

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examines how the teacher's language in a positive behavior discipline plan impacts the at-risk students in a third grade classroom. Participants include nineteen third graders in an elementary school located in a small-sized East coast city. This study uses character education as a foundation for the language used and for the plan that the teacher develops. The author shares individual stories about the third grade students in order to portray a "thick description" of the classroom environment. The study suggests that elementary classroom teachers can choose the positive language that they deem most important for use in a behavior plan. The author documents how previously identified at-risk students and new students blend with classmates in a heterogeneous classroom and find progress both individually and collectively. Finally, the teacher addressed issues of bias based upon students' academic, social, and socio-economic backgrounds.