Fostering Positive Learning Opportunities: Work Assignments

Please read the following scenario:

Ben recently started middle school, and his teachers are concerned about his lack of study and organizational skills. Ben seems unable to work independently in class for sustained periods of time, which is a more serious problem in middle school than it was in his elementary classroom. Ben’s teachers have noticed that he gets distracted easily while working independently, and that his books and assignments are disorganized and often incomplete. He is already falling behind in several classes, and his teachers constantly ask him to stay after school due to his unfinished work.

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, what could the teachers and paraprofessionals in Ben’s classes do to help him develop the study and organizational skills that he needs? Consider the following options, and then choose the strategy that you think would be most effective for Ben:

1. Teach Ben to keep track of his assignments and daily schedule in an assignment notebook. Ask him to get the notebook signed daily by his parents and teachers, who can help him stay organized and on task.

2. Help Ben to find a space in each classroom and at home where he can work independently without any major distractions. Teach Ben to put away any unnecessary items or materials before he begins to work.

3. Provide time-management reminders while Ben works independently, to help him improve his task completion. Give him 20-, 10-, and 5-minute warnings before a task needs to be completed or materials need to be put away.

4. Use another strategy, or multiple strategies, to help Ben develop study and organizational skills.

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.