DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING (DBR) IN COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW FOR SCHOOLS
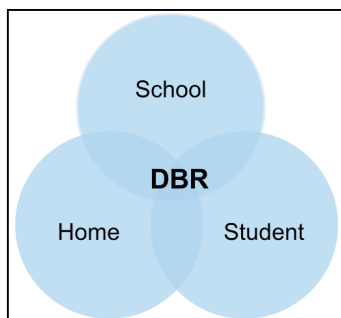
DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING

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Family---school partnerships have long been noted as critical to studentsuccess, and communication is an essential part of establishing and maintaining an effective partnership. Direct Behavior Rating (DBR) can be used to facilitate this communication. In fact, DBRS like tools were initially presented as a means for communicating between home and school (e.g., HomeS School Note[1]). However, it is important to note that DBR can also be used to communicate among several key people in a student's life (e.g., teacherS student, parentS teacher, teacherS teacher).

Why is home-school communication important?

Since the majority of a student's time is spent outside of school, changing the school experience will not necessarily have a significant impact on life outside of school[2]. In order to maximize the effectiveness of school-based behavior supports, educators need to address all contexts surrounding a student[3]. It can be especially important that behavior support programs include a family-school communication component in order a) to maintain productive parent-educator relationships and b) to facilitate consistency in provision of consequences across school and home settings[1]. Using DBR can help simplify the process for communication, thereby creating a frequent, consistent system for feedback among parents, teachers, students, and others involved with the student.

Potential Benefits of Using DBR in Communication:

➤ Provides immediate and consistent feedback about student behavior

➤ Fosters shared responsibility for student well-being

➤ Enhances consistency across settings in responding to student behavior

➤ Increases opportunities for positive attention in response to pro-social behavior

Who can use DBR in communication?

School

DBR

Home   Student

DBR can be used by anyone involved with the student:

- Teachers and other school personnel (e.g., counselor, school psychologist, speech therapist)
- Parents, guardians, and other family members
- Even students!

How can I use DBR to facilitate home-school communication?

Using DBR in communication can be easy, once procedures for completing DBR have been put in place. You just need to determine with whom the information will be shared (e.g., parent, student, counselor) and how often (e.g., daily, weekly). Decide if you want to simply provide the information or if you want to establish a communication loop (e.g., sign and return with comment). Don't forget to follow through as questions arise!

How is a DBR created to communicate about student behavior[4]?

Step 1: Select the target behavior you wish to communicate about (e.g., attention in class, homework), and if used as part of an intervention, define goals for behavior change.

Step 2: Establish how the target behaviors and goals will be defined (e.g., correctly completing at least 80% of assignments, following direct requests during transitions).

Step 3: Determine the periods in which information will be recorded about student behavior (e.g., completing assignments during morning work, decreasing disruptive behavior during large group instruction).

Step 4: Set criteria for use during the most relevant parts of the day, generally not the entire day (i.e., evaluate behavior for three different activities, not just overall at the end of the entire day).

Step 5: Schedule a meeting between relevant parties (e.g., teacher, parent, and/or student). Discuss how DBR might best be used in communication and intervention. Ensuring that everyone involved is motivated to take part in this communication effort is key to enhancing its success. And don't forget to explain what DBR is and how it will be used to the student in a positive way!

Step 6: If used as part of an intervention, establish a home- and/or school-based incentive system. Allow the student to choose his/her own incentives from a pre-approved list. You can arrange incentives so that fewer or less preferred incentives are earned for fewer positive marks and more desirable ones are earned for more positive marks.

Step 7: Monitor effectiveness of the communication by examining DBR data, and modify as needed. For example, you may need to change the frequency with which communication is shared, and modify goals and/or incentives. Consider additional options for behavior supports, if appropriate.

Example of a DBR Form Used for Middle School Students

- Used as part of a self-monitoring intervention with an incentive system
- Both the teacher and student rated the student's behavior after the class period
- The teacher communicated with the *student* about his/her behavior, with the student's *other teachers*, & sent a copy of the DBR form home for the child's *parents*

Student's name: _____   Day: M T W Th F   Date:_____

How well was I <u>prepared</u> for class?
<u>Examples</u>: Seated when bell rang, immediately began Schema Activators, instructional materials open, covered textbook/pen/pencil/paper ready, eye contact with teacher when lesson began

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all   Some   Totally

How <u>engaged</u> was I during class activities?
<u>Examples</u>: Writing, raising hand, answering a question, talking about a lesson, listening to the teacher, reading silently, taking notes appropriately, or looking at instructional materials

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all   Some   Totally

Add All Points:
(use teacher rating if different)

# of Bonus Points Earned:
(1 pt for each match within 1 pt)

Total Points for Day:

Copy Sent Home: Yes   No   Reward Chosen:
                                     (if earned)

Comments: Teacher Initials: _____
                                    Parent Initials: _____

[1]Kelley, M.L. (1990). *School-home notes: Promoting children's classroom success*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

[2]Christenson, S.L. & Buerkle, K. (1999). Families as educational partners for children's school success: Suggestions for school psychologists. In C. Reynolds & T. Gutkin (Eds), *The handbook of school psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 709-744). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

[3]Esler, A. N., Godber, Y., & Christenson, S. L. (2002). Best practices in supporting home-school collaboration. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology IV* (Vol. 1, pp. 389-411). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

[4]Center for Children and Families. (2010). *How to establish a daily report card*. Retrieved 7/12/10 from http://ccf.buffalo.edu. http://ccf.buffalo.edu/resources_downloads.php.