**PS340: Exceptional Needs Children**

**Unit 1 Discussion Board Lecture**

Welcome students! As we begin our study of the fundamental principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), and how the strategies derived from these principles can be used in the classroom, it is important that we understand all of the components that must be considered when developing a universal design for classroom management. Unit 1 will focus on the basics of behavioral classroom management. You will begin to explore some of the developmental theories of behavior, and their similarities and differences, and discover how theory and culture influence behavior strategies for the classroom, and how we can create “culturally responsive” learning environments.

The goal of classroom behavior management is to develop safe and positive learning environments. Reflecting on the principles of developmental theories, culturally responsive classroom management, and systems-based and principle-centered approaches, three basic goals of classroom management emerge, i.e., to create a safe and positive learning environment in which all students are treated respectfully and equitably; to provide opportunities for students to learn rules and the consequences of their choices; and to teach students to manage their own behaviors while providing opportunities to learn social skills.

Teachers need to consider many aspects of behavior and classroom management when they are developing and implementing classroom management plans. In addition to rules and consequences, teachers need to understand developmental theories, the basics of behavior management, and how diversity in culture and language influences behavior. In addition, teachers must examine their own perceptions and assumptions regarding culturally diverse students that might affect the development of effective behavior management programs.

The management of content, conduct, and covenant is also important when designing classroom management programs. One of the most important aspects of content management is a rigorous and relevant curriculum. Management of conduct encompasses the handling of day-to-day student behaviour, as well as discipline problems. And, management of covenant involves the social dynamics and interpersonal relationships in the classroom. A teacher must consider the needs of students with disabilities, ethnically and linguistically diverse students, struggling learners, and students of all ability levels in order to develop a behavior and classroom management plan that can meet the academic, behavior, emotional, and social needs of each student.

Behavior and classroom management is a complex construction and goes beyond the “five rules and five consequences” approach. Behavior is a social construct based on societal norms, cultural expectations, and political responses to these expectations. Many behavior management strategies are based on the premise that behaviors are learned and can be taught. Operant Conditioning theorizes that behavior is maintained or diminished by its consequences. Behaviors that are followed by reinforcing consequences are likely to be expressed again in the future. Behaviors that are followed by punishing consequences are not as likely to be repeated in the future.

Some assumptions of behavior management to keep in mind throughout this course are:

* All behavior is reinforced in some manner.
* Intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcements are correlated to students’ levels of self-efficacy.
* Treating students *equitably* is not the same as treating them *equally*. In treating students equitably, the teacher provides what is necessary for each student to succeed in school.
* Caring about students is one of the prevalent characteristics of highly effective teachers. These teachers are described as being warm, friendly, and caring.
* Caring communities enhance the quality of teacher–student relationships, increase student learning outcomes, and improve classroom behavior.

Two basic strategies of behavior and classroom management are the systems-based approach and the principle-centered approach. In the systems-based approach, teachers and schools have a set of prescribed rules and consequences that are administered to all students equally without regard to students’ situations or cultural backgrounds. In the principle-centered approach, a set of principles and values are established for behavior strategies that are based on the situation and the individual student.

Today’s teachers need to be behavior managers. They must establish classroom rules and a hierarchy of consequences and rewards, consider the academic and behavior needs of all students, and consider the differential needs of students of both genders, students of diverse cultures and languages, and students of all ability levels. Teachers must strive to create environments in which students feel safe to express their opinions and where they are not afraid to try and fail.

Bullying and cyberbullying has become a growing concern in today’s schools and can create a climate of fear and intimidation. Schools and teachers must develop strategies to prevent bullying and to address bullying when it does occur.

Above all, the most important goal of behavior and classroom management is to provide students with safe and positive environments in which learning can take place.

Thank you for viewing your Unit 1 Lecture!