Promoting Better Classroom Behavior Through SRA FLEX Literacy™
The purpose of this paper is to describe how key behavior-management approaches are integrated within *SRA FLEX Literacy™*. 

Taken together, these key behavior-management approaches help ensure better classroom behavior and set the foundation for improved academic performance in our schools.
Promoting Better Classroom Behavior Through SRA FLEX Literacy™

Student misbehavior has been and still is the main concern of educators across the country (Dunlap, Iovannone, Wilson, Kincaid, & Strain, 2010; Martella, Nelson, Marchand-Martella, & O’Reilly, 2012; Westling, 2010). In fact, “there may be no greater hurdle in public schools today than that presented by students who exhibit challenging behavior” (Westling, 2010, p. 48). When students misbehave, they learn less. “Disruptive behavior in any classroom impedes learning . . . and the time spent in redirecting students back to task takes away from valuable instruction time, which in turn affects student academic performance” (Musti-Rao & Haydon, 2011, pp. 91-92). Additionally, students who misbehave interfere with the learning of their peers and consume teachers’ time, disrupting the classroom and school. McKinney, Campbell-Whately, and Kea (2005) and Crothers and Kolbert (2008) indicate that difficulty managing student behavior is a factor associated with teacher burnout, stress, and dissatisfaction. For example, “50 percent of urban teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their career, citing behavior problems and management as factors influencing their decision to leave” (McKinney et al., 2005, p. 16). More should be done to create effective classroom environments through the use of better classroom management and instructional approaches (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008; Kern & Clemens, 2007; McKinney et al., 2005; Westling, 2010).

Historically, classroom management has been considered separately from classroom instruction, yet everything that goes on in the classroom should be thought of as instruction (Ausdemore, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2005). Behavior management involves the creation of successful learning environments for both classroom behavior and academic performance. Therefore, the focus should be on how to provide instruction in a manner that not only increases academic performance but also improves classroom behavior (Martella & Nelson, 2003). Specifically, teachers should provide a comprehensive approach in which instruction for both behavioral and academic skills is consistent with what has been found to be effective through empirical investigation (Gable, Tonelson, Sheth, Wilson, & Park, 2012; Kern & Clemens, 2007; Nelson, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2002).

Positive or negative student behavior is affected by teacher performance in creating an effective environment for student learning experiences (Stewart, Benner, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2007; Stewart, Martella, Marchand-Martella, & Benner, 2005). Research has demonstrated a strong positive correlation between behavior problems and low academic achievement (Gest & Gest, 2005; Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003). Above and beyond being correlated, Payne, Marks, and Bogan (2007) report that behavioral and academic problems are reciprocal in nature. In other words, behavior problems may cause a disruption in academic engagement and, as a result, students may fail to master skills because of this lack of academic engagement.

The opposite is also true—a classroom where there are high levels of academic achievement will be a classroom with low levels of behavior difficulties. This point is critical. Students do not generally come to school hating to be there. If students experience more failure than success, they frequently learn to hate school. As Scott,
Nelson, and Liaupsin (2001) note, “academics become aversive” (p. 313). Therefore, the more students find the classroom aversive, the more likely they will be to exhibit unwanted behaviors (Payne et al., 2007; Scott et al., 2001; Wehby, Lane, & Falk, 2003). Student successes and/or failures are in large part determined by how well teachers provide instruction to their students.

Effective instruction involves several components that are dependent on both teacher behavior and the instructional program that is being used. The effective teaching literature has shown what excellent instruction is. Excellent instruction comes from having appropriate curriculum pacing, lesson pacing, and transition management (Hofmeister & Lubke, 1990; Marchand-Martella, Blakely, & Schaefer, 2004; Martella et al., 2012). According to Slavin (2009), “Students who are participating in well-structured activities that engage their interests, who are highly motivated to learn, and who are working on tasks that are challenging yet within their capabilities rarely pose any serious management problems” (p. 329). Therefore, the goal for educators is to help students become successful in the classroom both academically and behaviorally.

Classroom Variables

Teachers are in control of a limited number of variables in a classroom. It is these variables that teachers must effectively manage to improve the behavioral and academic performance of their students. According to Bloom (1980), students come to school with two categories of variables that affect their achievement. The first category is nonalterable variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and home background. Clearly, teachers have a difficult responsibility in teaching students from varied personal, home, and environmental backgrounds. Even more difficult, as these children go through school, they tend to fall further and further behind their peers, making them far different from their peers by the time they reach sixth grade. “By the end of sixth grade, a child of poverty would need to go to school an additional 2 years to have the same amount of academic experience in school as a more advantaged child” (Carnine, 1994, p. 343). Compounding this difficulty, many of these students exhibit behavior problems in our classrooms (Engelmann, 1997; Kerr & Nelson, 1998; Martella et al., 2012; Meese, 2001; Walker, 1995).

The second category of variables that affect student achievement is alterable variables, those which are under teacher control. We need to rethink what management problems are in the classroom—a classroom issue (alterable variable) rather than a student issue (nonalterable variable). Approaching behavior management in this manner allows teachers to prevent or respond to management issues as part of the overall classroom planning process. Teachers should consider how they use their time (e.g., instructional momentum) so that student misbehavior is less likely to occur. Also, teaching skill is a key variable in student academic and behavioral success. Finally, the quantity of teacher-to-student interactions will have an important impact on students in the classroom.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss these alterable variables—specifically, the effective behavior-management approaches that are integrated within SRA FLEX Literacy™. These management approaches enhance classroom behavior and set the occasion for better academic performance. Readers interested in learning more about effective behavior-management approaches are referred to Martella et al. (2012) for more detailed information.
Key Behavior-Management Approaches Integrated Within SRA FLEX Literacy™

Although there are many behavior-management approaches used when implementing SRA FLEX Literacy™, we discuss the key behavior-management approaches integrated within the program (see Figure 1). Further, we showcase specific program examples to illustrate the integration of behavior-management approaches within an effective instructional program.

**KEY BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

**CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION**
- Expectations
- Routines
- Transitions

**SELF MANAGEMENT**
- Scaffolded Instruction
- Differentiated Instruction
- Positive and Corrective Feedback

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**
- Structure and Organization
- Opportunities to Respond
- Motivational Systems

**EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION**

*Figure 1. Key behavior—management approaches integrated within SRA FLEX Literacy™.*

**Classroom organization**

An important aspect of behavior-management is how the classroom is organized. Classroom organization involves the use and teaching of effective expectations and routines (Hirn & Park, 2012; Kern & Clemens, 2007; Trussell, 2008) and the management of transitions (Slavin, 2012).

**Expectations**

When teachers use and teach effective expectations, the probability of problem behaviors occurring decreases (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005; Kern & Clemens, 2007). To create effective classroom expectations, several issues should be kept in mind (see Martella et al., 2012 for a detailed discussion of these issues). First, students should be informed why expectations are important and teachers should solicit student input on these expectations. Second, the number of expectations should be kept to three to five. Third, expectations should contain student-friendly language. Fourth, expectations should be stated positively. Fifth, different sets of expectations should be used for different learning situations. Sixth, there should be consistency between classroom and school expectations. Seventh, expectations should be explicitly taught using an I do, we do, you do procedure. Eighth, classroom expectations should be posted in a prominent location. Finally, expectations should be monitored and reviewed over time.
**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

STAR expectations (see Program Example 1) are recommended and trained during publisher-sponsored professional development opportunities. However, teachers and instructional staff may use already established classroom expectations as long as these are taught explicitly to students.

**STAR**
- Sit tall (or) sit in the learning position
- Track with your finger
- Answer on signal
- Respect others

*Program Example 1. STAR expectations.*

Teachers are prompted to review their own classroom expectations at the beginning of each 15-day cross-curricular project in the Project Experience (see Program Example 2, second bullet).

**PREPARE FOR DAY 1**
- Decide how you will organize students into project teams.
- Before beginning the project, review established classroom rules and procedures with students. Discuss how these will be implemented during the Project Experience.
- Have materials available for the creation of a Bound Book Foldable® for each student (p. 48).

*Program Example 2. Teacher prompt (second bullet) to review classroom rules (expectations) and procedures during the Project Experience.*
Routines

Effective classroom expectations are critical aspects of preventing behavior-management problems. However, an equally important, and sometimes overlooked area is the teaching of classroom routines. If we observed an orderly classroom, we would see one where teachers have likely taken the time to teach students what to do in the classroom. “In classes where routines and procedures . . . are clearly delineated, taught, reviewed, and used . . . appropriate behavior is much more likely to occur, and the class is more likely to run smoothly. Literally, ‘Predictability predicts ability’” (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 121). For example, there should be a procedure for moving from the computer to a round table or a desk when students are signaled to transition from one activity to another. There may be start-up routines to get students ready for the day, such as a short activity for students to complete while teachers access materials. As with expectations, routines should be explicitly taught to help with the smooth flow of activities in a classroom.

In addition to typical classroom routines, there is also a need for consistent and predictable instructional routines or formats (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Students are better able to predict what is going to occur next when predictable instructional formats are utilized. When students have learned what the routines or formats are, they are more likely to follow them and experience less stress and anxiety; they tend to do better academically as well (Kern & Clemens, 2007). “Predictability predicts ability,” as Archer and Hughes (2011, p. 121) so aptly note.

**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

Students are taught to move an avatar through a lesson walkthrough in the Digital Experience (see Program Example 3). During this predictable routine, students initiate instructional activities by walking the avatar into the floating cubes that appear throughout this walkthrough. Each cube opens to reveal a screen that displays an icon and a name for each category of instructional activity. Students click a Start button to begin each activity.

*Program Example 3. Lesson walkthrough routine in the Digital Experience.*
Five-day lesson plans follow a familiar and efficient classroom routine sequence: Before Reading (Day 1), During Reading (Days 2 and 3), and After Reading (Days 4 and 5) (see Program Example 4). Within these instructional days, predictable activities are provided.

Program Example 4: Five-day instructional routine used in the Print Experience.

Transitions

One area that takes up much of the time devoted to instruction is transitions—moving from one activity to the next, for example. Unfortunately, transitions tend to increase the likelihood that students will misbehave (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Martella et al., 2012; Slavin, 2012; Witt, LaFleur, Naquin, & Gilbertson, 1999). Thus, transition management is an important consideration in behavior management. According to Slavin (2009), “Transitions are the seams of class management at which classroom order is most likely to come apart” (p. 334). When teachers decrease their transition times, they are able to increase the time they have to instruct, which increases student motivation and decreases behavior-management problems (Slavin, 2012). Therefore, teachers should plan for transitions and try to decrease the amount of time it takes for them to occur. Transitions can be improved by teaching the classroom expectations and routines as described above. Additionally, transitions can be improved by arranging the physical setting and the location of instructional materials so problem behavior is less likely to happen.
SRA FLEX Literacy™ example

The classroom is set up to optimize student involvement for up to 90 minutes per day. The Digital and Print Experiences each last 25 minutes, and the Project Experience lasts 40 minutes (see Program Example 5).

Program Example 5. Time spent in each learning experience before transitions.

As shown in Program Example 6, students are organized into two groups—one group completes the Digital Experience independently, while the second group completes the Print Experience with the teacher. After a 25-minute session, the groups transition to switch experiences. The two groups then come together, transitioning to work in their collaborative teams for the last 40 minutes in the Project Experience. Time management is also optimized when the Digital Experience and the Print Experience occur simultaneously.

Program Example 6. Classroom organization and transition to the learning experiences.
Effective instruction

Effective instruction increases student success and, in turn, decreases behavior problems. Effective instruction includes the following components: scaffolded instruction, structure and organization, differentiated instruction, opportunities to respond (OTR), positive and corrective feedback, and motivational systems (see Martella et al., 2012 and Vaughn & Bos, 2012).

Scaffolded instruction

Scaffolded instruction involves instructional components that move students from little to no knowledge of a skill to a demonstration of skills or knowledge at high levels. There are five components within scaffolded instruction: (a) explicit modeling, (b) guided practice, (c) independent practice, (d) assessment of mastery, and (e) review for maintenance. These instructional components are known to affect student achievement in a positive manner (Marchand-Martella & Martella, 2013) and can, in turn, decrease problem behaviors (Stewart et al., 2005).

Explicit modeling (Model) involves providing students a demonstration of the skill to be learned. Background knowledge may be provided; new content is presented in this component of instruction. Clear goals and objectives for the skill to be learned are provided, step-by-step instructions and directions are explained, and careful demonstrations are provided (Hofmeister & Lubke, 1990; Sabornie & deBettencourt, 2009). The presentation of new content is often referred to as teacher demonstration (Marchand-Martella & Martella, 2013; Meese, 2001), teacher modeling, or “I do.”

Following explicit modeling, guided practice opportunities (Guide) are provided. Guided practice is also called prompted practice (Meese, 2001), guided rehearsal (Sabornie & deBettencourt, 2009) or scaffolding (Vaughn & Bos, 2012) and is the “we do” of instruction because the teacher or computer is actively participating with the students (“Let’s do some together”). During guided practice, the level of assistance begins to fade as the students perform the tasks; feedback (both positive and corrective) is provided based on student performance.

Once students are performing at least 80% correct in guided practice, independent practice (Monitor) is provided. During independent practice, students “show what they know” by demonstrating the skill independently without teacher or computer support; this practice is also known as the “you do” of instruction. During independent practice, the teacher or computer actively monitors student performance and reteaches if students are not at least 80% successful.

Once students demonstrate independently, they may be assessed for mastery (Mastery Check) in a standardized test format. This assessment allows for the demonstration of the skill in a format students will likely face and serves as a measure of skill generalization. After students demonstrate generalized performance, the skill is typically reviewed (Review) so it is not forgotten. If skill atrophy is evident, reteaching is provided.
SRA FLEX Literacy™ example

A Gradual-Release Model is used to scaffold instruction (see Program Example 7). In this model, students receive Model, Guide, Monitor, Mastery Check, and Review opportunities to learn critical reading skills and complex strategies. Specifically, students receive strong support when they are “novice learners,” which fades to mediated scaffolding and then to student independence when students become “experts.”

SCAFFOLDED INSTRUCTION

Program Example 7. Scaffolding instruction through the Gradual Release Model.

Program Example 8 shows an example of how the Gradual Release Model scaffolds instruction for singular and plural nouns in the Digital Experience. During the Model, activities explicitly introduce the objective of the skill. They initially present information through entertaining animated videos, and then they transition to modeling for students how to think through and complete question items on the skill. During the Guide, activities provide reteaching of the skill and additional modeling for completing question items on the skill. They also include question items for students to complete on their own. The instructional host characters provide feedback based on student responses. During the Monitor, no instruction or modeling is provided, but students do receive feedback on their responses. The last Monitor activity in a skill sequence is presented in a multiple-choice “test prep” format in order to prepare students for the Mastery Check activities. During the Mastery Check, summative assessment activities for the skill are provided. No instruction, modeling, or feedback is given. Finally, Review activities are conducted that follow the same format as Monitor activities. They appear in the lesson sequence after the Mastery Check to maintain proficiency with each skill.
Structure and organization

If there is a lack of structure or organization in instruction, students are more likely to misbehave (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Konrad, Helf, & Joseph, 2011). Structure and organization relate to how lessons are planned and formatted to ensure maximum success for teacher and student. Structure and organization can occur in the following ways: (a) lessons are planned for each day or across several days; (b) lessons are scripted, with an easy-to-follow daily plan of instruction; and (c) lessons are systematic in nature, so a logical order to the instructional tasks keeps errors to a minimum.

Structure and organization allow for the maximization of the amount of time students are engaged and successful, resulting in better student outcomes. When students are successful during instruction, they are said to be experiencing academic learning time. Consider the following statements: “For academic progress to occur, students must not only be on-task, but must also achieve at high accuracy levels” (Olson & Platt, 2000, p. 172); the amount of time a student spends successfully engaged with an academic task “relates most strongly to achievement” in the classroom (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002, p. 3); and “Academic learning time is one of the most important correlates of achievement, and its linkage with learning is one of the most consistent findings in educational research” (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, true learning takes place when academic learning time is maximized (Marchand-Martella et al., 2004), not simply when students are on-task.
**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

A calendar can be used to plan instruction by the day/week/month (see Program Example 9). Such a calendar allows teachers to structure and organize instructional content and students/groups within the three learning experiences.

*Program Example 9. Program calendar.*

The three learning experiences are integrated for seamless, well-organized instruction, as shown in Program Example 10.

*Program Example 10. Structure and organization of the three learning experiences.*
Lessons are scripted to aid teachers in effective instructional delivery. Program Example 11 shows a Teacher Edition lesson in the Print Experience.
Each lesson is planned to ensure a logical order of the instructional tasks in order to keep errors at a minimum. Program Example 12 shows a sample of the scope and sequence from the Secondary System Print Experience for reading literature and reading informational text (Common Core State Standards anchor standards).


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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>BEFORE READING</th>
<th>DURING READING</th>
<th>AFTER READING</th>
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<td>X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X</td>
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<td><strong>GUIDE</strong></td>
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<td>X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X</td>
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<td><strong>MONITOR</strong></td>
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<td>X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X</td>
<td>X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X</td>
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<td><strong>X = Consistent teacher guidance</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Guide</th>
<th>Monitor</th>
<th>X = Consistent teacher guidance</th>
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Promoting Better Classroom Behavior Through SRA FLEX Literacy™
Differentiated instruction

Students have varying skill levels. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to meet the needs of all students, moving from more teacher-directed instruction when students are naïve learners to more student-centered instruction when students have the skills to work on their own. Two broad areas of differentiated instruction are multisensory instruction and instruction matched to student learning needs.

Multisensory instruction relates to instruction that incorporates all three learning sensory modes (auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic) into each instructional session (see Shams & Seitz, 2008 for information on the benefits of multisensory learning). That is, an auditory aspect of the lesson ensures students participate based on what they hear; a visual aspect ensures students participate based on what they see; and a tactile/kinesthetic aspect of the lesson ensures students participate based on what they do. In this way, all three sensory modes are strengthened and reinforced, meeting the needs of all students.

Matching instruction to student learning needs involves determining the appropriate placement level and instructional intensity required based on student skill levels. If instruction is not matched to student skill levels, problem behaviors may result. These problem behaviors may be the result of an inability of students to complete the required level of performance and may serve to motivate the student to escape or avoid the academic task. These problem behaviors can be categorized as “can’t do” problems.

Roberts, Marshall, Nelson, and Albers (2001) note that placement tests should be used to determine if these behaviors are escape or avoidance motivated. These assessments help to ensure that students are placed appropriately in the program, reducing the motivation to escape or avoid the academic task. In addition to the placement test, curriculum-based assessments such as mastery checks, fluency assessments, and critical thinking applications should be included within a program to ensure students are successfully progressing through the program. These assessments are critical because if students are experiencing difficulties, teachers can stop instruction and provide remediation to ensure firm responding. If students cannot achieve at least 80% correct on these types of assignments, the material may be too difficult or further instruction may be warranted.

**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

Students receive a wide range of instructional opportunities aligned to best practices in multisensory instruction. Students are exposed to three learning experiences that engage students in auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic learning opportunities (see Program Example 13).

*Program Example 13. Variety of learning and sensory modes for multisensory instruction across the learning experiences.*
Differentiated instruction is achieved by ensuring instruction matches each student’s unique skill level. There are 116 skills taught in 480 lessons across approximately 5,000 activities in the Digital Experience. These 480 lessons are organized into 11 bands, labeled A through K (Program Example 14). Upon initial log-in into the system, students take a Lexile®-based placement test to determine the band into which they are placed. The placement test is administered and scored online, and the student’s placement into a lesson band is automatic and immediate. Texts and skills presented in each band are aligned with a Lexile® range. The lessons in Bands A and B have a specific focus on early literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences, basic decoding, and high-frequency word recognition. They primarily cover Common Core State Standards associated with kindergarten and grade 1. The lessons in Bands C–K primarily cover Common Core State Standards associated with grades 2–8, moving from more basic concepts to more sophisticated ones as the lessons progress.

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<tr>
<th>BY THE NUMBERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
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<td>Lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Placement Points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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Program Example 14. Eleven Lesson Bands (placement points) in the Digital Experience based on Lexile® reading levels.

Student performance is continuously tracked through the FLEXWorks data management system (see Program Example 15). Data-based decisions inform instructional practices across learning experiences.

Program Example 15. FLEXWorks data management system.

Promoting Better Classroom Behavior Through SRA FLEX Literacy™
A wide variety of data is collected to ensure correct student placement in and progress through the program (see Program Example 16).

*Program Example 16. Sample of data collected throughout the program.*
The Print Experience focuses on shared reading, exposing students to richer, more sophisticated text than they may be able to read on their own (see Program Example 17). Students are invited to participate in reading the selections if they have the necessary skills to do so; thus, differentiated opportunities allow students from multiple skill levels to participate in rich heterogeneous instruction. The instructional purpose of the Print Experience is not to teach students how to read these selections independently, but rather to teach how to engage with the selections as proficient readers do, thinking critically about the text and discussing its literary elements.

An Interactive Reader, a consumable student component, is central to the learning experience and serves as a personalized student portfolio showing growth and accomplishment in the program.

**Program Example 17.** Access to complex text during the Print Experience.

Skill differentiation is provided based on how students progress through lessons (see Program Example 18). Also, independent reading and critical-thinking applications (generalization assessments linking digital- with print-based learning components) are provided to students based on their level of skill development. Students should continually be provided opportunities to test their skills in novel ways.

**Program Example 18.** Skill differentiation based on student performance.

Promoting Better Classroom Behavior Through *SRA FLEX Literacy™*
As shown in Program Example 19, if students average below 80% in two consecutive Monitor activities during the Digital Experience, the computer system presents them with an intensive remediation lesson just for that skill. Students work through consecutive activities that re-present the skill and provide supported practice. After completing this remediation lesson, students return to the regular sequence of lessons. If they continue to struggle with that skill, the teacher is prompted to administer a one-on-one Individualized Instruction lesson to provide further remediation for the skill.

Program Example 19. Adaptive remediation when students do not reach mastery levels of performance during the Digital Experience.

As shown in Program Example 20, if students demonstrate mastery at 100% correct in three consecutive Monitor activities in the Digital Experience, they skip the remaining Monitor activities (except for the final activity) when they encounter them in each lesson.

Program Example 20. Adaptive acceleration when students reach mastery levels of performance during the Digital Experience

Opportunities to respond

“Results from intervention research show that increasing opportunities for students to respond (OTR) correctly to academic questions, tasks, and demands also positively affects students’ appropriate academic and social behaviors” (Moore Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010, p. 172). Success promotes success. When students respond correctly and frequently, they learn more and misbehave less (Haydon, MacSuga-Gage, Simonsen, & Hawkins, 2012; MacSuga-Gage, Simonsen, & Briere, 2012; Stichter et al., 2009; Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, 2003).
Effective use of OTR includes two important aspects: (a) successful engagement in academic tasks and (b) rapid pacing of student responding (Lewis, Hudson, Richter, & Johnson, 2004). Successful engagement is predicated on appropriate student placement. Students who are learning new skills must have the necessary prerequisite skills to participate, otherwise frustration and behavior problems may occur. During instruction of new material, students should be responding at a minimum accuracy engagement level of 80% correct; accuracy increases to 90% correct during activities with previously learned material (see guidelines published by the Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 1987 as cited by Sutherland & Wehby, 2001 for details).

Further, rapid pacing of student responding should be programmed. A foundational study conducted by Carnine (1976) measuring the effects of increased OTR noted off-task percentages of 62% during slower presentations (teachers waited 5 seconds after a correct student response before providing another opportunity for students to respond) and 7% during faster presentations (teachers provided another OTR immediately after a correct student response).

**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

Students are placement tested to ensure successful engagement. Lessons are designed to ensure students respond at a high pace. During the Digital Experience, OTR range from 0.72 per minute to 3.96 per minute. OTR are dependent on the type of activities within a lesson. For example, if students are required to read a passage and cite text evidence, fewer responses are possible as compared to punctuation and mechanics activities that may require filling in a blank with a correct response from a list of choices. Additionally, timing features help keep students on task and maximize the time spent on instructional activities.

OTR are increased by building in these timing features that include the following: (a) Students have 10 seconds to move their avatar to the next activity cube. After that time expires, an animation automatically moves the avatar to the next cube in the lesson walkthrough and launches the activity, and (b) if students take too long to respond during a lesson, there is a “timeout” after 45 seconds of total inactivity (no keystrokes or mouse movement followed by a timeout warning message that appears to ensure active student participation and account security) (Program Example 21). The timeout warning message lasts for 15 seconds, after which students are temporarily locked out of the application, and a timeout message window is displayed with a password entry field. Students can enter their passwords into the timeout message window to re-enter the application exactly where they left off.

*Program Example 21.* Message students receive if they are taking too long to respond during the Digital Experience.
Positive and corrective feedback

Effective positive and corrective feedback is a critical aspect of effective instruction (Hirn & Park, 2012). Without such feedback, students who commit errors will continue to practice those errors (Vaughn & Bos, 2012). When students practice errors, they will have to spend time in the future relearning the skill that can lead to frustration and behavior issues. On the other hand, when students receive effective feedback, their correct responses are strengthened.

There are two primary aspects to effective positive and corrective feedback. First, feedback should be immediate. Immediate feedback has a much greater impact on behavior than does delayed feedback (Price, Martella, Marchand-Martella, & Cleanthous, 2002). This is because the behavior that occurs closest to the reinforcement (within a few seconds) will have a temporal relationship with it (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). Therefore, any effective instructional program must include immediate and frequent positive and corrective feedback to achieve the maximum results with student learning.

Second, effective corrective feedback in the form of error correction procedures should be used (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Effective error corrections often include a model (show the student the correct response), lead (help the student make the correct response), test (see if the student can make the correct response independently), and delayed test (see if the student can make the correct response at a later time). Effective error correction avoids negativity with phrases such as “No,” “That’s incorrect,” “You’re guessing,” “You can do better than that,” or “You’re not trying hard enough.”

SRA FLEX Literacy™ example

Immediate feedback (positive and corrective) is provided during Guide, Monitor, and Review activities in the Digital Experience (Program Example 22).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Modeling</th>
<th>Immediate Feedback</th>
<th>Scored</th>
<th>Activities per Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Check</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table describes the presence of modeling and feedback in each activity type as well as the number of activities of each type presented for each skill.

Program Example 22. When modeling and immediate feedback are provided throughout the Digital Experience.

Program Example 23 shows the rules used in developing feedback based on correct or incorrect responses during the Digital Experience. Immediate positive feedback is provided when students make the correct response; it is also specific to the task, noting what the student did correctly. A two-step error correction procedure is used when students respond incorrectly in Guide activities, and a three-step error
correction procedure is used when students respond incorrectly in Monitor and Review activities.

### FEEDBACK EXAMPLES

#### GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Attempt 1</th>
<th>Attempt 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Job.* You [did skill correctly].</td>
<td>Remember, [Teaching Tip or sub-objective*].</td>
<td>The correct answer is [correct answer]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(line break)

Look at the answer and try again.

#### MONITOR/REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Attempt 1</th>
<th>Attempt 2</th>
<th>Attempt 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Job.* You [did skill correctly].</td>
<td>Click Retry to try again.</td>
<td>Remember, [Teaching Tip or sub-objective*].</td>
<td>The correct answer is [correct answer]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(line break)

Look at the answer and try again.

*Use a variation of “Good job/Nice work” for only the first question in each activity; please drop the “congratulatory comment” for the other questions. Also, note the use of periods rather than exclamation marks in these statements.

Examples: That’s great. You found an example of synecdoche in the passage. Well done. You found the best definition for the adjective sesquipedalian.

*Sub-objectives are more specific than the Teaching Tips; they are the problem solving strategies we’ve already taught and that students need to apply to a particular item.

Example: Remember, words in the past perfect progressive tense end in -ing

*Program Example 23. Rules for the provision of positive and corrective feedback during the Digital Experience.*

### Motivational systems

One of the more important aspects of providing effective instruction and decreasing management issues is the motivation of students to attend to instruction. Three primary motivational systems are important to promote positive student behavior—engaging lessons, praise, and point systems.

Engaging lessons can be useful motivating tools for students. If lessons are boring and laborious, students will be less likely to engage in them. “Not surprisingly, students are more likely to be engaged and on task when the lesson is presented at a lively pace, in which the lesson moves smoothly and quickly from input to response to feedback and back again” (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 193). Thus, teachers should make every attempt to make the lessons as exciting and/or as interesting as possible.
Further, praise has been cited as an effective strategy for promoting school achievement and positive classroom behavior (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Martella, Marchand-Martella, & Cleanthous, 2002; Martella et al., 2012). The importance of praise cannot be overstated. One critical aspect of the use of praise and other motivational systems is to create a positive relationship with the student. Such a relationship can have a significant impact on student behavior (Musti-Rao & Haydon, 2011). For example, Marzano and Marzano (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of more than 100 studies and found 31% fewer discipline problems and rule violations over the course of a year for teachers who had positive relationships with their students than teachers who did not have such positive relationships. Thus, teachers should use positive methods of motivating their students, such as praise. We recommend a ratio of attending to 5 positive behaviors to every 1 negative behavior exhibited by students; this ratio is well supported by research (see Musti-Rao & Haydon, 2011 for details).

When praise is used, teachers should use specific praise at least 50% of the time (Martella, Marchand-Martella, Macfarlane, & Young, 1993; Martella, Marchand-Martella, Miller, Young, & Macfarlane, 1995; Martella et al., 2012). Specific praise statements are positive statements made in a neutral or positive/pleasant tone of voice to a desired behavior (e.g., ‘Good job working on the computer, Joe,’ rather than ‘Good job, Joe’). It is critical to tell students what behaviors they are exhibiting correctly.

Finally, point systems have been noted as effective motivators for students (Martella et al., 2002). Points are provided for specified student behavior. A point system may be used to provide grades to students and to award these grades in an objective way. In addition, points may be used for contingencies other than grades, such as to trade in points for special activities—computer time and awards, for example.

**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

Engaging animations introduce, explain, and demonstrate skills during the Digital Experience (see Program Example 24 for a screen shot of an animated video). These animations are designed to be entertaining, to capture student attention and interest, while they provide important background knowledge and instructional content.

*Program Example 24. Screen shot of a motivational animated video in the Digital Experience.*
Motivating lessons incorporate interesting lesson themes in the Digital Experience, level-appropriate reading titles in the Print Experience, and research-based projects with content-rich, technology-based learning in the Project Experience (see examples in Program Example 25). Further, in the Print Experience, high-interest, culturally diverse fiction and nonfiction texts illustrate just how exciting reading can be, and poetry provides a means to emphasize prosody and performance through Reader’s Theater.

Program Example 25. Motivating lessons with interesting themes (Digital Experience), level-appropriate reading materials (Print Experience), and innovative projects (Project Experience).
A positive teacher or computer/student relationship is developed across all three learning experiences. Program Example 26 shows the use of specific praise for a correct response during the Digital Experience. Additionally, as stated previously, all errors are corrected in a positive manner.

Program Example 26. Example praise statement during the Digital Experience.

The starting point for each Digital Experience session is in the Student Room. Students are taken to the Room for the first time immediately after completing the placement test. Each time they log in, they are given the option to visit the Room or to proceed directly to their next lesson. The doorway on the far right side of the Student Room is the portal to the Lesson Walkthrough and the instructional activities. Students click the door to proceed to the next Digital Experience lesson (see Program Example 27 for a screen shot of a Student Room).

Program Example 27. Screen shot of a Student Room.
Students are awarded 5 minutes of “play” time the first time they enter the Student Room during the Digital Experience. One minute is awarded for each lesson completed. Students can accumulate a maximum of 5 minutes. Students also accumulate points as they move through the lesson. They can enter the Item Shop (see Program Example 28) to purchase items with which to decorate their room.

Program Example 28. Item Shop.

The Digital Experience personalizes lessons by allowing students to design their own avatar (see Program Example 29). Students can choose from dozens of human and nonhuman characters, change to a different avatar anytime they are in the Student Room, and customize each avatar by adjusting the color of skin, the hair, the clothes, and accessories. Students move these customizable avatars through their Student Room and the instructional activities by using the mouse or arrows on the keyboard.

Program Example 29. Example of a customized avatar.
The Digital Experience includes elements at the top of the screen known as the “Chrome” to keep students informed and motivated during the Digital Experience (see Program Example 30). These elements are: (a) a thumbnail image of the avatar the student is currently using, (b) a gameplay timer that indicates gameplay time remaining before the next lesson is automatically launched, (c) a lesson progress meter to show how many activities appear in each lesson and how many have been completed, which converts to an activity progress meter during instructional activities, and (d) a points counter that displays the current total of points available for use at the Item Shop.

Program Example 30. Digital Experience Chrome at the top of the screen.

The Digital Experience includes game activities (see Project Experience 31). These games are brief engaging interactions that provide practice and reinforcement for previously introduced skills. These games incorporate entertaining and age-appropriate themes such as off-road racing, carnival games, and jungle safaris. Reward Points collected during these games contribute to the student’s overall point total for spending in the Item Shop, but performance on these activities is not incorporated into the student’s overall performance grade.

Program Example 31. Examples of games students can earn to play during the Digital Experience.

Self-management

One of the more effective behavior-management methods used today for a variety of students is self-management training (Dalton, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 1999; Martella, Leonard, Marchand-Martella, & Agran, 1993; Martella et al., 2012). Perhaps the most important self-management skill for students to learn is self-evaluation. Self-evaluation involves teaching students how to measure their own behavior against some specified standard (Martella et al., 2002; Martella et al., 2012). Teachers can show students how to self-evaluate by modeling the procedure and by providing accurate feedback based on student performance. For example, teachers could give students an assessment guide and have them evaluate if they met the expectations for a particular activity. Their evaluation can then be matched with the teacher’s evaluation.
Self-evaluation is incorporated throughout the program. For example, students self-evaluate how well they met the Readers’ Theater expectations and how well they liked books they read from the Tradebook Library (Reading Log) during the Print Experience (see Program Example 32).

Program Example 32. Example of Self-Evaluation form and Reading Log found in the Interactive Reader in the Print Experience.

Students also track how well they met their individual responsibility with regard to collaboration, opinion writing, and presentation from separate assessment guides and from a writing checklist during the Project Experience (see Program Example 33). These materials aid students in evaluating their performance.

Program Example 33. Example of assessment guides and writing checklist during Project Experience.
Social development

Students must develop social behaviors to have meaningful relationships with their peers, teachers, and parents. Social competence is considered a critical skill in today’s world (Cook et al., 2008). There is an ever-increasing need to work with others to solve the complex problems we face today. If students are not adept at working with others to complete a project or to solve a problem, they will be at a distinct disadvantage. Therefore, social behaviors must be supported in the classroom to the maximum extent possible (Snider & Battalio, 2011).

Social behaviors that are important to school success often include individual responsibilities (e.g., social etiquette, project contribution) and team responsibilities (e.g., collaborating with team members, resolving conflicts with respect for all involved). Social behaviors can be integrated within academic instruction through the use of modeling, role-playing, self-evaluation, and cooperative learning.

**SRA FLEX Literacy™ example**

In the Secondary System Print Experience, students learn important leadership behaviors by becoming discussion directors. Students are divided into small groups. One student in each group is assigned to be the discussion director. Discussion directors lead their groups in a discussion of important aspects of the text.

Additionally, students are taught and expected to work together to complete cross-curricular projects designed to develop 21st Century skills during the Project Experience (see Program Example 34). A Project Information Sheet and a Project Action Plan are provided to groups to aid in the completion of projects. Through these projects, students are expected to demonstrate social behaviors that allow groups to work together collaboratively (see assessment guides in Program Example 33).

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**Program Example 34. Example of project information sheet and action plan for team projects during the Project Experience.**
Summary

Behavior management is one of the most critical areas of concern for teachers because it directly impacts student academic performance. It cannot be separated from curriculum and instructional delivery. The use of effective instruction in the classroom should be thought of as a behavior-management issue. In fact, unwanted behavior may suggest changes in instruction are needed. One of the more important developments on how best to meet students’ needs involves the integration of behavior management and instructional systems (e.g., Aitken et al., 2011; Sadler & Sugai, 2009). *SRA FLEX Literacy™* was designed with this important development in mind.

Key behavior-management approaches are integrated within *SRA FLEX Literacy™*. These include classroom organization with emphasis on expectations, routines, and transitions; effective instruction including scaffolded instruction, structure and organization, differentiated instruction, opportunities to respond, positive and corrective feedback, and motivational systems; self-management; and social development. Taken together, these key behavior-management approaches help ensure better classroom behavior and set the foundation for improved academic performance in our schools.
References


Promoting Better Classroom Behavior Through SRA FLEX Literacy™


Sutherland, K. S., & Wehby, J. H. (2001). Exploring the relationship between increased opportunities to respond to academic requests and the academic and behavioral outcomes of students with EBD: A review. Remedial and Special Education, 22, 113-121.


