Effective Classroom and Behavior Management: Best Practices for CTE Instructors

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CTSP Center's Role

The primary role of the CTSP Center is to help CTE, general education, and special education teachers, educators, paraprofessionals, administrators, and parents who are concerned with serving students with special needs in Texas. The CTSP Center disseminates resources such as books, videos, curriculum guides, multimedia learning modules, and educational opportunities to the target groups. The CTSP Center staff answers questions or solicits the responses of external experts regarding several critical issues related to serving students with special needs.

The current funding from TEA envisions the center as a special populations clearing house. One of the main requirements of the grant for the year 2011-2012 was to create multimedia training modules and support materials addressing principles and strategies of accommodating a broad range of special population student learning needs in CTE.

This website, training manual, toolbox and this website are the resulting products. The modules are developed by the Career and Technical Special Populations Training and Education Resource Center (CTSP Center) in cooperation with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and an expert consultant from Texas A&M University. We hope that our audiences find that the information enhances the services that they provide to their students with special needs.

In this module users will become familiar with:

- Classroom and behavior management techniques in CTE classrooms.
- Strategies for establishing rapport with students and their families.
- Practices while handling escalating behaviors.
Tips for Trainers and Users

1. As users peruse the material they might find certain topics are more relevant to new teachers versus more experienced teachers, for e.g. the Definitions or just the “Examples” instead of the other chapters.
2. To aid in this regard the modules are organized into chapters and users can choose to view only relevant topics.
3. We recommend the following guidelines for each module to be used at workshops.
   a. The entire site does not have to be viewed in one day.
   b. Again, consider your target audience and choose to show relevant topics.
   c. Provide worksheets to accompany module content (refer to worksheets included with the module).
   d. Include a pre and post-test to examine level of learning (refer to pre-post tests included with the module).
   e. Use evaluation surveys to provide feedback to the CTSP Center (refer to evaluation surveys provided with the module).
   f. Refer to the FAQs provided to answer participant questions. In the case of further clarification forward questions or concerns to the CTSP Center along with participant contact information so that we may address them in a timely manner.
   g. The CTSP Center will not provide professional development credits from in-service workshops. This will be the responsibility of the organizing entity.
   h. The organizing entity is responsible for all print costs associated with material distribution.
4. The online materials are available for distribution free of charge. TEA Copyright restrictions apply.
5. Direct learners to the toolbox for additional references, handouts and resources: http://ctsp.tamu.edu/videos/videos12/toolbox.php.
Chapter 1: Effective Classroom Management

Section 1: Introduction

Mahadevan: Hi my name is Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan and I’m program coordinator for the Career and Technical Special Populations Training and Research Center. Welcome to this module on classroom and behavioral management in career and technical education.

A well-managed classroom promotes appropriate student behavior and affords the teacher more time to focus on instruction. This chapter summarizes five basic elements of classroom management that are essential for all teachers and relevant for students of all ages and settings.

Section 2: Element 1
Establishing a Clear Set of Classroom Rules

Mahadevan: The first element of effective classroom management entails establishing a clear set of rules. The rules do not need to be an exhausted list of every specific behavior you may ever possibly expect. Ideally you should strive for 3-5 over arching rules. David Mohr, a resource officer and CTE instructor, talks about the importance of a limited number of rules.

David Mohr: “Rules in high school settings is very important. The thing is you don’t want to get bogged down by too many rules. You need to have a small set of rules that is consistent trough out the entire school that goes from one classroom to the next. And that the kids look to have the consistence across the board.”

Mahadevan: Rules should be worded broadly enough to cover the range of specific behaviors you expect of students in your classroom or lab setting. The wording should be age appropriate, brief, and clear. Keep in mind that you will teach students what your rules and routines entail so you need not incorporate lengthy descriptions or explanations into their wording. Finally, classroom rules should be stated affirmatively. In other words, their wording should convey what students should do rather than what they should not do.

David Mohr: “You want to have 4 or 5 rules, come to class prepared, follow your instructions, allows be respectful to each other, do your own work, and take care of your business. You know be prepared when your come in.”

Mahadevan: Students also benefit from regular schedules and routines. Ideally these should be incorporated when teaching classroom rules. Posted schedules, and visual clues in the lab setting are also helpful props to remind students of your rules and routines. Following is some additional advice offered by an experienced CTE instructor.

Erin Stutts: “And that’s something that I think Elementary teachers are really good at is practicing those routines. Elementary teachers will say ‘the first two weeks for school you’re not even teaching content. You’re teaching how to behave and how to do the routines.’ It’s not entirely true with high school. We are teaching content in those first couple weeks, but it’s routine, routine, routine. And so in the first couple weeks I will design activities that make them get up and get a book so we have to practice how to do that. Get out the crayons or this applies to whatever it is we want them to do so that they do it for the rest of the year.”
Section 3: Element 2

Teaching Behavior Expectations

Mahadevan: One of the most common mistakes that secondary teachers make is neglecting explicitly teach their behavior expectations. Telling is not teaching. And being told is not the same thing as being taught.

Christopher Fox: “Some of the procedures that I feel like I have to explicitly teach you know for instance some of the subjected words: respect. When we say respect that might mean something different for you, for me, for anybody, so I have to clearly demonstrate this is what I think of as respect. I’m the teacher, I’m the one making the rules, and this is what my standard is for respect. So I clearly demonstrate either how to answer a question properly, when some else is talking, the procedure of rules I say this is what I think of as respect that way everyone is on the same standard.”

Mahadevan: The format for teaching social behavior expectations is similar to the way an academic skill should be taught. You begin with one of your classroom expectations and provide students with a brief, age-appropriate rationale or explanation for why it is important. Your rationale should be simply worded, to the point, and convey the relevance of your rule. Next, provide students with the range of examples and non-examples of what the behavior entails.

Use a minimum of five examples and non-examples that collectively cover the range of situations in which your behavior expectation applies. Use examples that clearly depict specific situation which your students can readily identify.

The next part of your lesson includes instruction procedures that allow students to identify and practice the behaviors you are teaching. In this part of your lesson provide opportunities for students to practice and for you to assess the extent to which they understand what the behavior expectation entails. Incorporate multiple practice scenarios that require student to exhibit understanding of when and how to perform the target behavior.

In essence, each practice scenario should provide a test of the extent to which students understand the behavior expectation being taught. Avoid overly obvious scenario and questions. Instead create situations that require learners to demonstrate a thorough of the expected behavior. It is helpful to plan how you will prompt students to engage in the newly taught behavior after the lesson ends. A pre-correction is a simple statement that functions to prevent predictable problem behaviors and prompt more appropriate behaviors to occur instead.

Christopher Fox: “So I expect everyone to turn around and face the group that is presenting. I know you guys aren’t finished with that’s fine. I just need one example for each group. I’ll wait till everyone turned around….alright group 1 go ahead.”
Mahadevan: “Pre-corrections are delivered shortly before a predictable situation where problem behavior offend occurs.”

Erin Stutts: “As we go through this you need to be quite and listen because you need to be writing it down. John you are up.”

Mahadevan: Pre-corrections can be simple visual or verbal reminders or brief behavior rehearsals.

Section 4: Element 3
Acknowledging Desired Behaviors

Mahadevan: It may also be helpful to think about the feedback that you will provide students who follow rules and behavior expectations you have taught. In the beginning acknowledge and praise students frequently when they engage in desired behavior. These acknowledgments should be specific, reaffirms what the student did correctly, and may serve as a learning opportunity for other students. Note how the following CTE teachers use praise and acknowledgment to reinforce student behavior.

David Mohr: “Praise works very well; I mean everybody wants to get positive affects as far praise. When you do something good you like to hear something good.”

Christopher Fox: “I heard some really great scripts guys. Y’all are going to be great salesmen.”

David Mohr: “A lot of times you’ll have teachers where ‘I just don’t know anything positive about this kid.’ You know my instruction for them is to sit back and sometimes you have to think you are in a situation where you can’t come up with something positive then you as a teacher or educator needs to step back and look at the whole thing because everybody has something positive.”

Christopher Fox: “Some of the effective procedures I’ve used for establishing praise or reward is first and for most verbally. So many students want or need that reinforcement, they want your good jobs because sometimes that’s the only place they are going to hear it, in my classroom. I would hope that they hear it in other people’s classrooms or at their work place or at the home but I can’t assume that. I have to assume they are only hearing it in my classroom, so I make sure that I do it as much as possible.”

“I think a really effective way is as teachers we have to learn when somebody is not doing something correctly, how to still praise them in a way of ‘yes this wasn’t correct but I really like the attempt that you made. Y’s this is the wrong font that you put that I asked for, but I see that you did change it. You are one off. Your almost there keep going.’ It’s all about reinforcement and finding ways to praise students even when they may not have it a hundred percent correct.”

David Mohr: “Sometimes I’ll use like in my CJ classes I use something law enforcement. You know give them a handcuff key something that has to do with law enforcement. If you’re in a ag shop class, something along the ag line you know maybe if they’ve got a welder find out what kind of welder they’ve got and give them a part or something.”
Erin Stutts: “I don’t think it’s that different at the high school level than it is at the elementary level. And that’s something that when I first started teaching I ‘thought we would go to these conferences and they would talk about the rewards and giving kids stickers and whatever and I thought there was no way I could do that with high school students. They will think I’m ridiculous.’ High school kids would do anything for a sticker. It is the craziest thing I have ever seen especially scratch and sniff stickers. Like senior football player boys they would do anything for a sticker. So that is something sometimes I’ll do. I’ll pull it out when they are least expecting it. ‘Hey that was a really great answer (I’ll make it cheesy) that was a really great answer you deserve a sticker for that’ and then I’ll go get a sticker out and make a big deal about it and all of a sudden all the other kids are like ‘I want a sticker.’ And they look like adults and they are doing anything for a sticker.”

“I do occasionally call home and say ‘hey I’m just really happy to have so and so in my class. She makes me smile every day, I really appreciate her.’ I think my students respond well to just a personal relationship with me, so just positive praise from me appreciating the work that they’re doing. Sometimes I’ll stop them in the hallways later and reflect on something that they did in class.”

Christopher Fox: “I definitely think some of the verbal praise or outside recognition really changes their behavior. I have some students who it seems like you know once I make the initial ‘oh this is a great job or good attempt’ then it kind of sparks something inside and then they start going ‘well…..’ I kind of see the gears grinding ‘I almost had it, I’m going to try a little harder next time.’”

Section 5: Element 4
Responding to Problem Behaviors

Mahadevan: Students exhibit behavior both good and bad for a reason. It is important to consider the purpose or function student’s problem behaviors when determining an effective response. Individuals will continue to engage in behaviors that result in getting something they want or need. For example, some students will engage in problem behaviors to escape or avoid academic demands. Others may engage in problem behavior to obtain teacher or peer attention. Still others may exhibit problem behaviors because they ultimately gain access to a place or activity they desire. Understanding the function of student problem behaviors serves allows you to generate a response more likely to decrease the problem behavior without indeliverable reinforcing it.

Another approach for decreasing a problem behavior is redirection. A redirection is a statement made right after a problem behavior that entails directing the student’s attention or behavior to another situation. Redirection interrupts undesirable behavior drawing adverse attention to it, by prompting the student to engage in a different behavior. When the student engages in the different the problem decreases or stops. Punishment is an aversive event that happens after problem behavior and reduces future occurrences of that behavior. Punishment should be reserved for behaviors that a dangerous, highly disruptive, or persist despite other inventions. The following questions should be carefully considered before punishing a student.
First, are rules and procedures clear, and have they been taught? Remember telling is not teaching. Second, do the classroom climate and teacher-student interactions create a respectful, positive learning environment? Third, has the function of the problem behavior been considered? Fourth, has the student received consistent praise and reinforcement for appropriate behaviors? Fifth, are the curricula and instructional methods appropriate for the student’s learning needs? Sixth, is the student actively and successfully engaged in meaningful learning tasks most of the time? Seventh, has the student been directly taught appropriate social and communication skills? And finally the eighth, have all of these interventions been applied correctly and consistently?

Section 6: Element 5
Monitoring and Making Data-Based Decisions

Mahadevan: The final element of effective classroom management involves procedures for monitoring student behavior. Sometimes you need objective data to determine whether a specific behavior is changing or improving. Operational defining the behavior of interest entails articulating it in observable terms so that it can be measured objectively. Data about specific social behaviors and or academic performance allows for better decision making and can indicate whether an intervention is working or the types of adjustment that may need to be made.

Formative progress data are essential for determining a student’s response to intervention. Moreover, formative progress data can reveal whether a student receiving special education services is on track to meet his or her individualized education goals. In essence, successfully managing student behavior entails establishing a small number of rules that are applicable across a range situation and systematically taught, much like you would teach an academic skill.

Students also need feedback about the extent to which they meet your behavior expectations. In the beginning, acknowledge and praise desired behaviors frequently. When responding to problem behaviors that persist after you’ve taught and reinforced appropriate behaviors consider the function of the problem behavior, and respond in a manner that does not inadvertently reinforce it. Remember that punishment should be reserved for behaviors that are dangerous, highly disruptive, or that persist despite other interventions.

Finally, it may be necessary to formatively monitor a student’s behavior to determine whether he or she is adequately responding to intervention and making progress to individualized education goals.

Chapter 2: Building Rapport with Student and Families

Section 1: Introduction

Mahadevan: Establishing a positive rapport for students offers many benefits that enhance effective classroom management. A positive teacher-student rapport is also associated with better grades and achievement test performance, fewer behavior problems, and increased social competence. Moreover, strong teacher-student relationships lead to better school adjustment and help develop resilience to certain risk factors. So how do you establish rapport with students?
Erin Stutts: “Rapport is unbelievably important. And again I think that teachers overlook the importance of that. We go to training after training and they say you’ve got to develop relationships; you’ve got to develop relationships. And I hear teachers say that’s great but I don’t know how, I don’t know how to develop relationships. So for me it starts with greeting them at the door and making that personal connection with them every single day. And I explain at the beginning of the year that I think that we have a lot of student that go through the day without ever communicating with an adult in their building. You know the quite kid who sits in class who doesn’t really cause problems and that’s shame. I want them to communicate with me every day.”

Mahadevan: Begin by modeling courteous behavior.

Erin Stutts: “As in the tertiary color red-orange. Thank you Jasmine for using that vocabulary.”

Christopher Fox: “Yes Ma’am.”

Mahadevan: Be sure to praise your students frequently and genuinely.

Christopher Fox: “Heard some really great scripts guys. Y’all are going to be great salesmen.”

Mahadevan: Ensure that your students experience academic and behavioral success in your classroom. Set high but reasonable goals for student achievement and spend time interacting with your students. Learn and use affective listening skills, celebrate student success, comment on what students do well, always be consistent, and don’t be afraid to use humor.”

Erin Stutts: “I am not, I heard that.”

Mahadevan: Solicit student input.

Christopher Fox: “Yes as long as you tell me who it affected.”

Mahadevan: Develop class traditions.

Erin Stutts: “From the very first day we practiced, you know I stand at the door I greet each student I expect them to make eye contact, to shake my hand. When they don’t do that or when they try to slip by which is kind of a fun game sometimes for them to try and slip by. Then they come on back and make the eye contact, I’ll hold their hand until they look at me and then they go in the room. So they know day after day that’s how it is every day.”

Mahadevan: Truly get to know your students and use positive and caring language when you talk about your students.

Section 2: Soliciting Parent Input

Mahadevan: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates family involvement. Parental involvement can increase the effectiveness of school programming by improving student grades, increasing school attendance, and decreasing challenging behavior.

David Mohr: “In establishing rapport with parents it’s very important to try not to start that rapport when there is a problem, you want to start it way beforehand. The first days of school, the days before you even get kids look at your class roles see the ones you already have rapport with. Start contacting them start getting the ones that you don’t have rapport with. Talk with them after school if you can find
them out there, get out of class and when the bell rings in the afternoon just go out there and work the field out there in the parking lot. Go out to the busses be apart out there even if it is not your day for duty.”

Mahadevan: Specifically instructors should communicate with families in order to solicit help and ideas when developing an intervention plan. Use informal settings and ensure that they feel welcome.

David Mohr: “Get out of your room at the end of school; go out to the parking lot start meeting parents. Go to athletic events.”

Mahadevan: Provide regular feedback on academic and behavior performance. Solicit information about changes at home that may be affecting the student’s behavior at school. Inform parents about disciplinary decisions and especially to celebrate a student’s progress and accomplishments.”

David Mohr: “The advice for parents to help their students in school is to have a two-way communication. Don’t just have the communication coming from school going to the house; have the house coming to the school also. And not just in times of crisis but in good times to where you have that good rapport with those parents. And they know if they have a problem they can come to you, and they know if they have a kudo they can come to you. And the positive effect it is just unreal of how good it is because those parents will start emulating you as you are giving the positive back and forth.”

Section 3: Communication with Families

Mahadevan: When communicating with families always begin with something positive about the student. This could be describing an area where the student is doing well or something you enjoy about the child.

Erin Stutts: “I do occasionally call home and say ‘hey I’m just really happy to have so and so in my class. She makes me smile every day, I really appreciate her.’”

Mahadevan: Next clearly identify the specific problem or concern. It will be helpful if you figure out how you articulate this before you call the family. Additionally, when serious problems need to be discussed schedule a phone conference or a face to face meeting.

David Mohr: “The biggest thing I can say about establishing rapport and you’re having trouble contacting a parent - don’t give up. I mean there is a kid in that class that is counting on you to establish that rapport and as I said earlier you are always looking to find something good with those kids like capturing kid’s hearts. You know if you can’t be at the door to greet them when they are in and you’re getting ready, everybody’s crushed for time just try to say something good to them. And if you see that kid tell them ‘Oh I was trying to get ahold of mom or dad last night and just watch them they’re just like ‘oh god’ And no I want to tell them something good, you did really good today and I want to tell them. They will be more than happy to help you get in contact with them. Give them a card; give them a note whatever and those kids will deliver those notes for you.”

Christopher Fox: “Ninety-nine percent of the communication parents get from school is negative. And it so and so didn’t turn in their work or I’m having trouble with behavioral issues. I have a notebook where I checkout, and I try to do six students a week, where I just call their parents. If I’m having an issue I’ll just address it then but sometimes it is just hey I want you to know that Shelby is doing a great
job in my class, she turn in all her work, she an excellent student. I know most of the time when you’re getting a call from your school it’s not going to be something positive so I’m really trying to change that image of communication from school. And just want to let you know farther than who I am if you have any questions or comments please feel free and don’t hesitate to contact me.”

Mahadevan: It is necessary that when communicating with families we talk about problems in such a way that conveys that they can be fixed. Effective strategies for this providing an idea or brief plan for how you think the situation would be improved or resolved. Or creating a plan in collaboration with the parent or guardian for fixing the problem and using language such as ‘I need your help’ or ‘what do you think I could do?’

Erin Stutts: “I also think that parents sometimes react, especially if your calling with bad news, they react in ways that we’ve described it before as the grief cycle you know when their dream has died. Their dream for their child all of a sudden has died because their child had made a 32 on a test or whatever it is. That they initially it’s that shock and denial and that’s often how parents initially react but then they come around. So just being prepared for that, that initially they may say ‘are you sure’ they may deny it they may react, but staying calm when you are on the phone with the parent or in person with the parent and they talk about how to remedy the situation. Not just your child did this but here’s what’s going on, I wanted you to know, and here’s what we’re going to do about it. Approaching it with a plan is really important.”

Mahadevan: Documenting your communication with families is the best practice that we recommend to all CTE instructors. Always have a record of your interactions with families. Your documentation need not record every detail but should allow you to recall the data, purpose, and main ideas that were discussed. This information can be recorded on paper or in an electronic document. Many teachers find it efficient to create a contact log for summarizing their communications with families. An example of such a log can be found in our toolbox. To maintain confidentiality choose your written word carefully and insure that your documentation is kept in a safe place.

Section 4: Conclusion

Mahadevan: Establishing rapports serves many useful purposes that are well documented by research. While the naturally interactive environment of CTE classrooms enable us to establish and maintain rapport with students it is our hope that you have gained farther insight into how to do this with families and insure mutual benefit for all concerned.

Chapter 3: Understanding and Managing Escalating Behavior

Section 1: Introduction

Mahadevan: Dealing with a student whose problem behaviors have escalated can be challenging. In this chapter we will help you understand what a student is experiencing during each phase of an escalation cycle which in turn will enable you to know when and how to intervene. This chapter is based on the following assumptions.

- First human behavior is learned. Although we are each born with unique personalities and predispositions much of the way we behave and interact with other is learned.
- Human behavior is also predictable. If you observe someone in their natural environment long enough you can often identify situation events that trigger certain behaviors as well as what happens afterward that makes those behaviors more likely to reoccur in the future.
Behaviors can escalate through a series of successive interactions. In other words a student whose behavior escalates to extreme levels usually experiences a series of aversive events along the way. Finally, behaviors can be changed by using an instructional approach. As teachers there is much that we can do to help students learn how to get their needs meet while engaging in more appropriate behaviors.

The purposes of this chapter are therefore to:
1. Provide an overview of the escalating behavior cycle and examples for each of its phases.
2. To summarize evidence-based strategies that highlight what CTE instructors should do (or not do) during each phase of a behavior escalation, and
3. To identify the optimal times for intervening with a student whose problem behaviors are escalating.

David Mohr: “When a student is out of control the CTE teacher should not engage them. They need to be real careful about a person’s personal space and understand that we don’t want to find out what their personal space is when they are in crisis. That is something that the CTE teacher should know across the board on each student what their personal space is. Be able to read their body language and determine… now on a good time I can be within a foot or two to this person, in a bad time I need to keep about three or four feet away. And watch how that person is going to react because we don’t want people coming up on us like that we shouldn’t do it to other people and other students especially because it’s all about saving face and giving them a reasonable and honorable way out.”

**Section 2: The Escalating Behavior Cycle - Phase 1 – Calm**

“So what do we mean by an escalating behavior cycle? Geoff Colvin and George Sugai have illustrated the phases of escalating behavior using a graphic.

Mahadevan: Prior to an escalation, the student is relatively calm and cooperative. He or she is likely to follow teacher directions, accept corrective feedback, and set personal goals. The student is also able to ignore minor distractions and will generally respond well to praise. For those students who tend to escalate from time to time, the optimal time to intervene is before they have an escalation.
While the student is calm the CTE instructor can focus on prevention. Be sure to reiterate your classroom behavior expectations and teach social skills including problem solving and self-management procedures. The calm phase is also a time to reflect. Try to identify potential triggers that initiate the escalation cycle and determine the purpose of functions that a student’s problem behavior serves. Consider the student’s academic and behavioral learning history and take advantage of this stage to arrange for high rates of successful academic and social engagements and high levels of positive reinforcement.”

**Section 3: Phase 2 – Trigger**

*Mahadevan:* Escalations can be triggered after a series of unresolved conflicts. The student may experience repeated failures, frequent corrections, interpersonal clashes, pressure in using time lines, and low rates of positive reinforcement.
Student: “I did some work and I turned it in and she cannot find that work. And this work is really long, it’s two-three pages and it takes a while and she lost it and it’s for a grade and the six weeks end really quick. And I’m not the kind of guy that redo work and it really makes me mad when it’s not my responsibility to keep up with it when I turn it in, it’s the teachers and she loses it.”

Student: “Like they nitpick and it gets on my nerves so I just go off on them.”

Erin Stutts: “Sometimes they feed off each other you know and they’re looking for that audience and they’re looking to show off in front of the other class. So if I give them that opportunity, if I’m going to argue back they are going to flare up even bigger.”

Mahadevan: During the trigger phase it is necessary to increase the student’s opportunities for success and reinforce the pro social behaviors that have been previously taught. Intervention efforts should focus on prevention and redirection. Give particular consideration to the function of the problem behavior when planning and implementing an appropriate response. It may be helpful to temporarily remove the student from or modify the problem context.

Christopher Fox: “One of the strategies I use to reduce behavioral problems is first try to remove them from the situation. I think a lot of problems can be solved by getting the student out of either a certain area or situation. Cause a lot of times they are either feeding off the student next to them or distracting the student around them. If I am able to pull them to another area of the room where they are not so disgraceful or give them preferential seating or somewhere close to me where I can keep a closer eye on them. I think that will helps tremendously. Sometimes it’s all about location for students.”

Section 4: Phase 3 – Agitation

Mahadevan: As a student enters the agitation phase you will typical see more unfocused behavior characterized by frequent starting and stopping of tasks. Some students may be out of seat and talking with others, while others may socially withdrawal as they become more agitated.
Student: “I can’t stand to listen to her. I just turn the other way and just try to block her voice out. That’s just how I respond.”

Student: “Basically not want to do anything, just makes me want to seat there and not do my work.”

David Mohr: “Seen some of them that will take their coat sleeve and put them inside. I’ve seen some that will take and start balling their fists, they’ll become fidgety. Um they’ll instead of engaging you eye to eye they will start looking away. They’re looking for that escape route to try to get themselves away from it. And most people in class you’re going establish that norm on a good day and you need to be aware of that norm looks like so that when something starts going away from that, that you start to notice something’s awry.”

Mahadevan: During this stage the intervention should be focused on reducing anxiety. You need to carefully consider the function of the problem behavior when determining a course of action. It may be necessary to make structural and environmental modifications. You should also provide the student with reasonable options and choices, and encourage him or her to be involved in successful social engagements.
Student: “I would say try to watch their body language and see what they need and ask them ‘do you need to calm down? Or do you want to stop working for a little bit to calm down? Or get a drink of water; see what we can do for you?’”

Student: “Well they can try to talk to me, I mean I like that, for them to try and figure out what’s wrong and calm me down.”

Christopher Fox: “There’s times where I think ‘is it going to escalate? Are they going to blow their top? What’s going on?’ um and I feel that the best way to handle this of course is preemptive strategies. Rather than me sitting back and going ‘ok it probably needs to cool down you know at his chair’ I need to remove him from the situation. I would pull him up to my desk, step outside say ‘hey listen you don’t have to tell me what’s going on if you want to you could absolutely tell me, but I’ve noticed that you’ve got something going on today, I know you’re not yourself. Um I have an office next door if you want to sit out here in the hall, cool down five-ten minutes take your time. I can see you are angry and I just want to remove you from the classroom. If you’d like to sit here and talk to me about it feel free but if you don’t I completely understand.’ So I’ve removed them from the situation, I’ve given them time to cool down, he’s out there by himself, he’s thinking over his thoughts, when he’s ready to step back in my classroom he can come back in.”

Erin Stutts: “You know so if it’s escalating I’m not going to play that game, I’m not fifteen I’m the adult, and so if it is I need you to step out of the room just a minute to cool off. And often they think they are in trouble, and I’ll say you not in trouble why don’t you just go get a drink of water real quick and come back.”

David Mohr: “Somebody brings some luggage from home that day that you have seen they have had a bad time, that’s the time when as they are walking in the class just quietly ask is everything ok? Or if you need something come to me. Or if you need something just pass me a note. There’s lots of times if I have a kid that having a crisis time or if something has happened at home, all you have to do is just hand me a note and then I know their having a problem and we’ll find them a place where they could go that’s quite.”

Christopher Fox: “Then I know to say to the student ‘listen I understand, I know you are frustrated, you have a right to be frustrated. You know you’ve been written up and I know that makes you angry but let’s calm down, realize that there some stuff that you… if want to talk about it go talk to the teacher, talk at home to parents, you know you are going to get to talk to the principles and over this. Your voice is going to be heard. I just want you to know I do understand why you are frustrated.”

Section 5: Phase 4 – Acceleration

Mahadevan: If efforts to reduce anxiety and resolve conflicts are unsuccessful the student will begin to accelerate. During this phase the student’s problem behaviors will sharpen and focus. Her actions may be provocative, highly intensive, and may be perceived as threatening and personal in nature.
Student: “Well when they engage me verbally I am still in that mood and so like I just go off on them even if it’s not the teacher who put me that way.”

Student: “I get more madder and madder and I just don’t care, and I just start saying stuff that I regret when I calm down.”

“Saying stuff to the teacher?” Student: “Everybody, everything and not just one person it is everybody.”

Mahadevan: During the acceleration phase your intervention efforts should shift to a focus on safety. Remember escalations and self-control are inversely related and at this point the escalation is likely to run its course. You should remove all triggers and factors that may be reinforcing or maintaining your student’s behavior. Follow crisis prevention and intervention procedures. It is important to establish and follow through with the bottom line and then disengage from the student.

David Mohr: “The worst thing you can do in a disciplinary crisis in your classroom is to escalate with the crisis. What you need to do is remain calm and try to use different technics to deescalate. A lot of my kids that I deal with that are having escalation issues, we have a safety plan in effect to where prior to the issue they know that they either have a red card. Some of them may just have it where they take their hat off or they make some type of a motion to the teacher and the teacher already knows that this thing is going south and they have a safe place to go.”

“If you as a student have a red card you’d have it and all you have to do is lift it up or go set it on the teacher’s desk or something as simple as that. Or it may be something as simple as pen and waving it back and forth and that teacher knows that’s the cue where he, that student needs to leave out for a little bit. The lighter the cue the better, that way the rest of the kids are not catching on to it and that student and that teacher know what’s going on and they quietly go out, they know what room that kids supposed to go to.”
Section 6: Phase 5 – Peak

Mahadevan: At the top of the escalation model is the peak stage. During this phase this phase, the student is often out of control and does not favorably respond to directions or attempts to reason with him or her. Problem behaviors are at their worst and often characterized by their extreme verbal aggression, physical aggression, property destruction, self-injury.

Student: “I tend to get very aggressive and go fight everybody I see and anyone I see.”

Student: “Everything goes black and I don’t know what I’m doing. I just flip.”

Mahadevan: Intervention efforts should continue to focus on safety. Ensure that any triggers and factors that may be reinforcing the student’s behaviors are removed. Follow crisis prevention and intervention procedures. During the peak phase do not further escalate the student with verbal confrontations.

Christopher Fox: “If I can’t even get them to talk to me or go outside in the hall, I have to make sure he is away from other students. My first priority is safety for my students. And so if I see a situation that is about to escalate I need to take control of that somehow.”

Erin Stutts: “If it’s a situation where two kids are escalating with each other and they are not listening to your instructions, to sit down, to calm down at that point it is time to possibly call for help, to get a neighboring teacher, to call for the principle to come in. We’ve had a couple of situations on campus where it has gotten to a fight in a classroom and at that point it is defiantly, obviously call for the principal. I would say 99 percent of the time it is something outside of class that happened. And I think for new teachers especially, to learn to not take behavior personally can be a challenge. You know when I first started teaching if a child misbehaved I felt like ‘oh they didn’t like me, they didn’t behave in class’ and it’s not that at all. I don’t think it’s personal at all. So once you can learn to remove yourself and your own feeling from the situation, you can handle it much better.”
Section 7: Phase 6 - Deceleration

Mahadevan: Once the problem behaviors have peaked, they begin to decelerate. During this phase the student may appear confused or somewhat disoriented, but the severity of the problem behaviors will decrease. She may socially withdraw, engage in denial by blaming others or attempting to minimize the problem.

Student: “I just count to twenty and I keep doing it over and over and over and over again till I’m finally calm. Or I have to get away from everybody and I go like to a room or to the restroom and I just chill off.”

Mahadevan: During the deceleration phase intervention efforts should entail eliminating any excess attention. Do not nag, avoid blaming or forcing an apology, consider the function of the student’s problem behaviors and emphasize on starting anew.

Christopher Fox: “If that student is so upset and won’t talk, at least knowing that someone understands she’ll be ten times more likely to at least breathe that sigh of relief, calm down, and realized there is other stuff she could do about it and this is probably not the time or place to do it.”

Section 8: Phase 7 - Recovery

Mahadevan: At the end of a behavior escalation is a recovery phase. During this phase, the student may focus on tasks that require minimal social engagement and interaction with others and may make attempts to correct the problem. The student may be hesitate or unwilling to participate in group activities with peers.
Student: “I tend to go back to class and try to get my work done so I don’t fail that class or do anything wrong to hurt my grade.”

Student: “I usually go back to working because I know I have to make those grades. I have to get back on track with my work.”

Mahadevan: During the recovery phase the instructor should focus on re-establishing routines and activities. It is also important to positively reinforce any attempt a student makes to exhibit appropriate behaviors. The recovery phase is the time to follow through with any pre-established consequences for problem behavior.

It is also important to debrief with the student during the recovery. This should occur after any consequences for problem behavior has been assigned. It is imperative to remember that the purpose of debriefing is to facilitate the student’s transition back into the normal class or lab routines and not to nag or impose further negative sanctions.

David Mohr: “When a child finishes an event you want them back in the classroom for sure because that’s where the instruction is and that’s where they need to be. The time to debrief and everything is not in front of the rest of the students. Have something with that student to know that as class is over with that you don’t make a big deal out of it. ‘Hey I need you to spend the next few minutes with me after school; everybody needs to leave out of here.’ That’s embarrassing to a lot of students, you want to minimize the embarrassment because they’ve already had an escalation and you are trying to minimize that as much as possible and turn a negative into a positive.”

Mahadevan: As you debrief with the student it can be helpful to have him respond to a series of questions such as,

- What did I do?
- Why did I do it?
- What could I have done instead?
- What do I have to do next?, and,
- Can I do it?

**Section 9: Identify Opportunities to Intervene and Additional Resources**

*Mahadevan:* To summarize, there are four optimal times during an escalation when an instructor can effectively intervene. Prior to the escalation; during the calm phase; after a potential trigger; while the student is agitated; and finally during recovery.

*David Mohr:* “Sometimes teachers just need to realize that what they are doing is not necessarily the wrong thing it’s just at the wrong time.”

*Mahadevan:* It is also important to be aware of environmental factors that can be manipulated during an escalation. Prior to the next occurrence of an escalation identify replacement behaviors that serve a similar purpose as a student’s problem behaviors and can be taught in advance. Finally, become familiar with external resources that may be able to assist you during an escalation.”
Erin Stutts: “On our campus we have a student success coordinator who works with our at risk students. And so she’s a huge resource on helping with student behaviors. Calling home and asking parents too, is another big resource. Here’s what I’m seeing, what have the teachers done in the past, what has helped your child in the past and that’s a bid source of help. Asking the kid, asking the kid and saying ‘you’ve talking an awful lot while I’m talking and I really need to help you to not talk so much. What can we come up with together that would help with that.’ Also works sometimes.”

Christopher Fox: “I think an important resource that is really underutilized are the counselors and the principals. When I have a student who either has anger issues or continual behavioral issues or they’re about to escalate whatever, I know I can send I quick email to the counselors or principles. Cause they know the students, they’ve dealt with those issues several times probably. ’I have so and so, she looks like she’s having a really bad day, I don’t know what’s going on with her. Do you have any insight on or some methods that are effective you know in cooling her down.’ I send a quick email or a phone call and nine times out of ten they’ve dealt with the student and they know the best. I mean they’re counselors and principals. They know great methods for cooling them down or deescalating the situation. And um I think just that’s a completely underutilized tool that we don’t use, don’t even think about. Oh counselors, principals they probably have great experience not only with this issue but with that student as well.”

Mahadevan: Students with escalating behaviors are almost always repeat offenders and it can be difficult in the heat of the moment to know when to disengage. Geoff Colvin offers the following advice: “If you inadvertently assist a student’s escalation, do not be concerned; you will get another chance to do it right the next time around.”

Conclusion

Mahadevan: CTE teachers are tasked with managing classrooms that contain a diverse range of students with varying interests, academic skills, and behavioral needs. Incorporating essential elements of classroom management promotes a positive classroom environment in which students are much more likely to experience academic and behavioral success. Establishing positive relationships with students and families also contributes to a positive classroom environment. However, even when the most effective approaches for promoting appropriate behaviors are utilized, a small number of students may engage in problem behaviors that escalate from time to time. While responding to more severe problem behaviors can be challenging, understanding what the student is experiencing during each phase of an escalation cycle can help you know when and how to intervene.

Erin Stutts: “It’s a hard job but it totally worth it. Totally rewarding, amazing, and wonderful adventure. And it’s always something new every day, and that’s what makes this job so awesome.”
Parent/Family Contact Log

Teacher ____________

* Type of Contact: P=Phone; L=Letter; E=Email; PC=Parent Conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Type</th>
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Sample Behavior Lesson Plan

Behavior Expectation and Setting

One of our rules for lab is **be responsible**.

Rationale/Explanation for Displaying the Behavior

In this lab, we sometimes work with materials, chemicals, and tools that can be dangerous. It is important to be responsible so that everyone can learn in a safe environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Examples</th>
<th>Non-Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Com to class prepared to learn by bringing your pencil, book, and homework, ready to turn in.</td>
<td>- Forget your book at home, then coming to class and waiting until the teacher calls on you to say, “I left my book at home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Com to class prepared for a lab by wearing shoes that cover your toes, shirts that have short sleeves or rolled up sleeves, and tying hair back.</td>
<td>- Come to class wearing sandals, and when the teacher asks, saying “I forgot we have a lab today.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Put on safety goggles before starting any part of the lab.</td>
<td>- Gather all materials, and then going to get safety goggles out of the cabinet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Using the spoon labeled “CaCl₂” to scoop calcium chloride into your beaker and using a different spoon, the one labeled “NaHCO₃” to scoop baking soda into your beaker.</td>
<td>- Use the same spoon to scoop CaCl₂ (calcium chloride) into your beaker as you used to scoop NaHCO₃ (baking soda) into your beaker.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Clean up your work station after a lab by dumping the contents of the graduated cylinder into the designated “Hazardous Waste” container and then carefully washing it out with soap using a large test tube brush before placing it upside down on the paper towel by the sink to dry.</td>
<td>- Dump out the contents of a graduated cylinder directly into the sink, rinsing it out, and then placing it right side up on the paper towel by the sink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tel the teacher IMMEDIATELY when you accidentally touch an unknown liquid and it starts to burn.</td>
<td>- Wipe your hand on your pants and then rinsing your hand with water when you accidentally touch an unknown liquid and it starts to burn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tel the teacher IMMEDIATELY when you accidentally drop and break a beaker after you washed it.</td>
<td>- Quickly pick up the pieces of a beaker you accidentally dropped and broke after you washed it and throwing the pieces in the trash.</td>
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Instructional Procedures/Activities

(Include opportunities for you to determine that students know how/when to engage in desired behaviors.)

Have students take turns reading each of the vignettes out loud in class. Afterwards, discuss the questions listed after the scenario as a group.

- Josephina is a straight A student. One Monday night she comes home to find that her grandmother is in the
hospital. After staying at the hospital all night, Josephina and her family finally go home when the doctors tell
them that her grandmother will be discharged later the next day. Tuesday morning, her mom tells her she
needs to go ahead and go to school. When she arrives at Science class, she realizes that she forgot all about the
lab procedures she was supposed to write down in her science journal. She decides to not say anything and
hopefully her lab partner will have the information. When the teacher comes by and asks where her procedures
are, Josephina tells her what happened last night with her grandmother.

  - Is Josephina being responsible?
  - What could Josephina have done differently?

- Karina is the materials master for her group project in Science class. Fifteen minutes before her first period
Science class on the day of her group’s presentation, she looks through her binder for the handouts she was
supposed to print off to pass out for the whole class to look at during the presentation. She realizes that she left
them on her kitchen table at home. Luckily, she has a flash drive with the electronic copy of the handout on her
key chain. She quickly goes to her Science classroom and tells her teacher what has happened. The teacher
understands and says that because Karina came to her before class, this little problem can be fixed in time for
class. The teacher says Karina can use the teacher’s computer to print out the handout and then go make copies
in the copy room.

  - Does Karina responsibly handle her problem?
  - Should Karina have done anything differently? If so, what?

- Jon has a huge thing for a girl named Susan. Her locker is right next to his, but they don’t have any classes
together. On Thursday in Science, the teacher has a long lab about endothermic chemical reactions set up. Jon
tries to rush through the lab so that he can get finished and go stand near Susan’s locker so he can walk her to
her next class and still make it to his next class on time. In his rush, he accidentally drops a beaker full of
bleach right before the bell rings. He doesn’t have time for this, so he quickly scoops the glass shards into the
trash and drops a few paper towels onto the bleach, which is now spreading under the lab table. As he rushes
out the door, he calls over his shoulder for his lab partner to please throw those paper towels on the floor in the
trash for him.

  - Is Jon being responsible?
  - What should Jon have done differently in this situation?

- Today in Science class, the teacher announces that students will be working with the Bunsen burner for the
first time. Samuel and his lab partner, Brian, think they already know everything there is to know about
operating the Bunsen burner. They don’t pay attention to the teacher’s instructions before they break up into
their lab groups. When it comes time to heat some water in a test tube over the Bunsen burner until it boils,
they forget the cardinal rule: Always point the open end of the test tube away from yourself and others. Samuel
holds the test tube with the test tube pinchers over the burner. Brian leans forward to get a better look at the
bubbles, and a stream of hot steam hits him in the face, burning him. Even though he says he is okay, Samuel
insists that Brian go tell the teacher what happened so that she can check to make sure he is okay.

  - Are Samuel and Brian responsible when they don’t listen to or follow the safety instructions for
    the Bunsen burner?
  - Do Samuel and Brian handle the accident responsibly?
  - What could Samuel and Brian have done differently?

- Brittany has a huge exam in Math today. Her parents told her that if she has an A average for the whole
semester in all her classes, they will buy her a car for her 16th birthday. She studied a lot over the weekend for
her Math exam, but she really needs to do well because this is the last six weeks and she has an 89 average for
the semester. In Science class, the period before Math, Brittany finds out that the teacher has a data collection
lab scheduled and everyone will be going outside to different areas around the school to collect soil samples
and other information. She decides to take advantage of her group’s position behind the bleachers away from
the direct line of vision of the teacher to study for her exam. She figures that her group won’t mind letting her
copy the data into her science journal tomorrow before the tardy bell rings.

- Is Brittany displaying responsible behavior?
- What should Brittany have done differently?

### Planned Feedback in Natural Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-correction(s): (Statements to be delivered immediately before students enter a situation that is typically problematic)</th>
<th>One Situation where problem behavior typically occurs: On lab days, many students forget to dress according to the safe lab dress code.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Corresponding Pre-correction: The day before, say: “Remember, tomorrow we will be doing a lab on ____. This means that everyone needs to come to class dressed the safe-science way. Being dressed the safe-science way means that you are wearing closed-toed shoes, your shirts are tucked in and the sleeves are short or rolled up, and if you have long hair, it is tied back. Tomorrow we will be scientists, so we all need to dress the part!”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Acknowledgement(s) (Responses when student engage in desired behavior)</th>
<th>A desired behavior you might observe after this lesson: A student remembers to dump the contents of his/her beaker into the container marked “Hazardous Waste.”</th>
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<tr>
<td>One example of a statement you would make to give feedback to students engaging in a desired behavior: <strong>(Student’s Name)!</strong> Good job remembering to pour out that <strong>(Name of Substance)</strong> into the Hazardous Waste container. Class, this is an excellent example of how to be responsible in this class. Not only is it responsible of you to follow instructions, but properly disposing of hazardous materials helps to keep our lab safe for everyone.</td>
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<th>Correction(s) (Responses for student who continue to exhibit problem behavior)</th>
<th>One example of a problem behavior that may occur: A student forgets to put on their safety goggles before starting to gather materials for an experiment.</th>
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<td>A Corresponding Correction: <strong>(Student’s Name), I see you are doing a good job of following the procedures of the experiment, but remember that one of the ways we are responsible in this class is by remembering that the first step of any lab is to put on our safety goggles. Go ahead and get your safety goggles. Next time, remember to get your goggles first. If it helps, next time I hand out a lab worksheet, before you do anything else, add “safety goggles” to the top of the procedures.</strong></td>
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### Behavior Lesson Plan Template

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<td>A Corresponding Correction:</td>
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Pre/Post Test

1. What is one of the most common mistakes that secondary teachers make?
   a. Not being motivated enough to teach.
   b. None of the answer choices are correct.
   c. Blaming the parents for the child's behavior.
   d. Neglecting to explicitly teach their behavior expectations.*

2. It is not necessary to include a rationale on your expectation outline.
   a. True
   b. False*

3. Types of feedback include all of the answers except which one?
   a. Constructive criticism
   b. The silent treatment *
   c. Praise
   d. Rewards

4. What is an effective method for decreasing a problem behavior?
   a. Praise
   b. Placing the student in a corner.
   c. All of the above.
   d. Calling the parents first.*

5. Educators should create a rapport with parents before behavior problems start.
   a. True*
   b. False

6. Parent involvement is important for a child's academic success.
   a. True*
   b. False

7. It is helpful to document your communication with families.
   a. True*
   b. False

8. Some activities to reinforce behavior are...?
   a. practicing the acceptable behavior involving scenarios. *
   b. simply repeat the expected behaviors until they can remember them verbatim.
   c. give up after two trials
   d. None of the above

9. When behavior escalates to crisis mode it is best not to intervene during which phase:
   a. Peak*
   b. Acceleration
   c. Trigger
   d. None of the above
Frequently Asked Questions

What are some general strategies I could use at the beginning of each class period to improve student behavior?

Be sure that you have established and taught the behavior expectations students will need to be successful in your class. Just as younger children do, high school students need and benefit from clear instruction about school behavior expectations. It is helpful to reference those expectations when you give students feedback (including praise) about their behaviors. Also, expert classroom managers utilize routines to ensure that students can independently get situated for class and know what to expect. Finally, precorrect predictable problem behaviors by reminding students what you want them to do immediately prior to situations where they typically have problem behaviors.

Given the general chaos in CTE classrooms it is hard to catch my students being good. Since frequent praise may be more effective if it is specific, any tips on how I can become a better “good behavior catcher”?

Offering genuine praise when students engage in desired behaviors can be a highly effective strategy for sustaining behavior improvements. The key is to ensure that the behavior you’re focusing warrants praise eyes of the student. Otherwise, your feedback may be perceived as insincere and become ineffective. One strategy is target behaviors that are improving rather than focusing only on those behaviors the student has demonstrated are easy for her to consistently achieve.

Also, many adolescents may value your praise more if it is delivered to them personally, rather than announced to the entire class. For example, announcing “Good job!” in response to a student’s homework submission may be less effective than pulling her aside and saying, “You have made a concerted effort to keep up with your homework in class this semester and I appreciate it. This is exactly the type of responsible behavior that future employers will be looking for.”

Finally, you need not wait for perfection when a student exhibits improvement in an area where he has typically not been successful. This is an opportunity to improve behavior via praise that is frequently overlooked. Watch closely for behaviors that may not be outstanding, but reflect positive change in an area where a student has not been successful. For example, if a student never submits any of his homework and one day submits an assignment that is partially complete, you might pull the student aside and comment, “Thank you for today’s homework submission. I know it wasn’t 100% complete, but you made an effort and that will be reflected in your improved grade. Keep attempting your homework and these assignments will become easier to finish.”

Some students finish assignments early and begin to engage in inappropriate behaviors. How can I prevent this from happening?

Effective classroom managers plan ahead by teaching student routines for what to do when they complete assignments.
Example of Workshop Evaluation

Part I Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements. (sd=strongly disagree, d=disagree, u=undecided, a=agree, sa=strongly agree)

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<th>sd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The information was accurate.</td>
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<td>2. The information was presented in a professional manner.</td>
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<td>3. The module was informative and easy to follow.</td>
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<td>4. There were no inconsistencies in the information presented.</td>
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<td>5. The information was comprehensive.</td>
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<td>6. The presentation flowed well.</td>
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<td>7. The presenters were credible.</td>
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<td>8. The information was highly relevant to CTE teachers.</td>
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<td>9. The visuals were of high quality.</td>
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<td>10. The video was of high quality.</td>
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<td>11. My time watching the instructional module and attending this workshop was well spent.</td>
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<td>12. The video module provided enough reviews/recaps of the materials presented.</td>
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<td>13. The video adequately takes the place of a live presenter.</td>
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<td>14. I would enroll in online courses based on this module when offered.</td>
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Note: Please turn page over for Part II
Part II - What additional resources should be available with the instructional module?

If there were inconsistencies in the video, what were they?

What was the strongest aspect of the video module?

What was the weakest aspect of the video modules?

What other instructional module topics do you believe would be useful to CTE teachers?