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Functional behavior assessment: Procedures, components, and personnel

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FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT:

PROCEDURES, COMPONENTS, AND PERSONNEL

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education in School Psychology

Hannah Louise Robson

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ABSTRACT

Challenging behaviors at school interfere with a student's ability to effectively learn. In these situations behavioral assessments are frequently conducted and current practice adamantly supports the use of functional behavioral assessments (FBA) in addressing challenging behaviors among students. This study examines the assessment methods and personnel most frequently included in the FBA process in a Midwestern regional education agency through the review of completed assessments in a one year period.

The results of this study suggest that record reviews and observations are utilized in the majority of the cases as part of the assessment process, along with an interview and other behavior data not further specified. Research suggests that assessments incorporating data from multiple methods enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of the FBAs and behavior intervention plans (BIPs), yet the majority of the cases reviewed included data from two or fewer different RIOT (Review, Interview, Observe, Test) sources. School psychologists, general education teachers, and special education teachers were involved in the FBA process most frequently and parents were involved in a smaller number of cases. Implications for practice are discussed.

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This Study by: Hannah Louise Robson

Entitled: Functional Behavior Assessment: Procedures, Components, and Personnel

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Specialist in Education in School Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Functional Behavioral Assessment: Procedures, Practice, and Future

Children encounter a wide array of experiences throughout their school years.

Because of requirements from the law, it is mandatory that all children go to school

where they must engage in social and academic tasks, receiving praise or disapproval,

acceptance or rejection, and varying levels of social attention (Van Acker, Boreson,

Gable, & Potterton, 2005). Children and youth react to contextual situations uniquely and

deal with emotional and situational issues in a variety of ways. Oftentimes challenging

behaviors occur in students while at school, interfering with their ability to effectively

learn in the school environment. Consequently, a problem develops in which there is a

mismatch between the expectations in the given context and the behavioral responses of

the student. Challenging behavior not only inhibits the student's own learning, it also

frequently causes chaos in the classroom producing a negative impact on teacher

effectiveness and compromising the wellbeing of the classroom peers. It is the school's

duty to address negative behaviors demonstrated by students in order to create and

maintain a safe environment that is likely to foster social development and academic

achievement (Van Acker et al., 2005).

Responses to Behavior Problems. Professionals have implemented a wide

variety of strategies to reduce problem behavior displayed by students. Schools have

generally viewed discipline separately from educational instruction, deeming behavior

problems in negative regards, whereas learning problems have generally been approached

more positively (Gable, Hendrickson, & Van Acker, 2001). Historically, behavior

problems in the school setting have been addressed with punitive measures such as timeouts, referrals to the office, and in-school and out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, to immediately alter the behavior (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007).These methods have proven to be ineffective in solving the problem of concern (Gable et al., 2001; Ward & Erchul, 2006). Such responses to challenging conduct may initially extinguish the behavior, however, it does not present the opportunity for desired alternative behaviors to be learned (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007). Furthermore, removing a student from the educational setting or given activity may increase the rate of negative behavior if the student views the removal as a positive consequence. Great amounts of time spent outside the classroom may also amplify the likelihood of antisocial behaviors, as the student does not learn alternative behaviors (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007; Van Acker et al., 2005). These methods have focused on the child being the problem rather than on the situational or environmental influences that might impact the behavior (Gable et al., 2001; Herzinger & Campbell, 2007).

In the past few decades the perception of the cause of challenging behaviors has shifted, changing the role of those working with children and youth in the school setting. Responsibility was placed in the hands of educators and other school-based workers to address environmental factors that encourage the negative behavior (Gable et al., 2001). As punishment appeared to be effective in immediately changing problem behaviors, it was an unproductive method for addressing behavior problems long-term. For these reasons educators altered their behavior assessment procedures in the school system to better understand student behaviors (Shriver, Anderson, & Proctor, 2001). These

assessments allowed practitioners to pinpoint and label patterns of behavior, explain the cause of the behavior, and also emphasized the relationship between the behavior and the environment (Shriver et al., 2001). While these types of assessments appeared useful for quite some time, they typically failed to address individual differences in strengths, weaknesses, and preferences (Ryan, Halsey, & Matthews, 2003), and were also likely to have biased results due to subjective data recording from observations of the interactions between the student and environment (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007). Functional behavior assessment (FBA) is an assessment process that is individually catered to specific behavioral situations, allowing for environmental manipulation and experimentation to explain the cause of the behavior, rather than that of traditional standardized assessment procedures (Ryan et al., 2003).

What is FBA?

FBA is a systematic process of addressing problem behavior in children, requiring an authorized team of trained professionals to obtain information concerning the antecedents, behaviors, and consequences of the target behavior (Gresham, Watson, & Skinner, 2001; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, & Hagan-Burke, 2000). FBA is a problem-solving approach that employs a multimethod strategy across different sources of information as well as different settings. The goals of the process are to identify the target problem behavior, collect and analyze information about the behavior, develop and implement an appropriate and individualized intervention, and thoroughly monitor and evaluate the intervention for effectiveness (Sugai et al., 2000). Data is collected through a process of parent, teacher, and student interviews,

observations, file reviews, functional analyses, or other measures by which the behavior may be explained (Alter, Conroy, Mancil, & Haydon, 2008; Gresham et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2003).

Children demonstrate different types of behaviors for specific reasons. Functional assessments look at the implications of environmental factors on student behaviors, directly manipulating the situation in order to isolate the function of the behavior (Barnhill, 2005; Gresham et al., 2001; Kern, Childs, Dunlap, Clarke, & Falk, 1994). Knowing the reason for the behavior, or function, is necessary in developing an appropriate individualized intervention to decrease the aberrant behavior (Gresham et al., 2001). The function of the behavior provides positive or negative reinforcement to the student and generally fits into one the following categories: social attention from other individuals, access to a desired activity or tangible object, escape or avoidance of an aversive activity or task, or escape or avoidance of a certain individual and internal stimulation. Internal stimulation may also be referred to as automatic reinforcement and may be a behavior that is necessary in meeting the child's sensory needs (Barnhill, 2005; Gresham et al., 2001). Both positive and negative reinforcement encourage the behavior of concern, making it important to determine the function the behavior serves (Barnhill, 2005).

Why Use FBA?

The use of FBA in addressing challenging student behaviors is mandated by legislation and supported by research. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) 1997 and the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement

Act (IDEIA) specified that every student who exhibits serious challenging behaviors should be provided with a functional behavior assessment by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team of trained school personnel, from which an individualized behavioral intervention plan (BIP) may be developed and implemented. These government mandates stressed the importance of FBA as a multimethod process of behavioral assessment which evaluates problem behavior within the context in which it occurs. Accordingly, any student entitled to special education services, presenting challenging behaviors that hinder educational functioning is required to have a functional behavioral assessment before a BIP may be developed and put into practice (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004).

Effectiveness. Utilizing FBA results when developing interventions can improve the effectiveness of the implemented behavior program. Information concerning when, where and why a behavior of concern is displayed is essential in developing effective interventions (O'Neill et al., 1997). If implemented as intended, interventions based on functional assessments can produce positive and lasting changes including decreased levels of inappropriate and off-task behavior and increased engagement in prosocial behavior (Lane, Weisenbach, Little, Phillips, & Wehby, 2006). Functional behavioral assessment-based interventions are also effective in teaching students to communicate needs in a positive manner before behavior escalates into a compromising situation (Kern, Gallagher, Starosta, Hickman, & George, 2006). Furthermore, such interventions have been found to decrease negative behaviors over an extended period of time, ultimately extinguishing the occurrence of the problem behavior (Kern et al., 2006).

Interventions implemented without FBA information run the risk of reinforcing aberrant behavior rather than providing a solution to the problem (O'Neill et al., 1997). Children engage in various behaviors for a specific reason, whether that might be to gain attention from a preferred adult or to avoid an undesirable activity, for example. When individuals learn that they can obtain desired results by engaging in a certain, the behavior is reinforced and they are likely to continue engaging in the aberrant behavior (O'Neill et al., 1997). The identification of the function of the behavior allows for the development of a behavior intervention plan (BIP) that does not reinforce the inappropriate behavior. Moreover, BIPs are more effective when a FBA has been conducted (Blood & Neel, 2007).

Other Benefits. There are several other advantages to using FBA which may provide benefits to students, teachers, and parents (Packenham, Shute & Reid, 2004). Interventions based on FBA results promote the development of positive skills as opposed to punishment and increase the likelihood of keeping students in inclusive settings (Packenham et al., 2004). Focus on the influence of the environment on an individual's behavior may allow educators to understand that the problem does not lie within the student, rather that environmental conditions can be manipulated to support the student (Packenham et al., 2004). Additionally, the FBA process can be carried out by trained general education teachers or other school personnel, who are able to gain better understanding about the procedures and implementation of subsequent interventions (Kern et al., 2006; Lane, Barton-Arwood, Spencer, & Kalberg, 2007; Packenham et al.,

2004). Assessments that are tied to appropriate intervention and are implemented with integrity provide the most advantageous outcomes.

Procedures and Components of FBA

A number of different assessment methods can be used to collect FBA data. The assessment can be carried out through formal methods, which require more time and effort for school personnel, or through efficient methods that can be completed more quickly, with less expertise (Scott, Anderson, & Spaulding, 2008). Although functional assessments have been used in practice for many years, there is disagreement about the necessary procedures and types of instruments needed to obtain the necessary information (Waguespack, Vaccaro, & Continere, 2006).

Direct Assessment Measures. Carrying out FBAs can be a complex process as there are a number of methods by which information may be collected. FBA includes direct and indirect assessment measures for collecting information on the student of concern (Alter et al., 2008). The direct assessment measures include observations of students in naturalistic settings in which the aberrant behavior is most likely to occur (Alter et al., 2008; Waguespack et al., 2006). Data obtained from observations can be graphed and analyzed, enabling the antecedents, behavior, and consequences to be made known (Alter et al., 2008). A number of functional behavioral assessment observation forms are available that may inform educators of the critical information that must be obtained from the observations and may guide their decision-making (Crone & Horner, 2003).

Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (A-B-C) observation procedures are often utilized while observing a student in the classroom, playground, or other setting. An A-B-C procedure involves recording the behavior, the stimuli present, and the events that occurred just before and just after the behavior (Gresham et al., 2001; Lane et al., 2007). According to Gresham and colleagues (2001), the A-B-C procedures assist in determining the function the behavior serves. While these direct assessments are an important component in the FBA procedure, it is important not to solely rely on these measures for an accurate depiction of the problem behavior and its context.

Indirect Assessment Measures. Indirect assessment measures include interviews with parents, students, and teachers; review of school records, questionnaires, checklists, and behavior rating scales to provide information on the behaviors of concern, as well as the antecedents and consequences (Alter et al., 2008; Waguespack et al., 2006). These measures have been found to be more cost effective and feasible for school personnel to administer without extensive training, while also providing relevant information to the pertinent situation (Waguespack et al., 2006). Functional assessment interviews serve four primary goals:

> (a) to identify and operationally define the target behavior, (b) to identify the antecedent events associated with the target behavior, (c) to obtain preliminary information concerning the hypothesized or probable function served by the target behavior, and (d) to identify appropriate replacement behaviors that will serve the same function served by the target behavior (Gresham et al., 2001, p. 161).

Functional assessment interviews with students, teachers, parents and other educators who may have a role in the child's school experience are vital sources of information (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007; O'Neill et al., 1997; Quinn, Gable, Rutherford, Nelson, &

Howell, 1998). An interview may be conducted with the particular student in order to identify how the student perceives his or her experiences and the subsequent causes of their reactions (Quinn et al., 1998). Student interviews may be conducted by a parent or teacher, however, more productive and accurate results come from those interviews conducted by an adult with whom the child does not have a negative history (O'Neill et al., 1997). Specific tools such as the Functional Assessment Interview (FAI) provide an outline of structured questions from which educators may obtain insight on the student of concern. Other interviews are targeted toward the adults in the child's life. The following are examples of the types of questions included in interviews with parents and teachers:

What setting is the behavior of concern observed?

Are there settings in which the behavior does not occur?

Is the problem behavior of concern at home?

What interactions or activities take place just before and just after the behavior?

With whom is the behavior most likely to occur?

School records may also provide useful data, which if reviewed systematically, can provide a wealth of insight about the student of concern, eliminating the need to search for information from other sources (Gresham et al., 2001). School records provide information regarding many important factors such as demographics, school attendance, achievement scores, as well as disciplinary interactions (Gresham et al., 2001). Indirect measures, however useful, may have subjective results that can potentially bias the data that is collected (Waguespack et al., 2006). This supports the importance of a

multimethod approach to assessing behavior in order to obtain a holistic view of the issues.

The Functional Analysis. The FBA procedure may also contain an experimental analysis, which is also known as a functional analysis. In some situations the IEP team can confidently develop the hypothesis statement, correctly identifying the function of the behavior without a functional analysis (Crone & Horner, 2003). Other cases may require this aspect of the assessment process, in which experimental or systematic manipulations are made in a controlled setting to determine the function of the student's behavior (Lane et al., 2006; Waguespack et al., 2006). Specifically, the student is exposed to each of the conditions (social attention, access to a desired activity or tangible object, escape or avoidance of an unfavorable activity or task, escape or avoidance of a certain individual, and internal stimulation) and a control condition such as free-time; school personnel track the rates of the aberrant behavior under each of the conditions (Barnhill, 2005; Gresham et al., 2001). This step in the FBA process has proven to be effective in determining the function of the target behavior.

Because each case varies dramatically, the procedures involved in the entire assessment should depend on the characteristics of the unique situation. In some circumstances, it is necessary to use only a couple of experimental manipulations (Barnhill, 2005). After completing the indirect assessments and direct observations, school personnel may hypothesize that the particular student behavior is reinforced by social attention from the teacher, for example. The first condition may only give attention to the student when the negative behavior is presented; the second condition may give

high amounts of unconditional social attention, but no attention when the aberrant

behavior is displayed. The rates of the behavior occurring in each condition would be

compared, indicating that the hypothesis was correct, given higher rates in the first

condition (Barnhill, 2005).

What are the Essential Components of FBA?

As previously stated, completing the FBA process can be challenging due to the

many available assessment methods and the lack of clear guidelines concerning the

essential components. This assessment procedure is used around the nation, but its

implementation varies from place to place due to the lack of structure in the required

process. There are multiple views about the core components and personnel needed to

fulfill the assessment procedures.

Weber, Killu, Derby, and Barretto (2005) suggest standard practice for FBA

completion consists of 14 necessary components. These include (a) defining or

identifying the problem behavior; (b) reviewing previous school records or other relevant

documents; (c) using rating scales, checklists or questionnaires to collect information; (d)

interviewing the student of concern; (e) interviewing teachers or parents; (f) discussing

the issue within a team meeting; (g) developing a hypothesis to explain the function of

the behavior; (h) directly observing the student in a natural setting; (i) using a scatterplot

to display the collected data; (j) using an ABC form to indicate the antecedents, target

behavior, and consequences; (k) filling out a functional assessment observation (FAO)

form; (l) indicating possible reinforcements for intervention planning; (m) examining the

ecological contexts of the behavior; and (n) testing the hypothesis through the manipulation of variables.

In contrast to these identified components, Steege and Watson (2008) discuss the five essential phases of FBA, necessary for a comprehensive assessment. The first phase, much like that previously described by Weber and colleagues, is to identify and describe the behavior interfering with the student's school success, within the home and school settings. This phase consists of using indirect measures to collect information. The second phase involves direct observation to measure the problem behavior, reporting the extent to which the behavior interferes with the student's ability to function while at school. The third phase is to identify the antecedents that elicit the behavior, the following consequences facilitating reinforcement, and the individual characteristics of the student. In the fourth phase, information from the FBA is used for the development of an appropriate intervention and a positive behavior support plan. Finally, the fifth phase is to evaluate the treatment validity, determining the contribution of the FBA in the effectiveness of the implemented intervention.

Crone and Horner (2003) identify another variation in the FBA process. In this process the assessment typically begins with a referral or request for assistance from the classroom teacher to the behavior support team, who then takes on the FBA-BIP process (Crone & Horner, 2003). A request for assistance form is often used by teachers to indicate the behavior of concern, the behavioral expectation, strategies implemented to change the situation or to teach desired behavior, and the consequences that have been used. Information from this form aids the behavior support team in working with the

teacher to discover and understand alternative strategies that may be more effective in changing the behavior (Crone & Horner, 2003). In addition, the teacher and behavior support team clarify the issue of concern with an operational definition of the aberrant behavior in observable and measurable terms, so that observers can independently watch the student and agree that the behavior has or has not taken place (Crone & Horner, 2003).

The assessment continues with the process for a simple FBA in which a member of the behavior support team conducts a brief interview with the student's primary teacher using the Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS; Crone & Horner, 2003). This instrument is seen as an efficient and easy tool to use that identifies the target behavior, defines the characteristics of the behavior, pinpoints the time and place in which the behavior is likely to occur, and identifies the typical consequences of the problem behavior. The final portion of the interview leads to the next stage in the process, the development a testable hypothesis explaining the reason for the problem behavior (Crone & Horner, 2003). This hypothesis indicates the antecedents and consequences that should be manipulated in order to decrease the problem behavior, providing a link between the assessment and the intervention. If the team is confident in the identified hypothesis and the student does not have a disability that may be a risk for other behavior concerns, the simple FBA is complete and the intervention should be implemented and monitored. If these are not met, a full FBA must be completed to more appropriately define the function of the behavior in order to implement an effective intervention (Crone & Horner, 2003).

The full FBA is an extension of the simple FBA which includes observation of the student and additional interviews with teachers, parents and as well as the student of concern. The interviews target information describing the problem behavior, the reason for its occurrence, the duration, intensity, as well as the setting events and consequences. The student interview elicits similar information while taking the student's perspective into consideration. At least one observation is necessary, however multiple observations may be required to pinpoint the pattern of behavior identified by the parent, teacher and student. The purpose of the observation is to collect measurable, objective information describing the antecedents, occurrence, and consequences of the behavior, ultimately testing the validity of the hypothesis statement. Crone and Horner (2003) provide a structure for completing the observation.

Assessment Tools. A number of tools have been developed to guide individuals through the FBA process while gathering information. Protocols and other forms have been created with the intent to increase the reliability of the information collected through interviews, observations, and rating scales. For example, Crone and Horner (2003) developed the Functional Assessment Observation (FAO) form that includes important observation components. The form includes space for the number of behavioral episodes, the problem behaviors that occur together, the situations in which the behavior is most and least likely to occur, the events that predict the problem behavior, perceptions concerning the function of the behavior, and actual consequences that result from the behavior. The information is then used to develop a Behavior Support Plan (BSP) for the student (Crone & Horner, 2003).

Scatter plots are also frequently used as a part of the observation portion of the assessment, allowing educators to track the behavior across time of day, setting, and activity, identifying the situations associated with behavior problems. In addition, summary forms may be used as an aid in compiling all of the information collected from the various sources (Larson & Maag, 1998). Some education agencies have specific criteria that must be met when conducting a FBA and BIP.

Although there were some common elements identified by the various researchers, the differences may present dilemmas when the assessment is employed. Steege and Watson (2008) identified general phases without the specificity as those suggested by Weber et al. (2005) or Crone and Horner (2003). General phases allow for variations in interpretation, whereas Crone and Horner (2003) differentiate between the steps for a simple and full FBA, describing in detail the actions to be taken by those involved in the process. A consensus supporting the necessary aspects that must be included in a FBA may produce better understanding among school personnel administering the assessment and developing subsequent interventions and may also lead to further research, ultimately increasing the effectiveness of the assessment.

As evidenced by the guidelines suggested by these researchers, the finer points of conducting a functional behavioral assessment are still unclear. There are a number of components that build upon each other to construct the procedures of functional behavioral assessment (Steege & Watson, 2008). FBA information can be collected in a wide variety of ways, and can variably inform the intervention, but ultimately, it is vital for school personnel to keep in mind the underlying principle of the assessment.

Specifically, FBAs are intended to guide and improve the understanding of the behavior so that the most appropriate and efficient behavior intervention plan may be put in place (Sugai et al., 2000).

Positive Behavior Support. Herzinger and Campbell (2007) acknowledge that FBA is a fundamental element in the treatment process as a whole. Positive behavioral interventions, supports, and strategies have been identified in the use of functional behavioral assessment, as they aim to teach students with disabilities appropriate alternative behaviors, rather than simply reducing or eliminating unsuitable behaviors (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2000). Positive behavioral support (PBS) focuses on guiding students in choosing socially acceptable modes of communicating feelings and desires, which can aid decision-making throughout the lifespan (Turnbull et al., 2002; Yell & Katsiyannis, 2000). Although one goal of PBS is to respond to behavior problems, it is also proactive because offering students alternative behaviors to gain the desired outcomes may prevent challenging behaviors from escalating into more complicated situations (Turbull et al., 2002). School-wide positive behavior support programs create a safe and constructive atmosphere which has been found to be advantageous to student learning (Blood & Neel, 2007).

Implications of FBA

Essential Components. Although there is a tremendous amount of literature concerning the use of FBA, there is still a need for further research about the best methods to serve children who demonstrate behavior problems in the educational environment (Steege & Watson, 2008). Many researchers have suggested that although

FBA has been in use for an extended period of time, further studies must address the components that are essential for an effective formal assessment, and provide guidelines as to the circumstances in which an efficient assessment is appropriate (Scott et al., 2008).

Oftentimes schools implement FBA without addressing all of the necessary components of the behavior. In turn, the resulting BIP may not bring about the most productive results. In such cases, the students are not reaping the benefits that the assessment could potentially offer; research may aid in evaluating what information is vital to the process (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007). Furthermore, it would be beneficial for school personnel to be informed of the situations in which less rigorous assessments may be conducted in order to make the process easier and more cost-effective for schools (Hoff, Ervin, & Friman, 2005).

Essential Personnel (Team Members). Conducting a functional behavioral assessment can be very resource intensive and the process requires cooperation, flexibility and expertise from general and special education teachers, school psychologists and other personnel (Ryan et al., 2003). The situation and severity of the behavior influences the level of involvement required by educators and school personnel, as well as the extent to which the procedures of FBA are employed. Often team-based approaches involve behavior support teams who share expertise in identifying the students in need of help and developing, implementing, and monitoring appropriate interventions. When an intervention is ineffective, teams reevaluate the behavior and make modifications to directly target the specific needs of the student in a more detailed

assessment (Scott et al., 2008). This clarifies the importance of IEP team members in the

assessment process and in decision-making throughout the implementation of the

intervention. According to IDEA, IEP team members include,

> the parents of the child with the disability; not less than one regular education
> teacher(…); not less than one special education teacher(…); a representative of
> the local education agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision
> of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with
> disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is
> knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the local education agency;
> an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation
> results(…); other individuals who has knowledge or special expertise regarding
> the child(…); and whenever appropriate, the child with the disability (Individuals
> with Disabilities Act, 1997; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement
> Act, 2004).

Further research is needed to gain more information about those who should be

involved in the FBA process. For example, a study by Murdock, O'Neill, and

Cunningham (2005) found insightful results in implementing FBA with junior high

school boys identified as having a behavior disorder. The teachers and students were

highly involved throughout the assessment process and most claimed that the process was

helpful and acceptable in identifying the problematic classroom behaviors. While some

disagreements occurred, the teachers typically identified the function of the students'

behaviors similarly. Conversely, students were unable to explain the reason for their

misbehavior, but the resulting consequences could be clearly recalled. The students

claimed to feel relief after talking to an adult about their behavior problems without the

threat of getting in trouble. Furthermore, Murdock et al. (2005) established that while the

teachers felt more knowledgeable about the assessment process, they did not feel that

they gained adequate training to carry out the same procedures without the input from

trained professionals. This sends the message that training teachers to carry out FBA can be effective but it is important to provide the necessary supports when needed.

Additionally, examining the efficiency of training teachers to conduct and implement functional behavioral assessments could bring forth important information to share with school systems and other individuals or organizations that have the ability to provide services for children and families. Future research might also examine the extent to which FBAs are linked to the interventions being implemented. It is hopeful that when functional behavioral assessments are conducted appropriately, they are able to provide ample information for educators to use in developing effective, individualized programs to set into practice (Ward & Erchul, 2006).

Training Requirements. While there have been many positive outcomes associated with the use of FBA, many schools throughout the country have struggled to train and prepare school personnel to conduct and implement functional assessments and behavior plans (Van Acker et al., 2005). Although the IDEA regulations were made public policy, no specific technique for carrying out the FBA procedures was established, causing individual states, school districts, IEP teams, or individual team members to make subjective decisions about the best methods for conducting and implementing FBA (Waguespack et al., 2006; Yell & Katsiyannis, 2000). The federal law has encouraged school personnel to conduct FBA without knowing the appropriate instruction and guidelines. While there is a growing body of literature, some have argued that the number of applied studies of FBA was insufficient to warrant mandating its use in addressing behavior problems in schools (Hoff et al., 2005).

Schools have often implemented the procedures of FBA without clear guidelines for proper practice (Scott et al., 2008). Research has found that it is not uncommon for school personnel to be included on FBA/BIP teams when they need not be involved, while parents, general education teachers and special education teachers are excluded from the process (Van Acker et al., 2005). It is also not uncommon for schools conducting FBAs to rely on a single person to control the assessment process as well as propose the intervention to be implemented. Such situations result in a dilemma for school personnel with unrealistically large caseload, susceptibility to errors if the individual is inadequately trained, and the risk of having a void in the system if the person leaves the job (Scott et al., 2008). It is evident that FBA procedures are occasionally flawed as a result of unclear guidelines, poor training, or low accountability standards.

Due to the unclear guidelines, some have implemented FBA inappropriately. A study in Wisconsin found the majority of FBAs were not completed by authorized personnel and many were completed entirely by a single individual rather than an IEP team (Van Acker et al., 2005). In addition, Van Acker et al. (2005) established that overwhelmingly, FBAs misidentified the function of the target behavior, provided vague descriptive information, did not use data gained in the FBA process to guide the development of an appropriate intervention, and used punishment rather than positive approaches to behavior change. It is evident that either school personnel are not receiving adequate training in how to appropriately conduct an FBA or they are not being held accountable for using it effectively.

<u>Conclusions</u>

Using functional behavioral assessments to address problem behaviors in school has proven to be very effective in numerous circumstances. There have been many positive outcomes from conducting FBAs which have led to the implementation of interventions which have been successful in decreasing the challenging behaviors presented by students at school. When FBA is efficiently and appropriately conducted, it is able to inform school personnel of the relevant issues as well as provide insight on developing interventions that would likely reduce the frequency, duration, or latency of the challenging behaviors.

There have also been situations in which the procedures of FBA have not been carried out as efficiently and appropriately as possible. Some of this is due to the fact that schools are required to use FBA as their primary assessment tool for dealing with behaviors in the educational setting when they do not have adequate training as to how to utilize the assessment. It is not uncommon for educators to become involved in the process, conduct the assessment and implement the intervention without completing the necessary aspects of the assessment procedure. As a result of these shortcomings, information is frequently misinterpreted, seldom providing the behavioral assistance necessary for students to fully gain the academic achievement, social competence and other skills needed for successful interactions.

Research plays a significant part in furthering the accurate implementation of FBA. There have been some contradictory findings from previous studies, indicating that educators are uncertain of the essential components of the assessment process,

occasionally failing to administer some of the crucial aspects. Likewise, school personnel have often been found to use the data gathered through the FBA to lead to intervention development, but there continues to be question in this link. As FBA is mandated to be used to address behavior problems with children who have disabilities, further research must address some of these concerns in order to advance the practice of FBA and benefits for children and families. As previously mentioned, it is the school's duty to address negative behaviors demonstrated by students. Functional behavioral assessment is a tool to be used by school personnel in order to create and maintain a safe environment which is prone to foster social development and academic achievement for all students.

The current study reviewed functional behavior assessments conducted and intervention plans implemented in a Midwestern regional education agency in order to determine the assessment methods most frequently utilized and the personnel involved in the assessment process. This study was one component of a larger project evaluating the FBAs and BIPs in one regional education agency so they may improve their training practices. This study focuses on the assessment process and components, while the other focuses on the link between the assessment results and the behavior plan. This information may shed light on the assessment methods that are crucial for a quality FBA and BIP and the personnel most effective in producing quality FBAs and BIPs.

METHOD

Participants

The researchers intended to randomly select 100 initial FBAs and BIPs, completed

within a one year timeframe beginning June 30, 2008 and ending June 30, 2009, for

students currently in grades kindergarten through twelve in a Midwest regional education

agency. The agency consists of 60 public school districts and 25 non-public school

districts that cover a span of 9,000 square miles, and serves over 66,800 students. The

actual sample of files reviewed in this study consists of 72 initial FBAs and BIPs. Initial

files were selected to ensure greater consistency and to provide an indication of the

process used when behavior concerns are first addressed with a FBA. The agency

provided a list of 126 initial files, but only 72 files were deemed to meet selection

criteria. The cases not included were either students who had moved out of the agency or

preschool students. The preschool files were not reviewed in this study due to great

differences in assessment methods. The majority of the initial cases reviewed were

elementary and early middle school students. The breakdown of students from each grade

level can be seen in Table 1.

Materials

The state mandated FBA and BIP forms were scored by researchers using two

rubrics. These state FBA and BIP forms can be located in Appendix A. The first rubric

scored FBAs and BIPs on a set of items and criteria established by the participating

regional agency's Behavior Resource Team. The Behavior Resource Team is a group of

four agency members including one school social worker, two school psychologists, and

an educational consultant who respond to challenging behavior problems posed in schools.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Cases Per Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage
Kindergarten	11	15.3
First	9	12.5
Second	7	9.7
Third	7	9.7
Fourth	7	9.7
Fifth	11	15.3
Sixth	5	6.9
Seventh	4	5.6
Eighth	4	5.6
Ninth	6	8.3
Tenth	1	1.4
Eleventh	0	0.0
Twelfth	0	0.0

The Behavior Resource Team works with educators in schools to address behaviors of concern and develop appropriate interventions. The team was interested in working with the researchers so that they could gain information concerning how to better equip educators to attend to behavior problems that arise in local schools and to evaluate the training within their agency.

The Behavior Resource Team's rubric includes 11 required components they determined necessary for a quality FBA and BIP, and scores each component on a three point scale. Specific criteria to earn each point level are clearly specified for each component. The Behavior Resource Team also determined the minimum criteria necessary for the researchers to score the BIP because they felt it was inappropriate to score a BIP created based on a low quality FBA. The team indicated minimum scores for a number of categories and an overall total score that would indicate a quality FBA. The minimum scores were highlighted on the rubric for the ease of scoring. Scores must be obtained in the highlighted region in order to score the BIP.

The regional education agency's Behavior Resource Team indicated that a FBA's descriptive summary should include assessment data from multiple sources, including RIOT (Review, Interview, Observe, Test) data as well as a scatterplot to incorporate the necessary information for a quality FBA. The Behavior Resource Team also specified that the data must be included in the designated section on the state forms in order to be counted while scoring the rubric. A copy of this rubric can be located in Appendix B.

The second rubric was created by the research team to examine additional criteria and components of FBAs and BIPs. This rubric includes various assessment methods or

information gathering tools, personnel involved in the process, and the connection between FBA findings and BIP interventions. The research team developed this rubric in order to gain insight on the specific assessment methods that are most frequently used by educators and the individuals who are included in the assessment process, as well as insight as to how the assessment data informs the intervention plan.

The researchers created detailed criteria and scoring guidelines for the items in this rubric. Items in this rubric were scored on a "yes" or "no" basis. For example, if the file included assessment data collected from a record review, the rater would make a mark in the designated space, indicating that assessment method was utilized. Assessment methods or tools were scored as a "yes" when specifically stated and linked to data in the report. The assessment methods on the rubric were chosen after reviewing research and gathering information on the types of assessments used to carry out the FBA process. The same method was used to determine the list of possible individuals included in the process. The research team developed an initial rubric, tested it with a practice file and took note of needed alterations, refined it by adding and specifying items, and then tested it again with a new practice file. This cycle was continued to refine the rubric five times. A copy of this rubric can be located in Appendix C.

Procedure

Training with the four raters was conducted to operationalize the rating levels in order to decrease the amount of rater interpretation influencing scores on both rubrics. The Behavior Resource Team trained the researchers to accurately score their rubric according to the specified criteria and until acceptable inter rater reliability was achieved.

Prior to data collection, inter rater reliability on the two rubrics was achieved with the researchers on approximately 15 practice files. The researchers reviewed and scored files independently on the two rubrics. They then compared scores and discussed the reasoning behind the given score. If a difference was found, the researchers held a discussion and came to a consensus on the appropriate score. This process was continued until scores were consistent between raters 90 to 100 percent of the time.

The regional education agency's Assessment Administrator provided the research team with a list of all the cases that appeared to fit the selection criteria. One of the researchers obtained a random selection of 100 files by using a computerized number generator which indicated the files to be pulled and reviewed. Each of the case files was assigned a number and no identifying information was attached to the coded data. A key linking the code and identifying information was kept in the records office at the regional education agency. The research team was instructed by the agency's staff how to appropriately checkout and pull the files from the file room as well as gain access to the files through the online system.

During the initial data collection, the researchers discovered some of the cases did not fit the selection criteria, as some were preschool files, and some of the students had moved outside of the agency and their files were unavailable. The researchers replaced these cases using the next random number in the list of files that met selection criteria resulting in the examination of the full sample of initial FBAs conducted in the agency that met the selection criteria.

Each case file's FBA and BIP were scored using the two rubrics. Case files were scored by one or more of the four trained researchers. Inter rater reliability was achieved during data collection by requiring adequate reliability levels between two or more of the researchers on the first ten files reviewed and randomly selecting another 10 case files to be scored separately by two raters. Kappa coefficients were used to obtain inter rater reliability. A score greater than 0.60 was considered reliable and a score of 1.00 was considered perfect reliability. The Kappa coefficients calculated for the assessment tools and personnel involved in the FBA process were generally found to have high reliability. Six of the variables had perfect reliability scores of 1.00. An additional 14 variables had Kappa scores between .60 and 1.00. The Kappas for three variables (forced choice reinforcement menu, general education teacher interview, and social worker involved in the FBA) were below .60 and therefore considered to not have good reliability in the scores among raters. This means there were inconsistencies between the raters and the results from these variables cannot be considered to provide meaningful information. Variables with low inter rater reliability should be interpreted with caution. Several of the variables' Kappa scores could not be calculated due to constants found in them. The Kappa coefficients for the variables can be found in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2

Kappa Coefficient Reliability Scores for Assessment Methods

Variable	Kappa Coefficient
Record Review	.857*
Office Referral	1.00*
Behavior Data Not Otherwise Specified	.865*
Forced Choice Reinforcement Menu	.444
Teacher Interview	.842*
General Education Teacher	.583
Special Education Teacher	-
Parent Interview	.842*
Student Interview	.762*
Other Interview	-
Observation Data	-
ABC Data	-
Scatterplot	1.00*
Peer Comparison	.634*
Structured/systematic Observation	-
Time On Task	1.00*
Duration, Latency, Frequency	-
Other (no, FAST, BASC, Connors)	.700*

Table 3

Kappa Coefficient Reliability Scores for Personnel

Variable	Kappa Coefficient
Team Representative Not Otherwise Specified	.842*
Social Worker	.286
School Psychologist	.857*
General Education Teacher	.796*
Special Education teacher	1.00*
Teacher Not Otherwise Specified	.773*
Paraprofessional	-
Education Consultant	1.00*
Speech/Language Consultant	-
Occupational Therapist	-
Parent	.634*
Student	1.00*
Counselor	.762*
Principal	.762*
Assistant Principal	1.00*
Other	-

Note: Items with an asterisk indicate the variables that were found to have high inter-rater reliability.

RESULTS

Assessment Process and Methods in FBA

The results of this study suggest that there is considerable variation in the methods used to collect assessment information to complete a FBA. There is also evidence of variation in the educators who are included in the process. Only 9.7% of the files were found to include data from all four RIOT sources as well as a scatterplot. This was the criterion necessary for a quality FBA according to the Behavior Resource Team and the regional education agency. Approximately 36% of the cases reported information collected from three of the RIOT sources, and 54.2% of the case files were found to have documented minimal data, from two or fewer resources. These results indicate that in most case files reviewed, the majority did not report data from multiple assessment methods as defined necessary by the Behavior Resource Team. Because this study focuses on the FBA process, it does not delve into the details of the BIP and the connections between FBAs and BIPs.

Record Reviews. A large number of cases collected information by reviewing student records. Out of the 72 case files reviewed, 54.2% gathered information from a record review. Approximately 35% discussed behavior data which was not further specified, and 22.2% included data from office referrals.

Interviews. Interviews with various individuals were indicated in several of the initial FBA cases. Typically, the assessment specified who was interviewed along with the information obtained. In one case, an interview was conducted without specification of the source of the information. Teacher interviews were conducted in 61.1% of the

cases, with a general education teacher interview specified in 25% of the cases. No case

reported a special education teacher interview. The majority of cases did not include

parent or student interviews. Also, 19.4% of the cases collected assessment information

from a forced choice reinforcement menu completed with the student. This information

should be interpreted with caution due to low inter rater reliability. The frequency of type

of interview data reported is included in Table 4.

Table 4

Interview Data

Assessment Method	Frequency (N=72)	Percent
Teacher Interview	26	36.1
Parent Interview	26	36.1
General Education Teacher Interview	18	25.0
Student Interview	26	36.1
Forced Choice Reinforcement Menu	14	19.4
Special Education Teacher Interview	0	0.0
Other Interview	6	7.3

Observations. A variety of observation methods were used in the FBAs and a

large number of the files documented information from some type of observation method.

Approximately 65% of the files included data gathered from an observation method. In

15.3% of the cases, general observation methods were utilized and not specified further.

Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence observations were not used in any of the files

reviewed, however, scatterplots were used in 30.6% of the cases. Peer comparisons,

structured or systematic observations, time on task, and frequency measures were

included in a smaller number of reports. See Table 5 for frequency of type of observation

data included.

Table 5

Observation Data

Assessment Method	Frequency (N=72)	Percentage
Scatterplot	22	30.6
Time on Task Observation	14	19.4
Observation Data Not Otherwise Specified	11	15.3
Peer Comparison Data	10	13.9
Structured/Systematic Observation	8	11.1
Frequency	3	4.2
ABC Data	0	0.0
Duration	0	0.0
Latency	0	0.0

Tests. Data collected from other assessments such as testing was not discussed in the majority of files reviewed. Approximately 22 percent of the files included data collected from other assessment methods such as the Functional Analysis Screening Tool (FAST), Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-2), Connors Rating Scale, cognitive abilities tests, Vanderbilt rating scales, or hypothesis testing through a functional analysis. The FAST is a functional analysis screen tool, designed to gather information from those who work with the student. The BASC, Connors, and Vanderbilt rating scales focused on behaviors and symptoms of internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depression, or externalizing behaviors such as ADHD and conduct problems. See Table 6 for use of various tests.

Table 6

Test Data

Assessment Method	Frequency (N=72)	Percentage
BASC	5	6.9
FAST	4	5.6
Hypothesis Testing	2	2.8
Connors Rating Scale	2	2.8
Cognitive Abilities Testing	1	1.4
Vanderbilt	1	1.4
Two Additional Tools	1	1.4
Testing Methods Total	16	22.2

Patterns in the Assessment Process

While it is evident that over half of the files reviewed included data from two sources or fewer, a large number of files did include data collected from three or four RIOT sources. When looking at initial FBAs that included multiple assessment methods, 45.8% or 33 of the 72 files included data from three to four different types of assessments. Out of this group, approximately 79% included data from a record review, 97% included some form of interview, approximately 79% reported data from an observation method, and 36.4% indicated information from a testing method.

Personnel Included in FBA

There were various individuals included in the assessment process. (See Table 7). Individuals in the FBA process were recorded by the job title identified on the state paperwork. General education teachers were included in 43.1% of the cases, and two or more general education teachers involved in the FBA process in 7 cases. Special education teachers were participants in 27.8%, and teachers not otherwise specified were involved in 23.7% of the cases reviewed. Six assessments involved two or more teachers not otherwise specified; two included two, two included three, and two included five teachers not otherwise specified.

School psychologists were included in the assessment process 43.1% of the time. A member of the regional education agency working in the system, also known as a team representative was included in 25% of the cases. While identified as a team representative, these individuals could be a social worker, school psychologist, or an

educational consultant. Social workers, educational consultants, speech and language consultants, and occupational therapists were included on a less frequent basis.

Approximately 18 % of the cases included a parent and 5.6% included the student. The school principal was involved in 29.2% of the cases and the assistant principal was involved in 2.8% of the case files. See Table 9 for the personnel involved in the FBA.

Table 7

Personnel Involved in FBA

Role	Frequency (N=72)	Percentage
General Education Teacher(s)	31	43.1
School Psychologist	31	43.1
Special Education Teacher(s)	23	31.9
Principal	21	29.2
Counselor	19	26.4
Education Consultant	18	25.0
Team Representative Not Otherwise Specified	18	25.0
Teacher Not Otherwise Specified	17	23.6
Parent	13	18.1
Social Worker	11	15.3
Student	4	5.6
Speech/Language Consultant	3	4.2
Occupational Therapist	2	2.8
Assistant Principal	2	2.8
Paraprofessional	0	0.0
Other	10	14.9

DISCUSSION

It is apparent that FBA plays an important role in a school's ability to address behavior concerns with students. Research supports the use of FBA and has found that when the assessment is used to inform the intervention, positive and long-lasting behavior change is possible (Kern et al., 2006; Lane et al., 2007). The purpose of this study was to determine the assessment methods that educators rely upon in the FBA process and to discover the individuals who are frequently involved through the assessment and development of the BIP. This information is essential for improving the way challenging behaviors are addressed in the schools.

The results of this study indicate that there is considerable variability in the assessment methods and personnel involved in the assessment process. FBA is intended to be used as a problem-solving approach that looks at a convergence of data across multiple sources of information (Sugai et al., 2000). Best practice suggests that data collected from multiple assessment methods is most effective in yielding a quality FBA and effective BIP (Scott et al., 2008). In this study, few cases documented information collected from four different assessment methods (RIOT). Several cases included three assessment methods and the majority of cases reviewed reported data from two or fewer types of assessments sources. In a small number, no data were reported. This suggests that many individuals and teams conducting FBA are drawing conclusions about the behaviors of concern and developing plans without using multiple sources of data.

In this study, when FBAs were conducted by using multiple assessment methods there were some patterns observed. Record reviews, interviews, and observations were

often primary sources of information. Interviews were highly cited in FBAs that included three to four RIOT sources, followed by direct observation methods and record reviews. There were occasionally multiple observations and interviews indicated in a small number of these files. Testing methods occurred less frequently. An approach that examines data from multiple sources enables educators to look at a convergence in the data when making decisions to effectively address problem behavior (Blood & Neel, 2007).

Previous research has provided guidelines for the FBA process, all of which include some similar components. These include direct assessment methods, or observations of students in their natural environment as well as indirect assessment methods, such as file reviews, interviews, questionnaires, checklists, or behavior rating scales. Research supports the use of direct observation methods in gathering information in the setting where the undesirable behavior is most likely to occur (Alter et al., 2008; Waguespack et al., 2006). While there are various types of observation methods, ABC observations are often conducted to provide insight on the function of the student's behavior (Gresham et al., 2001; Lane et al., 2007). This study found that some type of observation was occurring in many of the initial FBAs. Surprisingly, data from ABC observations was not included in any of the files reviewed. Rather, data collected from scatterplots and time on task observations was used in greater frequencies.

Indirect assessment measures were found often utilized in practice. Indirect assessment measures include interviews with parents, students, and teachers; review of school records, questionnaires, checklists, and behavior rating scales (Alter et al., 2008;

Waguespack et al., 2006). In this study, a review of records was most widely documented as a source of collecting assessment information, with over half of the case files including data from a school record review. Behavior data not specified, which might include, for example, counts of blurting out in class, and data from office referrals was included in a number of the files reviewed. Due to the insight that can be gleaned from a record review, it is surprising that this assessment method was not more frequently utilized in the current study.

Functional assessment interviews with students, teachers, parents and other educators are vital sources of information in the development of FBAs and BIPs (Herzinger & Campbell, 2007; O'Neill et al., 1997; Quinn, Gable, Rutherford, Nelson, & Howell, 1998). This study found teacher interviews occurring in just over two-thirds of the files reviewed, and parent interviews occurring in approximately a third of the cases. Student interviews were documented in one-quarter of the cases reviewed. Research suggests that these methods provide rich information, yet the current study did not capitalize on these assessment methods.

Specific tools such as the Functional Assessment Interview (FAI), Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS), or the Functional Assessment Observation (FAO) have been created for FBA data collection purposes (Crone & Horner, 2003; O'Neill et al., 1997). These tools were not found to be a part of the assessment process according to the population of this study. This study did include some assessment information from the Functional Analysis Screening Tool (FAST),

Connors Rating Scale, Vanderbilt Rating Scale, Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC), and other testing methods.

There are a number of individuals who are involved as team members through the FBA process. Best practice suggests that there are a number of individuals who are required to be a part of this process. According to IDEA, IEP teams are included as integral members in this process. This consists of parents, general and special education teachers, local education agency representatives, occasionally the child, and other individuals who can interpret data and share expertise. The results of this study suggest school psychologists and general education teachers had involvement in the largest number of cases reviewed, with involvement in just under half of the cases. The principal and special education teacher were involved in just over a quarter of the cases, and a team representative, education consultant, and school counselor were documented in about one quarter of the case files. Parents and students were involved in a smaller number of the files reviewed. Parents seem to be included in interviews in higher frequencies, yet a small number are actually included in the team as decisions are made, and in many situations the teacher was not part of the FBA process. The principal was included in the FBA process more frequently than many other personnel, however, one may expect the principal to have more involvement as they may have the authority to allocate the necessary resources to provide supports to students.

There are a few strengths notable to this research study. The first strength was that the research team attended the FBA training held by the Behavior Resource Team at the regional education agency. This enabled all of the research team members to learn

and understand the steps and processes involved in carrying out a FBA and BIP within the agency and according to agency guidelines. The next strength is that the research team reviewed several practice files together as well as with the Behavior Resource Team before data collection began. This provided the opportunity to operationalize the items on the rubrics, and create scoring rules or guidelines to follow. Additionally, the research team had several reliability checks throughout data collection to ensure that inter rater reliability was achieved and maintained. This study reviewed all files available that fit the selection criteria in a regional education agency. A total of 72 files were included in this review which is a smaller number than what was originally intended. The results of this study may not be generalizable to the population as a whole, but rather generalizable to the regional education agency.

There are many implications as a result of this study and further research areas that need to be addressed. While the researchers were able to explore the assessment methods that are most frequently used in the field and the personnel who are included in the FBA process, conclusions as to the methods and personnel important in order to obtain a quality FBA and BIP need to be further explored. The results of this study may encourage regional education agencies to review their training practices and ensure that their staff has the proper training and understanding before conducting FBAs and BIPs. It would be interesting to further review the data from this study to determine whether or not there are patterns in the assessment methods used in a FBA and the school personnel involved in the process. In other words, are certain school personnel more likely to use multiple data sources, or perhaps a common set of data sources when carrying out FBA?

Future research should determine whether or not multiple sources of data used in the assessment process are necessary for the development of a quality FBA to inform an effective BIP. Research may also verify whether or not there is certain school personnel, who if involved in the process, develop BIPs based on the FBA with more effectiveness. While there is information concerning the assessment methods used in practice and the personnel involved in the process, there is still a need to determine which assessment methods produce a quality FBA and whether or not there are certain educators who have the skills to carry out the process most effectively.

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APPENDIX A

FBA AND BIP FORMS

Functional Behavior Assessment

Assessment Date: __/__/____

Name: _____ _____ __   ☐ Male   ☐ Female
Last (legal)   First (no nicknames)   M.I.

Birthdate: __/__/____   **Grade:** ____

Resident District: ____   **Building:** ____

Attending District: ____   **Building:** ____

Attending Area Education Agency: ____   **Attending Building Phone:** (___) - ____

☐ Parent   **Name:** ____   Home Phone: (___) - ____
☐ Foster Parent   **Address:** ____   Work/Cell Ph: (___) - ____
☐ Guardian   ____
☐ Surrogate   ____   E-mail: ____ @ ____
☐ Student

☐ Parent   **Name:** ____   Home Phone: (___) - ____
☐ Foster Parent   **Address:** ____   Work/Cell Ph: (___) - ____
☐ Guardian   ____
☐ Surrogate   ____   E-mail: ____ @ ____
☐ Student

Individuals completing this Functional Behavior Assessment:

Name	Position	Name	Position

Contact person for this report: ____
Phone: ____   **E-mail:** ____

Behavior(s) of concern. State a clear, measurable, and observable description of the behavior or behaviors of concern.

Problem analysis. Provide a descriptive assessment of the behavior (include information from a variety of approaches and data sources – record review; interviews; observation; and graphic displays such as scatterplots, ABC analysis, etc.). Include:

How different is this student's behavior from the behavior of others in intensity or frequency?

Is there a pattern of behavior over time and/or across settings? Have changes in student behavior occurred over time?

What student strengths may provide a foundation for addressing the behaviors of concern?

What conditions make the behavior more or less likely to occur? What consequences maintain the behavior? Include:

- Setting events (the conditions that make the behavior more likely to occur, but do not directly or immediately trigger the behavior – e.g., time of day, certain classes, particular adults or peers present, poor sleep, receiving medication, missing medication, missed breakfast, thoughts, feelings, or beliefs of the child, etc.).

- Antecedents (the events that directly and immediately trigger the behavior – e.g., teasing, specific classroom demands, etc.).

- Consequences, both positive and negative that are related to the occurrence and maintenance of the behavior.

Hypothesis statement. State the current, best understanding of what triggers and maintains the behavior. Include:

Presumed function (purpose) of the behavior. Why is the behavior occurring? What is the child gaining or avoiding?

Conditions that make the behavior more or less likely. What are the conditions and events that trigger the behavior and the consequences that follow the behavior? What are the conditions and events that make the behavior less likely to occur?

Implications for interventions. Describe potential strategies, potential alternative skills or replacement behaviors, and needed supports for team members that will be considered in developing a Behavior Intervention Plan.

Note:	The hypothesis may need to be tested through the development, implementation and frequent review of a behavior intervention plan.

Behavior Intervention Plan

Student: _____ Date: _____

Behavior(s) of Concern. State a clear, measurable, and observable description of the behavior or behaviors of concern.

Student Strengths. Identify student strengths that may provide a foundation for addressing the behavior(s) of concern.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). Summarize or attach a current FBA.

    Hypothesis on which this Behavior Intervention Plan is based:

        Function of the behavior:

        Setting events, antecedents & consequences that trigger and maintain the behavior:

        Potential alternative skills or replacement behaviors:

Goal. State the behavioral goal for this student in measurable and observable terms that include the **conditions** (when and how the individual will perform); **behavior** (what the individual will do); and **criterion** (acceptable level of performance).

Implementation Plan

Environmental changes that make undesirable behavior(s) less likely to occur

    Action:

    Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:	☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:	☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

_____

Building and reinforcing alternative skills and replacement behaviors
_____

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:	☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:	☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

_____

Teacher/parent/caregiver responses
_____

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:	☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented: ☐ already in place   ☐ immediately   ☐   / /

Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Safety plan

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented: ☐ already in place   ☐ immediately   ☐   / /

Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented: ☐ already in place   ☐ immediately   ☐   / /

Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Other actions that are needed to meet the needs of this individual

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented: ☐ already in place   ☐ immediately   ☐   / /

Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented: ☐ already in place   ☐ immediately   ☐   / /

Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision - / / :	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Additional Supports for Team Members

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:			☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

How will progress towards the goal be monitored? Include the method and frequency of monitoring the individual's behavior.

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:			☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

How will implementation of the plan be monitored? Include the method and frequency of monitoring plan implementation.

Action:

Who will be responsible for this action?

When this action will be implemented:			☐ already in place	☐ immediately	☐ / /
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue
Decision -	/ /	:	☐ continue	☐ modify	☐ discontinue

Review. Specify the dates of scheduled review by the team.

1st Review: / /
2nd Review: / /
3rd Review: / /

APPENDIX B

BEHAVIOR RESOURCE TEAM RUBRIC

Requirements-FBA/BIP	3	2	1
Behavior(s) of Concern - Is the target behavior clearly defined? (Observable, measurable)	A problem behavior is clearly identified and described in observable, measurable terms. (Don't report numeric data here.)	A problem behavior is described, but description needs to be more specific OR description includes some irrelevant information.	A specific problem behavior is not identified OR is identified but not described in observable, measurable terms.
Descriptive Summary- Are multiple sources of data summarized, including data from all RIOT sources?	Multiple sources of **relevant** data are cited and summarized clearly, including RIOT data and a scatterplot.	Sufficient, relevant data have been collected (from 3 different RIOT sources), but the summarization is lacking.	Minimal data are documented (from 2 or fewer RIOT sources), OR irrelevant data are reported.
Problem Analysis- Is the data analyzed to describe current performance as compared to peer performance and/or expected standards?	The behavior of concern is described in measures of frequency, intensity, duration, or latency and is compared to peer performance or to an expected standard.	Measurements are not relevant, OR they are not compared to peers/standards.	Measurements are not relevant, AND they are not compared to peers/standards.
Environmental conditions – Are the data analyzed to determine antecedents and consequences? Do convergent data support the conclusions?	Data are logically synthesized to determine antecedents and consequences. Convergence is clearly described. (Hypothesis testing is documented if necessary.)	Data are synthesized to consider antecedents and consequences, but convergence needs to be more clearly described.	Data are insufficient to determine antecedents and consequences.
Hypothesis Statement- Is the hypothesis statement well written and aligned with the data?	The hypothesis statement describes the function: -in behavioral terms		The hypothesis statement describes: -a non-function OR -a function not

(Under x conditions, the student does y to get/avoid z.)	-considers the full range of antecedents and consequences associated with the occurrence of the problem behavior -is based on convergent data.		supported by data **OR** -a function that does not focus on what is reinforcing the behavior.
Self-check for FBA	In order to develop the BIP, you must have responses that score in the highlighted areas above.		
	3	**2**	**1**
Goal(s) – Is there a logical, well-written baseline and goal(s) that link with the function?	The baseline and goal(s) are based on the function and written to meet state criteria (conditions, behavior, criterion).	Baseline and goal(s) match the function, but some components of a well-written goal(s) are missing.	Goal(s) does not match the function **AND/OR** goal(s) and baseline use different measurement methods.
Prevention Strategies – Are prevention strategies clearly described that fit with the assessment data?	Prevention strategies are clearly described and fit with the assessment data.	Prevention strategies link with assessment data, but need to be described more clearly.	Prevention strategies are not clearly described **OR** do not link with assessment information.
Alternative Skills – Are alternative skills identified and do they fit with the assessment data? Is appropriate reinforcement for the use of alternative skills described?	There is a clear description for the teaching of alternative skills and how they will be reinforced. These match the function. (Skill deficits should be addressed with direct, explicit instruction. Performance deficits may be addressed through reinforcement.)	Alternative skills & reinforcement that fit with the function are described but need to be described more clearly.	Alternative skills are not described **OR** do not link with the function **OR** there is no plan for reinforcement.
Response strategies (Extinguishing inappropriate behaviors)– Is there a clear plan to avoid	There is a clear plan to stop reinforcement of inappropriate behavior, and it ties in with	There is a plan that links with assessment data for extinguishing inappropriate behavior,	There is no plan for extinguishing inappropriate behavior **OR** it does not match

reinforcing inappropriate behavior?	assessment data.	but it is vague.	assessment data.
Safety plan – Is there a clear and legal safety plan?	There is a clear safety/crisis plan that meets current regulations.	There is a safety plan, but it is vague.	There is no safety plan **OR** it does not adequately address safety concerns.
Progress Monitoring – Is there a plan for frequent progress monitoring of the student's response to the behavior intervention plan?	Progress monitoring is clearly described, including how progress will be measured, how often progress will be measured, and the decision making rule.	Progress monitoring is mentioned, but not all components are present.	There is no progress monitoring plan.
Monitoring Implementation- Who is going to ensure the plan is implemented as written and how and when will this be done?	There is a clear plan to monitor implementation of the BIP with how, who and when clearly defined.	There is a plan, but it is vague.	There is no plan to monitor implementation.

Behavior Resource Team – 7.14.09

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH TEAM RUBRIC

Assessment Tool	Check if Present
Record Review	
Office Referrals	
Behavior Data (NOS)	
Forced Choice Reinforcement Menu	
Interview	
Teacher Interview	
General Education Teacher	
Special Education Teacher	
Parent Interview	
Student Interview	
Other_____	
Observation Data	
ABC	
Scatterplot	
Peer Comparison	
Structured/Systematic	
Time on Task	
Duration	
Latency	
Frequency	
Other _____	
Personnel Completing FBA	
Team Representative (NOS)	
Social Worker	
School Psychologist	
General Education Teacher	
Special Education Teacher	
Teacher (NOS)	
Paraprofessional	

Education Consultant	
Speech/Language Pathologist	
Occupational Therapist	
Parent	
Student	
Other_____	
Grade of student	
Sector	
The Link	
Primary function of behavior identified	
Obtain	
Attention	
Activities/Object	
Escape/Avoid	
Attention	
Tasks	
Nonpreferred Activity	
Internal Stimulation	
Other_____	
Not Identified	
Identified function consistent with data	
Function consistent with convergence of data	
Clear connection between hypothesis and intervention	
Conditions specified in the hypothesis statement	
Antecedent Identified in hypothesis statement	
Consequence Identified in hypothesis statement	
Setting event Identified in hypothesis statement	
Behavior is identified in the hypothesis statement	
Function is identified in the hypothesis statement	
Conditions specified in the FBA and/or BIP	
Antecedent Identified	

Identified antecedent consistent with data	
Consequence Identified	
Identified consequence consistent with data	
Setting event Identified	
Identified setting event consistent with data	
Replacement behavior identified	
Replacement behavior serves function identified in hypothesis	
Plan to reinforce replacement behavior	
Antecedent modified	
Consequence modified	
Setting event modified	