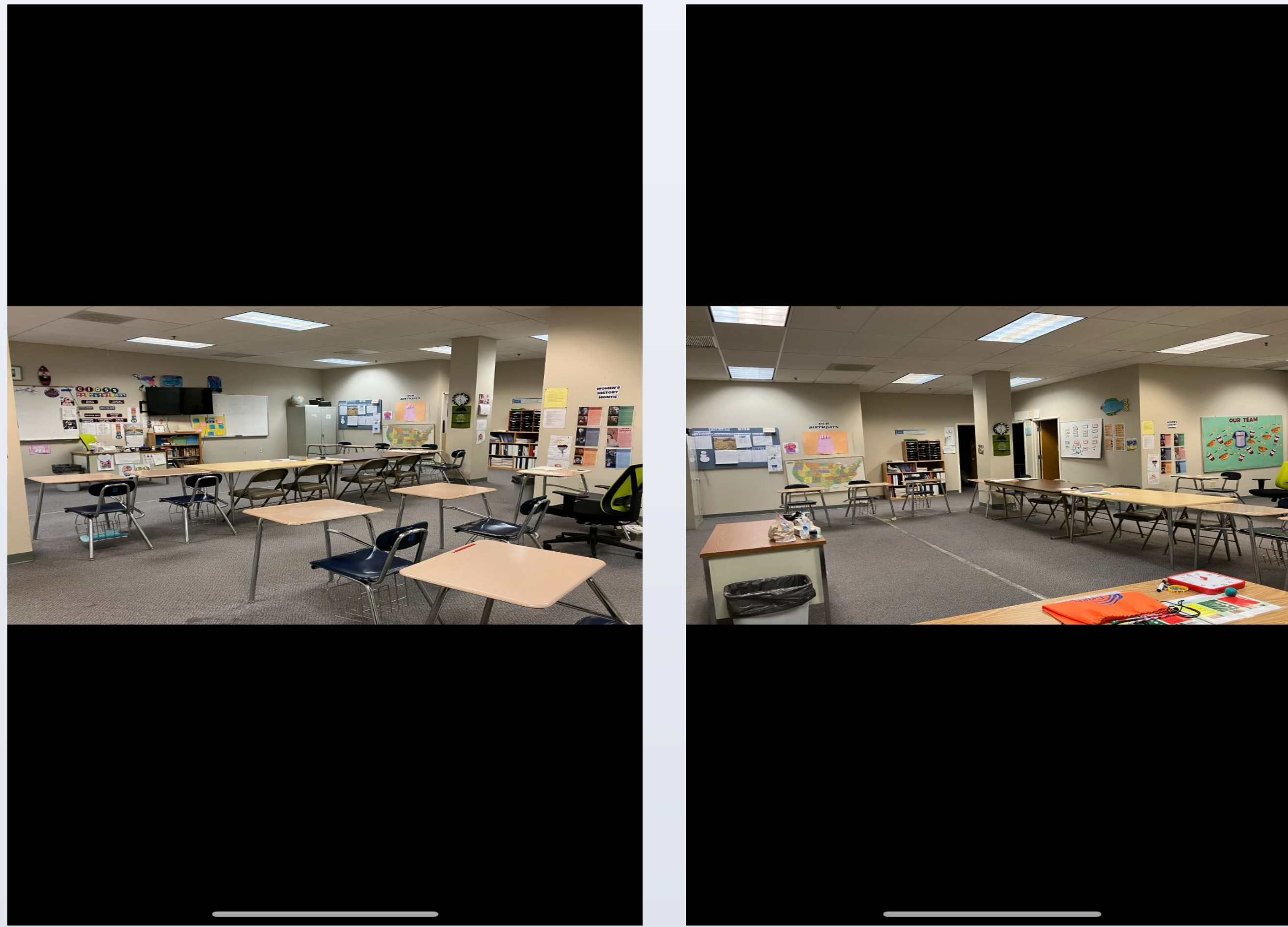


INTRODUCTION

- The SOAR/EMBARK program supports students with autism and developmental disabilities
- The program focuses on communication, social skills, and daily living skills
- Many students benefit from clear expectations and consistent routines
- Visual supports help students better understand what is expected of them



INTERNSHIP PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- Create and use a visual reinforcement board
- Encourage positive behavior and task completion
- Increase student engagement during activities
- Help make transitions between tasks smoother

RELATED LITERATURE

- Visual supports and structured routines improve on-task behavior and help students with autism understand expectations. These supports reduce confusion, increase independence, and help students stay engaged during structured activities. (Liang et al., 2024).
- Reinforcement strategies increase motivation and participation while reducing anxiety and challenging behaviors. These strategies are most effective when used consistently and when students are given clear expectations and rewards. (Hume et al., 2021).

MATERIALS & METHODS

METHODS

Case Study:

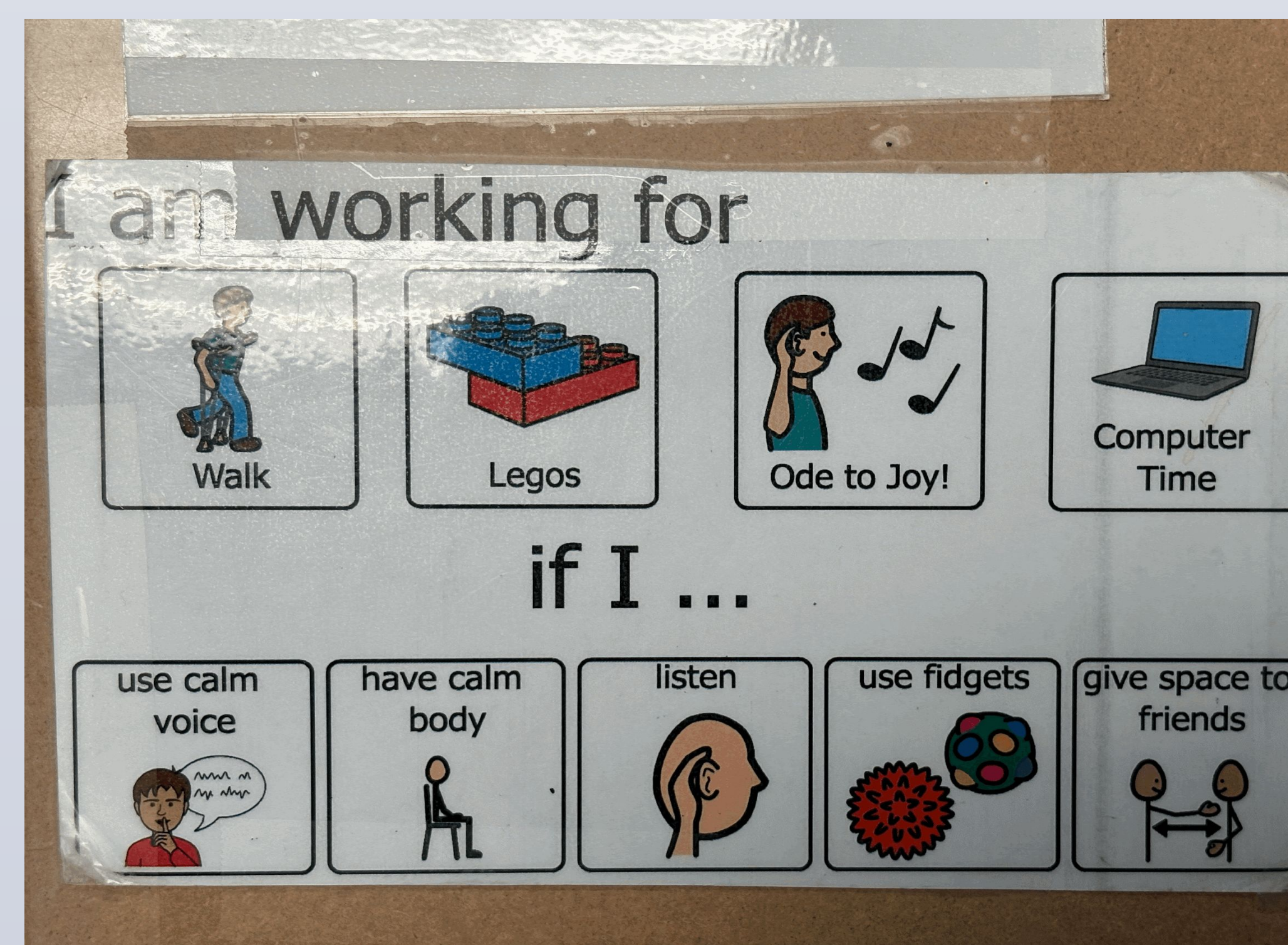
- This project focused on one student in the SOAR/EMBARK program
- The student had difficulty staying on task and following directions during activities
- At times, the student became distracted or overstimulated, which affected participation

Materials:

- A visual reinforcement board showing clear behavior expectations (e.g., calm voice, listening, staying seated)
- Visual icons to help the student understand expectations more easily
- Reward choices based on the student's interests (e.g., Legos, music, computer time)

Process:

- The reinforcement board was introduced and explained before each session
- Expectations were reviewed so the student understood what behaviors were expected
- The board was used during activities and transitions to guide behavior
- When the student became distracted, brief verbal reminders or gentle redirection were used to guide him back to the task
- The student was allowed to choose a preferred reward to stay motivated
- Rewards were given right after expectations were met
- This method was used consistently across multiple sessions (Thursdays & Fridays)
- Changes in behavior and engagement were observed over time



RESULTS

- The student had 5 opportunities to earn tokens each day: morning routine, internship work, class time, lunch, and afternoon class.
- The student earned a token (star) for each task completed and placed it on the reinforcement board.
- The student needed to earn all 5 tokens to receive a reward at the end of the day.
- The token board was used to visually track task completion and participation throughout the day.
- Over time, the student began earning more tokens across the day compared to earlier observations, showing improved task completion and engagement.
- The student showed more consistent participation in daily activities over time.
- There were fewer disruptive and non-compliant behaviors observed over time.
- The student followed the reinforcement board more consistently as he became familiar with expectations.
- The student required fewer reminders and prompts over time.
- When the student became distracted or overstimulated, brief redirection helped him return to the task.
- Focus and attention improved during structured activities.
- Transitions between tasks became smoother and required fewer reminders.

CONCLUSIONS

This project showed that visual supports can help students understand expectations and stay engaged. The reinforcement board provided structure and motivation. Visual tools like this can be helpful in programs that support students with developmental differences

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