To: Erika Paterson

From: Eva Ruiz

Date: July 15th, 2020

Subject: Proposal for Determining How to Gain/Maintain Authority with an Engaging Syllabus for Students Age 5 to 10 (on the Autistic Spectrum)

**Introduction**

Since the middle of March 2020, Covid-19 has had enormous impacts on education. Schools across British Columbia, and the rest of the world, have had to shut down due to their potential to be huge transmission sites for the virus. Education is a vital aspect of our society and essential for future generations’ success and survival, and so there have been huge efforts to continue education in whatever way is possible. For most teachers this means moving to an online platform.

This transition can be a big struggle for educators, not only adjusting to a new platform, but finding a way to capture the attention of the children in an enriching and engaging way online. For behavioural interventionists, those teaching children on the autistic spectrum, the change over can be even harder. Screens have proved to be a very difficult platform for the delivery of education to children because they are faced with what can be hours of online learning, sitting in the same place with all the distractions of the internet right at their fingertips. Authority, because of this, is essential for a teacher to run lessons smoothly. In many cases it is the key to keeping the children abiding to the instructions.

**Statement of Problem**

Teachers lacking authority in the online platform can lead to hours of wasted time trying to gain the attention of students. This means that the children are not getting the instructional time and accumulating knowledge that they may need to continue their education. The implication is that time, energy, and money are being wasted due to the difficulties of online education, and there is an enormous need to find more efficient and effective ways to assist teachers during this pandemic. This problem has become especially prominent for behavioural interventionists and has led to many team meetings trying to address various difficult situations.

**Proposed Solution**

One of the proposed solutions is to make a guide for teachers, specifically behavioural interventionists, to gain authority in an online platform following the strict program requirements. Most students learn to respect the teacher because the teacher is (most often) the only adult in the classroom and they tend to have the ability to reprimand any behaviour that disrupts the teaching environment. Online, however, this is not the case (at least in the traditional sense) and therefore there need to be new ways to make this connection with the students. With the creation of a guide to gain authority for behavioural interventionists online there should be not only a quicker transition to the online platform but a savings of time, energy and money. This guide will be created with input from a group of behavioural interventionists sharing their experience with teaching online and describing techniques that proved to be more effective than others for addressing their students. This guide would be presented to the supervisors for an organization of behavioural interventionists and following approval would be published on a group forum.

**Scope**

In order to create this proposed guide and make the need for this guide clear to others, I will investigate the following questions:

* How much time is spent trying to keep the student engaged in the course work?
* How much time is spent during the lesson using rewards to keep the lesson going?
* How much is the cost of the time spent on things other than the course content?
* What techniques have teachers used to express their authority? Improve engagement?
* What recommendations are suggested for new behavioural interventionists struggling to maintain control during the lesson online?
* What techniques have you used to express your authority to maintain their attention and engagement online?
* What methods were used initially to transition teaching online in terms of authority and engagement?
* What techniques can be used online to gain authority that are within program recommendations?

**Methods**

To collect data I will conduct interviews with each of the teachers in my Behavioural Interventionist division as well as an interview with my supervisor. The goal of these interviews is to identify common struggles the teachers have experienced, stemming from issues of establishing authority, as well as techniques they have found effective within each of their lessons. I will also use observation within my own lessons to inform the guide.

**My Qualifications**

I have been teaching children ages 5 to 10 for 8 years now, in a variety of subjects and settings. I have been teaching online since the beginning of May , accumulating close to 50 hours working with just one student. I am also in my last year of pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the University of British Columbia. The background in social psychology has educated me on the importance of authority and how to gain it, which can be applied to the teaching setting. Lastly, my association with a group of trained behavioural interventionists has given me access to qualified professionals in the field as well as resources and assistance to moving online.

**Conclusion**

In light of this new global situation and the huge masses of students transitioning to an online platform for learning, it is essential that teachers have access to guides to assist them in this change. By conducting these interviews and pooling the knowledge of this association of teachers, I can piece together a guide that may assist and improve the teaching experience online for both the instructors and the students (age 5 to 10). I look forward to beginning this project with your support.