Behavior is Language:
Strategies for Managing Disruptive Behavior

Introduction
Welcome to Behavior is Language, an interactive distance learning course, designed to give you a new perspective on student behavior and effective tools for facilitating positive student change. Behavior is Language provides a developmental framework for understanding what students are trying to tell you through the “language” of their behavior. The course teaches behavioral techniques and intervention strategies that remediate disruptive behaviors, reduce power struggles while increasing classroom control and reduce your workloads and burnout. This program helps you, as well as students, find creative, effective solutions to behavioral problems.

After you have completed your studies in the chapters on behavioral theory and interventions, you will be presented with various classroom scenarios in which you will be able to practice and hone your skills for interpreting behavior, determining appropriate interventions and effectively debriefing your students.

Although all of the course content presented in this course can be applied to any person of any age or ability level, some of the intervention strategies require that a certain level of intellectual and verbal skill be possessed by the students if they are to complete verbal and written debriefs. Debriefs will need to be adjusted for younger or less skilled individuals.

Course Materials (Online)
Title: Behavior is Language: Strategies for Managing Disruptive Behavior
Author: Mick Jackson MS/ED, Mark Trullinger MS/ED, Francine Salkin RCSW
Publisher: Virtual Education Software, inc. 1995, Revised 2004, Revised 2010, Revised 2013
Instructor Name: Dr. A.N. (Bob) Pillay
Facilitator: Mick R. Jackson MS/ED

Academic Integrity Statement
The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work
Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student’s own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one’s own work is unacceptable.

Aiding Honesty in Others
The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly. *Violations of these academic standards will result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.*

Level of Application
This course is designed to be an informational course with application to work or work-related settings. The intervention strategies are designed to be used in the remediation of behavioral problems with students ranging in age from approximately 10 to 18 years. Some alterations may be needed if you are working with younger children.

Course Objectives
- To enhance your skills in working with problem students
- To improve your ability to identify and understand underlying emotional issues
- To heighten your understanding of the problems underlying many difficult behaviors
- To increase the number of intervention strategies available to remediate disruptive behaviors
- To help you develop classroom management skills while reducing classroom stress
- To provide you with tools that can help reduce power struggles in the classroom
- To help you significantly reduce feelings of ineffectiveness and burnout resulting from difficult and disruptive student behaviors

Course Description
The course, *Behavior is Language*, has been divided into four chapters. The first two chapters, *Behavior is Language (BIL)* Parts I & II, explain why we choose to view student behavior as a kind of unspoken language. These two chapters provide a framework for understanding why certain students react to teachers, aides, peers and society in such dysfunctional, disruptive behavioral patterns. There are twenty subject areas, which are sequential and should be completed in the order in which they are presented in the program. After completing these twenty areas you should have the *basic* framework for understanding what causes the dysfunctional patterns that lead to the majority of students' behavioral problems in the classroom and other school settings. This information is not designed to be the total encyclopedia of aberrant student behavior. To cover all areas and issues affecting students' behavior would take hundreds of hours of research. However, these chapters should give you a firm grasp on how to begin interpreting students' behavior into an understandable language.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe intervention strategies, which we refer to as “clubs.” We will present twenty intervention strategies that remediate difficult student behavior. Don't be upset if you have heard of, or even used, some of these intervention techniques before. How and when an intervention strategy is used goes a long way in determining its effectiveness. These strategies are designed to be effective when used with the new framework of understanding presented in the previous chapters. The clubs themselves are used not only to remediate behavior, but also to help you gain further insight into a student's self view and world view. Using them in the manner and style in which they are presented will take you out of many power struggle situations. It also will place ownership of problems back on the student. These intervention strategies can be used in a step-by-step manner as natural classroom consequences for disruptive behaviors or rule violations.

The exercises in chapters 3 and 4 are followed by scenarios. In the scenarios you are introduced to 15 students with various backgrounds, emotional issues and behavioral problems. Various classroom, school and social situations will be presented to you, and it will be your job to determine which intervention strategy would be most effective in remediating that particular student's behavior. You will notice that some of the scenarios are similar, but the students involved are different. This has been done to illustrate the point that the same behaviors may need to be handled in different ways. A student's background, behavioral history and current situation all play a role in behavioral intervention and remediation.

First there are practice scenarios, followed by graded scenarios. Chapters 3 and 4 require that you pass the graded scenarios with a score of 70% or higher before you can access the exam for that chapter.

After completing each chapter you will be required to take an examination.
- Complete all information chapters covering *Behavior is Language*, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete all chapter exams covering *Behavior is Language*, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete classroom scenarios, showing a minimum mastery of 70% on course content.
- Complete final examination showing minimal mastery of course content.
- Complete a review of any section on which your examination score was below 70%.
- Retake any examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 70% (maximum of three attempts). *Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.*
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

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**Chapter Topics**

**Chapter 1: Behavior is Language! – Part I**

1. Behavior Is Meaningful -- What is meant by this term and why does it matter?
2. World View -- How do impaired children view their environment?
3. Self View -- What are the underlying beliefs that cause children to react in certain ways?
4. Scripting -- How do children script us into playing roles for which we are not prepared?
5. Safety Is Everything -- The key to all student intervention and change. How do you build a safe environment?
6. Building Consistency -- How do we build classroom consistency to facilitate positive student change?
7. Building Trust -- How is trust related to consistency and safety, and what is its importance to remediation?
8. Illusion of Control -- Who truly controls a student's behavior?
9. Power Struggles -- What are they and how do you avoid them?
10. Letting Go -- Can you maintain classroom control by giving more control to your students?
11. Dead End -- How do you keep out of situations that trap you into lose-lose situations?
12. Outside the Classroom -- How can you use this information in all parts of your life?
13. Personal Space -- Why do students need to be aware of their and other people’s body space?

**Chapter 2: Behavior is Language! – Part II**

1. Counter Transference -- What is it and how does it affect your work with your students?
2. Family Dynamics -- What information is important to know about the family before you attempt to remediate a student's disruptive classroom behaviors?
3. Sibling Rivalry -- How are sibling roles brought into the classroom and played out with peers?
4. Enmeshment -- How does this family dysfunction play a part in a student's classroom behavior?
5. Gathering Information -- What information is essential to gather before and during your work with a student, and where do you look for this information?
6. Avoiding the Blame Game -- How do you keep from using the family dysfunction as a scapegoat?
7. Ego Tortures -- How do we make our own job more difficult by the things we think and say to ourselves?

**Chapter 3: Intervention Strategies (CLUBS) – Part I**

1. Reminders -- What are these? How and when should they be used?
2. Interruptive Time-Out -- How can you make this strategy work more effectively?
3. Time-Out with Verbal Debrief -- When should aberrant behavior be discussed with the student?
4. Time-Out with Written Debrief -- When should a written debrief be used?
5. Quiet Room with Verbal Debrief -- What is this and what is its remedial goal?
6. Quiet Room with Written Debrief -- Why and when should verbal and written remediation be used?
7. Quiet Room with Calming Activity -- What can be done before a child acts out?
8. Floating Time-Out -- How do you make sure consequences affect the students and not you?
9. Self Time-Out -- What can a student do to monitor his/her own emotional levels?
10. Stop Action -- How can you make students accountable for classroom behavioral problems?
11. In-school Suspension -- When do you use higher-level consequences for extreme behaviors?
12. Isolation Areas -- How do you set up effective isolation areas within your classroom?

**Chapter 4: Intervention Strategies (CLUBS) – Part II**

1. Silent Observer -- How can a student participate in key classes or activities, even when receiving a consequence for disruptive behavior?
2. Natural Consequences -- How do we set consequences so they closely match the negative behavior?
3. Symbolic Consequences -- How can you assign consequences that will be meaningful to the student, even when restricted by your environment?
4. Support Groups -- How do you use the peer group to help support students in crisis?
5. OSS -- What behaviors constitute an out-of-school suspension; what tasks should be assigned to the student while out of school; and how should the student re-enter the classroom?
6. Consequence Ladder -- How do you individualize your classroom remediation and discipline strategies to meet the needs of the individual student?
7. Grandma's Rule -- What is it and why is it important in the classroom setting?
8. Individual Program Adjustment -- When and how do you adjust a student's regular program to meet his/her needs when in crisis?
9. Attunement/Claiming -- Why is it important that a student feel claimed in your classroom and how do you help a student attune to your program?
10. Working Harder -- Do we need to do more as teachers to get better?

**Practice Section Scenarios**

A set of classroom scenarios will be presented after you complete chapter 3 and after you complete chapter 4. The scenarios will ask you questions about various student behaviors and how you would deal with those behaviors in a classroom setting. Feedback on your answers will be given to you after each scenario.

The sequence for chapters 3 and 4 is the same. You must read the chapter, complete the practice scenarios and then take the graded scenarios. Once you have achieved a minimum score of 70% on the graded scenarios, you may continue on to the chapter exam. If you do not pass the graded scenario you may retake them. The course will track your score.

**Examinations**

At the end of each chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. Your last score will save, not the highest score. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and not allow further access. Your final grade for this course will be determined by calculating an average score of all exams. This score will be printed on your certificate (your graded scenario scores are not included in this average). As this is a self-paced computerized instruction program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam before you complete all questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

**Facilitator Description**

*Behavior is Language* was originally developed by a team of professionals with educational backgrounds in the areas of psychology, mental health, special education, behavioral intervention, and general education. Professor Mick Jackson MS/ED is a Behavior Intervention Specialist with a Master’s Degree in Special Education and a focus on behavioral theory. Professor Jackson has 15 years of combined experience in self-contained special education classrooms, resource rooms, and hospital day treatment in K-12 settings. He has developed and overseen mental health and intervention programs and has directed staff in four states. Professor Jackson has worked as a higher education adjunct faculty teaching distance courses in behavioral theory, Attention Deficit Disorder, and reading remediation for the past 18 years. Currently his courses are being offered through distance education programs with more than 75 institutions nationwide. He is the current President and Dean of Faculty for Virtual Education Software and has been working on distance course development since 1995. Please contact Professor Jackson if you have course content or examination questions.

**Instructor Description**

Dr. Bob Pillay is a doctoral-level instructor who has been teaching in the field of Special Education for the past 30 years. Dr. Pillay has received numerous national and international awards for his research in the field. He has headed boards and committees in more than five countries, including Australia, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia, to develop and strengthen special services. Dr. Pillay has extensive knowledge of special education issues in the U.S. due to his doctoral studies at the University of Louisville. He was the Founding Director of the Learning Improvement Centre, which was a training facility for teachers, and a service provider to students with learning problems. He is currently a retired Senior Lecturer and Senior Fellow in Special Education at the University of Melbourne. Please contact Professor Jackson if you have course content or examination questions.

**Contacting the Facilitator**

You may contact the facilitator by emailing Professor Jackson at mick@virtualeduc.com or calling him at 509-891-7219, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. PST. Phone messages will be answered within 24 hours. Phone conferences will
be limited to ten minutes per student, per day, given that this is a self-paced instructional program. Please do not contact the instructor about technical problems, course glitches, or other issues that involve the operation of the course.

**Technical Questions**
If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course, please try everything twice. If the problem persists please check our support pages for FAQs and known issues at [www.virtualeduc.com](http://www.virtualeduc.com) and also the Help section of your course.

If you need personal assistance then email [support@virtualeduc.com](mailto:support@virtualeduc.com) or call (509) 891-7219. When contacting technical support, please know your course version number (it is located at the bottom left side of the Welcome Screen) and your operating system, and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

**Minimum Computer Requirements**
Please refer to VESi’s website: [www.virtualeduc.com](http://www.virtualeduc.com) or contact VESi if you have further questions about the compatibility of your operating system.

Refer to the addendum regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted and how to submit your completed information. The addendum will also note any additional course assignments that you may be required to complete that are not listed in this syllabus.

**Bibliography (Suggested Readings)**


Course content is updated every three years. Due to this update timeline, some URL links may no longer be active or may have changed. Please type the title of the organization into the command line of any Internet browser search.
window and you will be able to find whether the URL link is still active or any new link to the corresponding organization's web home page.

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