FBAs are
Lifesavers for Students and Teachers!

An Analysis of Functional Behavioral Assessments

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What is an FBA?

An FBA, or Functional Behavioral Assessment is an analysis, which seeks to specifically identify the problem behavior that a student is exhibiting in the school. Its focus is to determine the main function or purpose to the behavior and then to develop a strategy to encourage acceptable alternatives to that behavior. In that regard it looks beyond the behavior and attempts to identify the social, cognitive, and/or environmental factors triggering it. This is a more useful and successful intervention plan, as it is based on the “why” of the behavior. The application of a FBA can be used to address a myriad of problem student behaviors.
The History of Functional Behavior Assessments

Functional behavioral assessment is not a new concept. It is an integral part of the field of Psychology that is based on applied behavioral analysis or (ABA). ABA is concerned with the detailed study and applicable modification of human behavior. The following paradigm is used to describe the FBA:

\[ A = B = C \]

- \( A \) is the antecedent or factor that often triggers the behavior.

For example:
- **External factors:** settings, tasks, people, activities, events
- **Internal factors:** moods, medical conditions, disabilities, psychiatric conditions

- \( B \) represents the observable behavior in factual terms.

- \( C \) is the consequence that follows the target behavior.
**What are some of the identified behaviors?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function of Behavior</th>
<th>Example of Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention seeking</strong></td>
<td>loud noises</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wise comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>off task tapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Escape/avoidance</strong></td>
<td>feigning sleep</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“bathroomitis”</td>
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<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td>oppositional demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questioning teacher's authority</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>verbally disruptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>intense frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to tangible reinforcers</strong></td>
<td>very demanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>overly dependent on item requested</td>
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Development and Implementation of the Functional Behavior Assessment Plan (FBA) as part of the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

• Is a written, individualized support plan based on a functional assessment of the child’s problem behavior
• Does not have to be part of IEP
• Used to decrease identified inappropriate behavior
• Incorporate behavior modifications- rewards, token system, and timeout into plan

Involvement

• Parents and Student- BIP plan may need to be followed out of school
• CSE Team – Chairperson, General & Special Educators, Paraprofessional, School Psychologist, Pediatrician, Parent Advocate

**Process**

• Teacher makes referral
• Team reviews referral
• Team reviews student’s IEP

**Observation Using FBA Form**

• Determine inappropriate behavior
• Determine why a student engages in behaviors that impedes learning
• Determine how the student’s behavior relates to the environment
• Identify information that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of behavior support plans.
## Develop and Implement Behavior Intervention Plan

- Expected outcomes and goals
- Intervention(s) & frequency of intervention
- Behavior Modification
- Person(s) responsible
- Review notes

### Sample Behavioral Intervention Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Number(s)</th>
<th>Expected Outcome(s) Goal(s)</th>
<th>Intervention(s) &amp; Frequency of Intervention</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Goal/Intervention Review Notes</th>
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**Review Codes:**  
- GA = Goal Achieved  
- C = Continue  
- DC = Discontinue

**Expected Review Dates**  
_________    ________   ________

**Signatures- Team Members**  
_________________________   ____________________  ____________________  ____________________
_________________________   ____________________  ____________________  ____________________
_________________________   ____________________  ____________________  ____________________

**Parents**  
_________________________  

**Student**  
_________________________
Present Plan

- Add to Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Student contract
- Goals-changing behavior, replacing with appropriate behavior or controlling inappropriate behavior
- Student reviews and agrees to BIP

Progress Report & Feed Back

- Follow BIP
- Teachers & Parents- monitor student progress using log - daily, weekly basis
- Report to parents on weekly basis
- Evaluate effectiveness of BIP
- Determine what is working or not working
  - Review in CSE meeting if part of IEP
  - Modify BIP if needed
IDEA '97 - The Law

- Recognizes that physical, mental, and emotional disabilities can and do disrupt a child’s ability to profit from free appropriate public education
- Requires every IEP Team to review the child’s behavior and decide whether it considerably hinders the child’s learning or learning with others
- When the behavior difficulties have been identified (FBA) the behavior challenges are analyzed and a BIP is put into place
- BIP can be modified without formal meeting if it is not part of IEP
IDEA “97- Second Level Behavior Intervention

- Protects student with IEP/BIP when behavior leads to suspension or removal from an educational placement for more than ten days

- Protects “Unidentified” Students
  - Protected if school had knowledge of behavioral problems, and the child has not been through the formal IEP/FBA/BIP process

- School must show whether or not services required by child’s IEP are being provided

- School must give written notice to parents within ten days of incident providing their right to challenge decision if they believe behavior is due to disability
Manifestation Considerations

- Protects student when behavior leads to suspension for more than ten days
- IEP team determines if explosive behavior was a sign of the child’s disability
- This is done only after the team examines the conduct leading to the disciplinary action
- Team reviews past evaluations and testing results
- Information provided by parents and student
- Review of IEP, BIP, and school environment
- Follow Manifestation Standards answering the questions which will determine outcome
Brian is a 13-year-old classified ED student in a residential setting. His mother is deceased and his father does have parental rights, but little involvement in Brian’s education. He has had several psychiatric hospitalizations in the past and is on a regimen of 2-3 psychotropic medications. He is currently placed in an 8th grade classroom configured with an 8:1:1 ratio. Brain has had difficulty making the transition from the orientation room to the classroom. His classroom teacher has identified some misbehaviors that interfere with Brian’s education. The lack of a Behavior Intervention Plan has led to the recommendation that Brian be referred for Functional Behavioral Assessment.
**Reason for Referral:**

Brian’s behaviors of concern at this time include: being off task, talking out, poor social skills, attention seeking, withdrawal, depression, mood swings, immature talk, defiance, non-compliance, disorganization, distracting others, losing materials, poor motivation, late assignments, being out of seat, verbal aggression, blurting out angrily, and self-victimization. He also demonstrates severe behaviors that are self-injurious, and can result in significant property damage. These behaviors are pervasive and maladaptive for which the instruction/behavioral approaches specified in his IEP are found to be ineffective. The ramifications of these behaviors are: classroom disruption, interference with learning, poor interpersonal relationships with adults and peers, and at times- potential danger to himself and others.
**Target Behavior:**

- **Blurting out angrily**—Brian will become increasingly agitated and will become verbally aggressive and angry.

- **Blurting our nonsensical answers**—Brian will blurt out disconnected thought and ideas during class and respond with disconnected responses.

**Assessment Team Members**

School psychologist  
Gen. Ed. Teacher  
Sp. Ed. Teacher  
Student  
Parent
**Assessment**

Brian's behavior was assessed using standardized assessment, observation, informal assessment, and teacher report.

**Functional Analysis:**

Blurting out angrily and Nonsensical response behaviors: occur several times a day for a duration of approximately 1 to 30 minutes. They occur at different times during the day, and in various settings. Brian engages in the behavior when peers, teachers, and staff are present. It occurs most often when an individual issues a directive to Brian, reprimands him, or ignores an attempt on Brian's part for attention. Based on the behavioral analysis, the team (teacher, special ed. teacher and school psychologist) hypothesize that the behaviors appear to be a function of a need to control his peers and adults and an unknown intrinsic motivation. The team consensus is that Brian does not have mastery of the necessary skills to
demonstrate the appropriate behavior and that the blurting out angrily behavior and eccentric responses are being unintentionally reinforced.

**Recommended Behavior Reduction Strategies**

- Apply consequences without conversation
- Attend to another appropriate student
- Communicate expectations without threats
- Do not comply with student’s demands
- Move away from student

**Replacement Behaviors and Goals**

_The Goal_: Brian will demonstrate a positive replacement behavior to blurting out both angrily and nonsensical answers by differentiating between actual observations and personal interpretations.

**Conditions:** When situation dictates

**Mastery Level:** every time

**Evaluation Frequency:** continuously

**Evaluation Method:** teacher observation

**Number of Trials:** 5 out of 5 days
Person Responsible for:

- **Implementing Goal**: Teacher and School Psychologist
- **Coordinating Changes**: Teacher and School Psychologist
- **Team Communication**: Teacher
- **Monitoring Progress**: Teacher and School Psychologist

**Progress and Success**

Progress will be reported to the team members 1x time(s) per quarter. The team will meet to discuss progress and the appropriateness of this behavior plan at six month intervals.
Resources

Websites- Useful Sites for Educators and Parents
Building Partnerships between Families, Schools, and Communities
http://www.bridges4kids.org
Psychsoft Inc.
http://www.psychsoftcom
TEACH-NOLOGY -The Web Portal for Educators
http://www.teach-ology.com

Software

!Observe Software
http://www.sopriswest.com
Books

“Understanding Student Behavior: A Guide to Functional Behavioral Assessments” More information online at

http://www.1rpdartnell.com/cgi-bin/SoftCart.exe/scstore/p-300106.html1?E+scstore

“Conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments: Data Collection Forms & Practical Guide”

References


