Attention Maintained Behavior

Looking to find a replacement or strategies for those behaviors identified as functioning as attention seeking? Research tells us that recommended practices include some of the following:

* Extinction or “planned ignoring”
* Differential Reinforcement
* Non-contingent reinforcement
* Restructuring Classroom Routine

Below are some possible “replacement” behaviors and strategies for attention maintained behavior. Finding just the right **replacement behavior** to teach can be tricky and while this may not be the **desired behavior**, it’s a start. Please feel free to add to the list at any time.

1. Allow student to gather materials for a lesson and distribute them.
2. Set up a visual of what to do before asking a question. “I’m stuck. Now What?”: 3 things to do before asking the teacher (Senaida Mehmedovic, Ed.S., ADHD Powerpoint Presentation).
3. Teach appropriate means for asking for attention using Functional Communication Training (e.g. raise hand, touch or exchange a card, sign, sentence stem) along with extinction / planned ignoring of the undesired behavior.
4. Student can self-monitor using smiley faces and a vibrating timer for specified periods of time that slowly increase. Instructor provides praise and/or thumbs up as well as a backup reinforcer after a specified number of smiley faces.
5. Identify alternative behaviors that can result in attention and teach them to student and/or share with support staff.
6. Give attention related jobs to the student (e.g. class messenger, calendar, pointer).
7. Include attention as reinforcer in token board system (e.g. game or play with toy with peer or staff, lunch with peer or staff).
8. Create a schedule for attention on the part of staff in the room when the student is not engaging in the problem behavior (e.e. eye contact, smile, check in, call upon, post-it w compliment, converse briefly).
9. Instructor can use a green and red visual to signal when attention is available (e.g. card, necklace) with gradual increase of the red signal over time.
10. Use First/Then (e.g. complete this assignment and then you can play a game with a peer).
11. Differentially reinforce an alternative (DRA) behavior and ignore the problem behavior (e.g. provide attention for on-task behavior or another desired school behavior).
12. Use DRA for behavior maintained by peer attention if appropriate (e.g. use a contingency system with peers to ensure that they are ignoring problem behavior and providing attention for an alternative behavior).
13. Refrain from giving attention (eye contact, facial expression, physical contact, vocal contact) if ignoring the behavior is safe.
14. Provide attention during times the undesired behavior is not happening.
15. Use classwide peer tutoring model (CWPT) involving putting students into tutor-learner pairs and then alter roles so that each student has an opportunity to be the teacher and the learner.
16. Utilize Check In/Check Out (e.g. morning check in, check in(s) throughout the day with peer or teacher)

**Resources**

Grow, L. L., Carr, J. E., & LeBlanc, L. A. (2009). Treatments for attention-maintained problem behavior: Empirical support and clinical recommendations. *Journal of Evidence-Based Practices for Schools, 10*(1), 70-92.

[Breaking the Attention-Seeking Habit: The Power of Random Positive Teacher Attention](https://www.interventioncentral.org/behavioral-interventions/challenging-students/breaking-attention-seeking-habit-power-random-positive)