The Essential Role of Positive Behavior Supports in Today's Schools

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Abstract
Individuals know what behavior is and at some point have reacted using a positive or negative behavior. It is important for adults to teach young individuals how to express their own or react to others behavior; depending on how behavior is taught to an individual depends how they positively or negatively may react to a situation. In both the literature review and collected data from surveys it is expressed that it is important to model expected behavior and how it should appropriately be used in certain situations. Also it was expressed that it is important for individuals to be responsible for their own behaviors; and that adults need to correct negative behavior; this way individuals learn and can in the future use more positive behaviors. To collect data an electronic anonymous survey way distributed to teachers in two different school districts to find out teachers’ point of view on positive behavior supports. The data allowed for there to be an investigation into how teachers feel about and use positive behavior supports. Furthermore, the also data investigated whether positive behavior supports are found school-wide or just in the classroom and how this affects student’s behaviors.
The Essential Role of Positive Behavior Supports in Today’s Schools

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Abstract

Individuals know what behavior is and at some point have reacted using a positive or negative behavior. It is important for adults to teach young individuals how to express their own or react to others behavior; depending on how behavior is taught to an individual depends how they positively or negatively may react to a situation. In both the literature review and collected data from surveys it is expressed that it is important to model expected behavior and how it should appropriately be used in certain situations. Also it was expressed that it is important for individuals to be responsible for their own behaviors; and that adults need to correct negative behavior; this way individuals learn and can in the future use more positive behaviors. To collect data an electronic anonymous survey way distributed to teachers in two different school districts to find out teachers’ point of view on positive behavior supports. The data allowed for there to be an investigation into how teachers feel about and use positive behavior supports. Furthermore, the also data investigated whether positive behavior supports are found school-wide or just in the classroom and how this affects student’s behaviors.
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Introduction

Our environment, surroundings, and others’ behaviors depend on how we behave and decide what behaviors we tend to use or react with. All individuals know what behavior is and at some point has reacted using a positive or negative behavior. Most individuals also understand that positive behaviors are more accepted than negative ones. Teaching behavior to students is one of the most important jobs that a teacher or parent may have. Depending on how behavior is taught to an individual depends how they positively or negatively may react to a situation when stimulated in a specific way. Teachers and adults, try to model behavior and how it should appropriately be used in certain situations. Also teachers and adults, try to correct negative behavior and make students understand what could have been done differently to reinforce positive behavior.

In many schools there are teachers and administrators in education who are trying to change the structure of behavior management in schools and how behavior management is implemented. Behavior management skills are being taught to students, teachers, and administrators through a variety of different structured programs. These programs are implemented as either classroom positive behavior systems or as school wide positive behavior systems. Many of these positive behavior support systems use a process of using tools to teach students positive behavior skills. Ways to teach positive behavior is through lesson, assemblies, a token economy, and interactive technology. Some of these positive behavior support programs are successful for schools and others are not, so it is important for teachers to use different support systems to help promote positive behavior skills. Teaching positive behavior to students is something that has become very important in schools.
This paper will provide a more in-depth look at how positive behavior reinforcement is used or not used in school settings. Also to understand what the best practice of positive behavior methods would be in a classroom or school setting all of the methods need to be examined. This paper will look at how school support or lack thereof for positive behavior support has an effect on students. It will also examine if the way in which behavior is taught to students determines if students have poor attendance rates, which may eventually lead to drop-out rate later in their school careers. Another aspect of this study will examine and help to determine if school wide behavior methods/interventions are better practices than individual classroom behavior methods.

Surveys will be distributed to teachers to allow them to examine the different ways in which behavior strategies are used in their classrooms and school community. The surveys will demonstrate the different practices of behavioral strategies that are being used in school today and how successful or unsuccessful they are. Also data will be collected from schools participating in study looking at attendance rate, number of referrals, and drop-out rate for students. Then data and surveys can be compared to see if there is a correlation between the data. There are a few major aspects of the data to be examined; one is if there is a correlation between attendance rate and the types of behaviors that students exhibit in a school setting. Also if there is a correlation that exists between good positive behavior methods and low referral rates in a school district. This study will help to determine the best practices that can be used with in a school district and individual classroom to help support positive behavior.
Positive Behavior Support and the Part it Plays in Education

It is interesting how each of us acts out and reacts in different ways, followed by how our actions are characterized as our behaviors. An individual can react using different behaviors many times throughout a day and each one of these reactions can be very different. A person’s behavior can be viewed as either positive or negative, affecting others around him or her. As a teacher and adult, it is our job to show students positive behavior and tell them when to fix or correct negative behavior. This is one of the behavior management skills that is important for teachers to have a successful classroom.

Every individual knows what behavior is and has reacted using a positive or negative behavior. Overall, individuals understand that positive behaviors are more accepted than negative ones. An individual’s behavior is something that is hard to define or even understand for that matter because there are so many variations of the same or different behaviors. The Merriam Webster Dictionary, (2010) defines behavior in many different ways; one definition explains that behavior is “the manner of conducting oneself” and second defines it as “the response of an individual, group, or species to its environment.” It is important for individuals to learn the difference between positive and negative behavior; this way we individuals know what behaviors are appropriate to use in certain settings and those that are not. Behavior is an important part of every individual’s life because it can have positive or negative effects on other people who come in contact with it and cause those individuals to react upon it in their own way. It is important for individuals to learn to control their behavior and understand where certain behaviors are appropriate or not.

Our environment, surroundings, and others’ behaviors can affect how we react. Many articles have presented ideas about how family’s social construction or parenting methods can
also play a role in how an individual’s behavior is formed and how they react to certain events (Carr, E., 2007). These reactions to behavior and how they are dealt with can play a role in the area of education. The reason for this is because there are a large number of individuals who interact with each other in a classroom; depending on how behavior is managed in that setting depends on how students may react to certain events, may they be positive or negative.

There are many teachers and administrators in education who are trying to change the structure of behavior management in schools and how behavior management is implemented. Many of these behavior management skills are being taught to students, teachers, and administrators through a variety of different programs. These programs are implemented as either classroom positive behavior systems or as school wide positive behavior systems. Some of these positive behavior support programs are successful for schools and others are not. Many researchers believe that positive behavior support systems are something that can help students to be successful in school. Also it can help teachers, staff, and administrators display successful behavior management with many different types of supports (Sailor & Paul, 2004). Positive behavior management goes by many different names and different acronyms, but for the purpose of this paper it will be referred to as school wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS), positive behavior supports (PBS), or positive behavior intervention strategies (PBIS).

**Defining Disruptive Behaviors**

In a school setting there are many different types of negative or disruptive behaviors that teachers are trying to correct by using positive behavior supports. One of the articles that I have read describes a negative or disruptive behavior to be considered as an action where a student talks without permission, gets out of his or her seat, or interferes with another student’s ability to be engaged in the learning process (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). When a negative or disruptive
behavior occurs, a teacher needs to use his or her behavior management skills and strategies to make sure that negative behaviors do not affect the rest of the students in the class. Behavior management is a teaching tool that teachers use to make sure that their students participate and are being engaged in learning to their fullest potential. (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). Also teaching positive behavior to students is something that has become very important in schools and many school districts are trying to promote more positive behaviors.

**Types of Behavior Support**

Many articles and literature has discussed that schools have used different methods and efforts to teach staff and students positive behavior skills. One way in which this has been done has been by using programs such as School Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS), to promote positive behavior and try to make students shy away from negative behavior (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). This type of behavior support system helps promote positive behavior for students. Teachers and staff do this by using lessons to show expectations of positive behavior (Simonsen, et al., 2008). There are many ways for teachers and staff to promote positive behavior. Positive behavior can be promoted in a number of ways. It can be done through modeling, assemblies, lessons, or a token economy. One important way that teachers and staff can set up the structure for positive behavior is by collaborating with students and coming up with a list or rules to follow; when the students are caught following the rules or presenting positive behavior they can be rewarded or given a certificate (Sailor & Paul, 2004).

Many schools are struggling with positive behavior supports. Some districts may decide to implement a program that helps to teach teachers, staff, and students about a positive behavior. Other school districts may give their staff direction about how to deal with positive behavior, but never go any further with how to implement in it in the classroom or school wide.
The way that positive behavior is taught or portrayed to students can become controversial when a student has his or her own behavioral intervention plan in place. Positive behavior can be controversial in a lot of different ways because some people don’t know how to implement or use positive behavior strategies with other behavior methods that they may be implementing. At times it can be challenging to implement more than one behavior intervention to students, so there may be a struggle with how to balance between the two behavior methods (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). Many ways in which positive behavior is taught and responded to by one student may not be that easy for another student or for a student who has special needs (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). A student who is having behavior issues in the classroom needs to be assessed, so teachers and or staff can identify any persistent problems that continue to occur (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). Once a student is observed and assessed using one of the functional behavior assessments (FBAs), then teachers and staff can collaborate on goals for a specific child that may go along with or be different from the rules a classroom has set up (Killu, Weber, Derby, & Barretto, 2006). Once these rules are established for the student, they then will have individual goals established for them (Killu, et al., 2006). Some teachers and administrators believe that a student should be rewarded when they show positive behavior; the other side believes that a student should not be rewarded for showing positive behavior because it is something they should just learn how to do (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). This is an area where there will continue to be issues because many teachers and administrators think differently about the topics.

Some teachers have a hard time implementing more than one behavior plan in a classroom (Killu, et al., 2006). One article discussed how there are many issues for school personnel when it comes to functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention
plans (BIPs) and how they should be created and implemented (Killu, et al., 2006). It is determined that many of these issues may stem from a lack of knowledge in certain areas such as special education or teachers struggling with multiple behaviors and students at one time (Killu, et al., 2006). The article discuss how if there were more explanations and training on how to understand and implement behavior intervention plans, then maybe they would be more successful for the students (Killu, et al., 2006). The topic of functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs) is one that it debated quite frequently among special education teachers, general education teachers, staff and administrators because there many ways in which to administer them (Killu, et al., 2006).

**Teaching Positive Behaviors**

Teachers and staff teach and promote students to display positive behaviors in many ways. Sometimes when positive behavior support systems are designed, when a positive behavior is displayed, there may be some kind of token economy that is established (Simonsen, et al, 2008). A token economy system is where a student is rewarded for having acceptable or positive behavior. Some researchers believe that there are other ways to teach students how to use positive behavior without rewarding through a token economy system. On the other had some data has shown that there is more classroom and school wide participation when a token economy is involved (Nelson, 2010). Another article discussed how teachers need to assess their classroom before they can determine what goals can be set for the class and how they will accomplish them (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). The authors go on to state that once the teacher assesses what goals need to be accomplished, then he or she can move on to what should happen if those goals are accomplished (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). Also the authors say that the teacher needs to set up rules to go along with goals, and that there needs to be at maximum of
five rules. That way teachers and students can remember them (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). The most important thing that this article discusses is that it is important for teachers and students to stick to the rules and that students should only be rewarded for behavior when they have followed the rules and met the goals that were set (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). This topic is debated by teachers and staff in a building because many times teachers believe that students should be rewarded for different positive behaviors and they don’t know how to reward some students and not others.

Many schools that have implemented a school wide behavior support system have used data to help set up and sustain what type of behavior system and school wide interventions would be fitting for their individual schools (Simonsen, et al., 2008). When it comes to an individual who needs positive behavior reinforcement; teachers and staff need to evaluate and address that individual’s specific problem through putting interventions in place for that student (Sailor & Paul, 2004). Establishing positive behavior can be very beneficial for students; data shows that a decrease in behavior problems has led to an increase in academics (Simonsen, et al., 2008). This allows for more student participation and less disruptions in the classroom.

It is important for data to be collected and analyzed for both individual and school wide positive behavior support systems; this way decisions can determine if adjustments need to be made based on data (Sailor & Paul, 2004). Many times data for an individual case may lead to a different type of behavior management system or a change to a behavior intervention plan (Sailor & Paul, 2004).

The common ground among most data and research that has been collected on positive behavior support is that positive behavior needs to be modeled and supported by all teachers and staff (Simonsen, et al., 2008). The Simoen, et al. article states how a school wide positive
behavior support (SWPBS) team should establish plans to teach types of positive expectations and behaviors within a setting or routine. Also stated is that in positive behavior lessons just like any other lesson a teacher would teach; there needs to be rules and routines, definitions or descriptions as to what it should look like to follow the rule within the routine, the teacher needs to model what is expected, give practice in a specific setting, and then assess to see if students understood and acquired the skill (Simonsen, et al., 2008). From these lesson and assessment teachers and staff can collect data and then discuss it with school wide positive behavior support team to set up corrections or give specific praise to students who are acquiring objectives of positive behavior lessons (Simonsen, et al., 2008). From the data collected by teachers and examined by school wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) team, schools can then decide if positive behavior lessons are successful and if not how they should be changed. Also the school wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) team can decide on consequences that can be established for students who are not following positive behaviors (Simonsen, et al., 2008). Data and observations are important when assessing how students are responding to positive behavior interventions.

There are many different methods, strategies, and tools that are being used to teach students positive behavior skills. These methods, strategies, and tools can be used by teaching lessons, having assemblies, and using technology. One research article suggests that if children gain self-control, organization and planning skills, it is likely that they will use more positive than negative behaviors when responding to others behavior or how they feel about an action that is occurring (Miller, Fitzgerald, Koury, Mitchem, & Hollingsead, 2007). The researchers in this article talk about using a software program Called KidTools, which was developed by Gail Fitzgerald and Louis Semrau (Miller, et al., 2007). Miller et al. also discuss how teaching kids to
use computer software programs that deal with students learning about behavior or learning problems and how they would be addressed, allows students to understand and be able to relate to problems. In the article, the authors also discuss how it is important for parents and teachers to be involved in the KidTools program. The article states that they can be a support system for children and use the computer software as a tool to reinforce and to help develop students self-control, planning skills, and organizational skills (Miller, et al., 2007).

Other researchers also believe that teachers and staff can effectively teach students positive behavior skills through other methods, strategies, and tools. Teachers discuss that a major part of knowing what methods, strategies, or tools to use with a classroom is through observing how a specific classroom functions (Krasch & Carter, 2009). Some researchers state that once a teacher observes his or her classroom through monitoring and evaluations, they will be able to improve their teaching and make learning optimum for students (Krasch & Carter, 2009). In the primary level, the method of monitoring and evaluations is useful because it helps teachers design a framework that can install positive behavior supports for children (Krasch & Carter, 2009). Researchers in the article discuss that one way this can be demonstrated is through modeling and showing students how they are expected to behave, for instance, move through centers or act during a specific activity (Krasch & Carter, 2009). Positive behavior supports and other strategies can be used to make a classroom a successful work environment (Krasch & Carter, 2009).

**Impact on Student Learning**

According to an article published by Guardino and Fullerton (2010), a classroom environment can have an impact of student’s behavior and learning. Teachers must learn to examine the environment. That way they can find methods to increase good behavior and
academic engagement. In this article a case study was conducted in an urban classroom where a teacher dealt with disruptive behavior and a lack of academic engagement (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). The teacher did this by observing, modifying, and following-up. After, the teacher changed her classroom methods based on her classroom environment to make students more engaged and display good behavior (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). In this case the teacher changed the setting of the environment by arranging the desks in a certain way and by the placement of other objects in the classroom; this way objects in the classroom were less distracting for students (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). The teacher responded that after making observations and modifying classroom environment, these changes helped many of the students in the class increase academic engagement and decrease disruptive behavior.

It is important for teachers to start early when teaching behavior patterns, this way students can make them part of their routine and display them more (Stormon, Smith, & Lewis, 2007). Implementing praise and correction for positive behavior at an early age has shown that students entering elementary school tend to have less behavior problems (Stormon, et al., 2007). Stronmon, et al., suggests that there needs to be a pre-school based intervention model set up this way students are learning and develop the positive behaviors that are expected of them in the school setting. By working with students from a pre-school age, using supports to teach them to develop positive behavior allows them to establish a frame work that other teachers can work with throughout their schooling (Stormon, et al., 2007). Using frame work to teach students positive behavior at a young age allows them to conform easier to other types of classroom or school wide positive behavior. The data from Stronmon, et al., suggests that the more exposure that young students have to positive behavior the more prepared they are to display it and demonstrate the behavior in appropriate situations.
Benefits of Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies

Once students conform to a positive behavior structure, schools spend less time disciplining students and more time focusing on academics (Simonsen, et al., 2008). These important structures help to support and focus on individual’s positive behavior, which can be beneficial to the individual and school wide. Some studies have stated that positive behavior intervention may encourage students to participate more in classroom activities (Carr, 2007). The positive behavior supports model is one that can be divided into a three tiered model that allows teachers to evaluate and monitor student’s behavior and move them toward positive behaviors (Krasch & Carter, 2009). With a three tiered model it allows there to be support for students and provide comprehensive behavior support (Krasch & Carter, 2009). Once students learn the expectations that have been set for them, they will begin to display more positive behaviors (McDonald, 2010). Teachers need to make sure that they are continuing to meet students’ needs and continue to practice positive behavior strategies, this way students can be engaged in classroom and school wide activities (McDonald, 2010). School wide positive behavior supports can serve as a frame work for classroom positive behaviors or other interventions that may be used for individuals to seek positive behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Also teachers have to show students that they are on board with positive behavior by themselves practicing positive behavior (Paciotti, 2010). Teachers need to encourage and use praise with students when they are displaying positive behavior, just like people are praised for making an effort or doing another activity correctly (Paciotti, 2010). Paciotti suggest that it is important for students to know when they are doing something correctly because they will continue to do it correctly if they see that they are receiving praise for it. The article also suggest that students like to feel that they are cared about, so when teachers show pleasure in approval this makes students feel cared about
and makes them want to continue to please. Paciotti suggest that by teachers making learning enjoyable for students it is likely that positive behavior management will make their classroom a place where learning occurs, because teachers make it an effective and enjoyable experience for all students.

**Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies working with Response to Intervention**

Positive behavior interventions strategies are also part of the New York State Response to Intervention (RTI) services. The Response to Intervention is divided into a 3 tiered model that goes along with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to help individuals with disabilities have services that are designed to their needs (Sugai & Horner, 2009). It is important for an individual’s area of need to be determined, this way appropriate instruction is being received (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Sugai and Horner present that the RTI process allows for there to be a multi-tiered approach that monitors a student’s progress and make intervention decisions. In order for positive behavior supports to become an intervention method, the teacher and staff need to collect data that determines if positive behavior interventions need to be put in place (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Behavior interventions and supports are an area where a lot of attention is paid because teachers and staff may be trying to prevent a particular behavior problem, so it needs to be addressed before it leads to further serious behavior challenges (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Developing school wide positive behavior supports can help to aid effectiveness of development and influences; this way students understand expectations of positive behavior and desired behavior, this would be considered a tier 1 intervention (Sugai & Horner, 2009). This article also states that teachers can do this by teachers using behavior management in instruction through routines, academic engagement, supervision, and success. If behavior issues continue to be present past a school wide or
classroom intervention, teachers then need to seek screening, evidence of instructional based practices, and observation data to then move to tier 2 or eventually tier 3 interventions to become more individual for the student and them have more supports to achieve positive behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

**Challenges with Promoting Positive Behavior Managements**

Some educators feel that there are issues with positive behavior supports and how they are implemented with students. One article discusses how a number of students are not performing well in school, due to the fact that academic and social interactions are not designed well for a growing diverse population (Scott, 2007). Positive behavior support systems are designed to teach, develop, and encourage positive behavior among students in a school community, but these actions may be seen as controlling actions over students (Scott, 2007). Scott also presents in this article that some students feel that schools may devalue their thoughts, social values, or beliefs. The article continues to present how positive behavior support system may bring up issues that are related to personal dignity and devalue students. The question is raised as to why adults are the ones who designed rules and consequences for students and if students had more interaction and involvement with designing positive behavior models they may feel less devalued (Scott, 2007). The Scott article also discusses if students had more interaction and involvement they may be able to give key insight and eventually help conform to positive behavior models among peers. By using positive behavior supports that are school wide, schools are trying to change the environment and make individuals participate in that environment in a way that will have positive outcomes, but not all situation can facilitate and make individual behavior positive (Scott, 2007). Many times it is hard to construct and evaluate
success or opportunities because in this construct there is really no room for negative outcomes or change when a positive outcome is the desired ultimate achievement (Scott, 2007).

Also positive behavior support systems can negatively affect students in other ways because many times there are not enough supports to assist a teacher, or in other cases teachers don’t know how to properly use supports (Stromon, et al., 2007). In some situations teachers showing support for positive behavior and how to display it can be a challenge; this is because they do not support this type of intervention (Paciotti, 2010). In many cases educators also don’t believe in a token economy or in giving some kind of reward to students for showing positive behavior. They believe that students should just display positive behavior and not have to be rewarded for it (Paciotti, 2010). Teachers also need to build a relationship and connect with students. Many teachers don’t do this and they begin to judge students, and this can lead to a negative impact on positive behavior (Beaty-O’Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010).
Methodology

This paper will be based on data that is collected through anonymous surveys from teachers. Also data will be collected from schools participating in study looking at attendance rate, number of referrals, and graduation rate for students. First an on-line program that distributes surveys will be emailed to teachers from two different participating schools districts in rural areas of Western New York State, this way data can be collected anonymously. The teachers will be given a link to the on-line survey which will be available for two weeks for them to complete. Once the survey data is collected, the examiner will collect data from each of the participating school. This data will consist of attendance rate, number of referrals given out, and graduation rate for students. Once all the data is collected it will be examined to see if there is a correlation between any of the data. The examiner will be studying to see if there are any main correlations between attendance rate and the types of behaviors that students exhibit in a school setting. Also the examiner will look to see if there is correlation that exists between good positive behavior methods and low referral rates in a school district. Once the data is analyzed the examiner will be able to determine the many ways in which positive behavior is taught and how it has an effect on how students behave and react to situations in a school setting. In the end the examiners ultimate goal of this study is to determine which form of teaching positive behavior to students is the best practice.
Results of How Positive Behavior Affects Today’s Schools and Classrooms

All individuals understand or know what behavior is and have at one point or another reacted using a positive or negative behavior. Teachers and adults, try to model behavior and how it should appropriately be used in certain situations. Depending on how behavior is taught to an individual depends how they positively or negatively may react to a situation when stimulated in a specific way.

Teachers and adults, try to correct negative behavior and make students understand what could have been done differently to reinforce positive behavior. Teaching behavior to students is one of the most important jobs that a teacher or parent may have. Positive behavior management plays a very big role throughout the school and in the classroom, there for it is possible that it has an effect on students attendance rate, number of referrals given out, and graduation rate.

Our environment, surroundings, and others’ behaviors depend on how we behave and decide what behaviors we tend to use or react with. There are many way that positive behavior can be taught to students, so they understand what behaviors to react with in specific situations. Many teachers and administrators in education are trying to change the structure of behavior management in schools and how behavior management is implemented. Behavior management skills are being taught to students, teachers, and administrators through a variety of different structured programs. These programs are being taught to be implemented as either classroom positive behavior systems or as school wide positive behavior systems.

To find out how individuals view positive behavior anonymous surveys were distributed through email to teachers from two different participating schools districts in rural areas of Western New York State, this way data can be collected anonymously. The teachers were given a link to the on-line survey, which was available for two weeks for them to complete. There
surveys were designed to get teacher input, feeling, and methods on positive behavior. The survey also discussed how positive behavior affected students, themselves, and administrators in school-wide and classroom settings. Once all the data was collected it was examined to see if there was any correlation between data as far as strategies to achieve positive behavior or see what kind supports are used for positive behavior.

Data collected resulted in teachers telling their interpretations of how they and their schools construct behavior management and how it is supported. The teachers who participated in this survey range in experience of teaching from 1 year to 14 plus years, (refer to appendix B). Also these teachers are a very heterogeneous group because it is not just special education or general education teachers who took the survey; there were also specials area teachers and teachers who work inclusion settings who completed this survey. Teachers also were allowed to express how positive behavior is taught to students and how they feel about its effects. To refer to the survey that was distributed to teachers see appendix A.

The teachers that returned the surveys have discussed the positive and negative impacts that the different types of positive behavior systems have played in their schools and classrooms. Teachers discuss a variety of different methods they use to promote and teach positive behavior to students. Also teachers discuss how negative behaviors affect their classroom environment and school. Throughout the data collected teachers also express their opinion about positive behavior supports and the possible lack of outside supports to help reinforce positive behavior in the classroom and school-wide. The data presents the effects of positive behavior in a few different ways and talks about their role in the classroom and school wide. One way in which the data presents is through ways to reinforce positive behavior. Another way in which the data supports positive behavior is explain ways to teach positive behavior or correct negative
behavior. Also the data collect discusses how negative behavior has an impact on others behavior and a loss of instructional time for students. Positive behavior and its supports play a hug role school-wide and in the classroom; the data collected supports this idea and gives evidence of just how important of a role it does play.

**Positive Behavior Reinforcement and how it plays a Role**

The returned surveys show that positive behavior reinforcement is the biggest achievement that teachers and administration are continuing to support school-wide and in the classroom. Fifty-eight percent of the data agrees that ultimately an individual person is responsible for his or her own behavior. This represents that individuals are allowed to make their own decisions as to which behaviors they choose to react with during certain situations. Based on these individual behavior choices, teachers and administrator try to reinforce positive behavior choices by recognizing students that decided to use positive behavior instead of negative. The data results discuss how things such as lunch with the principal, a certificate, student of the month award, character education awards, or another form of a token economy may be used to promote students who are choosing to use positive behavior. Other data also discusses how praising students for positive behavior tends to reinforce what behavior a student may choose to use. One teacher states on the survey that children choose to use positive behavior in some situations because “most students are willing to please.” This shows how positive behavior does play an important role in how individuals choose to act or react.

The survey data also indicates how using positive language with students also helps to reinforce positive behavior. It is suggested that if a teacher or administrator uses positive language to talk to students, then a student themselves maybe more likely to choose to use a positive behavior rather than a negative one. Another method that 29% of the surveyed teachers
discuss is using a type of check system that allows students to keep track of their behavior. A few methods that are discussed are using a stoplight system where students start the day on green, which equals good behavior. Then if students are spoken to they move a clip or flip a card to yellow and if their behavior continues then the student is put on red. Some teachers discuss a variation of the stoplight model where they add one more color which is orange; this it goes after yellow but before red, so then the students have 4 chances instead of 3 to correct a negative behavior. This seems to be an effective method for teachers because it reinforces positive behavior and allows individuals to be responsible for their own behavior. Sixty-four percent of teachers say that it is important to give students some kind of warning first when they choose to use the wrong behavior because this allows them to change a behavior to a more positive one, but if the student continues to use an incorrect or negative behavior that is when some kind of behavior method needs to be used to address it. Teachers surveyed also discuss how modeling behavior for students allows them to know what is expected of them and helps them learn how to use more positive behaviors.

Many of the surveyed teachers discuss how students respond to positive behavior reinforcement best when there is some kind of token economy or award established. At the same time though the teachers do express that there are some students who choose to please adults and don’t care about the reward and then there are other students who just behave and use positive behavior in an expected way to receive an award or prize. Some of the surveyed teachers expressed that students like to hear their name over the announcements when they are caught using some kind of positive behavior. It is expressed that at times those students who are using correct or positive behavior like to be the one who are made examples of. Just about all of the surveyed teachers express the same idea that students need to be encourage to do their best and
think before making decisions. This continues to represent the surveyed teacher’s idea that individuals are allowed to make their own decisions as to which behaviors they choose to react with during certain situations.

Ways in Which Positive Behavior is taught in Today’s Schools

The surveyed teachers express that there are many different methods that can be used to teach positive behavior to students. It is stated that some of these strategies are just classroom based and that other strategies are school-wide and that they filter into the classroom. A few of the teachers discuss how their school has character education assemblies that are held each month, at this assembly students are giving a word that they are supposed to represent and use positive behavior to do it. Examples of some of these words are things such as respect, friendship, responsibility, and others. Students are expected to display the characteristics of what these words mean and do it in a positive way, if a student is seen possessing one of these characteristics they may receive an award or prize.

Forty-seven percent of teachers surveyed also express that another way students learn positive behavior and what is expected of them in school is by a receiving a student handbook that has been sent to their home. It is expressed that student handbooks outline school expectations for students. Also some teachers stated that in their classroom they have behavior contracts that the teacher puts together or the classroom puts together, then students are expected to sign it and follow the rules that it states. Other teachers discuss how at the beginning of each school year as a class they come up with the classroom rules that their class will be expected to follow all year long, this way every student can have an input on the rule and once they have finished creating them everyone in the class with sign them.
Many of the surveyed teachers express how it is important from the start to let students know what your expectations are of them and their behavior, so they know how they should conduct themselves in the classroom. Also teachers expressed that using positive praise helps to recognize those students who are behaving themselves and also allows other to see what the teacher expects, so they can change or correct their behavior. Another suggestion that a just about all of the surveyed teachers give is that teachers need to continue to remind and reinforce positive behavior and behavior expectations. Some surveyed teachers express that students learn what behaviors to use and how to hold themselves accountable for their behaviors when teachers continue to tell students to think about what they are doing and to make the right choice. Many surveyed teachers also expressed that students need to know that there is some kind of consequence for negative behaviors this way it encourages them to make good choices and choose positive behaviors.

Teachers surveyed expressed that in many cases some kind of a token economy is established in their room or school-wide, which shows participants the right idea that students will use positive or correct behavior to attain some kind of prize. Furthermore it is expressed by a few surveyed teachers that this idea at times is only setting some students up to become dependent on a prize to perform in a correct way or use a positive behavior, and not really teaching them the correct way to use positive behavior in everyday life. One surveyed teacher states that “no one rewards you for doing what you are supposed to when you are an adult;” it is stated by this teacher that students need to know when they are doing something well, but that students should behave because they are expected to not because they could earn some kind of a prize.
Another way that the surveyed teachers express as a way to teach students positive behavior is by having individualized behavior plans for those students who continue to be a behavior issue in the classroom after the other behavior strategies have been taught to them. The teachers surveyed stated that individual behavior plans are set up between schools, parents and a student. It is designed to track an individual student’s behavior and to reward students when they do choose to use positive behavior so it reinforces them to continue to make good choices and choose positive or correct behaviors. Eventually it is hoped that the students will not have to have an individualized behavior plan and be able to follow the behaviors just like all of the other students in a classroom.

The data collected from the surveyed teachers shows that there is a variety of different ways to teach positive behavior and reinforce it in the classroom and school-wide. The importance is to continue to tell students what the expectations of them are and continuing to tell them what is a good behavior choice and what is a bad one. This way they learn to choose a positive one instead of reverting to a negative behavior. Also the greatest message that the surveyed teachers expressed is whether a teacher or school decides to reward a student’s positive behavior or not, the importance is that they know how and when to use positive behavior, so that later in life they can continue to use they behavior strategies that they have learned throughout their schooling.

**Lack of Positive Behavior Can Create a Loss of Instruction Time for Students**

The teachers that were surveyed all expressed that same idea that overall they believed positive behavior strategies and its supports are a good thing, but they said there were areas where areas where behavior continued to be an issue and because of it there was a loss of instruction time for students. The surveys show that there are still students though that do not
follow the examples of positive behavior and they continue to choose negative ones, so there is a loss of instruction time for them and their classmates. These teachers expressed that the loss of instruction time does not help these students, but they do not know what a solution would be to fixing it.

Data from the surveyed teachers shows that there are many ways in which negative behaviors impact instruction time for all of the students in a classroom. As expressed by the surveyed teachers before it is believed that an individual person is responsible for his or her own behavior. This represents that individuals are allowed to make their own decisions as to which behaviors they choose to react with during certain situations. An individual’s behavior choices, will eventually led to a consequence if they choose to use a negative one. The surveyed teachers discuss a variety of different ways in which negative behaviors lead to a loss of instruction time.

Some of the strategies that surveyed teachers discuss try to help show students there are consequences for when they choose to use negative behavior, but they try not to let it impact and have too much of a loss on learning. Some of the ways that teachers do this is by using the some kind of check system which was discussed in the section about talking about reinforcing positive behaviors and allowing students to keep track of their own behavior. The majority of the survey data expressed that giving a student a warning is the best way to remind and reinforce positive behavior, so they are able to correct a negative behavior and change it into a positive one. Yet the survey data states that if a student does not respond to the warning then a consequence needs to be enforced; while using the tracking system this could mean moving a clip or flipping a card which will result in a loss of free time. Survey data also refers to it as a time out. Due to a teacher having to stop a lesson and make a student flip a card or move a clip, this can mean loss of instruction time for not only that student, but the other in the class and this could also lead to
other behavior issues because students have lost focus on the lesson that was being taught. Also if a teacher continues to let negative behavior to go on and not address the issue, other negative behavior issues could arise because other students may think that it is ok to use negative behavior instead of choosing to use positive behavior.

Some of the survey data expresses that if the behavior continues or get to be too hard to handle, then the student may need to be sent to the office. By sending a student to the office is a loss of more instruction time for that student who chose to use a negative behavior. Eventually this could lead to another form of a longer time out or a suspension; due to this the student will have a substantial loss of instruction time which could make them fall behind in school work. This is not a way in which to help students gain knowledge or learn how to make choices and learn to use positive behaviors.

In the surveyed data teachers were very opinionated about how administration or principals can support or not support positive behavior when a student is sent to the office. Seventeen percent of the teachers surveyed say that there is a lack of positive behavior reinforcement by their principal even though the school supports it, the teacher believe that this only means there is positive behavior enforcement in the classroom and that is why so many behavior problems arise in their school. Another 70% believe that their administration does support positive behavior and that school-wide they have less behavior issues because everyone works together to promote positive behavior. About 11% of the teachers surveyed do not know or chose not to comment if positive behavior is supported school-wide. This data from the surveys could eventually be cross-referenced with other data from the NYS school report card to determine if positive behavior management plays role in the classroom and school wide, to
determine if there is possible effect on students attendance rate, number of referrals given out, and graduation rate. (refer to appendix C)

Positive behavior support plays a big role in the everyday lives of teacher and students in a school setting. The survey data suggests the way in which positive behavior is taught to students will determine that student’s individual ability to be able to choose to use the positive behavior strategies or not. The survey data indicates that positive behavior is one of the most important things that students learn in school.

**Final Analysis/Conclusion**

Behavior is something that continues to play a role and will always be a part of each and every person’s life on a daily basis. An individual’s behavior is something that is hard to define or even understand for that matter because there are so many variations of the same or different behaviors. Every individual knows what behavior is and has reacted using a positive or negative behavior. Most individuals understand that positive behaviors are more accepted than negative ones. Negative behaviors affect others in settings such as school, work, and many other public places, and need to be managed.

Behavior management is the most important thing in a classroom because everything a teacher and students do depend on its outcome. The reason for this is because there are a large number of individuals who interact with each other in a classroom; depending on how behavior is managed in that setting depends on how students may react to certain events, may they be positive or negative. Also it is important to teach behavior strategies from a young age that way students can practice them and know which settings to use them in and learn how to use them throughout life.
I have found out that with the many different ways to teach positive behavior, there is no one specific way that is better than the other. It depends on the setting and the accountability of the people who are the ones that are taking the role to teach what positive and negative behaviors are. The data from this paper show that with repeated reinforcement and modeling individuals can learn what types of behaviors can be used in specific situations. It is important for all individuals to understand that behavior is a part of life and that we all use it to react in a positive or negative way to situations.

The literature review and collected data from teacher surveys expressed that it is important to model behavior expected behavior and how it should appropriately used in certain situations. Additionally it expresses that it is important for individuals to be responsible for their own behaviors; also that teachers and adults need to correct negative behaviors, so individuals can learn and in the future and use more positive behaviors.

With further research, other areas of behavior could be looked at to determine what the best practices are when it comes to teaching students about behavior. Also schools could be looked at more demographically to see what the best practices to teach would be depending on the types of cultures that live within that district. It is important no matter what methods are used for positive behavior methods to be reinforced and that individuals understand how they are responsible for their own behaviors.
References


Journal of Instructional Psychology, 37(1), 49-56.


Appendices
Appendix A

1. What type of classroom do you instruct/teach?

______ Special Education
______ General Education
______ Inclusion
______ Self-Contained
______ Other

2. How many years have you taught?

______ 1
______ 2-3
______ 4-6
______ 7-10
______ 11-13
______ 14 or more

3. Please explain or discuss your school's behavior policy for each of the following...

a. School-Wide Behavior Policy
b. Classroom Behavior Policy
c. Individual Behavior Policy

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
4. What type of behavior support do you have in your school?

   _____ School- Wide Positive Behavior
   _____ Classroom Positive Behavior
   _____ Both
   _____ Neither

5. Do you feel positive behavior works as a behavior management system in your classroom? Why or why not.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. How does your school promote positive behavior? (Please explain)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. Do you use a token economy in your school or classroom? (earning prizes for positive/good behavior)  Please choose all that apply.

   _____ Individual
   _____ School-Wide
   _____ Classroom
8. What are some ways you or your school uses positive behavior?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. How do you or your school teach positive behavior?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

10. Has referrals been decreased since positive behavior has been implemented?

   Yes or No

   Please Explain

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

**Survey Question #2 Results:** How many years have you taught?

![Bar chart showing years of teaching](image)

**Survey Question #1 Results:** What type of classroom do you instruct/teach?

![Bar chart showing types of classrooms](image)
## Appendix C

**The New York State District Report Cards for 2009-2010 School Year**
*Accessed from NY START (New York State Testing and Accountability Reporting Tool)  
[https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb/](https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Annual Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Student Suspension Rate</th>
<th>District Graduation Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dexter Elementary School</strong></td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Brown Central School District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Annual Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Student Suspension Rate</th>
<th>District Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red Jacket Elementary School</strong></td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester-Shortsville Central School District</td>
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