

# Behavior is Language:

## Strategies for Managing Disruptive Behavior

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### Introduction

Welcome to *Behavior is Language*®, an interactive computer-based instruction (CBI) 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.

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### Course Materials

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  
Instructor: Mick Jackson MS/ED

**There is a \$25 replacement fee for CD-ROMs.**

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### 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 CBI 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 may result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.***

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## 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.

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## 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
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## 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 75% or higher before you can access the exam for that chapter.

After completing each chapter you will be required to take an examination.

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## Student Expectations

As a student, you will be expected to:

- Complete **all** chapter exams covering *Behavior is Language*, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete classroom scenarios, showing a minimum mastery of 75% on course content.
- Complete a review of any chapter on which your examination score was below 70%.
- Retake any chapter examination, after completing an information review, to increase that final examination score to a minimum of 70% (**maximum of three attempts**).
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

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## Chapter Topics

### A. Chapters 1 and 2

1. Meaningful Behavior -- 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 -- The key to all student intervention and change. How do you build a safe environment?
6. Consistency -- How do we build classroom consistency to facilitate positive student change?
7. 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. Giving up Control -- Can you maintain classroom control by giving more control to your students?
11. Avoiding Dead Ends -- How do you keep out of situations that trap you into lose-lose situations?
12. Personal Space -- Why do students need to be aware of their and other people's body space?
13. Outside the Classroom -- How can you use this information in all parts of your life?
14. Counter Transference -- What is it and how does it affect your work with your students?
15. Family Dynamics -- What information is important to know about the family before you attempt to remediate a student's disruptive classroom behaviors?
16. Sibling Rivalry -- How are sibling roles brought into the classroom and played out with peers?
17. Enmeshment -- How does this family dysfunction play a part in a student's classroom behavior?
18. Gathering Information -- What information is essential to gather before and during your work with a student, and where do you look for this information?
19. Don't Blame Family -- How do you keep from using the family dysfunction as a scapegoat?
20. Ego Tortures -- How do we make our own job more difficult by the things we think and say to ourselves?

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### B. Chapters 3 and 4

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. Supportive Time-out -- When should aberrant behavior be discussed with the student?
4. Quiet Room with Verbal Debrief -- What is this and what is its remedial goal?
5. Quiet Room with Written Debrief -- Why and when should verbal and written remediation be used?
6. Calming Activity -- What can be done before a child acts out?
7. Floating Consequences -- How do you make sure consequences affect the students and not you?
8. Self Time-out -- What can a student do to monitor his/her own emotional levels?
9. Stop Action -- How can you make students accountable for classroom behavioral problems?
10. In-school Suspension -- When do you use higher-level consequences for extreme behaviors?
11. Isolation Areas -- How do you set up effective isolation areas within your classroom?
12. Silent Observer -- How can a student participate in key classes or activities, even when receiving a consequence for disruptive behavior?
13. Natural Consequences -- How do we set consequences so they closely match the negative behavior?
14. Symbolic Consequences -- How can you assign consequences that will be meaningful to the student, even when restricted by your environment?
15. Support Groups -- How do you use the peer group to help support students in crisis?

16. 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?
17. Consequence Ladders -- How do you individualize your classroom remediation and discipline strategies to meet the needs of the individual student?
18. Grandma's Rule -- What is it and why is it important in the classroom setting?
19. Individual Program Adjustment -- When and how do you adjust a student's regular program to meet his/her needs when in crisis?
20. 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?
21. Working Harder -- Do we need to do more as teachers to get better?

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### 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 75% 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.

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### Examinations

At the end of each course chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. 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 chapter exams; your graded scenario scores are not included in this average. This score will be printed on your final certificate. 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.

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### Writing Assignments

This course has two required writing components:

#### **TO SAVE YOUR ESSAYS:**

**Macintosh:** When you select the question or article you wish to write on, simple text or text edit will automatically be launched. When you are finished, simply click on FILE>SAVE. **Do not select SAVE AS.** You do not need to give the document a name before saving. When you are done, select FILE>QUIT. **You must quit before you write another essay.**

**Windows:** When you select the question or article, notepad will automatically launch. When you are finished, click on FILE>SAVE. **Do not select SAVE AS.** You do not need to give the document a name before saving.

#### **1) *Essay Requirement: Critical Thinking Questions***

There is a *critical thinking question* for each chapter or section. You will do research on the question and write a brief essay upon relating it to the course content (and your personal experiences when possible). To view the questions, click on ESSAY REQ, then on CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS. You will see the questions, one for each chapter or section. Click on the question you would like to work on; this will bring up a screen where you can enter your essay. You must write a minimum of 500 words per essay.

#### **2) *Essay Requirement: Journal Articles***

This task requires you to write a review of three journal articles of your choice on a topic related to this course. You may choose journal articles outside the instructor's selected list, provided the content of the article relates to the course and you provide the journal name, volume, date and critical information so that the instructor can access and review that article. You must write a minimum of 200 words for each essay. To view the instructor list of journal articles and write your essays, click on ESSAY REQ. The VIEW ARTICLE button will lead you to a document, listing articles the instructor recommends for your research. In the dialog box below that, click on JOURNAL

ARTICLE ASSIGNMENT; this will expand the folder, which contains links to the screens where you can write your reviews. When you are ready to stop, click on FILE>SAVE. You may go back at any point to edit your essays. For more information on the features of this assignment, please consult the HELP menu.

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### **Instructor Description**

*Behavior is Language* was developed by a team of professionals with educational backgrounds in the areas of psychology, mental health, special education, behavioral intervention and general education. Mick Jackson is an Intervention Specialist with a Master's Degree in Special Education and Theory. Mr. Jackson has 15 years of combined experience in self-contained special education classrooms, resource rooms and hospital day treatment. He has developed and overseen mental health and intervention programs and directed staff in four different states. Mr. Jackson has conducted oral seminars on *Behavior Is Language*, presenting to school districts, teacher groups, and at educational conferences. Currently his courses are being offered through distance education at over 100 sites in the United States and Canada.

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### **Contacting the Instructor**

You may contact the instructor by emailing Mick at [mick@virtualeduc.com](mailto:mick@virtualeduc.com) or calling him at 509-891-7219, Monday through Friday, 9:00 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.

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### **Technical Questions**

If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course CD, 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 on your course disk.

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 printed on the CD label, your operating system and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

### **Minimum Requirements**

#### *Macintosh Operating Systems*

Mac OS 9.x or OS 10.x, 256MB of RAM and 5MB of free hard disk space, 15" or larger color monitor with a minimum resolution of 800x600, CD driver 4x minimum speed and a printer connected to your computer.

#### *Windows Operating Systems*

Windows 2000, XP Home, Professional or newer, 256MB of RAM and 5MB of free hard disk space; 15" or larger color monitor with a minimum resolution of 800x600, CD driver 4x minimum speed and a printer connected to your computer.

Please contact VESi if you have any questions about the compatibility of these systems.

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***Refer to the addendum included with your software package regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted, and where to send your completed information.***

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