HOW TO CREATE A WELL-STRUCTURED CLASSROOM

Presented by:

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Structured Teaching

- Describes the conditions under which a person should be taught, rather than what to teach
- A system for organizing the environment, developing appropriate activities, and helping people understand what is expected of them
- Address challenging behaviors in a proactive manner by creating appropriate and meaningful environments that reduce stress, anxiety, and frustration
- Aids in the development of independence

What does structure do for us?

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Top 10 Well-Structured Classroom Components

1. Physical Structure
2. Visual Supports
3. Schedules
4. Routines
5. To Do Lists
6. Transition Supports
7. Sensory Supports
8. Special Interests
9. Emotional Regulation Supports
10. Behavior Management Plan

1. Physical Structure

- Definition: refers to the way in which we set up and organize the person’s physical environment
  - It emphasizes where/how we place the furniture and materials in the environment (including classroom, playground, hallway, locker/cubby areas, etc.)
- Close attention to physical structure is essential because:
  - Defines boundaries and segments the larger classroom into smaller areas
  - Adds meaning and context to the area/environment
  - Helps to minimize distractions in the learning environment
In the Preschool Classroom, the teacher used rugs to give a visual boundary to the students.

**Sensory and Science Area**

**Block Play Area**

**Reading Area**

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**Use Tape to define spaces**

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### 2. Visual Supports

- **Why Use Visual Supports?**
  - We know that the majority (65%) of our students are visual learners.
  - Visuals can attract and hold a student’s attention, helping the student focus on the message.
  - Visuals make abstract concepts more concrete, aiding language processing.
  - Visuals can be referenced over and over.

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**Visual Supports**

- Visual Supports can be used ANYWHERE!
- Label supplies and materials to increase the predictability of the classroom environment
  - When students clean up, they know where everything is located
  - It helps adults too 😊

- “When I see it then I understand”
Red Shape indicates the size of the building block that should be put on the shelf.

Visual Supports

- Write out visual directions and expectations for group work
- Assign individual roles for group work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job: Recorder</th>
<th>Keep a record of what the group does</th>
<th>Writes important ideas down</th>
<th>Things I could say:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could you say that again for me please?</td>
<td>Let me see if I have this right.</td>
<td>Which one should I write down?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visual Supports

- Keep one bulletin board for all classroom business and label it. Post schedule, monthly lunch calendar, monthly classroom calendar, etc. Adults and students can always look and know what’s going on.

- Warning: Only post visuals you actually use! Too many posters, bulletin boards, reminder charts, and artwork can be distracting and overwhelming for some students.
3. Schedules

- **Definition:** tells the student what activities will occur and in what sequence
- **Whole Class Schedule**

   * 8:25 am – Morning routines
   * 8:30 am – CLA
   * 9:00 am – Recess
   * 9:10 am – Lunch & Recess
   * 10:15 am – Science
   * 11:00 am – Play
   * 12:00 pm – MFL
   * 1:00 pm – Recess
   * 1:15 pm – Math
   * 3:00 pm – Darrell

- **Individualized Visual Schedule**

**Essential because:**
- Helps address the student’s difficulty with sequential memory and organization of time
- Lessens the anxiety level of students, and thus reduces the possible occurrence of challenging behaviors, by providing the structure for the student predict daily and weekly events.
- Schedules can be used to alert the student to any changes that might occur.
- Assist the student in transitioning independently between activities and environments by showing them where they are to go next.
- Can be used in all environments.
Individualized Visual Schedule

- Must be directly taught and consistently used
  - For the student with autism, the consistent use of a visual schedule in an extremely important skill. It has the potential to increase independent functioning throughout life.

- Individualized Schedule
  - Necessary to develop an individual schedule for the student with autism in addition to the general education classroom schedule.
  - An individual schedule will give the student with autism important information in a visual form that can be easily understood.

Picture/Written Schedules

- Student checks off activity on schedule when it is completed
- Student puts a stamp on his schedule when activity is completed

This schedule includes the times for the student’s classes, along with a place to keep track of assigned work in the “TO DO” area.

There is also an area for reinforcement to remind the student what he will be able to do after he completes his work.

4. To Do Lists (Work System)

- Definition: refers to the systematic and organized presentation of tasks in order for students to learn to work independently, without adult directions/prompts, and increase success

Example:

- Unpack book bag
- Break
- Math with Mrs. Moore
  - turn in homework
  - test
  - read book until bell rings
- Spanish with Mr. King
  - turn in homework
  - class Spanish bee
  - workbook pg. 99-101
  - fill in the blanks
  - read book until bell rings
- Work Independently in room 100
  - date entry
  - journal
  - office
  - break
- Lunch

Brad, today Mrs. Smith isn’t here. No speech today. She will see you on Monday.
5. Routines

- Establish routines for activities in the classroom
  - Write them down
  - Videotape them
  - Take still pictures of the routines
  - Have a routine book to help new students learn routines

Routines that need to be directly taught:

- How to ask for help
- How and when to hand in work
- How to pass out papers
- How to organize materials so that they are accessible in desk, locker, backpack, cubby
- How to make up missed work
- When and what to throw away and where
- How to obtain school supplies when the student forgets to bring them
- How to line up for lunch, recess, music, etc
- How to walk down the hall with other students
- How to sharpen a pencil
6. Transitions

- Communicating and preparing students for what will occur next will decrease anxiety
- Use Transition Supports
- Give the student a transition aid. Some students need to carry an object, picture, or other aid to facilitate their movement from one place to the next.

Transitions

- Ask peers to help in supporting transition time. In elementary classrooms, teachers can ask all students to move from place to place with a partner. In middle and high school classrooms, students with autism might choose a peer to walk with during passing time.

Transition Supports

- Give 5 and 1 minute reminders to whole class before any transition
- Providing the student or entire class with a transitional activity such as writing in a homework notebook or for younger students, singing a short song about "cleaning up".
- Countdown
- Use a visual timer
  - Allows the student to see time passing
  - Teaches the concept of time
7. Sensory Supports

- Use Calming and Alerting Activities
- Alternate between difficult and less difficult tasks
- Provide “down time” during the day
- Brain Breaks
- Frequent breaks allow students to self-regulate sensory input and improve their attention and performance.
- Offer different seating options

8. Special Interests

- Using a child’s special interest can help increase his/her attention to an activity. A special interest can be comforting to a student. Special interests can be used by choosing stickers of favorite characters to earn on a Reinforcement page, reading books about a favorite animal, coloring a picture of a special building to visit.

9. Emotional Regulation Supports

- Help decrease stress
- Change level of alertness
- Increases engagement in class
- Influences all aspects on life
Emotional Regulation Supports

- Have each student develop a menu of what strategies work for them.
- Prompt students to use their menu when they become agitated or overwhelmed. Show students their menu when you see their stress levels start to rise.
- Have a designated “chill out” space

[Image: http://www.lizs-early-learning-spot.com]

Teach Relaxation Routines:

- Before I take a test...
  - I need to take 5 slow deep breaths
  - Count to 10
  - Take a few drinks of water
  - Read the test directions
  - Begin the test

The 5 Point Scale

By Kari Dunn Baron

Rewards and positive reinforcement help increase desired behavior.

- Individualize to make the plan meaningful to the student.
- Some students will need more frequent reinforcement.

[Image: 5 Point Scale]

10. Behavior Management Plan

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BEST WISHES!

AMY

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QUESTIONS???