

Teaching Strategies

During my Early Childhood Intervention Specialist Program at Ohio University, I learned about different teaching strategies and effective classroom management techniques. I had the opportunity to reflect and make changes to my teaching style, classroom environment, and management of behavior and routines. I strive to create a classroom that fosters a sense of safety, inclusion, and belonging among my students. I do this by having routines, clear expectations, and structure in my classroom. I show respect for my students and honor each of them as individual children. I learned different strategies for teaching students in whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction. I now use more specific strategies and understand I need to be flexible and ever-changing to meet my students' needs.

The first artifact is a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) that I completed for EDSP 5710: Functional Behavior Assessment. Before this course, I did not know how to conduct an FBA or a BIP. I heard of them, but had never seen one implemented or completed one. Learning how to do write an FBA and BIP was a beneficial teaching strategy to learn because I frequently have students who present challenging behaviors in my classroom. I teach in an inclusive preschool classroom, and many of the students have developmental delays in social-emotional development.

Lewis et al. (2017) explained, "Addressing inappropriate student behavior involves hypothesizing the function of the inappropriate behavior by conducting a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and designing plans that teach students appropriate behaviors to access the same or similar functional outcome" (para. 4). This assignment was completed with an example student for whom the professor gave information. I plan to use FBAs and BIPs with many of my own students in the future. This course helped instill in me that all behavior has a function, which explains why the

behavior is occurring. An example of this would be that a student might be throwing markers on the ground, and the reason behind it might be that they do not know how to ask for help, and when they throw markers, an adult comes to help them.

Educators need to identify the function of the behavior and create interventions to teach the desired behavior that meets the same function for the child. Lewis et al. (2017) explained, “The desired behavior refers to what the student should do instead of the current inappropriate student behavior” (para. 21). This is a very important teaching strategy for educators who work with children with delays and disabilities in social-emotional development.

Instead of using reactive strategies for behavior, educators need to get to the root of the problem and teach students the skills they need to behave appropriately and safely. Lewis et al. (2017) pointed out, “You would not take students making math errors as a personal affront; you would assess why they are making the error, reteach the concept, provide opportunities to practice, and acknowledge and celebrate when they master the skill” (para. 24). Teachers need to treat social-emotional skills the same as an academic skill. Some social-emotional skills need to be explicitly taught, especially in early childhood education.

The second artifact is a Classroom Ecology Project from EDSP 5740: Cultivating a Responsive Classroom. For this project, I created a slideshow about teaching strategies and classroom management techniques I learned about during the course and implemented in my classroom. This includes the setup of my classroom environment, my expectations and routines, instructional strategies, and responsive strategies. This assignment helped me reflect on my current practices and implement new ones.

To have effective classroom management, it is essential to have an environment and teaching strategies set up to help children be successful in their learning, while

supporting their well-being. Educators can't just show up on the first day of school with students without prior preparation and expect things to go well. Physical and mental plans need to be prepared, the classroom layout needs to be strategically laid out, and carefully thought-out daily schedules, procedures, and expectations need to be ready. At the beginning of the school year, students need to be taught and have the opportunity to frequently practice the routines, expectations, and procedures.

In EDSP 5740, I learned about the Restorative Justice approach, and began to implement it in my classroom. In this artifact, I review how I will use the approach in my classroom. Restorative Justice in schools, or sometimes referred to as Restorative Discipline, focuses on the harm that was done, the impact of the action, and repairing the relationship, instead of putting focus on punishing the person who caused harm. Milner et al. (2019) explained it is "a mindset, and an approach to discipline that builds upon the foundational idea that schools are places where students are expected to make errors and learn from them" (p. 146). Just like the last artifact, social-emotional skills need to be taught to students and practiced.

The third artifact is one of my Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) evaluations completed by my principal this school year. This evaluation demonstrates my growth and strengths as an educator. I have definitely gained new knowledge since beginning my master's program, and my evaluation is a good indicator of that growth. Steinberg & Kraft (2017) explains,

The process of assigning a summative evaluation rating to teachers is shaped by four primary design features of a teacher evaluation system: (a) the teacher performance measures used, (b) the approach used to place performance measures on a common scale, (c) the weights assigned to teacher performance measures, and (d) the performance ratings thresholds (p. 378).

My principal noted my lessons included differentiation and alignment with state

standards. My instruction was explicit, clear, and developmentally appropriate. She wrote that my classroom environment was positive, warm, and structured, and that my interactions with students were respectful and encouraging.

I received an overall rating of Accomplished on my OTES evaluation. This was the first year that I received a rating of Accomplished instead of Skilled. This rating shows that I have grown as an educator during my time in my master's degree program, which I started in the summer of 2024. I have learned different teaching strategies that have helped me become an effective educator, including how to create an effective classroom environment, what to prepare for my students before school starts, how to implement procedures and expectations, and how to conduct FBAs and BIPs.

My FBA and BIP, Classroom Ecology Project, and my OTES evaluation are all artifacts that indicate I have gained new knowledge and skills in my teaching strategies and classroom management techniques. The readings, videos, assignments, and practice I have completed during my program have helped me reflect and make changes to my teaching. I now know how to conduct an FBA to determine the function of a child's behavior. With this information, I can create a BIP to help teach them the social-emotional skills they need to learn to appropriately behave and self-regulate. Through my Classroom Ecology Project, I learned new teaching strategies, such as Restorative Justice, as well as reflected and changed my classroom environment and fully prepared my procedures and routines before students started school. My OTES evaluation shows I have learned new teaching strategies and that I have grown as an educator. Through all of this, I work hard to honor each of my students as unique individuals, and I am flexible with my thinking and strategies to best meet the needs of my students.

References

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