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Using Self-Management Techniques to Improve Academic Outcomes for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities

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Using Self-Management Techniques to Improve Academic Outcomes for Students with
Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities

Emilee Howard

EDCI 589 Applied Research

University of Mary Washington

Summer 2013

Honor Pledge: I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received
unauthorized help on this assignment. - Emilee Howard

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Using Self Management Techniques to Improve Academic Outcomes for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities

The everyday academic and behavioral challenges educators of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities (EBD) face are a growing concern in education. Students with EBD can be among the toughest students to teach. Their disruptive behaviors and social difficulties lend to high rates of social isolation, difficulties in classroom settings and overall academic failure. Teachers today strive to find ways to reach this unique population of students to provide them with opportunities to achieve academic success. However, the continual demands of students with EBD are not being met as students with EBD continue to have difficulties in all subject areas and across all grade levels. Furthermore, students with EBD are at a high risk for dropping out of school and enduring a lifetime of employment and financial difficulties.

Addressing the educational needs of this at-risk population of students should be a primary focus for educators. With the risk of a lifetime of difficulties ahead, attending to the deficit in this area of education is a necessity. Strategies that have been proven to be effective in working with students with EBD need to be incorporated in today's classrooms. Research has proven that with the use of appropriate techniques, the academic outcomes of students with EBD can be significantly improved.

One group of strategies has been particularly effective in raising academic outcomes for students with EBD. These strategies, known as self-management techniques, are an underutilized group of tools that have been empirically proven to be effective in working with students with EBD. The self-management techniques have been effective in addressing both social and academic behaviors that have resulted in improved academic outcomes. To put these techniques to use in the classroom, the benefits of self-management techniques needs to be more publicized.

The knowledge of how to use the five different types of self-management strategies needs to be made available to all educators and the materials required to implement the strategies should be made more accessible.

Problem Statement

The academic needs of all students, regardless of disability, should be met in order to give all students the same opportunities to achieve academic success. However, educators have been unable to successfully address the needs of students with EBD. Students with EBD continue to struggle academically across content areas. As students with EBD get older, the gap in academic achievement of where they should be performing and where they currently are continues to grow.

Rationale

When students with EBD are unable to achieve academic success, they often drop out of school. With a lack of education, these students never master basic academic skills that are essential to functioning within the community and successfully transitioning to the job market. Students with EBD are likely to have difficulty finding and maintaining employment and are thus likely to experience socioeconomic struggles. Improving the academic success for students with EBD is essential in decreasing the likelihood of a lifetime of financial and social hardships for these students. Addressing the needs of these students is part of fulfilling the role of educators to help all students become successful members of the community.

Research questions

1. What challenges do students with EBD face in the classroom?
2. What challenges do educators face when teaching students with EBD?

3. How can the use of self-management techniques improve academic outcomes for students with EBD?

Literature Review

It is difficult to determine the exact definition of an emotional and behavioral disorder. The difficulty with determining a reliable definition of an emotional and behavioral disability is that it is a label assigned according to cultural rules. The disability is thus a result of behaviors exhibited that the culture or an authority figure of the culture has designated as intolerable (Kauffman, 2005; Solar, 2011). However, there are a few common themes in every definition, which include that the behaviors exhibited are extreme, chronic and unacceptable (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). The most common definition referred to comes from the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). According to IDEA, an emotional or behavioral disorder is when at least one of the following characteristics has been displayed over a long period of time and to a marked degree that has adversely affected the educational performance of the student: a) an inability to learn that is unexplained by any intellectual, sensory, or health factors; b) an inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationships; c) inappropriate types of feelings or behaviors under normal situations; d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears related to personal or school problems (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012; Kauffman, 2005; Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006; Solar, 2011). This definition includes children with schizophrenia, but does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless they are also determined to be emotionally disturbed (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012; Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006).

Adding to the exact definition of EBD, comorbidity with other disabilities is frequently a characteristic that has been evident in many individuals with EBD. More than half of students

with EBD also meet at least one of the eligibility criteria for having a learning disability (Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). The average student with EBD has an IQ that falls somewhere between the dull to normal range (about 90) (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). In fact, compared to the normal range of intelligence, more children with EBD fall between the range of what qualifies as a slow learner and a mild intellectual disability (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012).

Much like the definition of EBD, the prevalence of the disability is difficult to determine. Despite that students with EBD are often easy to identify in a classroom, few schools bother with systematic screening procedures because there is a lack of special services available to treat this population of students (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). In early elementary school, the number of students with EBD is particularly underreported because of the screening process and a difficulty in determining whether or not the behaviors exhibited signify a problem. By the age of nine, only 17% of children with EBD have been identified (Niesyn, 2009). Though between 6% and 10% of school-aged children exhibit serious and persistent emotional and behavioral problems, less than one percent of school-aged children are identified as having an emotional or behavioral disability (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012; U. S Department of Education, 2008; Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). The children who are identified as having EBD are disproportionately from poor and ethnic-minority families (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012).

The laws that have been put in place to protect and support students with EBD primarily come from IDEA. The Act ensures that all children with disabilities have the right to a free and appropriate public education. Despite the gap in identification of students with EBD, this law also states that extensive efforts must be made to identify and screen students with disabilities.

Students found eligible must be given an individualized education program (IEP) and taught in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Therefore, all students with a diagnosis of EBD should receive an IEP. The screening process is to be a nondiscriminatory evaluation and is to be kept confidential. In regards to the LRE mandate, students with disabilities are to be educated in the least restrictive environment and educated with students without disabilities as much as possible. Due to this regulation, only 1/3 of students with EBD receive 60% or more of their education outside the general education classroom (Niesyn, 2009).

Outcomes

Research has shown that emotional and behavioral disorders are predictive of severe short-term and long-term difficulties across virtually every aspect of life for students identified with the disability (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). Academic struggles and behavior management are only a few of the barriers that face these students. Problems that start while children are in school continue to manifest and grow with the transition to adulthood. School failure, lack of employment and a lifetime of involvement with the justice system are major lifetime concerns for students with EBD.

School failure. Students with EBD have academic deficits that occur across all content areas including in the subjects of reading, math, and writing (Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid, & Epstein, 2005). Historically students with EBD are the most likely students to fail in a school setting and the most likely to experience significant social and behavioral deficits (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Mason & Shriner, 2008). During elementary school, students with EBD perform on average between 1.2- 2 grade levels below their peers and by high school the average student with EBD is performing almost 3.5 grade levels below their peers (Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008).

As a result of low achievement, many students with EBD often give up on school completely. With so many students giving up on their education, the dropout rates of students with EBD have become a national concern. Students with EBD have higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates than any other population of students (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). According to the U.S Department of Education (2006), students with EBD have a graduation rate of only 32.1%, meaning over 2/3 of students with EBD dropout or never complete high school. These statistics illustrate the severity of the current situation in education for students with EBD.

Lack of employment. As a result of school failure, students with EBD often never master skills that are essential to functioning within the community and are unable to successfully transition to the job market and are thus incapable of finding employment (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012; Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid & Epstein, 2005; Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). Unemployment can be a lifelong battle for students with EBD. In fact, four years after high school, students with EBD have an unemployment rate of 52% (Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). With over half of students with EBD left jobless, these students are at high risk for poverty and a lifelong dependence on the welfare system (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012).

Criminality. In addition to unemployment, a significant area of concern for students with EBD is their tendency to resort to a life that leads to criminal activity. Conduct disorder is the most common EBD diagnosis and individuals with this disorder are characteristically aggressive, disruptive and antisocial (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012; Solar, 2011). The antisocial and violent behaviors displayed by many individuals with EBD result in frequent encounters with the law and lead to incarcerations in the juvenile justice system (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen,

2012). In fact, the disabling conditions that fall under the EBD diagnosis are much more common in juvenile delinquents than in the general population (Clough, Garner, Pardeck, & Yuen, 2005; Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012).

Adding to issues with aggression and violence, another reason individuals with EBD get absorbed in the justice system is due to early involvement with drugs and alcohol. Many students with EBD are exposed early in their lives to drugs and alcohol because they grow up in homes where their parents and caregivers abuse drugs and alcohol (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012; Solar, 2011). Many students see the substance abuse and then begin to use drugs and alcohol themselves. As a result of early involvement with illegal substances, before the age of 12 many students with EBD have already experienced their first arrest (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012).

School failure, lack of employment and criminality are severe negative outcomes that face students with EBD. These outcomes demand immediate attention and remediation. To address these concerns, it is important to intervene during school- aged years where the problems begin. Attending to issues students with EBD face in the classroom is a critical place to start. In order to help these students, it is imperative to understand why these students are struggling in school and what can be done to help them become more successful in school and furthermore in life.

Challenges Students with EBD Face in the Classroom

To be able to comprehend the challenges students with EBD face in the classroom, an understanding of what it is like to have the disability is imperative. Students with EBD struggle in school because they have maladaptive behaviors and social difficulties that make learning tough. They often times find themselves alone and angry and have high rates of distractibility.

Everyday can be an emotional struggle for students with EBD and they have to work very hard to control their impulsivity. The inability to control impulsiveness is what leads to the unwanted behaviors and the social maladjustments.

Behaviors. Students with EBD characteristically exhibit behaviors that interfere with their ability to succeed in school. Their behaviors can be wide ranging and often times persistent. The behaviors they display that can be divided into two different types of categories. Students with EBD exhibit behavior that is either externalizing or internalizing. Externalizing behaviors are overt and can be seen when acting out towards others. Internalizing behaviors are those that involve either emotional or mental conflicts.

The most common types of behaviors exhibited by students with EBD are externalizing behaviors such as aggression, acting-out and disruptive behaviors. There are several behaviors that are exhibited by students with EBD that fall into this category. Students with EBD may exhibit one or several of the following behaviors: aggression, hitting, fighting, pushing, yelling, spitting, teasing, crying, destructiveness, vandalism and extortion. Although these behaviors can be found at some point in every child, students with EBD display these behaviors more persistently and more impulsively (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). There are very few individuals with EBD who exhibit only one maladaptive behavior and, as previously noted; Conduct disorder is the most common type of emotional and behavioral disorder (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). Due to the nature of the negative behaviors, students receive a high number of referrals, are sent to the principal often and are likely to attend a large number of schools (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012; Patton, Jolivet & Ramsey, 2006).

The internalizing behaviors of students with EBD are of equal concern. These behaviors often include immaturity, depression and withdrawal (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). These internal behaviors are particularly concerning because the feelings attached to these behaviors result in an inability to think or concentrate, lack of motivation and a decreased physical well-being, which are important aspects in succeeding in school (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). Students with EBD typically have a low self-worth, which results in negative feelings that affect their ability to motivate themselves and persevere through difficult times (Bandura, 2006; Solar, 2011). Having low self-efficacy is part of having negative self-worth and the result of these feelings causes students with EBD to quickly give up on trying things (Solar, 2011).

Social difficulties. Behavior issues, both internal and external, intertwine with social concerns. One reason students with EBD struggle in school is because they often have severe deficits in social skills that interfere with their ability to develop meaningful relationships with peers and teachers (Menzies, Lane & Lee, 2009; Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). They experience social difficulties in all aspects of their lives. In the classroom and during transitions with teachers and peers, students with EBD struggle to communicate appropriately. The problems continue on the playground or at lunch with their peers and remain consistent when they are home with their family (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Menzies, Lane & Lee, 2009; Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006).

Often students with EBD fail to maintain relationships because their disruptive behaviors seriously strain peer relationships (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). Their aversive behaviors often lead to social isolation and a lack of friendships because many or most interactions with peers result in negative confrontations (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). They have limited

positive interactions and are likely to feel alone. Feelings of loneliness and abandonment further issues with anger and aggression. Thus the behaviors that often result is social isolation become more extreme as the feelings behind the behaviors continue to develop and grow.

Distractibility. Following the concerns with behaviors and social difficulties is a concern with distractibility. Students with EBD have a hard time staying on task. They are easily distracted and often fail to complete work. Students with EBD frequently have endured a lifetime of hardships and have lots of issues they are trying to manage internally (Solar, 2011). They may be dealing with things at home that are beyond comprehension to a typical student that makes focusing in school feel nearly impossible.

Due to a difficulty to stay engaged and complete tasks, schoolwork and homework completion are a major concern. This lack of work completion ultimately leads to school failure regardless of ability of the student to complete the task. When students are integrated into general education classrooms, distractibility is an increasing concern because work completion is an even greater issue (Cancio, West, & Young, 2004; Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). However, regardless of the type of classroom, attacking the concern of distractibility is vital.

Challenges Educators Face When Teaching Students with EBD

Students with EBD not only face barriers themselves, but so do teachers who are trying to teach them. While the students with EBD are struggling with managing their own behaviors and social difficulties, educators are forced to find a way to reach this unique population of students. However, gaining the attention of students with EBD can be a momentous task. These students often display poor attitudes and highly disruptive behaviors that either intimidate or anger

teachers, which can quickly cause teachers to be in fear. Additionally, students with EBD lack overall motivation to learn which can make teaching intensely demanding and difficult.

Attitudes. Unfortunately, one problem teachers have with teaching students with EBD in the classroom starts before the students walk through the class doors. There is judgment made about some students before even being introduced to the teacher. Some teachers express fear simply because of the students label (Solar, 2011). Recognizing this preconceived bias towards students with EBD is essential. Teacher attitudes are particularly important when dealing with students with EBD who are intensely emotionally sensitive by nature. Many students with EBD have difficulty trusting others and teachers have the opportunity to allow students with EBD to feel safe and create a bond that could change their life (Solar, 2011).

However, staying positive and open-minded is not always an easy task. The attitudes of many students with EBD can make teaching them particularly challenging (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). It is important for educators to remember that students with EBD must learn to manage their disability on top of dealing with the developmental changes of adolescents and any other major biological, educational and social role transitions (Bandura, 2006; Solar, 2011). It is also important to remember that the attitudes displayed by many students with EBD are a result of one or many traumas they have faced in their lives. Students with EBD have endured difficult life experiences that their peers would find unimaginable and cannot understand. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding furthers feelings of anger, distrust, and abandonment (Solar, 2011).

Behavior management. The negative attitudes displayed by students with EBD are often compounded with major behavioral issues. One of the biggest challenges for educators working with students with EBD is trying to balance behavioral control with academic and social learning (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). Many teachers express having spent too much time

managing behavior and not enough time teaching (Patton, Jolivet & Ramsey, 2006). Students with EBD can be very difficult to manage in a classroom, especially in a larger class or an inclusion class. Including EBD students in general education setting may be particularly challenging since social interactions and behavior management are primary concerns. One of the many reasons educators fear working with students with EBD is because they do not want to deal with the constant disruptions that often are consequences of the common behaviors of students with EBD.

Motivation. Not only do educators struggle with behavior management for students with EBD, educators also find it very challenging to motivate these students, who often times naturally lack the ability to stay engaged or the belief in themselves that they are capable of success. Students with EBD may fear that they are just products of whatever has happened to them in life and that they cannot have an impact on the outcomes of life (Bandura, 2006; Solar, 2011). Despite the efforts of educators to try and find ways to motivate them, students with EBD typically will not respond positively to any well-meaning adult who is attempting to help them (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2012). With that being said, it can be a grueling and difficult challenge to get a student with EBD to open up and willingly accept help from others. Educators must relentlessly and repetitively encourage these students who may quickly decide to give up.

Self-Management Techniques

It is clear with such huge risks at stake that addressing the academic needs of students with EBD are of great concern. It is essential to provide educators with strategies that have demonstrated efficacy in improving academic outcomes for students with EBD. Self-management techniques should be a primary focus of educators. These techniques have proven to be effective and appropriate for working with students with EBD (Cancio, West, & Young,

2004; Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Mason & Shriner, 2007; Menzies, Lane & Lee, 2009; Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid & Epstein, 2005; Niesyn, 2009; Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006; Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008)

A self-management technique is an intervention where the student themselves is responsible for their own academic instruction (Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). It's a process where the student uses the techniques to influence or change his or her behavior (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). The goal of these techniques is to improve academic outcomes by implementing strategies to encourage student independence in behaving more appropriately and becoming more successful at school (Patton, Jolivette, & Ramsey, 2006). There are several types of self-management techniques, which permit their usage in a wide range of instances.

Different types. The five types of self-management techniques include: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-instruction, goal setting, and self- instruction. Each of these strategies works in the same way. Teachers are initially responsible for teaching how to carry out an activity and making sure the student is capable of performing the task and over time the responsibility of carrying out the task switches to the student (Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). Students become a part of the process of determining whether or not their behaviors are appropriate and can reinforce themselves accordingly (Patton, Jolivette, & Ramsey, 2006). Self-management techniques can be used with a variety of different behaviors: writing quality, writing quantity, math fluency, on-task behavior, social behaviors and can target specific behaviors across classrooms (Patton, Jolivette, & Ramsey, 2006). Other specific skills that can be considered for a self -management intervention include: planning for a task, monitoring a behavior or the completion of an assignment, executing a plan, task or strategy, and analyzing a problem (Menzies, Lane, & Lee, 2009).

To implement a successful self-management plan there are certain steps that need to be completed. First, the behavior that is to be targeted needs to be identified and clearly defined to the student (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). A student cannot be expected to change a behavior or perform a behavior without a clear definition of what is desired. The next steps involve determining the criteria for mastery of the targeted behavior and a discussion with the student on appropriate behaviors and inappropriate behaviors. The student should then be taught whichever self-management technique has been chosen and then should be given guided practice (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006; Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008). The student will eventually be required to complete the task independently.

Benefits. The overall benefits of using self-management techniques are substantial. The techniques were designed to improve academic outcomes for students with EBD and they appropriately serve that purpose. After a review of 22 studies, colleagues Ryan, Pierce and Mooney (2008) found that the use of self-management techniques to improve academic outcomes resulted in an overall large effect size (ES) (1.90). These findings showed large gains in writing (1.13), math (1.97), reading (2.28) and social studies (2.66). When self-management techniques are used to target academic outcomes in specific content areas, students with EBD demonstrated overall improvements in discrete academic skills (Mason & Shriner, 2008; Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid, & Epstein, 2005). Researchers Mason and Shriner (2008) demonstrated the use of self-management techniques to teach students with EBD how to write a persuasive essay and found that all students improved their writing. Further, they generalized and maintained improved performance across the different areas of writing. Their improved writing skills learned when completing the persuasive essays carried over to other writing assignments, which demonstrated an overall improvement in writing.

In addition to improving academic outcomes, the use of self-management techniques improves overall productive behaviors in the classroom. The constant feedback provided by the use of self-management techniques act as a cue to maintain or increase appropriate behaviors as well as change or decrease inappropriate behaviors (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). Self-management strategies can eliminate or minimize unwanted behaviors and increase more desirable social and academic behaviors (Menzies, Lane & Lee, 2009; Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid, & Epstein, 2005). This benefit is colossal and exemplifies the necessity in applying these techniques in the classroom.

As a result of an increase in more appropriate behaviors, self-management strategies have a positive social impact on students with EBD as well. When students learn to manage their behavior, they are able to better form relationships with their peers. When the overt and highly disruptive behaviors are eliminated or significantly decreased, students with EBD are more likely to be asked to join in with their classmates. Due to the increase in pro-social behaviors they are also sent to the office less for negative social interactions (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). When they display more appropriate behaviors, they are less likely to be isolated from the peers and less likely to endure teasing from others.

One other added benefit of using self-management techniques with students is that it increases independence in the student. One of the problems students with EBD have is that they do not know how to manage their own academic behavior (Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid & Epstein, 2005). The use of self-management techniques needs to be taught to them for that reason. Due to the nature of how self-management techniques work, students take ownership of their behaviors. They learn to become more intrinsically motivated as opposed to extrinsically motivated. Teachers can spend more time teaching and less time reacting to inappropriate

behaviors in the classroom (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). Moreover, students like feeling they have control. In fact, 66% of students with EBD responded better to using self-management techniques than any other intervention imposed or controlled by the teachers (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006).

Some of the most significant findings for the use of self-management techniques are that the techniques have been proven to be effective across grade-levels, content areas and behavioral targets (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006; Ryan, Pierce & Mooney, 2008). Self-management techniques have been proven to be effective in changing both social and academic behaviors. The techniques work with positive behavioral support plans (PBS) and can be used on a school-wide, classroom or individual level to increase ownership of behaviors (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). They are universal and widely applicable. The benefits of using self-management techniques make a strong argument for the need to apply these strategies when working with students with EBD. They require minimal energy to teach and implement and they are low in cost (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). However, there are barriers that have impacted the use of these strategies in the classroom.

Gap in practice. Though self-management techniques have proven to be effective, there are several reasons why there is a gap in application of the techniques. One of the biggest reasons for the low rates of usage of self-management techniques is teacher refusal or dismissal of the techniques. Many teachers who are unaware of the effectiveness of self-management strategies will instantly dismiss the application of using them because they feel they are inappropriate for their particular students (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). Often educators feel overwhelmed with managing their classrooms and they fear that they do not have time to apply any technique in their classroom because they have too much to cover already. They find the process or idea of

learning a new strategy overwhelming and abandon the idea altogether (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). Educators simply feel that implementing a new strategy is not feasible. They are unfamiliar or unaware that self-management techniques take minimal time to teach and use and as a result, they provide for more time teaching and less time managing unwanted behaviors (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006).

Other reasons self-management techniques are not used more readily is due to a lack of proper training (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). Not having proper training on dealing with students with EBD in general is a particular concern for general education teachers. General education teachers are finding that as more and more students with EBD enter their classrooms, they are feeling more and more ill equipped to handle the situation because of lack of training and support needed to ensure success for these students (Niesyn, 2009). Furthermore, educators are fearful to implement any new strategies including self-management techniques because they feel they lack adequate training on how to use the strategies effectively (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009).

The last major reason teachers have been unwilling to implement self-management techniques into their classrooms is because they feel that using such techniques to help the few students with EBD will interfere with the nondisabled peers in the classroom (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). What educators have failed to understand is that the use of self-management techniques can be helpful for all students and they take little time to teach and use (Patton, Jolivette & Ramsey, 2006). With so many benefits, using self- management techniques should be nonnegotiable.

Conclusion

The needs of students with EBD are not being met and it is time to make a change in how to effectively work with this population of students. Behavioral and social problems across the course of a life span should not be an accepted outcome. In order to improve academic outcomes, behavioral issues are of utmost importance. Addressing the unwanted behaviors so often displayed by students with EBD will improve their overall academic achievement.

The use of self-management techniques offers a solution to educators trying to find a way to teach students with EBD. The techniques are easy to implement and require little time and effort. They target improved academic outcomes and can be used in any classroom. There should no longer be a gap in application, as these strategies are empirically proven to work and result in improvement.

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Appendix

*How to Use
Self-Management
Techniques in The
Classroom*

A Quick Reference for Educators

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Self-Management Techniques

Overview

Who?

Self-management techniques are appropriate to use with any age group of students. The techniques have been proven to be effective when working with students with EBD, but can also be used with other populations of students.

What?

Self-management techniques are a group of strategies in which students take responsibility for managing their own behavior.

When?

The techniques are appropriate to use when a student exhibits behavior that is interfering with his/her ability to perform academic success. Self-management techniques can be used to target social or academic behaviors.

Where?

The techniques are appropriate to use individually, in small groups or in whole classrooms.

Possible Behavioral Targets

- **Staying in seat**
- **Working quietly**
- **Raising hand**
- **Following directions**
- **Participation**
- **Keeping hands and feet to oneself**
- **Speaking appropriately**
- **Writing quality or quantity**
- **Memorization**
- **Studying skills**
- **Discrete academic skills**
- **Math fluency**
- **On-task behavior**
- **Organization**
- **Planning for assignments**
- **Reading fluency or quantity**

* This list offers examples, but other behavioral targets may be appropriate.

Self-Monitoring

Description

Self-monitoring is the process of self-observation and self-recording.

How it Works

1. Student discriminates whether or not he/she did the target behavior.
2. The student self-records the answer. Handouts, forms, charts or journals are good places to self-record.

How to implement

- 1. Identify the behavior that needs to be changed.**

The targeted behavior can be any social or academic behavior that a student can monitor. Examples: Raising hands to ask questions, staying in seat, completing work, keeping hands and feet to oneself. Refer to the list of possible behavioral targets for more examples. The behaviors that can be used are endless, but the behavior chosen needs be individualized for each student. Make

sure the behavior selected is one that if changed would help the student become more successful in school.

2. Determine criteria for mastery

In this step, be sure to determine specifically what the desired behavior should look like. For example, if the targeted behavior were raising a hand to ask questions, then the desired behavior would be that when the student has a question he/she raises his/her hand. It is very important to clearly define the expected behaviors so the student can model them appropriately.

3. Discuss with student

This step is one of the most important. At this point, a discussion with the student should be held in order to discuss the expected behaviors. The student should have a clear understanding of what behavior is being targeted and what the desired behavior looks like. Using pictures or a video can be helpful in explaining the inappropriate and appropriate behaviors.

4. Introduce self-management to student

Next, the student must be taught how self-management works. The student should be given a handout, form or chart or should have a journal to self-record the behaviors. The look of the form will vary considerably and depend upon the student and the behavior being targeted. The charts are easy to make and can be designed according to needs. How often recording is done varies as well. It depends upon the behavior being targeted and the student. For example, if work completion is being targeted then the student may need to record after every assignment. However, if the targeted behavior were staying in seat during math class then the behavior would need to be recorded after every math class. See examples of handouts below.

5. Provide guided practice

Students should never be expected to self-record instantly without practice. The teacher should start by filling out

each form with the student and slowly work towards student independence. There should be a goal in mind created by or with the student.

Handout Examples

Example for a behavior that only needs to be recorded once a day. A monthly chart:

Student Name:

Targeted Behavior:

Class:

DID I...

<i>Monday</i>		<i>Tuesday</i>		<i>Wednesday</i>		<i>Thursday</i>		<i>Friday</i>	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

Example of behavior chart that needs to be monitored every 10 minutes

A timer can be used to keep track of time if needed.

Check the box only if you have remained in your seat for the entire 10-minute block. Put an X in the box if you were not in your seat for the ten minutes

Behavior	<i>1st 10 min</i>	<i>2nd 10 min</i>	<i>3rd 10 min</i>	<i>4th 10 min</i>	<i>5th 10 min</i>
<i>Stay in Seat</i>					

Behavior	<i>1st 10 min</i>	<i>2nd 10 min</i>	<i>3rd 10 min</i>	<i>4th 10 min</i>	<i>5th 10 min</i>
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<i>Stay in Seat</i>					

Self-Evaluation

Description

Self-evaluation is the process of comparing a performance to a previous criterion and receiving reinforcement based on meeting the criterion.

How it Works

1. Self-evaluation is similar to self-monitoring. The only difference is that in the end, the student receives reinforcement according to whether or not the criterion was met. First, the student compares behavior to predetermined criterion.
2. Then the student is awarded reinforcement based on meeting the criterion.

How to implement

- 1. The targeted behavior should already be predetermined**

The behaviors that can be picked from will vary just as in self-monitoring. The behavior needs to be

appropriate for the individual student and the student must be capable of performing the expected behavior.

2. Discussion with student

The student should clearly understand what behaviors are inappropriate and which behaviors are appropriate. At this point, a positive reinforcement can be determined. For some students, meeting criterion for a specific behavior for one whole day will permit for some type of reinforcement. Others may receive reinforcement at the end of a week. This again is dependent upon the type of behavior targeted, the student and the frequency of the behavior.

3. Compare behavior to criterion

It is helpful to have handouts or charts prepared for the student to fill out just as in self-monitoring. There should be a clarifier that states what will happen when criterion is met for the set amount of time.

4. Receive reinforcement

If the student meets criterion, they should then receive the reinforcement. For example, if the student has to stay seated for an entire math lesson every day for a week and they successfully meet that goal, then they should receive the predetermined reinforcement. It is important that the student is in charge of receiving the reinforcement. The reinforcement will vary. For some students, it may be appropriate to let them earn more computer time or have lunch with the teacher one day. As long as the reinforcement used is desirable to the student and it appropriately matches the effort put forth by the student, then the reinforcement chosen is suitable.

Handout Examples

Example for a behavior that only needs to be recorded once a day. Reinforcement received at the end of the week:

Student Name:

Targeted Behavior:

Class:

DID I...

<i>Monday</i>		<i>Tuesday</i>		<i>Wednesday</i>		<i>Thursday</i>		<i>Friday</i>	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

If I (targeted behavior) everyday for a week, then I can (reinforcement).

Did I perform (targeted behavior) everyday for a week?

Yes No

Do I get (reinforcement)?

Yes No

Example of behavior chart that needs to be monitored every 10 minutes

Put a sticker in the box only if you (Targeted behavior) for the entire 10-minute block.

If you get 5 stickers then you (reinforcement)

Behavior	<i>1st 10 min</i>	<i>2nd 10 min</i>	<i>3rd 10 min</i>	<i>4th 10 min</i>	<i>5th 10 min</i>
<i>Targeted Behavior</i>					

Circle One:

Yes I did it

I need to keep trying

Strategy Instruction

Description

Strategy Instruction is the process of learning specific steps and independently applying them to solve a problem or achieve an outcome.

How it Works

1. Student learns a strategy to use to solve a problem or achieve an outcome
2. Student independently learns to use strategy or specific steps when necessary.

How to implement

- 1. Identify the area or type of problem that needs improvement.**

For some students this means targeting studying habits, for others it means targeting reading concerns or how to handle social conflicts. As with all self-management techniques, the behaviors targeted are variable and depend on the needs of the student.

2. Find an appropriate strategy or list of steps to address targeted area.

This is where some research may need to be done. The strategy used for each behavior will be different, but a general search of steps to teach certain tasks or behaviors can be easily found.

3. Teach strategy or steps to the student.

The student should not be expected to learn the strategy alone. Handouts on the strategy or a list of steps are often helpful for easy reference for the student. How the steps are taught is up to the educator.

4. Provide guided practice.

The teacher should work alongside the student when the strategy or list of steps is first learned and then slowly provide less and less support.

5. Student uses strategy or steps independently to solve a problem or achieve an outcome.

When appropriate, the student should eventually apply the learned skills independently to achieve expected outcome. It is important that the student is given plenty of opportunities to use the strategy.

Strategy Examples

Example of a strategy to use when working on studying techniques

Cover, Copy and Compare (CCC)

- Look at item and solution
- Cover the item and solution
- Write down the item and solution on your own
- Compare your answer with the original
- If needed, repeat the process

Example of a strategy to use when problem solving

Identify, Plan, Monitor, Check

- Identify the problem
- Think about how to solve it and plan accordingly
- Monitor how your plan is being executed. Is it working? Does it need to be revised?
- Check to make sure that the outcome is what was expected.

Example of a strategy to use when working in social settings

SCORE

- S**hare ideas and contribute to the conversation
- C**ompliment others
- O**ffer help or encouragement to others
- R**ecommend changes nicely and respectfully
- E**xercise self-control

Great websites for more information on strategy instruction

<http://nichcy.org/research/ee/learning-strategies>

<http://cehs.unl.edu/csi/>

Self-Instruction

Description

Self-instruction is the process of using self-statements to direct ones own behavior.

How it Works

1. Student recognizes when he or she is about to perform or is performing an undesirable behavior.
2. Student tells himself/herself how to correct the behavior by stating I should...

How to implement

1. The student understands the behavior expected

This strategy can only be used if the student is already aware of the expected behaviors. They must have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Handouts can be given to students that ask questions on which behaviors are appropriate during certain situations. This practice will ensure they have a clear understanding of what behaviors they should be performing.

2. The student is able to direct behavior by thinking I should statements

The student is fully responsible for making the right decisions on exhibiting the appropriate behaviors. They use “I statements” to guide his/her behaviors.

Example of Behavior Questionnaire

Example of a questionnaire for speaking appropriately

Student: _____

Behavior: Speaking Appropriately

Answer the questions below by checking either the yes column or the no column for each question.

<i>Is it appropriate ...</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>To raise your voice in the classroom</i>		
<i>To raise your hand to talk</i>		
<i>To use profanity</i>		

Example of a questionnaire for any behavior

Student:

1. I think I need to work on

_____.

2. Instead of _____ I should

_____.

3. It is NOT appropriate to _____.

4. It IS appropriate to _____.

5. I am expected to _____.

Student Signature _____

Goal Setting

Description

Goal Setting is the process of self-selecting a behavioral target to motivate performance.

How it Works

1. Student picks his or her own behavioral target.

How to implement

- 1. Student independently chooses to address a behavior.**

The importance of goal setting is that it helps structure student effort. Students may feel more motivated to meet the criterion if they are in charge of coming up with the behavioral target and goal. It helps provide independence in the student. The teacher should still check to make sure the student chooses an appropriate behavior to target. Goal setting can be used within other

self-management techniques such as self -
monitoring and self-evaluation.