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*Honors Capstone*

*Written Reflective Critique*

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### *Written Reflective Critique*

#### *Introduction*

Researching and writing my Honors Capstone Project has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my time at Radford University. Having the opportunity to explore a topic closely related to my future profession was not only a privilege but also deeply fulfilling. It significantly contributed to my growth as an emerging educator. My project, “*Examining Proactive vs. Reactive K–12 Classroom Behavior Management Strategies*,” involved extensive research into both national and state-level policies regarding behavioral management, specifically the use of reactive strategies such as seclusion, and proactive frameworks like PBIS. Initially, I proposed conducting interviews to compare Virginia’s and Florida’s behavioral management practices. While that aspect of the project did not go as planned, I shifted my focus to a comprehensive literature review examining the types, uses, and implications of both reactive and proactive strategies. Throughout my coursework at Radford, I realized that behavioral management has not been a central focus in teacher preparation. I discovered that this is a common experience. Many pre-service and even in-service teachers report feeling underprepared to address challenging behaviors in the classroom. Because of this gap, my Capstone project brings attention to an often-overlooked area in teacher education. I hope it will inspire further conversations and, ultimately, greater emphasis on behavioral management training in teacher preparation programs.

#### *Strengths*

One of the biggest strengths I developed during this project was learning how to adjust when things didn’t go as planned. I had originally wanted to do interviews to compare how Virginia and Florida handle behavior management in schools, but that didn’t work out. Instead of giving up, I changed my plan and did a literature review. This helped me improve my research skills and taught me a lot about both reactive and proactive strategies, like seclusion and PBIS. I also became more confident in thinking about how these ideas connect to real classrooms. As I worked on this project, I realized how little training many teachers get in managing behavior, and it made me want to speak up for including more of that in teacher education. Overall, this project helped me grow as a future educator and made me feel more ready to face real challenges in the classroom. In addition, creating and presenting my poster was a great opportunity to showcase my research, share what I learned, and communicate my ideas for future improvements in

education. It allowed me to summarize key points from my project visually and engagingly, which helped others quickly understand the importance of the topic. Presenting my poster also helped me build confidence in speaking about my work and answering questions from others, including students, faculty, and professionals in the field. It felt rewarding to contribute to a conversation about how schools can better support students and teachers through effective behavior management. I hope that by sharing my findings, I encouraged others to think more deeply about the role of proactive strategies in creating positive learning environments.

### ***Weaknesses***

While I am proud of the work I completed, there were a few limitations in my project. One challenge was having to change my original research plan. I had hoped to conduct interviews with educators to compare behavior management practices in Virginia and Florida, but that did not work out due to time and access limitations. As a result, I shifted to a literature review, which provided valuable information but lacked the real-life insights that interviews could have offered. Due to much of the data having to do with children, the data related to how often specific behavioral management strategies were not available. Additionally, because I have not taken a formal coursework in behavior management, I had to spend extra time building my understanding of key terms and strategies. These limitations made the process more difficult at times, but they also pushed me to develop stronger research and problem-solving skills. If I were to continue this project in the future, I would aim to include direct input from teachers and students to deepen the analysis and to further understand why proactive strategies are better than reactive strategies.

### ***Conclusion***

Overall, completing this Capstone project has been an important step in both my academic and professional journey. It gave me the chance to explore a critical issue in education, strengthen my research and communication skills, and reflect deeply on my preparation as a future teacher. Even though the project came with challenges, I learned how to adapt, persevere, and stay focused on my goals. Most importantly, I gained a clearer understanding of the importance of proactive behavior management strategies and the need for stronger teacher preparation in this area. This experience has inspired me to keep learning, stay curious, and advocate for positive change in classrooms. I am proud of what I accomplished, and I look forward to building on this foundation as I move forward in the field of education.