The Effects of Social Skills Instruction on the Academic Achievement of a Student with an

Emotional/Behavioral Disorder at a Selected Junior High School

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Institutional Review Board Decision Tree

Based on your responses, you do not need approval from the IRB.

It looks like your study is exempt from IRB approval. You should have your study approved by the highest person in the department or area overseeing the targeted participants. For example, a campus-wide survey should be approved by the President, a student or faculty survey should be approved by the Academic Dean, and a survey specific to a certain major should be approved by the Area Chair.

Refer to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(5)

However, you should carefully review all procedures and questions to ensure that anonymity is protected especially in the case of institutional surveys where questions such as age, race and gender could be used to identify participants even if they are not asked for their names.

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Social Skills Instruction

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of social skills instruction on the academic achievement of a student with an Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD). The sample consisted of a student, age 13, at a selected middle school. The targeted behaviors of the study were responding appropriately when given assignments, following directions, and participation in class activities. Data were collected through observations and interventions using ABAB design. A baseline was established after one week of observation. An intervention of instruction in social skills was introduced for one week and target behaviors were examined and results tallied. The following week the interventions were withdrawn and target behaviors were examined and results tallied. Intervention was again introduced after one week of withdrawn. The target behaviors were observed and results were tallied. The results indicated a significant difference in the student's academic performance before and after intervention as measured by the number of times the student was on target. The results suggest that the use of instruction in social skills is beneficial to students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Chapter 1

Introduction

As with other learning disabilities, students with emotional or behavioral disorders exhibit characteristics that interfere with academic performance.   The definition of an emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD) as proposed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 lists five characteristics that include an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors, an inability to build or sustain satisfactory relationships with peers and teachers, inappropriate types of behavior under normal circumstances, a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal/school problems. According to the IDEA definition, in order to be classified as EBD, these characteristics need to be present over a "long period of time" and to a degree that markedly affects school performance (Lambros & Ward, 1998). Gunter, Countinho, and Cade (2002) suggest that: Children with EBD are often regarded as more difficult to teach than students with other kinds of problems and are more likely to be (a) mis- or under-identified, (b) recommended for exclusion from general education settings and (c) found to attain marginal or unsatisfactory educational outcomes.

Children with EBD exhibit behaviors that make the process of education quite difficult. The majority of these children enter schools devoid of the skills, interpersonal behavior, and attitudes necessary to satisfactorily participate in the classroom process (Sutherland, 2000). Social skill deficits include peer relationship problems, aggression, and oppositionality (Sutherland, 2000). Other social problems, which are often associated with language problems, include withdrawal, depression, and antisocial behavior (Hendrickson, Smith, & Frank 1998).

The combination of social and academic difficulty results in classroom problems such as disruptive and off-task behavior, which affect not only the EBD student, but other students and the teacher as well (Gunter et al., 2002; Kern, Delaney, Clarke, Dunlap & Childs, 2001). Students with EBD have the lowest grade-point averages of students in all disability categories. Almost one-half of students characterized as EBD have GPA's below 1.75 and have failed at least one course in the most recent school year. A majority of EBD students fail their yearly grade-level competency examinations. Perhaps contributing to the low achievement level is the rate of absenteeism, which is higher than students of any other disability, at an average of 18 days (yearly). Students with EBD also have lower rates of graduation than students in any other disability category. The dropout rate is almost double that of general education students (Quinn & McDougal, 1998; Sutherland, 2000).

The problems of students with EBD continue in life beyond school and graduation. Not many of the EBD students who graduate from high school attend any form of post-secondary education. Rates of unemployment of EBD students range from 25% to 52%. A significant number of EBD students have been arrested at least once within two years of graduation (Sutherland, 2000).

Statement of Problem:

Should a portion of the curriculum for students with EBD include training in learning to control antisocial behavior? It is important that social skill interventions not outweigh academic instruction, because that puts EBD students at an even larger disadvantage for academic achievement and can cause them to fall even further behind peers, exacerbating antisocial

behavior (Hendrickson et al., 1998). In order to avoid overcompensating for social skill deficits at the cost of academic gains, the types of social skill deficits should be considered in planning and implementing social skill training for individual students (Quinn, Kavale, Mathur, Rutherford, & Forness, 1999). Key skills selected for intervention are usually those identified as classroom survival skills, skills that promote positive peer interactions and those that provide problem-solving strategies. Classroom survival skills include following directions, task completion, making choices, and accepting consequences. Peer skills include joining a group, giving compliments, and appropriate play. Problem-solving strategies include negotiation, ignoring inappropriate behaviors of peers, and anger management (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999). Quinn et al. (1999) report that steps of social skill training often include: Selecting or prioritizing critical social skills that need to be improved; demonstrating, explaining, or modeling these skills; having the child practice these skills while being coached; providing feedback and reinforcement during practice; and identifying a variety of social situations in which the skill might be useful. Therefore, the problem of this study was to investigate how social skills instruction as part of the school curriculum would affect the academic achievement of a middle school student who has an emotional/behavioral disorder.

Purpose of this study:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of social skills instruction on the academic achievement of an EBD student at a selected Junior High School.

Significance of study:

The potential benefit of this study will be to determine if there is any benefit to teaching social skills to EBD students to increase their academic achievement. Emotional and behavioral disorder is a disorder that can severely affect the daily processes of a child and has serious long-term effects. Each teacher in the school system should have enough knowledge of the disorder and how to work with the disorder to give children who suffer from EBD the same chance for success that other students have. Students with EBD can be taught effectively, even in the general education setting. Research is beginning to provide possible methods of prevention and intervention for these children. With the proper application of these methods, children with EBD have a greater possibility of successfully completing high school and participating in a successful life beyond high school (Lane, Gresham, & O'Shaughnessi, 2002; Sutherland, 2000).

Limitations:

A limitation is the instrument for data collection was designed by the researcher and not tested for validity and reliability.

Definitions of terms:

Learning Disability: An educationally language and/or learning deficit.

EBD student: A student who has an emotional or behavioral disorder.

Antisocial Behavior: A behavior that lacks consideration for others and may cause damage to the society, whether intentionally or through negligence.

Social Skills: The ability to understand social situations, respond to others appropriately, and interact with other people.

IEP: Individual Education Plan.

Overview of study:

This study consists of 5 chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, limitations, definition of terms, and the overview of study. Chapter 2 includes the review of the literature. Chapter 3 contains the methodology and procedures, and research questions and related hypotheses. Chapter 4 consists of the data analysis, which has the collection of data, research questions and related hypotheses, and finally Chapter 5 contains the findings, recommendations, and implications of the study.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Manifestation of EBD

Emotional and behavioral disorders are manifested in the form of behavioral excesses or behavioral deficits. Behavioral excesses or externalizing behaviors are also referred to as under-controlled behavior problems and are characterized by multiple instances of defiant, aggressive, disruptive, and noncompliant responses. Almost three-quarters of children with externalizing disorders pass through a predictable progression from less to more severe forms of social maladjustment. These behaviors seem to be the focus of teachers, who view them as intolerable as a result of the challenging of their authority, the interference of instruction, disruption of classroom routines, and adverse effects on classmates (Masi & Favilla, 2000).

Behavioral deficits of EBD are referred to as internalizing behavior disorders or over-controlled behaviors. These behaviors are characterized by inner-directed and covert actions. A child with an internalizing behavior disorder may be withdrawn, shy, depressed, and/or have dysthymia and other emotional and personality disorders. Just as externalizing disorders, these disorders are predictive of social adjustment difficulties and psychopathology (Masi et al., 2000). Internalizing behaviors often occur along with impaired cognitive functioning, a lack of social competence and acceptance, language deficits, limited problem-solving strategies, and eventually result in nonattendance at school (Quinn et al., 1998). Due to the nature of internalizing behaviors, they do not often come to the attention of teachers or other

authorities. In cases where the problems are identified, they are overlooked because they are not seen as difficulties. This mistake of nonintervention must be avoided. If internalizing behaviors are not treated, the consequences carry the same seriousness as untreated externalizing behavior disorders (Lambros et al., 1998).

Causes

Research does not indicate a single cause of EBD but a number of theories and conceptual models have been established in an attempt to explain the problems of EBD children. These possible causes can be categorized as either biological or environmental. The biological category includes brain disorders, genetics, and temperament. There is research and support for a genetic link factor between genetics and temperament. For example, a child's temperament might naturally be impulsive and resist guidance or supervision from others then interacts with numerous environmental factors within the family, neighborhood, school, and community to produce more positive or more negative outcomes (Shogren, Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer, 2013).

A person's temperament is the way in which he generally responds to situations and can be classified as either easygoing or difficult. Children who display an easygoing temperament may be less likely to have behavioral problems in adolescence and beyond (Caspi, Henry, McGee, Moffit, & Silva, 1995).

Environmental factors believed to influence the likelihood of developing EBD involve the home, the community, and the school. These are the settings in which the undesirable events occur. Much research has indicated that the parent-child relationship is critical in determining

the way that a child learns to behave. Children with EBD most often come from homes in which parents are harsh and inconsistent disciplinarians, manage behavior with excessive punishment, do not spend much prosocial time with their children, do not monitor children's whereabouts or activities, and do not show much affection (McEvoy & Welker, 2000).

The community has a further negative effect on EBD children due to the reinforcement of antisocial behavior through association with peers. The activities of peers that contribute to antisocial behavior include gang relations, drug/alcohol abuse, and deviant sexual behavior (Biglan, 1995).

Because of the amount of time that children spend in the classroom school is also an influential factor to EBD children. Specific schooling practices that are suspected of contributing to EBD include ineffective instruction, unclear rules and expectations for appropriate behavior, inconsistent and punitive discipline practices, infrequent teacher praise and approval for academic and social behavior, and failure to individualize instruction to accommodate diverse learners. Teachers, peers, and the lack of support and discipline are all possible environmental causes (Shogren et al., 2013)

Although EBD affects both male and females of all races, those more often labeled and served as EBD are either male and/or African American. Hendrickson et al. (1998) found that there are a significantly greater number of males than females in restrictive programs for students with severe behavioral disorders. Sutherland, Wehby, and Yoder (2002) found only thirty-three female students as opposed to 183 male students in 20 participating self-contained classrooms. African-Americans made up the majority of students in both studies.

Behavioral Management

One of the most important intervention strategies for students with EBD is a behavior management system. Various systems have been shown to work and have similar components. Individual students should have behavioral and social goals specified in their IEPs, but classroom teachers should have a class-wide system in place as well. Effective behavior management principles are linked to academic and behavioral gains. Behavior management procedures, routines for classroom procedures, effective instructional delivery, and structures for a variety of instructional activities all affect the behavior of the class (Gunter et al., 2002). Therefore, to the benefit of the teacher and the students, a consistent system assists in the effective management of the class. To provide consistency, a behavioral management system should consist of multiple components. First, there should be a list of four or five positively stated rules. The rules need to be stated in terms of observable behavior, and should be posted where all class members can see them.

Secondly, there should be a hierarchal reprimand/consequence system. This system can be integrated into the statement of the rules, but to do so may make it more difficult to state the rules positively. Even if not posted with the rules, it is helpful to post the levels of consequence for inappropriate behaviors for easy reference and reminder. An example hierarchy is: nonverbal warning, verbal warning, loss of recess/center time, referral, call-home, and parent conference.

Thirdly, a points or token system can be implemented. This positively reinforces individual students for natural appropriate interactions of instruction, such as task completion.

Tokens can be any items, such as tickets, plastic chips, or play money. The items can be exchanged for tangible items such as food, markers, play jewelry, or books. However, it can be very easy to use token systems ineffectively; thereby disrupting an otherwise carefully put together management system. It is important to exercise consistency and to follow the stated rule hierarchy. Also helpful is recording in point form any tokens awarded and exchanged, as well as informing students that the teacher knows how many tokens each student should have (to discourage negative behaviors, such as stealing). Class-wide reinforcement systems similar to the token system may be used in conjunction with the token system, such as marble jars or desk charts, where a class or group accumulation results in an award. The teacher may chose the award, or allow students to vote on the award. Example class awards include free days or class parties (Gunter et al., 2002).

A fourth behavioral management system component is consistent communication with parents or guardians. Such communication can be attempted through a daily or weekly folder in which notes and student work are sent home for parental review and returned to teacher with comments and/or a signature. Teachers can also send home awards or notices to inform parents of the achievements or problems of the child (Kamps et al., 1999). Teachers should incorporate these components of behavioral management systems in order to clearly inform students of what behaviors are expected and accepted in the classroom.

Classrooms are often hard to manage during transitional periods or times that require students to be out of their seats. Students with EBD find it difficult to focus at these times and may respond in a disruptive or inappropriate manner. The classroom teacher should have a set

procedure for everything that is done in the classroom, and should provide a copy of these procedures for guests to the classrooms, including substitute teachers. The consistency of set procedures helps the EBD student know what to do and what is acceptable to do in various situations or times of need. Times of need for a student can include needing to ask the teacher a question when she is busy with another student or needing to sharpen a pencil. A study by Brophy (1993) (as cited by Gunter et al., 2002) showed that students were more likely to be involved in lessons and academic tasks in classrooms in which teachers told students of procedures, modeled the procedures, and answered questions the students had concerning the procedures.

Functional Behavioral Assessment

One method of discerning which levels and areas of social skills instruction are appropriate for individuals is termed functional behavioral assessment (FBA). FBA is a process of gathering information to help IEP teams understand why a student may be engaging in a challenging behavior. FBA helps IEP teams through the process of assessing and linking the environmental conditions to behaviors that students display in order to predict and thereby control the problem behavior. Either direct or indirect methods of assessment can be used. Indirect assessment does not take place at the time and place of the actual occurrence of the behavior whereas direct assessment does. Examples of indirect assessment are school records, interviews with school staff and parents, and ratings of behavior. Direct assessment methods take place in natural settings such as the classroom, the home, and the playground. Once assessments are completed, the gathered information is used to create hypotheses as to what

functions particular actions of the student serves. The information allows for a little insight into why students act as they do, or what the student is intending to accomplish through certain behaviors, such as teacher attention, or avoidance something unwanted, such as schoolwork. The hypotheses of FBAs serve as the basis for intervention plans to reduce negative and to increase positive behaviors (Lane et al., 2002).

A sub-practice of functional behavioral assessment is functional analysis. Functional analysis takes a step beyond observation of a child in his natural environment to manipulating antecedent or consequent events surrounding the child's target behavior in order to provoke the problem behavior. The purpose of functional analysis is to provide a verification process. Functional behavioral assessment does not need to focus only on social skill or behavioral intervention for students. FBA can also provide identification of preferences for specific types of academic activities and tasks, improving the academic performance of students (Gibb & Wilder, 2002).

Information gained from performing functional behavioral assessments should be implemented into the curriculum, in the form of instruction and/or material adaptions. As cited in Gunter, Denny and Venn (2000), Deschenes, Ebeling, and Sprague (1994) identified nine types of adaptions that can be effective in improving academic performance of EBD students. Those modification suggestions are: size, time, level of support, input, difficulty, output, participation, alternative curricular goals, and substitute curriculum.

Strongly related to functional behavioral assessment and subsequent curricular modifications is the concept of strength-based practice. This is the practice of focusing on

strengths to shift attention to child proficiencies and assets. Some strengths-based practices have centered on family strengths but research has also been conducted on individual child strengths and the use of assessment on the child-strengths in treatment, planning and level of care decision-making for EBD children (Oswald, Cohen, Best, Jenson, & Lyons, 2001).

Opportunity to Respond/Teacher Praise

Negative reinforcement is a practice that has long been used in the classroom, especially classrooms containing EBD students. A cycle can be formed to further complicate the practice, which follows the pattern of (a) student disruptive behavior (b) negative reinforcement for student through removal of the academic task demand (c) removal of disruptive behavior and (d) negative reinforcement for the teacher. This cycle contributes to the deficit in academics of EBD students. More effective behavior practices can keep this cycle from occurring. Research indicates that increasing the rate at which students are given the opportunity to respond to academic requests also increases their on-task behavior and decreases disruptive behavior. As cited by Sutherland (2000) the Council for Exceptional Children provides guidelines for teachers of students with high incidence disabilities regarding opportunities to respond (OTR) to academic requests. According to the Council, teachers should elicit 4 to 6 responses per minute from students during instruction from new material and should elicit 8-12 responses per minute during practice and drill work. Following this response pattern makes the teacher more effective by allowing him to adjust the lesson based on student feedback, to increase the quality of instruction, and to increase the attentiveness of students. In a study by Carnine (1976) (as cited in Sutherland 2000) faster presentation rates

resulted in higher percentages of correct responses than a slow presentation rate. This study

also showed that increased OTR resulted in lower rates of off-task behavior and higher rates of

participation. In fact, percentages of off-task behaviors were significantly higher during slower

presentation (62% as compared to 7% during faster presentation).

The data has two implications concerning the cycle of negative response patterns. One

is that the need for terminating unwanted behavior is almost eliminated. Therefore, there will

no longer be negative reinforcement for the students in avoiding classroom tasks. Two, the

teacher-student relationship and subsequent task engagement are positively increased. These

increased OTR allow more of an opportunity for praise.

Despite this possibility for positive instead of negative teacher-student relationships,

teachers continue to use low rates of praise in their classrooms. This is found to be especially

true in classrooms only for students with EBD. Praise rates in EBD classrooms have been found

to be as low as one praise statement per hour. Also few statements are behavior specific. A

study conducted by Sutherland et al. (2000) indicates that percentages of on-task intervals

increased when the rate of behavior specific praise was increased and decreased when the rate

was decreased. An example of a behavior specific praise directed toward a child who has just

appropriately raised his hand to answer the teacher's question: "Marcus, I really like the way

that you are quietly raising your hand."

It is suggested that teachers monitor their rates of praise and their use of OTR. This can

be done through feedback from peers or through self-evaluation. Video-taped instruction is a

very effective way for teachers to monitor their use of effective teaching strategies. It is

important to the education of students with EBD that teachers be willing to evaluate themselves and to receive feedback from colleagues. Obviously, this will require extra effort on the part of the classroom teacher (Sutherland et al., 2000).

Peer Support

The use of the peer group is an important concept when providing intervention for students with EBD. A specific strategy for using the peer group should be designed. The majority of children with EBD has not been part of a properly functioning social group and will not necessarily pick up on the characteristics of a new, properly functioning group. Some strategies for utilizing the peer group to decrease inappropriate behavior include peer monitoring, positive peer reporting, peer tutoring, and peer confrontation. In peer monitoring, one student is taught to observe and record the behavior of a specific peer and provide feedback to that student. Peer reporting is a way of discouraging negative comments made about other students. Instead of reinforcing students for making negative comments, such as comments known as "tattling," students are taught, encouraged, and reinforced for reporting each other's positive behaviors. Peer tutoring can take the form of academic or social skill tutoring between students. The intent is to improve both academic and social skills no matter which of the two is the subject of the tutoring. Teachers should provide students with specific tasks for each tutoring session and should allow the students to exchange teacher and learner roles. In peer confrontation, students are trained to confront one another when they feel an inappropriate behavior has occurred or may occur. The confrontation includes identifying the

behavior, explaining why it is a problem, and suggesting or even modeling appropriate alternative responses (Shapiro, Miller, Sawka, Gardill, & Handler, 1999).

A method of creating group cohesiveness in a class for children with EBD is called group process. The group process can take many forms but most of the different forms include group meetings and group-oriented contingencies. The group meetings are held twice a day. The teacher and students meet in the morning to review the daily schedule, to state specific and individual behavioral goals for the day, to provide support and suggestions to one another for meeting those goals, and to establish a daily group goal. Another meeting is held at the end of the day to discuss how well the goals of the day were met and to once again give the students opportunity to give and receive positive peer comments. Group-oriented contingencies are the rewards or privileges awarded to the group for meeting certain requirements (Hirn & Park, 2012).

Self-Management/Self-Evaluation

Self-management and self-evaluation can be extremely powerful tools to the student with EBD. It can provide them with the opportunity to learn responsibility and help them to realize the importance of attitude and determination. Students can conduct self-management through self-monitoring. This is a simple process of observing and recording the occurrence or nonoccurrence of one's own behavior. Self-evaluation consists of comparing one's own behavior against a standard or a goal. In this technique, the teacher begins by rating the students for classroom behavior and academic work on a scale from 5 to 0. At some teacher designated point, the students begin to evaluate their own behavior using the same scale.

Students then compare their ratings to that of the teacher. If the student's rating is within one

point of the teacher's the student earns the number of points he has given himself. If the

ratings are the same, the student gets the points plus a bonus point. Students are encouraged

to continue rating themselves, but the teacher gradually stops rating the students. Standards

concerning accumulation of points are set at the beginning stages of implementation. Students

exchange points at pre-set time periods for a reward. Analysis of self-management

interventions conducted by Shapiro et al. (1999) indicate that the method is effective based on

feedback and attention given to students by people who are genuinely concerned with the

children's success. The same study also concluded that this method will not be effective if

students do not perceive reinforcers to be motivating or if students do not accept responsibility

for their behavior.

Challenges of Classroom Intervention

A major concern of educators is curricular modification. Many teachers are concerned

that altering the curriculum of EBD students in order to retain their attention, increase student

response, or to focus on social skills in reality creates a "curriculum of noninstruction." They

believe that although important, there is too much emphasis placed on socio-behavioral

matters and not enough of the core curriculum of reading, mathematics, social studies, and

science. They feel that this emphasis may harm the student academically, creating yet another

barrier between the EBD students and the average general education student (Lane et al.,

2002).

Teachers may also avoid curricular modification based on their values. For instance, although a given curricular modification has been proven to improve Johnny's behavior and successful completion of tasks, Mrs. Gray feels that it undermines the importance of handwriting and she therefore chooses not to implement the modification. In light of this information, it may be helpful if the teacher were to be given a number of modification possibilities to choose from (Kern et al., 2001).

Conclusions

One of the greatest challenges of intervention is creating an environment in which students learn both academic and social skills at acceptable rates. There is a lot of debate about whether or not this environment could be a general education classroom for every student with EBD, with an equal frequency in research supporting each side of the debate. Regardless of the location, students with EBD should receive instruction in both social and academic areas. However, challenging student behavior often adversely affects the student-teacher relationship to the point where the teacher limits interaction with the student. As a result, students with behavioral problems tend to have fewer opportunities to respond during instruction, receive less feedback, and are provided less instruction than their peers who are more compliant. The degree to which teachers can manage challenging student behavior is directly related to the probability of student success in the classroom (Hirn et al., 2012).

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures

This study focuses on the academic achievement of one particular student in a behavior modification class at a selected Junior High School. Children with emotional and behavioral disorders have a significantly difficult time staying on task. Will the student be able to effectively stay on task after receiving social skills instruction? Will the student be able to gain academic achievement after receiving social skills instruction? These are the questions that are addressed in this study.

Population:

This study was conducted at T.A. Dugger Junior High School. There were 600 children who attended the school. White students made up 95 percent of the student population while African-Americans made up 3 percent and Hispanic students account for 1 percent. The other 1 percent was made up of Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaskan students. Forty-seven percent of the student population was economically disadvantaged.

Sample:

The sample for this study was selected from a behavior modification class at the selected Junior High School. The behavior modification class at T.A. Dugger Junior High School was made up of seven male students in sixth and seventh grade. There were no female students in the class. The teacher of the class was female. The students and teacher were assisted by two male teacher assistants. 52 percent of the students at T. A. Dugger were male.

This sample consisted of one student who was in the seventh grade, was male, and thirteen years of age. This particular student was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Mood Disorder. The student was a struggling reader with lower math abilities. His math skills were slightly below grade level while his math skills were at the level of a second-grade student. Due to behavior problems and the lack of staying on task the student could not be in a regular classroom environment throughout the whole academic day. The time that the student did spend in the classroom, a teacher assistant had to be with him to help keep him on task. While in the classroom, the students around him often became distracted by his behavior and the teacher had a difficult time due to the needs of this student and the other class members.

Data Collection Instruments:

Data were collected by observing and recording the behaviors and academic achievement of the student. At the beginning of the study, a baseline was established through observation of the target behaviors of the child while in the classroom setting. There were three different target behaviors that were observed, responding appropriately when given assignments, following directions, and class participation. After baselines for these target behaviors were established, the intervention of social skills were implemented for one week and the target behaviors were observed. After one week, the interventions were withdrawn and target behaviors were observed for one week. . The interventions were then reintroduced and target behaviors were observed for one week. Data was collected and analyzed using an ABAB design.

Procedures:

Before the study began, permission was sought from the school principal and the parent of the student. When permission was granted, the sample was selected. The sample consisted of one male student who was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Mood Disorder. After selection of the subject the study commenced. Week 1 established a baseline. During Week 2, after the baseline was established, the researcher conducted a daily, formal lesson which taught the student social skills for the duration of one week. After the daily, formal social skills lesson, the researcher observed and recorded the behaviors using tally marks. During Week 3, the social skills instruction was withdrawn and observation took place. During Week 4, the daily, formal social skills lesson were again taught and the researcher again recorded the behaviors as outlined above. At the end of the final social skills lesson, the tallies were taken and recorded all together to establish the results.

Research questions and related hypothesis

Research Question 1:

Is there a difference between student academic achievement before and after receiving

social skills instruction?

Research Hypothesis 1:

There is a difference between student academic achievement before and after receiving

social skills instruction.

Null Hypotheses 1:

There is no difference between student academic achievement before and after

receiving social skills instruction.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of social skills instruction on the academic achievement of a seventh grade student with an emotional and behavioral disorder. Academic achievement was measured by the number of times the student exhibited target behaviors.

Collection of Data:

Data was collected from one subject at a selected school who exhibited problems with social skills due to an emotional and behavioral disorder. Target behaviors were identified as responding appropriately when given assignments, following directions, and class participation. The design to collect data was ABAB. During Phase A, a baseline was established on target behaviors. This phase lasted for one week. During Phase B, an intervention was introduced. The subject was taught social skills for one week while collecting data on target behaviors. Week three, intervention was withdrawn and data collected. Intervention was reintroduced and data were collected. Data were analyzed using graphs.

Research question and related hypothesis:

One research question was used to guide the analysis of this research. The research question states: is there a difference between student academic achievement before and after receiving social skills instruction? A related hypothesis was established stating there is a difference between student academic achievement before and after receiving social skills

instruction. To answer the research question, data were collected for a week to establish a

baseline for the target behaviors.

After establishing a baseline, the intervention of social skills instruction took place for a

week and there was a significant difference in the student's academic achievement. The subject

was taught survival skills (e.g., listening, following directions, ignoring distractions, using nice or

brave talk, rewarding yourself), interpersonal skills (e.g., sharing, asking for permission, joining

an activity, waiting your turn), problem-solving skills (e.g., asking for help, apologizing,

accepting consequences, deciding what to do), and conflict resolution skills (e.g., dealing with

teasing, losing, accusations, being left out, peer pressure).

The student appeared to revert to baseline status during week 3 when the intervention

was withdrawn. Intervention was reintroduced after the withdrawn phase. Again, the results

indicated a significant difference in the student's academic achievement. As a result of these

findings, the null hypothesis has to be rejected. Graphs for each of the three target behaviors

are displayed in Figure 1.

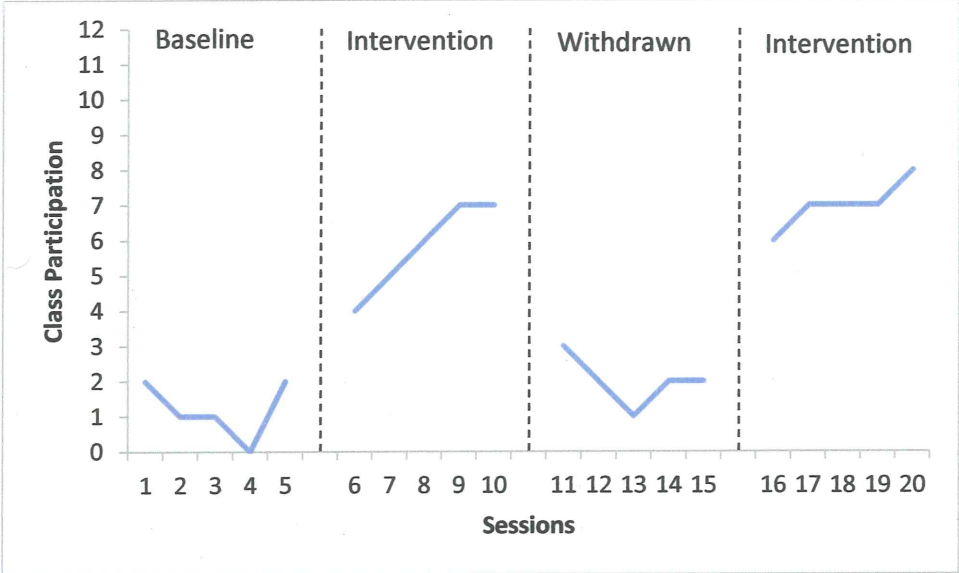**Figure 1 Target Behaviors: Appropriate Responses, Following Directions, Class Participation**

Graph 1: Appropriate Responses
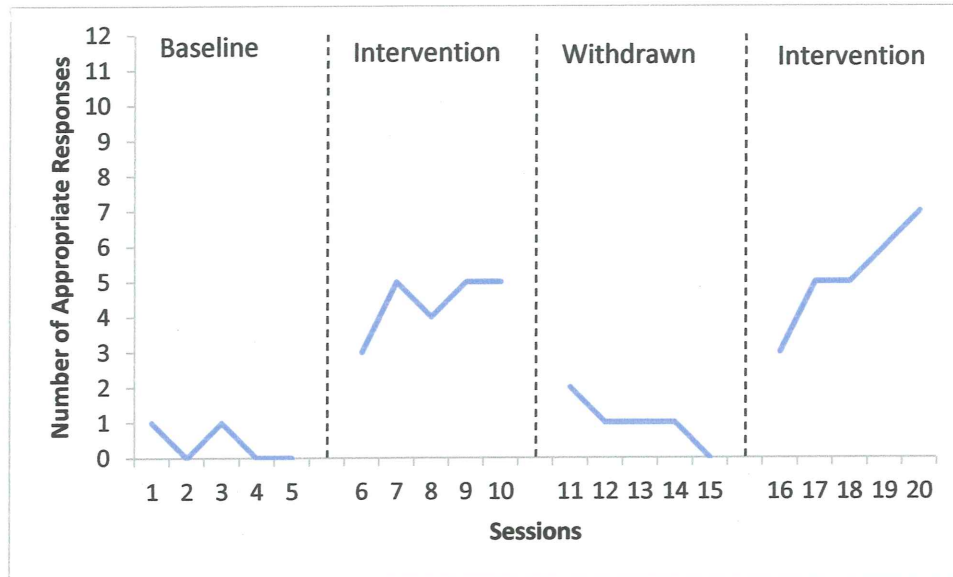
Graph 2: Following Directions
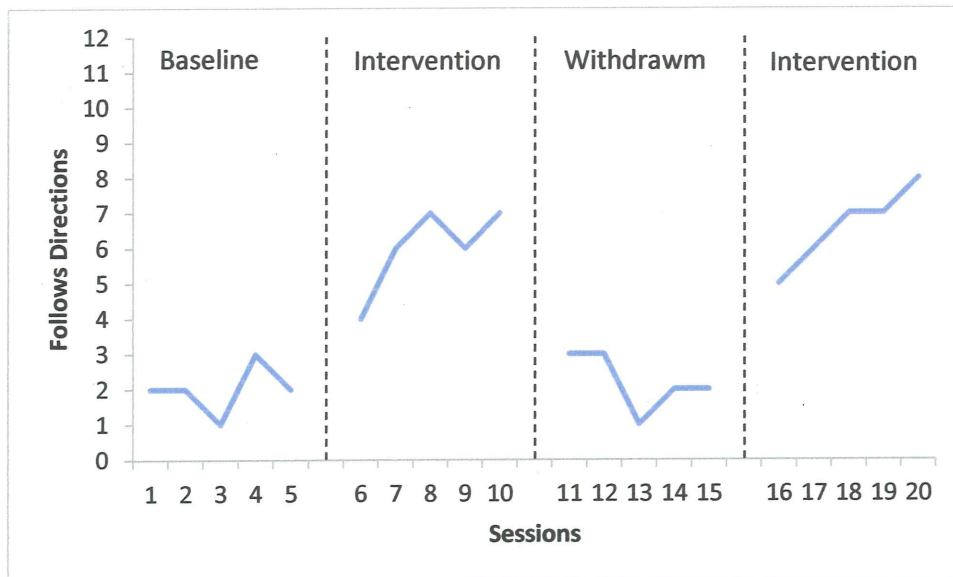
Graph 3: Class Participation

Chapter 5

Findings, Recommendations, and Implications

Introduction:

This research project was conducted to determine if teaching social skills to a student with an emotional and behavioral disorder will result in increased academic achievement of the student. This chapter consists of the Summary of Findings, Recommendations, and Implications.

Summary of Findings:

In regard to the research question, is there a difference between student academic achievement before and after receiving social skills instruction, a hypothesis was formulated that states that there is a difference between student academic achievement before and after receiving social skills instruction. This research project was able to identify a significant increase in academic achievement as measured by tasks completed for target behaviors when the intervention of social skills instruction was applied. For this study, target behaviors were identified as responding appropriately when given assignments, following directions, and participation in class activities.

Baseline for the target behaviors was first established for an entire week. The target behaviors were identified and the student was observed for one week to establish the baseline. Then the intervention phase was applied with the student beginning each school day of an entire week receiving social skills instruction. The student spent thirty minutes each morning one on one with a teacher completing formal lesson units on social skills. Each unit contained a

major goal, measurable student objectives, and content and classroom activities. During the

intervention phase, the amount of time on task exhibited by the student for target behaviors

was enhanced. During the withdrawn phase the intervention was withdrawn for a week, the

subject appeared to return to baseline status. When the intervention was not given, the subject

demonstrated more negative responses when assigned tasks and experienced difficulties in

interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers as well as poor academic performance.

Negative responses included the student hitting his desk, blurting out inappropriate language,

rolling his eyes, and making inappropriate gestures when given assignments. During the final

intervention phase, the subject gradually returned to the same point where the intervention

had left off. The subject would more often respond appropriately when assigned tasks and

would even acknowledge how well he was working and well he was acting with his peers.

Positive responses included saying "yes" and "okay" or quietly receiving the assignment and

writing it down in his planner. He would also collaborate with classmates and follow directions.

Good social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable us to

know what to say, how to make good choices, and how to behave in diverse situations. The

extent to which children and adolescents possess good social skills can influence their academic

performance. Much research has been done that shows there is an advantage in educating

students with emotional and behavioral disorders about appropriate social skills. Lane et al.

(2002) and Hendrickson et al. (1998) conclude that a portion of the curriculum for students with

EBD should include training in learning to control antisocial behavior. Kamps et al. (1999)

identifies key skills that should be selected for intervention. These include classroom survival

skills, skills that promote positive interactions, and those that provide problem-solving

strategies. Classroom survival skills include following directions, task completion, making choices, and accepting consequences. Interpersonal skills include joining a group, giving compliments, and appropriate play. Problem-solving strategies include negotiation, ignoring inappropriate behaviors of peers, and anger management.

In conclusion, results from this research indicate a significant difference in the academic achievement of an EBD student when the intervention of social skills instruction is applied. It is evident that both academic and social skills instruction are important for the EBD student. Academic instruction is important to keep EBD students from falling behind their peers and social skills instruction is important to teach and reemphasize the prosocial behavior necessary for inclusion in the classroom.

Recommendations:

1. Further studies should use a different design such as experimental with an experimental and control group to determine whether the same results would be realized.

2. Further studies should focus on other target behaviors that enhance social and academic skills.

3. Further studies should utilize two researchers, one as observers for target behaviors and the other to teach social skills.

Implications:

While most children pick up positive skills through their everyday interactions with adults and peers, it is important that educators and parents teach the EBD student appropriate social skills with direct and indirect instruction. We must also recognize what specific interventions are effective as not to waste instructional time. In the past, schools have relied exclusively on families to teach children important interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. However, increased negative societal influences and demands on family life make it imperative that schools partner with parents to facilitate this social learning process. This is particularly true for EBD students given the role social skills play in their academic achievement.

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