

Reading Instruction Strategies for Students with Emotional or Behavior Disorders: Practices that Engage Students with Different Reading Levels in a Self-Contained Classroom

David Blaiklock

George Mason University

Abstract

Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD) achieve at lower levels than their peers in reading. Recent research has been conducted to develop evidence-based practices in reading instruction. Students in self-contained classrooms may have a range of reading levels. This study explores ~~the teacher reported teaching~~ practices ~~used to~~ engage students with EBD during reading instruction. Twelve teachers of self-contained classrooms were observed over a nine month period. The teachers also submitted lesson plans and were interviewed by the researcher. Anticipated themes consistent with previous research include instructional quality, responsiveness to student needs, socioemotional climate are discussed. The additional anticipated themes are behavior management, differentiation of instruction, and proficiency in remediation.

Intro Title name here

Students with emotional or behavior disorders (EBD) perform at lower academic levels than their same age peers. cite Previous research has indicated that in addition to their aggressive and externalizing behaviors, students with EBD struggle with both mathematics and reading (Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout, & Epstein, 2004). Students with EBD tend to perform at lower levels in mathematics than they do in reading. This phenomenon may be due to recent focus on attempts to improve the reading levels of students with EBD (Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout, & Epstein, 2004).

~~Recent research such as~~ Staubitz, Cartledge, Yurick, and Lo (2005) used a peer-assisted repeated reading strategy ~~has worked to develop evidence based practices for~~ improving the reading fluency and comprehension skills of elementary students with EBD. ~~Staubitz et al (2005) used a peer-assisted repeated reading strategy to improve the reading fluency and comprehension of elementary students with EBD.~~ One of the challenges in the study was the disproportionate rates of improvement amongst the students. The majority of the repeated reading occurred with the researcher as ? the peer due to the disparity in reading levels amongst the students in the study (Staubitz, Cartledge, Yurick, & Lo, (2005). Given the potential differences in reading levels amongst students with EBD in a self-contained classroom it is challenging for the teacher to design reading instruction that will engage the varying abilities of the group.

Seo, Brownell, Bishop, and Dingle (2008) explored how beginning special education teachers engaged students with learning disabilities during reading instruction through/by The themes identified were instructional quality, responsiveness to student needs, socioemotional

culture of the classroom, and student autonomy. Though the focus of Seo et al. (2008) was on beginning special education teachers, it is important to focus on how teachers engage students with disabilities in reading instruction. The present study will explore how connect with previous citation – beginning? Veterans? Years of experience? special education teachers in middle school self-contained classrooms engage students with EBD in reading instruction.

Guiding research questions include.....??? Uh oh

Method

Obvious here - but nonetheless – need to identify the design you are using here...connect with

Formatted: Left

Leo et al. study in suggesting if this is a modification of their design or other....

Participants

Twelve teachers from self-contained special education classrooms across# six middle schools from a suburban Northern Virginia area will participate in this study. The teachers will be chosen through purposeful sampling of self-contained classrooms containing specific disabilities (i.e.,). How exactly were they found and then asked to participate? What was selection criteria and your rationale for the selection? Six of the 12 ~~of the~~ participating teachers are White females, four are African-American females, and two are African-American males. The amount of experience teaching for the participating teachers ranges from two to eight years with the median amount of time being five years. All of the teachers participating in the study are fully licensed sped??? or other. Eight of the teachers have master's degrees in special education and the remaining four have bachelor's degrees in special education.

Each of the teacher participant's classrooms will contain nine students may want to have a range here since student attrition etc. who will all be identified as having an emotional or behavioral disorder (EBD) as their primary or secondary disability. The 108 students (90 male,

18 female) from the twelve chosen classrooms are aged 13-15 (grades 7-8). Of the 108 students in the participating classrooms, 48 are African-American, 36 are Hispanic, and 24 are White. Approximately 80% of the students participating in this study are eligible for a free or reduced price lunch.

Data Sources

The data sources for this study will be field notes from classroom observations, [teacher](#) lesson plans, and teacher interviews. Permission to conduct the observations and the interviews will be obtained from the school district superintendent and the principal for each school [university?](#). Informed consent will be obtained from each teacher for the observations and interviews and from the parents of the students in each self-contained classroom for the observations. The researcher will explain the study to each of the self-contained classrooms and obtain verbal assent from all of the students. [Mention of HSRB....school district has a board as well as University](#)

Observations

Each classroom will be observed monthly over a nine month period of time. The observations will be conducted by six trained doctoral students who have at least two years of experience working in a self-contained classroom, with each observer assigned to two classroom teachers. Each observer will be assigned to two of the teachers for the length of the study. Training will consist of meeting as a group, reviewing taped classroom sessions, and comparing the field notes for consistency. The researcher will discuss the importance of documenting both the teacher behavior and the student response during reading instruction.

Each monthly observation will last 40 minutes and be arranged at the convenience of the teacher for the English/reading period that will be observed. The total observation time for each

classroom will be approximately 360 minutes. The observers will sit at the back of the room and make notes of how each teacher is engaging the students during reading instruction. Notes will also be taken on how the students respond to the instruction being provided. The observer will not engage the students in any dialogue and will ignore any attempts the students make to engage them. If the presence of the observer becomes too disruptive to instruction, then subsequent observations will be videotaped and field notes will be taken from viewing the video. The field notes will be gathered on a blank sheet with two columns. In one column both direct quotes of how the teacher engages the students and the behavior of the teacher will be documented. Immediately following the observation, the observer will document their interpretations of each of the field notes next to them in the second column. Pseudonyms will be used for the teacher and students to ensure confidentiality. The field notes and any video will be kept in a locked safe by the primary researcher and will be destroyed after they have been ²when information from them is no longer needed. Observations occur before, during, or after interviews? Seems that observation data could support the results of the interview and conducted after an interview – could provide a more specific context of what behaviors to observe....Activities in a classroom are so vast that these observers are undertaking quite a task. Try layering these data sources meaningfully in your procedures....

Interviews

Each teacher will participate in a semi-structured interview with the primary researcher after three months and at the end of the study. The questions will focus on the teacher's education in reading instruction, the strategies they use to engage each student in reading instruction?, and their perception of their own effectiveness ~~of their ability~~ to engage students in reading instruction. Examples of questions posed will be "How much time did you spend during

your teacher preparation program learning how to teach reading to students with EBD?” “How do you prepare a lesson for students with multiple reading abilities?” “What strategies do you use to engage every student?” and “How effective do you think you are at engaging every student during reading instruction?”. Based on the answers to those questions, the researcher may probe to gain a better understanding of how the teachers engage their students during reading instruction. The anticipated length of each interview will be 90 minutes. Where will this take place. The interviews will be audio taped and the recording will be transcribed. Each transcription will be given to the teacher for review to ensure that their answers have been appropriately captured. The researcher will also take field notes during the interviews to reference when analyzing the transcription. The same pseudonyms used for each teacher will be used for the interview data to align the data for analysis. The field notes, audiotapes, and transcriptions will be kept by the primary researcher in a locked safe and destroyed when they are no longer needed at the conclusion of the study.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans for every observed English/reading lesson will be gathered from each teacher. There may be a need then in your selection criteria to only include teacher participants who compose daily lesson plans for reading lessons. This is not always the case and you require this as a data source. The observers will change the name of the teacher and any students to the assigned pseudonym to align the data. There will be no guidance for the teachers on the type of lesson plan they need to provide. The purpose of reviewing the lesson plans is to review a documented source of planning that the teacher has prepared prior to engaging the students in the lesson. The observers will be coding the lesson plans of their assigned teachers. The lesson

plans will be kept by the primary researcher in a locked safe and destroyed when they are no longer needed.

Data Analysis

The three years of experience the primary researcher Often in qual. Research, this is discussed in first person... had in the classroom was working with EBD students in a self-contained classroom at a separate private day school. Reword.. The experience working with those students will informed the perspective in interpreting the data from the observations, interviews, and lesson plans. The observers all had experience working in a self-contained classroom that informed their perspective in their interpretations and coding of the data. Here you begin to address the researchers role in the analysis (An important component to include) – perspective and bias – how is this addressed in the procedures/design? Need more explanation here.....and perhaps its own section prior to data analysis – could even be a data source

The field notes and analysis from the nine observations, the field notes and transcriptions from the two interviews, and the lesson plans will be coded as the data is collected using open coding. The researcher and observers will underline and label portions of the transcripts they believe to have meaning – all has meaning – perhaps common patterns or emerging categories – or frequently used terms. The researcher will review the field notes from all of the observations and the lesson plans and code them using open coding. Seems that the observer may be needed to verify field notes and own interpretations/reflections – so MORE researchers developing codes/interpreting helps to support the internal validity of the study. The observers will be broken into two groups of three and will code the interview, field notes, and observation data from the teachers they are observing in addition to the teachers observed by the two other members of the group. Each group will meet with the researcher after they have coded the

previous month's observations, lesson plans, to compare their results. They will also meet after the interview data has been coded from each interview. The goal of the groups is to increase the credibility of the results through collaboration with peers and the researcher. What will they do in these meetings?

As the study progresses the researcher and observers will categorize the codes that will be discovered about how the teachers are engaging their students during reading instruction. Across data or as a case study of 'each' teacher? The categories will be broken down into themes that will be discussed at length with examples from the observations and interviews. The credibility of the themes will be triangulated by comparing (elaborate here as to WHAT you are comparing exactly – you are looking across data sources forXXXX XX How are you triangulating across data sources) the observations with the interviews and lesson plans.

Results

The anticipated themes of this study will be similar to those found by Seo et al.(2005). Instructional quality refers to the organization of the teacher's lesson and the ability to have the students relate to the lesson. Responsiveness to student needs refers to the teacher's ability to identify when students are struggling during the lesson and provide the necessary support to help them stay on task. Socioemotional climate refers to how conducive the classroom atmosphere is to learning. Promoting student autonomy is the ability of the teacher to get each student to work independently for part of the lesson (Seo, Brownell, Bishop, & Dingle, 2008).

Based on the researcher's experience with the EBD population in the self-contained setting, additional anticipated themes include behavior management, differentiation of instruction, and proficiency in remediation. Students with EBD often have difficulty staying on task particularly when they find the material to be frustrating. They will often engage in task

avoidance by either withdrawing from the lesson or attempting to engage others in off-task disruptive behaviors. The teachers of students with EBD in self-contained classrooms need to be skilled in behavior management to facilitate learning and to support students when they are struggling to prevent them from disrupting the lesson. Since students with EBD in middle school may potentially read at different levels, the teacher must be skilled at differentiating instruction. Differentiating instruction is important to prevent the less skilled readers from becoming frustrated and to keep the more skilled readers appropriately challenged to prevent them from becoming bored with the lesson. It is anticipated that engagement in reading instruction for students with EBD will include the ability to identify reading weaknesses and teach the skills necessary to improve them. Students with EBD may have difficulty with different components of reading. In order to effectively engage the student in reading instruction, the teacher must be able to identify and strengthen these weaknesses.

Discussion

Students with EBD in self-contained classrooms read at a lower level than their peers of the same age. As they get older, they have less ability to access the content curriculum of middle and secondary school. The inability to access the content curriculum causes frustration and underachievement, which may eventually lead to dropping out of school and underemployment. The frustration caused by reading may also lead to externalizing behaviors that may prevent the students from being in a less restrictive environment. Therefore, it is important to identify the necessary skills to successfully teach reading to students with EBD in a self-contained setting. Once those skills are identified, they can be further examined and included in teacher education and in-service training. Increasing student engagement in reading lessons will also decrease their frustration with school and their externalizing behavior. As their reading levels improve they

will be more autonomous and increase their abilities to work and learn independently. Being successful and needing fewer supports will allow students with EBD to be in a less restrictive environment and have the ability to participate in inclusionary classes where they will be able to learn with non-disabled peers. Perhaps in the discussion, connect more so with the methods used as well!!! – for example, limitations of the conceptualized study; Anticipated future investigations, etc.

References

- Reid, R., Gonzalez, J. E., Nordness, P. D., Trout, A., & Epstein, M. H. (2004). A meta-analysis of the academic status of students with emotional/behavioral disturbance. *The Journal of Special Education, 38*(3), 130-143.
- Seo, S., Brownell, M. T., Bishop, A. G., & Dingle, M. (2008). Beginning special education teachers' classroom reading instruction: practices that engage elementary students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children 75*(1), 97-122.
- Staubitz, J. E., Cartledge, G, Yurick, A. L., & Lo, Y. (2005). Repeated reading for students with emotional or behavior disorders: peer- and trainer-mediated instruction. *Behavioral Disorders, 31*(1), 51-64

8 points.