



Prof. John J. Wheeler is a nationally recognized scholar in special education whose work focuses on social validity, positive behavior supports, and interdisciplinary personnel preparation. A professor at East Tennessee State University, he has held leadership roles in his career spanning over 36 years as dean, Associate Dean, Department Chair, and Center Director. Dr. Wheeler has secured more than \$6 million in external funding and currently co-directs INSPIRE Appalachia, an OSEP-funded initiative preparing interdisciplinary professionals to serve students with high-intensity support needs in rural communities.

Preventing and Minimizing Challenging Behaviors Through the Application of Positive Behavior Supports

Challenging behavior remains one of the most significant barriers to effective teaching and learning in contemporary classrooms. Drawing on more than four decades of professional experience in applied behavior analysis and Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), this presentation examines practical, evidence-based strategies for preventing and reducing challenging behavior in educational settings. Emphasis will be placed on prevention-oriented classroom practices, functional assessment, and the design of proactive behavioral supports that promote positive student engagement. The session will also address methods for evaluating intervention effectiveness through systematic data collection and progress monitoring. Practical classroom examples will be used to illustrate how research-based practices can be translated into everyday teaching environments.