

## 8. GATHERING DATA TO UNDERSTAND STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

“Without data, conclusions are only opinions.”

—Manitoba Education, Training and Youth (2001b, 6.8)

To effectively support Manitoba students, school staff must understand the reasons why students behave as they do. When teachers understand the function of the behaviour, they can create appropriate plans to support positive behavioural changes.

In many instances, students in a classroom engage in negative behaviour to obtain something they want or to avoid something they don't want. Each behaviour serves a function, but the functions are different for different students. For example, students in a class may interrupt the teacher repeatedly to avoid an assigned task or because they are seeking the teacher's attention or the attention of their peers.

Collecting data about the functions of problem behaviours and the frequency of these behaviours provides classroom teachers with the information they need to

- decide which behaviour supports and strategies will be most effective in their classroom
- measure the success of the supports and strategies they choose

Many data collection methods used to document individual behaviours can be adapted to document group behaviours. Data collection that provides information regarding the group is important because it is more efficient and less time-consuming than multiple individual assessments. Since 80-85 percent of students will benefit from whole-group supports (Crone and Horner), data collected on the whole group will guide decision making that will be most effective and efficient for all students.

For example, in Manitoba, we often have associated the ABC recording method with planning for individual students, but it can also be used in the context of supporting positive behaviour in the classroom or in the school.

Teachers may choose to consult with available clinical or counselling support for assistance in selecting an appropriate data collection tool and/or support in collecting the data.

## Collecting Data in Your Classroom

1. Use existing information that is available (e.g., class profile, pupil file, and teacher observations).
2. Collect additional data (if needed).
3. Identify and record the strengths of the class.
4. Identify and record the problem behaviour(s) of the class in observable terms (i.e., what does it look like? sound like?).
5. Identify and record the predictors/antecedents: places, times where behaviour most often occurs.
6. Identify and record actions/consequences that typically occur after the identified problem behaviour.



See **Tool 9: ABC Chart** for a sample data collection tool.



For additional information see pages 6.3-6.8, 6.17, 6.19 of *Towards Inclusion: Tapping Hidden Strengths* (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2001)  
[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html)

Also see **Section 7: Planning for Individual Behaviour Support Materials** of *Towards Inclusion: From Challenges to Possibilities: Planning for Behaviour* (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2001)  
[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html)