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Positive Reinforcement Positively Helps Students in the Classroom

Lindsey Rumfola
lrumf1@brockport.edu

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Positive Reinforcement *Positively* Helps Students in the Classroom

By: Lindsey Marie Rumfola

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education of The College of Brockport,
State University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of English in Education

August, 21, 2017

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT POSITIVELY HELPS STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM:

by Lindsey Marie Rumfola

APPROVED BY: *

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| Chair, Thesis Committee | Date |

I would like to dedicate this work to my great-grandmother,
Pearl Simeone.

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Abstract

Current teachers are struggling between choosing mature teaching strategies and choosing more contemporary strategies to utilize in their classrooms. Although the choice to the younger generation may be simple, it is actually the application that is proven to be difficult. Teachers new and old are experiencing adversity when applying current teaching techniques such as positive reinforcement in their classrooms. Teachers need to be effectively trained to teach with these unfamiliar strategies, and their staff needs to be able to address their concerns as well. Although it takes time to become fluent in any teaching strategy it is vital that teachers start with building a positive relationship between their students, and their teaching peers as well. It is only when a student trusts their positive role model that they are able to benefit from positive reinforcement in their classroom. Through research it is proven that students will benefit from positive reinforcement in the classroom if used effectively by disciplined staff.

Chapter One: Overview

Introduction:

Academic engagement is a strong predictor of academic performance. The more students are engaged in the instruction, the more students will further their success. It is a well-known fact that academic engagement is linked to better study skills, academic productivity, and essential behavior for a functioning classroom (Otero, 91). One way to ensure the best learning environment outcome is to encourage our learners through positive reinforcement. Students learn to self-monitor themselves, manage their time, set goals, and self-evaluate through the reinforcement of the teacher(s) (Otero, 91). Students can be taught to maintain appropriate behaviors and techniques that can be used to future their overall education goal (Otero, 92). Just like a puppy learning new tricks, students need to learn how to learn. It sounds silly, but motivation is a key factor in learning for any species. Eventually, the idea is that the teacher does not need to constantly hand out treats to motivate, students will eventually see the reward as not being the driving force of their efforts- and see their grades as the most important force of their efforts. However, a student can have the best drive when it comes to academically succeeding, but the overall demeanor of the classroom can predict the outcome of the students.

Teachers who fail to integrate effective management in their repertoire will spend more time addressing the behavior issues than teaching the content

(Downing, 114). A teacher's ability to shape appropriate classroom behavior while extinguishing misbehavior is critical to the learning environment for both students and teachers in the education system. Positive reinforcement strategies are more effective than punishing strategies for increasing and shaping positive behaviors in any learning environment (Downing, 114). Therefore, through positively reinforcing students' acceptable behaviors, whether academic or social, the students and the teacher benefit academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally (Marian, 182).

Significance of the Problem:

When a teacher uses class time to try to extinguish a behavioral outburst or misbehavior, this action takes time away from the learning time students have as well as the time the teacher is teaching the content. Students who are positively enforced to keep up the good behavior are the students who will most likely learn to self monitor themselves in their learning environments (Otero, 100). Students, peers, and teachers commented during a study that the students' behavior was more acceptable when the 'wanted' behavior was encouraged (Otero, 100). Students will also learn through social cues of their teachers what is acceptable behavior and what is not. For example, when Student A is being praised for a wanted behavior, Student B knows that this behavior is acceptable and will also be praised for the 'wanted' behavior. Therefore, it is evident that the teaching and learning environments are made more effective when the teacher behavior that affects achievement is identified (Alacapinar, 216).

The more misbehavior there is in a classroom, the greater the need for effective reinforcement (Downing, 120). The goal of most students is to get the attention of their peers or their teacher. Attention seekers will act in either a positive way or in a less desirable way in the classroom (Downing, 115). It is often best for teachers to address inappropriate behavior right away; however, this cuts back on instruction time and results in ill feelings between the student and the teacher. Punishing procedures will never contribute to positive feelings in any situation (Downing, 115). In fact, negative reinforcement has been shown to create more of a problematic behavior (Bernier, 45). When our gut tells us to shut down a negative behavior right away, we are rewarding the negative behavior. The students in our classroom become the star of the show by gaining attention of their peers and the teacher, but also gaining an escape (Bernier, 46). Students don't always act out for attention. Students can act out to escape the question they are on, an upcoming turn in reading, or are simply in need of a break. Negatively reinforcing the unwanted behavior generally demonstrates a pattern of escape for those looking for a break from the task at hand (Bernier, 46). Destructive behavior that is negatively reinforced can lead to an increase in socially inappropriate behaviors of others who are also wishing to escape a situation (Bernier, 46). The significance of the problem is that it is not always seen as the problem. As teachers we try to extinguish negative behaviors before they become a bigger problem, but in fact we are actually continuing this behavior by the way we reinforce behavior. A functional analysis of

one classroom determined that destructive behavior was maintained by negative reinforcement, and positive behavior was continued by positive reinforcement (Bernier, 48). Therefore, it is crucial to our students and our teaching behavior to see the positive effects positive reinforcement has on our students' academic and social success in and out of our classroom walls.

Purpose:

The purpose in any classroom is to have every student receive maximum educational opportunities; this is emphasized in a classroom which practices positive reinforcement techniques (Marian, 182). "A teacher's behavior can intentionally or unintentionally affect students' cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and intuitional behavior" (Alacapinar, 216). Teachers who are willing to purposefully use their behavior to change their students have a higher success rate with their students as well as having a closer bond. It's important for both teachers and school administrators to reinforce the consequences that occur after teachers reinforce positive reinforcement in their classrooms (Downing, 115). "When students learn that pleasant consequences occur after particular actions, they are more likely to repeat those actions" (Downing, 115). The purpose of positive reinforcement always, and has been to have students actively contributing and learning in the classroom. When students are interested they show up, and any educator knows that is half the battle.

Allowing students to interact with their peers constructively and encouraging genuine communication is one way to hold student attention levels and to keep motivation levels up (Otero, 92). Teachers who use only traditional monologue-style lectures have more absences in their classrooms than classrooms where peer communication is encouraged (Otero, 92). Students use these teaching moments to learn not only classroom content but socially as well. Students are able to pick up on gestures from their teachers and their peers during social activities. When a student feels a genuine connection with a teacher or other student they provide quality feedback to those who will listen (Fromme, 893). The purpose of a classroom is to encourage the students to learn, feel safe, but most importantly show up (Gupta, 371). In a study where teacher appreciation was noted, when teachers showed appreciation to students who were studying the students said they “wanted to study for their teacher” (Bernier, 45). Positive reinforcement in the classroom, like appreciating a good studying student, is more effective than punishing in the terms of compliance (Bernier, 45). The praise given to one student becomes the goal for another student.

However, positive reinforcement does not stop at appreciation and praise. Positive reinforcement continues to real life applications and new interventions in the classroom. Teachers who use apps and unique activities which are applicable to the real world are more likely to maintain students’ attention (Malala, 563). Students are provided an entertainment factor to grab their initial interest through

educational games, but their interest is maintained through the experience of learning and the interactions with their peers (Malala, 563). Digital games are proven to positively enhance children's health, training, education, and community participation (Malala, 564). Students are positively reinforced through emotional rewards, a thrill, and motivation from themselves and other students (Malala, 564). Many parents may question why games are being used in the classroom, but one study links the games played in the classroom to the real world rewards that are given in an office. In a work setting, employees are given bonuses, pay increases, days off, workshops, or advancement in the job, the same can be said in the classroom. Students who do well are rewarded with time spent with friends, activities played and new information learned (Malala, 565). As always, the purpose of positive reinforcement is to have students actively enjoying being present and learning in the classroom.

Rationale:

Researchers, such as Bernier, have found that teachers need to be educated in how to implement positive reinforcement in their classrooms. Bernier compares students socially being driven by positive reinforcement and students in the absence of. Students who were reinforced socially in a positive manor were 68% more likely to do or follow what was being encouraged of them (Bernier, 46). The effects of this study alone allow educators, parents, and faculty members to view the importance

of this crucial classroom technique. There is no other profile used in a classroom that affects the children in such a positive way. Bernier noted that students pay attention 93% of the time during instruction when the teacher was using positive reinforcement techniques (Bernier, 46). When students are able to receive feedback from their peers and teachers they will continue to contribute to their learning environment in a positive manner (Fromme, 893). Classroom researchers such as Bennett, encourage teachers to not lost hope of positive change in the classroom; “the more misbehavior there is, the greater the need for effective [positive] reinforcement” (Bennett, 120).

When a child experiences positive reinforcement, there is often a greater willingness to exhibit positive behavior. Students who are encouraged to learn and allowed the chance to show off their learned skills through their preferred outlets are more willing to develop future thinking and organizing skills, and of course continue their learning (Malala, 576). Hands down people, not just students, perform better in life when they are asked to do something that they enjoy (Malala, 563).

If teachers can be taught to effectively use positive reinforcement in their classroom student absent rates may start to decrease. Children who develop a desire to escape negative learning situations often times find themselves purposely staying home from school, or finding unique ways to avoid being in the classroom. If

students continue to avoid school, they inherently remove themselves from social situations that every student should encounter. Students who fall into the avoidance cycle are at risk for social disconnect as well as falling behind academically. These are the children who desperately need a positive reinforced classroom. Teachers need to remind the children that it is not them with whom they have the problem, but they are dissatisfied with the child's behavior (Marian, 183). Bernier also encourages teachers to help one another learn from each others' experiences with positive reinforcement. Teachers and students need to talk about what is working in the classroom and what is not to increase their learning on the topic as well.

In a study conducted Bennett encourages teachers to use positively reinforcement by listing several suggestions for teachers who would like to better their classroom:

"Social reinforcers: high fives, praising verbally, smiling at the students, clapping/thumbs up, calling parents with positive feedback.

"Activity reinforcers: being a leader, reading out loud, writing answers on the board.

"Tangible reinforcers: snacks, stickers, pencils, homework passes or extra homework points"

(Bennett, 120).

Definition of Terms & Key Terms:

Student Response Systems: is a wireless response system that allows faculty to request information and for students to respond by using a “clicker” or hand-held device to respond, this sends the information to the receiver.

Interactive Teaching & Learning: student engagement techniques that provide opportunities for students to engage with content in the classroom.

Student Engagement: in education this refers to the degree at which attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion are present when students are being taught. (this also extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and take part in the class)

Formative Assessment: formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process in order to modify their teaching and learning activities to benefit the students’ improvement.

Traditional Monologue: *style lectures lack student interactions in the classroom (Gupta, 371).*

Negative: *“disagreeable” (Gupta, 371).*

Punishment: *suffering, pain, or loss (Gupta, 371).*

Reinforcement: *“act of strengthening” clearly a behavior definition (McConnell, 248). Any stimulus that follows a behavior and causes that behavior to occur more often (Downing, Keating, Bennett, 115).*

Reinforcement (Skinner Definition): *reinforcement as a behavioral consequence that increases the probability that a response will be repeated in the future* (McConnell, 248).

Situational Reinforcement: *best implemented via spontaneous interactions. The teacher reinforces students who are performing their skills correctly.*

Attention: notice taken of someone or something; something of importance or seen as interesting.

On-task Behavior: looking and dealing with the current activity; behavior and attitudes are focused on the task at hand.

Self- Management: management of or by oneself; taking responsibility for one's own behavior

Motivation: the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way

Compliance: complying with a wish or command; giving cooperation.

Instruction: direction or order

At- risk: vulnerable

Behavior: the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others; the way in which an animal or personal acts in response to a particular situation.

Interventions: action taken to improve a situation

Behavioral Difficulties: often associated with behavioral disorders; they are disruptive behaviors

School attendance: this is to account for the student being present at the school physically.

School refusal: refusal to attend school due to emotional distress that the school environment triggers.

Stressful events: experiences that produce severe strain physically, emotionally, or both.

Truancy: the action of staying away from school without good reason, resulting in absenteeism.

Child Motivated Absences: *are at the violation of the child, partly due to autonomy*

Non-child-motivated Absences: *manifest through influences external to the child (family, siblings, etc)*

Educational Games: games that are designed to help people to learn about a certain subject, expand concepts, reinforce development, understand a historical event or culture, or assist them in learning a skill as they play.

Knowledge Acquisition: the process of extracting, structuring and organizing learned knowledge.

Academic Performance: is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student and/or teacher has achieved their educational goals (can extend to the teaching institution as well).

Interactive Computer Games: type of educational game (see above)

Student Development: theory refers to the body of educational psychology that theorizes how students gain knowledge in post-secondary educational environments.

Edutainment: *Combination of education and entertainment it's a hybrid; relies heavily on visual material game like formats.*

Classroom Noncompliance: *the failure to comply with a teacher's request or instruction.*

Attenuation: *punishment*

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Teachers are not only teachers of the content, but they are responsible for the students' comfort in their classroom. When students feel comfortable in their learning environment they are more willing to learn and therefore they are more

likely to succeed in that classroom. The goal of every teacher is to keep his/her students learning in the classroom. When teachers have to take time out of their practice to discipline, or to excuse students from the classroom the classroom loses its forward momentum and the students lose valuable learning time. Positive reinforcement is a tool that when utilized correctly in the classroom can result in desirable characteristics from all the students in the classroom.

Understanding the Students: Relationship with Students

In order for positive reinforcement to become an effective technique in the classroom, teachers *must* know their students' needs. Dr. Jennifer Freeman who studies drop-out rates in schools urges teachers to know their students and build a positive relationship with each student (Freeman, 308). Now, it is impossible for every student to like their teacher fully, but Freeman says that if teachers can create one positive connection the teacher has already reduced the likelihood that students will drop out of school (Freeman, 309). A positive relationship with the teacher is directly correlated to time students spend in the classroom; the more time the students spend in the class the more time they have available to learn (Freeman, 310).

Relationships with students in the special education classroom are critical and can be a model for all classrooms (Kennedy, 211). Kennedy found the effect of positive reinforcement with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders

(EBD) stated that teachers *need* to take into consider the child's home life (Kennedy, 212). Students with EBD are often anti-social, and lack cooperative skills –but disciplining by removing students only hinders their ability to learn (Kennedy, 212). A child's performance in the classroom can be affected by the behavior at home (Kennedy, 212). When a teacher is able to create a safe and positive learning environment, students *want* to show up to class and *stay* in class (Ferster, 436). CB Ferster who studies learning deficits of children with special needs agrees with the results found in Kennedy's research. Ferster enforces the previous idea and affirms that a child's performance is changed by the environment of the classroom (Ferster, 437).

Creating a positive and effective classroom starts with staff. Teachers need to believe that students benefit from positive reinforcement in order for the staff to support as a whole (Pinkleman, 172). Teachers can be taught strategies through workshops, and teachers can be shown success stories through training and professional development (Pinkleman, 173). These trainings and development will help teachers understand the role their relationship has in their students' academic career. It is critical that teachers understand the importance of the strategy, and support one another in their efforts to continue utilizing the strategies. Effectively carrying out strategies shown during professional development can make students feel more comfortable with their relationship with the teacher, and continue their willingness to learn. Teachers need to be able to talk to one another about their

successful relationships with their students, and help one another when there are difficult relationships.

Effects of Punishment

Donald Baer who studies the effects of punishing children defines punishment in two ways “ a) a presentation of a negative reinforce for a response or b) the removal of a positive reinforce for a response” (Baer, 67). Baer admits that withdrawal of positive reinforcement as a punishing technique is an effective technique that can be used in a classroom (Baer, 67). Nonetheless, teachers need to continuously assess their punishing behavior. The goal is to keep the students in the classroom and to keep them comfortable while learning. Teachers who punish out of anger are less likely to yield any results, and the students are more likely to halt their relationship with the teacher (Dad, 127). Punishment can produce anger, resentment, and aggression which will further the destruction of the relationship with the student (Dad, 128). Punishment can be an effective tool to diminish a negative behavior almost immediately, but punishment has been shown to yield fewer results when compared to reinforcing positive behaviors with praise (Baer, 73 and Ferster, 443).

Students who are punished are more likely to isolate themselves from the teacher and other students, which means they are more likely to isolate themselves from help (Abreu, 131). For example, students who are inappropriately and

physically punished at home are more likely to seclude from others and develop depression (Abreu, 134). When a child is scared away by such an intense physical reaction, they are also scared away from providing a positive behavior when positive reinforcements are used (Abreu, 135). Physical punishment should never be the answer but Abreu uses it as an example to show the reaction students have to punishment in general. When a student is punished with any tactic that makes them *scared*, they are not able to reply appropriately when a positive behavior is praised (Abreu, 137). Punishment and scare tactics have an expiration date; eventually the lack of positive reinforcement increases the negative behavior (Abreu, 134).

Positive Reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement: The Facts

Skinner, who was a prestigious behavioral psychologist, is mentioned in several studies that revolve around positive reinforcement. When positive reinforcement is used to reward a desirable behavior, the unwanted behavior will eventually extinguish (Dad, 127). Again, knowing your student is encouraged because the rewarding of behavior has different effects for every student (Dad, 128). Based on Skinner's rat studies "Positive reinforcements increase response probability by adding to the situation" rather than taking away (Dad, 128). Skinner is known for promoting positive behaviors in his studies. Skinner's studies also conclude that the subject [students] are eager to do things that make them feel

better (Abreu, 132). Students want to feel confident about their work and their actions in the classroom. Positive reinforcement establishes one's tendency to behave in a certain way while punishment is concerned with ending it (Abreu, 134). As previously mentioned a child's performance is changed by their environment. When a child's environment becomes a positive atmosphere that takes notice to their positive behavior the child is more likely to be physically and mentally present in the classroom. Results from each and every study share the same conclusion: increasing positive reinforcement decreases the amount of time students spent outside the classroom (Kennedy, 210). Winter, who studied praise of students through social networks, concluded the following benefits to positive reinforcement and praise: "heightened enthusiasm, celebrating accomplishments as a class, the class has a greater sense of community, increased students' attendance, and motivated students" (Winter, 65). The benefits to positive reinforcement are necessary when beginning to understand the teacher's role in a student's academic learning.

Positive Reinforcement: The Teacher's role

Giving a positive reaction to positive behaviors decreases the negative interactions and therefore positive interactions increase (Kennedy, 212). Praise is important to student behavior. Praise to students should be "immediate, frequent, enthusiastic, descriptive, varied, and must involve eye contact" (Kennedy, 213).

Teachers when giving praise must “clearly state the exact positive behavior that the student is exhibiting and comment on its specific effect on academic and/or social achievement” (Kennedy, 213).

Teachers often ignore positive behaviors and draw attention to negative behavior. Teachers need to remind themselves that that kind of behavior does not create useful classroom results (Kennedy, 212). When studying students with EBD, the students who were given positive praise for their behavior increased their student compliance (Kennedy, 212). Positive reinforcement for students determines a strong influence on appropriate classroom behaviors (Kennedy, 213). Again, it is important that teachers keep in mind their behavior affects their students’ learning. The idea of “Matching Law” is described by Kennedy as the belief that students will match the behavior of the teacher (Kennedy, 212).

Due to “Matching Law” teachers should open up means of communication between their students and themselves. As the adult in the situation it is the teacher’s responsibility to initiate a verbal line of communication (Abreu, 131).When students have positive interactions with teachers the students tend to want to treat their teacher with a positive reciprocal action (Kennedy: Skinner,213). When communication between teacher and student increase the students’ attendance increases as compared to as before the relationship went verbal (Kennedy, 213).

Positive Reinforcement: The Student

Students who are acknowledged for their effort are more willing to put in effort for future assignments (Winter, 63). Discussion forums for students can be used effectively to praise each other which ultimately gives students an avenue for positive reinforcing each other (Winter, 63). When students were given a way to communicate with one another they used it as a platform for publically voicing encouragement, support, and appreciation for one another's efforts (Winter, 64). Winter's social network class, and Kennedy's "matching law" collectively display students praising each other's efforts. When students are able to voice their opinions in class, they are able to feel safer, and are more willing to show up and attend class (Winter, 65).

Peers displayed a willingness to give feedback in a Chinese writing class that was studied by Wei Wang. Wang observed that students went through a cyclical cycle: students would plan, act, observe, reflect and then plan again (Wang, 959). This cycle showed that students cared about the type of product they were putting out into the class, and the type of critique they were contributing (Wang, 959). Peer feedback in the Chinese classroom showed interest in one another's work and the peer evaluation they were supporting one another with. Wang observes that students were attaching value to the work, which produces an appreciation for one another's time and effort (Wang, 960). When a student is able to feel like they are

behaving appropriately in a classroom and that behavior is reciprocated by their peers that student is more likely to want to contribute academically to the class (Wang, 965).

Students who lack a positive self-concept are more likely to give themselves negative reinforcement, voice rude comments about themselves, and are less likely to believe positive comments (Felker, 1285). As mentioned in regards to physical punishment, the result is quite the same; the student lacks self love and confidence. When students were asked to rank statements that they would like to receive after a 'poor grade', students showed exactly what was predicted. Students in the study chose kind words that provided the most comfort (Felker, 1286). When students are left to their own devices, and have lacked a positive relationship with an adult, the student will show signs of depression and helplessness (Felker, 1285).

Positive Reinforcement: Quality vs Quantity

To avoid student isolation teachers are asked to allow meaningful relationships with their students. Students who are frequently punished, have low self-esteems, or are confused with the topic are more likely to act out in class for attention. The student knows that if they act out enough that the teacher will escort them out of the class, and the punishment therefore becomes the reward. By using positive reinforcement for favorable behavior the students' attention shifts to another type of behavior (Abreu, 132). A favorable learning environment should be

comfortable, motivate learning, and inspire social connections. Teachers are urged to provide meaningful interactions as the students' rewards. The quality of the interaction administered weighs heavier than the quantity of interactions (Abreu, 132).

Not Just Content

Teachers are not only teachers of the content, but they are responsible for their students' learning environment. A learning environment should be comfortable, motivate learning, and inspire social connections. The goal of every teacher is to keep his/her students learning in a safe environment. When teachers have to take time out of their practice for discipline, the students are at a social and academic disservice. Punishment is a technique that needs to become extinct through the choice of other teaching techniques, such as positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is a tool that when substituted for punishment can result in desirable characteristics both academically and socially between students in the classroom.

Chapter Three: Application of Positive Reinforcement

6-8th Grade Mini Lesson Unit: To Kill a Mockingbird

Objectives and Goals:

Students have been discussing the court case in the book To Kill a Mockingbird. Last class they were using media and understanding how each character would react to

the case and what the character would feel. The students then found evidence to support this. With this background information established we are going to move forward with a drama lesson. This lesson should take up to 2-3 classes depending on the class period/block. The students will be expected to read along and students will be taking roles as well. The students that have major roles will be asked to take costumes from the back of the class that corresponds with their vision of their character. The narrator, Scout Finch, will either be taken by the teacher or a student who wants extra credit. This lesson starts at chapter 17 to 19, however, if there is time for more reading and acting this lesson will continue based on class time.

1. Standards (NYS & CC) Standards:

SL9.1.e: Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.

SL9.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

2. Anticipatory Set:

The students will sign up for characters in the upcoming chapter, and the class will "help" out each "actor" by reviewing some characteristics of that character and certain character traits the "actor" should make sure they deliver during their role.

3. Grading during the lesson:

****I want this to be an encouraging exercise for students who maybe didn't do well in previous chapters****

4pts- added to a poor reading quiz grade for narrator (Scout) and class participation

2pts- added to a poor reading quiz grade for the "big" parts

Atticus Finch, Bob Ewell, Mayella Ewell, Tom Robinson,

1.5pts-added to a poor reading quiz grade for the part of the judge

Heck Tate

1pt- added to a poor reading quiz grade for smaller parts

Jem Finch, Dill, Calpurnia, Aunt Alexandra, Link Deas, Dolphus Raymond,

Class participation- for all students who actively participate as the characters, including the people of the court room

Extra credit points will be given to award winning actors and/or actresses that go above and beyond

4. Direct Instruction/Guided Instruction (Included Steps):

This is all guided/self instruction. I really don't want the teacher to have a huge part of the lesson as a teacher other than the closing discussion. Teacher may read if students do not want the extra credit opportunity.

Step 1: characters are chosen and actors are born!

Step 2: outfits are chosen, and acting recommendations are given to the “actors”

Step 3: chapter is read out loud and parts are acted

Step 4: pauses are put in the chapter to keep non-actors on track; maybe just a sentence or two to tie them in or wake them up! “Hey could the people in the court room go on recess?” Students could stretch, and just talk about the trial so far.

****Also keep in mind this lesson will last more than one lesson****

Step 5: continue to read and act until the chapters are complete

Step 6 closure: discussion of roles: Who performed well? Why? What do we think of ---- character’s reaction? Why do you think they reacted that way? How does truth play into this? How does class and race play into the court case?

Step 7: Vent session and awards

5. How do you know they learned anything?

During step 7 of the lesson, students will take a half sheet of paper and put ONE VENT of the court system and this court case. Then the students will award one actor as the best actress or actor (this will help me make any extra credit decisions).

This half slip is the ticket out the door and will allow me to see first, how this exercise shows them the struggle in the court case and second, how students are awarding each other. The ticket out the door allows me to see that the students were watching, and paying close attention to the visual character show portrayed in the classroom.

6. Required Materials:

-To Kill a Mockingbird –text book

-Desks set up like a court room in a “U” shape with two desks acting as a judge stand, and witness stand.

-(costume apparel):

Gavel

Dresses

Bows

Dress shirt

Stuffing for shoulders

Glasses

Hats

-half sheet of paper

-pens/pencils

-review papers from last class

9th-10th Grade Mini Lesson Romeo & Juliet:

1.Objectives and Goals: Students will participate in a class mini-play to showcase talents, and to provide another source of learning. Students will read out loud, act, dress up, and answer questions in their work packet, and participate as a class.

2. Standards: S&L.9-10.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

3. Anticipatory set:

Students will be instructed to sign up reading parts on the smart board, understanding that parts with bigger positions are allowed a larger class participation credit. They will also be asked to get out their packets and reading material on their desk.

4. Grading:

Each character receives a different point for the part they act out. This lesson focuses on Act II. Characters with larger reading parts will get +3, smaller parts will get +2, and characters who take part in the audience will get +1 for class participation.

+3 participation points: Romeo, Juliet,

+2 participation points: Nurse, Mercutio,

+1 participation points: Friar, Rosaline,

5. Instruction:

1. Students will review the previous act, Act I, in Romeo and Juliet and answer the simple plot questions.
2. Students will then get into their costumes if necessary for their part and other students will be given aids to help them participate.
3. The “actors” will simply read their parts while acting out. The teacher should be pausing every other page at the least and reviewing the scene and directing the students if they need to add more enthusiasm.
4. Students will answer questions individually in their read-along packet. Then, the whole class will go over the questions. The teacher may randomly select students during this session of the lesson.
5. At the end the actors will stand in front of the room and the audience will “toss roses on the stage” –this is where students have the chance to compliment the

actors and make reference to the way actors used to perform in Shakespearean time. Teacher may use this time to ask questions such as:

“Does anyone remember what the theatre was called that Shakespearean plays were performed in?”

“How does our audience differ from the audience in Shakespearean times?”

6. How do you know they learned?

Students will turn in their completed packet for credit at the end of the unit; however, constant checks for understanding are taking place. Students are reviewing the packet before the scene is acted out in class and after.

7.Required Material:

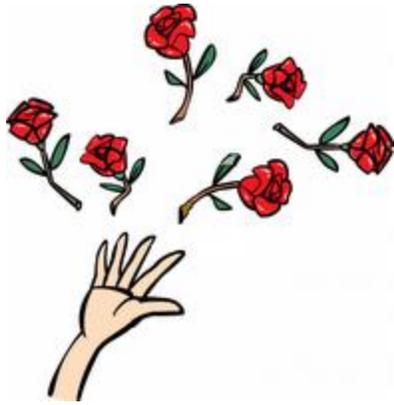
- Smart board
- Smart board page with actors' names
- Romeo and Juliet the play (in text form)
- Review book and questions in worksheet form

| | |
|--|--|
| Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____ | |
| Directions: Answer all of the following questions with complete sentences, and provide the page number when the question asks for it. | |
| 1. What does the Act 2 Prologue say happened to Romeo's love for Rosaline? | A: no longer in love, fell out of love |
| 2. Romeo's questions are playful and poetic, while Juliet's questions are _____? | a) Laughable b) Literal c) A lot of them |

| | |
|---|--|
| | A: b |
| 3. Why can the new lovers only see each other at night? | A: because their families do not like each other-or- their families would not permit it |
| 4. Why is this comparison to stars another example of foreshadowing? | A: can only be seen at night, stars fade, stars disappear |
| 5. Summarize the lines 142- 148 <i>Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed. If that thy bent of love be honorable, Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow, By one that I'll procure to come to thee, Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite, And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay, And follow thee my lord throughout the world.</i> | Three more words for real, and then I am going to bed. If what you say is true, and you love me... send me word tomorrow where we are getting married. Then she tells him that her fortunes and possessions will be his if they are married. Juliet also tells Romeo that she would follow him to the ends of the world. |
| 6. What does Friar Laurence agree to do for Romeo? | A: marry Romeo and Juliet |
| 7. "yet I should kill thee with much cherishing" is an example of what literary device? | A: foreshadowing |

-“Toss Roses white board”

(image from Google displayed on the smart board)



-costumes that are needed for all of the parts

11th-12th Grade Mini Lesson The Great Gatsby:

1.Objectives and Goals:

Students will be able to compare and contrast the fiction text The Great Gatsby to the non-fiction article provided about the roaring 20s. Students will use this information to find credibility in the fiction text.

2. Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

S&L.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

4. **Anticipatory Set:** A party invitation to a roaring 20s with mistakes on it will be given to the students from the teacher. The students as a class will participate via smart board to correct the mistakes on the invitation.

5. **Instruction:**

Step 1: Students will re-visit an informational text that they have been given before.

The students have already finished the Great Gatsby text and will use the informational text to compare and contrast the actual events of the 20s.

Step 2: The students will not only examine the time period but the characters as well.

Step 3: Students must provide references to their discoveries on the worksheet provided.

Step 4: Students are allowed to work in partners to discuss the factual events of the text, and fix any “mistakes” they can before turning in their worksheet. Students may use the internet during this lesson.

Step 5: Students will individually pick a character themselves and write a short diary entry from the character’s perspective that is time specific, 4 paragraphs in length, includes text from both the non-fiction piece and the fiction piece.

Step 6: If students finish early they may begin studying for the Final Great Gatsby Test.

6. Grading:

Students will be graded for their class work and will get a participation grade on their comparison task worksheet.

Students, however, will be graded on a 3-2-1 rubric on the written piece they are to turn in by the end of the class term. (Rubric is below in materials)

7. How do you know they learned?

Students' worksheet will be checked for their participation grade.

Students will be graded on their diary piece and that will determine whether another lesson needs to be addressed, or another area of information needs to be looked over before the students' final test.

8. Materials needed:

- Non-fiction piece: <https://www.commonlit.org/texts/the-roaring-twenties>
- Computer/internet/smart phone
- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Diary worksheet instruction (next page)

Name: _____ Period: _____

Date: _____

Circle the character name you have chosen to write in the 1st person as.

Daisy Buchanan – Nick Carraway – Tom Buchanan – Myrtle Wilson – George Wilson – Jay Gatsby

Directions: Write a 4 paragraph diary entry that includes:

-- quotes from the non-fiction and fiction text

--write in the 1st person (use "I", "me")

--use terms/sayings/slang that were current to the 1920s.

--YOU MUST mention the time period.

--use correct grammar and spelling unless using at 1920s slang term.

Dear Diary,

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

- Invite to the party



The mistakes on the invitation:

- date is wrong
- “awesome” should be a different slang term, students should replace with another word
- Jack Daniels wasn’t a drink during that time; most people drank rum and gin.
- DJs weren’t a thing back then; students will have to research what type of music will be there.

- The rubric that the diary will be graded with:

| Mention the date | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--|---|--|---|
| Quoted both Fiction & Non fiction | An accurate quote is used from both sources with the right page numbers associated with the quotes. Quotes are used accurately and make sense in the diary. | An accurate quote is used of one or both sources, the page number may be inaccurate, and the quote may seem placed randomly in the text. | No quotes are used accurately, and there is no page number associated with the text. |
| Slang used that is current to the time | Slang is used accurately and makes sense used in the diary page. | The slang term is correct, however, it is not used correctly in the diary page. | The slang term is incorrect and is not used correctly |
| 1st person narrative is used | The first person narrative is used correctly and there are no errors throughout the text to prove another narrative. | The first person narrative is used correct most of the time with a couple of mistakes. | There are frequent mistakes made that show the use of first person narrative is not understood. |

- Compare and Contrast worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____
Period: _____

Directions: You are to compare and contrast the two works, *The Great Gatsby* and the Roaring 20s non-fiction piece, however you like. There are some tasks that need to be completed no matter how you compare and contrast them:

1. There must be **4 DETAILED similarities**
2. There must be **3 DETAILED differences**
3. You must **GO INTO DETAIL** about how what you are reading in the non-fiction piece impacted **3 characters** of the fictional characters and include quotes.

Some hints: Venn diagram to compare and contrast, a T-chart to show the comparisons. You may use multiple ways of showing your answers.

Mini-Lesson Positive Reinforcement

Grade 6-8 Mini-Lesson

a) Students are not only being positively reinforced by the teacher, but are being reinforced by their peers as well. Several studies show that if you use the class as whole to contribute, the children whom have additional needs are less likely to act out during these times. This is reinforced by the “show” the students will be putting on. Students will be less likely to interrupt their peers than they are a teacher who is presenting a lesson (Maag, 176).

b) Students will also be positively reinforced for their good behavior by reminding them of their class participation grade. All students will be monitored, and the class as a whole will be reminded that their good behavior earns them class participation points. The teacher should remain focused on addressing the class as a whole and emphasizing positive behavior, instead of focusing on one student in general.

c) The teacher will also be focusing on behavior as well as understanding. Students will be monitored every couple of pages, and the teacher will perform a check for understanding. By making students aware of these pauses, it holds the children accountable for their behavior during the reading/acting (Maag, 175).

d) When students are answering questions in their packet the teacher should be monitoring the student behavior. If a child is off topic or distracted the teacher should interrupt the distraction and state that they would like a different behavior instead. Example: “Jake and Ashley, I like when you both talk about the text rather than your weekend plans. If you have any questions please ask me, however, I would

appreciate it if you stay on task". By addressing the off topic chatter, but allowing them to still educationally talk to one another minimizes the backlash from the student, and places the emphasis on what the students' correct behavior should look like (Maag, 183).

e) Students are praised for their hard work as readers; in the future this type of "reward" can encourage the student who does not typically read out loud. However, this reward needs to become a pattern. In studies they find that if you take away the reward especially for in front of class participations that students will resent the lack of praise and will extinct their positive behavior. By addressing the students as a whole and praising them it encourages laughter in the classroom, and a positive praising from one peer to another.

f) "Vent session" for this particular lesson will allow students to feel as a whole. This kind of activity is positive reinforcing the class acting as a whole unit and backing each other up. When one student feels like his/her emotions and feelings are being heard by another student it unifies them. Studies urge teachers to not be the only source of positive reinforcement, but to allow students to communicate with one another and unknowingly connect with their peers to encourage further learning. Students for this lesson will have the chance to vent about an innocent African American man going to jail in the murder trial from their text.

Grade 9-10 Mini-Lesson

The mini lesson created for the 9-10th grade is similar to the 6-8th grade lesson but it adds on more responsibility and takes more effort from the teacher to praise and control behavioral disorder.

a) Much like the 6-8th lesson the peers during this lesson are positively reinforcing each other. During the acting of their peers it is highly unlikely for students to be acting out in an abrupt way. Students are paying attention to their peers while they are performing. The teacher also needs to address the class' needs. During the play many of the boys will be into the typical spear and sword fighting, while the more feminine student may enjoy the balcony scene. Whether the student falls into one category, both, or neither it is the teacher's job to hold the students accountable for their learning.

b) The teacher will be walking around the classroom monitoring, and pausing every so often. To a student who seems to be disengaged a simple comment like "Woah, Evan, did you see what Ricky did in that last act"? This type of question puts the emphasis on Ricky's "sweet acting skills" and takes the negative attention off Evan, however, Evan will see it as a positive reminder to pay attention.

Additional question and conversations can occur with the disengaged student. If Evan is distracted, addressing Evan and telling him what behavior you would rather see without addressing the negative behavior will help Evan feel less under attack. The teacher may also opt to giving Evan a job to keep him and the teacher on task

like; “hey Evan, can you raise your hand when your peers are done acting out this next scene so I know when to pause the class?” This tactic positively reinforces the student by giving him/her a job that *helps* you. Researchers say when students feel trusted they act more responsibly and on task (Maag, 175).

c) All students are asked to review the packet together, and to complete any questions they may have. Students who are ahead may look over their packet, while students who need a moment have the time to do so. This is a time to praise students who have already finished their work, and to also praise students who have not. “Wow, nice job Tanner, looks like you have everything done why don’t you take this time to look over and review”. –OR- “Hi Tanner, I like you are really taking your time and answering each question carefully”. Each statement praises the child’s work without another child overhearing and thinking negatively of themselves.

Research says it is not all about what you tell the student, but what their peers hear as well (Bowces, Casad, 1322).

Grade 11-12 Mini-Lesson

a) Students as their anticipatory set are asked to come together as a whole and fix the invitation that the teacher made. The teacher addresses the class admitting his/her mistakes and allowing the students to fix it for him/her. When students are able to come together to “help” and “fix” a teacher’s work it allows the students to feel more helpful, and reassures the children that *everyone* makes mistakes. When a

teacher admits that they have made a mistake it can take embarrassment off of a child's shoulders and reduce their lash outs. Research says that when teachers come clean about their mistakes from the beginning of the year, it allows students to be freer in admitting their mistakes throughout the year (Auld, 170).

b) Pretending and empathizing with different character is a good way for students to be reinforced positively to interact with a lesson. *Any student can be any character* and students see this as a freeing act. When students are allowed to write or act as another character it can alleviate some of the pressure off of the student's abilities. Students are positive reinforced with a unique writing piece to write from another characters point of view. For the student who retains very little about a text, to the student who remembers this all... this process allows students to take part and not sacrifice a grade. This writing assignment has an emphasis on writing and articulation, but also holds significance to the other task at hand.

c) While students are reading the texts for the assignment the teacher can positively reinforce highlighting, note taking, and/or staying on task. If a student is disengaged or acting out the teacher may ask the student if this is a good use of the student's time. When students are asked to self evaluate, it is not only the teacher but the student themselves that addresses the behavior and rewards the student or his/herself (Bowes, Casas, 1322).

Chapter Four: Recommendations

A significant amount of money is spent each school year on professional development programs to improve teachers' effectiveness in the classroom (Auld, 169). Imagine if teachers were taught effective strategies for their classroom *that* actually works for the whole year. When positive reinforcement is used effectively teachers noticed a significant reduction in unwanted behavior (Auld, 171). Many studies continue to agree that promoting positive social interactions lead to better classroom relationships (Bowker & Casas, 1311). Positive reinforcement proves to be the most effective way to modify and encourage different behavior in the classroom. Those who believe that this reinforcement technique is a peaceful fad will be disappointed. Positive reinforcement is sometimes misunderstood by those from different generations and/or different teaching techniques, however, more are starting to understand this evolving and effective form of teaching (Maag, 174).

To start using positive reinforcement in the classroom a teacher would need to start by promoting positive social interactions, examining the relationships with their students, and with each other (Bowker & Casas, 1311). Teachers should then support conversations with students where they evaluate themselves, and get parents involved as well (Bowker & Casas, 1311). Getting parents involved also in a behavior plan must have clear, positively stated behavior that communicates with the student, staff, and parents effectively results in the optimum results (Hulac, 94). It is crucial that teachers and parents continuously reinforce positive behavior and talk to

students about what is expected. Teachers who attempt to create a plan for managing **each** type of misbehavior will find themselves reprimanding with a negative force which can only be detrimental to their classroom environment (Hulac, 91). Trying to reprimand each and every misbehavior is something an inexperienced teaching professional would do. Punishing is seen as the easier tool because it is the quickest means a teacher can use (Maag, 175). Rather, continue to reinforce the positive behavior.

Managing student behavior will come naturally to your classroom once punishment in the traditional sense has been eliminated. A teacher's positive behavior can go a long way, and teachers will notice the difference. Once the teacher has spoken to the student, involved the staff and parents, it is then time to focus on their classroom and plan for correction (Maag, 182).

Implications for practice are as follows:

1. Catch the students being good, and don't forget to praise,
2. "Think Small", little changes over time are still changes,
3. Have a group management plan where you are able to talk to other teachers about your experiences with students,
4. Prevent behavior problems, which include seating arrangements, extra directions, etc. It is always easier to prevent rather than control,
5. Use peer influences favorably, this tactic can also include strategic seating arrangements. (Maag, 183).

Through various researchers and classroom experiments it is conclusive that positive reinforcement is a suitable classroom management tool for teachers who need to control undesirable behavior in their classroom. Through positive reinforcement it is proven that forms of punishment and yelling are void. While positive reinforcement may take longer to yield results, the results of the behavior management are sustained throughout time.

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