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Abstract

The purpose of this research project and professional development series is to shed light on the influence and effect that teacher biases, perceptions, and interactions have on student behavior. Often, teachers become apprehensive when exceptional students attend their class. This notion is amplified if the student is accompanied with a behavior intervention plan or a disability that manifests as externalizing behavior. In many cases, teachers report a lack of proper training in behavior mitigation strategies that extend beyond common, general education practices. If schools are to promote an inclusive environment, all teachers require the background knowledge to properly implement and adhere to behavior intervention plans to create a safe, efficient learning environment for all.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) theorized that six constructs influence individual behavior in humans. These constructs are utilized to determine human behavior based on a perceived result or product of learned behavior. Thus, I theorize that The Theory of Planned Behavior can be used to possibly predict behavior in students much like B.F. Skinner's Behaviorism theory. Combining these theories can help to analyze external factors, namely teacher interactions and perceptions, that could influence adverse behavior in students. I have found that preconceived notions can affect teacher-student interactions. Weiner's Theory of Attribution (1985) outlines the effect that positive teacher-student interactions have on identifying and referring students for special education and mental health services as well as the willingness of adolescents to seek assistance.

Teachers can become hyper-vigilant of typical behavior of students at the middle school level. I theorize that if educators are aware of target behaviors, it can cause typical behaviors to be identified as adverse behavior resulting in office referral or punitive styles of punishment where strategies like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports would be more appropriate. Calling unnecessary attention to behaviors in the classroom can possibly result in an increase of disruptive behavior and negative student-teacher interactions.

Keywords: perceptions, biases, student behavior

Research Questions

What are the perceptions of students as well as teachers of behavior contracting, teaching self-regulation strategies through modeling, and PBIS for behavioral de-escalation and prevention, and how does the implementation of these strategies affect the classroom environment as well as student-teacher relationships?

What is the effectiveness of implementing behavior contracting, teaching self-regulation strategies through modeling, and PBIS as behavior strategies for de-escalation and prevention over a 4-week period in the middle school setting?

Context and Rationale

Context and Setting of My Work

This school is a southeastern, large suburban middle school with roughly 1,300 students and 62 full-time teachers. All teachers are certified, and the administration staff consists of one principal, four administrators, and three counselors all serving each grade individually.

Administrators serve as vice principals of their assigned grades as well as assisting with discipline, buses, lunch, grades, and testing. Teachers are typically positive in interactions between staff and students. The student body consists of 44.5% minority enrollment with 20%

Asian or Pacific Islander, 13.7% Black or African American, 6.7% percent Hispanic or Latino, 3.7% two or more races, and 55.5% Caucasian.

The overall attitude of the school is generally positive. There are minimal instances of bullying that have been reported and the administration treats teachers and staff with respect. When it comes to student discipline, faculty and staff employ the *Responsibility Centered Discipline* (RCD) model. This framework is a way to talk through problems with students to help them understand the effect their actions have on others and find alternatives to adverse behavior in the future. This program has been successful when it is implemented correctly with fidelity. There have been problems in the past with teachers not believing in the framework and not implementing it because they feel like it is replacing consequences or letting students off too easily. When the data for disciplinary actions is analyzed, there is a reduction in high-magnitude aggression and altercations between students that cannot be resolved. There will be times where consequences are necessary, but RCD and Professional Crisis Management (PCM) help to minimize these types of interactions with prevention, de-escalation, and social emotional learning.

How my Research Question Relates to my Work Context

The goal of this project is to improve teacher and student behavior in educational settings. There has been a major shift in society regarding discipline at home and at school. It seems as if societal standards are not being taught or upheld resulting in more crime and adverse interactions. Many of the students I work with do not have a strong or positive male role model in their lives, and I would like to fill that void while in the school setting. Most of my work involves social emotional learning and coping with everyday life. If I can reach these students

and help them at school, they could take those strategies out into the real world to better themselves not because that is what is being asked of them, but because they want to.

Many teachers still believe that punitive punishment will shape behavior, but it is clear this isn't the case. From my experience, students feel as if the consequence of their behavior means nothing and does not affect those around them. When it comes to completing schoolwork and meeting expectations, they act as if the consequences are more agreeable than the task at hand. It comes down to the standard functions of behavior: to avoid or to obtain. If acting out means they get to avoid an undesirable task or person, so be it. There are also times where disruptive or adverse behavior is a sign of an unmet need. Many students will disrupt to distract from their shortcomings. Instead of viewing the behavior itself, teachers and staff need to take the student's situation into account. At the same time, when teachers are aware of a behavioral disability, they tend to draw more attention to typical behaviors because disruption is expected. This leaves students feeling like they have a target on their back. In some cases, they are not wrong. It is difficult to better yourself if everyone around you expects the worst. This also creates a deficit between praise and punishment. It leaves children feeling like teachers only criticize rather than support and recognize or celebrate growth.

Why is This a Worthwhile Topic for a Professional in my Situation?

There is a disconnect between addressing adverse behavior and promoting social emotional growth in students. The proper implementation of de-escalation and prevention strategies can reduce disruptive behavior in students. Combining these strategies while working with educators to overcome their potential biases toward students with behavioral disabilities will elevate education entirely. The dissemination of this knowledge and experience can help all teachers and school staff as well as students for a more effective mode of education academically

and socially. I want to help education professionals understand that helping students in their social emotional growth and coping skills can teach them strategies to use beyond post-secondary education. If there can be a balance between promoting social emotional learning and appropriate consequences, more children can grow up to be educated, functioning members of society.

Literature Review

Introduction

In this literature review, I will highlight the correlation between teacher behavior or biases and student behavior by examining teacher perceptions of exceptional students within the field of secondary education. I aim to identify a connection between teacher perception or biases and adverse student behavior in that teacher behavior can influence student behavior. This will add to existing literature by covering the Theory of Planned Behavior in relation to behaviorist theory and real-world classroom experience. The Theory of Planned Behavior proposes that human behavior can be predicted using six social constructs: perceived behavioral control, perceived power, subjective norms, social norms, behavioral intention, and attitude (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this fashion, the six constructs can influence learned behavior and the perceived result of said actions. As discipline and education have undergone a shift accompanied by societal changes, educators must find a way to mitigate adverse behavior and create a learning environment that is conducive for all stakeholders involved. Few studies have been performed to investigate the effectiveness of The Theory of Planned Behavior in the classroom. In 2018, Burns et al. conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of the Theory of Planned Behavior through an examination of the instructor-confirmation-interaction model. They concluded that positive teacher-student interaction along with application of the Theory of Planned Behavior

could work to mitigate adverse student behavior and improve student-teacher relationships. Their study outlined three sets of beliefs (behavioral, normative, and control) which can influence an individual's behavior through the evaluative process (Burns et al., 2018).

Importance of Professional Development in Behavioral Intervention Strategies

Standard disciplinary sanctions have become counterproductive (Underwood, 2020). Students have become more enthralled with the results of their behavior rather than the implication. The consequences are more agreeable than the task itself. For instance, students will cause disruption to avoid an undesirable task regardless of the consequences. Therefore, educators must find a way to help students become more responsible for their behavior and the effect it has on others. Students with disabilities are twice as likely to be referred for disciplinary actions than their non-disabled peers (Underwood, 2018). In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education set a goal that 50% of disabled students would receive 80% of their direct instruction in the general education classroom. More recent data showed that while 57% of disabled students met this goal, only 37% of students with diagnoses of Emotional Disturbance met the same goal (Evans et al., 2012).

A 2012 study found that more than 50% of special education teachers that taught students with emotional disturbance could identify triggers, used social reinforcement, changed interactions with students, and reinforced desired behavior whereas only 41% of general education teachers reported that they used reinforcement of desired behavior often or very often (Evans et al., 2012). This shows that there is a need for professional development and education of general education teachers to properly meet the social emotional needs of students diagnosed with emotional behavioral disturbance to shape their behavior for the better. During their 2012 study, Evans et al. found that regular education teachers consistently marked an inability to learn

as the primary defining factor impeding learning with inappropriate behavior as secondary in students with emotional disturbance while special education teachers noted relationship problems as their secondary. This could show that special education teachers are more attuned with their students because of formal training and experience (Evans et al., 2012).

Professional Perspectives and Issues Around Behavioral Intervention and Teacher Biases

Research has shown that socio-emotional skills, particularly adaptability, motivation, and self-restraint, are key factors that could determine adult outcomes in students which means that educators should understand how their behavior affects their students' development across both academic and non-cognitive areas (Jackson, 2019). This can also apply to behavior. Teachers must realize and be taught how their behavior affects their students. In the case of this study, teacher behavior, perceptions, and attitudes can influence positive and adverse behavior. Teacher impact on non-cognitive skills is ten times more influential on a student's long-term success compared to test scores (Jackson, 2019). Test scores capture a small snapshot of a teacher's effect on potential student success.

The expectations and perceptions of teachers have a significant contribution to students' academic outcomes and academic self-esteem (Williams et al., 2020). In previous studies, students placed in a "low expectation" group were aware of the expectations and stated they noticed their teacher's low expectation in terms of their behavior toward the students (Williams, et al., 2020). The same goes for students with behavioral disabilities like emotional behavioral disturbance. Based on personal experience, these students understand the stigma that goes along with having a behavior intervention plan. They have noticed that teachers treat them differently whether that be more support or being overly vigilant to seemingly typical behaviors of a middle school student. Students that are perceived as hostile or oppositional by teachers run the risk of

being labeled, and these stigmas are communicated to the student in a multitude of ways (Williams et al., 2020). Classroom behaviors that are possibly influenced by teacher perceptions can either deteriorate or stimulate the classroom learning environment (Williams et al., 2020).

Standards that Support My Project

The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Code of Ethics outlines standards for educators to meet the needs of all students ethically and effectively. Every code applies to how a special education teacher should compose themselves and interact with others, but codes 3, 6, 7, 8, and 12 apply directly to this project. Code 3 states, "Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in their schools and communities" (CEC, 2023). Teacher biases and preconceived notions about students with behavioral disabilities violates this code because inclusivity means all students are welcome, as appropriate, regardless of their academic or behavioral history. Code 6 states, "Using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice" (CEC, 2023). Educational professionals must use evidence and research-based practices to efficiently instruct students and mitigate behavior. Experience should not inform practices considering that each exceptional student's case and circumstances are unique. Code 7 states, "Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptionalities." Code 8 states, "Neither engaging nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptionalities" (CEC, 2023). Targeting or being hypervigilant of students with behavior plans does not protect their psychological safety. It harms the student. Code 12 applies directly to the purpose of the PD section of this project. It states, "Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills."

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) Response to Intervention - Behavior (RTI-B) framework states, "Tier III interventions promote positive school climates by ensuring

that the students with the greatest support needs receive a level of support that allows them to thrive in school...Interventions should focus on teaching and strengthening pro-social behaviors that will benefit the student long term, while simultaneously decreasing challenging behaviors in the short term” (TDOE, 2018a p.42). This framework goes on to explain that exceptional students should be educated to the highest extent possible in the general education classroom with their non-disabled peers. The Council for Exceptional Children’s Professional Standards for Special Education mirror these statements with standards of their own that cover aspects of only using evidence-based practices, refrain from using aversive techniques, supporting positive and pro-social behavior, and creating safe, culturally responsible, and effective learning environments to fulfill needs and stimulate students to aid in developing positive self-concepts (CEC, 2023).

Relevant Educational Theories

Fishbein and Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior outlines six constructs that influence behavior in individuals. Perceived behavioral control, perceived power, and outcome are the main theoretical focus of this project and professional development series. The perceived outcome as well as the perceived power and control of the students can influence their behavior. Individuals act or react based on an intended outcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). For example, if a student intends to avoid an undesirable task, the student may disrupt class or get in trouble because the perceived outcome is either being removed from the class for disciplinary purposes or waste time to distract the teacher from completing the task. The perceived control or power would be the student’s perception of how much control they have over the situation based on their level of disruption. The six constructs also work to outline behavioral beliefs of the evaluative process: behavioral, normative, and control (Burns et al., 2018). Students utilize the

evaluative process to determine the amount of control they have based on the exhibited behavior and past experiences.

B. F. Skinner's Theory of Behaviorism was derived to explain how independent variables can be analyzed to predict and control behavior (Delprato & Medgley, 1992). During his study of operant (voluntary) behavior, Skinner found that individuals utilize past experiences to determine their behavior. When it comes to the classroom environment, explicit rules and expectations specify an environmental consequence of displaying certain behaviors (Delprato & Medgley, 1992). Consequences can be positive or negative. This term does not mean the punishment of adverse behavior. Instead, the consequence is the exact result or what happens directly after an exhibited behavior. For example, when students create disruption, the consequence could be obtaining peer attention or avoiding an undesirable task. Much like The Theory of Planned Behavior, this is the perceived outcome based on past experiences. Skinner went on to explain that manipulation of stimuli or the environment surrounding individuals can influence and alter behavior (Delprato & Medgley, 1992). In the scope of this project, teacher biases and teacher behavior serve as the independent variable that can alter or influence student behavior.

Theoretical Basis for Professional Development in Behavioral Intervention and Teacher Biases

Teachers have reported a lack of training, knowledge, and confidence when it comes to responding to student behavior, and this could be the driving force behind many teachers leaving the education profession (Carroll et al., 2023). Carroll and her colleagues (2023) also noted that this uncertainty could lead to under-utilization or removal of school-based behavioral support services resulting in more punitive disciplinary actions. Another common factor could be teachers' lack of motivation to act in support of students with behavioral disabilities which can

result in a failure to recognize behaviors as an unmet need requiring mental health services (Carroll et al., 2023). If teachers fail to support their students and recognize behaviors for what they are, it can lead to problems behaviorally and academically as well as hinder the school's ability to provide necessary services. For example, if a student with ED feels as if their needs are not being met or that their teacher does not support them, this could lead to further disruptions and adverse behavior. In 1980, B. Weiner theorized that an emotional responses and positive support can lead to an increase in willingness for students to seek outside help. In short, teacher attributions could become the mediator between accessing supportive responses and student behavior (Carroll et al., 2023).

Weiner's Theory of Attribution has been used to analyze adverse behavior in students. Results show that many teachers attributed misbehavior to internal (attitude, work ethic, etc.) or external (home life, living situation, etc.) factors rather than school or teacher-based influences like instruction model or perceptions (Carroll et al., 2023). The Gateway Provider Model states that teacher decision-making is based on four factors: structural characteristics (characteristics of the school or district), student predisposition (race, gender, potential risk factors), enabling factors (availability of services), and student's need for services (Carroll et al., 2023). In terms of student behavior or disruption, these factors can influence a teacher's frequency or ability to request behavioral intervention or special education services (Functional Behavior Assessment, Behavior Intervention Plan, IEP, etc.).

Potential limitations include "outlier" students that do not conform to the theoretical patterns established for students with emotional behavioral disturbance, hardline educators, and a lack of literature connecting teacher behavior to adverse student behavior. Considering that emotional behavioral disturbance is said to be a disability of "unknowns", there could be

instances that disprove behavioral interventions or their efficacy. Cases like these could cause teachers to lose sight of the end goal or disagree with interventions that are proposed. Hardline educators that continue to believe in the older methods of mitigating adverse behavior like punitive punishment could cause resentment amongst educators resulting in a lack of belief in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and cause teachers to question the fidelity of the professional development series. Most literature addressing teacher behavior and biases highlight the connection between positive teacher interactions rather than adverse teacher behavior possibly influencing disruptive and undesirable student behavior.

Developmental Characteristics of the Learner

Characteristics of Teachers as Learners

The purpose of the professional development series, *Shaping Student Behavior*, is to aid teachers in developing a deeper understanding of emotional disturbance as well as how teacher perceptions or biases can influence student behavior. Based on experience and teacher interviews, teachers are more comfortable with students with autism spectrum disorder because it is a more widely known disability that comes with many strategies that can typically be generalized for most students with ASD. With emotional behavioral disturbance, there are many unknowns and unpredictability. Teachers become apprehensive when they are met with unfamiliar aspects of education regarding mitigating student behavior. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) defines emotional disturbance as exhibiting one or more characteristics including:

- (a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal

circumstances. (d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. (TDOE, 2018b, p.5).

The vernacular used creates nervousness in teachers because it outlines that these students have difficulty with interpersonal relationships and self-regulation. Many teachers can get through to typical students by forming healthy relationships. These students are not typical. So, this becomes an issue and teachers do not feel like they can form that relationship resulting in a failure to attempt from the beginning.

This professional development session will also provide behavioral strategies to shape student behavior rather than punitively punish. From first-hand experience, shaping behavior helps students become responsible for their behavior and understand the effect it has on others. Part of shaping behavior is understanding the possible causes. Behavior can come about due to an unmet need. If a student does not feel safe or supported, this can result in disruption or a lack of trust. When needs are being met, students are more likely to seek help or think introspectively about their behavior (Carroll et al., 2023).

Professional Consensus on Best Practices in Professional Development

Professional development sessions should create opportunities for teachers to critically think and reflect on their own practices in the classroom (Weidenseld & Bashevis, 2013). This professional development session will require teachers to think introspectively about their own potential biases toward students with behavior plans. The focus should be on the significant value that professional development provides regarding student achievement rather than hours required for licensure or renewal (Weidenseld & Bashevis, 2013). Teachers can become fixated on the amount of hours needed to meet district requirements for PD or FLEX credit. This creates

an ulterior motive to the purpose of professional development. The aim of the sessions is not to keep teachers longer or make them do more. It is to help them grow as educators to better serve students and inform practices. When educators are more worried about fulfilling a requirement, they lose focus on skills and knowledge that proper professional development can provide. When teachers lose this focus and become disengaged in professional development, it can lead to apathetic feelings, burnout, rebellious attitudes, and an aversion to learning opportunities (Weidenseld & Bashevis, 2013).

Much like professional learning communities, professional development is driven by three main ideas: a focus on learning, collaborative culture and responsibility, and results orientation (DuFour et al., 2016). In this case, the teachers are the learners, and the focus is learning to become better educators. Teachers must take responsibility for their practices as well as their students' achievement while also working collaboratively. The end goal should be the desired result of student achievement, and in this case, increased pro-social behavior and responsibility in students.

Summary

Students must be supported regardless of predisposition and disciplinary history. Teachers need to take a deeper look at their own practices to identify areas for refinement. Education is not only about student behavior. It is also about teacher and staff behavior. The school environment should be one built on positivity, safety, and support of physical as well as social emotions. If students feel targeted, they do not feel safe. If students do not feel support, needs are not being met which can be the underlying cause of disruption and adverse behavior. When this is the case, it is not the students' responsibilities to make the proper changes. The teachers and staff must look inward to make the necessary changes on their end. It is the school's

responsibility to help students feel safe and supported. At the middle school level, it is not practical or logical to expect adolescents to create their own safe, supported space. That task lies with educational professionals who acquired the training and knowledge to create efficient, functioning members of society. Behaviorist theories highlight the environment around behavior and how it influences results. Teacher behavior has a direct influence on student behavior and achievement. Exceptional students need more support in different ways. Often, these students have a history of being let down or have experienced a pattern of treatment that led to anxiety, nervousness, and rebellion. They have not been supported because of the stigma that surrounds their disabilities. These feelings are amplified when they are met with less than supportive attitudes. If there is a pattern of behavior for students, educators need the ability to analyze and evaluate their own behavior and perceptions to create a more welcoming environment for learning.

Schools and educators should implement teacher and personal bias training during in-service days before the school year starts. This will bring the entire school together as a unit in a workshop form. If hours permit, schools can have faculty meetings, or portions of these meetings, as a check-in on personal bias work. This could also come in the form of questionnaires that can be sent out regularly throughout the school year to keep the idea of teacher biases at the forefront of educators' minds. As the school year progresses, and into the summer months, districts can offer more in-depth bias training involving more data and information that pertain to specific disabilities and topics like emotional behavior disturbance and societal influence on students. FLEX or PD hours can be used as incentives for taking part in these training courses. Teachers that continually put in the work necessary to change student perceptions can be highlighted in faculty newsletters or recognized through reward systems.

Action Plan and Results

My action plan consists of three phases: initial teacher surveys, professional development series, and post-PD interviews/surveys and data collection. The initial anonymous teacher surveys are given to teachers at random across multiple grade levels and content disciplines. These questionnaires are comprised of questions regarding students with diagnoses of Emotional Behavioral Disturbance and Autism Spectrum Disorder listed below:

1. How comfortable are you with having students with Autism in your classroom?
2. How comfortable are you with having students with Emotional Behavioral Disturbance in your classroom?
3. Are you more comfortable with students with Autism or Emotional Behavioral Disturbance?
4. Please briefly explain your answer to question #3.
5. Do you become apprehensive when you receive a student with a Behavior Intervention Plan? If so, briefly explain.
6. Have you had any formal training on behavioral intervention? If so, briefly explain.

The questions ask recipients to rate their comfortability of EBD and ASD from very comfortable to very uncomfortable. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather teacher perceptions of students with ASD and EBD as well as their feelings on students with Behavior Intervention Plans and any formal behavior intervention training. When prompted to explain, teachers are to provide insight to their response to possibly gain a better understanding for their mode of thinking.

PD Session Outline

Once information from the initial surveys is analyzed, I designed a three-part PD session to address feelings of apprehension as well as teacher perceptions, behavior mitigation strategies, and Emotional Behavioral Disturbance. The first session addresses the effect that teacher perceptions have on students, common behavior mitigation strategies, and an introduction to EBD including definitions, possible causes, and strategies for addressing target behaviors in students. The second session takes a deeper dive into the world of EBD and provides opportunities for 1-on-1 assistance for teachers. The third session is an overview of the first two sessions along with role-playing of real-world situations in a workshop format.

Results

Initial Teacher Survey

In response to the initial teacher surveys, 43% of teachers reported being very comfortable and 57% reported being somewhat comfortable with students with ASD. On the other hand, with EBD, 14% reported being very comfortable, 29% somewhat comfortable, 14% neither comfortable or uncomfortable, 29% somewhat uncomfortable, and 14% reported feeling very uncomfortable. When comparing ASD and EBD, 100% of teachers stated they are more comfortable with students with Autism. When asked about attitudes toward behavior intervention plans, 57% of teachers admitted feelings of nervousness and apprehension when students have behavior intervention plans with some reporting feelings of “dread”. These results outline a voluntary bias against students with emotional disturbance and behavior intervention plans.

Post-PD Survey and Teacher Interviews

After the first professional development session, attendees were given an anonymous survey pertaining to presenter knowledge, delivery, teacher confidence, and future comfortability attending sessions and seeking help. Results listed below:

1. Objectives were relevant and will help me respond to behavior in the future – 60% strongly agree, 40% agree.
2. The presenter stayed on topic, provided real-world experience, and facilitated the session effectively – 100% strongly agree.
3. I feel confident in my ability to implement strategies learned in the PD session – 80% strongly agree, 20% agree.
4. I feel comfortable reaching out for help in the future – 100% strongly agree.
5. I would attend PD sessions on this topic in the future – 60% strongly agree, 40% agree.

After allowing teachers two weeks to utilize the information and implement the strategies outlined in the professional development session, teachers reported that they have noticed a more efficient learning environment in their classroom as well as students becoming more motivated and responsible for their schoolwork as well as their behavior. In classrooms in which teachers implemented pro-active and positive strategies for behavior mitigation outlined in the professional development session, office referrals decreased by 28% and repeat offenses decreased 32% compared to classrooms in which more punitive styles of punishment are employed.

Conclusion

Teacher perceptions and attributions can influence student behavior. This could be a positive or negative influence to stimulate or deteriorate a classroom (Williams et al., 2020). Stimulation leads to a more efficient, healthy learning environment whereas deterioration affects all students and their behavior in a negative manner. Positive student-teacher interactions lead to improved behavior and better learning outcomes whether that interaction is a response to adverse behavior or celebrating pro-social, appropriate behavior. When responding to disruption,

teachers should remain as positive as possible to aid students in recognizing how their choices affect others to make better choices in the future. The use of Positive Behavior and Supports to mitigate adverse behavior in students teaches children how to think introspectively about their learning, actions, and outcomes. When teachers utilize these strategies, problem behaviors decrease and student responsibility increases.

When teachers recognize potential personal biases, perceptions can change. Through professional development sessions and teacher education, educators can more effectively inform their practices to serve all students. Teacher interventions are required to reach this goal. In this fashion, perception and bias intervention work is done on the side of the teacher rather than the student as with most behavioral intervention programs. Teacher attributions are more influential on non-cognitive development compared to test scores (Jackson, 2019). When professional development sessions are implemented properly, teachers attend to learn rather than to earn. The majority professional development systems in education involve requirements of PD hours to earn monetary incentives. In this mode, teachers do not attend these sessions to learn and inform their practices, they attend to earn that incentive. Professional development should be used to add to a teacher's skillset. When educators lose sight of that goal and the importance of perfecting their craft, the profession becomes stagnant, and the students are the ones that suffer.

List of Terms

BIP – Behavior Intervention Plan – Behavioral plan that outlines how staff should react to the behavior of a particular student.

De-escalation – communication strategies and techniques used to stabilize an encounter or prevent potentially violent outcomes.

FBA – Functional Behavior Assessment – An assessment that outlines target behaviors of a student as well their frequency, duration, and intensity.

Functions of Behavior – the reasoning behind or the perceived outcome resulting in adverse behavior.

IEP – Individual Education Plan – An education plan designed to accommodate outline special education services to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

PBIS – Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports – A behavior mitigation framework with emphasis on positive supports rather than punitive punishment.

PD – Professional Development

PCM – Professional Crisis Management – A physical and verbal intervention system used to de-escalate potentially violent situations while also keeping students and staff safe.

Punitive Punishment – Disciplinary actions involving detention, suspension, expulsion, or any consequence that removes the student from an inclusive setting.

RCD – Responsibility Centered Discipline – A disciplinary model which emphasizes structured conversations to aid students in accepting responsibility for behaviors to shape future behavior.

RTI - Response to Intervention - An educational framework that helps to identify and supports students requiring additional academic or behavioral assistance.

Self-regulation – the ability to control one’s emotions based on stimuli without external assistance.

Stakeholders – students, staff, families, the community.

Target Behaviors – Behaviors outlined in a students Behavior Intervention Plan that disrupt class or impede the learning of others.

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