Implementing Multi-tiered Systems of Support: Social Skills Instruction

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pbis.org
Designing School-Wide Systems for Student Success

**Academic Systems**

- **Intensive, Individual Interventions**
  - Individual Students
  - Assessment-based
  - High Intensity
- **Targeted Group Interventions**
  - Some students (at-risk)
  - High efficiency
  - Rapid response
- **Universal Interventions**
  - All students
  - Preventive, proactive

**Behavioral Systems**

- **Intensive, Individual Interventions**
  - Individual Students
  - Assessment-based
  - Intense, durable procedures
- **Targeted Group Interventions**
  - Some students (at-risk)
  - High efficiency
  - Rapid response
- **Universal Interventions**
  - All settings, all students
  - Preventive, proactive
Universal

• Matrix of school-wide expectations across settings
  – List of problems = replacements
  – “Scope and sequence” of social skills
• Simple lessons with activities
• Year long teaching schedule
  – Stages of Learning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Settings</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Hallways</th>
<th>Cafeteria</th>
<th>Bathrooms</th>
<th>Playground</th>
<th>Assemblies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safe</strong></td>
<td>• Keep bodies calm in line</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Walk</td>
<td>• Wash</td>
<td>• Use equipment for intended purpose</td>
<td>• Walk</td>
<td>• Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Report any problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stay to the right on stairs</td>
<td>• Push in chairs</td>
<td>• Wood chips are for the ground</td>
<td>• Enter and exit gym in an orderly</td>
<td>• Enter and exit gym in an orderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask permission to leave any setting</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Banisters are for hands</td>
<td>• Place trash in trash can</td>
<td>• Participate in school approved games</td>
<td>manner</td>
<td>manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep body to self</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respect-ful</strong></td>
<td>• Treat others the way you want to be treated</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Walk</td>
<td>• Eat only your food</td>
<td>• Allow for privacy of others</td>
<td>• Line up at first signal</td>
<td>• Be an active listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be an active listener</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Walk quietly so others can</td>
<td>• Use a peaceful voice</td>
<td>• Clean up after self</td>
<td>• Invite others who want to join in</td>
<td>• Applaud appropriately to show</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow adult direction(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td>continue learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Enter and exit building peacefully</td>
<td>appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use polite language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Share materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help keep the school orderly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use polite language</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Learner</strong></td>
<td>• Be an active participant</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Return to class promptly</td>
<td>• Follow bathroom procedures</td>
<td>• Be a problem solver</td>
<td>• Be a risk taker</td>
<td>• Raise your hand to share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give full effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use proper manners</td>
<td>• Learn new games and activities</td>
<td>• Be prepared</td>
<td>• Keep comments and questions on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be a team player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Leave when adult excuses</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Make good choices</td>
<td>topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do your job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Return to class promptly</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Be prepared</td>
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<td></td>
<td>topic</td>
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</table>
Small Group

• Students displaying social skill challenges as primary concern
• Set of skills targeting common concerns
• Set of clear generalization strategies for classroom teachers to implement
Individual

- Social skill deficits / performance problem
- Guided by functional behavioral assessment
- Replacement “social skill” meets need
- Environment supports use of new skill
  - High rates of reinforcement
  - New skill accesses previous function of problem behavior
First Task

• What social skill lessons developed to date?
• Teaching schedule?
• Meeting the need of students across the tiers of support?
Social Skill Instruction

Definitions
Functional Perspective
Best Practices
Definition - Social Competence

“Social competence represents an **evaluative term based on judgments** (given certain criteria) that a person has **performed a task adequately**. These judgments may be based on opinions of significant others (e.g., parents, teachers), comparisons to explicit criteria (e.g., number of social tasks correctly performed in relation to some criterion), or comparisons to some normative sample.”  

(Gresham, 1986, p. 146)
Definition - Social Skills

Social skills are defined as "those behaviors which, within a given situation, predict important social outcomes" (Gresham, 1986, p. 5).

a) social skills are simply one facet of an overall construct of social competence – if taught in isolation you will never reach the larger objective of improved social functioning, b) they are linked to the environment in which they occur, and c) targeted skills should reflect the larger school set of behavioral expectations.
Functional Perspective

“Inappropriate” social skills meet student need and until we teach an “appropriate” skill and alter the environment, they will continue to use the inappropriate
Social Competence Assessment

Social Task
   Context

Process {social skills} Behavior

Outcome

Effective?

Yes
Social Competence

No
Judged Appropriate?

Yes
Social Competence

No
Social Incompetence

Rating Scales
Direct Observation
Self-Report

Functional Analysis

T. Lewis, 1992
Best Practices
Steps in Social Skill Instruction

• Assessment
• Planning
• Lesson Development
• Teaching
• Generalization
Assessment: Student Identification
(Data, System)

Use of existing data / assessment sources such as ODR, visits to discipline room, teacher referral, number of “buddy room” visits
Assessment: Skill Selection
(Data)

• Teacher Ratings
• Ratings by others
• Direct Observation

Importance of discussing cultural, language, and other factors that impact perceptions of “appropriate” social skills
Assessment: Teacher Ratings

The Walker-McConnell Scale of Social Competence and School Adjustment. Pro-Ed. (elementary & secondary versions)

- Teacher-Preferred Social Behavior
- Peer-Preferred Social Behavior
- School Adjustment Behavior
Assessment: Teacher Ratings

Social Skill Improvement System (SSIS) Elliott & Gresham. Pearson (ages 3-18)

- Social skills acquisition deficits
- No interfering problem behavior
- Social skills performance deficits
- Interfering problem behavior
- Social skills strengths
Assessment: Direct Observation

Outcomes:

• Needed social skills

• Problem type
  – skill deficiency
  – performance problem
  – maintenance / generalization problems

• Examples for instruction and tests
Planning Requirements (practices, systems)

• Curriculum / Lesson Plans
  – Adapt/adopt
• Group procedures
• Generalization strategies
Curriculum Analysis (system)

- What instructional components are included in the curriculum?
- Is the curriculum adaptable to individual needs?
- Can the curriculum be used with small groups?
- Can personnel implement the curriculum without specialized training beyond that described in the curriculum?
- Is the cost implementation reasonable and manageable?
- Are strategies included that will promote maintenance and generalization of skills? (Carter & Sugai, 1989, p. 38)
Lesson Components
(practices)

- rule for when to use the skill
- set of useful skill variations
  - teach the rule (TELL)
  - demonstrate the skill (SHOW)
  - students practice the skill (PRACTICE)
  - review and test the skill (PRACTICE)
  - assign homework (PRACTICE)

Teaching social skills follows the same format as teaching academic skills
Lesson Plans: Teach (tell)

- definition of essential rule
- description of skill components and variations
Lesson Plans: Demonstrate (show)

• model / demonstrate the skill
  – select competent and respected students and adults
  – only the teacher models incorrect responses
  – select examples from natural context
  – at least two positive demonstrations of each example
Lesson Plans: Practice

• role play activities
  – focus on relevant features
  – have student "think aloud"
  – teacher can provide coaching during lesson
  – involve all members of the group by assigning tasks / questions
  – have student self evaluate after activity
Lesson Plans: Review & Test

More Practice

• review essential rule for the day
• test on untrained examples through role plays
• test each student as often as possible (daily)
• request demonstration of skill whenever possible (verbally or role play)
• lesson homework
Second Task

• Identify one of your school-wide rules/expectations

• Develop a brief social skill lesson
  – Tell = describe when and what to do
  – Show = teacher demonstrates
    • Examples
    • Non-examples
  – Practice = student role plays
Maintenance & Generalization

Connect points to larger School-wide System (system, policy)
Promoting Maintenance and Generalization

Strategies To Use During Training (practices)

• Use naturally occurring examples within role plays
• Use naturally occurring reinforcers
• Use language of school-wide PBS system
• Pinpoint activities students likely to engage
Promoting Maintenance and Generalization

Strategies To Use During Training (practices)
• Train in the targeted setting
• During training, include peers the target student(s) likely to encounter in the problem setting
• Use a number of trainers or other adults during training
• Continue training for a sufficient amount of time
Promoting Maintenance and Generalization

Strategies to Use Within the Target Setting (system, policy)

• Prompt students to display skill (Pre-Corrects)
• Reinforce displays of skills in generalized settings using language of school-wide PBS system
• Enlist a variety of others to prompt and reinforce skills in generalized settings
• Individual contracts and behavior change plans
• Group contingencies
Small Group Social Skill
Tier II/III Support Process

- Step 1 – Insure Universals, including Classroom, in place
- Step 2 – Student Identification Process
  - Decision Rules
  - Referral
  - Screen
- Step 3 - Tier II/III supports
  - Non-responders to grade level supports
  - Match function of student behavior to intervention
  - Progress monitor
- Step 4 - Evaluate Process
Important Themes

• Part of a continuum – must link to school-wide PBS system
• Efficient and effective way to identify students
• Assessment = simple sort
• Intervention matched to presenting problem but not highly individualized
Tier II Strategies

• Social-Behavioral Concerns
  – Social skills
  – Self-management

• Academic Concerns
  – Peer Tutors
  – Check in/check out
  – Homework club

• Emotional Concerns
  – Mentors
Group Procedures
(practices, system)

• Who & how many in small groups?
  – 5-8
• When & how long meet?
  – At least weekly over the school year
• Who teaches?
  – Combination
• Basic behavior management
  – Routines
  – Expectations
  – Attention signal
  – Incentives

*Social skill outcomes, expectations, etc. must be connected to the school-wide PBS/MBI system*
School Specific

• Social Skill Club
• Lunch Bunch
• Self-Management Center
"All right! Rusty's in the club!"
Social Skills Club
Student Selection

• Designed to meet the needs of repeat offenders
• Criteria for selection: 8 or more referrals across previous school year

Focus = _________
Social Skills Club

• Parent letters to extend “invitation”
  – Voluntary participation
  – Presented as prevention/support
  – Encouraged parent participation

Focus = ________
Social Skills Club
Instructors

• Special Educator with fluency in social skill instruction
• General Educator
• Access to technical assistance and resources

Focus = _________
Social Skills Club
Group Management

- Two adults!
- Club expectations linked to school-wide expectations
- Rules and expectations for group participation in role play
- Planned fun
- Reinforcement system linked to school-wide system

Focus = ____________
Social Skills Club
Curriculum & Delivery of Instruction

- Collected and prepared materials from a variety of sources.
- One hour per week after school for the academic school year
- Attention to pre-requisite skills for participating in lessons.
- Structured format: Advanced Organizer, Teach, Model, Role play, Review, Test & Homework

Focus = __________
Social Skills Club
Generalization

- Posters of each lesson given to classroom teachers to display in class and use as visual prompt.
- “Club” participants present weekly social skill lesson to from club to their class.
- Staff instructed on how to prompt and reinforce

Focus = ___________
STUDENTS RECEIVING A "BEHAVIOR PLAN"
EIGHT OR MORE REFERRALS

AVERAGE PERCENT DECLINE IN REFERRALS

50%

STUDENT NAME

NUMBER OF REFERRALS

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

A* B C D E F* G H I J* K L M N O P

* STUDENT LEFT SCHOOL DISTRICT BEFORE THE END OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

RED: REFERRALS 99-00  BLUE: REFERRALS 00-01
Planning a Social Skills Group
Third Task

• Identify “common” social skill challenges among “non-responders” to universals

• Identify possible decision rules to identify students who could benefit from additional social skill instruction

• Identify possible instructors for small group social skills
  – What additional training and technical assistance will they need?
Individual Social Skills

Teaching replacement behaviors to meet communicative intent of problem behavior
Functional Assessment

• Behavior is learned
  – Do not assume children know your rules, expectations, or social skills
  – Every social interaction you have with a child teaches him/her something
Functional Assessment

• Behavior communicates need
  – Children engage in behavior(s) to "get" something or to "avoid" something
  – Need is determined by observing what happens prior to and immediately after behavior
Functional Assessment

• Concerned with the functional relationships between BEHAVIOR and the TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

• “Functional Relationships”
  – When “X” happens, high degree of likelihood “Y” will result
Functional Assessment: Outcomes

• Hypotheses about functional relationships
  – Reoccurring chains of behavior
Functional-Based Interventions

• Teach replacement behavior(s) that result in same/similar outcome
• Environment should not allow problem behavior to result in previous outcomes
• Replacement behavior must be more efficient than problem behavior
Teach Alternative Behavior

• Function = Receives Attention
  – Social skills that access attention appropriately
  – Social skills that delay access to desired objects or events

• Function = Escape
  – Social skills that access assistance with difficult tasks
  – Social skills to avoid negative adult & peer interactions
Modify Environment

Attention

• Withhold attention for problem behavior
• Provide high rates of reinforcement for replacement behavior
Modify Environment

Escape

• Do not allow student to “escape” tasks unless they use pro-social alternative behavior

• Modify tasks to promote high rates of engaged time
Competing Behavior Pathways Model

- Setting Events
- Triggering Antecedents
- Problem Behavior
- Maintaining Consequences

- Desired Alternative
- Acceptable Alternative

- Setting Event Manipulations
- Antecedent Manipulations
- Behavior Teaching
- Consequence Manipulations

Sugai, Lewis-Palmer & Hagan, 1999
Final Thoughts

• Fluency in essential features social skill instruction
• Apply basic logic of SW-PBS (data, practices, systems)
• Emphasize system components
• Effective instruction
• Intensity of social skill instruction matches continuum logic