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AUTHOR: Abby Ineman

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Jodi Robledo, Ph.D
PROJECT COMMITTEE CHAIR

[Signature]

DATE

Kathleen Fisher
PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBER

[Signature]

DATE
Supporting General Education Teachers in Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

by

Abby Ineman

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Education

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Project Abstract

As more children are being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), it is becoming common for general education teachers to have students with this diagnosis in their classrooms. Although teacher preparation programs and professional development support general education teachers in supporting behaviors, many do not address autism spectrum disorder and specific evidence-based strategies such as Applied Behavior Analysis. The purpose of this project is to create a professional development for general education teachers to provide them with the tools and knowledge needed to support the challenging behavior of children with autism spectrum disorder within the general education classroom. This project addresses what autism spectrum disorder is, what behavior is, what applied behavior analysis is, the functions of behavior and how to best support these behaviors.

Keywords: Applied behavior analysis, Autism spectrum disorder, Behavior function, General education, Inclusion
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Chapter One: Definition of Problem

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention stated, “autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges” (2015). There currently is no cure for autism spectrum disorder and it affects 1 in 68 individuals (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015, 1). As more children are being diagnosed, it has become common for general education teachers to have students with this diagnosis within their classrooms. However, the problem that many general education teachers have faced is that they are not prepared. Many general education teacher preparation programs have not given teachers the necessary tools that are needed to work with this population of students. Also, as teachers are getting hired, there is minimal professional development on the topic of supporting the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder within the general education setting.

We know that general education teachers need to be trained in supporting the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. However, the question is how? Simpson (2001) supported the use of Applied Behavior Analysis by stating “applied behavior analysis can be applied in a variety of ways and settings with students with autism, including as a way to implement incidental teaching programs and teach social skills in natural settings” (Simpson, 2001, p.1)

This chapter serves as an introduction to this project by stating and explaining the purpose, providing an overview of the literature, providing an overview of the methodology, stating its significance of the project and providing key definitions.
Purpose of Project

The problem that many general education teachers have faced is that they have not received the proper training to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. Because of that, this project was created. This project is a five – day professional development for general education teachers to assist them in supporting the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder.

The reason for this professional development is because more children with autism spectrum disorder are being included within the general education population where educators are not prepared to support the challenging behaviors that these children exhibit. The California Teaching Performance Expectations hold general education teachers to high standards that address instructional content and planning, progress monitoring, interpretation and use of assessments, student engagement, teaching English Learners, creating and maintaining instructional time and creating a positive social environment. In terms of addressing behavior, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2013) stated, “if students are struggling and off – task, candidates examine why and use strategies to re – engage them” (California Teaching Performance Expectation1). The California Teaching Performance Expectations, released by the Commission of Teacher Credentialing addressed the behavior of all students but not specifically those with autism spectrum disorder.

The goal of this project is to support general education teachers in supporting challenging behaviors by implementing Applied Behavior Analysis within their classrooms. This project and review of literature will investigate what general education teachers know about Applied Behavior Analysis, look at how it is or could be implemented within their classrooms and see what could be done to best support general education teachers.
Preview Literature

Autism spectrum disorder was identified by Leo Kanner in 1943 and is characterized by language, social and behavioral impairments (Fein & Dunn, 2007). Individuals with autism spectrum disorder commonly portray behaviors such as physical aggression, self–injury, property destruction, tantrums and disruptions which impact their educational and social success (Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd & Reed, 2002). These behaviors not only affect the individual and people who are close to them but also affect the surroundings they are associated with by making it more likely for the individual to be excluded from community, home environments, social relationships, and the educational setting (Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd & Reed, 2002).

Within the educational system, there are a greater number of students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder receiving instruction within general education classrooms (Hard & Kelly, 2012). A major challenge that general education teachers have faced is providing an appropriate education for children with autism spectrum disorder in an inclusive setting (Loiacono & Valenti, 2010). However, without the proper training to teach children with autism spectrum disorder, academic and behavioral outcomes will be limited and improvement will be very little to none (Loiacono & Valenti, 2010).

Skinner and Hales (1992) recommend that training occur in “an ABA – oriented management course encouraging teachers to view classroom behavior from a behavioral orientation; focusing on classroom, instructional, and teacher variables which can be altered to solve problems” (p.229) because these principles are known to be the most effective and facilitate appropriate academic and social behavioral changes within the classroom (Skinner & Hales, 1992). Research has called for teachers to be trained in applied behavior analysis because
it has a model that provides clear and functional instruction that supports the academic needs of students (Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot & Goodwin, 2003).

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is an evidence-based practice that has been used for over 25 years in many different settings. Skinner and Hales (1992) stated that ABA is used to “develop less intrusive procedures for changing academic and social behavior” (p.220). This approach is individualized and is student centered, catering to the individual needs of the students (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, Kincaid, 2003).

**Preview Methodology**

In order to create this professional development for general education teachers, research was reviewed in the following areas: autism spectrum disorder, behavior, inclusion, training received by general education teachers, the quality of training received by general education teachers in supporting the challenging behavior of children with autism spectrum disorder and background information on Applied Behavior Analysis and how it is used within general education classrooms.

After the literature was reviewed, a five – day professional development was created for general education teachers. This presentation included handouts, examples, and a video for general education teachers to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder.

**Significance of Project**

The number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is on the rise as well as the number of children with autism spectrum disorder being included within general education classrooms. Children with autism spectrum disorder portray challenging behavior for a number of reasons such as social impairment, language, and repetitive and restricted behavior. Because
of this, general education teachers need to be supported and given the necessary evidence –
based tools to best support the challenging behavior of children with autism spectrum disorder.
By giving general education teachers support, children with autism spectrum disorder will have
the behavior support they need within the general education classrooms as well as increased time
within an inclusive setting. With behavioral support, families may see the behavior of their child
decrease and may feel more comfortable with their children being in the general education
classroom. Most importantly, general education teachers will have felt supported by receiving
training to support their students with autism spectrum disorder. Also, Applied Behavior
Analysis will be implemented within general education classrooms to meet the behavioral needs
of children with autism spectrum disorder.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter provided an overview of the behavioral needs of children with autism
spectrum disorder and how general education teachers need the proper training to support the
challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. The themes that were discussed
were autism spectrum disorder, behavior in children with autism spectrum disorder, inclusion,
the need for training for general education teachers, the quality of training that general education
need to receive and background information on Applied Behavior Analysis. The methodology
provided are tools and resources in the form of PowerPoint for general education teachers to use
in order to support the behavioral challenges of children with autism spectrum disorder.
Definitions

**Aggressive Behavior** – “behavior that causes physical or emotional harm to others, or threaten to” (Gabbey, 2003, p.1)

**Applied Behavior Analysis** – “Applied Behavior Analysis is the process of systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree, and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in behavior” (Baer, Wolf & Riseley, 1968, p.91)

**Autism Spectrum Disorder** – developmental disability in which individuals have deficits in social communication and interaction and show restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

**Behavior**-“Behavior is something that a person does that can be observed, measured, and repeated. When when we clearly define behavior, we specifically describe actions. We do not refer to personal motivation, internal processes, or feelings” (Bicard, Bicard & the Iris Center, 2011),

**Inclusion** –“students with disabilities are supported in chronologically age – appropriate general education classes in this home schools and receive the specialized instruction per their individualized education programs within the context of the core curriculum and general education activities” (Florida State University Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy, 2002, p.1)
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is on the rise and because of that more children are being educated within general education classrooms and within our schools. With repetitive and restricted behavior being one of the three impairments of autism spectrum disorder, general education teachers need the training to support the challenging behavior of these children. The problem that general education teachers face is that they are not prepared to support these behaviors because they have not received the proper training within the classroom and within their teacher preparation programs. These teachers need to receive training in Applied Behavior Analysis in order to best support their students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This chapter provides an overview on what autism spectrum disorder is, what behavior looks like in children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, the importance of inclusion and how it is on the rise, the need for teacher training when working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder, the quality of training general education teachers should be receiving and an overview of applied behavior analysis and how it is used within the general education classroom.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders defined autism spectrum as deficits in social communication in social communication and social interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities (DSM – 5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Autism spectrum disorder was identified by Leo Kanner in 1943 and is characterized by language, social and behavioral impairments (Fein & Dunn, 2007). Kluth & Olcott – Chandler (2013) stated “although no two students with autism will look, behave,
communicate, or learn in exactly the same way, students with this label do share some general characteristics” (Kluth & Olcott, 2013, p.4).

The first area of impairment of autism spectrum disorder is a social impairment. Individuals with social impairment may have difficulty with joint attention, eye contact, gestures, peer relationships and emotional reciprocity (Fein & Dunn, 2007). Fein and Dunn (2007) stated, “surprisingly the most central of the social symptoms is ‘joint attention’. Joint attention refers to the child’s desire to coordinate his attention with that of his partner, so they’re both attending to the same object” (p.4). Language is the second impairment of autism spectrum disorder and delayed language is one of the most common symptoms within this category (Fein & Dunn, 2007). Fein & Dunn (2007) described delayed language as “no spoken words by age two and no phrases by age three, but this is not meant to be a rigid definition” (p.7). Individuals with this impairment may also have difficulty with repetitive language and with pretend play. Repetitive and restricted behavior is the third and final impairment. Children with this impairment may have difficulty with visual self – stimulation, repetitive movements, resistance to change and preferred topics (Fein & Dunn, 2007). Fein & Dunn (2007) stated that is important to note, “repetitive and restricted behaviors vary, depending on the children’s ages and ability levels” (p.9).

Behavior in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd and Reed (2003) stated, “13% to 30% of young children engage in problem behaviors that warrant intervention” (p.423). Children with autism spectrum disorder commonly portray problem behaviors such as physical aggression, self – injury, property destruction, tantrums, and disruptions which impact their educational and social success (Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd & Reed, 2002). Hart and Kelly stated that “oftentimes students with
ASD will communicate their wants and needs through their behavior and many of the ‘inappropriate’ behaviors exhibited by these students serve a specific purpose for them; that is their behavior is both functional and communicative” (p.258). Janney and Snell (2000) stated that “all problem behaviors serve a purpose” (p.5) and the purpose could be attention seeking, escape or avoidance, getting something tangible (social communication function) or self–regulation based (Janney & Snell, 2000). When individuals partake in these behaviors, it is important to understand that their intention is never to hurt others and as Janney & Snell (2000) stated, we must remember, “if a person does not have the communication skills needed to convey these messages, he or she may use another behavior such as hitting, throwing a tantrum, or destroying property” (p.5). These behaviors not only affect the children and the individuals who are close to them but also affect the surroundings they are associated with by making it more likely for the child to be excluded from the community, home environments, social relationships, and the educational setting (Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd & Reed, 2002).

Inclusion of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Within the educational system, there are a greater number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder receiving their academic instruction within general educations settings (Hart & Kelly, 2012). Loiacono and Valenti (2010) stated that “as the number of children diagnosed with autism continues to increase throughout the U.S., one should anticipate that their numbers will also increase in inclusive settings” (p.24 – 25) and that “integrating students with autism and other severe disabilities in inclusive general education classes is not the expected norm and no longer a question to ponder” (p.25)
The Need for Teacher Training for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Loiacono and Valenti (2010) stated that “one of the most problematic and stressful challenges facing public school officials today is to provide an appropriate education for an increasing number of students with autism spectrum disorder in general education inclusive classrooms with well trained and prepared educators in evidence – based intervention strategies” (p.25). The reason why this is problematic and a stressful challenge is because children with autism spectrum disorder exhibit characteristics such as deficits in communication, cognition, and socialization which can result in aggression, self – abusive or noncompliant behaviors, which pose a challenge for teachers (Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot & Goodwin, 2003).

Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot and Goodwin (2003) shared the importance of teachers being familiar with behavior management techniques and why teachers lack these techniques:

Teachers of students with autism spectrum disorder need to know behavior management techniques beyond what would typically be covered in behavior management classes targeted for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Thus, unless teachers have attended a categorical autism certification program or other focus autism training, it is unlikely that they will have mastered the necessary skills to teach students with autism, even though they are fully certified by their state (p.199).

In past, teachers have received training in behavior management using psychoanalytic and developmental models (Skinner & Hales, 1992) while Hart & Kelly (2012) stated, “current legislation mandates that educators implement evidence – based practices” (p.259). The reason why this legislation that implements evidence – based practices is so important is because these practices are shown to improve the core challenges that are associated with autism spectrum disorder (Hart & Kelly, 2012). Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot & Goodwin (2003) stated that “it
is preferable that teachers be well equipped with the skills needed before engaging in the demanding task of teaching students with autism” (p.200) however, the core problem is that general education teachers have not received the proper training both within teacher preparation programs and within their classrooms to provides the necessary support (Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot & Goodwin, 2003). Without the proper preparation to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder, academic and behavioral outcomes will be limited and improvement will be very little to none (Loiacono & Valenti, 2010). Loiacono & Valenti (2010) stated that “it is important for all educators to know which methodologies should be utilized to best meet the unique needs of children classified with autism, especially those in inclusive classroom settings, to maximize their academic, social and behavioral success” (p.28).

**Quality Training for General Education Teachers**

Skinner & Hales (1992) recommend that training occur in “an ABA – oriented management course encouraging teachers to view classroom behavior from a behavioral orientation; focusing on classroom, instructional, and teacher variables which can be altered to solve problems” (p.229). The reason for this is because these principles are known to be the most effective and facilitate appropriate academic and social behavior change in the classroom (Skinner & Hales, 1992). Hart and Kelly (2012) stated, “as educators, we must keep in mind that if we wish to change a student’s behavior, we must change something that we are doing, or in some cases, alter how we are interpreting a given behavior” (p.258). Leaf and McEachin (1999) supported the need of applied behavior analysis training for general education teachers. They stated:

Two follow up studies, published in 1987 and 1993, have shown that 9 out of 19 children who received intensive behavioral treatment were able to successfully
complete regular education classes and were indistinguishable from their peers on measure of IQ, adaptive skills and emotional functioning. Even among these children who do not attain the best outcome, there were significant gains in language, social, self-help and play skills, and all but two of the children developed functional speech (p.7).

Research calls for teachers to be trained in applied behavior analysis because it is a model that provides clear and functional instruction that supports the academic needs of students (Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot & Goodwin, 2003). As Loiacono & Valenti (2010) stated it is also important because “as schools become more inclusive, the demand for teachers to demonstrate the necessary skills and specific knowledge pertaining to evidence-based intervention strategies and methodologies has become of paramount importance” (p.25). Loiacono & Valenti (2010) also stated that the benefit of providing teachers with applied behavior analysis training is as follows:

Knowing when and how to apply these interventions would boost teachers’ levels of confidence in teaching children with autism in inclusive settings. These interventions would impact the educational outcomes of children with other disability categories, as well as non-disabled children who are challenged in their pursuits of learned via traditional methods (p.29).

**Applied Behavior Analysis**

Smith (2010) described Applied Behavior Analysis as the following:

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) can be an invaluable tool in understanding and changing behavior. The basic assumption of ABA is that almost all behavior is learned based on its relationships with the environment. The consequences that
follow behavior, such as reinforcement, punishment, and extinction, have an effect on whether that behavior will continue on in the future (p.21).

Applied behavior analysis (ABA), an instructional method geared towards teaching children with autism, was implemented over 45 years ago (Loiacono & Allen, 2008). Kearney (2007) stated that Applied Behavior Analysis is an effective tool because it is “an approach to changing socially useful behaviors that employs scientifically established principles of learning to bring about these changes” (p.19).

Applied Behavior Analysis is a tool today that is being used within the educational setting. A research study conducted by Mukherjee, Rupani, Dave, Subramanyam, Shah and Kamath (2014) found that the use of Applied Behavioral Analysis within the classroom is effective. Within this study the researchers looked at comprehensive special education services including Applied Behavior Analysis, occupational therapy and speech therapy. They assessed the participants in a number of various domains using Applied Behavioral Analysis strategies. Their research found that “there was statistically significant improvement in most domains under the ambit of special education on ABA” (p.342). Skinner and Hales (1992) are two other researchers who are proponents of using Applied Behavior Analysis within the educational setting. They stated the following:

Most recently, the principles of ABA has been used to develop less intrusive procedure for changing academic and social behavior such as the appropriate use of antecedents, the systematic use of verbal encouragement and feedback, the use of time management strategies in the classroom and methods to encourage self – management (p.220)
Grindle, Hastings, Saville, Hughes, Huxley, Koyshoff, Griffith, Walker – Jones, Devonshire, and Remington (2012) also conducted research in regards to the effectiveness of Applied Behavioral Analysis in the educational setting. Their research compared two groups of participants both diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, one group who was using Applied Behavioral Analysis in their educational setting and another group who was not using Applied Behavioral Analysis. Their findings showed:

Clinically, there were significant advantages of locating the ABA class in a mainstream school setting. First there were multiple, daily opportunities to target inclusion with mainstream peers and teachers. Second, teachers in the mainstream school learned a great deal about autism and also about their particular learning needs and how these can be addressed using ABA methods. Increased awareness about autism was positive, even more positive was the chance to communicate about ABA in a positive context rather than battling the educationalists’ common misconceptions about ABA (p.17 – 18).

Applied Behavior Analysis is also effective when we look at it from a behavioral standpoint as well. A research study conducted by Eikeseth, Smith & Sigmund Eldevik (2002) looked at the effectiveness of intensive behavioral treatment within the educational setting. Their study compared intensive behavioral intervention with eclectic intervention and found that “at a 1 year evaluation, 13 children who had received intensive behavioral treatment made significantly higher improvements than the group of 12 who had received intensive eclectic intervention” (p.63).
Summary of Chapter

The number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is on the rise and because of that more individuals with autism spectrum disorder are being served within educational settings. These individuals are being placed in general education classrooms with teachers who have not received proper training to best support their behavioral needs. Those individuals also exhibit challenging behaviors, making it difficult for general education teachers to support their needs. Because of this, there is a need for general educators to be trained in applied behavior analysis so that children with autism spectrum disorder can be supported in inclusive settings.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Today it is becoming more common for general education teachers to have students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in their classrooms. Evidence-based research calls for these students to be supported by using applied behavior analysis, a scientific method that has been around for years and is commonly used to best support children with autism spectrum disorder in terms of behavior.

Within this chapter, the methodology section outlines the design, audience and setting and procedures for this project. The design provides an overview of what the project entails and what the five-day professional development looks like. The audience and setting provides an overview on which the project is intended for. Lastly, the procedures discuss the steps that have been taken in order to create this project.

**Design**

This project is a five-day professional development composed of handouts, examples and a video for general educators in supporting challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. The professional development begins by explaining autism spectrum disorder and its characteristics. It goes on to provide an overview of behaviors and what these behaviors may look like within a classroom. It also provides an overview of applied behavior analysis, the functions of behavior and how to best support these behaviors. Within the five-day professional development, general education teacher will be provided with behavior strategies that they can implement within their classrooms.

This five day professional development not only supports general education teachers by offering them the proper training that they need to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder but it also supports children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.
disorder. Unfortunately, without the proper behavioral support, children with autism spectrum disorder spend less time within the general education environment. By giving general educators the tools that they need, these children will be given more time in an inclusive environment with their peers where they can be supported.

**Audience and Setting**

This project was designed for elementary general education teachers at public, private and charter schools who are working or may work with elementary aged children with autism spectrum disorder who exhibit challenging behaviors. It is designed for general educators who have minimal knowledge and experience in special education and supporting the challenging behaviors of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

**Procedures**

The first step to creating this project was to review literature on autism spectrum disorder in order to identify the characteristics and how it affects those individuals who have been diagnosed. Once the characteristics were identified, further information was gathered on how the impairment of behavior affects children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. More literature on was reviewed on what behavior looks like and possible reasons why the behavior occurs, especially in the general education setting. After the literature was reviewed on autism spectrum disorder, further literature was reviewed on inclusion and the training that general educators receive in regards to supporting the challenging behavior of children with autism spectrum disorder. Literature was reviewed on evidence – based behavioral strategies and one behavioral strategy became the focus put, with that being applied behavior analysis. Literature was then review on applied behavior analysis and how it could be used within the general education classroom.
The second step was developing the curriculum for this project. This project consists of a five day in person professional development that uses powerpoint. The professional development is interactive and includes examples, handouts and a video that engages the general education participants. The first day of the professional development is an overview of autism spectrum disorder. The second day of the professional development provides an overview of behavior. The third day of the professional development provides an overview of applied behavior analysis. The fourth day of the professional development discusses the function of behavior and the fifth day of the professional development provides information in regards to how we can best support these behaviors.

**Summary of Chapter**

The methodology used within this project is a five – day professional development that provides general educators with tools, information and resources in order to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. This professional development was created after thorough research from journals, articles and books. Once the research was analyzed, the five – day professional development was created using an agenda, PowerPoint and handouts. The goal of the development of this project was to provide training and tools for general educators on how to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder.
Chapter Four: Project

**Purpose:** The purpose of this professional development module is to enable education specialists to facilitate professional development for general education teachers to address the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder.

**Module Overview:** This module is designed for general education teachers by providing them with the necessary tools to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. This module will:

1. Define autism spectrum disorder and behavior
2. Explain applied behavior analysis and how it is used
3. Model how to use applied behavior analysis within the general education classroom

**Rationale for the need and importance of the module:** The problem that is facing may general education teachers today is that they have not received the proper training to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. Because of that, this project was created. The reason for this professional development is because more children with autism spectrum disorder are being included within the general education population where educators are not prepared to support the challenging behaviors that these children exhibit.

The goal of this project is to support general education teachers in supporting challenging behaviors by implementing Applied Behavior Analysis within their classrooms.

**Module Objective:** By the end of this module participants will demonstrate:

1. a clear understanding of autism spectrum disorder
2. a clear understanding of behavior and its function
3. a clear understanding of applied behavior analysis and how to implement it within a classroom

**Needed Materials and Advanced Preparation:**

1. Overhead projector and screen
2. Laptop computer
3. Butcher paper
4. Markers
5. Paper
6. Pens
Anticipatory Set   Time Limit / Range: 20 minutes

1. Present the rationale for this module and the objectives to the participants.
2. Ask the participants “what is autism spectrum disorder?”. Have the participants discuss with their table group what they believe autism spectrum is. They may talk about characteristics, experiences, or what it may look like within their classrooms. As they are discussing, have them write down what they think autism spectrum disorder is. Once all the tables have shared with their table group and have written down their ideas, have them quickly share out to the entire group.

Body of the Lesson   Time Limit/ Range: 290 – 510 minutes

Section 1: What is autism spectrum disorder?   Time Limit / Range: 20 – 30 minutes

Lectruette 1.1

1. After discussing what autism spectrum is and what it may look like in their classroom, the participants will watch the video “My name is David”. This video provides a description of autism spectrum disorder from a child’s perspective.
2. Present the preceding slides on autism spectrum disorder statistics, the first characteristic of autism spectrum disorder, which is social impairment, the second characteristic of autism spectrum disorder which is communication impairment and finally the third characteristic of autism spectrum disorder which is behavior impairment.
3. In between slides, be sure that if discussion needs to occur and it can and that participants can ask questions if needed.

Section 2: What is Behavior?   Time Limit / Range: 60 – 90 minutes

Lecturette 2.1

1. Present the participants with an overview of behavior. Share with the participants that behaviors occur for a reason.
2. Present the participants with the reasons why children with autism spectrum disorder may be exhibiting behaviors within the general education classroom.
3. Have the participants discuss what the behavior may look like in their classroom. Have the participants choose one the behaviors and discuss. Give them 7 – 10 minutes and then have them share out with the group in regards to what they discussed with their table group.
4. Present the participants with examples of what these behaviors may look like within their classroom. Leave time for discussion and questions.

Section 3: What is Applied Behavior Analysis   Time Limit / Range: 60 – 90 minutes

Lecturette 3.1

1. Introduce the ABC’s of Applied Behavior Analysis
2. Present the participants with information in regards to defining behavior. Have the participants practice defining the behavior. Refer to the example on the slide. The
participants will discuss in their groups what the behavior is and will then share out. The participants should be given 2 – 5 minutes to discuss.
3. Present the participants information on collecting information – antecedents. Be sure to stress that IMMEDIATELY BEFORE is what is being looked at when collecting information to identify the antecedent. Have the participants practice defining the antecedent. The participants will discuss in their tables groups what the behavior is and will then share out. The participants should be given 2 – 5 minutes to discuss.
4. Present the participants information on collecting information – consequences. Be sure to stress that IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW is what is being looked at when collecting information to identify the consequence. Also review what is on the chart on the slide. Have the participants practice defining the consequence. The participants will discuss in their table groups what the behavior is and will them share out. The participants should be given 2 – 5 minutes to discuss.

Section 4: What are the Functions of Behavior? Time Limit/Range: 60 – 90 minutes

Lecturette 4.1
1. Introduce the four functions of behavior to the participants. Tell the participants that this chart explain the functions from the perspective of a child with autism spectrum disorder. Review the chart titled “4 functions of behavior”.
2. Present the participants with the functions of behavior, which include sensory, escape, attention and tangible. Be sure to sure to leave time for discussion and questions if needed.
3. Present the participants with information to find the function.

Application 4.1
In their table groups, the participants will make a hypothesis statement about the function of the behavior based on the information that is known.

Section 5: How Do We Support These Behaviors? Time Limit/Range: 60 – 90 minutes

Lecturette 5.1
1. Present the participants with information on chaining behavior.
2. Present the participants with information on shaping behavior.
3. Present the participants with information on reinforcement.
4. Present the participants with information on positive reinforcement.
5. Present the participants with information on negative reinforcement.
6. Present the participants with information on punishment.
7. Present the participants with information extinction.

Closure Time Limit / Range: 20 – 30 minutes
1. In their table groups, the participants will come up with strategies to support the function that they hypothesized.
2. Ask the participants to reflect on what they have learned about autism spectrum disorder and supporting behaviors.
Resources and References


Applied Behavioral Strategies


You Tube / My Name is David


Autism Speaks - Autism Spectrum Disorder Facts


Retrieved from Autism Spectrum Disorder Statistics

Collaborative Analysis – Individualized Care. (2013). The difference between positive/negative reinforcement and positive/negative punishment. Retrieved from Positive and Negative Reinforcement


Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.


https://www.gvsu.edu/cm3/assests/pbis/texasbptool/chaining.pdf

Making a Hypothesis

#1: Sevon, a 3 year old hits the teacher and says “no” when given a puzzle to complete. The teacher removes Sevon from the table and places him in a chair away from the group.

#2: Franz, a preschooler with an intellectual disability, cries when the teacher is passing out popcorn and accidently skips him. The teacher quickly gives him some popcorn.

#3: Kevin, a 4 year old, throw a temper tantrum when he sees the M & M’s at the checkout counter at the grocery store and it told by his caregiver “no candy today”. He continues to tantrum and the caregiver says “oh alright” and buys Kevin the candy.

#4: Kirby, who is 3 years old, runs to the play area when his teacher tells him it is time to sit at the table. The teacher says “no” and brings Kirby back to the table.

#5: When his teacher asks him questions about capital cities in geography, Jarrett tells the teacher, “why don’t you tell me … you’re the teacher”. His teacher moves him to the back of the room and ignores him for the rest of the class period.

#6: When Jason is asked to work independently on multiplication problems in math class, he often argues with his teacher and tears up his paper, which results in being sent to the office for disrespect. This behavior is more likely if Jason has an altercation with a peer on the bus on the way to school.
Supporting General Education Teachers in Addressing the Behavioral Needs of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Training Created by: Abby Ineman

Objectives

By the end of this professional development, you will demonstrate:
1. a clear understanding of autism spectrum disorder
2. a clear understanding of behavior and its functions
3. a clear understanding of applied behavior analysis and how to implement it within a classroom
What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Resource: http://www.youtube.com/v/c ООvRTKAY
Autism Spectrum Disorder Statistics

- 1 in 68 children have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015, 1).

- Autism spectrum disorder is 5 times more common among boys than among girls (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015, 1).

- Autism spectrum disorder is one of the fastest growing developmental disorders in the U.S. (Autism Speaks, 2015, 1).

- The number of U.S. school children placed in special education programs due to autism spectrum disorder more than tripled from 2000 to 2010, to nearly 420,000 (Cornwell, 2015, 1).

Resources: https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/facts-about-autism
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html
http://news.sciencemag.org/health/2015/07/autism-rates-are-it-really-rise

Social Impairment

- Impaired nonverbal communication, including eye contact and gestures (Moyes, 2002, 37)

- Poor peer relationships (Moyes, 2002, 37)

- Absent or reduced “joint attention” (Moyes, 2002, 37)

- Impaired emotional reciprocity (Moyes, 2002, 37)

Communication Impairment

- Delays in learning to speak (Moyes, 2002, 37)
- Impairments in the ability to hold a conversation (Moyes, 2002, 37)
- Tendency to say the exact thing again and again, or talk about the same topic too much (Moyes, 2002, 37)
- Pretend play that is either absent altogether, or delayed (Moyes, 2002, 37)

Behavior Impairment

- Preoccupations with certain topics or activities (Moyes, 2002, 37)
- Strongly held routines or rituals, or resistance to change in the environment (Moyes, 2002, 37)
- Repetitive motor behaviors (Moyes, 2002, 37)
- Preoccupations with parts of objects (Moyes, 2002, 37)
What is Behavior?

Behavior Overview

Behaviors within the classroom could include: (Moyes, 2002, 18)

- Verbal and physical aggression
- Repetitive and inflexible behaviors
- Socially inappropriate behaviors
- Inattentive, disorganized behaviors
- Withdrawal or refusal to participate

Causes of behavior within the classroom could include: (Moyes, 2002, 18)

- Language, social or academic demands that are too high
- Violations of the child’s expectations, including rapid, unexpected transitions
- An environment that is too noisy, bright or chaotic

Behavior Overview

- Education law suggests that the types of behaviors that need to be addressed are those that interfere with the student’s or other students’ ability to learn (Moyes, 2002, 19).

- We want to take a systematic approach to solving problem behaviors by taking into consideration why the behavior is occurring (Moyes, 2002, 19).

- We need to take a look at how often the behavior is occurring and take into consideration the possible reasons why it is occurring (Moyes, 2002, 19).

Behavior Overview

- Receptive language and language processing difficulties (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Social language difficulties (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Social behavior problems (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Sensory processing difficulties (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Problems handling transitions and change (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Weakness in organizational skills and task sequencing (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Academic skill deficits (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Difficulty managing stress and anxiety (Moyes, 2002, 38)
- Attention difficulties (Moyes, 2002, 38)
Let’s Practice: Behavior Overview

What may the behavior look like in your classroom?

- Receptive language and language processing difficulties
- Social language difficulties
- Social behavior problems
- Sensory processing difficulties
- Problems handling transitions and change
- Weakness in organizational skills and task sequencing
- Academic skill deficits
- Difficulty managing stress and anxiety
- Attention difficulties

Behavior Overview

Receptive Language and Language Processing Difficulties
- "These students may not be attentive in periods where teachers are lecturing and/or may not be able to follow long strands of directions" (Moyes, 2002, 38).

Social Language Difficulties
- "These students have difficulty with social language (pragmatic language). They may not understand how to begin a conversation, maintain the topic of conversation, use modulation in their voices and/or read the same in others" (Moyes, 2002, 41).

Social Behavior Problems
- "These students may have trouble taking on another’s perspective, enter into play with other children, maintain that play and be appropriate" (Moyes, 2002, 42).

Behavior Overview

Sensory Processing Difficulties
• These students may exhibit behaviors based on various sensory processing difficulties. For example, a child with tactile problems may not be able to maintain a grasp on a pencil and become tired while completing lengthy writing assignments (Moyes, 2002, 43)

Problems Handling Transitions and Change
• These students may become very anxious when suddenly asked without warning to move on to a new task or new environment (Moyes, 2002, 44)

Behavior Overview

Weakness in Organizational Skills and Task Sequencing
• These students may have the inability to keep a clean desk and organize his/her classwork and textbooks. They may also have difficulty relaying communications to and from school, keeping track of homework assignments and developing appropriate study skills (Moyes, 2002, 46-47)

Academic Skill Deficits
• These students may exhibit poor behaviors because they realize that they lack the academic skills necessary to complete the task or assignment. They may feel that they are different from peers in this respect (Moyes, 2002, 47 – 48)
Behavior Overview

Difficulty Managing Stress and Anxiety
• These students may experience anxiety when they lose a sense of control over their environment. During this time, they may feel powerless or helpless (Moyes, 2002, 48)

Attention Problems
• These students appear to be nonfocused or uninterested in the activities at hand (Moyes, 2002, 49 – 50)


What is Applied Behavior Analysis?
ABCs of Behavior Analysis

• “A” → Antecedent
  the events, action or circumstances that occur BEFORE the behavior

• “B” → Behavior
  the behavior itself

• “C” → Consequence
  the action or the responses that FOLLOW the behavior

Define the Behavior

Observable: the behavior is an action that can be seen.

Measurable: the behavior can be counted or timed

Ask yourself: what does the behavior look like?
• Tantrum → yelling and kicking
• Disrespectful → mutter under breadth
• Responsible → completes classwork
• Defiant → saying “no”
Time to Practice: Define the Behavior

The children are sitting at small tables working on puzzles, beads and coloring. Ms. Chrissy, the teacher, notices that every day during this time, Alex is noncompliant. When Alex does this, Ms. Chrissy removes him from the activity.

Collecting Information - Antecedents

What events occur immediately before the occurrence of the behavior?

WHERE and WHEN the behavior occurs:
- Where: routines where the behavior is most likely to occur.
- When: specific events within a routine that predict the behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting event</th>
<th>Antecedent stimulus</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Events or conditions that are present right before the interfering behavior occurs</td>
<td>Interfering behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Bell rings to change classes, teacher asks learner to do something, peer says, &quot;hello&quot;</td>
<td>Screaming, flapping hands, hitting, body rocking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time to Practice: Define the Antecedent

The children are sitting at small tables working on puzzles, beads and coloring. Ms. Chrissy, the teacher, notices that every day during this time, Alex is noncompliant. When Alex does this, Ms. Chrissy removes him from the activity.

Collecting Information - Consequences

What events immediately follow the occurrence of the behavior?

What do they GET or AVOID?

Time to Practice: Define the Consequence

The children are sitting at small tables working on puzzles, beads and coloring. Ms. Chrissy, the teacher, notices that every day during this time, Alex is noncompliant. **When Alex does this, Ms. Chrissy removes him from the activity.**

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What are the Functions of Behavior?
What are the Functions of Behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What It Does For Me</th>
<th>When Does it Happen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>Provides preferred sensory experiences; behaviour feels good to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>Removes undesired activities or interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Provides access to people or interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>Provides preferred items or activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensory

Behaviors that are often described at “self - stimulatory” or “stereotypic” which may provide the person with a way to regulate his or her energy level (Janney, 2002, 5).

Example: When by himself, Steven sifts sand through his fingers for hours if given the opportunity to do so.
**Escape**

Behaviors that communicate the desire to escape or avoid certain people or activities. This is a person's way of saying "No!" "Stop!" or "I want a break now" (Janney, 2002, 5).

Example: Steven runs away each time his grandfather asks him to "come here".

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**Attention**

Behaviors that serve the purpose of getting attention. These behaviors are a person's way of saying "Hi" or "Talk to me!" (Janney, 2000, 5).

Example: Steven pulls his hair every time his mom begins speaking with someone else in the room.
**Tangible**

Some behavior problems are a way for the person to communicate that he or she wants something. They may also be protesting when certain items are taken away or when the activity ends (Janney, 2000, 5).

Example: Steven pushes kids over at the park when he wants one of their toys.

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**Finding the Function**

Look at the Antecedent and Consequence:

- Identify a pattern
- Ask yourself: Does the student understand the expectation?
  
  Does the student need to learn a new skill in order to have the function met without negative behavior?
  
  Are we feeding the behavior by the way we react?
  
  Are we causing the behavior by something we are doing?
  
  What do we want the student to do instead of the inappropriate behavior?

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Let’s Practice Making a Hypothesis!

In your table groups, make a hypothesis statement about the function of the behavior based on the information that is known.


How Can We Best Support These Behaviors?
3 Ways to Modify Behavior

1. Reactive Strategies: do something after the behavior occurs.

2. Preventative Strategies: do something before the behavior occurs.

3. Replacement Strategies: teach the child to do something in place of problem behavior.

Reactive Strategies

Escape — follow through with the demand
- Example: Steven’s mom asks him to clean up his blocks. Steven pushes the blocks away. Steven’s mom prompts him with physical guidance to pick up his blocks.

Attention — ignore the inappropriate attention based behavior
- Example: Steven spits on his teacher and laughs when she yells “don’t do that!”. Steven’s teacher begins ignoring the spitting behavior completely.

Tangible — ignore the inappropriate attainment of tangible based behavior. Don’t give the child the item.
- Example: Steven screams every time he wants a cookie. His dad ignores the screaming behavior and does not give him a cookie.

Preventative Strategies

Behavior Momentum: Place several easy demands and reinforce heavily for following through. Then place the difficult demand and reinforce heavily for following through.

Task Choice: Provide the child a choice between 2 difficult tasks rather than choosing for the child.

Replacement Behavior

Teach the child what to do in place of the unwanted behavior.

Reinforcer Delivery: Deliver within 0 – 3 seconds (but no more than 30 seconds). Make sure that the child is easily motivated to receive the reinforcer.
Chaining Behaviors

“Chaining breaks a task down into small steps and then teaches each step within the sequence by itself” (Target Texas, 2009, 1).

Forward Chaining: “moves a child from the first part of the task to the end. Each step must be mastered before the next step in the skill series is added” (Target Texas, 2009, 1).

Backward Chaining: “the teaching process moves from the last part of the task to the beginning. Each step must be mastered before the next step in the skill series is added” (Target Texas, 2009, 1).

In order to utilize chaining the following must be done: (Target Texas, 2009, 2)

- Analyze the desired behavior
- Break it into steps
- Plan for teaching

Chaining Behaviors Example

Backward Chaining — When using a toothbrush, the child would be prompted to do every single step and then would independently put the toothbrush into the toothbrush holder.

Forward Chaining — When using a toothbrush, the child would independently pick up their toothbrush out of the toothbrush holder, and then all remaining steps are prompted.
Shaping Behaviors

“Shaping is used when an existing behavior needs to be changed into a more appropriate or new behavior or skill. This strategy uses reinforcement until the target behavior is achieved” (Target Texas, 2009, 1).

“It is important to clearly define the behavioral objective and the target behavior” (Target Texas, 2009, 1).

Shaping behavior steps include: (Target Texas, 2009, 2)

- Select the target behavior
- Select the initial behavior that your child currently performs and that resembles the target behavior in some way
- Select powerful rewards with which to reinforce the initial behavior, the successive approximations of the target behavior, and the target behavior.
- Reward the initial behavior until it occurs frequently
- Reward successive approximations of the target behavior each time they occur
- Reward the target behavior each time it occurs
- Reinforce the target behavior of an intermittent schedule of reinforcement.


Shaping Behaviors Examples

Example: Steven tantrums every time he is asked to write his spelling words

Step 1: Steven will write his name at the top of the spelling worksheet.
Step 2: Steven will write one spelling word of his choice.
Step 3: Steven will write three spelling words of his choice.
Step 4: Steven will write either all of the odd numbered words or all even numbered words.
Step 5: Steven will write all spelling words except one.
Step 6: Steven will write all spelling words.

Reinforcement

Differential Reinforcement of Higher Rates of Behavior (DRH)
- “The reinforcer is given when the behavior occurs at a higher rate than before. This intervention serves to increase desirable behaviors which decrease the amount of time available for inappropriate behaviors” (ABS, 2015,1).

Differential Reinforcement of Lower Rates of Behavior (DRL)
- “The reinforcer is given when the behavior occurs at a lower rate than before. This intervention serves to directly decrease the rate of inappropriate behaviors” (ABS, 2015,1).

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior (DRO)
- “The reinforcer is given as long as the targeted inappropriate behavior does not occur or it is given in the absence of targeted behavior. This serves to directly decrease inappropriate behavior” (ABS, 2015,1).

Reinforcement

Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior (DRA)
- “The reinforcer is given when another more appropriate behavior is used or observed. The intervention serves to increase the appropriate behavior while decreasing the inappropriate behavior” (ABS, 2015,1).

Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behavior (DRI)
- “The reinforcer is given when another behavior is used or observed” (ABS, 2015,1).
Positive Reinforcement

“Positive reinforcement refers to the presentation of a reinforcer after a learner uses a target behavior” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1)

“Positive reinforcement is generally the strategy that teachers use first when trying to teach new skills or to increase appropriate behaviors” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1)

“When using any type of reinforcement procedure, it is important to keep in mind that the reinforcers should be individualized to meet the needs of each learner” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1)


Negative Reinforcement

“Negative reinforcement is the removal of a stimulus after a learner uses a target behavior or skill” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1).

“It is often used to alter interfering behaviors and when used effectively, negative reinforcement increases a learner’s use and/or maintenance of the target behavior” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1).

“It is also often used to teach self-help skills and replacement behaviors to take the place of interfering behaviors” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1).

Punishment

Positive Punishment — “presenting a negative consequence after an undesired behavior is exhibited, making the behavior less likely to happen in the future” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1).

Negative Punishment — “when a certain desired stimulus is removed after a particular undesired behavior is exhibited, resulting in the behavior happening less often in the future” (Collaborative Analysis, 2013, 1).

Extinction

“Extinction involves withholding or terminating the consequence of previously reinforced behavior to weaken an undesired behavior. It has been used to decrease the occurrence of a variety of problem behaviors” (Target Texas, 2009, 1).

The extinction procedures are as follows: (Target Texas, 2009, 1)
- Identify the relationship between reinforcer and the reinforced behavior.
- Discontinue the previously provided reinforcers
- Monitor the rate of problem behavior
**Escape**

**Access to breaks:** the hope is that by providing access to breaks, the child will not misbehave to get one. Breaks could be provided through the use of a visual timer.

**Teach to ask for breaks:** some of your students may not know how to ask for a break. You can use a social story, verbal prompts (I want a break please), a script or a break card. When this intervention is started, given them a break every time they request it. This skill needs to be built first and then you can work on limiting it.

**Make tasks easier:** try making tasks easier and building up to more challenging work.

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**Escape**

**Shorter work sessions:** have the student complete shorter work sessions. You can include more work sessions — just shorter ones!

**Present tasks less quickly:** consider reducing the speed you present work.

**Choice for tasks or choices for task order:** ask the students which tasks they want to work on. For example, do you want to work on math or reading first?

**Demand fading:** start small. First, provide reinforcement for the student checking their schedule. Next, provide reinforcement for the student sitting at the table for one minute. Next, provide reinforcement for completing the first page. It is a gradual process but it is a good way to build up to completing a whole task.

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Escape

Easy, Easy, Easy, Hard: start with several easy tasks and then switch to the hard task.

Breaks based on work completion: give breaks when specified tasks are completed.

Less work based on task completion: students may be motivated to complete work if they know it will get them out of other work.

Visuals to show amount of work: use schedules and visuals to show how much work the student needs to do can be a successful intervention.

Attention

Planned Ignoring: along with building up that appropriate response, you can ignore the inappropriate response. If this behavior is not working anymore, the behavior will decrease. It may initially get worse before it gets better, but it will likely decrease if it is not working any longer. If you aren’t able to ignore the response, you can provide attention that is of lower magnitude or less frequently.

Non — Contingent Attention: a student will less likely to use attention seeking behavior if they are already getting attention. This strategy involves giving students a regular schedule of attention no matter what they are doing. For example, in a classroom, the teacher could stop by a student’s desk every few minutes to see if they needed help.

Attention

Token Economy: a token economy is a behavior change system that provides tokens or points for desired behavior and can be exchanged for reinforcing items at a set time.

Providing reinforcement when behavior does not occur: some time-based interventions can be use for attention seeking behaviors. An intervention that could be used would be setting a specific time interval and at the end of interval if the student has NOT done the appropriate behavior behavior — they earn a reinforcer.

Tangible

Token Economy: a token economy is a behavior change system that provides tokens or points for desired behavior and can be exchanged for reinforcing items at a set time.

Transitional Warnings: use a timer and visual to assist with transitions. This will let the student when the transitions are occurring.
**Sensory**

Designate a sensory spot: designate a spot where sensory behaviors are allowed!

Preference Assessment: conduct a formal or informal preference assessment. Provide your student access to a range of sensory toys and activities to see what he/she gravitate towards. Track how many minutes your student interacts with each item to determine which they seem to enjoy the most.

Sensory Breaks: incorporate regular sensory breaks into your day — include them on your schedule!

Ensure Generalization: create mini sensory activities that can be used beyond the classroom.


**Let’s Practice Strategies Based on Function**

In your table groups, come up with strategies to support the function you hypothesized.
Closure: Autism Spectrum Disorder

Take this time to reflect on what you have learned about autism spectrum disorder and supporting behaviors.

- What was the most important part of the presentation?
- What was one thing that you learned from today’s training?
- What was one thing that you will be able to implement immediately?
- What are some questions that you may have?
- Please provide any constructive feedback on the content of this training.

References


References


Chapter Five: Project Recommendations

All students deserve to be supported, especially those with autism spectrum disorder who are exhibiting challenging behaviors. Supporting the behaviors of these students often times can be a daunting task for a general education teacher, especially if they have not received the proper training. Applied behavior analysis, an evidence based strategy, allows general education teachers to provide academic and behavioral support to students with autism spectrum disorder that is individualized to meet the specific needs of these students. This project, provide general education teachers the support that is needed to support the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder. This project will not only be beneficial to general education teachers but will be beneficial the classroom environment, the students, families and all those who are involved.

Lessons Learned

The first lesson that that I learned was the importance of reviewing literature and being familiar with your project. There is so much information on the topics of autism spectrum disorder and applied behavior analysis within the general education classroom that it made it hard to narrow done what exactly I wanted to focus on. I really needed to read through each piece of literature and pick out the most important parts while also tying it into my project.

The second lesson that I learned was that applied behavior analysis is extremely comprehensive. This evidence-based strategy covers a plethora of information and I had a difficult time narrowing down exactly what I wanted to focus on. Also, applied behavior analysis can go very in-depth and I realized the importance of making it simple and relatable for general education teachers.
The final lesson that I learned was the importance of support general education teachers who have students with autism spectrum disorder in their classrooms. Often times I have seen special education teachers become frustrated because specific strategies are not being implemented and students are not being supported however special education teachers need to realize that it is not that general education teachers do not want to implement these strategies they may not know how. I learned that training for general education teachers is crucial not only for successful collaboration but also for students to best be supported in the general education environment.

**Educational Implications**

I would recommend that educators have an open mind. Supporting behaviors can often times be a scary thing for many, especially if it is something that you are unfamiliar with. However, with the proper supports, not only can the educator be successful but the student will feel supported and successful as well. My hope is that educators will want to learn more about supporting the challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorder after partaking in this training.

In regards to the implementation of this project, I recommend that the presenter be knowledgeable about the topics that are being discussed and have the ability to connect it to general education teachers and their experience. Autism spectrum disorder and applied behavior analysis are both topic areas that can be very dense and heavy. The presenter needs to make sure that the participants understand the material and most importantly understand how to implement the behavior strategies within their classrooms.
**Project Implementation Plans**

With this project, I plan to collaborate with other special education teachers at my school and help support special education teachers who have students with autism spectrum disorder who exhibit challenging behaviors. I encourage all special education teachers to utilize this training to support general education teachers within their schools as well.

**Limitations of Project**

Applied behavior analysis is an extremely in-depth topic that provides a great deal of information. Because this project was geared towards general education teachers, I left a lot of information out with the goal to make it very simple. Also, the time commitment of this training is not realistic. Teachers have a hard enough time finding the time to attend a one day professional therefore attending a five-day professional development would be extremely difficult, consuming and would take teachers out of the classroom for an extended period of time.

**Project Suggestions**

In order for this project to be implemented, collaboration needs to occur. The special education teacher and general education teacher need to collaborate and best support the student with autism spectrum disorder who is exhibiting the challenging behavior. Also, the special education teacher needed to be familiar with applied behavior analysis and behavioral support strategies so they can best support the general education teacher. General education teachers and special education teachers need to work together to identify the target behavior collect data and then discuss what strategies need to be put into place. This takes thorough time and planning by both parties.
Summary/Conclusion

It is becoming more common for general education teachers to have students with the diagnosis of autism spectrum within their classrooms. Because of this, this project is extremely important. The focus of this project was to support general education teachers in addressing the challenging behavior of children with autism spectrum disorder. General education teachers have received the training to address behavior overall however it has not been specific to autism spectrum disorder. This project provided strategies based on applied behavior analysis that could be used to support children with behavioral needs who have the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. With the implementation of these strategies, the hope is that everyone will feel supported, inclusion will increase and that challenging behaviors will decrease. With collaboration and an understanding of autism spectrum disorder and applied behavior analysis, the hope is that all students can be successful in a general education environment.
References


