# Positive Environments, Network of Trainers: Environmental Analysis Observation Tool

All behavior occurs within a context, which includes the environment. A BIP will not be effective unless it addresses the environmental factors which are contributing to the challenging behavior.

An environmental analysis gathers data and information about the student’s environment, by interview and observation, with the intent of identifying factors that contribute to the demonstration of challenging behavior. **There may be factors which are PRESENT in the environment, which lead to the demonstration of challenging behavior that need to be changed or modified. Or, there may be factors that are MISSING, which lead to the demonstration of challenging behavior, that need to be added**. Determining these factors allow the educator to identify individualized interventions, supports, or modifications which will reduce the likelihood of the student to need to engage in the challenging behavior to get their needs met.

It is important to remember that when observing the environment as part of the development of a BIP for an individual student, the intent is to identify areas of need which directly contribute to the demonstration of challenging behavior. It is not intended to identify elements of best practice which may be missing from the environment, resulting in a list of best practice recommendations which do not directly connect to the individual student’s challenging behavior.

When conducting an environmental analysis, the observer must additionally consider known antecedents and the function of the behavior, as these factors cannot be separated out. What environmental modifications connected to the known antecedents could be implemented to support demonstration of positive behavior? Additionally, considering the function of behavior is essential, as the recommendations should also connect directly to the function. Considering the antecedents and function(s) will ensure that the strategies identified are directly connected to the challenging behavior and/or demonstration of positive behavior, rather than general best practice recommendations.

The examples given below are not exhaustive and should not limit the recommendations made. The observer should utilize the Observation Tool as a starting point and use professional expertise to address additional areas of need or concern. Additionally, it is important to note that not all sections may have information filled in. The observer should utilize the sections which directly connect to the student’s challenging behavior, known antecedents, and hypothesized function.

Environmental Analysis Observation Tool

Positive Environments, Network of Trainers (PENT)

February 2020

## Description of Student Challenging Behavior

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Behavior of Concern:** | [define student’s challenging behavior] |
| **Known Antecedents:** | [define known antecedents] |
| **Hypothesized Function:** | [define hypothesized function] |

## Environmental Analysis Observation Tool

### Structure and Predictability

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| The more predictable a situation is for a student, the less likely they will be to engage in challenging behavior. Positive behavior is supported by knowing what is expected, how and things will happen, and predictable routines as this promotes more time on task, positive interactions, and attentive behavior. There will be less of a need to engage in challenging behavior to access or escape specific situations, because they have a clearer idea of what is going to occur throughout the day. |

#### Physical Structure and Setting: How does the physical environment support the student?

| **Physical Structure Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Is it clear where instruction occurs, where to get materials? * How are sensory differences accounted for? (e.g., overcrowding, space, noise level, lighting, etc.) * Does the presence or absence of an adult or supervision impact student behavior in a positive or negative way? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Clear Expectations: How does the student know what is expected of them?

| **Clear Expectations Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Expectations for desired behavior, participation, and engagement are clearly communicated to the student. * Expectations are posted, taught, reviewed, monitored, and reinforced throughout the school year. * Are there prompts and pre-corrects provided to the student, to support positive behavior?   Are visual supports utilized (as appropriate)? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Routines: How do the classroom routines support student engagement and participation?

| **Routines Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Transitions between activities are smooth and practiced. Student understands what to do. * Student understands when breaks and time with reinforcers will occur.   When there are changes to the scheduled routine, how is this communicated? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Scheduling Factors: How does the schedule support student understanding and participation?

| **Scheduling Factors Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Is there a posted schedule for the whole class, and/or individual student schedules? Are these schedules referenced and followed throughout the day? * Is there enough time allotted on schedule for activities? Is there a mismatch between time designated for activities and actual time for the student to work on activities? Is there adequate time built in for transitions between activities?   How are schedule changes communicated? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

### Active Engagement

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| When students are engaged and participating in their learning, they are more likely to demonstrate positive, on task behavior and less likely to engage in challenging behavior. Several components can support active engagement, including purposeful scheduling, student participation in learning activities, teacher/student and student/student interactions. |

#### Degree of Participation: How is the student able to participate in instruction?

| **Degree of Participation Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Are a variety of instructional methodologies utilized, and do any seem to impact the student’s behavior in a positive or negative way? (e.g., small group, large group, 1:1 instruction, independent work, free time, social opportunities) * Is downtime limited? * Are there frequent opportunities for the student to respond and participate? (expanded further in *Opportunities to Respond*) | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Opportunities to Respond: How does the student interact and engage during instruction? Are response styles individualized to the student?

| **Opportunities to Respond Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Is the student able to respond and participate during instruction? (expanded in *Individualized Supports*) * Possible response styles: erasable white boards, response cards, choral responding, guided notes, visuals. * Are there frequent checks for understanding during instruction? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Degree of Socialization: How does the student interact with adults and peers?

| **Degree of Socialization Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * How does the teacher interact with the student? Consider the frequency, quality, positive to corrective feedback, etc. * How does the student interact with other students? Is there opportunity for interaction during group work, social opportunity, etc.? What is the frequency and quality of interaction? * If needed, are individualized language supports available to support communication and interaction? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Degree of Choice​: What opportunities for choice are available to the student?

| **Degree of Choice Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Instruction (e.g., choices of: what work, how much work, etc.) * Response style (e.g., choices of: paper/ pencil, type, verbal, etc.) * Reinforcement (e.g., choices of: reinforcer when earned, amount of time, etc.) | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

### Degree of Independence

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| When a learning environment includes the instructional components needed to maximize student independence, this allows for greater levels of engagement and active participation, which leads to less opportunities for demonstration of challenging behavior. To allow for this level of independence in participation, it is likely that the student will require individualized supports, some of which are described below. |

#### Instructional Curriculum and Activities: How is the student able to engage with the curriculum, activities, and materials?

| **Instructional Curriculum and Activities Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Is there a match or mismatch between the student’s ability and the curriculum? Is it developmentally appropriate? * Can the student engage with the activities with minimal support? * Are accommodations or modifications in place to allow the student to access the curriculum? | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Instructional Strategies: How do the instructional strategies used support the student’s independence?

| **Instructional Strategies Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Are a variety of strategies utilized? (e.g., visual supports, behavioral momentum, reinforcement, etc.) * If prompting is used, are physical prompts used sparingly? (If not, consider if curriculum is mismatched to ability level) | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

#### Individualized Supports: If appropriate, are individualized supports available and used with the student?

| **Individualized Supports Considerations:** | **What was observed?** | **What is PRESENT or MISSING?** | **How does this effect the student?** | **Recommended Change**  **(fill out with teacher)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Communication systems or language supports * Individualized reinforcer systems (e.g., student receives more frequent reinforcement based on demonstration of desired behavior) | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** | **1.**  **2.** |

## Recommendations for Supports, Strategies, Modifications

After the Environmental Analysis is completed, it is recommended that top areas of need are identified and for the team to collaborate to identify solutions, supports, and recommendations to support the student’s positive behavior in those key areas. Such collaboration, along with action planning on how to implement the recommendations, is likely to increase successful implementation and follow-through of the recommendations.

### Identification of Top Areas of Need

Identify the top areas that are believed to have the most impact on supporting the student’s positive behavior. These areas can be targeted with interventions and supports and/or included in the student’s BIP.

**Area One**:

**Area Two**:

**Area Three**:

### Collaboration with Implementor(s) to Identify Solutions

Utilize this tool to collaborate with the BIP implementors (e.g., classroom teacher(s), school staff, etc.) Discuss the top areas of need for the student, explaining why these areas are recommended to target for change. Ask what they think they could do to support the student differently, to reduce the likelihood the student would need to use the challenging behavior and increase the likelihood that they would use more desirable behavior.

**Area One**:

**Area Two**:

**Area Three:**

## Resources and References

1. Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., & Sugai, G. (2008). Evidence-based Practices in Classroom Management: Considerations for Research to Practice. *Education & Treatment of Children (ETC)*, *31*(3), 351–380
2. Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). Applied Behavior Analysis (2nd Edition) (2nd ed.). Pearson.
3. Heron, T., & Heward, W. (1988). Ecological Assessment: Implications for Teachers of Learning Disabled Students. Learning Disability Quarterly, 11(3), 224-232.
4. Fovel, J. (2018, October 12). Ecological Assessment For Successful School Inclusion Settings. Retrieved January 19, 2021, from https://blog.difflearn.com/2016/11/03/ecological-assessment-successful-school-inclusion-settings/