



## Research paper

## Supporting high school teachers' implementation of evidence-based classroom management practices



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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Implementing evidence-based classroom management is critical for teacher success.
- Professional development is one method of supporting teachers' use of evidence-based classroom management practices.
- Content Acquisition Podcasts with Modeling Videos can support teachers' implementation of classroom management practices.

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## ABSTRACT

Teachers who employ practices associated with positive behavior intervention and support (e.g., provide opportunities to respond, behavior specific praise, and pre-corrections) create superior learning environments. In a randomized-controlled trial, we investigated the effects of a multimedia-based intervention called Content Acquisition Podcasts for Teachers with Embedded Modeling Video (CAP-TV) on high school teachers' implementation of these practices. Direct observations showed that teachers who participated in the CAP-TV condition used significantly more of the practices than those in the control condition and their students were significantly more engaged during class sessions. These findings indicate that multimedia strategies can be used to provide professional development that will help teachers adopt effective teaching practices.

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## 1. Introduction

Positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) is a school-wide framework which, at the classroom level, relies on educators to teach routines and expectations explicitly, supervise students actively, prompt desired behaviors frequently, and organize classrooms consistently (Stough & Montague, 2015; Sugai & Horner, 2002). PBIS practices have gained traction within the school and research communities in countries such as Australia, Canada, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guam, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Morocco, New

Zealand, South Korea, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States (U.S.; Association of Positive Behavior Supports, 2013; Goei, 2016). In the U.S., implementation of PBIS increased from about 600 schools in 2000 to nearly 20,000 schools in 2014 (Horner, 2014).

## 1.1. Evidence-based practices for classroom management

The PBIS framework emphasizes the critical role of Tier I classroom management practices (Saveski & Brown, 2011). Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008) reviewed the literature on classroom management practices. Their multi-component analysis included an examination of 10 college- and graduate-level classroom management textbooks. They also read and evaluated studies ( $N = 81$ ) using criteria similar to those used by the

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What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) to determine whether specific practices were supported by evidence. Through this approach, Simonsen et al. identified 20 evidence-based classroom management practices that fell into five broad categories: (a) maximizing structure and predictability; (b) posting, teaching, reviewing, monitoring, and reinforcing expectations; (c) actively engaging students in observable ways; (d) using a continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate behavior; and (e) using a continuum of strategies to respond to inappropriate behavior. Each broad category contained two to six practices with three to eight studies supporting the effectiveness of the practice. This work was an important first step in examining and identifying evidence-based classroom management practices. For the purposes of this study we included three of Simonsen et al.'s practices. The following provides a brief overview of each of the three practices.

#### 1.1.1. Opportunities to respond (OTRs)

OTRs are one strategy to increase active student engagement and academic achievement (MacSuga-Gage & Simonsen, 2015; Simonsen et al., 2008). An OTR is a teacher-delivered academic question, prompt, or statement that requires a student response. OTRs facilitate student engagement. Examples of OTRs include answering an individual question, reading aloud, rephrasing a topic, and whole-group answers during a lesson. There are significant academic benefits to providing students with multiple OTRs, such as increased on-task behavior and number of correct responses (Haydon & Hunter, 2011) and improved accuracy (West & Sloane, 1986). Social-behavioral benefits of decreased inappropriate and disruptive behavior of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). OTRs give students chances to share their knowledge and understanding of a topic. They also provide teachers with opportunities to conduct on-the-fly formative assessments; by observing students' responses to OTRs, teachers can quickly gauge whether students are grasping the topic and adjust their instruction accordingly.

#### 1.1.2. Behavior specific praise (BSP)

BSP statements recognize students for displaying appropriate behavior through teacher verbal or nonverbal (e.g., thumbs up) praise. BSP provides students with brief attention paired with a positive description of the desired behavior and has two main benefits. First, teacher attention for completing desired academic tasks has long been known to reduce disruptive behavior (Hall, Lund, & Jackson, 1968). Second, BSP has been linked to increased academic performance and reduced disruptive behaviors (Gorman-Smith, 2003; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Combining a brief amount of attention and a BSP statement is a practical strategy to promote positive academic and behavioral outcomes for both students with and without disabilities (Allday et al., 2012; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). Further, feedback given immediately following the completion of academic work is an effective method used to enhance academic performance and on-task behavior (Waxman & Walberg, 1991). Praise that is descriptive and contingent and immediately follows the desired behavior is the most effective (Sutherland et al., 2000), increasing the likelihood that the desired behavior will recur in the future (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007).

#### 1.1.3. Pre-corrections

Pre-corrections are antecedent-based prompts that preempt problem behavior and prompt or encourage the appropriate behavior (Colvin, Sugai, Good, & Lee, 1997; De Pry & Sugai, 2002). A pre-correction can be a verbal (e.g., teacher restates behavioral expectation) or non-verbal prompt (e.g., teacher gestures or models behavioral expectation) to remind students to engage in the

appropriate behavior (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). Pre-corrections can be added to teaching behavioral expectations (Colvin et al., 1997; De Pry & Sugai, 2002) or to academic instruction to increase on-task behavior (Miao, Darch, & Rabren, 2002). In addition to being an effective strategy, teachers have reported a high level of satisfaction with using pre-corrections (De Pry & Sugai, 2002).

#### 1.2. We know what works, can teachers implement with fidelity?

The PBIS model relies substantially on teachers to affect student behavior via implementation of specific evidence-based practices, but most teachers receive minimal coursework in behavior management during pre-service training (Greenberg, Putman, & Walsh, 2013). To illustrate, Oliver and Reschly (2010) reviewed teacher preparation programs in one U.S. state by examining course syllabi. Their study revealed that only 27% of U.S. universities devoted an entire course to classroom management; in the remaining 73%, classroom management content was included as a part of other courses. However this isn't the case in all countries. For example, in Australia, separate classroom behavior management strategies classes were offered in 68% of programs and included as part of classes in 96% of programs (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Apparently, pre-service teachers often do not receive adequate instruction and may not have the opportunity to practice implementing high-quality practices before entering the classroom (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012).

To compound the aforementioned limitation within many teacher preparation programs, in-service teachers also often receive little or no support on how to adopt and implement evidence-based classroom management practices (Gable et al., 2012; Markow & Pieters, 2012). For example, in 2009, Wei and colleagues reported that U.S. teachers ranked "student discipline and management" as their top priority for professional development (PD) with only two other topics ranking slightly higher. Despite the demand for classroom and behavior management PD, a high percentage of teachers leave the classroom within their first five years of teaching, frequently citing difficulties with classroom management as the main reason (Ingersoll & Perda, 2010; Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009). Unfortunately, it is not surprising, that teachers in other countries such as Australia (Buchanan, 2010, 2012) and Norway (Tiplic, Brandmo, & Elstad, 2015) also report that classroom and behavior management are related to teacher attrition and their intentions to leave teaching. It is therefore imperative that school districts support teachers by addressing behavior management practices and student behavior through effective PD offerings (Lane, Menzies, Oakes, Zorogian, & Germer, 2014; Sutherland, Denny, & Gunter, 2005). This manuscript is intended to present the results of a PD study evaluating secondary teachers' implementation of behavior management practices and the influence of those practices on their students' behavior.

#### 1.2.1. Limitations of PD offerings

Unfortunately the potential benefits of PD are lost if the teachers receive what is frequently described as "sit and get," which usually occurs over a short period of time (e.g., one-day) and does not involve follow-up monitoring or support (Klingner, 2004). Researchers have attempted to address this concern. For example, Dicke, Wlling, Schmeck, and Leutner (2015) provided Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP; Evertson & Emmer, 2008) training to beginning teachers ( $N = 97$ ) in Germany. The researchers modified the COMP training to meet the German school setting, provided a follow-up training session, and included information on interpersonal perspective on classroom management. The training consisted of group discussions, group

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