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Creative Component

Teaching Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom Environment

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Introduction to the Creative Component

Serving students who are considered at-risk, or have been formally diagnosed with learning disabilities or emotional or behavioral disabilities has always been a passion of mine. While my educational journey did not take a direct path to educating students who struggle in the traditional educational system, the past five years have provided affirmation that I belong in the classroom. I have a unique experience through which I completed my undergraduate studies; I focused on high school Family and Consumer Sciences Education, planning on spending my teaching career in the general education classroom. I spent my first year after graduation working as an at-risk aide. I felt that I could make a bigger impact on students' lives by obtaining my special education endorsement and working as a special education teacher. Thus, I received training and instruction focused on teaching in a smaller setting and focusing on the needs of individual students. Unfortunately, this isn't instruction that all general education teachers receive prior to being expected to teach in an inclusive classroom, where students with and without disabilities learn alongside one another. The driving force behind my creative component is to provide teachers with teaching strategies that have been proven effective through evidence found in studies and in literature, so that general education teachers may have a resource to turn to should they find themselves in need of strategies to promote the success of all students in an inclusive classroom environment.

Literature Review

The following literature review is broken down into three specific sections pertaining to strategies to be effective in the areas of math, reading comprehension, and behavior. You will find teaching strategies in each section that pertain to improved student achievement in the areas of academics, social skills, and classroom behavior.

Math Strategies

Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) Strategy

Flores (2009) stated that current educational reform, specifically in math, has had an emphasis on higher order thinking and problem solving. While higher order thinking and problem solving are skills that need to be addressed, proficiency in basic computation can not be forgotten as it is a prerequisite skill needed for complex tasks in math. Students who cannot perform basic computation at a proficient level will struggle in their progression, understanding, and achievements in mathematics (Flores, 2009). Flores, Hinton, and Taylor (2018) revealed in their literature review that there were positive outcomes in effective fraction instruction through the use of Concrete, Representational, and Abstract (CRA) materials through the instructional process, even for struggling math learners (Flores et al., 2018).

The CRA sequence uses scaffolding throughout each “level” of the instructional strategy, starting with concrete. The concrete level utilizes several manipulatives prior to teaching the mathematical operations needed using only numbers, which takes place at the abstract level of instruction within the strategy (Flores & Hinton, 2019). Between the first and third level of the CRA strategy, the representational level allows students to work with the concept being taught using pictures and drawings to solidify their thinking and understanding. Research has been done on the CRA strategy and it has been shown to be effective as students with and without disabilities struggling with math benefit from this type of instruction (Flores, 2009). It was also found that students who received CRA instruction, specifically through instruction on fractions within the math curriculum, “... demonstrated significantly more growth in fraction understanding than their peers who used the basal curriculum” (Flores et al., 2018, p.199). The

research suggests that CRA is an effective instructional strategy for the inclusive classroom, especially in the instruction of basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division (Flores & Hinton, 2019).

Some educational researchers have argued that CRA can be shortened, by eliminating the Abstract portion of the strategy. Research has been done comparing the two (CRA vs. CR) and researchers have found that students who were instructed with CRA showed more growth in the area of mathematics than those who were instructed only using the CR format (Flores et al., 2018). While CRA focuses more on basic mathematical computation, studies have shown growth in the area of problem-solving abilities of students after CRA instruction. In the studies that focused on fraction instruction using CRA, the strategy took approximately 20 minutes per instructional session (Flores et al., 2018).

One of the many benefits of the CRA instructional strategy is that the intensity of the strategy/intervention is increased due to the focus of instruction being on one specific concept at a time to homogeneous groups of students, both with and without disabilities (Flores & Hinton, 2019).

In the study done by Flores et al. (2018) at the concrete level of fraction instruction in the area of mathematics, the manipulatives consisted of, "... laminated circles with equipartitions and corresponding laminated fraction parts" (p. 199). This allowed students the opportunity for hands-on learning while being able to visually see how fractions fit together to make up a whole. "The representational stage included pictorial representations of circular area models aided by fraction cards to assist students with drawings" (2018, p. 199). The concrete instruction consisted of practice problems matching up fractions to pictures as well as verbal assessment.

Another example of the three stages of instruction used within the CRA strategy, specifically for younger students, is learning two digit numbers (Flores & Hinton, 2019). In the concrete level, students are tasked with making sense of what the number “23” is and the meaning of the numbers (2 and 3) that make up the number. Again, manipulatives were used, rather than asking students to conceptualize 2 tens and 3 ones. At the representational level, students were asked to draw representations of numbers, rather than using base 10 blocks. After completing problems correctly using the first two stages, “... students then moved onto the abstract level where they were taught a strategy to remember the procedural method associated with completing an operation” (Flores & Hinton, 2019, p. 75). Not only was there an increase in operational knowledge demonstrated by the students, but students also demonstrated an increase in their skills related to explaining the operation and how to find the solution through verbal description, completed during interviews, and their progress carried over to the students abilities to apply the newly learned skill when solving word problems (Flores & Hinton, 2019).

Flores (2009) stated that a mnemonic used to help students with basic computation that was used throughout the CRA process was “DRAW.” D: Discover the sign. R: Read the problem. A: Answer or draw and check the problem. W: Write the answer. With the use of the DRAW mnemonic and the hands-on aspect of the CRA strategy, students show improved understanding of the mathematical concepts being taught.

Detect, Practice, and Repair (DPR) Strategy

The second mathematics strategy is Detect, Practice, and Repair. It is important to have evidence-based instructional strategies readily available in all areas of academics, but especially in math, as Schrauben and Dean (2019) state that only 40% of fourth grade students score at or

above proficiency. Detect, Practice, and Repair (DPR) focuses on automaticity and learning rates related to basic mathematical facts. This strategy is unique in the way that it focuses only on facts with which each individual student requires additional practice (Schrauben & Dean, 2019).

DPR is made up of three primary phases, with the first being Detect. During the detect phase, students are asked to answer fact problems using one and a half second intervals. During this interval time, students keep track of problems answered correctly and incorrectly. The remaining phases of DPR focus primarily on the problems that were answered incorrectly or were not solved at all (Poncy, Skinner, & Axtell, 2010).

The second phase consists of Practice. During the practice phase, students apply Cover, Copy, Compare to assist with the learning and memorization of the facts that were missed or not answered during the initial Detect phase (Poncy et al., 2010). “Cover, Copy, Compare is used to strengthen fact acquisition. The strategy was originally developed to assist with the learning of spelling, but was later adapted for use in mathematics” (Schrauben & Dean, 2019, p. 23).

There are six primary steps involved with the implementation of Cover, Copy, Compare in the practice stage of DPR. They consist of:

1. Look at and study a completed problem.
2. Cover the problem.
3. Write the problem and answer from memory.
4. Uncover the sample problem.
5. Compare own answer with the sample problem.
6. Move on to the next problem if correct, or start over with the first step if the student provides an incorrect answer (Schrauben & Dean, 2019, p. 23).

The third phase of DPR is the Repair phase. This phase consists of “timed tests” based on one minute sprints, and also entails a feedback component during which students self-graph their performance on the sprint. This phase is used to maximize the Cover, Copy, Compare portion of the strategy and to identify problems with which the student may need additional practice (Poncy et al., 2010).

DPR is unique in its ability to be administered to the whole class, but the results provide a unique set of practice problems for each individual student. Poncy et al. (2010) stated that the detect and sprint component allow students the opportunity to respond under a time constraint which improves overall fluency. The self-graphing of performance, completed by each student at the end of the repair phase, also contributed to fluency. The combination of strategies that are utilized through the use of DPR are, “... designed to provide educators with an efficient method to individualize instructional objectives for each student in an inclusive setting” (Poncy et al., 2010, p. 343).

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy

The third and final mathematics learning strategy is the Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS). PALS is composed of two peer-tutoring procedures, commonly known as coaching and practice. The coaching portion consists of one student (the tutee) working on a problem set provided to him/her by the teacher while the coach oversees the progress and takes time to correct errors on incorrect answers. The coaching portion of the strategy usually takes approximately 15-20 minutes of instructional time (What Works Clearinghouse, 2013).

The second stage of PALS is the practice stage where students independently work on a worksheet provided by the teacher containing problems similar to those that were completed

during the coaching phase. Upon completion of the worksheet, the student pairs (coach and tutee) trade papers and score each other's practice sheets. The practice stage lasts approximately 5-10 minutes (What Works Clearinghouse, 2013).

The students are put into pairs (coach and tutee) by the teacher. There are many ways that these student pairs can be constructed. The What Works Clearinghouse (2013) stated the importance of the teacher finding each student's strengths and weaknesses related to the topic that is being practiced through the use of PALS. They also stated that the groups are changed often as the concepts being practiced are changed. They stressed the importance that at some point every student should have the opportunity to serve as the coach.

Kroeger and Kouce (2006) stated that there are positive outcomes through the use of PALS aside from the growth in the area of mathematics. They stated that PALS also positively influenced the majority of students overall personal feelings about math and their success within the academic area. A second benefit is, "Through the use of the PALS approach, it allowed teachers to address a challenging math curriculum while simultaneously attending to a wide diversity of math skills in the classroom. The strategy also supported the use of appropriate social skills in a neutral environment" (Kroeger & Kouche, 2006, p. 6).

Kroeger and Kouche (2006) stated that PALS is different from the traditional act of tutoring which is one-way and provides opportunities for students to develop reciprocal 1:1 relationships. They also stressed the importance of following the overview of PALS, paying attention not to overlook any step. They stated the overview of PALS consists of "... stating clear objectives, presenting one new concept at a time, reviewing prior knowledge, making explanations explicit, utilizing effective instructional time, creating opportunities for providing

effective feedback” (Kroeger & Kouche, 2006, p. 8). The outcomes from this overview allow for an educational setting that mitigates anxiety where overtime, students’ avoidance responses are transformed to approach responses. This is primarily due to the pairing methods used by the teacher which provides many students with varying abilities to feel comfortable interacting with one another (Kroeger & Kouche, 2006).

After reviewing the mathematical strategies above, it became apparent that basic math skills are a must in order for students to be successful in the area of mathematics. While there has been a recent emphasis on higher order thinking and problem solving, it is important to remember that without sound fundamentals, students will struggle to achieve these more desirable mathematical skills.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Think Before Reading, Think While Reading, Think After Reading (TWA) Strategy

Students who have emotional and behavioral disorders experience many different challenges throughout the day, ranging from social skills deficits to struggles in various academic areas. Sanders, Ennis, and Losinski (2018) stressed the use of concurrent behavioral and academic interventions. The purpose of this is to ensure that teachers are serving the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom environment. One way this can be done is through the reading comprehension strategy of Think Before Reading, Think While Reading, and Think After Reading (TWA).

Students with emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) thrive in environments where expectations are clear, and when teachers use positive reinforcement when desired classroom behavior is exhibited. The combination of verbal and visual cues in the classroom for redirection

also aids in maintaining student attention and promoting positive, acceptable behavior. TWA is structured so all of these features are being addressed at once, and research has found that general education students benefit from these same attributes. Hedin and Gaffney (2011) stated that when TWA is taught to students struggling in the area of reading comprehension, there have been positive outcomes, whether the student has been diagnosed with a disability or not. That is one reason that TWA is suitable as an inclusive classroom teaching strategy.

The purpose of TWA is to teach students how to identify important pieces of information and remember the information found in informational text (Sanders, Ennis, & Losinki, 2018). The strategy encourages students to set goals, as well as self monitor their learning through the use of TWA. The mnemonic itself (TWA) has been shown to assist students in self-regulating their own learning. They are able to think about which step they are on, as well as which step is to come to ensure that they are following the strategy accurately.

TWA is made up of nine steps within its framework, falling into three reading phases. Hedin and Gaffney (2011) stated, “Through the use of TWA, students learn to use all nine steps within the frameworks, but also learn to set goals and self monitor their use of the strategy” (p. 149).

Phase 1: Think Before Reading: During this phase, students learn to draw on their prior knowledge to get in the correct mindset prior to reading any of the information provided in the text. Students also identify the author’s purpose for writing the passage prior to reading, followed by writing down “What I know” and “What I want to learn” (Hedin & Gaffney, 2011).

Phase 2: Think While Reading: Through the second phase of TWA, students are taught to monitor how well they understand what they have read in the informational text and, and they

are taught to re-read when they experience a feeling of uncertainty after completing the reading. It is essential that students connect phase one and two and revisit their prior knowledge while actively reading to make connections to the text. The final skill taught to students during phase two is the ability to identify reading speed, and to adjust their reading rate according to how challenging the various sections of the text are (Hedin & Gaffney, 2011).

Phase 3: Think After Reading: The biggest portion of this phase is to teach students to identify the main ideas of each paragraph by highlighting important details and sentences. Hedin and Gaffney (2011) suggest using a yellow highlighter for important details, a green highlighter for supporting details, and a pink highlighter for irrelevant details. The purpose of each of these steps is to reiterate what is important and what can be disregarded from the informative text. The TWA process is concluded by providing students an opportunity to verbally retell or summarize the passage as a whole.

There are six stages of instruction associated with teaching the TWA strategy to students:

1. Develop pre-skills
2. Discuss the strategy as a group
3. Model the strategy (Think aloud/read aloud)
4. Memorize the strategy (Emphasis on the mnemonic “TWA”)
5. Support the strategy (Guided practice)
6. Independent practice in strategy use (Hedin & Gaffney, 2011, p. 149)

Sanders, Ennis, and Losinki (2018) found that significant gains in reading comprehension were seen through strategy use when compared to baseline data prior to TWA implementation.

Expository Text Structure Strategy

Studies have shown a large correlation between the intentional instruction of text structure, how the instructional strategies are taught, who the implementer is, and the dosage of instruction on the success of expository text structure interventions, and the level of comprehension outcomes (Pyle, 2017). Meyer and Ray (2011) defined reading comprehension as, “actively constructing new understanding by building relationships among the parts of text and between the text and one’s prior knowledge” (p.128). They continued to state that through the use of text structure intervention, it places an importance on the readers’ meaning making (Meyer & Ray, 2011).

The purpose of structure strategy, according to Meyer and Ray (2011) is to allow the individual to identify the organization brought forth by the author, and allow the reader to organize their own understanding in the same way. This promotes comprehension by helping the reader organize the concepts read based on the explicit or implied relationships communicated by the text (Meyer & Ray, 2011).

Meyer and Ray (2011) identified three primary benefits to text structure interventions:

1. The reader can follow the logical structure of the text to understand how an author organized and emphasized ideas.
2. The reader uses processes parallel to the structure to increase their own learning and thinking.
3. The reader uses these text structures to organize their own writing, such as written summaries, recalls, and essays (Meyer & Ray, 2011, p. 128).

The purpose of the text structure strategy is to emphasize to the readers the importance of recall and organization while reading. The strategy is used to increase the reader’s

understanding of the expository text focusing on signaling words. The use of the text structure strategy has demonstrated an increase in production of good main ideas, summaries, improved standardized reading comprehension test scores, as well as answers to questions pertaining to the expository texts (Meyer & Ray, 2011). Comprehension is increased because the structure strategy alters what the readers would typically underline as important, changes students' think-aloud process, as well as modifies the readers' eye movement while reading challenging text.

Due to demands of the common core and teaching standards, there has been an emphasis on the use of expository text in elementary schools, in hopes of improved reading comprehension. This demand has increased the exposure of expository texts to students in the classroom, but the downfall has been the lack of instruction for teachers on implementing such strategies (Williams, Pollini, Nubla-Kung, Snyder, Garcia, Ordynans, & Atkins, 2014). This is unfortunate due to the evidence that elementary aged students can benefit from such strategies, regardless of some professionals' beliefs on child development.

Expository texts are often more difficult for students to understand due to the unfamiliar content and lack of prior knowledge, which presents a challenge to elementary aged students. Williams et al. (2014) stated that students' ability to identify text structures, as well as organize and plan their thinking is essential to improved reading comprehension of expository text. Pyle (2017) stated, "Text structure is the organization of ideas, the relationship among the ideas, and the vocabulary words used to convey the meaning to the reader" (p. 469). Pyle (2017) continued by stating that there are seven primary forms of expository text that should be taught to students to improve their overall comprehension of expository text. They consist of:

1. Compare-and-contrast (comparison)
2. Problem-and-answer/cause-and-effect (causation)
3. Sequence (chronologic)
4. Enumeration (collection/lists)
5. Descriptions (categorization/generalization)
6. Position-and-reason (persuasion)
7. Pro-and-con (Pyle, 2017, p.470)

Text structure instruction assists students in constructing and organizing the text and ideas into easy to remember weblike structures. It has been shown that the reader's awareness of the structure in place in the text that is being read assists the reader in recalling more information from the text when compared with readers with less knowledge of text structures. Pyle (2017) encourages teachers of students in grades K-3 to expose their students to expository text structures to encourage comprehension and to promote students' understanding and ability to recall key ideas from expository text. By doing so, it also promotes students to question more relevant material and may assist students in monitoring their own understanding of what is being read.

As the reading strategies suggest, it is important that students are still learning techniques that teachers and other adults may take for granted. It is imperative that teachers take the time to teach the small details associated with reading and comprehension so that students can actively practice and refine these skills.

Behavioral Strategies

Check, Connect, and Expect (CCE) Strategy

With the increasing demand of teachers being expected to teach in inclusive classroom environments, it is not uncommon for teachers to express a feeling of unpreparedness when it comes to the development and implementation of strategies geared toward identifying and actively serving at-risk students in the general education classroom. It is important that teachers get the training needed and utilize strategies for these types of environment, as McDaniel, Flower, and Cheney (2010) state that students with EBD and learning disabilities struggle in the areas of academics, social skills, and behavior, which ultimately places those students at a higher risk for school failure.

McDaniel et al., (2010) referred to Tobin and Sprage's finding of the eight best practices of an inclusive classroom, and stated that Check, Connect, and Expect (CCE) is aligned with six of the eight practices including:

1. Low student-teacher ratio
2. High structured environment
3. Positive focus
4. School-based mentorship
5. Social skills lessons
6. Parental involvement (McDanie et al., 2010, p. 19)

CCE is a tier two intervention and, when implemented with fidelity, is shown to improve behavior of students through the use of support from a full time coach. This coach, who is a school staff member, is thought to be a positive and caring adult who provides daily interactions with the student and monitors overall behavioral progress (McDaniel et al., 2010).

In addition to the support of the coach, CCE also provides social skills and problem-solving lessons integrated into the students daily schedule. McDaniel et al., (2010) commented on the positive outcomes of the use of CCE resulting in decreased office referrals, decreased special education referrals, and increased positive social behavior.

The CCE framework is composed of two levels, with the first being the “basic level.” This basic level of intervention includes daily check in and check out with the student’s coach, where a focused conversation takes place pertaining to goal setting and progress toward meeting established behavioral goals, while also focusing on the student’s strengths and abilities. By doing so, this establishes a unique and individualized approach to student behavior.

McDaniel et al., (2010) referred to the second level of the CCE framework as “Basic Plus” (p. 19). The basic plus level mirrors the initial basic level of intervention, but also contains social skills and problem-solving lessons which are incorporated into the students daily schedule, taught by the students coach. It was also stated that the duration of time spent on each level, whether considering moving up or down, should not be delayed and the decision should be made based on data collection of student behavior.

Cheney et al. (2010) stated, “Over the past 20 years, studies have concluded that the quality of students’ relationships with school staff is connected to student outcomes. To counteract negative social and academic problems, it is paramount to teach and reinforce desired social behavior to students in prevention programs to decrease problem behaviors in schools” (p. 153). This reiterates the importance of the coach’s role in the CCE strategy. CCE relies on a positive and caring adult to provide support and instruction to those students who have behavioral problems. State and Galanti (2017) agreed by stating that student-teacher

relationships appeared to determine the successful outcomes of the CCE strategy, specifically by providing quality feedback to students and having conversations regarding progress. It is also important to consider Cheney et al. (2010) finding that teachers typically welcome the CCE strategy and would recommend its implementation to other teachers.

Check-in Check-out (CICO) Strategy

The check-in check-out strategy (CICO) is a tier two intervention has been found to be effective in correcting problem behavior exhibited by students in school, and increasing social and academic behaviors of those students (Hawken, Bundock, Kladis, & Barrett, 2014). As with all interventions, fidelity is a primary concern, but when CICO is implemented with fidelity, it has been shown to mitigate students' disruptive behavior in the classroom. When disruptive behavior is minimized, it has been shown to positively improve students' academic performance as well (Filter, McKenna, Benedict, Horner, Todd, & Watson, 2007).

Filter et al. (2007) also found that decisions based on data from CICO have resulted in a reduced number of office referrals for students exhibiting problem behaviors. Ruiz, Smith, Naquin, Morgan-D'Atrio & Dellinger, 2014) focused primarily on the fidelity of implementation of CICO in the school setting, and broke it down into four important variables consisting of:

1. Environment (support from the stakeholders)
2. Organization process (available resources)
3. The intervention (complexity)
4. Interventionist (skill proficiency level) (p. 42)

Ruiz et al. (2014) noted that the training of school staff on the CICO framework was paramount to its success, and suggested modeling and rehearsal during training promoted higher

levels of fidelity. Through implementation of CICO, there is a focus of clearly defined behavioral expectations, social skills instruction, and use of contingent positive reinforcement, as well as increased positive access to adult interactions. While CICO has been shown to assist in minimizing problem behavior for students with EBD, it is important to note that the strategy is NOT appropriate for behaviors considered violent or dangerous, nor with students who exhibit escape behaviors (Ruiz et al., 2014).

Students are recommended by teachers for the CICO intervention based on data which shows failure to follow schoolwide expectations and a failure to respond to tier 1 interventions. Following student recommendation, specific behavioral goals are determined and written and communicated with the student and parents. Baselines are determined for each behavioral goal and a daily point goal is decided based on a conversation held with the student.

The CICO intervention consists of steps that are repeated daily. The student is assigned an adult, who is a school staff member who is responsible for meeting with the student prior to the start of the school day as well as at the end of the day prior to the student leaving. The students are given their daily progress report during their morning check in time with their adult, and carry the card with them throughout the day. The card is then marked by each teacher throughout the day at the end of each subject, focusing on the behavior to be changed, and positive feedback is given to the student while the card is being filled out. During the check-out process at the end of the day, the same school staff member from the morning check-in process reviews the daily progress card with the student and provides feedback about the day and delivers positive praise where appropriate. The daily progress card is sent home with the student and is expected to have parents review and sign off on the card, which is then returned the

following day at the check-in meeting. The adult responsible for the CICO meetings at the beginning and conclusion of each day periodically reviews the data and uses the data to make decisions in regards to the students response to the intervention (Ruiz et al., 2014).

Self-Management Strategy

As with most literature focused on behavior and the strategies associated with teaching students with EBD, Niesyn (2009) stated that a concern from general education teachers expected to teach in an inclusive classroom settings, because of lack of training and support necessary to ensure the success of ALL students in the classroom. These feelings are most likely not going to change due to teacher preparation programs focusing on content knowledge to produce “highly qualified” teachers due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Niesyn (2009) stated that this type of preparation puts general education teachers at a disadvantage, because unlike special education preparation programs, which emphasize training on teaching students with EBD, general education teachers are trained to focus primarily on content delivery rather than individual differences of students or special needs. This is unfortunate, because based on a review of the literature, teachers’ attitudes towards working with students with EBD are poor, but not due to a lack of desire, due to feelings of inadequacy.

Reiber and McLaughlin (2004) stated that self-management strategies have been shown to be effective at improving overall classroom behavior. Self-management strategies focus on the correlation between behavioral response and the consequences of said behavior. Reiber and McLaughlin (2004) also stressed the importance of the ability of students to accurately evaluate their behavior and apply the appropriate consequence in order for self-management strategies to be effective.

One of the self-management strategies provided by Niesyn (2009) is that of self-monitoring. Within this strategy, students observe, evaluate, and record their own behavior during various times throughout the school day. This cannot be accomplished without explicit instruction from the teacher, where together the teacher and student identify the behavior in need of change and determine what criteria are necessary for mastery. A self-monitoring form is used to document and assist students in evaluating their behavior, and the students learn to utilize the form through guided practice. Niesyn (2009) suggested the use of the self-monitoring form during difficult transitions during the day, such as preparing to go to recess, where students can physically check off items relating to their behavior throughout the transition.

A second self-management strategy that has proven to be successful when implemented with students who have EBD is self-instruction. Niesyn (2009) defined self-instruction as, “Orally coaching oneself through the steps in a given activity or assignment” (p. 230). It was also stated that in order for self-instruction to be successful, verbal modeling is necessary and can be incorporated in various activities.

Again, success in self-management strategies is dependent on students' abilities to accurately self-assess their own behavior, and this requires training from the teacher on how to recognize and record the targeted behavior. Reiber and McLaughlin (2004) emphasized that these targeted behaviors must be clearly outlined and understood by the student in order for success to occur. This has successfully been taught through several attempts where teachers record the student's behavior while the student does the same. The evaluations are compared where the student can visually see both recordings, and then a conversation is held comparing the

similarities and differences. Reiber and McLaughlin (2004) stated that this process can be excelled through the use of points or rewards for matching evaluations.

In addition to the two self-management strategies discussed above, Niesyn (2009) also provided strategies that teachers can implement concurrently which help promote success within the self-management strategies. The first is teacher praise. It is important that teacher praise be timely and specific, stating why the praise is being given and should be delivered every time an appropriate behavior is demonstrated by the student. While this may seem self evident, studies have shown time and time again that teachers rarely give praise to students with EBD.

Another complementary strategy for teachers while students participate in self-management is the scaffolding of individual seat work. Students with EBD often struggle considerably more during independent seatwork at managing their behavior. By presenting materials individually, rather than in packet form, folding worksheets in half only to reveal a portion of the work, and giving shorter assignments all positively relieves student stress (Niesyn, 2009).

If there was anything that these three behavioral strategies had in common, it would be that it is extremely important for students to have an adult in the school that they have a solid relationship with. By having a positive relationship with a school faculty member with daily positive interactions, the students will be more successful when behavioral strategies are put to use.

Conclusion

Navigating the world of the inclusive classroom environment, and how to appropriately serve all students can be a struggle at times. Through the use of evidence-based teaching

strategies, teachers can improve the overall success of student achievement in the areas of academics, social skills, and behavior, regardless of whether students have been identified or diagnosed with a form of learning or behavioral disability. The literature suggests that general education teachers struggle with knowing which way to turn or how to “fix” their classroom when teaching in an inclusive environment. Proper training and fidelity have been stated as determining factors when it comes to the successful implementation of the above teaching strategies. Through the use of these strategies, teachers can expect success to be had in the inclusive classroom for students with and without disabilities when the strategies are properly implemented.

Another factor that was considered to be detrimental to the overall success for the majority of these strategies was the importance of consistent and positive teacher-student relationships. The quality of relationships that students have with school staff was shown to directly correlate with the overall success of the strategies put in place.

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Teacher Toolbox for the Inclusive Classroom Environment

(By clicking each strategy, you will be taken to a page that contains more information for that specific teaching strategy)

Math:

- *Concrete-Representational-Abstract Strategy (CRA)
- *Detect, Practice, Repair Strategy (DPR)
- *Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS)

Reading:

- *Think Before Reading, Think While Reading, Think After Reading (TWA)
- *Expository Text Structure Strategy

Behavior:

- *Check, Connect, Expect Strategy (CCE)
- *Check-in Check-out Strategy (CICO)
- *Self-Management Strategy

References

Concrete-Representational-Abstract Strategy (CRA)

This teaching strategy focuses on the area of mathematics with a focus on basic computation, and is broken down into three stages.

1. Concrete: Students learn through “doing” by using manipulatives and hands on activities to explore the mathematical concept being taught.
2. Representational: Students utilize pictures and drawings to assist in the completion of mathematical problems.
3. Abstract: Students use only numbers and signs to complete the mathematical problems.

Evidence of Success:

*Research states that when effectively implemented, the Concrete, Representational, and Abstract strategy benefits students with and without disabilities struggling with math (Flores, 2009).

*One of the many benefits of the CRA instructional strategy is that the intensity of the strategy/intervention is increased due to the focus of instruction on one specific concept at a time to groups of students, both with and without disabilities, whose needs are homogenous (Flores & Hinton, 2019).

See it in Action! The following video clip provides additional explanation and visuals to see how students interact with the mathematical concept at each of the three levels of instruction within the CRA framework: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Oa3dZCPeRM>

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Detect, Practice, and Repair Strategy (DPR)

This strategy is broken down into three major sections, with an emphasis on automaticity of basic computation problems. During the second step (Practice) an additional strategy is used (Cover, Copy, Compare). This strategy should be followed step by step to promote success.

1. Detect: Students answer fact problems using 1.5 second intervals. Students keep track of correct and incorrect responses. The following steps focus on the problems that were answered incorrectly.
2. Practice: Students take the problems that were missed and apply the Cover, Copy, Compare (CCC) strategy. CCC involves 6 steps (See Figure 1.0)
3. Repair: During this stage, students participate in “sprints” which are one minute timed tests. It is important for the teacher to provide feedback while students self-graph their sprint performance.

Cover, Copy, Compare Strategy
1. Look at and study a completed problem.
2. Cover the problem.
3. Write the problem and answer from memory.
4. Uncover the sample problem.
5. Compare student answer with the sample problem.
6. Move on to the next problem if correct, or return to the first step if incorrect.

Figure 1.0

Evidence of Success:

*DPR is unique in its ability to be administered to the whole class, but the results provide a unique set of practice problems for each individual student (Poncy, Skinner & Axtell, 2010).

*The self-graphing of performance, completed by students at the end of the repair phase, also contributes to fluency (Poncy, Skinner & Axtell, 2010).

*The strategy is “...designed to provide educators with an efficient method to individualize instructional objectives for each student in an inclusive classroom environment (Poncy, Skinner, & Axtell, 2010, p. 343).

See it in Action! The following video allows you to see the strategy in use while it is explained.

It is important to notice each step (including CCC) is being followed, with an emphasis on student self-graphing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im1zWbvAM_Q

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Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS)

This teaching strategy is focused on the area of mathematics and is composed of two peer-tutoring procedures known as “coaching” and “practice.” It is important for the teacher to consider the students strengths and weaknesses in relation to the concepts being taught with this strategy and group students together accordingly.

Coaching: One student works on a problem set provided by the teacher while the student designated as the coach oversees the progress and takes time to correct errors. This portion takes approximately 15-20 mins. of instructional time.

Practice: Students work independently after a coaching session, usually completing a worksheet or timed test over the same concept that was practiced during coaching. The student pairs then trade papers with one another, check, and discuss incorrect problems. This step usually takes 5-10 mins. of instructional time.

Evidence of Success:

*PALS positively influenced the majority of students’ overall personal feelings about math and their success within the academic area (Kroeger & Kouce, 2006).

* “Through the use of the PALS approach, it allows teachers to address a challenging math curriculum while simultaneously attending to a wide diversity of math skills in the classroom” (Kroeger & Kouche, 2006, p. 6).

*The use of PALS strengthens math skills and also promotes the appropriate use of social skills in a neutral environment (Kroeger & Kouce, 2006).

See it in Action! This video provides additional information on PALS, as well as additional research backing the effectiveness of the strategy. It is important to note that partner groups change depending on the concepts being taught, and it is important that every student has the opportunity to be the coach as some point throughout the school year:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6Tbva5Bo0s>

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Think Before Reading, Think While Reading, Think After Reading Strategy (TWA)

This strategy focuses on reading comprehension, and teaches students to identify important pieces of information from informational text. It is broken into three primary phases.

Think Before Reading: Students are asked to review their prior knowledge on the topic of the assigned reading. Students can use notebooks to organize their thinking and list “What I know” as well as “What I want to Learn.”

Think While Reading: Students are taught to self-monitor how well they understand what they have read and are taught to re-read when experiencing feelings of uncertainty after completing the reading. During this phase, students are also taught to identify and adjust their reading speeds according to the difficulty of the section being read.

Think After Reading: Students need to be able to highlight portions of the readings, so some type of consumable is needed in regard to materials. After reading, students go back through the passage highlighting specific details associated with each color of highlighter.

Yellow Highlighter: Important Details

Green Highlighter: Supporting Details

Pink Highlighter: Irrelevant Details

Evidence of Success:

*Significant gains have been shown in the area of comprehension when this strategy is used with students, both with disabilities or without disabilities, which promotes the use of TWA in an inclusive classroom environment (Hedin & Gaffney, 2011).

*A study completed in a science classroom, utilizing the TWA strategy for reading informative text, showed gains in reading comprehension when compared to baseline data prior to TWA implementation (Sanders, Ennis, & Losinki, 2018).

See it in Action! The following video demonstrates how the TWA strategy can be implemented using technology to create personalized consumable materials for students, while providing the TWA structure throughout the reading: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfo6_dqwLpo

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Expository Text Structure Strategy

This strategy focuses on improvement in the area of reading comprehension through the intentional instruction of text strategy to improve comprehension of expository texts.

There are seven main types of expository text structure that should be taught to students. Students should be able to read a passage and determine which type of expository text the passage would fall in. This then allows the students to comprehend the reading and construct their own ideas by organizing them in the same manner as the author. The seven types of expository text include:

1. Compare-and-Contrast (Comparison)
2. Problem-and-Answer/Cause-and-Effect (Causation)
3. Sequence (Chronologic)
4. Enumeration (Collection/Lists)
5. Descriptions (Categorization/Generalization)
6. Position-and-Reason (Persuasion)
7. Pro-and-Con

Evidence of Success:

*Allows students to identify the organization brought forth by the author, and allows the reader to organize their own understanding in the same way (Meyer & Ray, 2011).

*Through the use of Text Structure Strategy, there has been a recorded increase in the production of good main ideas, summaries, improved standardized reading comprehension scores, as well as answer to questions pertaining to the expository texts (Meyer & Ray, 2011).

*Reader's awareness of the structure in place in the text that is being read assists the reader in recalling more information from the text when compared with readers with less knowledge of text structures (Pyle, 2017).

See it in Action! This video discusses some of the text structures mentioned here, as well as provides in depth detail as to why it is important to teach text structures to students, as well as how to do so effectively: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSGX34Zf82c>

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Check, Connect, Expect Strategy (CCE)

CCE is a strategy with an emphasis in behavior through the utilization of a coach for each student participating in the intervention. CCE is a tier two intervention intended for use when tier one interventions fail. This intervention is composed of two levels of support.

Basic Level: The student is paired up with a coach (a school staff member), who is responsible for daily positive interactions. The student checks in with their coach upon arriving to school and prior to leaving. The coach should also assist the student in goal setting and having conversations about reaching goals in regard to student behavior.

Basic Plus: This level of the intervention includes everything in the “Basic Level” but also includes daily social skills and problem-solving lessons incorporated into the students daily schedule.

Evidence of Success:

*Teachers who have experience with CCE typically welcome the intervention and would recommend its implementation for other teachers (Cheney et al., 2019).

*Studies have shown that students’ relationships with school staff are connected to student outcomes. Having a coach students to have a positive relationship with a school staff member (Cheney et al., 2010).

See it in Action! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D93gwDLLUic>: This video comes from a high school perspective, but the intervention can be used at the elementary age as well. You will notice the emphasis that is placed on positive relationships between students and staff throughout the video.

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Check-In, Check-Out Strategy (CICO)

This is a strategy intended for use to correct inappropriate behavior in a proactive way. There is an emphasis on positive student-teacher relationships for the intervention to be successful. Students begin CICO after being referred to the intervention by a teacher. After implementation has begun, students complete the following steps on a daily basis.

Check-In: Upon arrival to school, students check in with their CICO adult. This adult is a school staff member responsible for meeting with the same student(s) throughout the intervention. During this time, the students are reminded of their behavioral goals and are offered encouragement from their adult.

Daily Progress Report Card: Students carry around their report card with them throughout the day. At the end of each class or subject, the teacher fills out the report card and has a brief conversation with the student offering encouragement and staying positive.

Check-Out: At the end of the day, the students meet with the same adult from their check-in meeting at the beginning of the day. At this time, the Daily Progress Report Card is reviewed and a conversation is had in regards to the students behavior throughout the school day. Depending on their progress/points awarded, students may receive rewards and/or praise for their success.

Parental Involvement: Students take home their Daily Progress Report Card and parents are required to review them on a daily basis, sign the card, and then return it with their student the following day. The signed report card is then turned in during the following day check-in meeting.

Evidence of Success:

*When data from CICO is used to make decisions, the number of office referrals for students exhibiting problem behavior were reduced (Filter et al., 2007).

*CICO has been found to be effective in correcting problem behavior exhibited by students in school, and increasing social and academic behaviors of those students (Hawken, Bundock, Kladis, & Barrett, 2014).

*When CICO is implemented with fidelity, it has been shown to mitigate students' disruptive behavior in the classroom, and as a result has been shown to positively improve students' academic performance (Filter et al., 2014).

See it in Action! In this video, you will see CICO being utilized with a student. The video also contains additional resources and printable resources to use while implementing CICO. Notice, during the check-in and check-out meetings, the adult is very specific as to why the student is receiving points on their daily progress report

card. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vP7GJ72UxsA>

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Self-Management Strategy

This strategy can be broken down into multiple different strategies, but they all emphasize the importance of self-management. The two main strategies that will be discussed are Self-Monitoring and Self-Instruction.

Self-Monitoring: Students are responsible for observing, evaluating, and recording their own behavior throughout the day. The student must be taught via explicit instruction from the teacher about acceptable and unacceptable behavior and the characteristics of each. A self-monitoring form is used to document and assist the students.

Self-Instruction: This strategy relies on the student's ability to accurately self-assess their own behavior, and proper training is necessary. Students are taught to verbally talk themselves through activities or assignments they have been asked to complete prior to beginning them. By taking the time to verbally process what is expected, it allows the students to get into the correct frame of mind which promotes success with the activity or assignment.

Evidence of Success:

*Self-management strategies have been shown to be effective at improving overall classroom behavior (Reiber & McLaughling, 2014).

*Most instructional practices, when it comes to self-management strategies, are effective for students with special needs, and have even larger effects when used with general education students (Niesyn, 2009).

See it in Action! The following video discusses how self-monitoring can be used with academics in addition to behavior if needed. The video will also take you through the appropriate steps necessary to implement self-monitoring in your own classroom:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLZIM3hs89w>

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