

*Creating Environments that Work for All Students:  
Real Manuals for Real Teachers*



## **Fidelity Instrument for Measuring the Use of Evidence-Based Academic Strategies in Special Education Classrooms**



Increasing Family Involvement  
for Special Populations



Reading Strategies  
for Special Populations



Providing Academic Feedback  
for Special Populations



Positive Behavior Support:  
A Classroom-Wide Approach  
to Successful Student Achievement  
and Interactions

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### *About the Department of Child & Family Studies*



The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, a college of the University of South Florida, is the state's primary research and training center for mental health services and a nationally recognized source for its innovative research and training. The Institute was created over 25 years ago by the Florida legislature to expand knowledge about how best to serve the mental health needs of the state's citizens. The Institute's Department of Child and Family Studies is committed to the enhancement of the development, mental health and well-being of children and families through leadership in integrating research, theory and practice.

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# *Fidelity Instrument for Measuring the Use of Evidence-Based Academic Strategies in Special Education Classrooms*



This is a companion document to the Real Manuals for Real Teachers series. It is used to determine the extent that middle school and high school classroom teachers actually use the evidence based practices found in the manuals (i.e., the fidelity). The instrument may be used as a whole, or it may be used to measure any of the four sections that are of importance to the user. The four areas are: 1) Reading 2) Providing academic feedback 3) Parent involvement, and 4) Positive behavior support.

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This instrument is designed to be used in special education classrooms that meet certain criteria. First, the class must be made up entirely of special education students. (This is not appropriate for use in inclusive or mainstream classrooms.) Second, there must be at least eight (8) students in the class. One additional criterion must be met if the reading section is to be administered, that is, some reading instruction must take place in the class. In the event no reading instruction takes place, the other three sections may still be administered.

To determine how much of the model described in the manuals is being implemented, set up an interview to be conducted in the classroom with the teacher. The location of the interview is important in that many of the questions require the teacher to provide evidence that will be available only in the teacher's classroom.

To begin, turn to the section of the instrument you wish to measure. Each section consists of basic information recorded on the top, followed by a series of questions and scoring instructions. In the left column you will find the criteria the question seeks to measure. Read aloud the question found in the center column to the teacher. Based on the answer given and the evidence provided, score the response in the right column. Repeat the process until the end of the section and then total the score in the space provided.

If appropriate, move on to the next section and repeat the question / response / scoring procedure until all sections are complete. Add the scores from each section to arrive at a Total Fidelity Score. The highest possible total score is 40. If you administer all four sections, and your score is 30 out of 40, then 75% implementation has taken place.

# Evidence Based Practice – Fidelity Instrument – Reading

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class name/type: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria: Class being rated must: 1) be a special education classroom, not inclusive or mainstream, with at least 8 students, and 2) include some reading or writing activities.

Qualifying questions to choose a class that meets the criteria: 1) Are all of the students in this class in the special education program? (If no, ask if teacher teaches a class that is entirely special education); 2) How many students are in this class? (There must be at least 8 students in the class); 3) Do you do any kind of reading instruction in this class? If no, ask: Do you teach or use any reading or writing strategies to help your students understand the textbook and/or other reading materials. If no reading instruction occurs in this class, go to page 3, Providing Academic Feedback.

Introduction: We are going to discuss reading instruction. We're interested in any activities that help students to better understand and remember what they read and how you and they keep track of their reading progress.

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
1. Determines present level of functioning in reading with multiple indicators for more than 50% of students	<p>Did you determine students' present reading levels for this school year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, ask: How did you determine students' present reading levels? Probe: Do you use any other methods for determining present levels of functioning in reading?</li> <li>• Ask: For how many students did you determine present reading levels?</li> </ul>	<p>Teacher describes at least 2 methods for determining present levels and can provide results for &gt; 50% of students. Methods for determining levels may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norm referenced tests (such as Lexile or WRAT)</li> <li>• Informal reading inventories (IRIs)</li> <li>• Retrieving information from students' cumulative files</li> </ul>	1	0
2. Matches student's present level of functioning with appropriate texts and instructional materials	How do you choose instructional materials for each student?	Teacher provides evidence that instructional materials have been matched to students' instructional and functional levels for >50% of students	1	0
3. Systematizes the tracking of students' reading progress based upon written expectations (see p. 30 in manual)	Do you have written expectations for each student's reading progress? If yes, ask: How do you keep track of your students' reading progress based upon stated expectations?	Teacher provides evidence of written expectations and a method of tracking reading progress based upon the expectations for >50% of students.	1	0
4. Shares information about present levels of functioning with students	Have you shared the information about their present levels of functioning with the students? If yes, ask: How did you share the information with the students?	Teacher describes a method for sharing this data with students.	1	0
5. Teaches and uses specific learning strategies (such as CRIS strategies)	<p>Have you taught and used any of the following learning strategies within the past 30 days?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word of the Week</li> <li>• Person of the Week</li> <li>• What's Important Now</li> <li>• Quote of the Week</li> <li>• Newspapers/Magazines</li> <li>• Two column notes</li> <li>• Opinion/Proof Notes</li> <li>• Progress notes</li> <li>• Other (describe):</li> </ul>	Teacher provides examples of a minimum of 4 strategies used within the past 30 days.	1	0

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
6. Familiarizes parents/ caregivers with reading strategies	Do you communicate with parents/ caregivers regarding the reading strategies that you teach to your students?	Teacher provides an example of written communication sent home within the last 30 days to >50% of the parents/ caregivers describing a reading strategy used in the classroom.	1	0
7. Provides parents / caregivers with reading activity materials	Do you provide parents/ caregivers with activities and/or materials that they can use to help improve their children's reading?	Teacher provides copies of reading activity material sent home within the last 30 days to >50% of parents/ caregivers.	1	0
8. Makes accommodations for students based upon their needs (“Making Accommodations,” p. 32 in manual)	Have you used any of the following strategies to help students who need accommodations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic organizers</li> <li>• Thematic instruction</li> <li>• Model and Think Aloud</li> <li>• One Sentence Summary</li> <li>• Question Answer Relationships (QAR)</li> <li>• Authentic Questions</li> <li>• Finding main ideas</li> <li>• Other (describe):</li> </ul>	Teacher provides at least one example of a strategy in a lesson plan used within the past 30 days.	1	0
9. Plans monthly activities that focus on specific reading, note taking or listening skills	Do you develop monthly activities to target specific reading skills such as note taking, questioning strategies, or active listening?	Teacher presents a current example of monthly activity worksheet that has been used for >50% of the time since the beginning of school.	1	0
10. Teaches and uses specific reading strategies	Have you used any of the following reading strategies in the past 30 days? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selective Underling</li> <li>• Power Notes</li> <li>• Framed Paragraph</li> <li>• Mapping</li> <li>• One Sentence Summary</li> <li>• Question Answer Relationships (QAR)</li> <li>• Authentic Questions</li> <li>• Marginal Note Taking</li> <li>• Know-Want to Learn-Learned (KWL)</li> <li>• Other (describe):</li> </ul>	Teacher provides evidence of a minimum of 5 activities used in the past 30 days.	1	0
		Subtotal for <i>Reading</i> Number of “1s” (10 possible)		

# Evidence Based Practice – Fidelity Instrument – *Providing Academic Feedback*

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class name/type: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Introductory question: Now we're going to talk about providing academic feedback to your students. If Section I: Reading was not completed, ask: What subject do you teach?

List the subject, e.g., social studies, math, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
11. Determines present level of functioning for applicable content area for more than 50% of students	Have you determined students' present levels of functioning in this content area (e.g., social studies, math, etc.) for this school year?  • How many students did you test for present levels of functioning?	Teacher describes a method for determining present levels and presents results for > 50% of students.	1	0
12. Determines present level of functioning for applicable content area with multiple indicators	How many methods do you use to determine present level of function for students in this class?	Teacher describes multiple methods for determining present levels which may include: • Norm referenced tests • Teacher made tests • Informal surveys	1	0
13. Uses rubrics to delineate required knowledge & skills and indicators of successful attainment (pp. 66-67 in manual)	Do you use any kind of rubric in your class to delineate expected knowledge and skill indicators (i.e., scope and sequence for this subject)?	Teacher provides a rubric or chart with both skills/knowledge to be learned and indicators of successful attainment of any concept being taught.	1	0
14. Integrates IEP objectives into lesson plans	Do you integrate IEP goals and objectives into your lesson plans?  If yes, ask: How do you do this?  If no, score question #14 and #15 "0" and skip to question #16.	Teacher provides evidence of written strategies that demonstrate a reasonable connection between IEP goals and objectives and the student's area of need.	1	0
15. Integrates IEP objectives into lesson plans for >50% of students	For how many students have you integrated IEP objectives into their lesson plans?	Teacher provides evidence of integration of IEP goals and objectives for >50% of students.	1	0
16. Displays charts and/or graphs of students' progress	Do you display charts and/or graphs of students' progress in your classroom?	Teacher displays charted progress for >50% of students and information has been updated within the past 30 days.  If students have entered information on charts or graphs, skip Question #20, but score "1" for Question #20.	1	0
17. Tracks student progress through the development and maintenance of student portfolios	Do you have portfolios of student work?	Teacher provides portfolios showing entry activity within the last 30 days.	1	0

Evidence Based Practice – Fidelity Instrument – *Providing Academic Feedback*

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
18. Tracks student progress through the development and maintenance of student portfolios for >50% of the students	How many students have portfolios?	Evidence of portfolios is presented for >50% of students.	1	0
19. Requires students to chart their own progress	Do students keep track of their own progress in this class? If the teacher answers, "Yes," ask: How do they do that?	Teacher provides at least one example of a tracking procedure used by a student.	1	0
20. Requires >50% of students to chart their own progress within the last 30 days	How many students track their own progress and when did they last record data?	Teacher states that >50% of students have used the procedure within the last 30 days.	1	0
Subtotal for <i>Providing Academic Feedback</i> Number of "1s" (10 possible)				

# Evidence Based Practice – Fidelity Instrument – *Parent Involvement*

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class name/type: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction: Now we're going to talk about family involvement in the school and your classroom. We're interested in how parents receive information about their children's progress and about school activities.

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
21. Sends a welcome letter home to parents/ caregivers at the beginning of school or when student joins the class	Do you send a welcome letter home to every family at the beginning of the school year or when a student joins your class?  If yes, ask: May I see a copy of it?	Teacher provides evidence of a welcome letter that is sent to >50% of students at the beginning of the year or to any students who entered during the school year.	1	0
22. Has a specific communication system in place for communicating with parents/ caregivers (e.g. daily/weekly report	How do you keep in touch with parents/ caregivers?  How many families do you contact?  How often do you contact them?	Teacher shows evidence of a systematic method of communication e.g.,  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• daily/weekly progress sheet,</li> <li>• notes written in daily planner,</li> </ul> used at least twice during last 60 days for >50% of students/ families.	1	0
23. Has a method for recording contact with families	Do you have a method for recording the contact that you have with families?	Teacher provides evidence of a separate contact log used to record contact (e.g., phone calls, email, notes) with families.	1	0
24. Has a method for recording contact with families	How do you encourage students to take communication from you home to their families and return communication from their families to you?	Teacher shows evidence of a method of reinforcement. Methods may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extra credit</li> <li>• computer time</li> <li>• free time</li> <li>• points toward rewards</li> <li>• other</li> </ul>	1	0
25. Encourages parents/ caregivers to serve on school committees and/or volunteer in the classroom or school	Do you encourage parents/ caregivers to serve on school committees and/or volunteer in your classroom or in the school?  If yes, ask: How do you do that?	Teacher provides copies of written materials sent home to parents describing activities for which they may volunteer and encouraging them to participate.	1	0
26. Is aware of families for whom English is not the primary language and accommodates them whenever possible	Are any of your students' families non-English speaking?  If yes, ask: How do you accommodate them?	Teacher is aware of families who do not speak English and uses strategies to accommodate them.  Note: Score "1" if there are no non-English speaking families. Score "0" if teacher does not know if any families are non-English speakers.	1	0
27. Provides families with written information about how and when to contact him/her	Do you provide families with written information about how and when to contact you if they have questions or concerns about their children?	Teacher provides evidence of written contact information materials given to families.	1	0



Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
28. Records the best method and time to contact parents/ caregivers	Do you have contact information for the families of your students such as phone numbers and addresses in one central location?  If yes, ask: How do you organize this information?	Teacher provides an organized method of recording parent/ caregiver contact information.	1	0
29. Seeks parent input through surveys, etc, other than the IEP	Do you seek parent input about matters concerning the school, your class, or their children through a systematic process such as surveys?	Teacher provides evidence of previous surveys or other systematic information gathering process other than the IEP	1	0
30. Keeps a record of parent/ caregivers volunteer activities in the classroom	Do you keep track of how and when individual parents volunteer in your classroom?  If yes, ask: How do you do this?	Teacher provides evidence of keeping current (within the last 60 days) records of parent/ caregiver volunteer activities in the classroom.	1	0
Subtotal for <i>Parent Involvement</i> Number of "1s" (10 possible)				

# Evidence Based Practice – Fidelity Instrument – *Positive Behavior Support*

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class name/type: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction: Now we're going to talk about behavior management in your classroom.

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
31. Posts schedules in a prominent place in the classroom, informs students of schedule changes, and provides individual schedules when appropriate	Are daily schedules posted in your classroom (i.e., bell and lunch schedules)? How do your students find out changes in the daily schedule (i.e., assemblies)? Are students provided with individual schedules when needed (i.e., for individual therapies or counseling)?	Teacher provides evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schedules posted where students will see them</li> <li>• informing students of daily schedule changes</li> <li>• individual student schedules on desks or in planners, if appropriate.</li> </ul>	1	0
32. Posts classroom/school rules and refers to them frequently	Are classroom and/or school rules posted in your classroom where students can see them?  If yes, ask: How often do you refer to them?	Teacher provides evidence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rules posted where students will see them and</li> <li>• indicates reference to them at least once a day.</li> </ul>	1	0
33. Arranges desks and instructional areas in a manner that maximizes on-task behavior and minimizes distractions	How do you determine placement of desks and instructional areas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to teacher</li> <li>• Proximity to other students</li> <li>• Proximity to distractions</li> <li>• Instructional areas</li> </ul>	Provides evidence of thoughtful arrangement of desks and instructional areas.	1	0
34. Arranges instructional materials in a manner that maximizes on-task behavior and minimizes distractions	How do you determine placement of instructional materials?	Provides evidence of thoughtful placement of instructional materials for student use.	1	0
35. Adapts and modifies curriculum and instruction to take advantage of students' strengths and preferred learning modalities	Have you used any of the following strategies to modify or adapt the curriculum and instruction for students who require it? If yes, ask: For how many students do you use these strategies? If yes, ask: How often do you use these strategies? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple modalities</li> <li>• Change amount of work</li> <li>• Change difficulty</li> <li>• Change of amount of time</li> <li>• Change appearance of assignments</li> <li>• Alternative time for assignments</li> <li>Relate to real life</li> <li>• Pacing</li> <li>• Peer support</li> <li>• Change student output</li> <li>• Other – Describe:</li> </ul>	Teacher provides evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of using at least 4 adaptations or modifications to the curriculum or instruction</li> <li>• for &gt;50% of the students</li> <li>• at least twice per week.</li> </ul>	1	0

Criteria	Interview Question	Score "1" if:	Circle One	
36. Instructs students in methods of communication that promote and encourage effective student/students and student/adult social interactions	How do your students learn effective methods for communicating and interacting with other students and with adults?	Teacher describes at least two ways that he/she instructs students in effective methods of communication and/or interaction with other students and adults.	1	0
37. Instructs students in methods of communication that promote and encourage effective classroom communication	How do students learn effective ways to communicate with you or other students about classroom activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requesting help</li> <li>• Seeking attention</li> <li>• Negotiating assignment completion</li> <li>• Requesting preferred materials or activities</li> </ul>	Teacher provides evidence of instruction in at least 2 communication methods to encourage/promote effective classroom communication.	1	0
38. Uses response methods designed to motivate students to continue effective behavior	How do you encourage students to continue effective behavior? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific praise</li> <li>• Varied praise</li> <li>• Praise of others</li> <li>• Neutral voice tone</li> <li>• Enthusiasm for positive changes</li> <li>• Other – Describe:</li> </ul>	Teacher describes 2 methods used to motivate students to continue effective behavior.	1	0
39. Ignores or redirects challenging behavior	What do you do when a student exhibits challenging behavior? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore challenging behavior</li> <li>• Redirect challenging behavior</li> <li>• Remind student of desirable behavior</li> <li>• Other – Describe:</li> </ul>	Teacher describes 2 methods for ignoring or redirecting challenging behavior.	1	0
40. Teaches peers to respond effectively to the challenging behaviors of their classmates	How do you teach peers to respond to the challenging behavior of their classmates? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach students how to respond to each other</li> <li>• Coach students privately in the use of effective response methods</li> <li>• Remind students during class of effective response methods</li> </ul>	Teacher describes 2 strategies for teaching students to respond effectively to classmates' challenging behaviors.	1	0
		Subtotal for <i>Positive Behavior Support</i> Number of "1s" (10 possible)		
		Subtotal from <i>Reading</i>		
		Subtotal from <i>Providing Academic Feedback</i>		
		Subtotal from <i>Parent Involvement</i>		
		<b>Total Fidelity Score:</b> Sum of Reading, Academic Feedback, Parent Involvement, and Positive Behavior Support Scores (40 Possible)		