Implementing Positive Behavior Support Strategies: Encouragement and Praise

Paul Caldarella, Ph.D.

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Thank you to

• Beijing Normal University
• Zhejiang Normal University
• Brigham Young University
My Background

• Education
  – combined clinical/counseling/school psychology

• Work Experience
  – schools, psychiatric hospitals, outpatient clinics

• Common Experiences of Clients
  – lack of positive relationships
  – insufficient encouragement and praise
Encouragement and Praise

Children and students in families and at school need the positive benefits of encouragement and praise.
Did you know?

• Approximately 20,000 individual moments in a waking day

• Each “moment” lasts a few seconds

“…single encounter can change your life forever.”  How Full is Your Bucket? (2004)
Encouragement and Praise

• Encouragement is expressing confidence in students to motivate them to try, to learn, to act.

• Praise is recognizing what a student has done or their efforts to accomplish something.
Benefits

• Praised and encouraged behavior is likely to be repeated

• Builds positive teacher-student relationships

• Builds confidence

• Helps students turn failures into successes

• Improves classroom environment and academic performance
Encouragement

Purpose:
To motivate students to try or achieve something

When to use it:
Student lacks confidence or needs to know you support them
Encouragement

Think of a person who has encouraged you when you were unsure of yourself. What did they say or do to help you?

Examples:

• “You can do this.”
• “I can see that you’re not sure of yourself, but I believe in you.”
• “Relax, you’ll do better each time you try.”
Activity

Think of a student you know who lacks confidence. List ways you could encourage this student to try to succeed. (1 minute)

Discuss this list with the person sitting next to you. (1 minute)
Types of Praise

• General Praise
• Effective Praise
General Praise

Purpose:
Build relationships and confidence.

When to use:
Often, but less frequently than effective praise.
General Praise

• Simple statement, but not specific

• Examples:
  “Good job!”
  “Way to go!”
Think of a student you know who has misbehaved at school. List this student’s positive attributes. (1 minute)

List three praise statements you could say to this student using your list of positive attributes. (1 minute)
Effective Praise

Purpose:
Build relationships and confidence.
Teach students what you want them to do.

When to use it:
As often as possible when teaching.
Effective Praise

- Contingent
- Immediate
- Specific
- Sincere

Examples:
“\textit{I like the way you completed your work.}”

“\textit{You were very careful forming your letters. They look beautiful!}”
General vs. Effective Praise

**General Praise**

- “Good Job!”
- “Thanks.”
- “You are awesome.”

**Effective Praise**

- “Good Job! I like the way you completed your work.”
- “I appreciate the way you cleaned off your desk quickly when I asked you.”
- “You are awesome. I like the way you completed your math homework accurately.”
Activity

Look at the praise statements you listed earlier.

Change any statements that are general praise into effective praise statements.

(2 minutes)
Praise Notes

• Written notes are a powerful way to praise students.

• It’s best to use effective praise when writing notes.

• Our research documents the value of praise notes.
### Percentage of Participants Who Agreed on Praise Note Survey Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students should be praised for appropriate classroom behavior.</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students like receiving praise notes.</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise notes should continue to be used next year.</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents like it when their children receive praise notes.</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise notes help students improve their classroom behavior.</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ r = -0.55 \]
\[ p < .05 \]
Conclusion

• Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a way to address students mental health needs and prevent problems from developing.

• Encouragement and praise are crucial foundations of PBS.

• We encourage you to use these simple strategies with students.

• Feel free to contact us.
http://education.byu.edu/pbsi/

Paul_Caldarella@byu.edu
Lynnette_Christensen@byu.edu
Richard_Young@byu.edu