

# How High School Special Education Teachers Implement Interventions to Address Student Behavioral Challenges

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## Background

Developing and implementing best practices for secondary students with disabilities is a necessity mandated by federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Act-IDEA, 2004). This is especially true for adolescents with emotional behavioral disabilities (EBD) or behavioral concerns whose general outcomes are less than desirable. Understanding what high school teachers and school personnel utilize with these students is imperative so that best practices can be identified, supported, and implemented.

## Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify:

- ❖ What high school special education teachers use to intervene with students with challenging behaviors?
- ❖ How do teachers rank potential disruptive behaviors in respect to the necessity of developing interventions?
- ❖ If necessary, what interventions they implement to mitigate behavioral challenges?
- ❖ How do Individual Educational Plan (IEP) goals reflect the behavioral concerns and interventions?

These questions will provide insight into what high school teachers do to support students with challenging behaviors.

## Participants

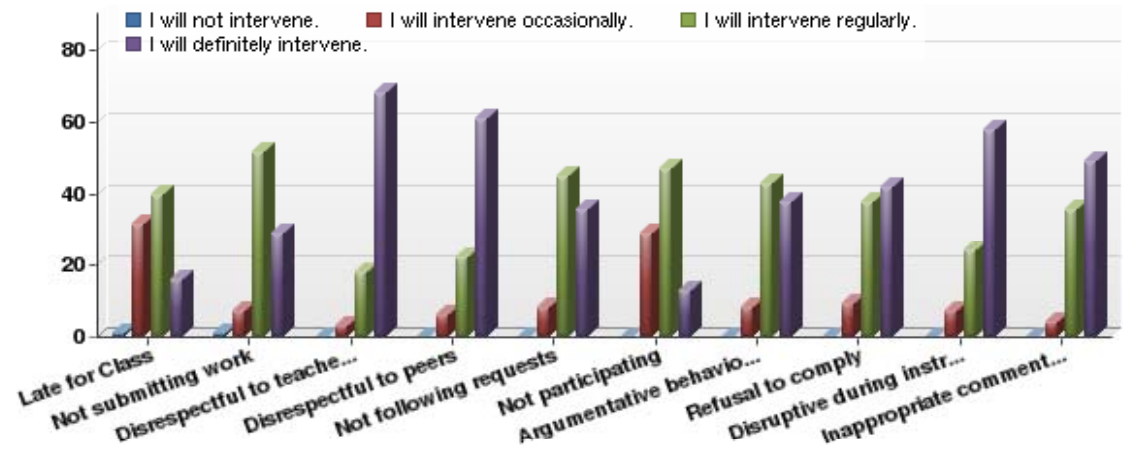
- ❖ N = 89 responses of the original 200 survey invitations (44.5%)
- ❖ Gender: 23% male, 77% female
- ❖ Years of Teaching Special Education: 1-5 Years: 18%; 6-10 Years: 19%; 11-15 Years: 20%; 16-20 Years: 13%; 20+ Years: 29%
- ❖ Disability Populations (Participants could check multiple categories)  
 Learning Disabilities – 77%  
 Emotional Behavioral Disabilities – 77%  
 Mild Cognitive Disabilities – 56%  
 Other – 42%

## Methods

- ❖ An online survey was created in order to determine how special education teachers implement interventions to address student behavior.
- ❖ Using a current DPI list of practicing teachers, 200 Wisconsin Special Education teachers were randomly selected to participate. Participants were selected based on CESA and school population.
- ❖ Postcards informing the participants of the arrival of an online survey were sent one week prior to survey distribution.
- ❖ Using Qualtrics, an invitation to participate in the survey was sent to all selected teachers. Two follow up reminders were sent.
- ❖ Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

## Results

Teacher Perceived Need to Intervene Based on Student Behaviors



Top Three Interventions Teachers Found Useful or Highly Useful:

Talking to the Student	89.5%
Redirecting the Behavior	85.2%
Proximity Control	81.8%

Top Three Interventions Teachers Found Least Useful or Experienced Mixed Results:

Sending the Student to the Hall	94.3%
Sending the Student to the Office	85.2%
Journaling	77.9%

## Example IEP Goals

- ❖ Student will turn assignments in by due date 90% of the time or make arrangements with the teacher prior to the due date.
- ❖ Students will use appropriate coping strategies (i.e.: deep breathing, coming to case manager, going to guidance office, calling parents, etc.) instead of becoming verbally aggressive toward peers and staff in 4/5 situations.

## Discussion

- ❖ Teachers chose to intervene when the behavior was disruptive to instruction or others (disrespectful).
- ❖ Teachers chose to intervene when behavior that was less tolerable in a group setting.
- ❖ Teachers chose not to intervene if the behavior was construed as internalizing and did not cause problems for the teacher.
- ❖ Teachers choice of interventions was self contained. That is to say that teacher's interventions generally did not involve people or places outside the classroom.