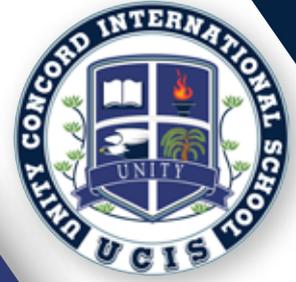


# Welcome to the September edition!



For this month's newsletter, we will be discussing a procedure called Behavioral Momentum - an effective and research backed-up technique to teaching skills while preventing occurrence of problem behaviors during instructions.

In Physics, we define Momentum as the measurement of mass in motion: how much mass is in how much motion. Apparently, we can apply this definition in behavioral field particularly in teaching skills (e.g., IEP goals). That is, we use momentum to increase the probability that a learner responds positively to instructions by delivering few known skills i.e., skills currently in the student's repertoire (high probability/high-p request) followed by the target or novel skill (low probability/low-p request). If this order is done in a quick pace, we are creating a behavioral momentum and therefore, it is likely that the student will respond positively. This procedure is also known as High Probability Sequence (HPS).

## POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL MOMENTUM



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In other words, HPS uses behavioral momentum so that it is likely that the student will respond to the low-p request. This is why HPS is also considered a proactive/preventive measure for reducing problem behaviors by manipulating the antecedents of it -- through increasing the probability of successful responses from students. In short, if students respond correctly to teacher's instructions, there will be higher frequency of contact with reinforcement (e.g., verbal praise or preferred items), thereby reducing the rates of problem behaviors.

Cooper, Heron, and Heward identified few points to consider to effectively use HPS

### 1. Selecting from Current Repertoire

The high-p request sequence should be in the student's current repertoire. These are skills that the student has been previously mastered or IEP goals that have been acquired during the past academic year. Selecting high-p requests is a crucial step in HPS as this is where the teacher will obtain the behavioral momentum.



### 2. Presenting Requests Rapidly



The high-p requests should be presented at a rapid succession, with short intervals between the requests. Therefore, it is advisable that the teacher comes prepared before starting the HPS to achieve desirable outcomes.

### 3. Acknowledging Compliance

The teacher should reinforce compliance by delivering verbal praises (e.g., "Way to go!"). This increases the likelihood that the student will comply for the next requests to come.



#### 4. Using Potent Reinforcers/Rewards



Students may exhibit problem behaviors related to escape from instructions of the low-p requests. Mace and Belfiore (1990) cautioned that social praise may not increase compliance if the motivation for escape behaviors is high. Therefore, high quality positive reinforcers/rewards will increase the effectiveness of the high-p intervention (Mace, 1996).

Based on my experience using the HPS in an applied setting, I find it easy to use that I incorporate the technique in every teaching session I do. And since it is a proactive strategy to addressing problem behaviors, I am able to maximize the student's time for skill acquisition rather than managing problem behaviors. Thus, creating an instructional environment that is friendly and full of learning.



Let's see an example of HPS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eryaiphLtiM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuAcsR58r24>



Sample Video 1



Sample Video 2

Finally, here are research articles that have proven HPS to be a highly effective approach:

- Belfiore, P.J., Basile, S.P., & Lee D.L. 2007. Using High Probability Command Sequence to Increase Classroom Compliance: The Role of Behavioral Momentum, *Journal of Behavioral Education*.
- Davis, C.A., Reichle, J.E., Southard, K.L. 2000. High-Probability Requests and a Preferred Item as a Distractor: Increasing Successful Transitions in Children with Behavior Problems, *Education and Treatment of Children*.
- Killu, K., Sainato, D.M., Davis, C.A., Ospelt, H., & Paul, J.N. 1998. Effects of High-Probability Request Sequences on Pre-Schoolers' Compliance and Disruptive Behavior, *Journal of Behavior Education*.
- Mace, F.C., Hock, M.L., Lalli, J.S., West, B.J., Belfiore, P., Pinter, E., & Brown, D.K. 1988. Behavioral Momentum in the Treatment of Noncompliance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

**Comments, questions, or suggestions?**

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