Fostering Positive Learning Opportunities: Motivational Strategies

Please read the following scenario:

Susie is a fourth grade student who shows very little interest in science. She rarely finishes science assignments, and she often talks to her friends during the lessons. When Susie is off task in science class, her teacher usually asks her to sit at a separate table by herself. When asked why she does not pay attention during science, Susie replies that it is “boring”.

The teacher thinks that Susie lacks motivation to participate in science lessons and activities. Suppose you are the paraprofessional in Susie’s class, and the teacher asks for your help to increase Susie’s motivation. Based on what you have learned in this lesson, what strategies could you use to increase Susie’s motivation during science? Consider the following options, and then decide which strategy you would use in this situation:

1. Use hands-on, experiential learning activities to help Susie apply science to the real world. For example, take a field trip to the local science museum or lead a nature walk in the surrounding neighborhood.

2. Use videos and computer games that relate to the science lesson to engage Susie’s interest.

3. Allow Susie to choose between two science activities, so that she can pick the one she is most interested in.

4. Use another strategy, or multiple strategies, to increase Susie’s motivation.

Describe the behavior:

1. What does the behavior of concern look like when it happens?

2. What should the behavior look like (i.e., what behavior should you teach)?
Describe the conditions around the behavior:

3. When does the behavior take place?

4. What specifically occurs before the behavior takes place?

5. How do people respond to the behavior after it takes place?

Consider the options presented for the above scenario:

6. Which of the options (above) would you choose to use to address the challenging behavior? What is your reasoning for choosing this option over the other options?

7. Would you apply this strategy before, during, or after the challenging behavior occurs? What is your reasoning for this?

8. Imagine that you need to tell another paraprofessional how s/he should respond to the challenging behavior described in the scenario. Describe in detail, step by step, how this paraprofessional should carry out the strategy that you chose to use.