Promising Practices for Supporting Youth in BC Schools

Last Issue

In issue 3.1, we discussed some strategies for addressing challenging behaviour and bullying in the classroom. We also included a section on a bully-prevention program and looked at how one BC school district teaches self-regulation in the context of social responsibility.

In this Issue: <u>Is Data a Four-Letter Word in Your School?</u>

We are regularly told that data collection is important; however, it can be difficult to figure out how to use it to help students. It can be frustrating for school personnel to collect data that never gets used in a meaningful way, or to watch data being misused. Whether it be seeing data being used for ranking schools by achievement test scores without considering the context, having to use user-unfriendly computer databases, or collecting data that never get used, it's no wonder people think of data as a four-letter word! In this issue, we provide some strategies and tools for how to collect and use data to guide to help us make our schools safer and more caring.

Heard of booster lessons but not sure how to tailor them to your needs? See page 7!

UBC | a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

How to use data effectively

Schools collect a variety of data, from grades and attendance to standardized test scores; however, this data often isn't used at all, or if so, it is used ineffectively. Data can be a valuable tool to quickly and directly monitor **academic or behaviour patterns** that may not be observed otherwise. For instance, **Office Discipline Referral (ODR) data** is a commonly used measure of behaviour, and can provide efficient powerful information about what is happening in your school.

TYPES OF DATA:

Data can come in many forms, and your choice of what to measure depends on what you want to know. Some examples of types of data include:

* Academic Data (e.g., in-class academic assessments, standardized assessments, school-wide assessments)
* Behavioural Data (e.g., office discipline referral data, absences and lates, suspension data, screening for mental health needs)
* Fidelity of Implementation Data (i.e., data to tell you if you are carrying out a program as planned)
* Perceptions Data (e.g., what do parents think about the new program you implemented, what do students think is the highest priority in their school?)

TOP FIVE REASONS TO USE DATA:

1. To make your school decisions more efficient and effective
2. To provide quick snapshots of what is happening in your school
3. To provide an in-depth understanding of an issue
4. To monitor how well a program is working
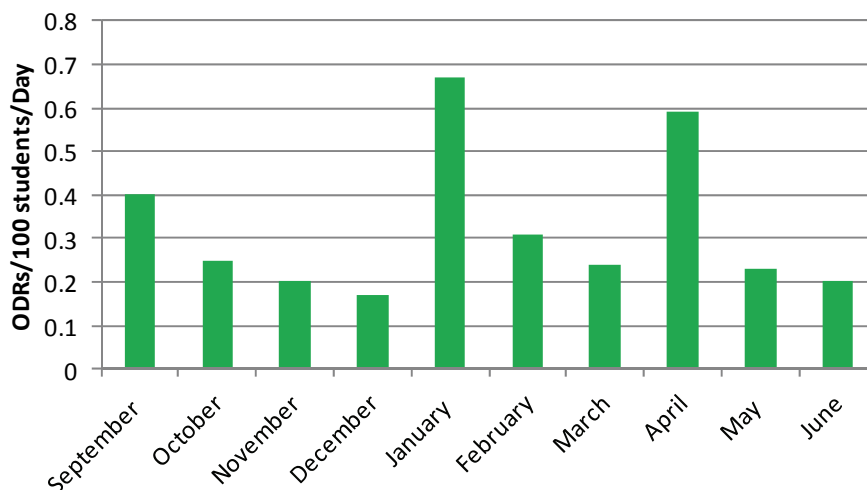5. To monitor individual student progress

Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) are often already used to document major behaviour incidents in a school. If they are already collected, ODRs can be an efficient and but helpful tool to monitor behaviour and observe patterns of behaviour across the school.

How to use Office Discipline Referrals:

To start using ODRs, you will need a standardized referral form and an electronic system for tracking and summarizing ODRs. Electronic systems used in Canada for tracking ODRs include:

* Incident Management Protocol (www.theimp.ca)
* School-wide Information system (go to www.swis.org for a demo)
* The Profiler (www.profco.ca)

Once ODRs are collected, they can be summarized in a number of ways; for instance, data can be summarized according to the location of incidents, time of day or year when incidents are more frequent, and types of incidents. **Figure 1** shows an example of how ODRs can be summarized by month. As the graph shows, this school has spikes in ODRs in January and April (right after breaks). These would be excellent times for this school to teach some booster lessons (see page 7)!

Figure 1. Mean number of Office Discipline Referrals per 100 students per day.

Case study of one school's use of ODRs

After analyzing their ODR data, a Kamloops school noticed that most of their behaviour concerns were occurring at the end of the lunch hour. With assistance from their coach to brainstorm evidence based strategies, the school PBS committee decided to suggest that they implement 'reverse' lunch hour, such that students ate their lunch after the lunch recess. The next year, they noticed not only a drop in lunch hour ODRs (from 110 to 70), but the 'lunch ladies' noticed that they threw out almost no food. Moreover, teachers commented that students were more relaxed and were ready to start right in on school work in the afternoon.

Fidelity of implementation refers to how well a program is put in place. If you don't measure fidelity of implementation, you won't know if poor outcomes are due to the program's effectiveness or whether it was actually used with students. Therefore it is important to use tools to monitor fidelity of implementation of any school practice. Fidelity tools also help tell the school what next steps can improve student outcomes even more.

PBIS Assessment offers schools and districts access to five application tools that monitor the fidelity of PBS and all resources offered are **FREE!**

PBIS ASSESSMENT

PBIS Assessment (www.pbisassessment.org; the 'I' stands for interventions!) is a free online application that was created to aid schools in implementing and sustaining PBS with high fidelity. The purpose of this website is to support schools in three main areas: initial assessment, implementation assessment and sustained assessment.

Initial Assessment: Used to decide *if* and *how* PBS should be implemented, and what parts are already in place.

Implementation Assessment: Once you have implemented PBS, to determine what parts you have implemented to date, and what areas of implementation can be the next main focus.

Sustained Assessment: On-going assessment of PBS implementation at all three tiers.

To sign up for PBIS Assessment:
Schools and districts can sign-up for PBIS Assessment.
Schools and districts will need to locate their nearest designated coordinator.
To find a coordinator, click on CONTACT and then FIND A LOCAL COORDINATOR.
All sign-up sheets are located at www.pbisassessment.org/Support/Resources

Tools Available through PBIS Assessment:

Stage of PBS Implementation	Measure
Thinking about implementing PBS?	**Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)** This assessment examines staff perceptions of the status and priority for improving school-wide, classroom, non classroom and individual student systems. Find it here.
Planning implementation or getting started with PBS?	**Team Implementation Checklist (TIC; Sugai, Horner & Lewis-Palmer)** The TIC is administered three to four times per year and is a progress monitoring tool for teams using PBS. It can be used until all of the features are rated as in place. Find it here.
Already implementing PBS and want an outside evaluation?	**School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner)** The SET is conducted annually and assesses key features of PBS. The SET assessment can only be implemented by trained SET evaluators.
Monitoring your activities after implementation?	**Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ; Kincaid, Childs, & George, 2010)** Advanced assessment tool used annually to identify areas of success and areas of improvement for experienced school teams implementing PBS. PBS Teams and coaches complete the online survey in spring of each school year. Find it here. **School Safety Survey (SSS; Sprague, Colvin, & Irvin)** The SSS is an student outcomes measure that examines risk and protective factors within a school. The SSS is completed by at least 5 school personnel, including: administrator, custodial staff, supervisory staff member, classroom teacher, and office staff member. Find it here.

USING DATA TO SELECT GOALS

By collecting data, schools can set valued goals and monitor their progress toward meeting them. It is important to select and focus on one or two achievable goals, rather than trying to achieve too many goals at once. Here are some steps for setting and achieving goals:

1. Identify the area in need of improvement.
2. Select a valued outcome and decide how you will measure it.
3. Choose a reasonable goal (i.e., a quantifiable number).
4. Evaluate practices and decide how you will meet that goal (what do you already have in place? What might work better?)
5. Develop an action plan.

Example: One school noticed that there seemed to be an increasing number of altercations between students on the playground. They start to monitor office discipline referrals (ODRs) and realize that 50% of their ODRs occur during recess on the playground, indicating that there is indeed a problem. They choose physical aggression on the playground as the valued outcome, and choose ODRs as a measurement system. They set a reasonable goal of reducing the number of ODRs from the playground by 50% by the end of the year. Next, they examine the practices that they have in place. They are a PBS school, but after observing on the playground, they realize that recess monitors have not been acknowledging students for expected behaviours on the playground. At the next pro-d day, staff discuss easy ways to remember to catch students doing things the right way on the playground and select a common strategy. They also ask each teacher to revisit school expectations on the playground with their classes. They continue to monitor ODRs and notice a decreasing trend over the next few months!

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE DATA

Canadian school

MacNeill Secondary in Richmond, BC, wanted to gather data from their students about where they felt safe in the school, and if there were any places in the school that needed more active supervision. They provided all students with a map of the school, and asked them to colour code the map based on where they saw different behaviours.

Students responded to the following questions:

"Where do you see POWER-ful behaviours happening?"
"Where do you see disrespect to others?"
"Where do you see disrespect to the facility?"
"What else should we know?"

Based on students' anonymous answers, they decided to increase seating in a common area and increase teacher supervision in specific areas of the school (like specific hallways and stairwells).

Tips for Tomorrow

Booster Lessons.

Once you have analyzed your data, you may realize that you need to address a particular aspect of behaviour with which students are struggling. For example, if you notice that there is a jump in problem behaviour in the hallways, you may decide to re-teach hallway expectations. Or, if a teacher notices a spike in problem behaviour during transitions, s/he may want to do a booster session for how to transition smoothly. Alternatively, data may tell you that there are predictable times of the year when problem behaviour spikes, such as right after spring break. These would be great times to schedule yearly booster lessons. These lessons can be fun and engaging ways to refocus on positive behaviour.

Here are some creative ideas for booster sessions:

1. Have students create posters or drawings about behavioural expectations, which can be displayed around the schools.
2. Have different classes create skits or songs to feature different expectations, which can be showcased at an assembly or parent event.
3. Have students create powerpoint presentations and 'teach' another class about expectations in a specific setting.
4. Make a quiz show! Search for quiz show templates online (such as here) to turn a questions about your specific school expectations into an exciting game.

UBC **a place of mind**
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Promising Practices is a publication of the University of British Columbia, with support from the BC Representative of Children and Youth.

Our mission is to provide educators and parents with positive approaches that have been shown to work in creating positive school environments, preventing challenging behaviour and supporting students who are at risk for challenges.

We welcome your comments and ideas for future newsletter articles at:

promisingpracticesbc@gmail.com.

Visit us on the web and sign up for future issues at:

http://promisingpractices.research.educ.ubc.ca

To find out more about PBS in BC, including examples from BC schools, free downloadable materials, and info on the Making Connections Conference, visit

http://bcpbs.wordpress.com/

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

So far, Promising Practices has focused on how to improve behaviour school–wide, for all students. But not all students will be successful with school–wide support alone, and they will need additional PBS systems and strategies to be successful. In our final issue, we'll describe the systems and strategies used in many PBS schools in BC to meet every student's needs.