

A STUDY USING COMMUNICATION PRACTICES, MOTIVATION
PRINCIPLES AND HIGH PERFORMANCE LEARNING STRATEGIES TO AID
STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM WITH EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES

By
Melvin D. Shepherd

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree

In

Education

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Research Advisor

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
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ABSTRACT

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A Study Using Communication Practices, Motivation Principles and High Performance Learning Strategies to Aid Students in the Classroom with Emotional Disabilities
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The teaching practice of helping students with emotional disabilities continues to change throughout the history of education. There are many practices and behavioral methods that will allow teachers to be successful when working with students with emotional disabilities. Research has shown that students with emotional disabilities spend a great deal of time isolated from others due to the inability to control impulsive behaviors, manage time wisely, and set and achieve goals. Teachers need to find different strategies to help create an environment that is conducive to the success rate of their student's ability to self motivate and to have focus in the classroom. Communication practices, motivation principles and high performance techniques will assist teachers in creating a positive strategy when working with students with emotional disabilities.

The objectives of this study were to explore the practices of communication, principles of motivation theory, and high performance techniques of learning strategies. This study identified how these practices, principles, and techniques are utilized in an environment working with student with emotional disabilities. This review of literature should be of interest to special educators and parents around the United States who are seeking ways to understand different methods in motivating students in the classroom with emotional disabilities. This study was conducted through a comprehensive review and critical analysis of research and literature focused upon the objectives of the study. The results of this study were used to formulate recommendations for helping professionals.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Behavioral disorders (emotional disability) also known as conduct disorders are one of the most common forms of psychopathology among students with emotional disabilities and is the most frequently cited reason for referral to mental health services. The appearance of behavioral disorders is increasing dramatically in the classrooms. As a result their presence severely constrains the ability of the school systems to educate students effectively. The prevalence of behavioral problems among students is substantial. Many surveys indicate that behavioral disorders vary among young adults, ranging from 2% and 6% in K-12 students. This percentage translates into .3 to 3.8 million cases of behavioral disorders among the school and pre-college population. Behavioral disorders (emotional disability) become apparent when the student displays a repetitive and impact persistent pattern of behavior that results in the significant disruption in other students. Such disturbances may cause significant impairments in academic, social, and or occupational functioning. Such a behavior pattern is consistent throughout the individual's life (Keller, 2004).

Communication, motivation, and performance are probably the most important elements in being successful with emotional disabilities. According to Martens (1997), communication, motivation, and performance are indicators that reflect in the student's attitude about how much they can trust what the teacher says. Students will give teachers credibility, simply because they occupy the prestigious role of the teacher. Berger (1990) stated:

Communication scholars tend to feel that communication is central to understanding everything else and have generated innumerable theories of communication and models of the communication process. There seems to be a split in communication study between people with a social science background versus people with different ideas about communication.

Schools of communication are relatively recent arrivals in academia, and many of the most influential thinkers in these schools are people who have trained in sociology, political science, history, literature, journalism, economics, psychology and anthropology (p. 137).

According to Froyen (1998), in addition to possessing communication skills that draw students into a relationship, the teacher must be skilled at encouraging the student to use the relationship for growth; the skill is grounded in a basic belief in the goodness of students and their ability to separate their work from their worth. Teachers must develop a special language, one quite different from the language commonly used to give praise. Too much praise can leave students doubting the sincerity of the teacher's message and can reduce the value of rewards. The positive approach is an attitude that teachers communicate in both verbal and nonverbal messages. It is an attitude that seems to communicate a desire to understand an acceptance of others, and an expectation of mutual respect. It is the attitude of a cooperative style teacher. It is important for teachers to have realistic goals not only about the student's performance and abilities, but about their emotional and social behavior as well. Being realistic when setting expectations for students with emotional disabilities (ED) will help teachers become more positive. Just as

students assign reasons to their successes and failures, so must teachers; these reasons in turn will lead teachers to have certain expectancies of the students, which conveyed may affect the student's behavior and motivation to perform in the classroom. Teachers must convey to parents what assistance they will need from them during the school year.

Teachers need parent's support and reinforcement of their classroom objectives. Teachers should specify what they consider appropriate behavior at home and school for students with ED. Parents play a vital role in encouraging students during the school year and in helping students understand the significance of behavior failure and success and the emotions associated with them. At the end of the school year, teachers should invite parents to evaluate the classroom and ask parents to point out things that went well and suggest what might be improved. Parent's feedback will help teachers become better educators in teaching students with ED (emotional disabilities). Effective teachers recognize the importance of working with parents to enhance what teachers do in the classroom as well as to be aware of what students does at home (Polloway and Patton, 1997).

Teacher-parent conferences provide important opportunities for interaction with parents in the school. If they are handled ineptly, however, they can do great damage to the relationship of the parent with the school. Therefore, it is essential that teachers be trained to conduct conferences skillfully and to maximize their effectiveness as channels of communication (Landers and Myers, 1977). Teacher visitation to student's homes would allow teachers to gain insight on the problems of the student or the perception and aspirations of the parents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the practices of communication, principles of motivation theory, and high performance techniques of learning strategies. This study identifies how these practices, principles, and techniques are utilized in an environment working with student with emotional disabilities. The review of literature should be of interest to special educators, administrators, and parents around the United States, who seek ways to understand different methods to motivate students in the classroom with emotional disabilities. This study is conducted through a comprehensive review and critical analysis of research and literature focused upon the objectives of the study. The results of this study are used to formulate recommendations for helping professionals.

Research Objectives

The study addresses the following research objectives:

1. To determine that communication principles and practices used in the classroom by teachers increases the success rate of students with emotional disabilities.
2. To determine that the use of motivation principles and techniques will improve behavior, build self-esteem, and motivate students to learn.
3. To create high performance learning strategies for teachers and administrators so they may have other avenues to increase the level of success among students with emotional disabilities.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviewed the literature relevant to teachers motivating students with emotional disabilities (ED), as well as techniques and strategies for helping them to succeed in the classroom. The effectiveness of these techniques and strategies are discussed. The literature review includes the following topics: (a) the principles and practices of communication (b) motivation principles and techniques, and (c) high performance strategies.

The traditional education environment has been modeled after a "factory" model of design. Bring in the raw material (the students), process this material throughout the machinery (classrooms and the school), by trained and skilled laborers (teachers), and output a completed product (the graduate) (Gross & Chandler, 1964). This model is further delineated by defining the supervisory role of management (the teacher), and the subjected role of the trainee (the student) (Freire, 2000). Prior to the Henry Ford method of mass production, education was not provided in this manner in American schools (Postman & Weingarter, 1969). It was sometime during or after World War II that this model was woven into the American social fabric (Kay, 2001).

Communication Practices

One of the most important skills to learn for teaching or any other profession is to communicate with a positive approach. Positive approach in communication emphasizes

praise and rewards to strengthen desirable behaviors in students with ED (emotionally disabilities); whereas the negative approach uses punishment and criticism to eliminate undesirable behaviors. Behavior is defined by the mores and norms established within the social context. It is this notion of defining the parameters of the social context which defines the ability or inability of someone to interact "appropriately" within society (Bandura, 1969). Arguments exist which claim that by redefining these parameters that most, if not all, learning disabilities would cease to exist (Levine, 1992, Papert, 1999). This claim is the philosophical foundation of postmodern thought concerning education. This philosophy has opened the door to the study of children experiencing emotional or behavioral disorders as well. However, society would need to reinvent itself continuously in order to redefine the "appropriateness" of behavior (Bandura, 1969). It would be unrealistic to expect a society to accept all such changes. Too often the cause behind inappropriate behavior is environmental (Rapp, 1991), whether this is from the structure of the school, home, or society (Kay, 2001). The positive approach can help students with ED value themselves as individuals and help them stay on track in the classroom and in turn it gives the teacher credibility. The negative approach can increase student's fear of failure, lower their self-esteem and can aid in destroying the teacher's credibility. Using the positive approach in communicating with students with ED does not mean that every message should be full of praise and compliments (Martens, 1997).

Communication is the foundation of human interaction. It is a two-way process of giving and receiving information through any number of channels and it is often very complex. When listening to or reading someone else's message, we often filter what's

being said through a screen of our own opinions. One of the major barriers to communication is our own ideas and opinions. Having the ability to communicate is to understand spoken language and be able to express a clear meaning or response (Chitwood and Hayden, 1997).

The word communication, suggest an exchange of ideas between people. Communication is a process whereby each party understands what the other has to say and formulates responsive messages in a way to create further understanding (Wolfgang, 1995).

Students are better able to understand information and problem solve if the environment is nice and comfortable, but all students may not understand the information and problem solve well in this environment. They may have different communication patterns. There is evidence that just as there are gender differences in the way language is used men and women differ in their use and interpretation of nonverbal behavior. Nonverbal cues affect the meaning of messages; individuals generally believe these cues more than they believe verbal messages. Nonverbal cues are particularly important in communicating emotions. Several applications of nonverbal communication research to small groups have been discussed. Consider the following suggestions: interpreting nonverbal behavior, body posture and movement, eye contact, facial expression, vocal cues, territoriality and personal space, personal appearance, communication environment, and gender and culture.

Listening is the most important skill of communication and listening patiently is critical to a teacher's success in the classroom. In order for teachers and schools to help

students with ED, they should strive to follow this principle and practice of communication. Teachers should be leaders, committed to a plan and share this plan with their students. They should stay with the plan and never give up (Brymer, 2000).

Leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate others. In order to inspire people, you must have their trust and respect and the first step is always to do that which you say you are going to do. "In order to be good in managing student's motivation, there are four functions that must be practiced: (a) planning, (b) organizing, (c) controlling, and (d) leading. These functions can help teachers better manage their classrooms" (Brymer, 2000).

Communication practices are about developing ways to teach and learn communication and relationship skills, through educational "practices" used within everyday life. These practices work with ordinary human interactions -- so they do not require money or other material resources, nor formal education, permission, special settings, and privileges. This means that rich and poor are equal here -- and that we can focus immediately on the heart of what we want to do, without waiting for resources to become available. And there's no need to fight over resources, avoiding that major distraction.

Communication between student and teacher is an essential aspect of constructivism. Communication must be present for the teacher to know how the student's knowledge has been constructed. Teachers need to realize that solutions are built from past constructions and therefore will probably differ from their own. To

promote this communication in assessment, teachers should add points for each step of correct thinking that students show rather than subtract points for incorrect work. Many students do not show their thinking because they lack confidence. This procedure follows the implementation of positive behavior modification plans; that is, rewarding the student with positive reinforcers for the good work they do instead of punishing them for making a mistake (Glasser, 1997).

Communication practices use assisted-performance education, recognized by many experts as a highly effective way to learn. It brings this learning into everyday life, which is always available and doesn't cost money -- not just into the classroom. And it brings to the table a key ingredient -- a way to modularize this work so that it becomes open and flexible, not tied to any particular practices or methods. Each practice stands or falls independently; it can be added, changed, or deleted at will. People anywhere can use their particular talents and experiences to improve existing communication training practices, design new ones, apply practices to their own circumstances, or promote ones they believe in. They can work independently yet within a community. They can receive guidance from others, yet can proceed on their own, without having to stop and wait until others are ready.

Motivation Principles and Techniques

Motivation is putting high level of effort in order to achieve the planned goals of an organization and also an individual puts his or her effort in order to achieve his or her

desired need.” Everyone is motivated everyday by something that rouses the mind or emotions to take action in pursuit of a goal or to fulfill a need.

Motivation is the key to success in the eyes and theories of many psychologists of today. It is one factor that drives the human behavior to reach its full potential. Many psychologists like Abraham Maslow argued that the factors that drive or motivate people to act lie on an ascending scale (Cloninger, 2000).

Maslow believed that once a group or order of needs is satisfied, the individual will not be motivated by more of the same, but will seek to satisfy higher order needs. He defined five orders of needs, listed in ascending importance: Physiological - which is the basic survival requirements of warmth, shelter and food; Security - protection from danger or threat; Social - relationships with others, expressed as friendship or love; Self-Respect - sense of personal worth, respect and autonomy; Self-Actualization- sense of achieving your full potential. Maslow believed that a higher order need would not be a motivator if lower order needs remained unmet. According to Cloninger (2000), Maslow postulated that people begin development with basic needs that are not noticeable different from animal motivation. As they mature and as their lower order needs are satisfied, people develop more uniquely human motivation.

Frederick Herzberg studied and practiced clinical psychology in Pittsburgh, where he researched the work related motivations of thousands of employees. According to McGregor (1960), Herzberg findings were published in “The Motivation to Work” in 1959. He concluded that there were two types of motivation: Hygiene Factors that can

de-motivate if they are not present – such as supervision, interpersonal relations, and physical working conditions and salary. Hygiene Factors affect the level of dissatisfaction, but are rarely quoted as creators of job satisfaction. Motivation Factors that will motivate if they are present such as achievement, advancement, recognition and responsibility; dissatisfaction is not normally blamed on Motivation Factors, but they are cited as the cause of job satisfaction. So once you have satisfied the hygiene factor, providing more of them would not generate much more motivation, but lack of the motivation factors would not of themselves de- motivate. There are clear relationships to Maslow here, but Herzberg's ideas really shaped modern thinking about rewards and recognition in major companies. Traditional management methods (Theory X) might not be the only way to get people motivated. Instead, you could take a different approach (Theory Y) and achieve the same if not more (McGregor, 1960).

Theory X is the traditional view of direction of control, based on these assumptions. The average person inherently dislikes work and will avoid it if at all possible. As a result, most people have to be coerced, controlled and threatened if they are to put in enough effort to achieve the organization's goals. In fact the theory states that the average person prefers to be directed, avoids responsibility, is not ambitious and simply seeks security. Theory Y, based on the integration of individual and organization goals, assumes the physical and mental effort of work is as natural as play or rest, so the average person does not inherently dislike work. People are capable of self-direction and self-control, so those factors do not necessarily have to come from elsewhere. A person's

commitment to an objective is a function of the rewards for its achievement. The average person learns not only to accept but also to seek responsibility. Most people have a capacity for imagination, ingenuity and creativity. The intellectual potential of most people is under –used in modern industrial life.

Theory Y is not a soft option. In fact it can take as much management effort as Theory X, but the effects of a Theory Y approach will last longer. Theory X manager is a dying breed, and Theory Y lies behind most modern approaches to motivation.

Teachers can help motivate students with ED by forming an individualized instruction plan for the student (Nielsen, 1982). Nielsen, states: “When the abilities of students in the same class are significantly different, individualized standards of grading are more motivating than a system that permanently excludes the less skilled from rewards” (p. 37). Today’s society is more diverse and will require different techniques to help motivate a diverse population in schools do to the fact that different cultures are motivated by different things.

The environment can be used to focus a student's attention on what needs to be learned. Teachers who create warm and accepting, yet studious atmospheres will promote persistent effort and favorable attitudes towards learning. Interesting visual aids, such as booklets, posters or practice equipment, motivate learners by capturing their attention and curiosity.

Incentive motivation includes privileges and receiving praise from the teacher. The teacher determines an incentive that is likely to motivate an individual at a particular time. In a general learning situation, self-motivation without incentives will not succeed.

The use of incentives is based on the principles that learning occurs more effectively when the student experiences feelings of satisfaction.

Internal motivation is longer and more self-directive than is external motivation, which must be repeatedly reinforced by praise or concrete rewards. Students must find satisfaction in learning based on the understanding that the goals are useful to them, or based on the pure enjoyment of exploring new things. Some individuals, particularly children of certain ages, have little capacity for internal motivation and must be guided and reinforced constantly. Caution should be exercised in using external rewards when they are not absolutely necessary; their use may be followed by a decline in internal motivation.

Learning is most effective when an individual is ready to learn that is, when one wants to know something. Sometimes the student's readiness to learn comes with time, and the teacher's role is to encourage its development. If a desired change in behavior is urgent, the teacher may need to supervise the student directly to ensure that the desired behavior occurs. If a student is not ready to learn, he or she may not be reliable in following instructions and therefore must be supervised and have the instructions repeated again and again.

Motivation is enhanced by the way in which instructional material is organized. In general, the best organized material makes the information meaningful to the individual. One method of organization includes relating new tasks to those already known. Other ways to relay meaning are to determine whether the persons being taught understand the final outcome desired, and instruct them to compare and contrast ideas.

Success is more predictably motivating than is failure. Ordinarily, people will choose activities of intermediate uncertainty rather than those that are difficult (little likelihood of success) or easy (high probability of success). For important goals, there is less of tendency to choose difficult conditions. Having learners assist in defining goals increases the probability that they will understand them and want to reach them. However, students sometimes have unrealistic notions about what they can accomplish. To identify realistic goals, teachers must be skilled in assessing a student's readiness or a student's progress toward goals.

Because learning requires changes in belief and behavior, it normally produces a mild level of anxiety, which is useful in motivating the individual; however, severe anxiety is incapacitating. A high degree of stress is inherent in some educational situations. If anxiety is severe, the individual's perception of what is going on around them is limited. Teachers must be able to identify anxiety and understand its effect on learning. They also have a responsibility to avoid causing severe anxiety in learners by not setting ambiguous or unrealistically high goals for them.

It is important to help each student set goals and provide informative feedback regarding progress toward these goals. Setting a goal demonstrates an intention to achieve and activates learning from one day to the next. It also directs the student's activities toward the goal and offers an opportunity to experience success.

Both affiliation and approval are strong motivators. People seek others with whom to compare their abilities, opinions, and emotions. Affiliation can also result in reducing anxiety by the social acceptance and the mere presence of others. However,

these motivators can also lead to conformity, competition and other behaviors that may be seen as negative.

Many behaviors result from a combination of motives. No grand theory of motivation exists; however, motivation is so necessary for learning that strategies should be planned to organize a continuous and interactive motivational dynamic for maximum effectiveness. The general principles of motivation are interrelated, and a single teaching action can use many of them simultaneously.

Much of the recent research on student motivation has rightly centered on the classroom, where the majority of learning takes place and where students are most likely to acquire a strong motivation to gain new knowledge. Making the classroom a place that naturally motivates students to learn is much easier when students and teachers function in an atmosphere where academic success and the motivation to learn are expected and rewarded. Such an atmosphere, especially when motivation to learn evolves into academic achievement, is a chief characteristic of an effective school.

An environment that nurtures educational motivation can be cultivated in the home, in the classroom, or throughout an entire school. One of the most effective avenues for engendering student motivation is a school's culture. School culture can be embodied and transformed through channels such as shared values, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and cultural networks.

Teachers should use a wide variety of activities and symbols to communicate motivational goals. Visible symbols illustrate and confirm what is considered to be important in the school. School newsletters, statements of goals,

behavior codes, rituals, symbols, and legends convey messages of what the school really values. Staging academic awards assemblies, awarding trophies for academic success and displaying them in trophy cases, scheduling motivational speakers, and publicizing students' success can help them see that the desire to be successful academically is recognized and appreciated.

Teachers and administrators can influence levels of motivation by shaping the school's instructional climate, which in turn shapes the attitudes of teachers, students, parents, and the community at large toward education. By effectively managing this aspect of a school's culture, principals can increase both student and teacher motivation and indirectly impact learning gains.

School administrators can take advantage of times of educational change by including strategies for increasing student motivation. Administrators leaders should be challenged to ensure that motivation and the investment in learning of students will be enhanced as a result of school reform. School leaders have seldom considered motivation in the current restructuring movement and few have considered that the school as an entity in its own right may have effects that supersede those of individual classrooms and the acts of individual teachers (Renchler, 1992).

Six keys for motivating students

*First to motivate students with ED, just telling them what to do will work with some, but it will not work with a class full. Teachers must always teach students how to learn perform their skills. Also teachers must tell them how well they are

learning and performing their skills at the present time. In addition, teachers must show students precisely how they want learning and work to be done in the future. These steps take time and, for some, individualized instruction. But they are vital when it comes to initiating motivation. If we simply instruct, correct, or evaluate without taking these actions, we may actually decrease some students' interest and motivation.

*Second, motivating students includes refusing to accept poor performance as the best they can do. Once teachers allow themselves to accept poor performance, motivating becomes twice as difficult. Teachers don't have to rant and rave about poor performance. Neither do they have to act disgusted. But they don't have to react in silence either. To motivate, teachers must say something--directly to the student. Fortunately, there are many ways and means of accomplishing this task. These techniques range from mentoring to giving a formal reprimand. Regardless of the approach they use, teachers are relating to the student that standards are important. Teachers are teaching the students that standards count. Above all, teachers are communicating that the student is capable of performing at a higher level-- and this kind of communication is motivating.

*Third, if teachers want to motivate all students most of the time, they must never take good work for granted--or let it go unnoticed. Rather teachers must recognize the effort given. They should glorify the work, when it is done in satisfactory as well as superior ways. Teachers may think, "Everyone knows what a great effort is." That is not true. If teachers want to motivate students to higher levels of

academic achievement, they must explain what they exactly want from the student in terms of observable and measurable levels of performance. Then explain why that superior level of effort is important.

*Fourth, a basic key to motivating is giving positive reinforcement extensively to ALL students to promote and encourage improvement. To be the most effective, however, teachers must personalize positive reinforcement. They must be specific in their praise. Students must know precisely what the teacher is talking about.

The students must know that teachers are honest and sincere. And, they must thank the students for showing improvement. In the process, teachers must remember that what motivates one student may turn another student off.

Therefore, teachers must find the type of praise and recognition, which is motivational to the individual--and use it.

*Fifth, a basic key to motivating includes working to build a personal relationship with each student--on the level at which the student is ready to begin. This means treating each individual as real, live human beings who are unique. When a teacher's motivational approach recognizes, appreciates, and respects each student's individuality, then the students are most apt to respond positively to both their words and actions. When teachers develop a personal relationship with their students, they will be the first to notice that teachers praise, correct and motivate differently--and with more success.

*Sixth, to motivate students teachers must remember that they can't separate their respect for the task at hand from their students' point of view. Teachers should not

talk before they listen. And should not offer advice and give directions until they have listened and gathered information. That is, teachers can not make these mistakes and motivate students. If teachers listen first, they will motivate much more effectively. Students are more likely cooperate with those who listen to them and are not as likely to follow those who don't listen to them (Lukiv, 2001).

One of the hardest parts of teaching is motivating young students to learn. To do this effectively, teacher needs to foster an understanding of the relationship between achievement, and peak performance. They must encourage the students, provide structured lessons, and help them gain the self-discipline necessary for success and excellence in the classroom. Effective motivation flows from the partnership between teachers and students. Teachers must understand students as individuals to gain his/her trust and respect. Teachers must remember that they are working with young-adults, not machines. They must teach students the processes of learning, but they must also assist in building their character. Showing support and interest in all facets of their lives helps build an effective teacher-student relationship. A good way to demonstrate such personal interest is by working with students on an individual basis and completing assignments with them. This will show students that teachers have been where they are, that teachers know it's hard work, and that they are willing to work hard also.

Schools must think in terms of attitude, communication, motivation, and performance. A winning attitude is the best motivator. If students believe they can achieve their goals, they'll try harder and increase their likelihood of success. A positive

teacher-student relationship lays the groundwork for this attitude, and setting goals helps establish it. Teachers should help students set long-term goals and encourage them to achieve these goals through a series of short-term goals. The short-term goals will keep motivation high, while giving the students an ongoing sense of achievement. Once the student begins developing a sense of accomplishment, he/she will be motivated to try even harder.

It's important to remember that students can motivate one another. Teachers should often place the students into cooperative learning style groups and grade them as a group rather than as individuals. These cooperative learning style groups help build classroom morale and make the students feel they have invested in one another. Each student has a responsibility to the group. They share the short-term goals of improving attitudes and basic skills with the long-term benefit of overall improved performance. Motivation is simply a means to an end. If teachers provide exposure to positive ideas over a long period of time, they will produce a successfully motivated student.

High Performance Learning Strategies

Classroom performance learning strategies is a major concern among students of all ages in the field of special education today. Performance learning strategies should be learned early in life. It is the responsibility of our educational system and parents to provide good strategies for high performance learning in special education programs. Performance learning strategies may easily be integrated with any of the other areas of the total educational curriculum.

Most people know, or are taught, at an early age, how to process information and develop an organized plan or strategy when confronted with a problem, whether that problem is social, academic, or job related. Others find such cognitive processes quite difficult. Learning disabilities have only recently been recognized as disabilities. This neurological disorder causes difficulty in organizing information received, remembering them, and expressing information and therefore affects a person's basic function such as reading, writing, comprehension, and reasoning. However, these students with learning disabilities can be taught effective learning strategies that will help them approach tasks more effectively (Keller, 2004).

The term "learning disability" (LD) refers to problems students have with learning and processing information. A student with a learning disability may have difficulty listening, speaking, remembering, reading, writing, reasoning or problem-solving. Learning disabilities create a discrepancy between the student's potential ability and actual performance. Learning disabilities make it difficult for a student to work up to his or her level of ability (Coleman, 1996).

Martin Haberman at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee offers insight into what is needed to create high-achieving, engaged learning environments, particularly in urban schools. He argues that high levels of student involvement and a focus on higher-order thinking rather than basic skills give classrooms a different structure. As a result, urban students in particular are likely to be more successful, engaged, and have higher self-esteem (Haberman, 1991).

A high-performance learning culture is one that expects each individual member to perform to high standards. Colleagues and peers support one another's efforts, and resources and structures are aligned with expected behaviors. To achieve such a culture, school leaders must take an action-oriented approach. Based on a review of the research on creating high-performing learning communities, a dynamic and interactive conceptual framework for accomplishing this work would embody five components: (1) vision, (2) mission, (3) core beliefs, (4) strategic structures, and (5) distributed accountability. The theory underpinning the approach posits that, while individuals' behaviors are guided initially by intrinsic personal beliefs, their behaviors can be modified by strategic structures designed to reinforce organizational core beliefs as stated in the vision/mission. Over time, changes in behaviors can lead to changes in beliefs and can foster distributed accountability—a state wherein each member of a school's faculty assumes responsibility for the academic progress of every student (AEL, 2003).

High performance learning is divided into categories of knowledge which involves three stages of progression: acquisition, understanding, and application. These stages represent important milestones in the learning process. Acquisition, involves studying, reading and memorization. It is simply, as it is entitled: acquisition. At this stage there isn't enough meaning assigned to the acquired knowledge where it is actually understood and retained in the context where it is presented. Acquired knowledge without progressing to the next level often has a short lifetime (in the absence of a "photographic" memory), and will be readily discarded if understanding within a contextual application is not obtained. However, it is seldom remembered in the way it is

presented, rather it is remembered in whatever emotional or existing schematic associations were assigned to it. This may negate the ability to recall the acquired knowledge in a form that can easily be applied in context.

The next stage of learning progression is actually applying contextual meaning and understanding to the acquired knowledge. For those who understand the terms “dry fire” and “wet fire”, this stage is the “dry fire” of learning progression. Depending on the interdependencies and associations between the various pieces of knowledge, a higher progression of learning may not be possible when a dependent knowledge tract is in the initial stages of learning progression. Since progression phases two and three require contextual knowledge, there must be a degree of progression with contextual knowledge suitable for progression in other areas. Often the contextual knowledge is the main target of analogous concept bridging between the new domain and old ones. The final phase of learning progression involves actually gaining experience applying the contextual understanding in real-world application. This would be considered the “wet fire” of learning progression. In a person's personal experience, all dependent and interdependent knowledge must be at least to a solid phase two level of learning progression before this one can come to fruition (Kalat, 1999). It is important to understand the importance of having a learning approach and using it, than what the actual methods and logistics will be. This is to say, teachers, students, parents and administrators should be aware and mindful of how students learn.

There will always be talk about the right or wrong way to maximize performance. Research suggest that it is the responsibility of the to find what is going to work best for

his or her situation in the time and or environment they are in (Sanon, 1999). Teachers need to be conscious of the methods used in performance improvement.

CHAPTER THREE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter includes a critical analysis of literature, as well as a summary of key points from Chapter Two. It will include recommendations to teachers, parents, administrators, and students in regards to identifying a study using communication practices, motivation principles and high performance learning strategies to aid students in the classroom with emotional disabilities.

Critical Analysis

In today's society teachers can have all the skills and knowledge in the world but without the proper communication to guide them, they will not be successful in aiding students with emotional disabilities. Teachers need only to come across a student with an emotional disability that has the high performance ability but not the communication skills, and motivation to develop into an excellent student to see full well the importance of the three components of communication, motivation, and high performance learning. A teacher may have possess the knowledge of these components but not the time to aid individual students. Teachers must make time to meet with each student to learn specific things that will allow communication, motivation, and high performance learning to help them be successful in the classroom. The more teachers understand how students communicate, learn and what motivates them, the easier it may be to understand their ability to learn throughout the school year and to deal with communication problems. Communication, motivation, and high performance

learning are the three components that are very useful in helping students with emotional disabilities achieve success in the classroom.

Teachers can help ED students meet their needs in the classroom through participation which can influence student communication, motivation, and positive behavior. Different things may be motivating or rewarding to different students at different times. Praise and fieldtrips are examples of extrinsic rewards, they are provided to students by teachers, parents, and others. Intrinsic rewards are those things that are internally satisfying when students participate in school activities. Having fun and feeling competent and successful are intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards such as recognition from others and trophies can be motivating and influence positive behavior but over time, these rewards often become less and less valued while intrinsic rewards become more and more valued. Unlike extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards are self-fueling. Teachers do not need to provide them. What teachers must create the condition in the classroom that provide each student the opportunity to attain intrinsic rewards. Teachers, who are great motivators and understand the importance of motivation and performance, know that they do not motivate students. Instead, they create the condition or the climate where students motivate themselves and manage their own performance. Teachers skillfully use extrinsic rewards to help build intrinsic motivation. When students fail to achieve the intrinsic rewards , they may lose motivation to participate in class/school, display negative behaviors and quit.

Performance is observable behavior that demonstrates a skill, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Learning is a relatively permanent improvement in performance

capability arising from practice. Because learning is not directly observable, it must be inferred from changes in performance over time. Because other things besides learning can cause change in performance, it is not always easy to know whether a student has actually learned a skill. Sometimes a student may perform exceptionally well due to luck or poorly due to a loss of concentration and lack of motivation. The key to knowing learning has occurred is that the improvement in performance is relatively permanent. The process of helping students, correct errors and behaviors begins with the teachers observing and evaluating their performance to determine if the mistakes are learning or performance errors. For performance errors, teachers need to look for the reason that their students are not performing as well as they know how. Teachers possess the ability to

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to increase the awareness of parents and educators of the strategies that can be developed to impact the learning process of students with special needs (emotional disability) in school. These recommendations will assist administrators in providing teachers with materials and resources to better practice their profession, and to improve interaction with parents.

For Administrators

There needs to be an increasing motivation among schools to understand the culture of special education in order to provide an appropriate education. This increased motivation for improving quality of school services to special needs students is attributable, in part, to the growing political and social presence of special needs students, both within schools and in the larger society. New sets of values, beliefs, and cultural

expectations should be introduced into educational system by the physical presence of these groups. The issues of learning, language and culture do impact on the provision of free appropriate educational services. Schools need a sociocultural framework to consider diversity of values, interactional styles, and cultural expectations in a systematic fashion. They need knowledge and skills for special education assessment and intervention, including abilities to:

- 1 Recognize special needs students; understand the role that culture and society play in the sociopsychological and economic development of special needs populations;
- 2 Understand that socioeconomic and political factors significantly impact the psychosocial, political and economic development of people with special needs.

For Teachers

Teachers should recognize students with special needs and special education resources as significant parameters in understanding special educational process.

- a. Educators, regardless of teaching experiences, should be aware of how their own teaching background/experiences, attitudes, values, and biases influence educational processes. They should make efforts to correct any prejudices and biases.
- b. Educators should incorporate an understanding of the student's needs and educational background. This includes the student's familiarity and comfort with the majority school culture as well as ways in which the

student's culture may add to or improve various aspects of the majority culture and/or of society at large.

- c. Educators should help students increase their awareness of school values and norms, and they should facilitate discovery of ways students can apply this awareness to their own lives and to society at large.
- d. Educators should seek to help students determine whether a problem stems from prejudice or bias in others so that the student does not inappropriately personalize problems.
- e. Educators must consider not only differential diagnostic issues but also cultural beliefs and values of the student and his/her community in providing intervention. Teachers should respect the roles of family members and community structures, hierarchies, values, and beliefs within the student's culture.
- f. Educators should identify resources in the family and the larger community.
- g. Clarification of the role of the teacher and the expectations of the student should precede intervention. Educators must seek to ensure that both the teachers and student have a clear understanding of what educational services and roles are reasonable.
- h. Teachers should respect the right of a free and appropriate education for students with special needs.

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