

What Is It?

A *consequence* occurs immediately after a behavior. Consequences can be planned or unplanned, and they can increase or decrease the likelihood that the behavior will happen in the future. In a classroom setting, teachers can use consequences to give feedback to students about a particular classroom behavior that lets them know whether or not it should be repeated. Behavior refers to academic and prosocial (helpful to others) behaviors that teachers want to increase, as well as challenging behaviors that teachers want to decrease.

When to Use It

Teachers use consequences in several ways:

- To increase or maintain a classwide behavior (e.g., class participation).
- To increase or maintain a targeted behavior (e.g., hand raising).
- To provide feedback so students understand when something is done correctly, and when they need to change what they're doing.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

After identifying a task or activity the student is trying to escape:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Identify a behavior that you want to increase or decrease.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Determine what antecedent elicits the behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Identify a powerful reinforcer (e.g., praise, attention, break from work, access to preferred items).
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Determine who will provide reinforcement, how, and when.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Reinforce the new skill or desired behavior immediately and every time it occurs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. If a problem behavior occurs, prompt the student to engage in the new skill or desired behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Respond to inappropriate behaviors with verbal corrections.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Do not reinforce the problem behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Set goals (e.g., end of the week computer time).
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Give more praise than corrections.

Example

William is a 5th grade student who makes loud noises during small group reading instruction. According to William's teacher, Mrs. Davis, William makes loud noises with increasing intensity until an adult sits next to him. When the adult leaves, William makes noises again and often his teacher tells him to sit outside in the hallway. This frequently escalates his behavior, and results in William being sent to the principal's office.

According to the results of their assessment, the team determines that the function of William's noise-making is to gain attention from the adults in the room during reading instruction. The team creates a behavior plan and decides to implement a system of praise.

During reading instruction, Mrs. Davis and the class paraprofessional provide William with two yellow cards that he can raise at any time during the lesson to gain attention. Mrs. Davis and the classroom paraprofessional provide high verbal praise approximately every 10 minutes that William is able to refrain from making loud noises. When William does make loud noises, the classroom instructors verbally remind him of appropriate behavior but do not provide additional attention. Mrs. Davis collects data on William's behavior and gradually increases the time between reinforcement.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Conduct a preference assessment to identify a highly preferred positive reinforcer.
- Use behavior specific praise.
- Use a ratio of 4:1 praise to reprimand statements.
- Use about six praise statements every 15 minutes.
- Incorporate reinforcement to increase or maintain the rate of the behavior occurring in the future.
- Provide reinforcement immediately (contingently) when student gives the requested response.

Resources

Conroy, M. A., Sutherland, K. S., Synder, A., & Al-Hendawi, M. (2009). Creating a positive classroom atmosphere: Teachers' use of effective praise and feedback. *Beyond Behavior, 18*, 18-26.

Myers, D. M., Simonsen, B. & Sugai, G. (2011). Increasing teachers' use of praise with a response-to-intervention approach. *Education and Treatment of Children, 34*, 35-39.