

Reinforcement Reflection Case Study #1: Answer Key

Jerome is a 5th grade student who often forgets to do his homework. His teacher has developed a reinforcement system for Jerome in order to increase his homework completion. Every time Jerome completes all of his homework, his teacher gives him a “Good Job” sticker on each completed paper. Sometimes, Jerome’s teacher checks his homework and gives him a Reese’s first thing in the morning. Sometimes, Jerome’s teacher doesn’t give him a Reese’s until the end of the day. Initially, Jerome appeared to be motivated by receiving the Reese’s and completed his homework for 3 nights in a row. Over time, Jerome’s homework completion has decreased to pre-intervention levels. When Jerome’s teacher asks him, “Don’t you want to earn your Reese’s?” Jerome replies, “Nah, I don’t need any more of the same old Reese’s.”

Did the team’s reinforcement match the function of Jerome’s behavior? Explain.

No – the function of the behavior was to avoid tasks, while the reinforcement provides access to edibles

Rank the top 3 reinforcement factors that you would consider for enhancement, along with a brief explanation of the change you might suggest to the team.

Rank:	Factor	What change would you consider? Why?
3	Immediacy	Enhance consistency of delivering reward in the morning
	Frequency	Frequency of <u>daily</u> appeared effective and may be difficult to increase (e.g., only one opportunity per day)
4	Size/Amount	Jerome’s teacher may give a small reinforcer for completing <u>some</u> homework, medium reinforcer for <u>all</u> homework
2	Contingency	Make the contingency more clear and consistent – define how much completion is expected and only one response rather than multiple competing responses (e.g., stamp on paper, Reese’s)
1	Variety/Choice	Provide some variety within 3 quick options for each day (e.g., Reese’s, walk-and-talk, half-off morning work) -- and change out options every two weeks

Rank the top 3 reinforcement factors that you would consider for enhancement. Now explain how you might proceed to determine *the most appropriate change* to make in Jerome’s plan.

Discuss the feasibility with the teacher to make the changes, including:

- Collaboratively identifying potential reinforcement options that could be used
- Rationale for “Good Job” stamp on papers
- Barriers faced in being able to consistently provide the Reese’s in the morning

Presented by Christopher Barclay, PhD, BCBA, NCSP and Erin Crosby, MA, BCBA at the 15th Annual New England Positive Behavior Support Forum

Reinforcement Reflection Case Study #2: Answer Key

Carter is a 3rd grade student at Sunshine Elementary School. Carter's Student Support Team (SST) reports that when given an academic demand, Carter has been aggressive towards staff and peers on average 3 times per day in order to obtain adult attention. Carter's behavior support plan involves the team providing him with positive, non-contingent adult attention throughout the day and pre-corrections at the beginning of independent activities (e.g., "Remember to raise your hand if you want help"). Carter's plan also includes a 5-minute break with the school counselor at the end of the day if he has had a "safe body" (e.g., zero incidents of aggression all day). While implementing the plan with fidelity, the team reports that Carter continues to be aggressive 3 times per day.

Did the team's reinforcement match the function of Carter's behavior? Explain.

Yes - the functions of his challenging behavior and reinforcement are both obtaining adult attention

Rank the top 3 reinforcement factors that you would consider for enhancement, along with a brief explanation of the change you might suggest to the team.

Rank:	Factor	What change would you consider? Why?
	Immediacy	[See frequency]
1	Frequency	Carter may be provided with immediate, brief behavior-specific praise (e.g., "Thanks for using a safe body") after every hour that he is safe
2	Size/Amount	Carter could be provided two contingent 5-minute breaks (one mid-day, one end-of-day) that total 10 minutes with the school counselor
4	Contingency	The contingency of zero incidents could be modified to allow for 1 incident per day at first (to be decreased over time)
3	Variety/Choice	Carter could be provided with options of (a) what adult to take a break with and (b) what activity to enjoy with the adult

Rank the top 3 reinforcement factors that you would consider for enhancement. Now explain how you might proceed to determine *the most appropriate change* to make in Carter's plan.

Discuss the feasibility with the teacher to make the changes, including:

- Specifically determining routinely feasible "check-points" for providing Carter with praise
- Determining the feasibility of consistently providing the school counselor, which may be worked around by incorporating variety/choice of adult to spend time with

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Reinforcement Reflection Case Study #3: Answer Key

Alexa is a 14 year-old high school student who struggles with using appropriate language at school. In order to increase her use of appropriate language, Alexa’s teacher created a point sheet which Alexa brings with her to each class. At the end of each class, the teacher rates her use of appropriate language using the following scale: 0 =None of the time, 1=Half of the time, 2= Entire time. Alexa’s points are added up each day and written in a special place on the teacher’s desk. If Alexa earns 80% of possible points by the end of the month, she gets to have extra 30 minutes of game time on the last Friday of the month. Since beginning this reinforcement system, Alexa has yet to earn her extra game time, and often does not earn 80% of possible points for the day.

Did the team’s reinforcement match the function of Alexa’s behavior? Explain.

Maybe – if the function of Alexa’s inappropriate language was obtain peer attention, this may be accessed via game time

Rank the top 3 reinforcement factors that you would consider for enhancement, along with a brief explanation of the change you might suggest to the team.

Rank:	Factor	What change would you consider? Why?
5	Immediacy	<i>Points toward a goal could be earned each time Alexa communicates properly during class</i>
3	Frequency	<i>Alexa’s 80% goal for extra game time could be done <u>weekly</u> instead of <u>monthly</u></i>
2	Size/Amount	<i>Alexa could be provided with 10 minutes of game time more frequently (to maintain lost instructional time)</i>
1	Contingency	<i>The goals could be redefined to prevent “perfection” (entire time) being the goal (e.g., 0 = < 50%; 1 = 50-75%, 2 = 75%)</i>
4	Variety/Choice	<i>The team could review Alexa’s interest in game time and potential variations of game time (e.g., board games, outdoor games, gym games)</i>

Rank the top 3 reinforcement factors that you would consider for enhancement. Now explain how you might proceed to determine *the most appropriate change* to make in Alexa’s plan.

Discuss the feasibility with the teacher to make the changes, including:

- Determining buy-in and ability to differentiate between the 0, 1, and 2 ratings in the classroom context*
- Determining the feasibility of arranging for weekly 10-minute doses of extra*