

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE TEACHER AND STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Functional Interview with a Teacher

Functional interviews should be structured so that they give the IEP team information regarding the behavior of concern and its social, affective, and/or environmental content. Here is an example of an interview conducted with Mandy's science teacher.

Q: "In what settings and under what conditions do you observe the behavior?"

A: "Group discussions, usually when discussing what students learned from the previous night's reading assignment."

Q: "Are there any settings/situations in which the behavior does not occur?"

A: "When Mandy is working alone or on small cooperative group projects."

Q: "Who is present when the behavior occurs?"

A: "The entire class and me."

Q: "What activities or interactions take place just prior to the behavior?"

A: "The class is asked to take out their notes on the reading assignment."

Q: "What activities or interactions usually take place immediately following the behavior?"

A: "The class looks at Mandy and smiles; actually, there are times I can't help laughing myself; she is funny. But, it takes us a long time to get back on track and often a significant amount of valuable instructional time is lost."

Q: "Are there other behaviors that occur along with the problem behavior?"

A: "None that I can think of."

Q: "Can you think of any reasons why Mandy might behave this way?"

A: "I think she really enjoys the attention. But, there are other, more appropriate ways for her to get attention; maybe I could begin with that thought."

Q: "What would be a more acceptable way for the student to achieve the same outcome?"

A: "I'm not sure. I could give it some thought. Maybe if she contributed to the discussion instead of getting us all off track, or if she could at least wait until we are finished to tell us what she finds funny about the subject."

Functional Interview with a Student

In addition to interviews conducted with adults, interviews with students may be useful in identifying how they perceive the situation and what causes them to act (or react) in the way that they do. What follows is an example of a functional interview conducted with Mandy:

Q: “Is there anything that is happening outside of school lately that bothers you?”

A: “No.”

Q: “Is there something new that is happening to you?”

A: “Not really.... Well, we just got a new foster kid.”

Q: “Does it bother you?”

A: “No, I like playing with him and I get to feed him sometimes, too.”

Q: “What was the lesson about that was being taught right before you made the comments that made your classroom laugh?”

A: “I don’t know, something about rocks, I think.”

Q: “What was your teacher doing?”

A: “We were discussing our homework reading assignment.”

Q: “Do you remember what were you thinking right before you made the comments?”

A: “It was just so boring!”

Q: “How do you feel about getting homework in science?”

A: “Frustrated. The book is hard to read and so I get real confused.”

Q: “Can you tell me what Mr. Smith was expecting of you during science class?”

A: “He wants us to talk about the homework, answer questions...you know, that kind of stuff.”

Q: “When you make the funny comments in class, what usually happens afterward?”

A: “Everyone laughs and looks at me. Sometimes, even Mr. Smith cracks up.”

Q: “How does that make you feel?”

A: “Pretty good. I guess I like it when the other kids notice me. I don’t know....”

Functional Interview with Geoffrey
(10th grade student with mental retardation)

Q: “Is there anything that is happening outside of school lately that bothers you?”

A: “No.”

Q: “Is there something new that is happening to you?”

A: “Well, yeah, I’ve been hanging out with Drew and Kurt a lot. They are real cool!”

Q: “What kind of things do you do with Drew and Kurt?”

A: “We talk about girls and cars and stuff mostly.”

Q: “How did the marijuana get in your locker?”

A: “I was holding it for Drew. He said he forgot to put it in his locker and he didn’t want his teacher to find out he had it.”

Q: “Did you know that it was against school rules to have drugs in your locker?”

A: “Yea, but Drew asked me to.”

Q: “How does it make you feel when Drew asks you to do him favors?”

A: “Oh, I feel like an important friend. You don’t say no to important friends.”

Q: “What do you think would happen if you told Drew ‘no’?”

A: “He probably wouldn’t be my friend any more. I couldn’t hang out with him after school any more.”

Q: “Can you tell me what might happen if you are caught with drugs at school?”

A: “I could get in lots of trouble.”

Q: “How does that make you feel?”

A: “Well, bad. My dad says school will make me smart so I can get a good job when I finish.”