

Review Article

Toward a model for collaborative function-based planning in work-based learning environments

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Abstract.

BACKGROUND: Paid and unpaid work experiences are in-school predictors of post-school employment success for students with disabilities. Unfortunately, students who engage in work-related problem behaviors are at an increased risk of having these experiences terminated. To decrease problem behaviors on the job to help ensure students maintain employment, transition personnel should work in collaboration with high school teams implementing Tier III systems of support to address social-behavior problems in the workplace.

OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this article was to describe (a) how collaborative partnerships could be developed between high school teams implementing Tier III systems and secondary transition personnel supporting students in work environments, and (b) provide a conceptual model outlining the collaborative partnership. Future considerations for research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: Work-based learning, WBLE, function-based, FBA, problem behaviors, Tier III systems, school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports, SWPBIS

1. Introduction

In 2015, the national unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities was 10.7%, nearly twice as high as individuals without disabilities (5.1%; U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Across all educational levels, unemployment rates were significantly higher for individuals with disabilities compared to those without disabilities (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). For individuals with disabilities who do obtain employment, they are more likely to receive lower pay, work part-time, and stay employed for

shorter periods of time (Hotchkiss, 2004; Lindstrom, Doren, & Miesch, 2011; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009; Sanford et al., 2011). These disparities are unfortunate, because community-integrated employment for individuals with disabilities is associated with a number of positive outcomes, such as improvements in emotional well-being, health, productivity, increased autonomy, sense of community integration (e.g., engaging in community activities such as dining at restaurants and running errands), and an overall increased sense of normalcy (Beyer, Brown, Akandi, & Rapley, 2010; Blick, Litz, Thornhill, & Goreczny, 2016; Kober & Eggleton, 2005). Many individuals with disabilities may not experience these positive outcomes. One of the primary reasons is due to individuals with disabilities failing

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to socially fit within employment settings (Agran, Hughes, Thoma, & Scott, 2016; Alias, 2014; Blick et al., 2016).

1.1. Social skills as a contributing factor

One reason for disparities in work for individuals with disabilities is a lack of social skills. An abundance of empirical literature exists on the importance of social skills in relation to employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Agran et al., 2016; Mazzotti, Test, & Mustian, 2014; Murray & Doren, 2013). Social skills in secondary transition are operationally defined by Rowe et al. (2015) as “behaviors and attitudes that facilitate communication and cooperation (e.g., social conventions, social problem solving when engaged in a social interaction, body language, speaking, listening, responding, verbal, and written communications; p. 122)”, and are essential for gaining and maintaining long-term employment. As evidence of the importance to the workforce, Test et al. (2009) found social skills to be a strong predictor of post-school employment for students with disabilities in secondary transition. Unfortunately, students with disabilities, who do not have accurate and fluent social skills in high school, may not be able to function efficiently in the work setting, and may be more likely to feel socially isolated and engage in problematic behaviors, which will hinder their chances of gaining positive work experiences (Alias, 2014). For students receiving secondary transition services, such as work-based learning experiences (WBLEs), limited empirical evidence exists concerning developing effective interventions to (a) address problematic social behaviors in the workplace and (b) teach more appropriate work-related social behaviors (Cihak, Alberto, & Fredrick, 2007; Hughes, Alberto, & Fredrick, 2006).

1.2. Lack of instruction in work-related social skills

In a seminal study, Salzberg et al. (1986) asked employers across different entry-level jobs to rate a number of work-related social behaviors (i.e., clarifying instructions, asking directions, responding to criticism), personal social behaviors (i.e., listening without interrupting, acknowledging what others are saying, expressing appreciation), and nonsocial behaviors (i.e., working continuously, getting to work on time) in terms of importance to job success. Work-related social behaviors were rated

significantly higher than personal social behaviors. Unfortunately, work-related social behaviors are typically not ones most frequently taught in schools. In a replication and follow-up study, Agran et al. (2016) surveyed over 600 secondary teachers using a revised list of both work-related and personal social skills generated by Salzberg et al. (1986). As with the previous employers surveyed, teachers were asked to (a) rate the importance of each social behavior to general employment settings and (b) indicate the extent to which each of these skills were taught in the classroom. Findings indicated a significant difference between the skills educators perceived to be most important (work-related social behaviors) and those that were actually taught (personal social behaviors; Agran et al., 2016). The authors suggested work-related social behaviors may need to be taught during applied work experiences (e.g., on-the-job) to ensure skills are effectively delivered and received by students (Agran et al., 2016).

The concept that certain work-related behaviors need to be taught in authentic contexts to support generalization is consistent with previous literature (Sheridan, Hungelmann, & Maughan, 1999). Sheridan et al. (1999) noted learned social skills often fail to generalize to different contexts due to interventionists (a) failing to consider the environmental and contextual variables which govern the continuation of these skills, and (b) difficulty in correctly identifying target behaviors important to address to promote generalization and maintenance of these skills (Sheridan et al., 1999). If target behaviors were identified based on the operant function the behaviors served, teaching targeted behaviors based on function may be an effective way to teach new work-related social behaviors which address a similar function. Furthermore, to ensure maintenance of these newly learned social behaviors, interventionists should program common stimuli within the work environment to prompt the continued use of these behaviors (Sheridan et al., 1999; Stokes & Baer, 1977).

1.3. Context of the workplace as a contributing factor

Unlike the workplace, schools play an important role in providing structured learning environments where students are taught how to engage in desired and expected social behaviors through the use of natural social behavior systems (Simonsen et al., 2010). Existing support systems may include (a) universal preventative strategies focused on acknowledging

and reinforcing positive social behaviors of all students across school settings, and (b) general and special education personnel who are expected to explicitly teach and model appropriate social behaviors in the classroom and non-classroom settings. For students engaging in more serious problem behaviors, school counselors and psychologists are trained to deliver social-behavior skills (Plavnick, Kaid, & MacFarland, 2015). For schools implementing multi-tiered systems of support, a team of school and non-school personnel (e.g., school behavioral specialist, teachers, families, community members) are responsible for providing and monitoring individualized supports for students engaging in high intensity, challenging social-behavior problems (Simonsen et al., 2010).

Unfortunately, natural supports for students who engage in work-related behavior problems are often limited in the workplace. Basic work-related social-behavior expectations are not likely to be explicitly taught or reinforced, and businesses typically do not hire behavior support specialists to assist individuals engaging in social-behavior problems (Agran et al., 2016). Furthermore, severe behavior problems in the workplace are more likely to be handled in a punitive manner, which may result in a loss of responsibilities on the job or termination (Hughes et al., 2006). For the aforementioned reason, WBLEs are ideal situations for students to receive behavior support to teach the expected social-behavior skills necessary for competitive integrated employment.

1.4. Intervening with students participating in WBLEs

WBLEs are commonly used in secondary transition to prepare students with disabilities for competitive integrated employment (Cease-Cook, Fowler, & Test, 2015; Luecking & Luecking, 2015). Rowe et al. (2015) operationally defined these work experiences as “any activity that places the student in an authentic workplace and could include work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and paid employment” (p. 118). These experiences have shown to increase the likelihood of post-school employment for students in secondary transition by providing youth with disabilities opportunities to (a) investigate various careers areas, (b) gain and maintain an employment position, and (c) learn specific job-related skills through hands-on experiences (Cease-Cook et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2015). However, WBLEs are not typically designed

to teach students work-related social-behavior skills. Students, who engage in inappropriate work-related behaviors, are at increased risk of having these valuable learning experiences denied or terminated (Hughes et al., 2006; Kittelman, Bromley, & Mazzotti, 2016). To understand how to address inappropriate work-related behaviors in WBLEs, it is first important to understand the use of function-based interventions in WBLEs. Next, to address the primary purpose of this article, a description of how to develop collaborative partnerships between high school teams implementing Tier III systems and secondary transition personnel supporting students participating in WBLEs is provided, including a conceptual model outlining the collaborative partnership (see Fig. 1).

2. The use of function-based interventions in WBLEs

Among the most effective and empirically supported interventions for decreasing problem behaviors are those that use a function-based approach (Anderson, Rodriguez, & Campbell, 2015; Carr, 1994; Horner, 1994). Interventions that address the function, or reason why individuals engage in problem behaviors, are more efficacious than those that do not (Dunlap & Fox, 2011; Gage, Lewis, & Stichter, 2012; Ingram, Lewis-Palmer, & Sugai, 2005; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004). The rationale suggests that once the function of a problem behavior is understood, efforts can be made to not only decrease problem behaviors, but also teach more appropriate ones which address a similar function. Functions for behaviors fall under three empirically supported categories: (a) receive or obtain access to a reinforcing stimulus, (b) avoid or escape an aversive stimulus, or (c) gain access to a sensory or automatic stimulus (Carr, 1994; Lewis, Mitchell, Harvey, Green, & McKenzie, 2015).

Assessments typically used to determine the function of problem behaviors primarily include functional analyses (FAs) and functional behavioral assessments (FBAs; Carr, 1994; Lewis et al., 2015). FAs and FBAs have been used to determine the function of problem behaviors across a range of behaviors (e.g., decreasing off-task and disruptive behaviors, increasing on-task and compliance-related behaviors; Anderson et al., 2015; Brooks, Todd, Tofflemoyer, & Horner, 2003; Hughes et al., 2006; Majeika et al., 2011) and disability categories (e.g., autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disability, emotional and

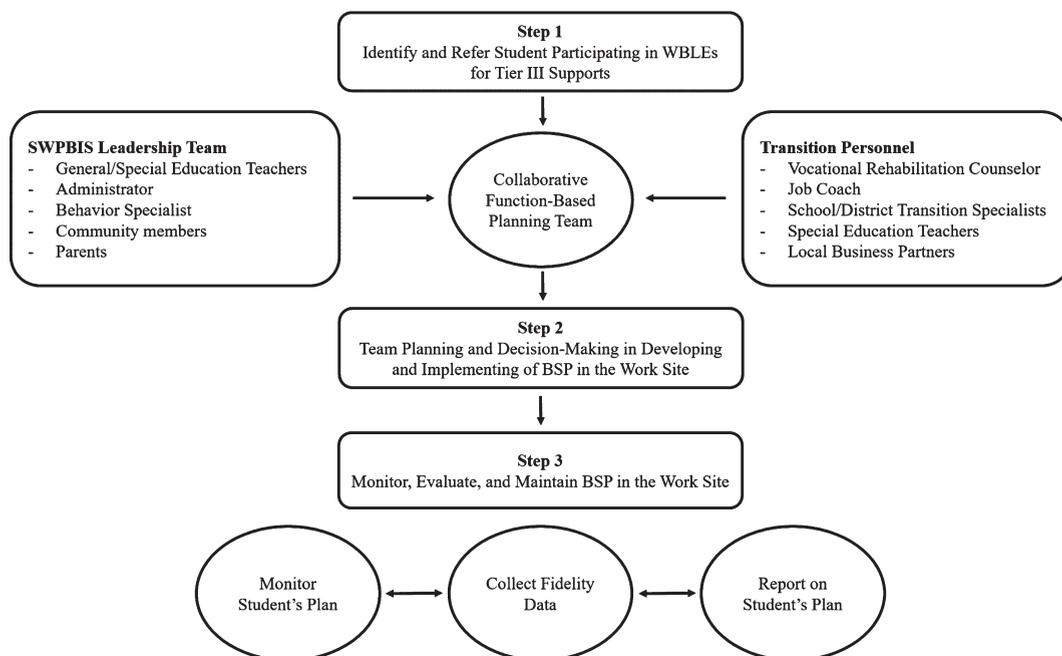


Fig. 1. Conceptual partnership between transition personnel and Tier III SWPBIS teams for providing function-based supports to at-risk students participating in WBLEs.

behavioral disorders; Hughes et al., 2006; Lane, Kalberg, & Shepcaro, 2009; Machalicek, O'Reilly, Beretvas, Sigafos, & Lancioni, 2007).

Although both FBAs and FAs have empirical support, FBAs are more widely used in schools since staff are mandated to conduct FBAs for students on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), who have been suspended for more than 10 days or placed in a temporary alternative education setting, and because FBAs are perceived by school staff as being more feasible to conduct (Lewis et al., 2015). FBAs rely on collecting direct (i.e., observations of student behavior) and indirect (e.g., school records, interviews, medical records, rating scales) student information to develop summary hypotheses to determine antecedent and consequence stimuli governing these problem behaviors (Anderson et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2015). When compared to FA methodologies, FBAs are considered less rigorous because FBAs do not require confirmation of the function of the problem behavior through experimentally testing; however, research with students with disabilities has shown FBA generated-hypotheses to closely align with those developed using FAs (Lewis et al., 2015). A major strength for using FBAs in schools is that major alterations to the school environment to experimentally test and confirm functions of problem

behaviors are not required. Furthermore, internal and external behavioral specialists can train typical school personnel to conduct FBAs and develop effective function-based behavior support plans (BSPs) for students exhibiting problem behaviors (Borgmeier, Loman, Hara, & Rodriguez, 2015; Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015).

2.1. *Function-based interventions in work settings for high school students*

Few studies have examined the effects of function-based interventions for intervening with high school youth with disabilities participating in WBLEs. Research in this area has primarily focused on supporting students with mild to moderate disabilities (Cihak et al., 2007; Hughes et al., 2006). For example, Hughes, Alberto, and Fredrick (2006) conducted FAs and FBAs with four high school students with learning disabilities participating in work experiences in community settings and engaging in inappropriate work-related behaviors (e.g., off-task, noncompliance, asking multiple questions unrelated to work, excessively talking to others; Hughes et al., 2006). In a related study, Cihak, Alberto, and Fredrick (2007) intervened with four high school students with moderate to severe learning disabilities, participating in

community-based work settings, engaging in inappropriate workplace behaviors (e.g., leaving the work area unassigned, outbursts, inappropriate touching). Interventionists conducted brief FAs to confirm the function of each student's problem behaviors, and then, developed antecedent-based intervention strategies to reduce the problem behaviors.

In both studies, the primary interventionists were the researchers. However, Hughes et al. (2006) utilized a special education teacher, para-educators, job coaches, and co-workers at the work sites to assist in implementation of the interventions for student workers. Given the limited research, there is little understanding about the roles and responsibilities transition personnel, co-workers, and typical school personnel play in supporting students with problem behaviors in work-based settings. In a recent practitioner article, Kittelman et al. (2016) described how school transition and employment personnel may work together to collect indirect (e.g., ecological assessments, interviews, student records reviews) and direct (e.g., observations of problem behaviors) information to conduct FBAs and implement function-based interventions for students participating in WBLEs. In addition, Mueller, Bassett, and Brewer (2012) described how a support team is necessary to work together to implement effective transition-focused function-based BSPs.

2.2. *Systems for function-based interventions in schools*

Collaborative approaches to behavior intervention planning are routinely used in schools implementing multi-tiered systems of support (Dunlap & Fox, 2011; Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010; Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009). Multi-tiered systems of support are models designed to match the level of need (e.g., behavioral, health, or academic) to the level of support (i.e., universal, group-based, or individualized) for each student in the school (Dunlap & Fox, 2011; Horner et al., 2010).

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is one multi-tiered system of support designed to address the social-cultural and behavior needs for all students within a school (Horner et al., 2010). Implementation of SWPBIS is associated with improvements in a wide range of student behaviors and academic outcomes, school climate, and attendance (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Leaf, 2015; J. Freeman et al., 2016; Horner et al., 2009). There are over

23,000 schools implementing SWPBIS (PBIS; see www.pbis.org). At each tier (i.e., Tier I [primary], Tier II [secondary], Tier III [tertiary]), SWPBIS is comprised of a leadership team responsible for executing the organizational systems necessary to implement, monitor, and sustain evidence-based practices (EBPs) embedded within the SWPBIS framework (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Debnam, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2013; Horner et al., 2014; McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner, 2006; McIntosh et al., 2013).

First, Tier I practices include universal interventions designed to address the needs of all students across all academic settings (Debnam et al., 2013; Horner et al., 2010; McIntosh et al., 2006). Second, Tier II supports and systems include group-based interventions and weekly progress monitoring by school teams to address and prevent problem behaviors for students identified as at-risk (Horner et al., 2010; McIntosh et al., 2006). Interventions typically include low-intensity, EBPs such as Check-In Check-Out (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010). Third, Tier III supports and systems are most relevant to students participating in WBLEs. Tier III supports and systems include having leadership teams responsible for conducting FBAs and developing behavior support plans (BSPs), which utilize core evidence-based strategies in the fields of applied behavior analysis and explicit instruction (e.g., reinforcement contingencies, self-management, intensive instruction, prompting, programming for generalization and maintenance) to intervene with the most at-risk students (Horner et al., 2010). These leadership teams consist of a team of individuals with the knowledge and experience necessary to identify, develop, implement, and monitor interventions for students needing intensive and individualized supports (Benazzi, Horner, & Good, 2006; R. Freeman et al., 2006; Horner et al., 2014). Teams include both general and special education personnel (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators), non-school personnel (e.g., family members, social workers, community service providers; Debnam et al., 2013; R. Freeman et al., 2006), and a behavior specialist with experience in conducting FBAs (Benazzi et al., 2006; Borgmeier et al., 2015; Horner et al., 2010).

3. **Applying Tier III school systems to WBLEs**

For students with disabilities engaging in challenging work-related problem behaviors in WBLEs, it

may be practical and feasible for transition personnel and school team leaders implementing Tier III systems to collaborate for the purposes of supporting students in these off-campus workplace contexts. The organizational systems necessary to implement SWPBIS at the Tier III level, include systems for (a) teaming, (b) identifying and referring students for Tier III supports, and (c) team planning and decision-making (Horner et al., 2014; Horner et al., 2010). The following sections discuss how these Tier III organizational systems may be used to support students participating in WBLEs with minimal adjustments to the already existing systems in place in high schools implementing Tier III supports.

3.1. Teaming to support students in WBLEs

To actualize how Tier III team members may assist students with problem behaviors participating in WBLEs, transition personnel, directly responsible for working with these students, should be included on the Tier III team. This allows an opportunity for transition personnel to provide Tier III team members with student information regarding the student's work-related problem behaviors. Transition personnel should include individuals who most frequently come into contact with and/or impact the success of each student in the work environment. Specific transition team members may be school-based (e.g., special education teachers, transition coordinators) or community-based (e.g., job coaches, vocational rehabilitation counselors).

At the initial planning meeting, team members need to decide what each members' roles and responsibilities will be in terms of providing behavior support to students participating in WBLEs. For example, team members need to decide who will be responsible for coordinating how often and where the team would meet to plan and provide support to students. For transition personnel looking to partner with high school teams already implementing Tier III supports, it would be reasonable to assume the team already has staff members responsible for coordinating and leading group activities. In addition, internal support teams are likely to (a) contain vital members necessary for planning and implementing intensive behavior supports, and (b) have designated locations/meeting times for planning and coordinating behavior support for students.

3.2. Identifying and referring students in WBLEs for Tier III supports

Simonsen et al. (2010) highlight the need for having a streamlined, data-based system for referring and identifying students needing Tier III level supports. This system is contingent on having effective and well-established screening procedures (Scott, Anderson, & Spaulding, 2008; Simonsen et al., 2010). For schools implementing SWPBIS, screening procedures include office discipline referrals and/or teacher and staff nominations for students to receive individualized supports (Horner et al., 2010; Scott et al., 2008). Although it is unlikely that employers have a screening system to identify students needing behavior supports in the workplace, transition personnel, school teams, and employers could work together to develop a similar system for identifying and nominating students needing individualized supports. Screeners may include using formal procedures for assessing adaptive and maladaptive challenging behaviors in the workplace, such as the *Scales of Independence Behavior-Revised* (SIB-R; Bruininks, Woodcock, Weatherman, & Hill, 1996), and informal procedures, such as an employer's verbal recommendations to transition personnel, or more formal procedures which may include documented written work reports. For example, specific employee evaluations of students' behaviors and/or work performance may be useful indirect tools for determining the intensity of particular problem behaviors students are engaging in, and whether these behaviors actually need individualized support from Tier III teams.

Further, a nomination process would also be helpful in identifying whether students participating in WBLES already have BSPs in place at their high schools. Ideally, if students are receiving function-based supports in their schools, a wrap-around process would be included into a BSP to ensure it is meeting the student's needs across multiple contexts (e.g., school, home, community settings; Eber et al., 2002, 2011). However, it is not uncommon that replacement behaviors, developed through the implementation of BSPs, may fail to generalize to different settings. If students participating in WBLES already have BSPs in place in their schools, Tier III team members should work with transition personnel to make contextual adjustments to BSPs for the work context in order to extend services and provide wrap-around supports to students in these work settings. For example, if a student already has a BSP in place at school, which involves teacher prompting

the student to take breaks at particular times when the student is engaging in difficult class assignments, job coaches may also be trained to prompt the student, who is engaging in difficult work tasks on the job site, to take breaks before engaging in problem behaviors.

3.3. *Team planning and decision-making*

To develop an efficient and effective collaborative organizational structure for team planning and decision-making to support students participating in WBLEs, several other system-level considerations are necessary. First, a system is needed for Tier III teaming in terms of collaboration during the development of the BSP process. Second, a system is needed to conduct progress monitoring and evaluation to ensure BSPs are being implemented with fidelity and achieving desired outcomes. Third, a system is needed for reporting on student progress to the support team and those invested in each student (e.g., family, employers, school/transition personnel). Last, a system is necessary for collecting fidelity data to assist in guiding the continued use of BSPs in settings for which they are intended to be maintained (Borgmeier et al., 2015; Horner et al., 2010; Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015).

3.3.1. *Development of BSPs*

The building of BSPs for students participating in WBLEs is likely to be strengthened through the collaboration of the entire Tier III team. Each member may have particular insights concerning modifications important to the work setting to increase the effectiveness of BSPs, and what natural, environmental supports exist to build on and further develop student's strengths. O'Neill and colleagues (2015) described four important considerations when designing BSPs. First, teams need to consider how personnel working with the student (i.e., supervisors, coworkers, job coaches) will change their behaviors to better support each student worker. As an example, for a student engaging in off-task behaviors on the job (e.g., checking phone, talking to co-workers for extended periods of time), this may include coaching the employment supervisor on how to pre-correct with the student prior to the student engaging in daily job-related tasks. Second, BSPs need to be based on prior FBA information to ensure the function of the student's behavior is taken into consideration (O'Neill, Albin, et al., 2015). Targeting the function of students' problem behaviors

assists team members in reducing previously negative behaviors by teaching more positive ones, which address the same function the problem behaviors had previously served. An example could include a student worker, who is engaging in disruptive behaviors, obtaining attention from co-workers. An appropriate intervention to address the function of "peer attention" and/or teach a replacement social skill for getting peer attention could consist of the student earning opportunities to work with co-workers on future job assignments. Third, O'Neill and colleagues (2015) recommended that BSPs be technically sound, meaning that plans need to incorporate the use of behaviorally-based principles (i.e., shaping, chaining, schedules of reinforcement, extinction). When developing technically-sound BSPs, careful consideration needs to be given by the support team on how to best teach and reinforce newly learned behaviors using behaviorally-based principles. For example, the support team may decide a student engaging in negative behaviors (e.g., yelling, fighting, inappropriate language) on the job needs to be placed on immediate extinction; at the same time, other replacement behaviors need to be taught through task analysis using a sequence of chaining procedures.

Last, BSPs should fit naturally within the intended context to support effective implementation. This means goals, values, skills, and resources of the setting should be taken into consideration during the development and implementation of the BSPs (O'Neill, Albin, et al., 2015). To gain implementer buy-in, it is important goals of the BSPs, such as teaching more appropriate work-related behaviors, align with goals of the transition specialists and employment providers. In addition, careful consideration should be given to resources available to transition specialists and other staff implementing the BSPs. For example, a job coach is expected to teach and intermittently reinforce a student worker to ask for help when the student is engaging in difficult tasks. Once the student seeks out help appropriately, the job coach is expected to then give specific reinforcement to the student. However, if the student has engaged in the correct behavior and the job coach is unable to deliver the reinforcer, due to possible financial costs or time restraints, the student may stop asking for assistance when engaging in future job tasks.

3.3.2. *Progress monitoring and evaluation*

Once a BSP is developed, it is the responsibility of the Tier III support team to decide on how the plan

will be evaluated and monitored (Scott et al., 2008; Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015). The support team must identify: (a) the student data which will be used for monitoring and evaluating the BSP; and (b) those responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the BSP. The procedures used for monitoring and evaluating, including the frequency to which the BSP is monitored and evaluated, should be decided by the Tier III team prior to the implementation of the BSP in WBLEs (Scott et al., 2008; Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015). Having clear decision rules regarding what behavior data will need be collected and the degree to which the BSPs are implemented with fidelity will assist team members in confirming students are making adequate progress towards reaching their intervention goals (Horner et al., 2010; Simonsen et al., 2010).

In schools implementing Tier III supports, team members are typically trained and responsible for carrying-out specific components of each intervention and collectively responsible for making data-based decisions about how the student is responding to the intervention and whether additional adjustments or supports to the BSP are needed (Simonsen et al., 2010). Tier III team members assisting transition personnel in supporting students in WBLEs must decide on who will (a) be trained to collect the student data, (b) implement the BSP in the off-campus work setting, (c) evaluate and monitor the BSP, and (d) report to the team on the student's progress (Scott et al., 2008).

Once a student participating in a WBLE is identified as needing function-based support and referred to the support team, it is the responsibility of the team to collect both direct and indirect student data to develop a clear description of the student's problem behaviors and determine the function of those problem behaviors through the FBA process. Indirect data may include written student records or evaluations of work performance, as well as interviews with transition and employment personnel, and the student to identify the features associated with the student's problem behaviors (O'Neill, Albin, et al., 2015). Direct data would be collected through observations of the student's problem behaviors at the work site. Problem behaviors most common to worksites include behaviors such as off task, noncompliant, complaining, and disruptive (Cihak et al., 2007; Hughes et al., 2006). Although, the roles and responsibilities of assisting school team members with conducting FBAs and BSPs may be

novel for transition personnel, they are likely to be experienced in conducting other forms of direct and indirect assessments (Luecking & Luecking, 2015). For example, VR counselors typically complete vocational assessments and provide direct supervision and job-related coaching for student workers participating in WBLEs (Luecking & Luecking, 2015; Schall et al., 2015).

For transition personnel participating in the Tier III teaming process, the roles and responsibilities in terms of monitoring progress and evaluating BSPs for students in the work setting should stay consistent to build fluency for these members during the BSP process. Optimally, transition personnel would be involved in each step of the process. Specific roles may include being trained to (a) collect direct and indirect student observation data, (b) assist in developing summary statements and developing BSPs, and (c) implement and report on the ongoing implementation of the plan in the work settings. To carry out these responsibilities, transition personnel could receive training and professional development from internal school personnel (e.g., behavior specialists, other members on the Tier III team). Internal coaching in terms of providing behavior support is typically the responsibility of specific SWPBIS team leaders who do not have primary teaching roles and have received additional training to provide coaching support from external or other internal SWPBIS team leaders (Lewis, Barrett, Horner, Mitchell, & Starkey, 2016). Concerning Tier III systems, internal coaches are trained to determine readiness for Tier III implementation in schools and to monitor and evaluate Tier III systems as a whole once in place (Lewis et al., 2016).

3.3.3. *Reporting on progress and outcomes of BSPs*

Having clear and measurable data for evaluating and reporting on students' progress assists Tier III team members in making informed, data-based decisions regarding when to adjust the BSP and/or fade supports (Horner et al., 2010; Simonsen et al., 2010). To facilitate this formative problem solving and data-based decision-making process, school teams should collect student-level observational data pre- and post-intervention in WBLEs to determine (a) number of target problem behaviors which occurred, (b) different types of problem behaviors, (c) locations where those behaviors took place, and (d) with whom those behaviors happened (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Progress reports based on students' performance are

typically analyzed and evaluated through the use of graphic visual displays, such as single-case analyses (Horner et al., 2005; Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015). Internal school coaches may train transition personnel to (a) collect pre-intervention data of students engaging in problem behaviors on the job, (b) collect data of student problem behaviors once the intervention is in place to examine any changes in the student's responses, (c) note changes in the student's behavior once the intervention is in place, and (d) continually monitor the student's problem behaviors throughout the intervention on the job. Training transition personnel to record and graph students' direct observational data for the weekly or bi-weekly Tier III team meetings, may include having internal team members (i.e., coaches, school behavior specialists) make visits to WBLEs to train and coach the transition personnel. Training and coaching may include behavior support specialist and transition personnel conducting initial student observations together, so transition personnel are able to gain fluency and receive direct feedback on their data collection.

3.3.4. Collecting fidelity data to guide implementation and evaluation of BSPs

Having weekly or bi-weekly Tier III planning meetings for team members to review student data collected by transition personnel, and adjust supports if necessary (e.g., increase or decrease intervention intensity, fade supports, develop new BSP), serves as a safeguard to ensure BSPs are being implemented and monitored with adequate fidelity (Benazzi et al., 2006; Scott et al., 2008). Prior to intervention, the support team must decide on what would be considered meeting adequate progress for each student, and whether training or re-training of students or transition personnel should occur. Once the BSP is implemented with fidelity and the student has shown success on the plan, the continued use of the BSP will depend on the goals outlined by the support team (Benazzi et al., 2006). In schools, goals of the intervention typically include (a) immediately reducing problem behaviors of the most immediate concern, (b) reducing any barriers that prevent fellow peers in receiving educational opportunities and (c) improving students' social-behavior and/or academic deficits (Benazzi et al., 2006). For students participating in WBLEs, it is reasonable to assume many of the same goals would apply in this context.

4. Considerations and future directions for research and practice

The purpose of this article was to describe how a collaborative partnership could be developed between high school teams implementing Tier III systems and secondary transition personnel supporting students participating in WBLEs, including a conceptual model outlining the collaborative partnership (see Fig. 1). Due to the importance of workplace social behaviors and a lack of these important skills being taught in schools (Agran et al., 2016), interventions that specifically target the function of the problem behavior and teach more desirable replacement behaviors would greatly benefit students needing intensive supports in WBLEs prior to entering the workforce. Conducting FBAs and developing BSPs is a multi-component process in schools and is recommended to be carried out by a team of individuals (Horner et al., 2010; Simonsen et al., 2010). High schools implementing SWPBIS at the Tier III level have established organizational systems and procedures necessary to facilitate this collaborative partnership between internal school teams and off-campus transition personnel. To expand upon this promising line of research, several important recommendations for future research and practice need to be addressed.

4.1. Addressing barriers for collaboration in high schools

Compared to elementary and middle schools, high schools present unique contextual challenges for researchers and practitioners looking to implement effective practices (Flannery et al., 2009; Freeman et al., 2016). High schools typically have more staff and students, multiple administrators, and larger campuses (Flannery et al., 2009). For these reasons, the high school context is likely to present unique barriers which could impact the successful collaboration between Tier III school teams and secondary transition personnel. For example, an important factor for the proposed collaboration, is the ability for transition personnel and internal Tier III school staff to have a designated regularly scheduled meeting time for student teaming. In high schools, with multiple initiatives being implemented that compete for staff time and resources, it is important for Tier III teams to have of at least one administrator who can advocate for the importance of Tier III teaming. Second, because of the number of students in high schools, who may need

behavior support and are participating in transition-related activities, it is crucial that teams contain enough members necessary to provide comprehensive support to students participating in WBLEs.

4.2. Further validation of FBAs and BSPs for students participating in WBLEs

Although a small number of peer-reviewed practitioner articles have discussed how function-based supports can be utilized by transition personnel to address work-related challenging behaviors and teach important transition-related skills, such as self-advocacy/self-determination (Kittelman et al., 2016; Mueller et al., 2012), empirical demonstrations are warranted. Specifically, future research is needed in terms of extending the use of behavior-analytic technologies (e.g., response prompting, shaping and fading, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, goal setting) when supporting high school students engaging in problem behaviors in WBLEs. Training transition personnel to assist in collecting FBA information and developing and implementing BSPs, may be an effective way to disseminate the use of these technologies to students in these settings.

4.3. Roles and responsibilities of secondary transition personnel

As discussed, transition personnel could play a critical role in terms of providing function-based support for students with problem behaviors participating in WBLEs. However, empirical validation is warranted. Specifically, future research is needed to examine how Tier III teams, with the inclusion of transition personnel, could provide effective function-based support to these students. First, future research is needed to understand what roles and responsibilities transition personnel may have with regard to collecting FBA information such as: (a) collecting indirect student information (i.e., FBA interviews, employer evaluations of student's performances, strength-based information); and (b) direct information (i.e., conducting direct observations of student's problem behaviors), which would help the support team develop clear and accurate summary statements to confirm the function of each student's challenging behaviors. Second, future research is needed to address how transition personnel could work with internal Tier III school team members to develop and implement effective BSPs in work settings to address student's challenging behaviors.

Internal Tier III school team leaders may assist transition personnel in supporting students by providing training and coaching about how to collect FBA information and implement and evaluate BSPs. Identification of (a) how training should be conducted and (b) what coaching activities would be most beneficial for transition personnel in implementing components of the FBA-BSP process at worksites are important areas for future research. Future research is needed to also understand how training and coaching activities could be effectively delivered (in person or teleconference) to transition personnel. Because this teaming process between transition personnel and internal Tier III team members is complex and utilizes existing organizational systems already in place, it may take several years for this collaborative model to be efficient and effective for providing behavior support to students participating in WBLEs. It may be beneficial for researchers and practitioners to build a blueprint regarding how school teams and transition personnel can form these collaborative partnerships and achieve the desired student outcomes, which can be used to identify possible gaps in practices for future research to address (Chafouleas, Johnson, Overstreet, & Santos, 2015).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a strong potential for transition personnel to work in partnership with Tier III school teams. Students with disabilities participating in WBLEs and engaging in problem behaviors may be at increased risks of having work experiences terminated and may not be able to maintain future long-term employment. Work experiences in high schools are predictors of positive post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009; Mazzotti et al., 2016). If students do not have the opportunity to participate in work experiences due to behavior concerns, it is likely to impact future employment success. To address work-related problem behaviors, transition personnel and school teams are encouraged to enter into meaningful partnerships to provide the function-based behavioral support to students participating in WBLEs.

Conflict of interest

None to report.

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