Special Needs Students in Inclusive Classrooms:

The Impact of Social Interaction on Educational Outcomes for Learners with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

nclusion of students with special needs is prevalent in many countries. One of many goals of special education is to give students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the least restrictive environment so that they receive as much education as possible with non-disabled students. There are many strategies and models school systems are using to ensure special education students are participating within the mainstream classroom setting; however, the inclusion model seems to prove to be the most beneficial in the areas of academic achievement and social interaction. The inclusion model centers on educating students with disabilities in the general education setting along with their non-disabled peers. General education teachers do have concerns about teaching students with learning impairments including lack of training, planning time, and resources so research is essential to demonstrate how the inclusion model can have a positive impact on academic achievement as well as social interaction among students with disabilities. This paper includes a review of literature relating to the problems special needs students encounter by being included in the regular classroom. In general, the literature indicates inclusion can be problematic for special needs students. However, the literature indicates with proper training and resources, inclusion can be a practical and effective learning environment.

Keywords: *Inclusive Classrooms, Special Needs Student in Inclusion, Special Education*

What are Inclusive Classrooms?

The *inclusion method* is a basic model where both disabled and non-disabled students are educated within the same classroom. Educational inclusion, then, offers education geared to include all students, even those with disabilities in the same learning environment. This may include *special needs children* who have emotional and/or behavioral problems. Teachers may encounter a variety of situations in the classroom, including those with learning disorders, emotional disabilities, and mental retardation. Special needs students are placed in the regular education classroom and are involved in instructional settings that may have the general education teacher, the special education teacher, the teacher assistant and possibly parental or community volunteers (Wiebe & Kim, 2008). The most popular inclusion method seems to be a co-teaching model. "Co-teaching may be defined as the partnership of a general education teacher and a special education teacher or another specialist for the purpose of jointly delivering instruction to a diverse group of students, including those with disabilities or other special needs, in a general education setting, and in a way that flexibly and deliberately meets their learning needs" (Friend, Cook, Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010, p. 241).

Inclusion of all children within the classroom has brought about a new challenge for teachers. A typical class may consists of gifted children, slow learners, English-language learners, mentally-retarded children, hyperactive children, emotionally challenged children, and low socio-economically status children. With such a diverse combination, classroom management, along with focusing on delivering a differentiated instruction that targets each student individually in the classroom has made a regular education teacher's job beyond difficult. Because the state and federal education systems are calling for schools to improve special education, school systems are turning to inclusion of special education students in the mainstream setting.

Education can be a powerful tool to unify the students with disabilities and those without them (Mowat, 2010), but what problems do special needs students encounter by being included in the regular classroom? This review of the literature will examine the effects of the inclusion model on the academic achievement and social interaction among students with disabilities.

A Brief History of Inclusion

The many issues affecting inclusion of special needs students have been debated over the last 25 years (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011). The term "inclusion" replaced all previous terminologies, i.e., integrated special education, reverse mainstreaming, previous to the early 1990s in hopes that the word would mean more than placing children with special needs in the regular educational classroom, including a sense of belonging, social relationships, and academic development and learning (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011).

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), requires American school systems to examine how to best address the needs of students with disabilities based on academic achievement. This has "shifted the instructional focus with regard to students with disabilities from where they are educated to how they are educated" (McDuffie, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2009, p. 494). It requires that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum by being placed in the least restricted environment possible and therefore participate in the same assessments as students without disabilities unless the nature of their disability is determined to be too severe to do so. Both also mandate that students with disabilities show progress in academic classes and participate with their non-disabled peers on all state assessments. "Districts and schools have struggled to overcome

a history of a separate and segregated special education system, and for various reasons, efforts to include students with disabilities in general education have not always been successful" (Calabrase, Patterson, Liu, Goodvin, & Hummel, 2008, p. 62). Many school systems have adopted the inclusion model as a method to ensure IDEA and NCLB are being implemented.

Learning Theories Related to Inclusion

Social Learning Theory. With so many factors that would seem to make inclusive classrooms unproductive, what learning theories might support the idea? Within the school setting, all students are expected to learn academic concepts as well as behavioral skills. Because both of these areas often times are potential barriers for disabled students, they can develop low self-esteem issues which hinder them socially. "These learners, due to their histories of repeated failure at school, are likely to feel as though academic outcomes are beyond their control, thus perceiving themselves as less competent than their peers" (Ntshangase, Mdikana, & Cronk, 2008, p. 77). It is important that academic content and social skills are addressed within the classroom.

Albert Bandura developed the social learning theory which states that learning, both cognitive and behavioral, takes place through the observation, modeling, and imitation of others. "The main characteristic of the social learning theory, are the centrality of observational learning, a causal model that involves an environment- person- behavior system, cognitive contributions, and self-efficacy and agency" (Miller, 2011, p. 236). This theory proposes that academic and behavior modeling takes place through verbal instruction, live modeling by a person, and symbolic modeling through four steps: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Inclusion classes capitalize on this theory because disabled peers can observe their nondisabled peers and their teachers and then imitate them both academically and behaviorally. Social learning theory combined with Freudian learning principles focus on teaching children important real-life social behaviors (Miller, 2011). As mentioned before, advocates for inclusion thought this course of action would help students with disabilities by emerging them into a learning community that mimics a mini society. Through this learning community students with disabilities are able to interact with their peers and develop friendships.

When included in the regular classroom, special needs students have the opportunity to see their peers working habits, and they can model those habits and behaviors to reflect their own. This insight ties into the Freudian theory of identification through observation of learned behavior from the peers around them. Bandura and Walter, who were two other researchers who expanded on the exploration of Sigmund Freud's identification concept of identification through modeling, realized that new behavior can be attained by observation; for example, when a student sees a peer being praised for their hard work, the student learns to try that behavior in hopes of pleasing the teacher and being praised also (Miller, 2011). This plays into the observational theory, where students with special needs can watch the correct behavior and model that desired performance.

Observational Learning Theory. Students with special needs can learn not only desired behaviors from their peers through social interaction, they can also learn academically within their learning community. Children can be the best teachers. Cooperative learning involves social interaction amongst the students, and it is the key to educational thinkers such as Piaget and Vygotsky (Slavin, 2009). Using social interaction and active experiences in learning helps children to feed knowledge to one another. These methods also promote social communication skills that children will need to possess as adults. They will need to be able to effectively discuss the various issues that will occur as life progresses. Even students with special needs can offer educational

knowledge to their peers; if the students learn that they can teach others and learn from others, and then they will feel a sense of belonging, pride, and responsibility. When students are working together, these students can be paired with slower learner students from time to time. When students work together and are able to engage in discussions on different ideas, then the sky's the limit to what types of knowledge the students can transmit to one another. Peer learning helps students to build effective listening and communication skills (Harding, 2009).

Guided Learning Theory. In addition to social learning and observational learning theories, the zone of proximal development also has implication for inclusive classrooms. According to Lev Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development states that students learn when guided by an adult or when working with more capable peers. "A more competent person collaborates with a child to help him move from where he is now to where he can be with help. This person accomplishes this feat by means of prompts, clues, modeling, explanation, leading questions, discussion, joint participation, encouragement, and control of the child's attention" (Miller, 2011, p. 175). Students with disabilities can learn from their peers without disabilities as well as with the support of adult guidance to gain a better understanding of the concept being taught. For example, peer tutoring has been found to be effective for students with disabilities (McDuffie, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2009). A second example is when a teacher provides scaffolding. Scaffolding occurs a great learning support is provided at the time new concepts are introduced and the support is slowly taken from the student as he or she masters the content.

All three of these theories discussed describe how learning occurs in the classroom both academically and socially. According to Ntshangase, Mdikana, & Cronk (2008), "high social interaction is important not only for learners' academic achievement but also for their long-term general well-being and personal development" (p. 82). The zone of proximal development, in conjunction with the social learning theory, should theoretically help explain how students with disabilities progress academically and increase appropriate social interactions with placed within an inclusion classroom.

Review of Literature on Inclusive Education

Effect on Academic Achievement. The effect of inclusion classes on academic achievement and social interaction for students with disabilities continues to produce positive results. Because self-esteem is a spring board for appropriate social interactions, it is important to note the effect of inclusion in this area. According to a study conducted by Ntshangase, Mdikana, and Cronk (2008), "included and mainstream adolescent boys do not have disparities in their overall levels of self-esteem. This result is very encouraging for schools promoting inclusive practices as it implies that overall sense of worth for included and mainstreamed learners is not disparate" (p. 80). It is important to note that according to this study, disabled students did not indicate lower self-esteem than non-disabled students although it would seem the opposite would be true. Another study by Calabrase, Patterson, Liu, Goodvin, and Hummel (2008) found that the Circle of Friends Program (COFP) was very beneficial in increasing social interactions both inside and outside the classroom. The COFP paired disabled students with a non-disabled buddy and is supported by parents and sponsors. "The COFP is not only a model for successful inclusion of students with disabilities in and outside the classroom but has the potential to serve as a vehicle for facilitating school-wide inclusive educational practices. It was evident that the COFP helps foster a culture of acceptance through encouraging relationships between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

While the COFP introduces buddies into the special education setting, most inclusion efforts begin with placing students with disabilities in the general education classroom" (Calabrase, Patterson, Liu, Goodvin, & Hummel, 2008, p. 37). The success of this program began with an inclusion classroom. Parents, students, and teachers noted the positive results in the area of social interaction during this study.

In another study, Dessemontet, Bless, and Morin (2012) conducted a study comparing the academic progress of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) who were served within an inclusion setting as opposed to a special school setting. The findings indicated that "the included children made slightly more progress in literacy skills than children in special schools" and concluded "from this study that inclusion in general education classrooms… is an appropriate alternative to an education in separate settings for primary pupils with ID who require extensive support in school. This study gives empirical support to the actual efforts made to develop more inclusive practices for children with ID" (p. 583). Further, research by Chitiyo, Makweche-Chitiyo, Park, Ametepee, and Chitiyo (2011) examined the correlation between positive behavior support (PBS) and academic achievement in special education students as mandated by IDEA. The study found that the use of PBS to address behavior problems led to an increase in academic achievement.

Effect of Co-Teaching. Some studies specifically address the effects of the co-teaching inclusion model on the academic achievement of disabled students. For example, Conderman (2011) studied the reflections of middle school students, both disabled and non-disabled, in co-teaching classrooms. Students reported that their favorite aspects of co-teaching included "felt I could ask for help… I get more time with teachers… I understand the subject more… Do more fun things…" (Conderman, 2011, p. 25). Students also reported their least favorite aspect of co-teaching was that "they could not get away with anything" (Conderman, 2011, p. 26). Wilson and Michaels (2006) also researched student's perspectives of co-teaching and found that

> *both special and general education students thought they received much of what they needed in the cotaught English classes (e.g., ready access to help, feelings of support and academic efficacy, access to multiple presentation and instructional styles, access to different opinions). Certainly, the beneficial themes that emerged revealed educational settings very favorable to learning. In addition, student participation in co-taught classes contributed to self-reported improvements in literacy (p. 220).*

It is reasonable to believe that students who have positive feeling about their classes will be more likely to be motivated and put forth good effort on assignments thus increasing academic achievement. A fourth study by Hang and Rabren (2009) assessed the effects of co-teaching on standardized testing. The results of this study demonstrated that students with disabilities who had been co-taught for one year had significantly higher SAT NCEs in reading and math than they did before being co-taught. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in academic achievement found between student participants and all students at the same grade level as measured by SAT NCEs. These results "suggest that the academic achievements of co-taught students with disabilities are as typical as the entire school system's student population.

Therefore, these results suggest that co-teaching, as an instructional approach, provides students with disabilities adequate support for their achievements on standardized tests" (Hang & Rabren, 2009, p. 264).   This study determined that co-teach has positive effects on standardized testing, an area that many disabled student struggle with. Lastly, a study by Simmons and Magiera (2007) determined that student achievement was greatest when co-teaching teams emphasized four quality co-teaching indicators: both teachers maintained responsibility for the whole class, accommodations provided for all special education students, both teachers participated during instruction, and an emphasis placed on the learning process. These indicators proved necessary for quality co-teaching to be practiced. When co-teaching is practiced with a correct model, student achievement increases.

Effect due to Gender.   Researchers Nelson, Benner, Lane and Smith (2004) studied the academic achievement of one hundred sixty-six K-12 EBD students and the behavior problems that caused poor academic achievement in all content areas with attention to age and gender differences. The authors defined these achievement problems as externalizing behavior problems and listed them as, "attention, aggression and delinquency" (p. 69). Nelson et al. also suggested "the achievement issues of students with EBD who exhibit externalizing deficits may be more pronounced and "with these students, effective instructional programs may play, at least in part, a role in improving their social skills" (p. 71). Findings showed that male and female students with EBD had large academic deficits relative to their norm group. Next, the authors found that male and female students experienced deficits in all content areas. In fact, "the academic achievement levels of students in the sample remained stable in reading and written language; where as, deficits in mathematics appeared to broaden over time" (p. 69). Results revealed that externalizing behaviors influenced student's academic achievement. In addition, results indicated that there must be earlier identification of students with emotional and behavior disorders.

Effect of Teacher Preparation.   Oliver and Reschly (2010) provide information on teacher organization and preparation in the classroom. The article states that special education teachers as well as general education teachers are not adequately prepared to manage students with behavior disorders in the classroom. Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) or Severely Emotional Disorders (SED) have behaviors that inhibit them academically as well as socially. The EBD student oftentimes cannot or does not know how to control these "acting out" behaviors. Moreover, they are frequently too disruptive in the general education classroom and must be separated from their peers. Conversely, federal law states that students with disabilities must be educated in the same classrooms as their nondisabled peers.

The underlying key to teacher success is preparation. Learning in the classroom with the least disruptions possible is essential. Therefore, to impede negative behavior as much as possible, teachers must be prepared to manage these behaviors. Oliver and Reshly (2010) argue, "Because of the excesses exhibited by students with EBD, teacher skills in classroom organization and behavior management are necessary to address these challenging behaviors, attenuate academic deficits, and support successful inclusion efforts" (p. 188). Teachers must make sure that classrooms are structured and conducive to learning with minimal disruptions. Teachers must have concise rules for the classroom and ensure that students know and understand the rules that are set. Final results of the research of Oliver and Reschly (2010) found that special education teachers "may not be adequately prepared to meet the behavioral needs of diverse learners" (p. 195).

Akalin, Sazak-Pinar, & Sucuogluo (2010) give information on teachers and classroom management in inclusive classrooms. The inclusive classrooms in the study have at least one or more student diagnosed with a learning disability. The authors explain, "In Turkey the law mandating that children with disabilities should be placed in general classroom was accepted in 1983 and mainstreaming has been expanding throughout Turkey since then" (p. 65). However, teachers were not trained to provide accommodations or modifications to adhere to this mandate. Students were mainstreamed, even though few teachers were adequately trained in an academic setting to provide for the needs of students with disabilities. Moreover, Akalin et al. (2010), state, "The effectiveness of mainstreaming has been questioned in the light of the problems being encountered by the children, their parents and especially the teachers since 1990" (p. 65).

Equally important was a study conducted by Fallon, Zhang, Kim (2011), which focused on training teachers to manage the behaviors of students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. Many general education teachers lack the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage these challenging behaviors. The study focused on novice teachers that are certified in the general curriculum who want additional certification in special education. Each participant in the study were volunteers in a graduate class in managing and assessing behaviors of students with disabilities using functional behavior assessments as well as behavior intervention plans. The need to train teachers to manage students with behavior disorders in imperative since these students are now educated in the same classrooms as their nondisabled peers. Educating, training, and cultural diversity should be considered when recruiting teachers to teach students with behavioral and emotional disorders.

It is essential that teachers are trained in the skills and strategies to support behavior management in the classroom as well as the ability to differentiate instruction for students with special needs. Frequent classroom distractions take away from the learning experience of all students. The teacher is the manager of the classroom and he or she must have rules in place to impede negative behaviors as much as possible. Akalin, Sazak-Pinar, and Sucuoglu (2010), conclude, "The results of research focused on classroom management revealed that effective classroom management increased academic achievement and decreased problem behaviors of students" (p. 64). It is the responsibility of the teacher to structure their classroom so that it has minimal distractions and create a learning environment for all students. Teachers should be dedicated to teach all students. Akalin, Sazak-Pinar, and Sucuoglu (2010) state the behavior of the student has a direct correlation to student achievement. Final results of the research found that "classroom management should be considered as a powerful cluster of techniques and strategies in terms of creating meaningful learning experiences for all students including students with disabilities, because in Turkey, there are a limited numbers of experts working in special education collaborating with the general education teachers for meeting the needs of students with disabilities" (p. 72).

Wagner, et al. (2006) reported that general educators believe that they are not trained to effectively manage the challenging behaviors of EBD students, therefore making them apprehensive about having these students in their classes. Furthermore, Sawka and colleagues research has found that there continues to be high turnover rates for teachers of EBD students; therefore leaving the students with EBD at greater risk of poor academic outcomes and constantly having to adjust to new teachers.

Sawka et al. (2002) in their study found that response cost was one intervention to decrease negative behavior and encourage positive behavior in students with EBD. During this study, a project named Strengthening Emotional Support Services Model (SESS) was conducted in a large urban school district.   The authors reported that, "Certainly, one of the best approaches to addressing the concerns of serving students with EBD is to create an effective special education teacher workforce" (p. 224). The SESS project increased staff knowledge of effective behavior management of EBD students. Sawka, et al. (2002) are supported by research conducted by Kern, Clarke, Dunlap and Childs (2001). These researchers agree that there must be a consequence or reward to decrease negative behavior and increase positive behavior. In their study, "the teachers used a behavior management system in which appropriate behavior was reinforced with points that were exchangeable for tangible rewards at the end of the day, problem behavior resulted in a loss of points" (p. 241). The study concluded that variables such as rewards of extra computer time can influence behavior. The teacher will need to know what specific variables are comparable for the students in their particular class.   The two participants in this study were able to manage their behavior for variables or preferred activities. For example, extra computer time for completion of assignments.

Effect on Behavior. The following studies further proposed that there are many variables that can influence the behavior of EBD students during certain situations. For example, challenging behavior can occur during certain curricular activities. Because EBD students have difficulty completing tasks and staying on task, Kern, Delaney, Clarke, Dunlap and Childs (2001) found that problem behaviors occurred during certain curricular activities. Kern, et al. (2001) research participants were two eleven-year-old fifth grade boys. The two students exhibited most of their problem behaviors during pencil and paper activities. The authors went on to state that this study was "consistent with previous research demonstrating the relationship between environmental variables and problematic behavior" (p. 244). Such findings are highly congruent with those of Sawka et al. (2002) in that teachers and students must find out how to effectively manage these behaviors through interventions, accommodations and training, so EBD students will be academically successful in the inclusion classroom. Furthermore, the study by Kern and associates illustrated how the use of functional assessment can "provide information about relatively simple classroom adaptations for students with EBD that can be influential in increasing task engagement, decreasing challenging behavior, and increasing academic productivity" (p. 245).

Effect of Teacher-Mediated Intervention. One study conducted by Pierce, Reid, and Epstein (2004) found that teacher-mediated interventions aid in academic compliance of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. The authors reviewed thirty studies that examined teacher mediated interventions. The study participants were children or adolescents with emotional and behavior disorders between the ages of six and twenty years. Pierce and associates summarized that teacher-mediated interventions proved to be successful throughout all academic areas. Reading is an academic area that continues to be a major concern; good reading skills have proven to help with all levels of academics. However, poor reading skills have found to be a major factor in EBD students' poor academic success. Poor reading skills continue to be one of the deficits in the academic success of EBD students because reading affects other content areas. On the whole, teacher-mediated interventions were proven to be effective in the academic performance of EBD students.

Teacher-mediated interventions such as token reinforcement, antecedent interventions and consequence-focused interventions can be extremely successful for students with EBD. Pierce, et al. (2004) reviewed literature on teacher-mediated interventions and its academic success. Pierce, et al. (2004) defined a teacher-mediated intervention as "an intervention in which the teacher (or administrator of the intervention other than the student him/herself) takes responsibility for treatment, manipulating antecedents and/or consequences in order to improve the academic performance of the student" (p. 176). The major findings were: (1) A majority of the studies focused on reading; (2) On average, interventions were implemented for short periods of time; (3) Many studies lacked complete descriptions of participant characteristics; (4) A majority of the studies had outcomes in the desired direction; and (5) Overall, teacher-mediated interventions were effective for improving the academic performance of students with EBD.

These findings are consistent with other research that focused on reading, because reading is a major limitation of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. The majority of students that had outcomes in the desired direction increased their academic performance. The first desired outcome reached in this study was an increase in reading performance and academic response rate. Second, reading comprehension for all students increased. Third, there was improvement in math problems increased. More specifically, teacher-mediated interventions provided a ninety percent positive effect on the academic outcome of students. In particular, some teachers included student's interests or choices, token economies as reinforcements to improve academic success of EBD students. Additionally, the authors suggest that interventions should be implemented in short periods of time so the students will not get bored with the same intervention and stop responding. Teacher-mediated interventions were effective because those teachers get to know the students and their behaviors. Still further, the desired direction of the studies were to implement more teacher-mediated interventions to improve academic and behavioral success of students with emotional and behavior disorders. Teacher-mediated interventions mentioned in the study were token reinforcement, antecedent interventions, and consequence-focused interventions. All interventions showed moderate to high levels of academic improvement among students.

Effect of Behavioral Effectiveness Strategies. Bowman-Perrott, Greenwood and Tapia (2007) investigated the success of Class Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) as an effective intervention for decreasing problem behavior and increasing instructional effectiveness in the classroom. Nineteen EBD students in grades 5-12 and two teachers participated in the study. Participants showed an increase in social interaction with their peers. Students that used self-management techniques had a reduction in negative behaviors. Also, compared to teacher led instruction, data indicated that class wide peer tutoring instruction was more effective and social competence in students increased. In contrast, Bowman-Perrott, et al. (2007) study has also proven that students with emotional and behavior disabilities have trouble interacting with their peers as well as with their families.

Authors, Tyler-Wood, Cereijo, and Pemberton (2004) examined curriculum-based assessment (CBA) as a means to decrease the negative behaviors of EBD students in the classroom and increase their academic success. Curriculum-based assessment is a measurement of student performance by direct observation. Once the data is collected from the observation, the teacher is able to decide what instructional techniques are best for the student.

The purpose of research by Tyler-Wood and colleagues (2004) was "to show how the use of curriculum-based assessment (CBA) can have a positive effect by lowering the number of inappropriate behavior occurrences within the classroom" (p. 30). This study used two groups of participants and discipline referrals of EBD students. One group was the CBA group while the other was the non-CBA group. CBA and non-CBA groups each had similar numbers of discipline referrals. Tyler-Wood et.al. (2004) revealed the CBA group discipline referrals decreased after the intervention. Still further, the "results of the study suggested that the use of sound instructional techniques can lead to a reduction in student behavior problems" (p. 32). This study also reinforces that EBD students need well-managed and organized classrooms.

More recently, Wright-Gallo, Higbee, Reagon, and Davey (2006) studied classroom-based functional analysis as a behavior intervention for EBD students. Functional analysis provides educators with knowledge of specific behavior problems in students and when these behaviors may occur. The participants were two male children aged 12 and 14. The teachers in the back of their classrooms conducted the functional analysis sessions in the back of their classrooms. After the results of the functional analysis, teachers designed and implemented a differential reinforcement of alternative behavior (DRA) intervention that was introduced to reduce the problem behaviors. "A DRA procedure was implemented in which participants were taught to request either escape or attention and the delivery of the functional reinforcers following disruptive behavior was minimized" (p. 432). The two participants were given two choices, access to attention and escape from demands. The implementation of DRA decreased disruptive behaviors in both.

Jull (2008) reiterates that inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disorders in the inclusive classroom is a great challenge. The effectiveness of students with learning differences in the general education classroom requires that educators be trained in the instructional strategies to facilitate learning. Anti-social behaviors oftentimes exclude students from positive interactions with their peers.

The significance of research is important for the educational success of EBD students in the classroom. They are at a greater risk of academic failure, suspension and dropout. The majority of research indicated that students with emotional and behavioral disorders require specialized training to control their behaviors. As a result of Sawka et. al. (2002), teachers specified that they were not adequately trained to teach these students in the inclusive classroom without appropriate interventions. Effective interventions will continue to differ depending on student needs and variables to accommodate those needs. There must be collaborative efforts made by all teachers and staff to find the exact intervention for that individual student and strides must be made to consistently reinforce positive behaviors.

Collectively, functional behavior analysis, positive behavior support, teacher-made interventions, curriculum modifications, class wide peer tutoring, and antecedent- based intervention are all essential for EBD students to be successful in the general classroom. Again, it is of the essence that educators have effective in-service workshops as well as frequent staff development to the academic success of students with emotional and behavior disorders. An effective behavior management system should be implemented in every school system. Research from Pierce, Reid, & Epstein (2004) and Kern, Delaney, Clarke, Dunlap, & Child (2001) indicated that if implemented correctly, response cost, token economies and reward systems reinforce positive behavior and teach students necessary self-management skills.

More research must be done to determine the effectiveness of interventions used with students that have emotional and behavioral disorders in the general classroom. Research should use a wide variety of participants from different geographic locations. Specifically research done should include African American, Latino, and Asian American student populations. Additionally, there are more males labeled, as EBD, but there is little research on EBD females. Current research from includes teacher-mediated interventions, token economies, and peer tutoring as important techniques to be used to increase on task behavior in students (Kern, Delaney, Clarke, Dunlap, & Child, 2001). It is also imperative that teachers have adequate training, in-service workshops and consultation to teach students effectively. Teachers must institute rules and regulations for the classroom and implement them consistently to successfully manage the student's individual behaviors and learning styles. Students with emotional and behavior differences cannot be taught as part of the norm. They have numerous facets that influence how they learn and make decisions. Although their decisions may be inadequate, they are an integral part of the classroom.

Practical Aspects of Inclusive Classrooms

Problems Faced by Special Needs Students

Just as inclusion has its benefits, it also has its disadvantages. Students with disabilities tend to disrupt the classroom with behavior issues. Because they are not as cognitively developed as their peers, the teaching-learning process is not as effective as it could be. It is difficult to serve the needs of every student who is normally in the regular education class, and with the special needs students the job becomes even more of a struggle for the teacher and someone draws the short in of the stick, usually the special needs students. Teachers have to treat special needs students differently based on standards are on their learning level. Special needs students are deprived of a suitable education when they are taught at a mismatched level with students how are significantly above their level. This can negatively affect a student's sense of self-esteem and dignity. Even in physical education classes, students with physical disabilities are disadvantaged because the curriculum is not gear to include them (Combs, Elliott, & Whipple, 2010). This can cause students with disabilities to face discrimination and bullying from their peers. Causing them to experience low self-esteem, isolation, depression, and in some cases aggression (Khudorenko, 2011). These emotional breakdowns can lead to violence (Frances & Potter, 2010).

Attempts to Improve Inclusion

In the classroom, there are typically more regular education students than special education students. The students who have disabilities sometimes experience regular education class for the first time in their lives. It is difficult for these students to cognitively, emotionally, and sometimes physically to involve themselves in the teaching-learning process. These students understand they are different from their peers, and they come into a classroom of 15 or more of them and feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. Schoger (2006) conducted a study designed to have the general education students come into the special education learning environment to help the special needs students flourish within their own community. This study showed to be very successful for the students with special needs because they were able to work in an environment that was comfortable for them, they developed friendships with their peers, they felt a sense of respect which increased their self-esteem, and their cognitive learning increased significantly (Schoger, 2006).

Anderson, Klassen, and Georgiou (2007), detailed how the teachers in their study lacked the knowledge they need to be more effective at teaching and dealing with students with special needs. The teachers in this article thought that school psychologist should play a huge part in educating them about students with special needs. They felt that with a better understanding of the types of students who they were working with, they could be more effective teachers to them. To understand how these children better work mentally, emotionally, and physically changes many aspects of the teaching-learning process for the better.

One would think he more training and insight usually make teachers feel better about situations, however, that was not the finding for this study Wilkins & Nietfeld (2004). There were teachers who were experts on inclusion in the classroom, and their attitudes toward inclusion were no different than those educators who had little training and insight on the program. Inclusion is a sore spot for many professionals in the field of education.

In order to provide a quality education for special needs students in the general education classroom, all of the necessary resources must be available for both the students and the teachers (Anderson, Klassen, & Georgiou, 2007). Resources are often extremely limited. There is a lack of teachers because there is a lack of funding, and these insufficient materials affect the success of the inclusion and those who are involved in the program.

Conclusion

Although research has shown that inclusion methods benefit all students, teachers are still hesitant to volunteer to teach within this specific method. For inclusion to be successful, it is important to provide educators with training, planning time with their co-teacher, and adequate resources to meet the needs of students. It is when teachers are fully prepared that the inclusion model will yield positive results. Further research is needed to show particular inclusion and co-teaching methods which are highly successful yielding the best results for both disabled and non-disabled students.

It is obvious from the research discussed that properly practiced inclusion method has benefits for all students in both academic achievement and social interaction. Overall, both disabled and non-disabled students view co-teaching in a positive manner and seem to make progress in academic classes. Socially, disabled students have the opportunity to interact with their non-disabled peers in order to learn academically and behaviorally. They also seem to maintain adequate self-esteem levels which are comparable to their non-disabled peers. Co-teaching is a form of inclusion which has gained popularity over the last several years due to federal and state mandates. This model provides all students with support from two teachers in the same classroom benefiting them in a number of ways. As inclusion models are adopted by school systems, it will be important to continue to research and address its effectiveness in the areas of social interaction and academic progress of disabled students.

Since many public schools do have full inclusion, students with emotional and behavioral disorders that were once in self-contained classroom, are now educated in classes with their non-disabled peers. It is necessary that students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders in inclusive classrooms learn to effectively manage negative behaviors so that classrooms are environments of learning for all students. It is important for teachers to learn management

techniques for emotional and behavioral disorders so that they are able to spend less time on discipline and more time on instruction. It is also important that teacher understand the laws that govern exceptional children. It is essential that students with emotional and behavior disorders have the ability to manage their own behavior and stay on task so that they can be successful in the general education classroom. When these students exhibit negative behaviors in the classroom it affects their peers, teachers and themselves. What behavior management approaches are most effective with Seriously Emotional Disabled students in the general education classroom?

It is of the essence that educators are skilled to teach the leaders of tomorrow. Research continues to support the use of self-management techniques to decrease negative behaviors and increase academic performance that can be implemented by the student as well as the teacher (Konrad, Fowler, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007). Teachers must effectively manage their classrooms so that all students can have a positive learning environment. Additionally, contend that teacher-mediated interventions, establishing and enforcing rules and token economies have proven to be successful as behavior management techniques for EBD students. In the words of Bowman-Perott et al. (2007), "effective intervention procedures are essential to breaking the cycle of school failure" (p. 66).

All classes have students that exhibit negative behaviors that warrant their removal from the classroom for interventions as well. For example, there are students that are argumentative with staff, talk refuse to work and talk continuously without permission. The exception that I see is that students with EBD seem to exhibit behaviors that draw negative attention to themselves from their peers. Researchers, Nelson, Benner, Lane and Smith (2004) studied the academic deficits in EBD students and improving their social skills. EBD students lack social skills and want to fit in socially with their peers but many times their academic deficits in many content areas hold them back socially. Additionally, there may need to be a school wide positive behavior support system developed so that negative behaviors may be minimized further. Still further, educators need to be trained in behavior management techniques for students with behavioral disorders. Sawka, McCrudy and Manella (2002) affirm that general education teachers do not feel adequately trained to manage these students. The importance of effective behavior management techniques is essential for any educator.

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