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TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM EDUCATION

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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM EDUCATION

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The project submitted in partial fullness of the
requirements for the
Bachelor of Integrated Studies Degree

Murray State University

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper will be to discuss resources and tools that can be used in the classroom. These tools will involve successfully establishing classroom management. Classroom management is as simple as creating a routine for the students in the classroom, which will also guide the students through the classroom expectations. Setting expectations is crucial and will assist students by helping them gain an understanding of what is expected of them while in the classroom, and while they are working. This also establishes what kind of role model the teacher plans to be in the classroom. When a teacher utilizes classroom management, students are taught effective techniques, expectations are established and students are guided. Guiding students involves an effective procedure when directing students to perform a task. This teaching method is called “I do, they do, we do together,” and an effective time to use this method is when students are taught how they are expected to transition from working in stations to working independently at their desks. The teacher will show the class how to move from their stations to their desks and model these movements. The expectation is that the students will then do it with the teacher, and be prepared to do it successfully by themselves. This method is often successful because the students can see how the teacher performs the task, and the students can copy those procedures themselves. Often teachers in higher-level education will explain to their students their expectations, which can be difficult. Getting students up and out of their seats alongside the teacher to perform the expectations helps students with focus and attention and provides direct engagement in what they are doing. This leads to the next topic to be discussed, classroom engagement. Engagement by and with students in the classroom plays an important role when teaching students, a new curriculum. Often, students can become bored or will not pay attention to the teacher if nothing is pulling their attention towards the teacher. Engagement can look like many things, such as discussing topics the teacher knows their students are interested in. Students are more likely to be interested in an activity by connecting with their teacher, and will naturally become much more engaged. These classroom strategies involve decreasing bad behavior and prioritizing positive behavior and positive outcomes. Positive classroom and student outcomes provide special educators with a better opportunity to reach students and to become successful at a much higher level. When students succeed, everyone succeeds.

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Introduction

“Proactive classroom strategies and interventions focus on (a) establishing expectations and routines, (b) reviewing expectations, (c) engaging students actively, (d) implementing strategies to recognize and increase appropriate behavior, and (e) selecting strategies to decrease inappropriate behavior.” (How Special Education Faculty Teach Classroom Management)

According to Korpershoek, the definition that was described spoke about the actions that teachers are taking inside and outside of the classroom to create an environment that supports the academics and the student's social-emotional knowledge. Effective classroom management provides a positive environment that will improve student's behaviors. Increased good student behavior emphasizes the effective actions taken by the teacher. To be able to manage or motivate a class or a group of students, the vision needs to be clear of what the teacher expects the classroom to look like. It is important to have a vision of what the teachers want the students to accomplish, what the classroom should sound like, and what the classroom would feel like for the class members and visitors. After creating a vision of how the classroom will feel, the teacher's next steps should be to create procedures that will effectively accomplish these goals.

“Classroom management is an ongoing interaction between teachers and their students” (Korpershoek, 2016). A teacher has many responsibilities in the classroom. Some of these responsibilities involve creating a safe environment for students, providing an appropriate education, and, most importantly, developing a trusting relationship with them.

Students in the classroom often return home and do not receive proper support and care from their families. It is crucial to make every student feel and believe that they matter, and this is a crucial part of teaching. For some students, the classroom is the only place they will receive care and support for their needs.

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Expectation

All of these responsibilities develop through the process of establishing classroom rules, another term that can be used is expectations. Expectations are taught and established within the first few weeks of school. The most important day of the school year is the first day of school. Often first-year teachers are nervous for their first day of school. The emotions that are felt by first-year teachers can include feeling vulnerable, isolated, and concerned about how they will be perceived as teachers. The way a teacher models behaviors to their students, the students will reciprocate the same form of behavior in return. Students and teachers will often experience first-day back-to-school anxiety.

Teachers will make their first impression on their students on the first day. A common strategy that teachers use during their first year of teaching is to be very authoritative at the beginning of the year and then slowly transition to be less authoritative by the end of the year. This strategy is not always effective in controlling behaviors. A strategy that has become most effective is when the teacher establishes positive teacher-student relationships. Developing relationships with students will decrease misbehavior inside the classroom. Greeting students as they enter the classroom is a positive way to leave a lasting impression. This action will allow the teacher to welcome each student into the classroom. Greeting students at the door on the first day of school is a great way to chat with each student and have that first moment together. When the teacher greets each student as they enter the classroom, the teacher can ask the student how to pronounce their name. It is extremely important to pronounce their students' names correctly because, as a teacher, showing students that each one of their students is a priority will make them feel valuable. It is crucial to convey to each student, that they are cared for and in a safe environment, especially on their first day at school.

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Pay close attention to student body language as some students can be more open than others. It is important not to push boundaries with a student on the first day, because many students who walk into the classroom may be shy or more reserved. This can be from nerves and anxiety, it is important as the teacher that we gauge each student and know how to develop a relationship that will keep the student feeling comfortable and safe. Another key to creating an effective classroom is the environment that is created for the students. As the teacher, expectations will be set during the first week of school. Most teachers may create these expectations independently, and the classroom should be perceived as the student's classroom. There should be an atmosphere where students inside the classroom, can also be involved when teachers discuss expectations. What may work for the teacher, may not work for every student in the classroom. Although school-wide district rules must be accepted by the students, these guidelines involve attendance, profanity, hitting, abusing school materials, hitting, and drugs. These expectations should be concrete, although students can be a part of setting classroom expectations, students' roles will still be limited. Many first-year teacher goals are to create a great classroom that can also be maintained. This can be very challenging for first-year teachers if they are not properly trained in maintaining order and routine. How a teacher runs the classroom will dictate how much time spent on tasks will take place during the day or how much time will be spent confronting discipline problems. Classroom management can look different in every classroom, but the most important key to having a successful classroom is the inclusion and involvement of every student.

Free Appropriate Public Education, also known as FAPE, was a law created for every child with a disability to receive a fair and appropriate education in all classrooms. Classroom management is crucial in creating an appropriate learning setting for students with disabilities.

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There are a few characteristics of keeping a well-managed classroom. These characteristics include the layout of the classroom, accessibility to supplies, and how the teacher efficiently manages. In a special education classroom, there will be students who may have a physical disability, for example, they may require a wheelchair in the classroom. As the teacher, there should be an established plan for inclusion for any student who cannot walk independently. Organizing desks or tables to be easily accessible for students in wheelchairs, would be part of an effective plan and a good example of a well-managed classroom. Making sure tables and desks are spread far enough apart to allow these students to maneuver around the classroom and placing supplies at a height that students in wheelchairs can reach are both well-thought-out plans to accommodate these students with disabilities.

In a special education classroom, it is very important to establish an environment that has a routine. Setting routines helps to support a non-chaotic classroom environment. As a special educator, some students, for example, may have autism. Students on the spectrum can typically become triggered if there is no routine. Most of these students have to have a set routine, so as a teacher, we must create one for the students before they walk into the classroom. The reason for creating these routines and processes ahead of time is to prevent future behavioral issues in the classroom. It is also important to be proactive in the worst-case scenarios, as they may relate to behaviors. The development of disciplinary strategies will help decrease the number of interruptions in the classroom and the loss of instructional time.

“To attain a high quality of classroom management, teachers must (a) develop caring, supportive relationships with and among students, (b) organize and implement instruction in ways that optimize students’ access to learning; © encourage students’ engagement in academic tasks, which can be done by using group management methods (e.g., by establishing rules and

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classroom procedures; (d) promote the development of student's social skills and self-regulation, and (e) use appropriate interventions to assist students with behavior problems.” (Korpershoek, 2016). Loss of instructional time will occur when a student is acting out in the classroom. These behaviors can include students disrupting other students in the classroom, not completing a task that was given, or participating in out-of-seat behaviors. These specific behavioral acts will likely happen during the teacher's learning activities or when a task has been assigned. Dealing with these behaviors during class time will cause the teacher to pause the activity to redirect the student's behavior to a positive one instead. For these situations, there must be expectations already set in place. Setting behavioral expectations will decrease the chances of losing instructional time. Another term that gets confused with setting behavioral expectations, is discipline. Discipline does not solve all issues in the classroom when trying to manage a classroom.

“Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in poorly managed classrooms.” (Korpershoek, 2016). There are three known characteristics of an effective teacher. These three characteristics include having positive expectations for student success, being an extremely good classroom manager, and knowing how to design lessons for a student's mastery. A positive expectation is also known as a high expectation. A high expectation is simply the teacher believing in the student's ability to learn and that the student can learn. When high expectations are discussed, this term can often be confused with having high standards. If a teacher were to believe that a student is below average or at a low level, then the teacher would project those characteristics onto the student, and they may then perform at those levels. As a special educator, it is part of the responsibility to help students reach their goals and instill confidence in each student's ability to learn and master their goals. It is important never to ignore students'

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challenges in the classroom. Establishing expectations that can be differentiated for each student is important, not all students will be learning and growing at the same level. All expectations should be realistic for each student, so they have the opportunity to accomplish what the teacher believes they are capable of.

An unrealistic expectation would be for a teacher to have a student with a learning deficit in math calculation take a timed multiplication test along with the general education class. Being aware of a student's learning deficit and placing them in this scenario would be identified as an unrealistic expectation. Teachers need to have confidence in every student and understand that classroom activities can always be modified for students who need extra help.

Running an effective classroom is highly based on the processes and guidelines that are established on the first day of school. The moral compass of creating a well-managed classroom is creating an environment that will encompass teacher-student relationships. Teachers who are struggling to manage challenging behaviors can often get caught making statements about those students who cause challenges throughout the day. Some of these conversations can and will be, considered very negative. For example, at lunchtime, the teachers might sit at the table with their fellow peers. One teacher might make a comment during that lunch about a student with chronic and long-standing behavior problems and explain that this student knows how to push their limits. Another example would be a teacher making a negative statement to the student directly. This statement might sound like the teacher asking a student not to ask dumb questions. This particular behavior is unacceptable inside the classroom, teachers are role models not only for their students but for their fellow teachers as well. These kinds of remarks can be very damaging to the students who hear them.

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As a teacher, having a negative mindset about the challenges that are faced throughout the day can cause a teacher to be perceived as having low expectations for their classroom. Teachers can often experience this type of negative mindset when under pressure or overwhelming stress. There are many concerning factors that are also leading to teachers becoming tired and burned out, in the classroom. Some of these factors involve the student's behavior and the lack of support. Teachers are under an enormous amount of pressure when it comes to handling the responsibilities of managing a classroom of students, with significant disabilities. "For USA special education staff, 'stress and burnout can have a deleterious effect on both the physical and mental health of the individual [employee], resulting in a potential risk of insufficient service delivery for students with the most distinct special needs.'" (Conley, 2017).

Behavior

"Classroom behavior refers to the actions or reactions of classroom participants. The behavior of an individual is complex as it is controlled not just by the nervous system but also by the social context in which she/he participates." (Ming-tak, 2008). Behavior issues can often be overwhelming for a teacher who is not fully equipped with the tools to handle each situation that occurs during a possible meltdown. There are teachers who will crack under pressure and choose to leave the classroom completely. The most common mistake that teachers make when handling challenging situations with students who do not show appropriate listening skills in the classroom, is that the teacher takes it personally. When a student makes a bad choice by acting out during a lesson or by speaking negatively towards the teacher, it is easy for teachers to take these behaviors and remarks personally. Teachers often use reactive strategies on students to punish students that could be disruptive inside the classroom. Reactive strategies are implemented because of a lack of knowledge on how to change a student's behavior. To successfully change a student's behavior, it is advised that teachers are aware of how to

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implement strategies to engage the students in the activity rather than take away from the student who is misbehaving.

For the teacher to maintain a positive environment for all students in the classroom, it is important that the teacher does not take one student's behavior personally. As the special educator, it is not one's fault for how a student behaves in the classroom, students will often lash out towards the teacher of the classroom because that is the person who is implementing tasks or expectations that the student may not want to follow. Naturally, students in the classroom will have bad days; these days can look like students who do not want to focus or may not have gotten enough sleep the night before. Therefore, they are sleeping during lessons. Some students can also become physical if something happens in the classroom, that triggers them. During these moments of feeling defeated as a teacher, it is highly recommended that a teacher expresses their concerns to fellow staff members on how to problem-solve certain behaviors.

“Misbehavior refers to behavior that interferes with teaching, violating the right of other students to learn, and sometimes makes them feel psychologically uncomfortable and physically unsafe.” (Ming-tak, 2008). Due to these behaviors, our schools have experienced a serious shortage of special education teachers all throughout the country. It has been reported that after three years of teaching, most teachers will choose to leave the profession. With that said, special education has experienced a growing demand. This has been the case due to the higher amounts of stress that special educators often feel inside of the classroom. Another challenging aspect of teachers leaving the special education field is the lack of support from staff members. It has been reported that teachers under the age of 30 years old are more likely to leave this profession. Additionally, there continues to be a decrease in personnel staff, along with the enrollment of

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special education programs provided for teachers. These programs support and teach skills that are beneficial in successfully navigating the special education classroom. It is important to continue to analyze why teachers are choosing to leave the field of special education. This information can help future special educators learn everything needed to create a positive experience for the teacher and fellow peers.

“Proactive classroom strategies and interventions focus on (a) establishing expectations and routines, (b) reviewing expectations, (c) engaging students actively, (d) implementing strategies to recognize and increase appropriate behavior, and (e) selecting strategies to decrease inappropriate behavior.” (Youngs, 2023). Implementing these strategies from the very start of the school year can make a teacher's first year less stressful and leave a feeling of accomplishment for not only the students meeting their goals but also the teacher. Establishing expectations when the students enter the classroom will help to support a successful classroom experience.

Classroom management involves the increase of positive behavior. One of these behaviors includes engagement, which keeps the students in the classroom engaged with the teacher and the curriculum being taught.

As a teacher, it is important to keep students interested in the activities and tasks that are being assigned. Every classroom will have a variety of students from different cultural backgrounds. A great way to engage students is to bring those cultural backgrounds, into the classroom. Implementing a curriculum relevant to the students in the classroom will help build upon engagement. Students are often looking for ways to express themselves in the classroom. Implementing engaging activities during the beginning of the school year, even during the first week of school, will help build the student's ability and comfort level in expressing themselves. Assigning activities to the students that will tell the teacher about their interests, asking students

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about their hobbies, favorite movies, and whether they play sports or instruments are all questions that will help the teacher understand their students' interests. Students are always looking for ways to connect with their teachers. Showing genuine interest in students will develop a relationship with the entire class. Creating lesson plans based on the student's interests will further engage the students in the curriculum. Other ways of engaging students in the classroom include giving students a role in helping out during the activity; each student can have a job. Giving students a role in an activity will build and instill confidence in these students.

For a student who is challenged in the classroom with behavior, it is important to understand that typically these students are acting out inside the classroom because they cannot keep up with the homework or the material being taught. Students love to get out of their seats and move around; keeping a student in a seat for long periods can be challenging. These situations can become even more challenging if the student lives with (ADHD) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. These students will often struggle to stay still in their seats, pay attention for more than a short time, stay on task, and disrupt their peer's ability to stay focused. For these students, it is incredibly beneficial to keep them out of their seats and moving around, and if remaining seated is needed, not to have that student sitting still for an extended period of time. This will help decrease future disruptions and loss of instructional time. Keeping students in their seats for a long time will negatively affect their behaviors. It is important to know that the longer students remain seated, the greater the chance that those students will lose interest in the task.

School curriculum has evolved over the years and changes based on how teachers can manage a classroom. The classroom environment has continued to change over the years, including the behaviors and expectations given to students today. Teachers often use the strategies that they have learned while growing up, but not all of the methods of teaching that

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used to be effective are relevant to school districts today. The word discipline was commonly used to describe a student who was not listening or following directions from the teacher.

Discipline has always been considered severe; classroom discipline is another element of our education system that has changed and evolved over time. Today's teachers are realizing the importance of discipline and how it can also harm students in the classroom. For example, a student in the classroom may refuse to stay on task and get out of their seat. The teacher attempted to redirect the student a few times, but the student continued the same behavior.

The following strategy would commonly be used: to send that student to the office, to be disciplined. There is an increasing awareness that most students who act out in the classroom usually try to escape the task they were assigned. Sending the student to the office only allows the student the opportunity to leave the classroom and not to finish the task. Sending students to the office often reinforces bad behavior because the student understands that if they continue to misbehave they will eventually be sent out of the classroom. Teaching students with behavioral challenges inside the classroom can be considered a persistent challenge for special educators. The special education field has continued to evolve and implement effective strategies that bring systematic change in the classroom for teachers with behavioral-challenged students.

“The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included regulatory language requiring the use of a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to guide the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).” (Hirsch, 2023). According to Jones, the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act have had the most significant changes since the original approval. The IDEA 2004 changes included that the requirements for a student's related services and support to be implemented have to be identified through only evidence-based peer-reviewed research. This change was made for Functional

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Behavior Analysis (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). These changes have been made in the discipline and behavior of students with disabilities and are intended to keep all school environments fair and appropriate. Consequences can be positive and negative and occur when a student follows or breaks the rules set. Students in the classroom should be completely aware of the consequences that are involved when expectations are not being followed or respected. The choices students make inside the classroom are completely up to the student. Teaching students at the beginning of the year, that the choices they make inside the classroom will be entirely up to them. Explain to the students the difference between making a good choice and making a wrong choice, and the rewards or consequences of those choices should also be explained. Explaining to the students that making good choices every day is the expectation for the school year, will set the tone for how the students decide they want the school year to go.

“FBAs include (a) operational definition of behavior, (b) identification of events that are functionally related to behavior, (c) Identification of the consequences that maintain the behavior, (d) hypothesis about the function of behavior, and (e) direct observation to confirm/support hypothesis.” (Hirsch, 2023). According to Hirsch, these systematic procedures have been a big support regarding the effectiveness of FBAs in improving behavioral results. A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) may be implemented for a student with behavioral challenges. An FBA is the start of the development of the behavior intervention plan. A Behavior Intervention Plan is short for BIP. These interventions specifically address the behavior of the student. A team in special education will have a meeting to begin this intervention for the student, and these assessments are designed to fix the behavior that breaks the rules inside the classroom. These behaviors can be disruptive, aggressive, out of seat, and not engaging with the teacher appropriately. According to Hirsch’s analysis, seventy-three percent of states

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recommended a Functional Behavior Analysis before providing the student with a Behavior Intervention Plan. Children will already have personality traits when born, although most of these personalities and behaviors are learned. These behaviors seen from students can develop in a positive manner depending on the environment they are in at home.

Reinforcement

Three variables have been proven to affect behavior. The first variable is the conditions that trigger the behavior. To fix the condition of the behavior, a couple of methods to try would be to give lessons that teach the student how to behave appropriately or assign different seats if the student cannot stay focused. Next is the behavior that involves what behavior the person portrays. Following the behavior that occurs, the next step is to question the outcome or consequence. Typically, the result of a pleasant consequence is an increase in behavior in the future. Regarding punishment, this may result in decreasing behavior in the future. A couple of methods to try when trying to eliminate pleasant consequences could look like the teacher ignoring the misbehavior that the student is using to receive attention. Or as the teacher, responding calmly to a student trying to push the teacher to their limit. To effectively implement unpleasant consequences, the teacher could use a journal system that records the students' behavior during the week. The teacher would keep this journal on their desk and have a weekly meeting with the students to talk about the highs and lows of the week. Inside a classroom, the term motivation plays a huge role in the student's success. As a teacher, some students in the classroom may lack motivation. Often, the start of being a teacher is to instill motivation in their students to be the best version of themselves; being motivated will guide a teacher on how to implement effective procedures that will reinforce responsible behavior properly.

A student is typically motivated to perform a misbehavior and is sometimes aware of the behavior that they are performing. Reasons a student would purposely participate in misbehavior

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always come from intrinsic and extrinsic factors around the student. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is what implements the force that creates behavior. Extrinsic motivation happens when a student participates in a behavior because of the pleasant consequences that are not essential for that behavior. For example, a student finds it desirable to complete a task because of the praise they will receive. For a student with intrinsic motivation, this kind of motivation involves the student being focused on participating in an activity because of the reward they might receive as a pleasant consequence for following directions. Sometimes, these behaviors become mixed up since the motivation behind the behavior cannot be what it appears to be.

There will be students in the classroom who are not motivated to complete tasks or participate in class activities. For example, the special education teacher gives each student a book to read and most of the students will open the book to begin reading. However, one student might sit in their chair and not open the book. The teacher will redirect the student to start reading, but the student will advocate that they dislike reading. This would be an example of a student who is not motivated to try to read. Teachers can help students become motivated by how they can present an activity for the students to do themselves. A teaching method that would engage the students would be the model method. The model method involves the teacher doing the activity first as the students watch how the teacher went through the task process. The next part of the method would be for the teacher to present an example of the task alongside the students. During this stage of the model strategy, students can ask the teacher questions to clarify the task process. The teacher can also give students ideas that could help those who are not motivated to develop an idea on their own once the students understand what the teacher expects them to do. The students will then begin the activity and complete it individually. This teaching

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strategy is most known as the “I do, we do, they do” procedure. It has been proven effective for teachers who have students in the classroom who need to see steps to understand the task.

An explanation of why the student does not want to read may involve the student's struggles with reading and reading comprehension. Or the student does not want to perform that task at that moment. Avoiding the situation of a student who is not motivated to read can be prevented by giving the student a book about a topic that the student is interested in. For example, if the student is interested in the planets. The teacher could provide a book about the different planets in outer space. Giving the student a book with a topic that interests them will further engage the student to read. This kind of motivation is intrinsic motivation. However, another important aspect of motivating students in activities is that the teacher should provide content like books relevant to the student's proficiency levels. When students can successfully participate in an activity, it is beneficial for them when the task is at their academic level. For a student to experience repeated failure at a specific task will only limit the student's motivation toward that task. Teachers often become frustrated during an activity because students ask many of the same questions. A way to prevent students from being confused during an activity would be to write out the steps on the smart board or whiteboard. Listing the steps of the process that the teacher wants the students to follow will make it easy for them to understand that process by having a visual showing on the board.

“Effective teachers spend more time promoting responsible behavior than responding to irresponsible behavior.” (Sprick, 2009) This is one of two concepts that both have necessary indications that it is beneficial for teachers to put their energy into managing their students' behaviors. Implementing a pleasant consequence will reassure students that positive feedback will further push them to continue to participate in responsible behavior. A pleasant consequence

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can be implemented by writing positive notes, consistently giving verbal praise, rewarding students or the entire class with a fun activity, and encouraging students to celebrate every accomplishment. To remove unpleasant behavior, the teacher should make a point that the student who is showing unpleasant behavior does not get embarrassed or singled out for making mistakes. When the student accomplishes a task that they usually are challenged with, it is important to give quiet praise to the student. Students do not want to be singled out or put in a box; typically, as students get older, the fear of embarrassment increases. Misbehavior from a student often occurs, possibly due to the student not understanding what the teacher is expecting. This would happen if the teacher had not established clear classroom expectations. Students do not understand or are unaware that they performed misbehavior due to the expectations not being established or learned. Effective communication, understanding, and reinforcing positive behaviors, can only help to build the overall effectiveness of a teacher.

Teaching with Misbehavior Strategies

As part of the FBA, teaching strategies, and behavior interventions should be reviewed and replaced or modified weekly if ineffective. When a student in the classroom performs a behavior with no responsibility, this can often be because the student has never received the experience of having responsibility or experience. Students who are showing irresponsible behavior could include students feeling entitled to their emotions in a way that their peers and mentors will feel empathy. To the students, this misbehavior is effective because they gain attention when acting out. However, teachers can become confused with a student who needs attention, rather than a student who requires extra support. When the students are in the classroom they are the safest because they are with the teacher. Students who are in the classroom can still learn the curriculum that is being taught. When a teacher separates their student from the classroom, it only limits the students from learning alongside their classmates.

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Teachers today who have experienced a different teaching method, often struggle to be effective teachers for students today. Our classrooms have evolved from giving tasks to students individually to now having the classroom work in groups. These methods have been passed down to each generation of teachers up to today. The current generation has helped evolve our school system, to change the old ways teachers would lead the classroom, and to create a positive environment for the teacher and students.

As Special Educators, it is important to understand the term adapting because, as teachers, we are constantly having to adapt to our students. All students in the classroom will have specific needs. Differentiation plays a big role in a special education classroom and has not always been a method used in the classroom. For example, a long time ago, classrooms were set up for students to read a chapter of a book assigned to them, and the homework would be for the students to answer questions after reading the book. Today's education system tries to teach our students in different ways, that can be fun and much more interesting. Students in a special education setting may not be able to complete those same assignments as the other students in a general education classroom. This is when differentiation comes into play, as differentiated tasks are often modified versions of assignments given to students in a general education classroom.

For example, when students are given an assignment in the classroom that involves solving 20-word problems on a worksheet, a student in the special education classroom who might have a learning disability (LBD) might be given ten-word problems and can use a calculator, with the teacher reading the student each word problem. Limiting the number of word problems can benefit a student who struggles in that area.

At the beginning of the school year, a great tool to use would be the VARK website. Teaching to a student's learning style is outlined in this resource. Many students enjoy learning

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things about themselves, and it is also a great learning assessment tool for the teacher. VARK allows students to answer questions about navigating projects or tasks and what works best for them. After the students answer these questions the site will explain how each student learns the most effectively. For example, when a student in the classroom has challenges with reading and writing. The teacher may notice that the student experiences anxiety when reading and writing, so they can use the background knowledge to identify this particular student. The students' interests are cats, and the student has a cat at home. This teacher will turn reading and writing into a more positive experience by using what the student is interested in. The teacher could use a stuffed animal cat to assign the student as a reading buddy or have the student interact with the stuffed animal while reading. By including this student's interest in the reading activity, the teacher will decrease the student's anxiety levels.

Considering how a specific task might trigger a student to feel anxious is also important when teaching a student with a disability. Often students who have a disability in learning can have high anxiety levels when working on challenging skills. Effectively educating students means understanding the development of children and their changing behaviors or interests. Children's interests are constantly changing as they grow into adults. Elementary, preschool, high school, and college students have different maturity levels and behaviors. When a teacher is placed in a school setting it is crucial to be aware of the students and their hobbies at their age. Awareness of these behaviors is crucial to engage and build relationships with the students effectively.

Implementing effective instructional practices is crucial in guiding students to exceed their maximum potential inside the classroom. Sometimes, teachers provide dull instruction and implement confusing tasks for an activity. When teachers implement instruction that does not

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meet the needs of the students, they will find these students to become unmotivated, disruptive, and have challenging behavior during these lessons. Giving students instruction that is beyond their skill level will not be beneficial in helping them reach their goals. Meeting students where they are in academics is important as a special educator. When a teacher is aware of what level a student is on in reading, the teacher will then be able to proceed with helping increase the student's skill level in that specific area of school.

A strategy that is often used in the classroom is self-monitoring. This is a tool that allows teachers to assess themselves in the classroom. Teachers often monitor their students in the classroom using progress monitoring although there is a difference between progress monitoring for a student and self-monitoring. Self-monitoring can be used for teachers. It is usual for teachers to be observed teaching in the classroom every year that they teach. Teachers are a role model to the students inside the classroom. Self-monitoring can encompass a teacher's behavior with the use of observations. Observation allows the school to regulate how the teacher progresses through their first year and will be implemented yearly, by a school's principal or vice principal. These tests and techniques are used for the teacher to understand how well the curriculum is being taught or how much the students grasp the new curriculum. Monitoring happens daily, and teachers monitor their students throughout the day. It is part of a teacher's responsibility to know when a student is beginning to fall behind or is not comprehending information fast enough. Self-assessment has been a practical skill for decades; another term for this is reflection. For a teacher to reflect on their work, it is crucial to be effective. "Self-monitoring can be particularly helpful in promoting consistency, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and improving the fidelity of implementation." (Youngs, 2023) Teachers are known to be life-long learners, teachers are constantly having to adapt how they are coming

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across to their students with new information. Teachers must always think about how to teach curriculum in a new and better way for students to understand.

Regarding the term progress monitoring, how does a teacher monitor student's progress inside and outside the classroom? Progress monitoring involves a series of assessments and hours of observation on students completing set tasks or performing a particular skill. Progress monitoring is required in every special education classroom. The information that a teacher receives from progress monitoring will be used for a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) documents. This information can look at how fast a student was able to perform the particular skill that was instructed by the teacher, what level the student is currently at for a particular area in the curriculum that is being taught in the classroom, how much the student engaged in the content that is being taught during class time, how much is the student interacting with the teacher during lessons, how much is the student interacting with fellow peers, is the student asking questions during the lesson and what kind of questions are being asked, and what did time on task look like for this particular student. Teachers can use this information and gauge what the strengths and weaknesses are. Figuring out the strengths and weaknesses of the student will help the teacher what the student is lacking. This is regarding whether the weaknesses are socially, behaviorally, or academically based. This information is often confidential and should never be shared with any person who is not a staff member who works with the student.

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Legal Binding Documents

This particular information is FERPA confidential, FERPA stands for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. FERPA is a federal law that protects all students inside and outside the classroom from teachers or staff having open conversations regarding legally binding documents, including IEP or 504 plans, with people not working inside the classroom with those students. Inside an Individualized Education Plan is loads of information regarding the student's academic levels and how the student interacts with peers inside the classroom. The information gathered and written into the IEP is confidential to anyone not a part of the administration staff. "The IEP PLAAFP statement is one of the most important IEP components that provides baseline data from which the IEP team develops a student's goals."(Swain, 2022) This information is gathered through progress monitoring reports from paraprofessionals and special educators who observe these students as they work inside the classroom. This information is placed in the section of the IEP called Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP), [PLAAFP](#) is located on the first page of the IEP. A PLAAFP is split into academics, social, Cognitive, hearing, and functional sections. The information in this portion of the IEP document must contain sufficient data to understand the student's challenges and provide the correct support. The data, services, and instruction practice are crucial for the student's progress.

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a legally binding document written for qualified students for special education. A multidisciplinary team makes decisions from written statements that establish plans for the student's educational needs and support services specifically designed for the student. These supports are modifications in the curriculum and written statements regarding implemented assessments. These assessments from the IEP are

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implemented on students to determine their progress level; one of the first statements that an IEP must have documented is where the student is currently performing. This information will show the IEP team what goals need to be set to begin increasing the students' performance levels.

There are specific assessments that will determine a student's strengths and weaknesses, including assignments and test scores. Observation is another form of assessment consisting of observations implemented by parents, service providers, and teachers. The IEP documentation and data are developed by the multidisciplinary team.

Data-based decision-making plays an important role in the effectiveness of special education. This is the process of collecting data, from the students. Teachers in the elementary school setting often lack the ability to gather data since they do not have a planned process for collecting data. Teachers who are not aware of how to properly implement the process of gathering data will find it difficult to provide the correct support for the student because there will not be enough data and information to draw from. It was reported that teachers often lack time to implement long periods of student monitoring or assessments. Special educators are also struggling to gain expertise. First-year special educators who are not properly trained in making instructional decisions will lack the knowledge to implement this process successfully.

The ability to pre-plan the process of systematically monitoring students will benefit the teacher and the IEP team in developing an individualized education plan. A study on a student in the *Mindfulness and Positive Education* journal involved students who were instructed to read a book. These were elementary school students who had a reading disability. The teacher collected data using observation, interviews, school records, and journal writing. This is considered the qualitative research methodology. This kind of research is used to help discover patterns of behavior when the student reads. This would be considered a deficit involving reading

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comprehension. When students with a reading deficit are asked to read, it is common for students to advocate about the trouble they were experiencing when asked to read or repeat sight words.

When students are placed in a position of being tested, anxiety that the student can feel can often hinder the student's mind from being able to perform at its full potential.

Current special education teachers comment on the research article regarding teacher-reported IEP goals data collection methods. Special education teachers were prompted to respond to the question of how successful progress monitoring is inside the classroom. The common response that was said was that special educators in high school, middle schools, and elementary are challenged with not having enough time to monitor a student appropriately. Special educators are responsible for supporting each student inside the classroom. Some of these responsibilities include creating lesson plans, grading work assigned to students also to grade, reevaluations on students that are done every three years, differentiating for every student in the classroom, and planning meetings.

Regarding these comments made by teachers, teachers are now voicing their opinions on how school districts need to provide better support for their teachers. In a special education setting, teachers often rely on the team's support to help solve solutions for students who are not progressing and for help inside the classroom during class periods. Special educators who lack support from their team often are left with overwhelming pressure trying to keep each student in the classroom to reach their individual goals. Knowing their students and how to accommodate their needs is a huge responsibility that is important to understand. Case studies are a great way for future special educators to get insight into how to appropriately teach a challenging subject to a student with a learning disability.

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Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities may have difficulty learning that vary widely in range from mild to severe. To diagnose a student with a learning disability, the cognitive ability will determine where the student is challenged academically. The characteristics of students who have a learning disability (LD) are poor social skills, delayed speech, and language development, or may have emotional/behavioral difficulties. Starting with students who have a mild learning disability, these students will typically receive scores of 70-85 points on their IQ test. These scores could be considered as the student having a below-average intellectual ability. Although these students reportedly are not typically identified in elementary school. Students who have a moderate learning disability will test with a score between 55-70 points on their IQ test. A student with a moderate learning disability will also typically not be identified during their years in elementary school. A student who has scored below 50 points on the IQ test is considered severe. Identifications for students with mild to moderate learning difficulties include short attention spans, difficulty understanding instruction, and difficulty in learning, reading, writing, and number skills. Teachers teaching students with mild to severe intellectual difficulty will require modifications and accommodations. Some teaching guidelines for students with mild to severe learning disabilities can look like starting at a point in the curriculum that the student understands and is proficient in. From that point as the teacher, the goal would be for the student to improve the skill over time. Setting achievable targets and continuously reviewing all progress data. Implement repetitions and reinforcements to further the student's knowledge. It is important when working with a student who has a learning disability to encourage the student consistently when working on a challenging task. Positive reinforcement can play a huge role in boosting the student's self-confidence academically. Anxiety can hinder a student from being

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able to work with full focus on the task. It is not uncommon for students to become distracted by their thoughts when they experience anxiety in the classroom.

As a teacher, it is important to understand how to successfully work with a student who has a learning disability (LD). For a student who is challenged with a severe learning disability, these characteristics can consist of the student's behavior being considered immature, when starting to communicate or begin walking at a slower pace. The communication that the child is giving cannot be clear and the vocabulary that the student uses can be limited. These students may prefer spending time with older adults than the student or with other students who are younger. Some important teaching guidelines for students with a severe case of learning disability can look like working on skills that the student is already proficient in and continuing to increase their knowledge from that specific point. Remind the student of all the things that they are good at rather than focusing on everything that the student is unable to do. Students who suffer from mild to severe learning disabilities are always looking for reassurance from their peers and the teachers who mentor them inside the classroom. Students who are challenged with profound and multiple learning disabilities are students who score below 30 points on their IQ test. These students are considered to be well below average, these particular students require many supports inside and outside of the classroom. These students are typically identified within the first two years after they are born. This is due to the severe level of the inability to talk.

These students have a low ability to be able to be fully independent when they become grown-ups. Some identifications for a student with a severe learning disability include speech and language being very limited, challenges in being able to relate to children and older adults, and not having fine and gross coordination skills. For these students to successfully develop to their fullest potential it is important to understand some teaching guidelines for working with

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these students. Some of these teaching guidelines include focusing on daily living skills to promote the idea of independence further, working on social skills like manners and advocating for oneself when needed, and always encouraging the student to make their own decisions developing a sense of self-determination. Students who are challenged with a specific learning difficulty, for example, Dyslexia, are often challenged in the areas of oral language, spelling, reading mathematics, and written tasks. Students who are diagnosed with dyslexia will score within the average, above-average, or below-average ranges. Identification of these students can look like the student is challenged with auditory or visual processing skills, short-term memory, or struggles with sequencing as well as difficulties with staying concentrated and keeping organized. Special educators and teachers can help these students by supporting them inside the classroom by following these teaching guidelines. These guidelines include placing one of these students in the front row of the classroom so the students are close to the board and to the teacher. This helps the student be able to have a better visual of what the teacher writes on the board. Practicing different study skills for the student and developing a study plan that works best for the student, are important. A student who has challenges with a processing disorder can often be found in a student who has a learning disability. A processing disorder includes many challenges for a student that can make learning difficult in a general education classroom. Inside the classroom, the teacher is often giving directions and instructions. Direction and instruction are often given verbally by the teacher for a student who has processing difficulties understanding instructions that are given, or the curriculum can take longer than it would normally for students who learn inside a general education classroom.

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In the case of these students, special education teachers will often create self-contained classrooms for them. Designed specifically for students with disabilities, self-contained classes are designed to accommodate and modify their learning environment giving them material at the level they are performing. The inclusion of a student with a processing disorder into a self-contained classroom can be extremely beneficial because it allows him the opportunity to learn the curriculum at his own pace and his level. General education classrooms usually move at a pace that students with a learning disability cannot keep up with. Self-contained classes are set up in a way that learning areas of content for students who struggle with the material can put more focus on the student understanding the process of understanding the material rather than having the student master it after they first learn it. Teaching strategies for students who need extra time when learning new material in the classroom should look like giving students a step-by-step process. Creating a process that a student can practice following will allow them to understand how they solved the problem. When the process is done incorrectly the student will have an easier time figuring out where they were incorrect and how they could have solved the problem differently.

“Parental involvement has been defined ... (as) parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children.” (Hornby, 2014) Special educators carry a load of responsibility inside and outside of the classroom. In a special education classroom, it is an important responsibility to keep consultations and communication open between themselves and the families of the students. The most important thing about teaching a student with special needs is keeping the student's parents fully involved in every step of the student's academic journey. When preparing for a student's IEP meeting the first thing to make a priority when planning is to personally contact the parents of the student and figure out a day that works for the parents to be

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a part of the student's meeting. IEP meetings are crucial for parents to participate in due to the importance of the student's future success inside and outside of the classroom.

Developing Relationships

For a parent of a student, whether it's a single parent or grandparent who is considered the student's legal guardian, the special educator should plan accordingly around the parent(s) schedules. Building relationships with the parents can build a positive atmosphere for the teacher and students in the classroom and make communication easier between both parties, the teacher, and the parent. The first initial contact with the guardians of the student should always be a positive conversation. When working on building a connection with parents, it is crucial that the first time the student showcases good behavior is the time to make that first phone call with the parents to let them know how great their student is doing in class. When parents can be involved in what the student is doing in the classroom this can only help the student's success in school. When the parents support the teacher, the parents will always push their child to make good choices inside the classroom. The contribution of the parent also is a crucial part of the student's education. The active participation from the parents is important because that will allow the parents to voice their opinions on how they feel about the student's progress in a particular subject or area. In some cases, it has been apparent that not all parents are actively involved in their child's IEP process. When parents are not actively involved in the IEP meetings, this could be due to a personal choice for the parent that they are not willing to be an active participant. This can make decision-making difficult for the IEP team when implementing new interventions or when discussing possible new goals for the student. Parents are a crucial part of the team for the IEP team to be able to implement strategies and goals to increase a student's progress in the classroom.

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“Collaboration. Most parents of children are willing and able to contribute more than just information. They can collaborate with teachers by reinforcing classroom programs at home, such as in home-school reading programs.” (Hornby, 2014) Communicating with parents concerning the student’s progress or the activities that are happening in the classroom can be implemented in different ways and be effective. The teacher can create a schedule for each month and discuss in that schedule what areas will be covered, the teacher can also create a newsletter at the beginning of the year that talks about how the teacher plans on meeting the needs of the students inside the classroom. Giving the parents of the student a schedule of a typical day in the classroom will give parents insight into how the teacher plans to create a productive learning environment.

Another example of inviting the parents of the student inside the classroom could be an open house night when all teachers are to review the progress of each student in the classroom if the parents decide to participate. During these nights, teachers will often ask the parent(s) about the student’s progress and how the student is getting along in the classroom. Another way a teacher could invite parents into the classroom would be to have a presentation night where students can show off their accomplishments inside the classroom. Assuring the parents of the students that the classroom is a safe environment, is crucial when gaining the trust of a parent. Actively involved parents are constantly wanting to know the progress of their child in the classroom. The questions these parents will have will be about what their child is having the most difficulty with and how the parent can support their child outside of the classroom. Another way the special education teacher can keep the parents involved with their child, the teacher could create a time in the day when the parent of the student can sit inside the classroom while the special education teacher or the paraprofessional works one-on-one with the student or when

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the student is working in a group setting with other peers. This can allow the parents to observe how their student is working inside the classroom and can get a better understanding of where the challenges are and how the student is getting along in the school environment.

A part of a special education teacher's responsibility is managing time to accommodate the students and the staff team. Special education teachers are required to manage collaboration with the general education teachers. This can often be difficult if working in a school that does not have a great approach to collaboration. Collaboration not only involves working with parents but also collaborating with the other teachers in the building. Reasons for a special education teacher to collaborate with a general education teacher would be to know about the student's class activities for the week, and what the student will be learning inside the classroom. The special educators must be aware of the material that their classes are covering.

Keeping parents informed on new progress and keeping the line of communication open will make for an effective learning environment for the student. Regarding IEP meetings, they should be properly scheduled with the guardians of the student, to make sure that each IEP meeting is effectively documented by the teachers and the parents. For a family's first IEP meeting, the special education teacher should communicate with the parents during the week of and give the parents tips on what to bring to the meeting, the location, etc. For purposes of it being the first meeting, the special education teacher should recommend that the parents bring a pen and notepad to write down information that is being given during the meeting. Another recommendation that should be made is for the parents to write down any questions they may have about the process or concerns about the student. When a student enters high school, it is often typical for the student to begin joining their guardians at the IEP meeting. It is highly recommended that students attend their IEP meetings with their guardians. It is beneficial for the

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student to understand the process that happens inside an IEP meeting. It is important to make the student aware of not just the challenges the student faces in class but, more importantly, how the student is positively progressing in the classroom.

Giving positive reinforcement to students who often struggle in school is incredibly important for their confidence. Students who are a part of the special education program often feel a sense of embarrassment. Therefore, when a student is expected to participate in an IEP meeting it is important to highlight the students' strengths and reassure the student that their progress is being seen. When directing an IEP meeting it is important to start the meeting out with conversations regarding everything that the student is succeeding in and the progress that each of the teachers has witnessed. This starts the meeting with the student feeling proud and accomplished to hear that the teachers are making it clear that they do see the students' hard work. Students in special education have to work extra hard to reach their goals, as special educators, there must be positive encouragement inside the classroom every day. Students need encouragement and constant reassurance to feel like they can reach their goals and that their hard work is acknowledged. Students are aware of the treatment they receive versus how others are treated. Reassurance is a large form of motivation that the students will gain every time a teacher praises their students for accomplishing a task that may have been challenging.

Not implementing positive reinforcement is a big way to decrease a student's confidence. On the first day of school, first impressions are made within the first couple of hours of school. Students are learning about routines and how the classroom is structured. Often when students face challenges regarding their behavior, teachers will work throughout the day with the students to keep reinforcing the students with good behavior. Allowing students, the opportunity to choose to make good decisions should be entirely up to the student. When a student does not

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follow the classroom expectations, the teacher should ask the student whether or not they think they are making a good choice. This makes the student think about their behavior and will let the teacher know if the student is aware that their behavior is not acceptable. Most teachers have the same standards regarding the expectations that the student is aware of when in school. Still, most importantly, the parents reinforce similar expectations when the student is at home. Informing the student's parents about the guidelines inside the classroom is important information that should be shared with the guardians. This will allow the guardians to reinforce these expectations when bringing their students home. This will help implement the correct behavior, continuously giving the student structure. When parents and teachers can effectively work together and share good news and bad news will help increase the amount of positive behavior.

Preventive and Reactive Behavior Methods

According to Korpershoek (2016), four specific classroom management methods involve preventive and reactive interventions. The four methods are: The first intervention is teachers' *behavior-focused intervention*. This intervention focuses on developing teachers' management skills, which can involve changing the students' behavior by establishing order and disciplinary interventions. The next intervention is called *Teacher-student relationship-focused intervention*. This intervention discusses the development of the interaction between teachers and students inside the classroom. This kind of intervention looks like developing a classroom environment full of compassion and support. Preventive strategies are only included in this intervention. The third intervention is *Students' behavior-focused intervention*. This intervention focuses on *developing the behaviors of the students*, which can include improving the self-control of all the students.

“Classroom management includes strategies for reducing conflicts and disruptions to teaching and learning, i.e., problematic events. Experts' knowledge of classroom situations

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allows for focused noticing, directing attention to relevant, informative areas, including student interactions, to interpret classroom events.” (Wolff, 2016) For students to have self-control, it can look like when they want to answer a teacher's question, they can wait their turn until the teacher calls on them. One of the major behaviors teachers are challenged with is the level of talking during class. Students are in class for eight hours a day, so it can be challenging for some to not converse with their peers. This intervention is in the category of both preventive and reactive. The last intervention is called students’ social-emotional development-focused interventions. This intervention focuses on developing compassion for other peers and children. This strategy focuses on the student's emotional and social skills.

The teacher must show compassion to the students to inspire them to be compassionate to others. Classrooms can be dangerous if students are not appropriately taught to be kind to one another. Bullying has been a big issue for many years, teachers carry a responsibility for making sure that the classroom is a positive and safe environment for every student that walks through the door. Being self-aware inside and outside of the classroom is important for teachers. Students who are a part of special education can often feel singled out around their peers. Pulling students out of class for an hour of self-contained learning can cause social anxiety. Upper-level students in middle or high school can feel embarrassed if called out in front of their peers. Creating a plan for the student to get services outside the general education classrooms can make the student feel comfortable leaving class.

“Establishment of rules and procedures and favorable teacher-student relationships are preventive strategies. Concepts of management of content (e.g., space, materials, equipment, movement, and lessons) and management of covenant (e.g., social dynamics and interpersonal relationships) for preventive strategies when referring to classroom management.” (Korpershoek,

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2016) Various reinforcement strategies, including preventative and reactive, have been used to improve students' behavior and performance. This group of strategies all have a classification regarding contingencies. Independent, interdependent, and dependent groups are classified as contingencies. The following strategies are described to improve the process of the following behaviors or performances. An independent contingency group is focused on improving the intervention so that the same assessment must be applied to each student. For example, every student has to pass the same exam to be eligible for college. A dependent contingency group is focused on the intervention that expects only a single or only a couple of students to be at a specific criterion level for the rest of the group to be eligible for reinforcement.

For example, when one or more students receive a perfect score on a quiz, the teacher may hand out candy or prizes to the entire group of students. “Effective education refers to the degree to which schools successfully accomplish their educational objectives. Numerous studies have shown that teachers are key in shaping effective education. The differences in achievement between students who spend a year in a class with a highly effective teacher instead of a highly ineffective teacher are startling. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom” (Korpershoek, 2016) According to Korpershoek, the initial objective of creating this study was to research the effectiveness of many classroom management strategies and skills.

“Only when management efforts fail should teachers resort to reactive, controlling strategies. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between preventive and reactive classroom management skills.” (Korpershoek, 2016) Establishing effective rules and procedures that are valuable regarding teacher-student relationships is referred to as preventive strategies. This strategy is different from using interventions like giving students warnings or punishments,

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referred to as reactive strategies. Classrooms are experiencing complicated situations every day. These situations range from complex information overload for teachers to better understand what happens during these situations and why they occur. A huge role in classroom management is the teachers' perception of classroom situations and the awareness of why these situations occur. "Managing the diversity of classroom interactions and attending to the cues and events most relevant for understanding them hinges on sophisticated cognitive processing. An immense quantity of varied, fast-paced, co-occurring classroom events characterize the complexity of perceiving and processing a classroom." (Wolff, 2016) A particular strategy that is used by teachers is to be selective on the battles they choose to direct their attention to inside a classroom. This uses observational skills and perception from the teachers' point of view. When students in the classroom initiate a negative behavior, the teacher has to decide at that moment what the best way to deescalate the student from continuing this behavior without being off task.

Time on a task inside a classroom is when all students are engaged in the given task, and no disruptions or distractions keep the student from working on the task. Keeping students on task can be challenging for students who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These students often become easily distracted and need a lot of movement to stay focused. A distraction these students could cause could look like the student tapping their pencil on this desk, and this behavior can cause noise that will distract other students around them. The teacher's role in supporting these behaviors would be to modify how they stay focused. The teacher could keep desktop mouse pads in the classroom for these students who need to tap their pencils to stay concentrated. Giving the student a mouse pad to lay on their desk allows them to tap their pencil without creating a distracting noise. "Classroom management has been defined as actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and

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social-emotional learning. ” (Wolff, 2016) Teachers' responsibilities can be stressful and overwhelming regarding the responsibility of planning educational activities and also monitoring the effectiveness of these activities within the classroom. The environment in these classrooms is based on the pace at which the students grasp the information and the progress they are making with the curriculum being taught. This can also be referred to as teachers' ‘professional vision.’ A professional vision can develop over a while until the teacher can understand how to observe and effectively find the sense of the classroom. “To manage the classroom, teachers must observe the relevant cues and events, make sense of them quickly, monitor the progression of events, and ultimately make effective pedagogical decisions based upon this informational intake” (Wolff, 2016).

“It is what allows experienced teachers to *seek and monitor* meaningful information. Eye tracking offers a useful methodology for investigating teachers’ perceptual attention and professional vision; measures such as fixations can identify where a teacher directs their attention and processes visual information.” (Wolff, 2016). Researchers have found that experienced teachers tend to have fewer fixations and more student check-ins than pre-service teachers. These check-ins involve faster processing times to understand the environment and structure of the classroom. Teachers often process the classroom environment, which can happen through experiences or events that have occurred already. These experiences and events provide knowledge to the teacher on the awareness of the classroom environment.

Understanding Student Behavior Patterns

“A viewer's pre-existing knowledge guides and organizes what is seen within a particular scene, shaping the kinds of goals, elements, and events perceived, and helps construct a plausible interpretation from the scene of the classroom.” (Wolff, 2016) The experience that is given

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through teaching can greatly influence how the students process the information. Not only is the teaching experience for the students influential for understanding but how the teacher interacts and responds to their students can also influence the classroom environment. The classroom experience for a student regarding the interaction or the way the information was taught can leave a lasting impression on each student. For students, there is always a teacher that they will remember when they grow to be adults. These memories for the student can be negative or positive, and whether the experience was enjoyable.

The lasting impression that a teacher leaves their students can impact how the teacher makes each student feel. Students cannot correctly process information or concentrate on the task given if the environment does not feel safe for the student. Situations inside the classroom that can cause a student to feel uncomfortable are when they do not feel they can ask the teacher for help or raise concerns about things happening in the classroom. Teachers can often leave this impression on their students by their own behavior. It is essential for a teacher to keep a positive attitude and always show compassion towards the students. It can often be challenging to engage students in classroom discussions. Students with disabilities can become anxious when answering questions in front of their peers. A way to keep students from second-guessing themselves is always to remind them that there are no wrong answers. Giving positive feedback after a student answers questions or gives an opinion, the teacher should always respond positively, whether it is correct or not. This strategy will increase students' confidence during class discussions and help them answer questions they are unsure of.

Students will always seek reassurance from the teacher because every student wants to feel important and that the teacher sees their efforts inside and outside of the classroom. Showing interest in the students' hobbies and interests will increase the students' comfort in the classroom.

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Showing interest in the students is another way that makes each student feel reassured by their teacher. It was reported by Wolff, that years of experience in teaching cannot always be considered an expert teacher. Research done by Wolff showed that teaching skills develop within the first couple of years of teaching in the classroom. “Five to seven years of experience is a reasonable estimate of the time it takes to develop a high-level skill and knowledge as a teacher.”(Wolff, 2016).

“When learners perceive similarity in structural features, the application of rules is strengthened.” (Tallman, 2016). Understanding the triggers that a student may experience in a special education classroom will prevent explosive behavior that may occur if not redirected before the situation escalates. Often, when a student shows behaviors of disinterest in a particular task that has been assigned to them, most teachers will look at the behavior as the student showing behaviors of not wanting to participate. This can be a behavior that is often overlooked as the student does not follow instructions. Most of these students are unaware of how to perform the given task. Students in special education often look around the room or just look at their tasks when they cannot solve problems. This is why it is crucial for teachers to model and talk through the tasks assigned to their students. “Teaching relevant information and competent reasoning processes may be accomplished through cognitive modeling which presents information in terms of an individual’s emerging thinking processes.” (Tallman et al., 1993). Teaching students effectively will support their understanding of the thinking process the teacher wants them to use. The strategy that is used to teach students a specific skill is referred to as cognitive modeling. Cognitive modeling looks like when a teacher talks through their thinking process when solving a problem. As reported by Tallman, this strategy has shown an increasing use of improving problem-solving skills for the ages 6-10.

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Modeling Expectations of the Learning Process

Cognitive modeling is most successful for comprehension questions or operational questions for science demonstrations. It was also reported by Tallman that improving certain areas of academic performance also proved that the cognitive modeling strategy also increased the expectations of success for learners or how the students perceived self-efficacy in accomplishing familiar tasks. Cognitive modeling has been proven to be effective in increasing students perceived self-efficacy. This will also reduce anxiety about the performance of a task; students can often feel pressure when working on a specific task and often have challenges performing it. Increasing self-efficacy in a student will also increase the student's confidence when completing a challenging task individually. "In addition to differences between the presentation of knowledge via direct instruction and cognitive modeling, explicitly preparing the learner to apply rules by providing connecting ideas that suggest their applicability in similar contexts makes relevant knowledge more active. (Tallman, 1993.)

Cognitive modeling strategies can look different in every classroom; for example, in many special education classrooms, teachers and paraprofessionals will split up teaching a subject. The special educator may work with a big group of the students and the para may pull out a couple of the students into another room to work closely with those students. The students who are pulled out in smaller groups often need hands-on support and guidance when learning a challenging curriculum. It may take these students longer than others to retain the information. This strategy is often referred to as co-teaching. This strategy allows students who need extra support in particular areas to have one-on-one time with a teacher and go at their own pace. Students in the special education classroom will be on different academic levels. Some students may be reading at a lower level than others. It is vital that when teachers place students in groups they are paired with students who can help one another in areas that are difficult for some but

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easy for the other students. This will allow students to observe different problem-solving methods, although some may feel uncomfortable showing their weaknesses in certain areas.

Creating an environment where students are not afraid to make a mistake or give a wrong answer will create a positive learning environment. It will lessen the student's anxiety when coming into the classroom to work on challenging areas. According to Tallman, teachers' and students' understanding of the classroom keeps changing during interaction. Students and teachers will act and react in relation to the actions of their peers around them. This guideline that Tallman gave in this article encompasses how the teacher and students' actions will always have a reaction.

How the peers interact and react to one another will dictate the environment created. According to Ming-Tak (2008), it has been recorded that all behaviors inside a classroom are always purposeful. Behind every behavior, there will always be a reason why that behavior occurred during an activity or event inside the classroom. It is essential for teachers to maintain the classroom environment. Monitoring students' behavior with group work during activities is an effective way to understand how the students treat each other. Another statement by Ming-Tak (2008) discusses how the patterns of behavior among the students and teachers inside the classroom will make up the reality of the classroom. The meaning behind this statement was that the behaviors teachers allow inside the classroom daily without consequence or expectations will become normal if not adequately addressed or redirected. Behaviors such as bullying in a classroom can become severe if not adequately monitored; when students become negative towards one another, this can create a toxic classroom environment and can make students feel unsafe. For example, a teacher is in the middle of teaching a lesson. A student feels uninterested and bored during the lesson. Because this student is uninterested, the student begins acting out like a clown. The teacher begins to feel aggravated towards the student and gives the student a

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warning. The student feels misunderstood and threatened and continues to misbehave. The teacher began to tell off the student and continued to become very frustrated. This example showcases a cycle of interactions between a teacher and a student who did not understand the expectations of the classroom and the teacher did not know how to remain calm and escalated the situation. When a student begins to misbehave, the teacher should have a plan to redirect the student back to the directed task at hand. When teachers do not understand how to react to misbehavior, it can create a vicious cycle of teacher vs. student. When cycles of behavior like this occur other students inside the classroom who witness the behavior will become used to these situations and think it is normal. It is important for a teacher to react fast and in a proper manner, as this can decrease off-task time and increase on-task behaviors. “Problem-solving transfer improves when relevant concepts and rules are highly salient at the time they are needed. The more aware one is of information and the conditions under which can be applied, the more likely it is that such information will be transferred to new problems. (Gorrell, 1993).

A proper classroom environment involves keeping the students' behavior in check. This is not only behavior towards the teacher but to each student as well. The teachers' behavior towards students can set the tone for the classroom environment. If a student feels that the teacher is not respecting their students, this can highly affect the student's attitude toward one another. “Compared with the findings regarding self-efficacy beliefs, there were no significant differences among the groups on the measure of attitudes towards behavior analysis as a classroom procedure. Suppose more positive attitudes towards behavior analysis had been found among the cognitive modeling/implicit rules subjects. In that case, there might be an interpretation that cognitive modeling had increased positive attitudes, affecting their self-efficacy beliefs and the knowledge they retained.”(Gorrell, 1993). In a special education classroom setting, these

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students have been pulled out of their general education classes to receive support in particular academic areas. These students can be in different grades and ages depending on the support they are receiving during that period of time of the day. These students can all receive a range of different supports.

Differentiation

There may be students inside the classroom that can only read books by listening to the book on audio, there could be students who are learning mathematics at a lower level for their age, and students who may struggle with reading or writing. The students require technology for extra support in class can be challenging for students who do not need technology to learn. To prevent behaviors of students singling out one another due to the extra support they receive, it is important to be open about the technology that some students may need to reach their goals in school. At the beginning of the year, a good way to expose students who do not need specific technology for support is to understand how helpful technology can be when it comes to learning material in an alternative way. Keeping technology use in the classroom normal will lessen the embarrassment for students worried about their appearance when using technology for support. For example, when a student cannot process reading stories, they may have more success in processing information by listening to a voice reading the story to the student.

These students who are challenged in comprehension will be able to receive stories in an audiobook format, which will allow the student to have a program that reads the book to the student. Some of these programs that give this accommodation will often have ways for the student to follow along with the reader of the book and highlight the words being read. Allowing the student to follow along with the reader will train the student's brain to read while processing information. Many different programs offer audiobooks, such as Read Write and Gold. Read Write and Gold is an audiobook program that allows students a free Google extension to listen

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and read along with any story. This program provides students with many different features. These features allow the student to dictate how fast or slow the audio reads the book, and another feature of the program will allow students to set up how many lines of text they want to read in a paragraph. The student can edit the program to only show one sentence or a chunk of text at a time. This helps students keep track of where they are at in the paragraph. Students who are challenged with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will often struggle in reading small texts that are in chapter book format. Students typically begin reading chapter books during their time in middle school. This program would be more accommodating for students in middle school and higher-level grades. Elementary school students may need help understanding how they would be able to edit the book and how they want it to be read to them. This could take extra time for the teacher to teach their students step-by-step how to access this program. Higher-level grades and even beyond high school can use this program when reading any text. This program is considered universal because no student can use it to support their reading skills. Reading is an important skill that everyone needs to learn to be successful. According to the law, free appropriate public education (FAPE) gives students less fortunate a higher level of education. Still, it will always receive the right to attend public school.

Reading in the classroom is very common, these students will need to be provided with headphones or earbuds due to the volume of the reader. Wearing big headphones can often bother students if they are the only students in the room to use this accommodation. Keeping a couple of earbuds in the classroom for any student can be helpful for students who may not own a pair of headphones or earbuds. Audiobooks are also good for keeping the students engaged in the story, as students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often struggle to stay focused when reading a story in a classroom of peers. A tool that fixes the student from being

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distracted can look like accommodating the students with noise-canceling headphones. These headphones are made for background noises in a room and heighten the sound of the audio being played. Cancelling out background noise for a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will make it easier for them to focus on the information in the article or story.

Providing materials like headphones and programs for students who are challenged in reading or comprehending will benefit the classroom in terms of comprehension of information. These noise-canceling headphones also have many uses other than when a student is reading a book, noise-canceling headphones can be provided for students who need a quiet environment when working on a task or taking a test. Students challenged with comprehension often need a quiet workspace to complete a task with their full attention. It can often be difficult for students who struggle in comprehension to perform a task in a noisy environment; the noise can distract the students from understanding a question on their homework or test, and they will often need more time to understand the information. Creating a classroom environment that provides these accommodations regarding the noise level or accommodations using technology to increase the students' retaining level when reading or completing an assignment inside the classroom. Often students find it beneficial to work in a secluded area when reading or working on a test. Providing space in the classroom that uses desks with privacy walls to increase the students' focus on the assignment or test that they are working on. This desk will also decrease the distraction level the student may experience from other peers inside the classroom who are working on different assignments or who are working with the teacher.

Classroom distractions can often look at what activities are happening inside a special education classroom. The noise level inside the classroom can be controlled by setting expectations for what is considered a good volume during class time. The noise level in the

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classroom should be monitored throughout the day, and students should be aware of when the volume is increasing to a loud level. Keeping control of the noise level in a classroom will only benefit the students who need a quiet space to complete set tasks. It can be common to find materials in the classroom that also monitor noise levels. Using technology inside the classroom to help monitor peer interaction can be beneficial when used visually for the entire class.

Modeling the expectation and then referring back to that expectation before setting tasks or tests will affirm the expectations throughout the year. There are many programs that can be used inside the classroom when redirecting students.

A great program that many teachers use in the classroom daily is called [Classroom Screen](#). This program allows the teacher to use tools that will redirect students, for example, the noise level inside the classroom, dice that can be used for many different activities, timers, visuals for a clock, or scorekeeping that can be used for games. This program provides all the needed tools for any activity during class time. On this program, it provides a tool that can randomly choose a student. This tool is a great way to start a discussion within the classroom, letting the program choose the student's name will instantly pull focus to the teacher. The ability to pull focus from the students during an activity is crucial for how much time will be spent on the task. Pulling focus can look like putting a funny meme on the board that the students can relate to. A funny joke for the students to read when sitting at their table can automatically change the atmosphere. Classroom screen provides students with the accommodation of having a way of participating in the activity without having to give an answer aloud in front of their peers. A way that students can interact silently with this program is by using the poll tool. This is a way for the students to vote on an activity or homework without having to say their answer aloud. Not only does it benefit the students, but it also provides an assessment tool for the teacher to use

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when monitoring how the class engages with the activity. Another beneficial factor for the teacher is that the classroom screen can also allow the teacher to plan the curriculum for the upcoming classes and give students a visual of the expectations for that class period. Providing visuals is one of the most common accommodations students with learning disabilities can receive. Providing visuals for the entire class can be a universal way of teaching and will benefit the students who need step-by-step instruction when starting an assignment or project. Using these programs and tools inside the classroom will make all activities interactive and engaging for all students.

Classroom management includes many different strategies and techniques. Every teacher has a different version of what they consider successful classroom management. Understanding what works in the classroom environment is essential. Keeping students involved in the classroom expectations. Letting students have a say in how they feel the classroom routine is set up can gain the students' trust. Students will always seek reassurance from the teacher and want to make good decisions. The easiest way to lose a student's trust is when a teacher dismisses a student. Teachers can often get caught up in controlling every aspect of the room, and it becomes easy to forget that these students have hobbies and interests in things outside of the classroom. Telling stories and talking about what the students did during the weekend is a way to let the students know that the teacher is invested in them.

There are many students who will come to school who do not receive the proper care and attention at home. These students who come from an environment with no direction will attend school seeking love and support. Home environments for students can vary from moderate to severe. Outside behaviors that students have been accustomed to can have a big effect on the way they will behave inside the classroom. These backgrounds can affect the student's mood,

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emotions, and how they are feeling physically. The outcomes of these environments that these students experience can look like a lack of sleep at night; the effect this situation has on a student will be that the student may fall asleep during class time. In these situations, teachers must be aware of the backgrounds that their students come from. In the case of a student falling asleep during class, it is up to the teacher to make the decision to let the student sleep. These types of decisions are made based solely on the condition of the student. Whether or not the teacher feels that the student can focus and be able to comprehend information. These are other ways that teachers provide accommodation for their students. An important role that the teacher plays in the classroom is looking out for every student's well-being.

The well-being of students is the most important aspect of having good classroom management. Classroom management involves taking care of each student's mental health and redirecting behaviors that are unacceptable. Teaching responsibilities and how the choices they make can affect those around them. Misbehavior often occurs when the students feel their teacher is not hearing or seeing them. The beginning of the school year greatly will later affect the student's perspective on the teacher. Creating a classroom with routine and expectations that will help everyone succeed is essential to begin developing as soon as the students enter the classroom. Bonding and developing relationships from the start of the year will show the students a level of trust and compassion. Students often will have developed anxiety after having a negative experience with a teacher and this can lead students to put up a wall. Behaviors can be redirected and controlled when the classroom is set up properly that accommodate students' needs or support. Setting expectations and boundaries happens at the beginning of the year, so students are completely aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable.

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Having a vision of the classroom and knowing that classroom management has many categories, setting expectations is a large part of developing the environment. Expectations play another important role in developing a productive and supportive environment for students and teachers. Expectations will create a guideline for students to follow, mainly focusing on positive or negative behaviors. When students are given expectations, the teachers will often implement practice for those expected routines and expectations. Establishing these routines will increase positive behaviors and develop a strong student work ethic. Differentiation in the classroom involves making the students comfortable and supporting them in reaching their goals inside and outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

Teachers are most successful in the classrooms when they have developed a plan before the school year begins. These plans involve expectations, IEP-set goals, engagement, and routines. Creating an environment that allows students to reach their fullest potential can only happen when the teacher is interested in their students and who are willing to go the extra mile. Going the extra mile as a teacher can look like waiting by the door of the classroom when students first enter. This will be the first impression that a student will have of the teacher on the first day of school. Keeping in contact with the family of the student is another way to grow a bond with the student and gain the trust of the family. These all play a part in having a vision of the classroom and knowing that classroom management has many categories; setting expectations is a large part of developing the environment. Expectations play another important role in developing a productive and supportive environment for students and teachers. Creating an environment with established expectations can be done by using visuals, for example, posters on the walls that list the rules and the routines that the students will have to learn. Using visuals as a strategy and supporting the students who respond to learning visually can benefit the

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comprehension aspect of their learning. This can quickly create a guideline for students to follow, mainly focusing on positive or negative behaviors. When students are given expectations, the teachers will often implement practices for those expected routines and expectations. Teachers will spend the first week going through transitions in and outside the classroom. Teachers will walk through the routine of transitioning from one task to another until the students show an understanding of what is expected when they step into the classroom. The goal of this process at the beginning of the year is to teach students how to be responsible. This responsibility includes accountability for the effort they put into completing assigned tasks and for the choices that the students make.

Implementing technology in the classroom will help the students to become involved in classroom work. Technology is also an accommodation that many students with disabilities rely on every day inside the classroom. Creating motivation for the students with praise and positive reinforcement is important when working with students who are challenged in school. Students who have learning disabilities will often lack confidence when entering the classroom. Guiding students is most effective when the teacher models the expectations, behavior, and procedures. Students are most nervous on the first day of school due to the unknown factor, which is that they do not know the expectations and wonder if they will succeed in this environment. This anxiety that students feel in class can come from past experiences in other classrooms or fear of embarrassment in front of their peers. Expectations, across all levels, of respect for not only the teacher but also students to have respect for their peers.

Establishing these routines will also increase positive behaviors in the students and will create motivation for the students. Praise is important when working with students who are challenged in school. Students who have learning disabilities will often lack confidence when

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entering the classroom. Monitoring the students' interactions with one another is super important for the environment and the well-being of every student. Bullying occurs in every classroom, and it is a monumental issue in today's schools. Keeping a constant awareness in the classroom about being kind to one another can only benefit the students and push them always to be the best versions of themselves.

Teaching involves having the skill of understanding the strategies that involve decreasing bad behaviors and making positive behaviors have an encouraging outcome. Positive reinforcement is a key part of creating an environment that is productive and a place for students to reach their goals. Special education teachers set goals for each student that is assigned to them. When teachers think of these goals that are created in IEPs, they look at every aspect of the student. The reason these goals are set is that students who attend classes in special education need extra support in certain areas of school. When every student leaves the classroom to move on and grow, teachers hope that the students have been given all the tools to be successful in any field or career. To send students out into the world, the teacher's responsibility and expectation involve laying out a foundation for the students to start on to accelerate their success in the classroom. This is one of the many ways teachers can impact a student in school and out of school. Engaging with students in their interests, hobbies, and aspirations will develop a relationship of trust and respect. From a teaching standpoint, all these practices and behaviors will help grow the students with disabilities. Confidence, abilities, and success beyond education and throughout their life.

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