



Teaching Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
in Inclusive Classrooms (Grades P-3):
A Meta-Synthesis

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Abstract

This meta-synthesis focuses on the literature pertaining to students with emotional and behavioral disorders in inclusive preschool through third grade classrooms. The first purpose of this study was to discover the feelings and ideas that teachers, parents and community members have. Teachers, parents and community members have varying views about inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. The second purpose was to discover ideas that teachers could use in the classroom to successfully support students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

1. Introduction

1.1. The problem

Students with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD) account for .91 percent of the school age population (ages 6-17) of students in America's classrooms in the 2001-2002 school year (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Dowdy, 2008) The federal government defines emotional and behavioral disorders as follows:

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), the term emotionally disturbed – used synonymously with E/BD – means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked extent, which adversely affects educational performance:

- A. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- B. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory relationships with peers and teachers;
- C. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- D. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depressions; or
- E. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or.
 - a. The term includes children who are schizophrenic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed. [Section 300.8, 4]

E/BD can be troublesome and exasperating for parents, teachers and other community members. The problem is that many of these students are misunderstood; they are labeled as wild, inconsiderate, rowdy and uncontrollable. Teachers, families and schools

need to be better informed about E/BD to better interact with these students to facilitate personal growth and educational goals.

Many of these students are included in regular education classrooms. Inclusion is when special education and non-special education students are in the same classroom. A typical classroom teacher provides modifications for many students special education or not. It is important for special education students to be in regular education classrooms so both parties can learn skills about interaction, group dynamics and respectful behaviors.

1.2. Author's beliefs and experiences

I had my first experience with behavioral disorders in third grade. I was in Mrs. Little's class at Silver Firs Elementary School in Everett, Washington. I specifically remember the day J.R. threw over his desk in a fury and screamed at the teacher and proceeded to throw other items around the classroom. I don't remember what caused his outburst but I do remember what the teacher did because of it.

My knowledge of J.R. was that he came from a low-income family, his dad was in jail and his mother worked a lot. He lived in a part of the neighborhood that was not safe to walk around in at night and police activity was frequent. He had teased me incessantly and my mother had told me to stay away from him. As we were shuffled out of the class that day, I remember Mrs. Little being very cool and calm. She spoke in a kind voice to the rest of us and after we were safely in the hallway, she went in with the vice-principal and counselor and calmed J.R. As a 29-year-old grown woman, I realize that J.R. really needed love and positive attention. As a third grader, it was my first realization that not

all kids can control their behavior and that children often have to deal with very adult issues.

The next day J.R. had a behavior plan taped to his desk, and if he acted responsibly for five days in a row Mrs. Little would buy him a Happy Meal from McDonald's. I was extremely jealous that he would get this sort of incentive; my mother still reminds me of the conversation we had – that I could get Happy Meals anytime I asked, but his mother probably could not afford them. I decided in third grade that I wanted to be a teacher just like Mrs. Little with a calm, loving, patient demeanor. I have kept in touch with her over the years, and have realized I am now my own Mrs. Little.

My experiences did not end with Mrs. Little. Beginning in my junior year of high school through my sophomore year of college, I worked at the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). During that time, I experienced many students with behavior disorders; some children rarely acted out, but others were on a daily basis. I had my first encounters with Autism, Downs Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (AD/HD). I soon learned that many of the staff that worked with me shied away from these students, while I was drawn to them. I felt connected, "dialed-in," or "in-tune" with the kiddos most everyone else complained about. I was not afraid to deal with a screaming 5th grader or a temper tantrum-throwing 3rd grader. I was often called upon for assistance when other staff did not know what to do.

I have always believed that children are important. They need to be treated with respect and dignity. I feel that all children can learn, and that children need to learn to be members of society. Those students with behavior disorders are often overlooked or cast

aside because they are hard or troublesome for adults to handle. They may not fit into adult ideals or schedules, but they need to be addressed for who they are and what they know.

Fast-forward to 2005, and I was graduating college with a degree in Communication and a minor in Psychology. In 2007, I graduated with my teaching certificate and was seeking adventure and a change of pace. I soon found myself in Hooper Bay, Alaska – a village of 1,100 Yup'ik Eskimo on the edge of the Bering Sea. During my first year of teaching some extraordinary things happened: the old school burned down, and the new school wasn't ready, so school didn't start until December that year. My classroom flooded over Christmas break with three feet of water, and I was moved to the art room. I confidently faced diversity, hardship, and change. Though I only had 14 students in my classroom, many of these 14 students had special needs; I had two students with ADHD, one with Down syndrome, and numerous students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Since my strenuous first year, I have been here in Hooper bay for three more years. I have dealt with the complexities of village life, taught children that are dirty, hungry, neglected, and in need of structure and love. I have had my share of unruly students, and I have learned from each one of them; I have become my own Mrs. Little.

1.3. Purpose of this meta-synthesis

The purpose of this meta-synthesis was to review the literature on the education of students with E/BD (grades P-3) in inclusive schools and classrooms. I hope to use the information gleaned from these articles to strengthen the instructional services I offer young children with E/BD.

2. Methods

2.1. Selection criteria

The 13 journal articles included in this meta-synthesis met the following selection criteria:

1. The articles focused on students from preschool through third grade.
2. The articles focused on students with emotional and behavioral disorders.
3. The articles focused on students in inclusive classrooms.
4. The articles were published in peer-reviewed journals.
5. The articles were published between 1995-2010.

2.2. Search procedures

I conducted database searches and ancestral searches to locate articles for this meta-synthesis.

2.2.1. Database searches

I conducted a systematic search of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC, Ebscohost) database in October 2010. I used the following search term combination to conduct a Boolean search of the ERIC database: (“Emotional Disturbances” OR “Emotional Problems” OR “Behavior Disorders” OR “Behavior Problems”) AND (“Inclusive Schools”) AND (“Early Childhood”) This database search produced 12 articles that met my selection criteria (Blair, 2007; Blair, 2006; Bradley, 2006; Carr, 2006; Doyle, 2004; Goodman, 2007; Kemp, 2006; Kniveton, 2004; Lane, 2007; Moffett, 2008; O’Connor, 2002; Yianni-Coudurier, 2008).

2.2.2. Ancestral search

I conducted an ancestral search of the articles I located through my search of the ERIC database. An ancestral search is a type of search in which you look at the 'works cited' or reference list of an article to discover more literature related to your chosen topic (Welch, Brownell, & Sheridan, 1999). Through this ancestral search I discovered seven additional articles that met the selection criteria (Anderson, 2001; Blair, 1999; Cooper, 1999; Dahle, 2003; Mathur, 1998; Peetsma, 2001; Wehby, 2003).

2.3 Coding procedures

I used a coding form to categorize the information presented in each of the 16 articles. This coding form was based on: (a) publication type; (b) research design; (c) participants; (d) data sources; and (e) findings of the studies.

2.3.1 Publication type

I evaluated and classified each article according to publication type. I used the following definitions to sort my articles. A *research study* is a type of study that is conducted in an orderly, scientific fashion and done to find facts and reach new conclusions. It always uses quantitative or qualitative data. A *descriptive article* is a type of work that tells about experiences but does not use specific methods to gather or analyze information. An *opinion piece/position paper* is a type of essay based on the author's opinions and beliefs. They usually are showing support for or against a topic. A *guide* is a paper written to inform readers of new material or data. It often includes how this new information can be used and put into practice.

2.3.2. Research design

I sorted each research study by using three types of data gathering: quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method. *Quantitative* research is when the researcher uses

numerical data to discover patterns, relationships, or new information. *Qualitative* research is when researchers use language (and not numbers) to describe a phenomena. This type of research looks for patterns, relationships or new information while focusing on the language or experience of a given group. *Mixed methods* research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative within one study.

2.3.3. Participants, data sources, and findings

While reading through my 14 research studies I recognized the type of participants in each study (e.g. kindergarteners, pre-school children, early elementary students). I also recognized the data sources that were analyzed for each study (e.g. observations, groups, work samples). I pulled all of this information together into a table for my meta-synthesis (Table 2).

2.4 Data analysis

I used a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method previously employed by Duke (2011) and Duke and Ward (2009) to analyze the 19 articles included in this meta-synthesis. I first identified significant statements within each article. I defined significant statements as statements related to the inclusion of children with E/BD in the general education classroom from preschool to third grade. I then developed a list of non-reoccurring, non-overlapping significant statements. Finally, I grouped the significant statements or formulated meanings from all 19 articles into a theme clusters. These theme clusters are represented as the essence of the entire body (Table 3).

3. Results

3.1 Publication type

There were 19 articles that met my search criteria. The publication type of each article is shown in Table 1. Thirteen of the 19 articles (68.42%) included in this meta-synthesis were research studies (Anderson et al., 2001; Blair et al., 2006; Blair et al., 2007; Blair et al., 1999; Bradley & Kibera, 2006; Carr & Blakeley-Smith, 2006; Kemp & Carter, 2006; Kniveton, 2004; Lane et al., 2007; Mathur et al., 1998; O' Connor & Colwell, 2002; Peetsma, et al., 2001; Yianni-Coudurier et al., 2008). One of the 19 (5.26%) articles was a descriptive article (Cooper & Lovey, 1999). Four of the articles (21.05%) were guides (Dahle, 2003; Doyle, 2004; Godman & Williams, 2007; Moffett et al., 2008). I discovered one article (5.26%) that was an opinion paper (Wheby et al., 2003).

Table 1

Author(s) & Year of Publication	Publication Type
Anderson, Kutash, & Duchnowski, 2001	Research Study
Blair, Liaupsin, Umbreit, & Kweon, 2006	Research Study
Blair, Umbreit, & Bos, 1999	Research Study
Blair, Umbreit, Dunlap, & Jung, 2007	Research Study
Bradley & Kibera, 2006	Research Study
Carr & Blakeley-Smith, 2006	Research Study
Cooper & Lovey, 1999	Descriptive Article
Dahle, 2003	Guide
Doyle, 2004	Guide
Godman & Williams, 2007	Guide
Kemp & Carter, 2006	Research Study
Kniveton, 2004	Research Study
Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips & Welsh, 2007	Research Study
Mathur, Kavale, Quinn, Forness & Rutherford Jr., 1998	Research Study
Moffett, Swafford & Richey, 2008	Guide
O' Connor & Colwell, 2002	Research Study
Peetsma, Vergeer, Roeleveld, & Karsten, 2001	Research Study
Wheby, Lane, & Falk, 2003	Opinion Paper
Yianni-Coudurier et al., 2008	Research Study

3.2. Research design, participants, data sources, and findings of the studies

I found 13 research studies that met my selection criteria (Anderson et al., 2001; Blair et al., 2006; Blair et al., 2007; Blair et al., 1999; Bradley & Kibera, 2006; Carr & Blakeley-Smith, 2006; Kemp & Carter, 2006; Kniveton, 2004; Lane et al., 2007; Mathur et al., 1998; O' Connor & Colwell, 2002; Peetsma, et al., 2001; Yianni-Coudurier et al., 2008). Table 2 outlines the research design, participants, data sources, and findings of each of these studies.

Table 2

Authors	Research Design	Participants	Data Sources	Findings
Anderson, Kutash, & Duchnowski, 2001	Quantitative	42 students with EBD, 61 students with LD	Various tests, individual student files	Students with LD made significant process over time in reading, and this progress was associated with receiving less full-time special education services.
Blair, Liaupsin, Umbreit, & Kweon, 2006	Mixed Methods	3 young children with severe mental retardation	Phase 1- Observations in the classroom Phase 2- Function-based interventions	Phase 1- The data reveals that each child engaged in high levels of appropriate behavior and low levels of problem behavior when they had access to preferred activities Phase 2- When intervention was introduced problem behaviors reduced substantially and appropriate behaviors increased.
Blair, Umbreit, & Bos, 1999	Quantitative	4 young children with behavioral disorders	Functional assessments conducted individually	Problem behaviors of young children with BD could be reduced dramatically when preferred activities were imbedded within their existing curriculum.
Blair, Umbreit, Dunlap, & Jung, 2007	Mixed Methods	1 boy with autism and mental retardation	Functional assessments, function based interventions	Lower levels of challenging behaviors and increase rates of appropriate behaviors associated with intervention.
Bradley & Kibera, 2006	Qualitative	90 interviews with directors, staff, and parents	Interviews	Families' supportive cultures are essential for the successful inclusion of children with challenging behaviors.
Carr & Blakeley-	Quantitative	21 students with	58 item rated survey	The behavioral plus medical intervention

Smith, 2006		developmental disabilities		group showed lower levels of problem behavior and completed more academic tasks than did the medical intervention alone group.
Kemp & Carter, 2006	Quantitative	19 children with disabilities who were integrated in general education classrooms	Direct measures of classroom skills	Significant clinical and statistical differences were found between children with disabilities and their average peers for on-task behavior during while class instruction, active off-task behavior during while class instruction but not during independent activities.
Kniveton, 2004	Quantitative	507 teachers and parents of other children and other adults in society or "significant others" were interviewed	Interviews	Some children are more likely than others to be readily accepted by 'significant others' for inclusion into mainstream schooling.
Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips & Welsh, 2007	Mixed-Method	7 first-grade students at risk for E/BD and reading difficulties	Various test data and intervention strategies	The study supports the effectiveness of having general education teachers serve as the primary interventionists to meet the academic needs of students at risk for E/BD in the general education setting without sustained support from other support staff.
Mathur, Kavale, Quinn, Forness & Rutherford Jr., 1998	Quantitative	Not applicable. The researcher did not collect primary data from human subjects	Meta-analysis of 64 single-subject studies	Social skills interventions have limited support for their overall effectiveness.

O'Connor & Colwell, 2002	Quantitative	68 children (46 boys and 22 girls) who had attended a nurture group full-time	Developmental Diagnostic Profile	The emotional and behavioral difficulties of nurture group children were significantly reduced upon exit, thus enabling return to normal classrooms.
Peetsma, Vergeer, Roeleveld, & Karsten, 2001	Quantitative	252 matched pairs of the 'at-risk' pupils making a total of 504	Tests, psychosocial questionnaires, characteristic questionnaires, interviews	The results support the idea that comparable pupils do make more progress academically in regular education than in special education.
Yianni-Coudurier et al., 2008	Quantitative	77 children with autism	Direct observation, questionnaires	The number of hours of inclusion at school was influenced by the children's behavioral and adaptive characteristics, major behavioral problems and low socio-professional category of the parents.

3.2.1. Research design

Of the 13 research studies I discovered, nine of the 13 (69.23%) were quantitative studies (Anderson et al., 2001; Blair et al., 2006; Carr et al., 2006; Kemp & Carter, 2006; Kniveton, 2004; Mathur et al., 1998; O'Connor & Colwell, 2002; Peetsma et al., 2001; Yianni-Coudurier et al., 2008). Three of the 13 (23.07%) were mixed-method studies, meaning they used both qualitative (i.e. non-numerical) and quantitative (i.e. numerical) results (; Blair et al., 1999; Blair et al., 2007; Lane et al., 2007). One of the 13 (7.6%) studies was qualitative (Bradley & Kibera, 2006).

3.2.2. Participants and data sources

This meta-synthesis analyzed 13 studies about students from preschool to third grade in the inclusive classroom. Of the 13 studies, five (38.5%) used function-based assessments for their data collection (Anderson et al., 2001; Blair et al., 1999; Blair et al., 2007; Lane et al., 2007; O'Connor & Colwell, 2002). Three studies (23.1%) used observations to collect data (Blair et al., 2006; Kemp & Carter, 2006; Yianni-Coudurier et al., 2008). Two studies (15.4%) used data gathered through interviews as the primary data source (Bradley & Kibera, 2006; Kniveton, 2004). One study (8.0%) used questionnaires and surveys to gather data (Carr & Blakeley-Smith, 2006). One study (8.0%) used tests, psychosocial questionnaires, characteristic questionnaires, and interviews to gather data (Peetsma et al., 2001). One study (8.0%) was a meta-analysis that analyzed previously published studies (Mathur et al., 1998).

3.2.3. Findings of the studies

The discoveries of the 13 studies included in this meta-synthesis can be summarized as follows:

1. Student's success and progress in academic programs showed improvement with direct instruction, small group instruction and other various additions to their educational program.

2. E/BD students showed an increase of appropriate behaviors and reduced levels of problem behaviors with a variety of strategies used by teachers, special education teachers and parents.

3. With supportive teachers and families the transition of E/BD students into mainstream classrooms can be a smooth transition. Without the support from the family and teacher, the transition to mainstream classroom can be a struggle.

3.3. Emergent themes

Seven themes surfaced from my analysis of 19 articles included in this review of the literature. These "emergent themes" (or theme clusters) include: (a) successful direction following; (b) success in independent activities; (c) strengthened family relationships; (d) successful classroom interventions; (e) family and community views of inclusion; (f) increase in positive classroom behavior; and (g) building successful social skills. These seven theme clusters and their formulated meanings are found in Table 3.

Table 3

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
Successful Direction Following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer support assists special needs students in direction following and on-task behavior • For multi-part directions it was found that using icons to assist students in following order assists students with disabilities • A significant difference was found between children with disabilities and their peers for successful direction following in that students with disabilities followed directions less. • Students with disabilities followed fewer directions and required one-on-one assistance for follow-up directions. • Encouragement and prompting increases the students ability of successful task completion. • When curriculum and preferred activities co-exist compliance with direction following goes up.
Success in Independent Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was less of a statistical difference of time spent on task between special needs students and their average peers during independent activities.
Strengthened Family Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support relationships with parents and families it is important to take a positive approach and remain positive. • Research shows that minority families with E/BD students generally do not receive the support and services they need. • To improve family relations asking questions about ones culture and cultural activities is essential. • Teaching about similarities as well as differences enhances students understanding of one another.
Successful Classroom Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a curriculum is embedded in preferred activities students learning is increased. • Students with E/BD were able to at least maintain academic progress after 5-years of full-time intervention services. • General education teachers can serve as a primary intervention to assist students with E/BD in the general education classroom. • Without effective interventions students with E/BD experience a higher rate of academic failure, dropout rates and are most often retained a grade. • Early intervention is essential to impacting students with E/BD. • An approach to behavioral interventions involves interspersing items that the student knows with items that the student does not know. • Medical and behavioral intervention showed a significant reduction in violent problem behaviors.
Family and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents viewed inclusion of handicapped and gifted students to have disadvantages in the general education classroom.

<p>Views of Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers often viewed the inclusion of handicapped and gifted students in the general education classroom as a good idea. • Arguments for inclusion are that they offer disabled students an opportunity to build relationships. • Community member's views towards inclusion and whether it is successful depend on the type of disability, the resources needed and whether the child is a problem for the parent. • Students that are viewed as a problem for parents are not viewed as suitable for inclusion in general education classrooms. • Students with E/BD showed improvement as a result of inclusion in general education classrooms. • Successful inclusion in mainstream classes depends on a combination of school characteristics, pupil characteristics and family circumstances. • The attitudes of family members strongly influence how successful a student will be in an inclusion setting.
<p>Increase in Positive Classroom Behavior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in nurture groups showed significantly reduced behavioral difficulties upon exit of the program allowing them to return to general education classrooms. • The lowest levels of challenging behaviors occurred when students were in smaller groups, during preferred activities and received additional direct instruction. • The majority of nurture group children are able to transfer and remain in mainstream classes with out further support. • The effects of student choices can have significant positive effects on problem behavior. • Many students with disabilities have a difficult time relating to peers and display inappropriate behaviors.
<p>Building Successful Social Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special needs students involved in inclusive classrooms do better academically and socially than special needs students in non-inclusive settings. • The largest improvement for students with E/BD was to improve their social and communication skills. • To enhance students' social skills role-playing provides learning, practice and skill improvement. • Students with disabilities showed more social skill improvement in the regular classroom. • Students with mild mental retardation showed greater improvements in social skills in special education classrooms rather than regular education classes.

4. Discussion

The section of my meta-synthesis is a summary and a discussion. I will summarize the theme clusters that emerged from my analysis of 19 articles. I will discuss how these themes connect with my teaching and my personal experiences.

4.1. Successful direction following

For students to be successful in following directions the research points to a few critical items. The research shows that using visual directions or icons greatly increased success. It also showed that students who were involved in tasks that were desirable followed directions. Significant differences were found between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers in the length of time able to attend to a task and follow directions and that disabled students needed more follow-up directions or teacher assistance. Many studies showed that when the preferred activities and curriculum are combined direction following goes up. The last thing discovered was that encouragement and prompting increased the students' attention to a task and the directions.

I have found these key factors to be true in my own classroom. In order for students to have success in following directions I often will draw, visually show and verbally share the directions for any given task. The students who have more difficulty in following directions get picture directions right on their desk. By using these strategies the success rate of direction following has improved. I also know the specific students with disabilities will need follow-up, so I make sure myself or my aide touches base with these students to ensure directions are followed. One thing that I was not surprised about was that encouragement and prompting increase successful direction following and task completion. A little encouragement goes a long way.

4.2. Success in independent activities

The research shared that the time difference spent in independent, preferred activities was very similar for disabled and non-disabled students. A few studies touched on this subject and came to the same conclusion. Students who are doing what they want to will spend longer at a task, it makes no difference whether disabled or not.

I can clearly see this relation in the classroom; if students are doing what they want to do their attention to a task will be longer. Isn't that the same as adults? We can spend hours out hiking or reading a book if that is what we chose to do but it feels like a lifetime to clean the house or do the laundry? It was not at surprising that the research concluded this minimal time difference.

4.3. Strengthened family relationships

Families who feel important and have support are more inclined to be supportive of their disabled students. Research shows that families who do not receive the proper services or support often struggle with their disabled students. To get to know a family and have them feel included research shares a few tips on how to do so. Getting to know the family by asking questions, learning their beliefs, their culture and what is important to them will show that they are valued.

I find this the most difficult part of my job. I rarely see parents let alone get enough time to know them. I learn about the families by sending questionnaires home, talking with others, talking to their children and being knowledgeable about the culture. Some parents will come into the classroom and talk with me, others I will see at conference time, others I will never see. I can see why a family would feel unsupported with their disabled student. There is one area that the research never touched on; how

much time and effort the teacher put towards getting to know the parents. I think this information would be valuable to know as well. If the teacher put towards a large amount of effort to get to know the parents and it was not reciprocated the family may not feel included but not for lack of trying.

4.4. Successful classroom interventions

The research showed a multitude of classroom interventions that could be successful, one would just have to pick from a list of items to try. Some of the suggestions that were repeated within the research were integrating the curriculum with preferred activities and interspersing the known information with unknown information. These strategies will increase the likelihood of student's success. Research also shows success that early interventions can reduce the dropout rate. Using a combination of the skills of the classroom teacher and possible medical interventions the student should have the best chance with interventions in the regular classroom.

Since the research shows that intervention is so important, especially early intervention I work hard to discover each student's needs. Teaching kindergarten is a struggle in this area, I never know if a student is still developing or if there is a problem. If a child is more than a year behind I will begin the identification process. Once a child has gone through the process of being identified there are a multitude of interventions to be used. I often use the combination of known information and unknown information interspersed together to support learning. It allows the child to have success throughout learning something new.

4.5. Family and community views of inclusion

This was the most diverse research found; parents, communities, outsiders and teachers have varying views of what inclusion should look like. The community members felt that inclusion should happen but it was dependent upon the disability. The parents felt inclusion should happen but were wary about the disadvantages that could happen in the general education classroom. The teachers felt that inclusion was beneficial for all students even though it may be more difficult. Outsiders, people with no children in the school felt that inclusion depended upon the resources needed in the school and classroom. The research concluded that communication between these groups would lead to a clearer understanding for all parties.

This theme led me to examine my own thoughts and feeling about inclusion. I discovered I sided with the views of the teachers. I agree that inclusion is important and can be successful with the proper support. The research shared some of the feelings of parents, community members and outsiders so as a teacher I learned what some of these feelings might be. I now know what questions to ask or information to tell parents before their child becomes involved in an inclusion program.

4.6. Increase in positive classroom behavior

The research supports positive classrooms and nurture groups. Nurture groups are small groups that work together to learn communication skills, social skills and support each other. Research showed that students who partook in nurture groups had lower levels of challenging behaviors, an easier transition into the inclusive classroom and had less difficulty exiting the program.

I have never dealt with a nurture group but do understand the value of small groups working together to learn new skills. In my classroom we work on

communication and social skills daily. We focus on sharing their feelings, sharing their wants and sharing their needs. I also make sure we role-play these situations so that the students have practice and know how to respond in various situations.

4.7 Building Successful Social Skills

Through research it was discovered that special needs students and disabled students do better in inclusive classroom than in a non-inclusive setting. They are able to watch and learn the social skills in the regular education classroom. Research showed that practicing social skills through role-playing drastically improves the students' communication skills. Communication skills are a life-long skill that needs to be learned efficiently. Overall the research concluded that the students learn social skills better in the inclusive classroom rather than the special education classroom.

I practice role-playing and building social skills daily in my kindergarten class. It is so important for students to learn how to communicate their feelings. The research really backed me up in what I have been doing and I feel good that I am supporting the students in such a practical skill. I have two students with emotional and behavior disorders in my classroom and through the research I learned that the largest improvement for them would be to increase their social skills. I know that they are building a good foundation of communication in my classroom.

5. Conclusion

This meta-synthesis opened my eyes to the many thoughts and feelings of teachers, parents and caregivers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. I discovered that the feelings towards students with E/BD are often negative and I will work to change that in my own classroom and throughout my teaching career. I decided

upon this topic because of two identified students in my classroom and found I made the right choice. I learned how to teach classroom information by interspersing new material with material the student already knows. I learned that teaching proper social interactions, through role-playing, would really be instrumental throughout the life of a child with E/BD. I learned how to listen to the negative ideas parents may have about the inclusion of E/BD students and what I can do and say to inform them more. Students with E/BD can be a handful in the classroom but through this meta-synthesis I learned techniques to teach them more effectively.

The studies included in this meta-synthesis display a range of students with E/BD from mild to severe from all over the world. Many of these studies used classrooms as a basis of observation and used the teachers as a way to intervene with the student. By using this method of intervention the study was able to see the student clearly in the classroom. I learned that I am not alone, I am working hard to integrate students with E/BD into inclusive classrooms and it felt good to read about others doing likewise. I envision classrooms around the world that support the intellectual, emotional and social growth of students with E/BD.

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