

I.D.E.A. Conceptual Underpinnings: Shifting Our Understanding of Behavior

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CURRENT THINKING	PAST PRACTICE	THE DIFFERENCE
Students may require “ <i>Behavior Support</i> ”	Students may require “ <i>Behavior Management</i> ”	“ <i>Behavior Support</i> ” implies addressing Environment, Teaching Strategies, Teaching New Behaviors, and Using Positive Reinforcement Strategies;
		“ <i>Behavior Management</i> ” implies focus on consequences, whether positive or negative.
<i>Behavior Support Plans</i> should focus on understanding “why” the behavior occurred (i.e., the “function” or “communicative intent”) then focus on teaching/eliciting an alternative behavior that meets the student’s needs in alternative, more acceptable ways.	<i>Behavior Management Plans</i> focused on specifying the consequences of misbehavior, and to some extent, the consequences of acceptable behavior.	<i>Past practice</i> rarely attempted to understand the reasons a maladaptive behavior occurred;
		<i>Current practice</i> , by understanding the behavior and teaching alternatives or changing environmental conditions, plans to seek to permanently change the way a student seeks to get a need met.
<i>Antecedents</i> (the immediate and immediate past “triggers” or “predictors” for the behavior) are critical in changing behavior Focus: What we can actively do (e.g., teach, structure the environment) to change the behavior?	<i>Consequences</i> were attempted to be made so compelling that the student would stop a behavior (i.e., either so strongly aversive that the student didn’t want to choose the maladaptive behavior or so strongly positive that the student avoided the problem behavior to get the reinforcer) Focus: What the student must do to avoid or to get something we provide.	Consequence-based Plans: For many students, neither a strong enough punishment, nor a strong enough reinforcer can be found to change the behavior;
		Antecedent-based Plans: Can result in changing environmental conditions (e.g., time, space, materials, interactions), and student skills so that lasting change is possible.
Philosophy: Positive behavior needs to be taught, i.e., modeled, shaped, cued in a conducive environment.	Philosophy: Problem behavior needs to be controlled or eliminated. Positive behaviors are to be expected regardless of environment.	Controlling Behavior: Becoming increasingly more difficult in today’s classrooms;
		Teaching Behavior: Has potential for lasting change.