

student must be able to identify and evaluate the possible consequences of each alternative. Finally, the student must be able to implement the solution. This may require rehearsal and modeling. Whereas these four components are characteristic of most interpersonal problem-solving programs, many programs include additional components and procedures.

For example, a social problem-solving intervention was conducted with 50 students with serious emotional disturbances (Amish, Gesten, Smith, Clark, and Stark, 1988). The intervention consisted of 15 structured lessons that occurred for 40 minutes once each week. The following problem-solving steps were taught:

1. Say what the problem is and how you feel.
2. Decide on a goal.
3. Stop and think before you decide what to do.
4. Think of many possible solutions to the problem.
5. Think about what will happen next after each possible solution.
6. When you find a good solution, try it.

The results of the intervention indicated that students with serious emotional disturbances who participated in the intervention improved their social problem-solving skills and were able to generate more alternatives to interviewing and role-playing measures.

Following are descriptions of several interpersonal problem-solving (IPS) programs that have been developed, implemented, and evaluated with students who have learning and behavior disorders.

FAST and SLAM

FAST is a strategy that is taught as part of an IPS program to second-, third-, and fourth-grade students with learning disabilities who have been identified as having social skills problems (Vaughn and Lancelotta, 1990; Vaughn, Lancelotta, and Minnis, 1988; Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe, 1991). The purpose of FAST is to teach students to consider problems carefully before responding to them and to consider alternatives and their consequences. Figure 9.2 presents the FAST strategy. In step 1, **Freeze and Think**, students are taught to identify the problem. In step 2, **Alternatives**, students are taught to consider possible ways of solving the problem. In step 3, **Solution Evaluation**, students are

Figure 9.2 FAST: An Interpersonal Problem-Solving Strategy

Freeze and think!

What is the problem?

Alternatives?

What are my possible solutions?

Solution evaluation

Choose the best solution:

safe?

fair?

Try it!

Slowly and carefully

Does it work?

asked to prepare a solution or course of action for solving the problem that is both safe and fair. The idea is to get students to consider solutions that will be effective in the long run. Step 4, **Try It**, asks students to rehearse and implement the solution. If they are unsuccessful at implementing the solution, students are taught to go back to alternatives. Students with learning disabilities practiced this strategy by using real problems generated by themselves and their peers.

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

PROCEDURES:

1. In each classroom, ask peers to rate all same-sex classmates on the extent to which they would like to be friends with them. Students who receive few friendship votes and many no-friendship votes are identified as rejected. Students who receive many friendship votes and few no-friendship votes are identified as popular. See Coie, Dodge, and Coppotelli (1982) for exact procedures in assessing popular and rejected students.
2. A rejected student with learning disabilities is paired with a same-sex popular classmate, and the pair becomes the social skills trainers for the class and school. The school principal announces to the school and to parents through a newsletter who the social skills trainers are for the school.
3. Children who are selected as social skills trainers are removed from the classroom two

- to three times a week and are taught social skills strategies for approximately 30 minutes each session.
- 4. Social skills training includes learning the FAST strategy as well as other social skills, such as accepting negative feedback, receiving positive feedback, and making friendship overtures.
- 5. While the social skills trainers are learning social skills strategies, their classmates are recording problems they have at home and at school and placing their lists in the classroom problem-solving box. Trainers use these lists as they learn the strategies outside of class as well as for in-class discussion that occurs later and is led by the social skills trainers.
- 6. After the social skills trainers have learned a strategy, such as FAST, they teach it to the entire class with backup and support from the researcher and classroom teacher.
- 7. During subsequent weeks, social skills trainers leave the room for only one session per week and practice the FAST strategy as well as other strategies with classmates at least one time per week. These reviews include large group explanations and small group problem-solving exercises.

- 8. Students who are selected as social skills trainers are recognized by their teacher and administrator for their special skills. Other students are asked to consult the social skills trainer when they have difficulties.

COMMENTS: The above approach to teaching social skills and increasing peer acceptance has been successfully applied in two studies with youngsters with learning disabilities (Vaughn, Lancelotta, and Minnis, 1988; Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe, 1991) but has not been evaluated for behavior-disordered students or adolescents.

Apply the Concept 9.3 shows an activity sheet that is used as part of a homework assignment for students participating in the training.

Based on principles similar to those of the FAST strategy, SLAM is a technique that can be used to assist students in accepting and assimilating negative feedback and comments from other people (McIntosh, Vaughn, and Bennerson, 1995). The SLAM strategy is practiced in small groups and presented to the class. The four components of the SLAM strategy are as follows:

APPLY the CONCEPT 9.3

Activity Sheet for FAST

This activity sheet can be used to give children written practice in using the FAST strategy.

You are in the cafeteria. Another student keeps bugging you. He hits you, pokes you, tries to steal your food, and will not stop bullying you. You start to get angry. What would you do? Use FAST to help you solve the problem.

- 1. *Freeze and think.* What is the problem?

- 2. *Alternatives.* What are your possible solutions?

- 3. *Solution evaluation.* Choose the best one. Remember: safe and fair; works in the long run.

- 4. *Try it.* Do you think this will work?

A friend of yours is upset. She is teased a lot, especially by a boy named Kenny. She told you that she wants to run away from school. What could you tell your friend to help her solve the problem? Use FAST to help you.

- 1. _____

- _____
- 2. _____
- _____
- 3. _____
- _____
- 4. _____
- _____

1. *STOP*—Stop whatever you are doing.
2. *LOOK*—Look the person in the eye.
3. *ASK*—Ask the person a question to clarify what he or she means.
4. *MAKE*—Make an appropriate response to the person.

Figure 9.3 presents the lyrics to the SLAM Strategy Song.

LLW: Living, Learning, and Working

Living, Learning, and Working (LLW) is a program that is designed to enhance listening, attending, empathy, social problem solving, and contributing skills among fourth and fifth graders (Brigman and Molina, 1999). This program can be implemented throughout the school with the cooperation of other teachers or the school counselor. The fourth and fifth graders work with a younger reading partner, and the pair read books that deal with specific issues, such as difficulty making friends. This program is designed to be implemented in a group setting. The goals

Figure 9.3 Lyrics to the SLAM Strategy Song

Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Stop what you're doing. Look them in the eye.
 Fix your face. We'll tell you why.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Listen with your ears to what they say.
 This is no time for you to play.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Ask a question if you don't understand.
 Don't stand there in wonderland.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Accepting negative feedback, feedback, feedback.
 Make a response to their concerns.
 Accepting negative feedback is the way to learn.

of the program are achieved in three phases: working together, learning together, and living together. Figure 9.4 presents the specific goals for each session. Bibliotherapy is a counseling

Figure 9.4 Living, Learning, and Working

Session 1

Developing group norms and learning about each other.

Session 2

Learning specific encouragement skills and behaviors.

Session 3

Learning cooperation skills for working in a group. Students learn that they will be helping younger students by learning specific strategies for reading, discussing, and role playing. The younger students are introduced and paired with the older students midway through the session.

Sessions 4–8

Each session follows a six-step format. Different books can be used for each session.

1. Read a developmentally appropriate story that involves diversity such as cognitive, physical, or social.
2. Process the story using story structure and the five *Ws* (*Who* were the main characters? *When* did the story take place? *What* were the main events? *What* were the main problems encountered in the story? *Where* did the story take place? *Why* did the characters have the problem?) and two *Hs* (*How* did the characters feel at the beginning, middle, and end of the story? *How* was the problem solved?).

3. Discuss similarities and differences between story characters and group members.
4. Brainstorm other ways to solve the problem introduced in the story.
5. Role play various problem-solving solutions
6. Provide feedback on role playing.

Session 9

Involve the whole group of older and younger students, and discuss ground rules for reading, discussing the story, and role playing.

Session 10

Have each pair of older and younger students read a story. Ask the older child to use a structured guide to discuss the story and role play the solution to the problem identified in the story.

Session 11

Conduct a closure activity with the whole group.

Session 12

Bring both the older and younger groups of students together at the beginning of the session to discuss what the experience was like for them. Involve only the older students at the end of the session, and debrief them.