

Positive Reinforcement In the Classroom

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Summary 1/3

- The main idea of my research paper is that positive reinforcement can increase student participation in the classroom.
- It is likely that shortening attention spans are at fault for the lack of student focus and participation in the classroom.
- There are some concerns about implementing positive reinforcement in the classroom, such as:
 - Students may become overly reliant on receiving rewards
 - A potential solution to this concern is to space out the rewards.
 - Students may not feel intrinsically motivated
 - A potential solution to this concern is to make sure students understand why you desire a specific behavior. Establishing an environment of respect and responsibility may also help.
 - Students may become used to the rewards and respond less to positive reinforcement over time
 - Teachers can vary the types of rewards and be thoughtful in the implementation of rewards to combat this concern.
 - Some teachers may not like using it in their classrooms.
 - It is hard to change the mind of a person about what they do and do not like doing in their classroom, but there is a great potential benefit for teachers who use positive reinforcement.

Summary 2/3

- There are many theories that support the use of positive reinforcement in the classroom and I address some of them in my research paper.
 - Behaviorism - This theory claims that a person's behavior is simply a learned response to stimuli.
 - Operant Conditioning - In this theory, it is the consequences of a behavior that determine whether or not that behavior will be repeated. Specifically, if a behavior is rewarded, it is likely to be repeated in the future.
 - Social Learning Theory - People observe and repeat the actions of others.
- After looking at theories that support the use of positive reinforcement, I discussed the scientific methodology of my research.
 - I observed at Greenup County High School and identified a problem. Then, I came up with a hypothesis that positive reinforcement would positively affect student participation. After this, I continued my observations and looked at research from scholarly journals.
- There are several great implementation strategies for teachers who want to use positive reinforcement in their classroom. Teachers can use verbal praise, gift-giving, activities or signaling. It is important to identify the behavior being rewarded.

Summary 3/3

- Next, I addressed the need for teachers to be well-trained in the implementation of positive reinforcement.
 - Teachers should be taught about the theories that support the implementation of positive reinforcement.
 - It would benefit teachers to see real-life examples of positive reinforcement being implemented in a classroom.
 - Teachers could be observed so that they can have feedback on the use of positive reinforcement strategies in the classroom.
 - It would be beneficial if the training that teachers received on positive reinforcement strategies was continual. This will keep teachers up-to-date with any new research and ideas.
- Finally, I addressed the ethical considerations of positive reinforcement. Teachers need to be clear with students about the behavioral expectations of the classroom they are in. The reward system needs to be fair to all of the students in the classroom. The teacher needs to consider equity and inclusion when implementing positive reinforcement strategies. Teachers need to make sure that the students who do not receive a reward do not feel punished. Teachers must not give out too many rewards, lest the rewards lose their value. Lastly, the teachers need to make sure that the rewards do not distract the students.

Student Beliefs and Ideologies 1/3

- **Most students are scared to stand out by being active in the classroom.**
 - This can make it difficult for teachers to get students to participate.
 - Student participation is an important part of the learning process.
 - Teachers need to try different strategies—such as positive reinforcement—to see if they can get students involved in classroom activities.
- **Most students want acceptance from their peers.**
 - This is part of the reason that they do not want to do anything that will make them seem uncool.
 - In order to seem cool, students usually do not want to stand out by answering a teacher's questions or by seeming too engaged in the lesson.

Student Beliefs and Ideologies 2/3

- **Many students are scared of making mistakes.**
 - **For this reason, they will not answer questions or take any risks in the classroom.**
 - **They do not want to be laughed at by their peers.**
 - **They avoid feelings of embarrassment by avoiding moments that make them stand out.**

Student Beliefs and Ideologies 3/3

- The learning capacity of students can be limited by their fear of taking risks.
 - One way that students learn is by answering questions and being involved in the class discussions. These kinds of activities involve a certain level of risk.
 - Teachers need to find ways to make the risk worth the potential negative consequence of being embarrassed.
 - Offering students a reward can be a good way to do this.
- Students also may come from different cultures and religious beliefs which may impact their understanding of how they should behave in a classroom.
 - These students will have difficulty adapting to the expectations of the classroom.

Positive reinforcement is a gentle way for students to learn classroom expectations.

Teacher Beliefs and Ideologies 1/2

- Teachers and students value different behaviors.
- To a teacher, a good student is inquisitive and willing to participate.
- Students likely believe the direct opposite of teachers about what constitutes as good classroom behavior.
- The clashing beliefs between students and teachers about what should happen in the classroom can put a significant strain on the relationships between a teacher and their students.
- Positive reinforcement can help teachers to build a healthy relationship with their students.
- When teachers encourage students or give them a reward for participating in the class, they will be encouraged to do so more often and this will help students' and teachers' beliefs about what should happen in a classroom to align.

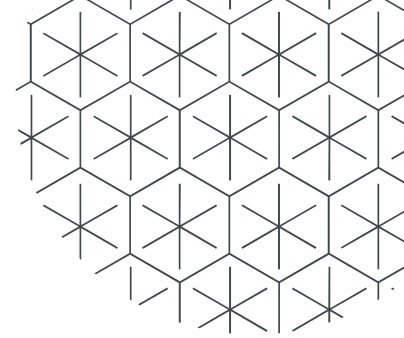
Teacher Beliefs and Ideologies 2/2

- Teacher beliefs may affect the implementation of positive reinforcement strategies.
 - Teachers who believe in student-centered learning believe in placing students at “the heart of learning” (Soubra, et al., 2022, p. 1). This kind of teaching approach supports the use of positive reinforcement and teachers who believe in student-centered learning are more likely to use positive reinforcement in their classroom.
 - Teachers who have traditional beliefs about classroom management might be less inclined to use positive reinforcement strategies.
 - Teachers may hold biases toward some students that may make them more or less likely to receive a reward or a punishment.

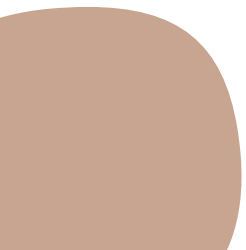
Societal/Religious Beliefs and Ideologies 1/2

- It seems that, over time, the beliefs and ideologies surrounding behavior management in the classroom have changed. There was a time when physical punishment occurred in schools. Now, there seems to be an emphasis on positivity and a focus on the well-being of the students.
 - There is much research and societal changes that have caused this shift. Philosophers like B.F. Skinner (Behaviorism) are at least partially responsible for these changes.
- Some religions or cultures may protest the use of positive reinforcement because they are used to a much stricter standard of behavior and punishment.
 - The use of positive reinforcement does not mean there will never be punishment in the classroom. School policies—such as detention or expulsion—will still apply. Positive reinforcement is a gentler approach to smaller behaviors that do not require an intense response.

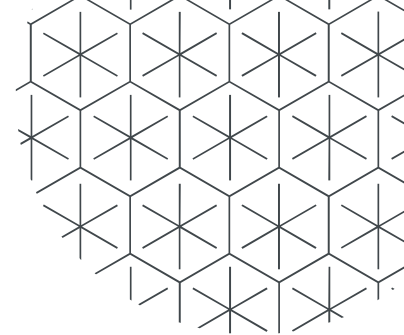
Opinions/Conclusions 1/2



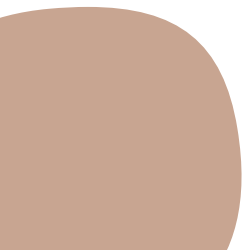
- Positive reinforcement helps to make a positive classroom environment.
 - This should not be much of a surprise. Positivity and encouragement are two major pieces of creating a good classroom environment for students.
- Positive reinforcement helps students feel safe enough to participate in the classroom.
 - When students are rewarded for contributing, they are not afraid to speak up.



Opinions/Conclusions 2/2



- Students thrive in environments where they feel safe.
 - When teachers encourage their students, instead of ridiculing them or yelling at them, students feel safe in the classroom.
- Positive reinforcement is a good way to build the students' active engagement in lessons.
 - When students are rewarded for paying attention and participating, they are more likely to continue that behavior.



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