considerably. Thus:

- Inform parents of what their child’s teachers are doing and how this is helping their child.
- Encourage parents to let the teacher know how much they appreciate what he/she is doing to help their child (e.g., when the teacher sends home positive notes on student’s progress, or implements an individualized instructional program).

Students. A major source of reinforcement received for teaching is from students. It comes not only from the students’ progress, but also from positive comments or actions directed toward the teacher or to classmates about the teacher in the teacher’s presence. A smile from a student after the teacher has helped him, or comments such as, “This teacher makes school work fun,” and “I like her,” can serve as powerful teacher reinforcers. Thus, as Mayer and McGookin (1977) have pointed out, the effectiveness of programs can be enhanced considerably. Rather than relying on student progress or the reinforcement from others to motivate teachers to implement the program, students are taught to reinforce teacher behaviors that facilitate student learning and social-emotional growth. All would seem to benefit by such an approach. (See Chapter 4 for illustrative social skills that can be taught to students.)

Teachers. Fellow teachers are an important source of possible reinforcement. Teachers often learn from one another. They serve both as models and sources of reinforcement for one another. Comments such as, “Maria sure has changed since you started working with her,” “Your students sure do enjoy the program you have them on,” and “I have never seen Mike work so hard and accomplish so much” often function as powerful reinforcers. Much can be done to increase the likelihood of such comments occurring, and to increase cooperation among teachers. Such activities appear to increase teacher retention and reduce burnout (Gersten, Keating, Yvanoff, & Harniss, 2001) and will enhance the students’ learning environment:

- Encourage teachers to meet in groups to discuss new procedures and techniques they have found helpful in teaching their students.
- Encourage teachers to observe procedures and classroom environments that specific (model) teachers are using.
- Teach aides to compliment or communicate appreciation of constructive teacher activities.
- Teach teachers to compliment or communicate appreciation of constructive aide activities.
- Inform model teachers when a specific teacher needs assistance and how he or she might be able to help the teacher in need.

School administrators. As pointed out previously, school administrators have a powerful effect on teacher behavior and on the school's learning environment. They also appear to influence teacher retention rates (Gersten et al., 2001). For most schoolwide programs to be effective, the administrator must communicate active support of the program. In fact, Horner and Sugai (2000) point out, schools that have successful schoolwide discipline programs rely "on clear administrative direction and support" (p. 231). Active support is communicated by:

- Being present at the schoolwide positive behavior support team meetings
- Providing positive recognition to teachers and others who implement agreed to programs
- Providing resources
- Providing release time for training, observing, or helping other teachers
- Helping to establish needed district and community contacts
- Compensating committee work by subtracting other duties or responsibilities
- Recognizing students for improvements

The administrator's support and assistance can determine the success or failure of a program.

Counselors, psychologists, resource specialists, and classroom visitors. Compliments by the school counselor, psychologist, resource specialist, classroom visitors, and others on the teacher's accomplishments and student behavior can be very reinforcing. Be sure, then, to point out to those who visit the classroom what the teacher is accomplishing to increase the likelihood of the teacher receiving well-deserved recognition. Comments by PPS specialists, parents, and administrators, such as, "The children are sure learning in your class," "Ramon just can't wait to get to school," "Your programs certainly have improved this classroom," can mean a lot to a teacher. Even comments given to another adult in the presence of the teacher (e.g., "Look how well she used positive control in her classroom.") can be most gratifying.

Reinforcement of Successive Steps

As inferred above, do not assume that all teachers have the skills to implement a particular program. Like with students, they have different training and experiences, and if they are to learn to implement a program, training will need to start at their level and is a gradual process. Behavior change can take time. The following scenario is an illustration of this point by Mayer and McGookin (1977) that emphasizes starting where the teacher is and gradually introducing a paradigm shift to a more desirable classroom structure:

The goal for one teacher, Mrs. Jones, was to increase her use of positive reinforcement. To do this, she requested assistance from a consultant. Several students in her classroom were causing a disturbance. The consultant's observation indicated that the teacher was quite skillful in identifying and administering aversives to individual students when they misbehaved, but that she did not use reinforcement – a baseline of zero. In discussing the situation, Mrs. Jones indicated that it would be an impossible task to implement the desired program (i.e., reinforcing individual students for their positive behavior). Because the teacher was skillful in identifying misbehaviors and applying aversives, the first step in the program was to involve her in using a modified response cost program. Each student started off each day with a total of ten points listed on a point card on his or her desk. Each time Mrs. Jones observed a misbehavior she crossed out one of the points. Near the end of the period, students could exchange the points for time in a reinforcing activity center which the consultant helped the teacher set up in the rear of her classroom. The consultant made sure he frequently stopped by Mrs. Jones's classroom to assist her, to answer any questions she might have, and to reinforce her efforts in implementing the program. What were the students' reactions? They reported they liked the program because, "Mrs. Jones doesn't yell at us much any more."

Once the first phase of the program began to work, the consultant introduced the next step, or successive approximation. He suggested that when the class had gone for ten to fifteen minutes without misbehaviors, which they were starting to do, the teacher reinforce the whole class with social reinforcement and an extra point: "Gee, I sure am pleased with the way all of you are working. You all deserve an extra point on your cards. Go ahead and put a plus one on your card." The teacher agreed to and implemented this plan. Again the consultant carefully monitored the progress and socially reinforced the teacher whenever he could, as he would continue to do at each successive step toward the goal of "increasing use of positive reinforcement." Once the second step was successful (i.e., student behavior results were positive, and so were reactions to the teacher's use of positive reinforcement), the third step was implemented. The teacher was asked if she could socially reinforce one student, Hector, when she saw him at work. The teacher agreed. Once the behavior of reinforcing Hector was established, another student was added who, it was pointed out, was very similar to Hector. Soon other students were added in a similar fashion, then small groups of students, until the program was changed from students being given ten points at the start to students earning their points for constructive classroom behavior. An aversive classroom situation was eventually changed to a positive one through the use of shaping.

A second teacher, who was observed delivering reinforcement to the class as a whole, was able to start at an approximation much closer to the goal. She started out by delivering reinforcers by tables. When every student at a table was engaged in on-task behavior, that table received a point. These points were exchanged for extra recess time, free time, or other activities the table selected for their points. Once their points were used up, the students at that table would start earning points again. The other tables would continue to add points to those already earned until they too had enough to cash in for an activity or special privilege. (pp. 39-40)

Some guidelines for effectively using the strategy of reinforcing successive steps include:

- The initial step suggested for implementation must not be too different from what the teacher is doing or has done in the past.
- It is helpful to provide prompts, directions, models, cues, or any antecedent that will help foster the occurrence of each desired step or approximation. (Be sure to follow the guidelines provided above.)
- Assure that each accomplished step receives reinforcement. (Without frequent reinforcement the teacher is likely to revert to using previous behaviors, such as aversive control methods.)
- Once the newly acquired behavior has been established, the amount of reinforcement necessary to maintain it can be gradually and progressively reduced.

Reinforcers and Reinforcing Programs For Faculty and Staff

Reinforcers. Below are lists of possible reinforcers that have been used successfully in a variety of educational settings. There are, of course, many others that can be used. Review the lists and decide which are currently in use and those that might be appropriate to add in your school setting. Also, solicit other ideas from the school's administration, faculty, students, parents, and staff. However, it is very important to recognize that what works, or what is appreciated, can vary among teachers. It is therefore important to observe their effect and use those that work for the teacher being assisted.

Verbal Praise

- ❑ Students give verbal praise
- ❑ Administrators give verbal praise
- ❑ Compliment a teacher on a program over the P.A. system
- ❑ Congratulate class and students over P.A. system
- ❑ Compliment class in front of teacher
- ❑ Encourage substitute teachers to provide positive feedback
- ❑ Provide specific labeled praise
- ❑ Parents give verbal praise
- ❑ Pass on compliments from parents, kids, and others to teachers and staff
- ❑ Principal spends first few minutes of faculty meeting complimenting staff
- ❑ Teachers give aides and each other verbal praise
- ❑ When visiting class, make positive comments on how students respond; point out specifics
- ❑ Visitors to school give verbal praise

Written Praise

- ❑ Individualized school note
- ❑ Appreciative letters with copies sent to administrators
- ❑ Letters of recommendation
- ❑ Positive notes in file
- ❑ Spotlight teacher in newspaper
- ❑ Positive written messages from consultant
- ❑ Written positive feedback
- ❑ Warm fuzzy notes
- ❑ Thank-U-Grams
- ❑ Appreciative letters from administrators
- ❑ Positive comments on teacher evaluation
- ❑ Thank you in daily bulletin
- ❑ Compliments on specific bulletin boards, etc.
- ❑ Positive notes from students

Tangible Rewards

- ❑ Buttons
- ❑ Lunch with administration
- ❑ Food
- ❑ Bonus money, or voucher, for special supplies or equipment
- ❑ Cash award
- ❑ Five gallons of gasoline
- ❑ Theater tickets
- ❑ Certificates
- ❑ Special lunches/dinners
- ❑ Small gifts
- ❑ Bonus supplies or equipment
- ❑ Merit raise
- ❑ Bonus pay
- ❑ Super market shopping spree
- ❑ CD ROM or DVD

Miscellaneous

- ❑ Release from teaching for a period (administrator or counselor takes class)
- ❑ Immediate response to request for help
- ❑ Remodeling of staff lounge
- ❑ Positive phone calls expressing appreciation or recognition
- ❑ Teacher of the month program
- ❑ Gestures: Smiles, nods, etc.
- ❑ Release paid time for in-service training or workshops
- ❑ Counselor or psychologist spends time in classroom in response to request for help

Programs. Mayer et al. (1983c) have developed a number of reinforcing programs for improving staff relationships and the school climate. Several are illustrated below.

Secret Pals for Staff Members

Highlights

Staff members secretly give each other complimentary notes and small gifts throughout the year.

Situations

Staff members at any level will benefit from this program. The secretary and counselor at a junior high school wanted to create a program to add spirit to the final 3 months of school. They also wanted to encourage positive communication among the faculty and staff.

Purposes

- To raise staff morale.
- To provide opportunities for staff members to get to know each other better.
- To model a program that teachers may use later with their students.

Procedures

- Personal information about each participant is obtained by using the form provided (see sample below). The program coordinator may make his or her own, if desired.
- Copies of the personal information form are duplicated and distributed to staff members with instructions for filling them out.
- All staff interested in participating are asked to return their completed forms to the office.
- At a staff meeting, all Secret Pal forms are folded and placed in a box. Each participant is asked to draw one form from the box. If someone draws his or her own name, he or she should draw again.
- The drawn names should be kept secret.
- The program coordinator suggests ways that staff members can show appreciation to their Secret Pals, such as by anonymously placing gifts or cards in mailboxes on special occasions. They also can use a form such as illustrated below.
- Any gifts should be of minimal cost.
- At the end of the year a party is held, during which Secret Pals officially meet each other.

Materials, Equipment, and Personnel Needed

- ✓ One person to coordinate the program
- ✓ Secret Pal personal information forms
- ✓ Box for the Secret Pal drawing
- ✓ Secret Pal form (Optional – copies in Appendix E)

Results

All the administrators and about half the faculty and staff participated in the Secret Pal program. Everyone reported much pleasure from receiving the positive notes and fun gifts. They planned to continue the program the next year.

Adaptations

One staff member may wish to keep track of the Secret Pals in order to ensure that everyone is remembered. The time interval may vary from 1 month to an entire year. Limits may be placed on how much money each participant may spend.

Concluding Comments

This enjoyable program helps to end the school year on an upbeat note. Teachers leave school feeling positive and pleased that they have had opportunities to get to know each other and show mutual appreciation. Similar programs can be implemented at the beginning of the year and with students.

Personal Information Form

Name _____

Date _____

1. Place of birth:
2. Number of brothers/sisters:
3. Education:
4. Favorite color:
5. Favorite pastime:
6. Hobbies:
7. Favorite sport:
8. Musical instrument played, if any:
9. Favorite shows (T.V., Broadway, etc.)
10. Favorite music:

Fuzzy-Grams for Staff

Highlights

This positive note provides administrators, teachers, and other staff members with often-missed opportunities to thank and compliment each other.

Situations

These notes can be used in all school settings. In elementary, junior high, and high schools, teachers frequently reported a need to provide a more socially reinforcing school environment.

Purposes

- To create a more positive school climate.
- To promote positive staff social interactions.
- To increase the frequency of peer reinforcement.
- To raise staff morale.

Procedures

- Staff members use the Fuzzy Gram form (see Appendix F) that includes spaces for both sender's and recipient's names, and a complimentary message.
- An administrator makes available to staff members a supply of Fuzzy Grams in central locations, such as in the office, in the faculty lounge, or in mailboxes. He or she posts instructions on writing positive comments and includes samples.
- The administrator provides opportunities for staff members to share these positive messages, such as at staff or department meetings, or to place them on a bulletin board in the lounge area. They also can be placed in staff mail-boxes.

Materials, Equipment, and Personnel Needed

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Resources for printing Fuzzy Grams | ✓ Pens |
| ✓ Central locations for supplying them to staff members | ✓ Good things to say about others |

Results

Administrators, psychologists, counselors, teachers, and other staff members all expressed enjoyment at writing and receiving Fuzzy Grams. Tremendous improvement in school climate often was noted.

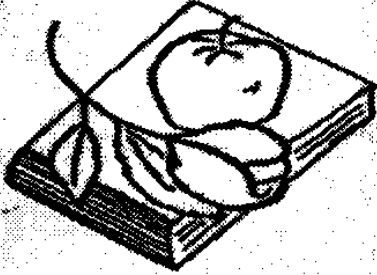
Adaptations

Schools can create their own distinctive Fuzzy Grams. Teachers may write Fuzzy Grams to their students, and students may write positive messages to staff members and other students. One high school principal, who was being transferred to another school, wrote a Fuzzy Gram expressing thanks to every staff member, and then encouraged all staff members to write complimentary messages to each other. The staff morale at this school was raised considerably.

Concluding Comments

Fuzzy Grams are simple and low-cost, and they do much to promote productive relationships among educators and students. When staff members compliment each other more frequently, the school climate becomes more positive and constructive, thereby more beneficial to all.

Super Teacher Day

TO: _____ Room _____ YOU are a SUPER TEACHER because... <input type="checkbox"/> YOU convey enthusiasm <input type="checkbox"/> YOU give time to study in class <input type="checkbox"/> YOU have a thorough knowledge of your subject <input type="checkbox"/> YOU have a great sense of humor <input type="checkbox"/> YOU really listen <input type="checkbox"/> YOU present interesting class lectures <input type="checkbox"/> YOU tell us what to expect on our next test <input type="checkbox"/> YOU make positive comments about my work <input type="checkbox"/> YOU always have time to smile <input type="checkbox"/> YOU keep me awake and listening <input type="checkbox"/> YOU present interesting material <input type="checkbox"/> YOU open new doors of interest for me <input type="checkbox"/> YOU care Personal comment: _____ _____ _____ _____	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">Have a HAPPY Super Teachers' Day</p>
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Highlights

Teachers are given a fun-filled day in their honor by parents and students.

Situations

This program may be used at all grade levels. At a junior high school with ongoing positive programs, PTA parents created an original plan to show appreciation to teachers for their efforts in making the school a better learning environment.

Procedures

- PTA leaders are contacted to set up an appointment to discuss this plan.
- At the meeting with PTA leaders, the rationale is presented for a positive approach, and positive programs being used by teachers and staff are demonstrated.
- PTA support and leadership are requested.
- Program coordinators designate a date for Super Teacher Day.
- PTA committee members in charge of the program then plan activities and gather necessary materials:
 - a. Early that morning, they decorate the school with balloons and posters to announce Super Teacher Day.
 - b. As staff members arrive, the PTA members greet them with decorated name-tags.
 - c. Parents and students start the day off serving coffee and doughnuts to the teachers.
 - d. As teachers enter their classrooms, students present them with Super Teacher Grams. (See above Super Teacher Day.)
 - e. At the end of the day, teachers are honored at a special assembly arranged by students and parents.

Materials, Equipment, and personnel Needed

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ Committee of PTA members | ✓ Coffee, doughnuts, and other treats |
| ✓ Super Teacher Grams | ✓ Luncheon materials |

Results

Teachers and other staff members reported a great boost in morale. Students and parents expressed much enthusiasm and soon afterward made plans for a Super Teacher Week. The staff members held a surprise brunch for the PTA members to thank them.

Adaptations

Parents and students also may show their thanks to other staff members. Posters may be made and put up around the school to advertise Super Teacher Day. A Super Teacher Week may include a variety of activities, such as a bulletin board display of teacher pictures, special certificates, classroom release time, and a decorated staff lounge. If the school does not have a PTA, or similar parent group, the schoolwide positive behavior support team could form a subcommittee to design and conduct a similar program.

Concluding Comments

Here, parents become involved in helping students show their appreciation to teachers and boosting staff morale.

Sustaining Staff Behavior Changes

“The real challenge is not identifying and developing new strategies, but in delivering and maintaining these strategies in schools” (Sugai & Horner, 1999, p. 12).

Continued Training and Support

A major problem in trying to maintain the implementation of an effective program in a school or district is the high attrition rate. In Chapter 1 attention was called to the high rate of teachers leaving the profession. In addition, many teachers and administrators leave particular schools or districts due to retirements or obtaining a teaching or administrative job elsewhere. Because of this high attrition rate within education, the provision of training and support must be viewed as on-going. Districts must devise strategies to provide on-going training and support for new staff, aides, substitute teachers, and administrators. When this is not done, effective discipline and educational programs deteriorate.

Here are some suggestions that can help promote continued successful program implementation. Perhaps several of these can be applied in your school or district.

- *When possible, hire principals from within.* Prepare vice principals within the same school/district to continue to implement the programs once they become principals. Consider identifying teachers with good teaching, classroom management and collaboration skills and encourage them to prepare for possible administration positions.
- *Schedule trainings for new administrators.* Acquaint them with the programs within a school and district. Educate them as to how they will be expected to support the programs. Consider overlapping work schedules, where the new administrator works with and receives training from the one who will be leaving. Also consider hiring back administrators who have retired to help train those newly hired.
- *Schedule trainings for new teachers and communicate an expectation of program implementation.* Also pair with mentor or retired teachers who are selected because of their expertise (consider developing a formal mentoring program for new teachers).
- *Obtain active central office and school board support and participation.*
- *Assign the responsibility for continued program implementation, training, and support to a district administrator, with the assistance of each schoolwide positive behavior support team.* This district administrator is required to periodically report program progress to the district Superintendent and School Board.
- *Communicate to all new administrators and teachers how their program implementation will be supported and evaluated.* The schoolwide positive behavior support team should assist with the evaluation.
- *Develop a discipline handbook that spells out school and classroom discipline policies and programs.* It should contain specific examples of how administrators and teachers implement various discipline program components. It also needs to provide resources, including a list of available materials and a means of checking them out; and, a list of individuals indicating their area(s) of expertise, and how to contact them.

Jointly Setting Goals

Jointly setting goals is another way to promote initial and enduring improvement in staff performance. This strategy, which is used in all types of organizations (Fellner & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1984; Gillat & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1994), assists people to progress in increments towards their ultimate objectives (e.g., tailoring instruction to individual student skills and interests; developing and rehearsing classroom rules; planning and conducting reinforcing activities for

students; suppressing reprimands, sarcasm, and other forms of punishment). After discovering their current levels of functioning (by constructing a baseline composed of repeated measures of the performance of concern), the performer sets a level to be attained during the next few days or weeks that is challenging yet attainable. Achieving a level set as a goal (e.g., “I will compliment the behavior of at least 4 students during the next half-hour.”) becomes an occasion for feedback and reinforcement. Then a new goal is set, and so on until the ultimate objective is accomplished. Reinforcement and feedback are then continued as the newly acquired routine becomes habitual and incorporated into the staff members' daily routine.

Student success teams also can provide an avenue for staff to work together in setting goals and providing support for one another in addressing student behavior problems. However, whether it is a student success team or some other organizational structure, some structure must be available that encourages staff to work together and provide support and assistance for one another.

Fading Prompts

This strategy is helpful to use with those administrators and teachers who have received training and on-going support. Fading involves the gradual removal of artificial or intrusive prompts, such as directions, modeling, physical guidance, and other cues. It is used to foster independence, in that a skill is not learned until it can occur consistently in the absence of artificial prompts. Prompts need to be faded out (unless they are an integral part of the program) to promote independent functioning. For example, as the teacher acquires the skill of implementing the program, gradually fade out, or reduce, directions, role playing activities, and the use of other intrusive cues so that the teacher can eventually conduct the program on her or his own.

- *Prompt just enough to bring about the response.* An overuse of prompts can lead to over-dependence, or to resentment if the prompting is seen as an effort to control or to reduce the teacher's independence. Jointly select prompts with each teacher.
- *Avoid abrupt reductions in prompting.* As the prompts begin to be faded out, if the teacher begins to make mistakes, the reduction has been too abrupt. A more frequent use of prompts is then indicated, followed by a more gradual reduction.

Using Reinforcement

Most everyone needs to receive very frequent reinforcement for their initial efforts to change behavior. The reinforcement can take the form of specific feedback, recognition, praise or even special privileges or rewards. As discussed previously, this reinforcement of staff performance can become less frequent with time (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1994c). However, if abrupt termination of reinforcement occurs, changes or new programs are not likely to continue. A number of years ago, Dustin (1974) stressed this point when he wrote:

One reason that institutions change superficially has to do with ineffective behaviors on the part of the change agent. These proponents of change ‘burn out,’ or move on, before the change is fully implemented. It is necessary that a change agent possess tenacity to follow through and to return to the same tasks and the same individuals time and again. (pp. 423-424)

Often, reinforcing feedback is done in person, but adequate support can often be attained by providing charts, telephone calls and notes (Fox & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1982; Hunt & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1974), and also by encouraging colleagues to provide positive recognition for the newly acquired skills. The advantage of involving colleagues or peers in delivering reinforcement is that the natural social environment begins to prompt and support the desired behaviors.

As mentioned earlier, the importance of frequent, sustained reinforcement must be stressed. This is especially true when attempting to implement preventive programs, because unlike the very discernible immediate reinforcement provided by deterrents and punishment, the reinforcing consequences for prevention are delayed and difficult to detect. Consequently, staff frequently require supplementary positive reinforcement, from one another, consultants, administrators, their students, and community members, if they are to continue conducting their preventive programs until the programs become embedded in the school's natural environment. Intermittent praise, though, may be sufficient. For example, Cossairt, Hall and Hopkins (1973) found that teachers' use of praise was maintained and even increased, when their principals intermittently praised their use of praise.

Summary and Discussion

The importance of providing follow-up support and feedback was stressed if meaningful program implementation is to be obtained and sustained. Staff training alone is *not* sufficient. Follow-up support is needed.

Several suggestions were provided to improve staff training, including continued, on-going training for all new educators (teachers, aides, substitutes, PPS specialists, and administrators). To be effective, training must be combined with strategies that provide support and resources. Methods of identifying resources and supportive individuals were presented, along with specific methods of providing support and sustaining staff behavior changes.

When staff members feel encouraged and supported by the administration and one another, the overall morale improves resulting in the use of less punitive, more positive, behavior intervention strategies. Initial support is necessary for program implementation, and continued support is essential if new programs are to be sustained.