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A Study of Instructional Strategies, Behavior Management Techniques, and Classroom Adaptations used by Technology Education Teachers with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students

James. R. Monn
Old Dominion University

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**A Study of Instructional Strategies,
Behavior Management Techniques,
and Classroom Adaptations
Used by Technology Education Teachers
with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students**

**A Research Paper Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
the Department of Technology Education
Old Dominion University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in Education**

**by
James R. Monn
August 1998**

APPROVAL PAGE

This research paper was prepared by James R. Monn under the direction of John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. This paper was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science of Education.

Approval by: John M. Ritz

Dr. John M. Ritz
Advisor and Graduate Program Director

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Date

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To be successful, students must be able to interact with other members of the class. For students with emotional problems this can be a difficult task. Speaking in front of a class, having to read out loud, being called on to answer a question, or taking part in small groups can produce anxiety. These students often fear evaluation or testing and frequently have difficulty paying attention in class. How can a regular education teacher of Technology Education meet the unique needs of this population?

The need for special education in public schools has increased over the past few decades. More students are being placed in special education than ever before. An increasing number of special education students are being diagnosed as emotionally disturbed or emotionally handicapped. These students have legal rights to be educated in the least restrictive environment. This means that students should be placed in regular classrooms whenever possible. While many of these students are in self-contained classes for academics, most are mainstreamed for elective classes. It is imperative that elective teachers learn strategies to deal with these students.

Are there existing instructional techniques that are successful with students

who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED)? Research indicates that there may be some strategies that help SED students more than other strategies. Therefore, it is necessary to examine existing techniques to improve instructional methods for special needs students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study is to determine if there are specific instructional strategies, behavior management techniques, and classroom arrangements that are more successful than others in dealing with emotionally disturbed students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goals for this research paper will be to answer the following questions:

- ◆ What instructional strategies are most effective with emotionally disturbed students?
- ◆ Are there behavior management techniques that work well with this population?
- ◆ Are there adaptations that can be made in the classroom environment to facilitate the mainstreaming of emotionally disturbed students?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Discipline is one of the biggest problems faced in schools today. Teachers must possess skills in the area of behavior management if they are to be effective instructors. It is estimated that students with behavior problems take up as much as eighty percent of a teacher's instructional time and require anywhere from sixty to ninety percent of the teacher's attention during the course of a class period. (McIntyre, 1989, pp. 3-4)

An increasing number of students are being formally identified as needing special education services due to their misbehavior. However, the number of students with severe behavior problems who are not in special programs is growing as well. There are numerous reasons for this lack of diagnosis. Although there are many characteristics of emotionally disturbed students, few students exhibit all of these characteristics and the combinations that are manifested in each student are far from anything that could be defined as typical. (D'Alonzo, 1983, p. 43) Also, it is difficult to establish the criteria for normal behavior. Yet, defining the range of behavior generally accepted as normal is necessary in order to identify that behavior which could be classified as abnormal.

Diagnosis usually begins with teachers' observations of a student. A student may be identified as emotionally disturbed when he or she takes up a large portion of class time and teacher's attention; when behaviors seem to be

inappropriate for his/her age and are increasing in frequency and intensity; and when the student is beginning to ostracize himself/herself with peers. If there is sufficient evidence, then a referral may be made to a special education evaluation team. There are numerous checklists available to assist in determining whether or not a student has a behavior problem. The validity and reliability of these various instruments have not been widely accepted, but these checklists do provide a starting point for teacher identification. (McIntyre, 1989, p. 18)

For the student to be labeled as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed, he or she must possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- ◆ An inability to learn that cannot be explained by other factors, such as sensory, intellectual, or health factors.
- ◆ An inability to form interpersonal relationships with peers or adults.
- ◆ A tendency to exhibit inappropriate feelings or behaviors even in normal situations.
- ◆ A depressive mood that does not diminish.
- ◆ Manifestations of physical symptoms or emotional fears where relationships and school concerns are involved.

(Reinert and Huang, 1987, p. 3)

Once students are diagnosed and classified, then the task of educating them comes into focus. Education for this population has been undergoing

tremendous change in the past three decades. Public Law 88-164 provided for the training of personnel to teach the emotionally disturbed. Public Law 94-142 included provisions for Individualized Education Plans for all special education students, guarantees of confidentiality and nondiscrimination in identification and evaluation procedures, requirements for due process and ongoing communication with parents, and, perhaps most relevant to the Technology Education teacher, assurance that each child be placed in the least restrictive environment possible. (Reinert and Huang, 1987, pp. 17-19) Often, this latter provision places Special Education students in regular elective classrooms at the middle school level, thus providing mainstreaming in an area where the student stands the best chance of being successful.

Public Law 98-524, also known as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act of 1984, placed emphasis on vocational programs for disabled students. The law required that handicapped students be informed of vocational opportunities prior to ninth grade. Technology Education at the middle school level is often a special education student's introduction to vocational education. (Sessoms, 1986, pp. 3-4)

Previous research done on teaching vocational education to emotionally disturbed adolescents was done in 1992 by Denny, Epstein, and Rose who found no difference in the instruction given to SED students and that of non-handicapped students. It was not determined whether this was due to

vocational teachers' lack of training in individualized instruction or whether the instructors felt that differentiated education of special education students was unnecessary. The study suggested further research on the training of vocational education teachers in instructional behaviors and effective teaching strategies. In addition, an article written by Gunter and Denny in 1996 suggests a need for research to investigate educational practices with regard to classroom management strategies used with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students. They further recommend continued research on intervention strategies for student behaviors. The significance of this paper was to examine instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and behavioral intervention practices that work with SED students.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the study are:

- ◆ The research is limited to Virginia Beach Middle Schools.
- ◆ The number of students in the Seriously Emotional Disturbed classes at the schools included in this study is relatively small.
- ◆ The classroom management techniques of the individual Technology Education teachers may be a variable.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made regarding this study:

- ◆ The majority of students in the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed classes take Technology Education as an elective.
- ◆ The behavior of mainstreamed SED students is more disruptive than regular education students.
- ◆ Technology Education teachers have minimal training in working with Special Education students.

PROCEDURES

The researcher will study the instructional strategies and behavior management techniques that Technology Education teachers use in teaching emotionally disturbed students in their sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used throughout this paper:

- ◆ Severely Emotionally Disturbed - the term used by the federal government to distinguish emotionally and/or behaviorally

handicapped students. Synonyms include emotionally disordered, emotionally impaired, socially-emotionally maladjusted or disordered, or behaviorally or emotionally handicapped. These students are underachievers, have difficulty maintaining relationships, appear unhappy, exhibit inappropriate affect, and may develop physical symptoms brought on by emotional upset. (McIntyre, 1989, pp. 4-5)

- ◆ Least Restrictive Alternative - placement recommended for all handicapped students; mainstreaming as much as possible.
- ◆ Mainstreaming - placing handicapped students in regular education classes with non-handicapped students.
- ◆ Individualized Education Program (IEP) - a written statement indicating a student's present educational performance, combined with goals or objectives for the year. The IEP will also include initiation and duration dates for services and the evaluation procedures to be used with that student.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER I

In Chapter I, the need for developing instructional strategies and behavior management techniques for elective teachers of the emotional disturbed were

presented. The background and the significance showed how important it is for teachers to manage the behavior of emotionally disturbed students in order to maximize learning. This study will include all middle schools but will be limited to Technology Education teachers. Unique terms were defined and goals for the study were addressed. The remaining chapters will present the literature used for the study, along with explanations of how data was collected and analyzed. The findings and summary will conclude the paper.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The need for effective teaching strategies and behavior management techniques when working with emotionally disabled students has been well documented. This student population is at risk for failure under even the best of instructional circumstances. They require specific instructional and behavior plans carried out in a fair and consistent manner in order to reach their potential.

The changes that have occurred over the past few years in the area of special education have had an important impact on educating Seriously Emotionally Disturbed adolescents. This study will review the history of special education as it relates to the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed student, examine the changes that have occurred, and evaluate the factors that provide the greatest possibility of educational success for this population.

To refine the topic for this research paper, a thorough review of available literature was done. It was necessary to include numerous topics including the history of education for the emotionally disturbed, a definition of emotionally disturbed, the prevalence of emotionally disturbed students, teacher training, teacher characteristics, teaching strategies, behavior management, and classroom environment.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION FOR THE EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED

The history of special education for the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed is not easily traced. (Gable and Laycock, 1991, p. 167) In fact, there have been relatively few educational interventions prior to the mid-20th century. (Reinert and Huang, 1987, p. 8) In the mid-1900's the public schools began to develop programs for emotionally disturbed students. It was not until the 1960's, however, that research into different approaches of reaching these students was done. Even then, Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students had little opportunity for integration into general classes. (Gable and Laycock, 1991, pp. 167-168)

It was not until 1975 when The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, also known as Public Law 94-142, was enacted that the rights of the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students were protected. This law provided for:

- ◆ the development of IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) for each child
- ◆ confidentiality of data about the child
- ◆ nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures
- ◆ the least restrictive environment for the child
- ◆ ongoing consultation with parent or guardian of the child
- ◆ due process rights
- ◆ ongoing inservice programs

- ◆ activities designed to identify children in need of special assistance.

The requirement for the least restrictive environment means that a growing number of emotionally disturbed students are receiving some educational instruction in the regular classroom. (Gable and Laycock, 1991, p. 170) The least restrictive environment is often referred to as a mainstream classroom. In fact, the word "mainstreaming" dominates the special education vernacular. It means placement in a program designed to integrate handicapped students in regular education classrooms to the greatest degree possible. (D'Alonzo, 1983, p. 353) In 1976, the following definition was adopted by the Council for Exceptional Children:

Mainstreaming is a belief which involves an educational placement procedure and process for exceptional children, based on the conviction that each child should be educated in the least restrictive environment in which his educational and related needs can be satisfactorily provided. This concept recognizes that exceptional children have a wide range of special education needs, varying greatly in intensity and duration; that there is a recognized continuum of educational settings which may, at a given time, be appropriate for an individual child's needs; that to the maximum extent appropriate, exceptional children should be educated with

nonexceptional children; and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of an exceptional child from education with non-exceptional children should occur only when the intensity of that child's special education and related needs is such that it cannot be satisfied in an environment including nonexceptional children, even with the provision of supplementary aids and services. (D'Alonzo, 1983, p. 355)

Exceptional students are most frequently mainstreamed through elective classes. Courses like Technology Education, are not only popular among emotionally disturbed students, they can also provide the first opportunity for integration with nonhandicapped peers. For mainstreaming to be successful, the regular educator must be receptive and prepared. (McIntyre, 1989, p. 253) Many regular educators have misconceptions about handicapped students and may be reluctant to participate in the reintegration process. From the outset, most regular education teachers have opposed mainstreaming students with disabilities, with seriously emotionally disturbed students being the least acceptable. Teachers feel that emotionally disturbed students are aggressive, antisocial, inattentive, disruptive, and defiant of authority. There is evidence to suggest that being exposed to or having experience with exceptional students can temper the negative feelings of some teachers. (Gable and Laycock, 1991, pp. 171-172) It is reasonable, then, to assume that the more regular education teachers know and

understand about students with emotional and behavioral problems, the better equipped they will be to include these students in their classrooms.

DEFINITION OF EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED

The term emotionally disturbed is complex to define. No one definition can encompass all the different characteristics found in students with this handicap. However, a definition is required before these students can be identified. When defining emotional disturbance, the following things should be kept in mind:

The definition should reflect a theoretical orientation.

The setting in which the student is to be identified should be clear.

The definition should apply to the child as a student.

The definition should be interdisciplinary in nature.

Cultural difference should not be used as a criterion.

The definition should avoid references to possible causes of disturbances.

The severity of the disorder should be included in the definition.

The definition must contain ideas that can be put into practice to aid in measuring the disability.

The definition should help in identifying students with the disability.

(Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 12-13)

The definition that is most widely accepted is the one included in Public Law 94-142. It is recognized by the United States Board of Education and many state governments as well. It reads "a serious emotional handicap in children is behavior that is developmentally inappropriate or inadequate in an educational setting and is indicated by one or more of the following characteristics:

Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or teachers.

Inappropriate types of behavior or feeling under normal circumstances.

A general or pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems." (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, p. 14)

PREVALENCE OF EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED STUDENTS

As difficult as it may be to define emotional disturbance, it is even more difficult to determine its prevalence. Numbers vary due to the definition used to classify students, the individual or group doing the classification, the reason for quantifying the population, and the instrument used to measure the deviance.

Estimates range from 2 to 22 percent, with the higher percentage warranting careful examination. The United States Office of Education uses 2% as an estimate for behavior disorders. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, p. 16) That figure may represent only those who have been formally identified. The percentage of school-age children needing special services is probably closer to 6 to 15%. Regardless of the actual numbers, regular education teachers will encounter Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students in their classes. (McIntyre, 1989, p. 4)

TEACHER TRAINING

While teachers of SED students receive extensive training in preparation for dealing with conduct disorders and social skills problems, and learn how to modify curriculum to the special needs of individual students, regular education teachers do not. Most general educators are not given the knowledge and skills necessary to teach exceptional children. (Gable and Laycock, 1991, pp. 171-172) Specialized training is needed to work with emotionally disabled students and the problems they present.

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

There are personal characteristics that make some teachers better suited to

teaching the emotionally disturbed, whether they are regular education teachers or special educators. The greatest predictor of success in teaching emotionally disturbed students is a genuine concern for these children. Students need to know that their teachers care. (Long and Morse, 1996, p. 107) In addition, teachers who are reluctant to give up on special education students, who are not easily discouraged, and who are willing to give more of themselves, are more likely to be able to reach troubled students. Certain teacher competencies, such as effective group management skills, security in one's own teaching ability, and the ability to motivate individual students are factors that are critical for student success (Reinert and Henry, 1987, pp. 204-205) Having the inherent personal traits mentioned above is important because most teachers report that classroom management techniques were not taught in their college programs. (Gunter and Denny, 1996, p. 7)

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Developing a body of knowledge on effective teaching strategies is important for the instruction of all children. In the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed student, the negative impact of ineffective teaching strategies cannot be overlooked. The SED student is at risk, even under the best of circumstances. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, p. 4) In regular education classes, the effectiveness of

the academic instruction can be correlated to emotionally disturbed students' achievement. (Foley, Epstein, and Cullinan, 1991, p. 43) Secondary teachers rely heavily on teaching methods that require listening and reading skills. These skills can be difficult for a student with emotional disorders. (D'Alonzo, 1983, pp. 17-18) Teaching strategies that work well with emotionally disturbed students include one-to-one contact with the student. The teacher should attempt to relate to each student on a personal basis. Secondly, the teacher should realize that he/she is a model for the student and as such, should demonstrate behaviors that can be a positive force for change. The teacher should also create a positive classroom environment where the students are affirming and nonjudgmental of one another. With Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students it is important to clarify what is expected in terms of achievement and behavior. Finally, the teacher should use strategies that foster self-control and independent problem solving. (Swift and Spivack, 1975, pp. 198-206)

With this as a foundation, specific instructional strategies for students with emotional disorders can be reviewed. Each lesson should begin with a brief review of the previous day's learning. This provides a link to prior knowledge. The goals for the new lesson should then be shared. This step lets the students know the teacher's expectation for them. The new material should be presented in small steps, with time for student practice. A variety of examples should be used, with teacher demonstrations of each type. Seriously Emotionally Disturbed

students have more difficulty maintaining concentration when students are allowed to do examples instead of the teacher. Instructions and directions should be presented in detail. Check for student understanding by asking questions, making sure each student responds. Higher levels of learning are reported when each student is questioned. Initial practice should be teacher-directed to allow for feedback and corrections. If students are having difficulty during this phase of instruction, it may be necessary to review or reteach the lesson. Give detailed instructions for seat work, then monitor as students begin. The practice material should be interesting, challenging, and directly related to the lesson presented. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 352-359)

Secondary teachers usually rely heavily on teaching methods that require listening and reading skills. These skills can be the most difficult for students with emotional disorders. As a result, student frustration levels may increase and boredom, anxiety, and misbehavior can result. (D'Alonzo, 1983, pp. 17-18) In their study, Denny, Epstein, and Rose found that technology education teachers did not follow the effective instructional practices that have been outlined in the previous paragraph. In fact, after their initial presentation of the lesson and a brief demonstration was given, there was little interaction with the students. Instead the students were allowed to work independently. While this did not result in behavior problems among the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students, it is unclear how much learning was taking place. (Denny, Epstein, and Rose, 1992, p. 39) The

teacher's task then is two-fold -- teaching the curriculum and controlling students' behavior. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 23-24) In fact, competency in behavior management has been identified as a major predictor of teacher success with emotionally disturbed students. (Gunter and Denny, 1996, p. 15)

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Regular education teachers' expectations for classroom behavior generally includes compliance with rules, academic productivity, and following an established routine. (Gable and Laycock, 1991, p. 175) Teachers may differ, however, in what they view as a disruption and how they respond to it. This often depends on their own personal maturity, their teaching skills, and their ability to distance themselves from the situation and concentrate on the causes of misbehavior. (Lawrence, Steed, and Young, 1984, pp. 19-20) Clearly, the best approach to behavior management is one of prevention. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, p. 374) In addition to this proactive approach, it is necessary that the teacher have a reactive behavioral program as well. (D'Aronzo, 1983, p. 148) A review of the literature provides techniques for both programs.

As teachers set up their behavior management programs, they bring their educational philosophy, beliefs, and knowledge with them. Effective teachers develop a preventive behavior management system that begins before school

actually starts. They decide what they expect of students, how they will elicit the desired behaviors, and how they will deal with noncompliance. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 386-387) There are numerous behavior management plans to guide teachers as they develop their own approach.

Strategies for Increasing Desirable Behavior is a preventive behavior management program presented by Long and Morse as skills teachers can use to encourage acceptable behavior. It includes:

1. **The Skill of Stating Positive Expectation** - Positive behaviors should be described for the group, as well as for individuals, in much the same way as limits are explained.
2. **The Skill of Modeling** - The teacher should exhibit the behaviors she expects from her students in both words and actions. Peer modeling can also be effective.
3. **The Skill of Structuring the Situation** - This skill addresses the physical structure of the classroom to encourage positive behavior. This can include group setups as well as those that insure privacy.
4. **The Skill of Positive Reinforcements** - This strategy is perhaps the most effective way to recognize positive behavior. The reinforcers can be tangible, such as rewards, or intangible, such as additional privileges. The recognition

for positive behavior should be immediate.

5. **The Skill of Regulated Permission** - The goal of this skill is to recognize student impulses and find acceptable classroom alternatives. Allowing an angry child to clean chalkboard erasers is one example of regulated permission.
6. **The Skill of Contracting** - A contract can be an effective way to help students set goals for behavior and establish rewards for reaching those goals. There are four basic steps in contracting: Planning the student conference, exploring the problem, writing the contract, and reviewing the contract and making revisions when necessary.
7. **Token Systems** - Tokens are objects gained by exhibiting desirable behaviors and exchanged for privileges or rewards.
(Long and Morse, 1996, pp. 281-285)

A preventive behavior management program requires consistent reinforcement. Teachers must constantly communicate their expectations for student behavior. They must also be willing to refine and adapt the system when necessary. Teachers with truly effective systems teach it all year. During the early weeks of the school year, teachers introduce rules and procedures. The rest of the year is devoted to maintaining control through monitoring and following through with expectations. For secondary teachers, they assume the roles of

motivator, counselor, reinforcer of expectations, and enforcer of the system, when necessary. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 395-396)

Shaping is a behavior management program that allows the teacher to set goals for behavior on an individual basis. It can help students develop positive behaviors that may not currently be in their repertoire. The steps for shaping are:

1. Identify the desired behavior and determine the final goal.
2. Identify the student's present level of performance.
3. List steps that will take the student from his present level to the desired behavior.
4. Have the student focus on one step at a time, with reinforcement given after each step. (McIntyre, 1989, pp. 137-138)

Behavior Planning is another strategy that focuses on increasing desired behaviors. In this method, the teacher establishes individual classroom behavior expectations that are separate, but supportive of the school's standards. Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students should be expected to adhere to school rules as well as those in their individual classes. Identifying those behaviors that are unacceptable will help students know the behavior that is desired. These can be individual or group behaviors. Positive behaviors should be presented as alternatives to negative ones. In this way, students can see that there is a positive behavior that is incompatible with an undesirable behavior. This gives students a

list of desirable behaviors from which to choose. Finally, the teacher should plan intervention strategies to deal with undesirable behavior. In this step it is important to use the least intensive strategy possible to address the undesired behavior. (Long and Morse, 1996, pp. 274-277)

Many behavior management systems focus on eliminating undesirable behavior. One of the best known is William Glasser's Ten-Step Approach to good discipline. His system is sequential and gets more restrictive as students fail to comply. The steps begin with teacher self-evaluation.

1. Think about a disruptive student and make a list of your usual method of handling the misbehavior.
2. Ask yourself if any of these interventions have worked. If not, stop using them and find a strategy that will work.
3. Plan to help your student start the day on a positive note.
4. If a problem behavior arises, ask the student, "What are you doing?" Keep repeating until the student describes the behavior, then simply say, "Please stop it."
5. If steps 3 and 4 do not stop the behavior, have a conference with the student, repeating the question, "What are you doing?" When the student replies this time, ask, "Is it against the rules?" When the student agrees that it is against the rules, ask, "What should you be doing?" When the student

replies with an appropriate behavior, he has realized that he was behaving inappropriately.

6. If step 5 also fails, repeat all but the last question. Replace the last question with "We have to work this out. What kind of plan can you make to follow the rules?" The student must come up with a positive action and tell what he will do differently next time.
7. If the student becomes disruptive again, use isolation in the classroom. During this time-out, the student must still come up with a positive plan of action. When he has one, he may rejoin the class. If the behavior continues, he will have to be removed from the room.
8. If step 7 does not work, the student will have to be placed in-school suspension. Say, "Things are not working out for you here. You and I have tried to solve this problem, but now it's time to talk with some other people. Please report to the principal's office." This needs to be continued until a plan of action is formulated.
9. If the student is totally out of control, parents may be requested to take the student home.
10. If step 9 becomes ineffective, an out-of-school suspension or

alternate placement may be necessary. (McIntyre, 1989, pp. 127-129)

Long and Morse describe Eight Teacher Skills for Reducing Undesirable Behavior that can be thought of as a continuum:

1. **The Skill of Planned Ignoring** - This is particularly effective if the behavior is attention seeking in nature. It also avoids possible power struggles and shows confidence in the student's ability to put his own behavior in check.
2. **The Skill of Stating Expectations** - The expectations of the teacher for her classroom and the school's expectations for all students must be clearly established. The expectations should be kept to a minimum and stated in a positive way.
3. **The Skill of Signaling** - Nonverbal signals, such as facial expressions; body movement, sounds, or gestures; and mechanical devices can be a quiet, private way to redirect behavior. Proximity control is another way of signaling a student without reprimand or reminder.
4. **The Skill of Restructuring the Situation** - A teacher can often modify the classroom setting to regulate undesirable behavior. Examples include changes in seating, grouping, physical movement, or format of the presentation.

5. The Skill of Conferencing - Conferencing with a student privately can be an effective means of controlling behavior. It allows for a confidential exchange of views and shows the teacher's interest in the individual as a person, not just as a group member.
6. The Skill of Warning - Because students do not always relate their behavior to possible consequences, a warning can serve as a reminder of the rules and the possible outcome, should the behavior continue.
7. The Skill of Enforcement of Consequences - Follow through on the consequences of misbehavior is critical to the success of any behavior management program. The teacher should issue consequences in an immediate, non-punitive, and consistent manner.
8. The Skill of Life Space Crisis Intervention - The teacher's skill in this area can have far-reaching implications for her class. When students totally lose control and become a danger to themselves or the class, the teacher must maintain calm and quickly restore order. There should be a procedure in place for dealing with emergency situations. (Long and Morse, 1996, pp. 277-281)

Other behavior management techniques mentioned in the review of the literature include establishing reinforcers that range from concrete to intrinsic, administering token economies or level systems, teaching alternative behaviors, administering punishment, giving group-oriented rewards and punishments, and self-monitoring. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 387-395)

Other skills that teachers must master to be effective in behavior management include the skill of descriptive phrase, the skill of decoding student behavior, the skill of therapeutic humor, and the skill of physical restraint. (Long and Morse, 1996, pp. 287-290) Teachers who are most effective in behavior management are those who use a positive, proactive approach, but who also anticipate the need for corrective interventions and plan for them.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

One component that can enhance both teaching strategies and behavior management, is one often overlooked by teachers and administrators, that of physical structure. (Gunter and Denny, 1996, p. 16) Many times special education classes are relegated to parts of schools that are "left over." It is generally not until they are mainstreamed that Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students are allowed in other parts of the school without escort. Yet many studies emphasize the need for an environment that is carefully planned. The physical

arrangement of classroom space is important to students with emotional disorders. The arrangement should reflect individual needs and take into account the tasks that need to be done. If space permits, it is helpful to have different environments within the class for different activities. The teacher's desk should be placed where teachers can observe the entire class. This could be centered at the front or to one side in back. (D'Alonzo, 1983, p. 126) Student desks should be reasonably comfortable and an appropriate size for the student. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, p. 329) In technology classes, there may be tables instead of desks. Care should be taken to seat emotionally disturbed students in close proximity to the teacher or with students who are well-behaved and willing to help others.

Special attention should be given to class size when mainstreaming special education students. If the student-teacher ratio is too high, it interferes with the regular education teacher's ability to individualize instruction. Also, the higher the density, the greater the noise level and the possibility of distraction. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, p. 329)

Finally, emotionally disturbed students find change confusing and stressful. They do best when events are predictable and their environment is stable (Long and Morse, 1996, p. 473) Scheduling is one more area that is important for mainstreamed students. These students need to understand their Seriously Emotionally Disturbed class schedule, as well as their own individual

schedules. It is also helpful if their regular education teacher provides a class schedule. This will aid the mainstreamed students in their adjustment to the routine. (Paul and Epanchin, 1991, pp. 382-383)

SUMMARY

A review of the literature provided a brief history of education for emotionally disturbed students. Definitions of the various terms used to describe this population of special education students were given. The prevalence of students diagnosed with this disorder was also presented. The need for training regular education teachers to work with mainstreamed students was discussed. The characteristics of successful teachers were explored.

The body of the research reviewed dealt with the various teaching strategies that have proven effective with regular and special needs students. Behavior management skills, both proactive and reactive were examined. Finally, the need for an orderly classroom environment was discussed.

Each area was reviewed with the technology teacher in mind, since many Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students are mainstreamed for electives and many of them choose Technology Education. Because of the unique environment of a manufacturing technology class or the synergistics technology laboratories, the principles of behavior management and the effectiveness of various teaching

strategies will be evaluated in this study with those settings in mind.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research is to determine which instructional strategies are most effective with emotionally disturbed students, which behavior management techniques work well with this population, and which classroom environment adaptations facilitate the mainstreaming of Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students. This chapter describes the population, the research instrument, the procedures used to collect and evaluate the data, and a summary of the results.

POPULATION

The population for this research was 31 middle school Technology Education teachers in the Virginia Beach City Public School system. A letter requesting permission to survey Virginia Beach Technology Education teachers was sent to Mr. John Ledgewood, Technology Education Curriculum Specialist. Upon approval, a questionnaire was sent to each middle school technology teacher of grades six, seven, and eight with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research.

INSTRUMENT

A survey was used to collect the data. It was designed to collect information about:

- ◆ Extent of experience in working with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students.
- ◆ Attitudes about working with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students.
- ◆ Instructional strategies used with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students in Technology Education classes.
- ◆ Behavior management techniques used with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students in Technology Education classes.
- ◆ Classroom environment of Technology Education classrooms.

The questionnaire consisted of eight closed form questions based on the research goals of the study that allowed for multiple answers on the questions dealing with teaching strategies and behavior management methods used in the Technology Education classroom. Other questions dealing with teacher attitudes were measured by the Likert scale. A few background questions were multiple choice. A copy of the survey and cover letter can be found in the Appendix.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA

Survey questionnaires were mailed to each middle school Technology Education teacher in Virginia Beach. Accompanying each request was a cover letter of introduction and an explanation of the purpose of the research. Directions were given for completing and returning the questionnaire. Each teacher was asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in a timely fashion in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data gathered was compiled using the frequency of the responses to generate percentages for the questions requiring multiple answers and for those using the Likert scale. Personal questions regarding individual teachers' levels of experience were summarized.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine which instructional strategies are the most effective with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed middle school

students. Behavior management techniques that help elective teachers deal successfully with these students were explored. Adaptions in the arrangement of the classroom were identified.

The population used in the study was middle school Technology Education teachers in Virginia Beach public schools. They were surveyed through the use of a questionnaire. The data gathered will be tabulated according to the frequency of the responses and percentages will be used to analyze the results.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter will present the findings or data from the instructional strategies survey. The problem of the study was to determine if there are specific remediation techniques that are more successful than others in dealing with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students. The survey was sent to thirty one middle school Technology Education teachers in Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Twenty-one teachers, or 67.7% of the middle school technology education staff, responded to this survey. The Report of the Findings follow.

Question one asked, "How long have you been teaching?" The responses showing the experience level of each teacher can be found in TABLE 1.

TABLE 1

Teacher Experience

Question 1	Responses %			
How long have you been teaching?	A)	1-5 years	(6)	29
	B)	6-10 years	(2)	10
	C)	11-15 years	(3)	14
	D)	16-20 years	(3)	14
	E)	21+ years	(7)	33

The experience level of the twenty-one teachers surveyed ranged from six with the least experience to seven with over twenty years of experience. The smallest group was teachers with six to ten years' experience. The two remaining groups each had three teachers, one with eleven to fifteen years of experience and the other with sixteen to twenty years of experience. The average of the group surveyed was eleven to fifteen years experience.

The second question asked, "How many Seriously Emotional Disturbed students do you teach each year?" Ten teachers, or 47% of those surveyed, teach six to ten SED students yearly. Six teachers, or 29% of those responding, teach one to five SED students yearly. Three teachers, or 14% of those surveyed report teaching eleven to fifteen SED students a year. Lastly, one teacher teaches 16 to 20 SED students and one teaches 21 or more SED students yearly. The average of the group was six to ten students. The results are found in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2

Number of Students

Question 2			Responses	%
How many Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students do you teach each year?	A)	1-5	(6)	29
	B)	6-10	(10)	47
	C)	11-15	(3)	14
	D)	16-20	(1)	5
	E)	21+	(1)	5

Question three asked, "Have you had any special education training working Seriously Emotional Disturbed students?." Eleven teachers indicated that they have had no training in how to work with SED students. Five said that they had an inservice or two and five said they had taken one or two courses on working with SED students. None of the teachers surveyed had taken several courses. The results to question three are shown in TABLE 3.

TABLE 3

Special Education Training

Question 3		Responses	%
Have you had any special education training working with Seriously Emotional Disturbed Students.	A) none	(11)	52
	B) inservice or two	(5)	24
	C) 1 to 2 courses	(5)	24
	D) several courses	(0)	0

Question four asked, "Do you consult with special education teachers about the students you share?" Five responded that they often did, thirteen indicated that they sometimes did, and three said they rarely communicated with special education teachers. There were zero teacher responses for never. The results for this question can be found in TABLE 4.

TABLE 4**Consultation**

Question 4		Responses	%
Do you consult with special education teachers about the students you share?	A) often	(5)	24
	B) sometimes	(13)	62
	C) rarely	(3)	14
	D) never	(0)	0

Question five asked, "Do you think emotionally disturbed students should be mainstreamed for electives?" Three of the teachers responded with often, thirteen said sometimes, two respondents indicated rarely, and five said never. TABLE 5 shows the results of this question.

TABLE 5**Mainstreaming**

Question 5		Responses	%
Do you think emotionally disturbed students should be mainstreamed for electives?	A) often	(3)	14
	B) sometimes	(11)	52
	C) rarely	(2)	10
	D) never	(5)	24

Question six asked, "Do you think emotionally disturbed students are successful in your class?" Seven teachers responded that SED students are

often successful in their classes. Ten teachers said they are sometimes successful, three indicated that SED students are rarely successful, and one teacher said that SED students are never successful. The results of question six can be found in TABLE 6.

TABLE 6

Success Rate

Question 6			Responses	%
Do you think emotionally disturbed students are successful in your class?	A)	often	(7)	33
	B)	sometimes	(10)	47
	C)	rarely	(3)	14
	D)	never	(1)	5

Question seven asked the following: "The following items have been identified as effective general teaching techniques. Please circle the strategies you use that work well with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed. Of the seven items listed, the item selected most often: "one on one assistance" by 86% of the teachers, followed by "group work /peers helping peers" used by 71% of the teachers. Each of these two strategies were selected by fifteen teachers as the strategies most effective with SED students. Twelve teachers selected "teacher demonstration followed by student practice." Ten teachers indicated that "independent problem solving" was effective. "Teacher directions, then allow student questions" was selected by six teachers. "Class discussion" and "lecture"

“teacher demonstration followed by student practice.” Ten teachers indicated that “independent problem solving” was effective. “Teacher directions, then allow student questions” was selected by six teachers. “Class discussion” and “lecture” were selected by four teachers. This question allowed teachers to select more than one technique. The results can be found in TABLE 7.

TABLE 7

Teaching Strategies

Question 7		Responses	%
Please circle the strategies you use that works well with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed.	Teacher demonstration followed by student practice	(12)	57
	One on one assistance	(18)	86
	Teacher directions then allow student questions	(6)	29
	Independent problem solving	(10)	48
	Group work/peers helping peers	(15)	71
	Class discussion	(4)	19
	Lecture	(4)	19

Question eight read “Behavior management techniques vary greatly with instructors. Research indicates that the following strategies are accepted

practices. Circle those techniques that have been most successful with emotionally disturbed students.” Teachers were allowed to circle as many techniques as they wished. The most frequently used technique, with eighteen teacher selections, is “clear established rules for behavior.” The second most used technique, with sixteen responses, is “constant teacher monitoring.” Fifteen teachers use “statement of teacher expectations.” “Positive reinforcement” was used by fourteen of the teachers surveyed. Thirteen teachers used “change of seating” and eleven “model appropriate behavior.” Nine teachers use “isolation” and six use “behavior contracts.” Four teachers each responded that they use “signaling or cueing,” “ignoring minor infractions,” and “consequences.” The least used technique is “group punishment,” which is used by three teachers. The results of this question can be found in TABLE 8.

TABLE 8

Behavior Management Techniques

Question 8	Responses	%
Behavior management techniques vary greatly with instructors. Research indicates that the following strategies are accepted practices.	Clear, established rules for behavior	(18) 86
Circle those techniques	Statement of teacher expectations	(15) 71
	Group punishment	(3) 14
	Ignoring minor infractions	(4) 24
	Change of seating	(13) 62

most successful with	Constant teacher		
emotionally disturbed	monitoring	(16)	76
students.	Positive reinforcement	(14)	67
	Consequences(referrals)	(4)	19
	Isolation	(9)	43
	Signaling or cueing	(4)	19
	Behavior contracts	(6)	29
	Model appropriate		
	behavior	(11)	52

Question nine asks, "The addition of special education students to your class may require some changes in the classroom environment. Please circle all the modifications you use when Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) students are placed in your technology classroom." Nine teachers selected "smaller class size" and "assigned seating," as the most frequently used modifications to their classroom. Six teachers "seat SED students near the teacher" and four use "isolation." Two teachers "increase space between students" and "decrease number of students per table." The results can be seen in TABLE 9.

TABLE 9**Classroom Adaptations**

Question 9		Responses	%
The addition of special education students to your classroom environment. Please circle all of modifications you use when SED students are placed in your technology classroom.	Request smaller class size	(9)	43
	Increase space between students	(2)	10
	Decrease number of students per table	(2)	10
	Seat SED students near me	(6)	29
	Use assigned seating	(9)	43
	Isolate the SED student	(4)	19

SUMMARY

In Chapter IV the results of the survey of middle school teachers were discussed. The results were presented in narrative and tabular form and answered the research questions of the study. Chapter V gives the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are any specific remediation techniques that are more successful than others in dealing with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students. The increase in the number of special education students in our schools creates a need for teachers to find instructional strategies and behavior management techniques that are effective with this population. This is particularly true for elective teachers. Many special education students, including those who have been identified as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed, are frequently mainstreamed in elective classes.

The goals of this research paper were to answer the following questions:

- ◆ What instructional strategies are most effective with emotionally disturbed students?
- ◆ Are there behavior management techniques that work well with this population?

- ◆ Are there adaptations that can be made in the classroom environment to facilitate the mainstreaming of emotionally disturbed students?

Previous research on teaching vocational education to Seriously Emotionally Disturbed adolescents was done in 1992 by Denny, Epstein, and Rose who found that there was no significant difference in the way SED students and non-handicapped students are taught. It was not determined in that study whether this was due to a lack of training or whether it was felt that differentiated instruction was unnecessary. The study suggested that further research on instructional behaviors and effective teaching strategies be done. An article written by Gunter and Denny in 1996 recommended continued research on classroom management and behavior intervention strategies for SED students. This study examined instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and behavioral intervention practices that work with Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students.

A review of the literature provided a brief history of special education and presented the prevalence of students who are diagnosed as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed. The characteristics of successful teachers were examined, as were the techniques of behavior management and effective teaching strategies.

The study was limited to Virginia Beach middle school Technology Education teachers, with twenty-one out of a possible thirty-one teachers

responding to the survey. The number of Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students taught by these teachers was greater than expected. Using the minimums in the survey, these twenty-one Technology Education teachers have 136 SED students mainstreamed in their classes. One variable in this study may be the teachers' personal styles of classroom management.

A survey was used to conduct this study. A copy of the survey and a cover letter of explanation was mailed to each middle school Technology Education teacher with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for its return. The data from the survey was compiled and the information was presented in tables, one for each question. A full discussion on each table was provided.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research paper was to answer the following questions:

- ◆ What instructional strategies are most effective with emotionally disturbed students?

The strategies found to be most successful with emotionally disturbed students by the teachers surveyed were one on one assistance, with 86% of the teachers responding favorably; group work/peers helping peers, with 71% favorable response; and teacher demonstration followed by student practice, with 57% reporting success. Of the seven strategies listed, these three were selected

by well over half of the teachers surveyed. These strategies are the ones most frequently used with emotionally disturbed students.

- ◆ Are there behavior management techniques that work well with this population?

There were twelve management techniques on the survey and seven of these were used by over half of the teachers surveyed. The number one technique, "Clear, established rules for behavior" is being used by 86% of the teachers. "Constant teacher monitoring" is the second-most used by 81% of the teachers. "Consequences" are used by 76% of the teachers, followed by "Statement of teacher expectations" which was fourth with 71% of the teachers responding. "Positive reinforcement" is used by 67%, of the teachers surveyed, "Change of seating" was selected by 62%, and finally, "Modeling appropriate behavior" is being done by 52% of the teachers. These were clear choices as the management techniques being used with emotionally disturbed students.

- ◆ Are there adaptations that can be made in the classroom environment to facilitate the mainstreaming of emotionally disturbed students?

Of the seven possible adaptations on the questionnaire, no adaption was selected by more than half of the teachers surveyed. The top responses were "assigned seating" and "requesting smaller class size." Both of these were selected by 43% of the group.

Research questions one and two had strategies that were clearly used by a majority of the teachers surveyed. The last research question was still left unclear, with no responses being selected by half of the teachers.

Other conclusions from the survey are as follows:

- ◆ The experience level of the group is high, with over 71% having taught for six or more years.
- ◆ The average Technology Teacher surveyed teaches 6-10 SED students a year.
- ◆ Over half of the teachers surveyed had no training for SED students.
- ◆ Eighty-six percent of the teachers surveyed do communicate with special education teachers.
- ◆ Sixty-six percent of the teachers said SED students should mainstreamed in electives.
- ◆ The teachers responding to the survey said that SED students are successful 80% of the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the information gathered in this research, it is clear that in spite of deficiencies in specialized teaching training, Technology Education teachers are being successful with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed by using

the same instructional strategies and behavior management techniques that they use with nonhandicapped students. The reasons for this success are unclear. Do special education students conform to the expectations of regular education teachers? Does pressure from classmates influence behavior? Are students more motivated in an elective class? Are technology educators instructional techniques similar to those advocated by special education? Clearly, more research is needed before we can formulate substantive conclusions about our SED students.

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APPENDIX

900 Salisbury Green
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
May 12, 1998

Mr. John Ledgewood
Technology Education
School Administration Building
2521 George Mason Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038

Dear Mr. Ledgewood,

As a Technology Education graduate student at Old Dominion University, I am doing a research paper on effective instructional techniques for use with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed. It is my hypothesis that some strategies are more successful than others. With the increased number of special education students who are mainstreamed in elective classrooms, Technology Education teachers need to know which teaching strategies and behavior management skills are the most effective with these populations.

I have prepared a questionnaire designed to assess which strategies are being used by Technology Education teachers and which techniques are the most effective. A copy of my survey is attached. I am requesting permission to conduct this survey using Technology Education teachers in Virginia Beach middle schools.

Sincerely,

James R. Monn

900 Salisbury Green
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
June 10, 1998

Mr. Charlie Evanosky
4120 Franklin Street
Chesapeake, VA 23324

Dear Mr. Evanosky:

As a Technology Education graduate student at Old Dominion University, I am doing a research paper on effective instructional techniques for use with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed. With the increased number of special education students who are mainstreamed in elective classrooms, Technology Education teachers have undoubtedly used teaching strategies and behavior management skills are effective with this population.

I have prepared a questionnaire designed to assess which strategies are being used by Technology Education teachers and which techniques are the most effective. A copy of my survey is attached. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. I realize your end-of-the-year time is valuable, so I have designed the survey to be user friendly. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

James R. Monn

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Technology Education Students

The purpose of this survey is to determine which instructional strategies and behavior management techniques you have used that work best with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed. You are also asked to answer some personal questions about your teaching background and experience with SED students.

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the following background questions by selecting one of the answers given.

1. How long have you been teaching?
A)1-5 years B)6-10 years C)11-15 years D)16-20 years E)21+ years
2. How many Seriously Emotionally Disturbed students do you teach in a year?
A)1-5 B)6-10 C)11-15 D)16-20 E)21+
3. Have you had any special education training?
A) none B)an inservice or two C)one or two courses D)several courses
4. Do you consult with special education teachers about the students you share?
A) often B) sometimes C) rarely D)never
5. Do you think emotionally disturbed students should be mainstreamed for electives?
A) often B) sometimes C) rarely D) never
6. Do you think emotionally disturbed students are successful in your class.
A) often B) sometimes C) rarely D) never

7. The following items have been identified as effective teaching techniques. Please circle the strategies you use that work well with students who are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed.

Teacher demonstration followed by student practice

One-on-one assistance

Teacher directions then allow student questions

Independent problem solving

Group work/peers helping peers

Class discussion

Lecture

8. Behavior management techniques vary greatly with instructors. Which behavior management techniques have you found to be successful with emotionally disturbed students?

Clear, established rules for behavior

Positive Reinforcement (rewards)

Statement of teacher expectation

Consequences(detention,referral)

Group punishment

Isolation

Ignoring minor infractions

Signaling or cueing

Change of seating

Behavior contracts

Constant teacher monitoring

Model appropriate behavior

9. The addition of special education students to your class may require some change in the classroom environment. Please circle all of the modifications you use when Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) students are placed in your technology classroom?

Request smaller class size

Seat SED student near me

Increase space between students

Use assigned seating

Decrease number of students per table

Isolate the SED student