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Social/Emotional Interventions and their Impact on Student Achievement

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An Action Research Project Presented

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Education

August 2019

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Abstract

This purpose of this action research project was to determine the impact of combining social, emotional, behavioral and academic interventions and their effects on academic achievement for at-risk elementary students. Data was collected from SAEBRS to determine social/emotional risk and the FAST Early Literacy Universal Screener to determine academic risk. For twelve weeks the researcher implemented Resiliency interventions and targeted 1-on-1 literacy interventions. This was done in addition to Tier 1 classroom interventions and Tier 2 Title interventions. The intervention program was implemented every school day for 15 minutes. The teacher began each intervention session by allowing the student to choose a greeting to exchange with the teacher and allowed the students to share about their life or a story for up to 2 minutes. This process helped create a safe learning environment, a positive relationship, and resiliency. Targeted 1-on-1 guided reading instruction using Journey's reading curriculum and leveled text was also implemented as the academic intervention. These interventions targeted student's social and emotional needs as well as academic needs. Data was collected through quantitative testing done weekly to show students' increase in correct words per minute. The CBM-R progress monitoring materials provided by FAST Bridge were used during this process.

Social/Emotional Interventions and their Impact on Student Achievement

Children who are at-risk of social and emotional behavior issues or children who suffer from Adverse Childhood Experiences or Trauma are at significant risk of academic delays. Students who are at-risk or show social-emotional delays have difficulties making friends, are at high-risk of expulsion and dropout, and mental health issues. These skills have a large impact on academic achievement. Therefore, early intervention could be key to student success. Living in a community of low-socioeconomic status and poverty this action research project could potentially help teachers identify at-risk students and provide interventions that support academic success of students. This research will pose no risk to participants. Screeners used when conducting research will cause no harm or discomfort to students.

Through action research, this study will be used to determine the impact of resiliency interventions and 1-on-1 targeted guided reading instruction on student academic progress. Screeners used in this research include the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST), Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM) Progress Monitoring, and the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS). FAST Early Reading screener is an assessment comprised of 12 sub-tests. These tests are administered three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. Sub-tests students will be assessed on are word segmenting, nonsense words, sight words and passage reading. Through these sub-tests a composite score is generated and can be used to best match reading skill development and risk. SAEBRS is a tool supported by research for use in universal screening for social, emotional, and behavior risk. Benchmarks are built into the FAST system and SAEBRS to assist in determining students who are at risk for academic, social, and emotional failure. The researcher will implement intervention for student identified as academically at-risk on the FAST Early Literacy screener and at-risk on SAEBRS.

Review of the Literature

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Classroom Engagement

"One in five U.S. children under the age of 18 – or 16 million children – live in poverty" (Jensen, 2013, p. 11.) Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are events that are traumatic and can have long-lasting negative effects on the health and well-being of children. Schools across America are finding an increase in ACEs among young children. ACEs can range from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Children who experience multiple adverse childhood experiences are more at-risk of negative outcomes. Eight adverse childhood experiences were measured by The National Survey of Children's Health in 2003, 2007, and 2011/12. Those experiences measured and reported include: divorce or separation, death of a parent or guardian, living with a parent or guardian who served time in jail or prison, living with anyone who was mentally ill or suicidal, severely depressed for more than a couple of weeks, living with anyone with an alcohol or drug problem, witnessing a parent or guardian or other adult behave violently toward another, was ever the victim of violence, and economic hardship somewhat or very often. According to ACEs parents reported for their child, by state, in Iowa 55% have experience zero adverse childhood experiences, 33% of children have experienced one or two adverse childhood experiences and 12% have experienced three or more adverse childhood experiences. The most common adverse childhood experiences in Iowa are divorce and economic hardship or poverty in which both were reported as 22% experiencing these negative events.

According to Eric Jensen (2013), students from low-income households are more likely to struggle academically for seven reasons: health and nutrition, vocabulary, effort, hope, growth mind-set, cognition, relationships, and distress. Being able to understand these differences and how to implement strategies and interventions to help mitigate the effects of poverty can make a

difference in student engagement and academic success. One of the most important suggestions Jensen makes is building a relationship with students. Creating an environment that ensures students feel able and safe, tying classroom learning to the real world, revealing more of yourself and learning more about your students are strategies that will strengthen a teacher student relationship. Students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds often test lower on tests of intelligence and show cognitive problems that can include short attention spans, distractibility, and difficulty generating solutions to problems. Focusing on these barriers will result is disengagement. Instead, teachers should focus on affirming and reinforcing effort to guide students to make better choices. Set high goals, sell students on their chance of reaching those goals and use strategies to build curiosity and excitement over learning. Students desire engagement and are more likely to be engaged in a learning environment when the teacher is invested in student achievement.

Increasing student engagement is a strategy to enhance all students' abilities to learn how to learn or to become lifelong learners. There are many types of engagement. Academic, cognitive, intellectual, emotional, behavioral, social, and psychological engagement all play a role in student achievement. Respectful relationships and interaction improve student engagement. Creating a classroom environment and teacher student relationship that fosters a learning environment supportive of these connections increases engagement. Social engagement is considered a way of identifying students who are at risk of disengagement and negative academic behavior. "To be engaged in learning, today's students need social interaction" (Taylor & Parsons, 2011, p. 10). One factor of relationship building that stands above other is the importance of a positive classroom disciplinary climate. "Students who describe their classroom disciplinary climate as positive are one and a half times more likely to report high levels of

interest, motivation and enjoyment in learning" (Taylor & Parson, 2011, p. 11). Social skills

interventions provide positive modeling of classroom and interpersonal skills for students

therefore, increasing student engagement and preventing the possible negative trajectory toward

academic and social achievement.

"Student engagement is a strong predictor of educational outcomes. Students with higher

behavior and cognitive engagement have higher grades and aspire to higher education (Wang,

Degol, 2014, p. 3). Implementing targeted intervention programs at many levels may be more

effective for students at greater risk of academic or psychological problems. An evidence-based

intervention program, Check and Connect, has reduced dropout rates and truancy for students at

high-risk of school failure. School wide positive behavioral support programs have also

improved student engagement and classroom culture. Social and emotional skills have a critical

impact on academic achievement. These programs can be effective for students who are at-risk

socially and emotionally.

Early Behavior Disorders (EBD) are common among children or youth at-risk for

emotional and behavioral disorders. Implementing social skills interventions have shown

effective for at-risk students. According to Frank Gresham (2015), 65% of students with EBD

will improve when given social skills interventions. Social skills function as academic enablers

and contribute to higher academic achievement (Gresham, 2015). Social skills can be divided

into three categories: social interaction, prosocial behavior, social-cognitive skills. These

categories fall into problem behaviors or externalizing and internalizing categories and

academic/achievement/performance. "Researchers have documented meaningful and predictive

relationships between students' social behaviors and their long-term academic achievement"

(Gresham, 2015, p. 101). Early identification of EBD and explicit interventions implemented in the early childhood classroom positively impact academic achievement.

Evidence-Based Social Skills Interventions

A federally funded program from the Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early learning and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention suggest a 3-tiered intervention program for students. Tier 1 interventions are suggested for an entire group of students. The second tier focuses on intentionally teaching social and communication skills to students who are at risk and the third tier suggests a behavioral assessment and individualized behavior intervention plans for at-risk students. Young children with EBD or who are identified as at-risk for emotional, behavioral and social challenges like children with EBD should participate in a tiered intervention. According to Kristen L. Withey (2018), when implementing a three-tiered intervention, procedures should follow a four-step process: Establish the Environment, Direct Instruction, Application, and Follow-Up.

In the interventions first step teachers should alter their classroom environment and instruction. The teacher should move toward meeting the social-emotional and behavior needs of at-risk students. One way to meet these needs is with a choice board or incorporation of a students preferred material or tool into a lesson or activity. The teacher must establish predictable daily routines and post a visual schedule to allow for independence while providing explicit expectations. Furthermore, the teacher must alter his or her own behavior by incorporating specific instructions of what the exact behavior looks like. "High probability requests ask students to comply with directives that they are most likely to complete" (Withey, 2018, p. 184).

The second step is instruction. Depending on the focus, social-emotional or behavioral skill, the instructions can take multiple forms such as mindfulness, social stories, modeling, and/or rehearsal. This step of the intervention encourages students to develop self-regulation skills. Step three and four include application and follow-up. It is important to teach students how to self-monitor or reflect on their behavior. This can be done through emoticon rating scales. If a student demonstrates appropriate and positive behavior, they will choose a smiley face. If the student displays poor behavior, they will choose a frown face. When an individualized intervention plan is considered and implemented it may increase the likelihood of social, emotional, behavioral and academic success.

Head Start Trauma Smart (HSTS), an early intervention program developed in 2008 for preschoolers in head start programs, goal is to decrease the negative impact of chronic, toxic stress, to support children's social and cognitive development. HEARTS is another school-wide model that uses tiered responses to support trauma-exposed kindergartener and elementary students. Tier one supports school wide changes to the culture and learning environments. Tier two supports specific training for staff and tier three addresses specific resources and interventions for trauma-exposed children. "The HEARTS program was associated with increased school personnel knowledge about trauma and trauma-informed practices, increased student engagement in school and decreased behavior problems and trauma-related symptoms among students" (Loomis, 2018, p. 137.)

How Poverty and Trauma Effect the Classroom

Nutrition, poor diet and diminished health practices can affect attention, reasoning, learning, and memory. "Children who grow up in poor families are exposed to food with lower nutritional value. This can adversely affect them even in the womb" (Jensen, 2013, p. 25). There

are two primary foods for the brain, oxygen and glucose. Educators can engage students in slow stretching while taking slow deep breaths to increase oxygen to their brain. Recess and physical education contribute to greater oxygen intake as well.

Furthermore, children who grow up in low socioeconomic conditions typically have smaller vocabulary which raises academic risk. "A child's vocabulary is part of the brain's tool kit for learning, memory, and cognition. Kids from low-income families are less likely to know the words a teacher uses in class or the words that appear in reading material" (Jensen, 2013, p. 25). Children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds often perform below students from higher-socioeconomic backgrounds on test and academic achievement because they have short attention spans, difficulty monitoring the quality of their work and generating solutions to problems. These students, who struggle, begin to act out or shut down. Teaching problem solving and organizational skills while using a positive mind-set, encouragement, and persistence can build higher-level thinking skills.

The sixth difference Jensen discusses is relationships. In homes experiencing poverty or adverse childhood experiences children get twice as many reprimands, caregivers are stressed out and more likely to be grumpy and less likely to offer positive comments to their children. Disruptive home relationships and ACEs often create mistrust in students because adults have failed them at home so why would not the adults in a classroom fail as well. These children need strong, positive, caring adults to intervene and build positive relationships with them for them to emotionally and academically succeed. Learning every students name, their likes and dislikes, asking about their family and hobbies will begin to build a respectful and trusting relationship where students feel comfortable learning. Addressing the differences between students who come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and those who come from high-socioeconomic

backgrounds who have not experienced more than one adverse childhood experience can make a difference in a child's ability to engage in learning and become academically successful.

Resilience in the Classroom

Academic resilience is important because it increases the likelihood of academic success and a key to building resiliency is facing adversity with positive adaptation (Berg & Pietrasz, 2017). Patricia Berg and Carol Pietrasz research strategies to build resiliency in the article *Turning Classroom Failure into Student Success: The Value of Integrating Resiliency Building Activities in the Academic Classroom.* The Distribution Challenge is a strategy to build resilience. It is an obstacle course competition. Students are placed into teams and each team has the challenge of getting from point A to point B. This strategy can be modified to fit any grade level. The point of the activity is to have students complete the challenge with little or no preparation and allow a second chance, after failure or challenges, with greater preparation time. The Distribution Challenge represents a safe environment for facing challenges, provides an environment of positive feedback, failure and second chances. This builds resiliency and grit. Grit is focused on overcoming challenges. "Resiliency is bouncing back in the short run when faced with a setback, failure, plateau, or even a success" (Berg & Pietrasz, 2017, p. 301).

Resiliency also involves teaching students terms to use in their daily language and then giving them a strategy for dealing with failure. The second strategy Berg and Pietrasz discuss is the F.L.E.X. plan. F.L.E.X. stands for (a) failure happens, (b) lean in and allow yourself to lean into the emotion, (c) elect a positive response, and (d) X-ray or share your story of resiliency with others. This is a role-playing exercise that can include fictional trial and triumph cards, sharing personal stories of facing challenges and how to apply the F.L.E.X. plan. Students begin by discussing resiliency terms like effort, self-control, social intelligence, courage, self-

determination, perseverance, resolve and optimism, to name a few. Then students break into groups to generate their own resiliency terms. This activity, integrated with the Distribution Challenge, can help increase resiliency awareness (Berg & Pietrasz, 2017).

Helping students embrace a safe and predictable connection and relationship is the beginning of building resiliency. Educators must be able to understand what happens to a child emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively when they are exposed to trauma. Behavioral issues arise from stress response and are correlated with attachment and self-regulation challenges children face because of ACEs or Adverse Childhood Trauma. How a student responds to a situation may be a result of a childhood experience. Resilience is not a trait that develops naturally. These skills are developed through training, nurturing and positive relationships. "When resiliency is embedded in the classroom culture, teachers transform the lives of students" (Teaching Resilience in School, 2019).

Having just one trusted adult in a student's life makes it less likely they will develop behavior problems and academic disengagement. Providing resilience training for staff and pupils, like the program piloted in South Tyneside, Manchester in 2007 where a total of 22 schools gave resilience training and measured the impact on children's well-being, behavior, attendance and attainment for up to three years, led to significant improvement in pupil's depression symptom scores, school attendance rates and academic attainment in English. Students that received free school meals and not academically achieving benefitted the most (Bouncing Back, 2017). The impact of the training wore off soon after the training finished suggesting that regular resilience training is the most effective strategy for long term outcomes for students.

Resiliency touch points is a targeted and intentional interventions implemented for students who have chronically elevated and activated stress response systems. These are students who shut down, are disengaged, test boundaries and come to school unready to learn but needing love and emotional support. Resiliency Touch Points can be brief encounters throughout the day. They can last for 30 seconds or up to five minutes, enough time to explore what's going on with students and start building a positive social and emotional connection. When this intervention is implemented consistently it can lessen feelings of despair and hopelessness of students who have experienced adversity and trauma (Desautels, 2018).

One-on-one interaction such as those used in the Reading Recovery program have the potential to lead to a high quality of student-teacher relationships and in turn lead to higher levels of academic engagement. According to Nadia O'Toole and Clemence Due and their research of school engagement for academically at-risk students and the Reading Recovery program, students who were part of the Reading Recovery group gained important benefits from Reading Recovery that went beyond assistance with reading (O'toole & Due, 2015). This group discussed their interactions with teachers and their impact or importance, whereas the group not participating in Reading Recovery did not. Students who would have fallen into at at-risk category and participated in the Reading Recovery program experienced an increase of school engagement and displayed no anxiety in relation to school. "This positive impact could be the result of a number of factors, including the development of positive relationships with teacher, the experience of being rewarded rather than punished, and the sense of achievement the Reading Recovery students demonstrated in their interviews (O'toole & Due, 2015, p. 14).

Despite the challenges presented to children who experience adverse childhood traumas there are school-based targeted intervention programs. Close teacher-child relationships can

positively influence the development of children who experience emotional trauma. "Guided by attachment theory, a focus on interventions to support children's relationships with major caregivers, such as teachers, is of particular importance for young children who have experienced trauma" (Loomis, 2018, p. 141). Trauma-informed preschool models for young children have shown to make a positive impact when implementing early childhood interventions and trauma-informed education for older children. Trauma-informed care needs to be more accessible for children and integrated into existing systems of care. Trauma-informed practices are being incorporated into public school systems, social services and medical systems.

The importance of considering student's emotional needs is just as important as their academic needs. Emotional and academic growth go hand in hand and without addressing a student's mental health and emotional needs a child's academic success may be at-risk. Teaching strategies, classroom environment, administrative support and professional development to inform school staff of important interventions can help lead to trauma-informed schools and practices. These practices and interventions can help at-risk students develop positively emotionally and academically.

Methods

Participants

In this action research study, data was collected on 11, first grade students. Of those eleven, nine students are boys and two girls. Five of the 11 students are either at-risk emotionally or academically according to SAEBRS and FAST data. One student receives special education services and has an IEP, one student is African American, eight students receive Title I services that were implemented at the beginning of the school year and will continue until the end of the school year. In February, students were given the FAST Early Reading screener to

assess their reading skills and how they have progressed since the beginning of the year. The

students were also assessed on the SAEBRS social, emotional and behavioral screener to

determine emotional risk. Students with a FAST Early Reading composite score of less than 55

and a SAEBRS social, emotional, and behavioral composite score of less than 37 were

considered at-risk both academically and emotionally (see Table 1 and Table 2). Using this data,

the teacher identified students at-risk academically and emotionally and implemented an

intervention to help boost resiliency and academic literacy success.

Data Collection

For this action research study data was collected for 12 consecutive weeks. Data was

collected from students' weekly progress monitoring assessments. The data was recorded on an

Excel spreadsheet and analyzed by the teacher weekly. During the twelve weeks, students at-risk

socially and academically participated in a one-on-one reading intervention program targeting

each students needs and a Resiliency Touch Point intervention targeting social and emotional

needs. The intervention program was implemented every school day for 15 minutes. The

teacher began by exchanging greetings. Students choose from the Choose A Greeting poster.

The teacher was able to build a positive relationship and resiliency by listening to the student to

learn about their life. This process took two minutes and was implemented at the beginning of

each intervention session. Targeted one-on-one reading instruction followed a guided reading

lesson structure. The teacher used the districts Journey's Reading curriculum and leveled text

during this process.

Students only at-risk academically worked in a small group of six. Students were

grouped according to their FAST Early Literacy composite score in order to group students with

like needs for easier collaboration and differentiated instruction. Students whose composite score

was less than 55 were considered academically at-risk. Instruction was targeted based on their needs as a group and leveled according to their ability. Journeys small group instruction, leveled readers, and high frequency words were used during this intervention.

The teacher assessed student's progress each Wednesday using Progress Monitoring provided through Fast Bridge. Progress monitoring is designed to be a quick and easy weekly assessment that provides data to monitor student progress and evaluate instructional effects. (FAST, n.d.). CBM-r passages were used to determine fluency and reading rate growth. The teacher listened while students read aloud from a passage for one minute. Accuracy and rate were recorded during this assessment. Students who can read a grade-level passage with efficiency are better able to us cognitive resources to comprehend while reading. (FAST) Data collected through Progress Monitoring was used to monitor weekly growth and drive instruction during guided reading small groups or one-on-one reading instruction.

Findings

Data Analysis

The data analysis needed to determine what interventions can be used with students who are at-risk emotionally and academically to increase engagement and what impact does the intervention have on academic achievement will be both qualitative and quantitative. Variables such as emotional risk were gathered using the SAEBRS universal screener. The screener relied on the teacher's observation of student behaviors socially, academically, and emotionally over the last month. The data collected on the screener was qualitative. However, using SAEBRS enabled quantitative data to also be collected and reported. SAEBRS is a reliable diagnostic, universal screener used across elementary, middle, and high school settings.

Quantitative data was collected using the FAST Early Literacy universal screener to determine students who were at-risk academically. Data was collected and analyzed over two testing periods, winter and spring. Based on the outcome of the FAST screener the teacher determined students who were at-risk academically and then compared those results to SAEBRS to compile a group of students who were at-risk both socially, emotionally, and academically. Data analysis and interpretation involved the use of descriptive statistics to help make sense of the quantitative data gathered and organized in an Excel spreadsheet (Mills, 2018).

Students who were at-risk emotionally, socially, and academically received an intervention. Teacher worked with at-risk students 1-on-1 and implemented Resiliency Touch Points intervention practices. Progress monitoring data helped the teacher evaluate instructional effect and determine if differentiated instruction in one-on-one groups using Resiliency Touch Points as an emotional intervention made a positive impact on students' academic achievement. Data was recorded in an Excel sheet to determine at-risk students and progress monitoring graphs on FAST Bridge were also used to track academic growth.

Other variables data such as special education services, ethnic background, and gender was gathered using qualitative data practices. These variables were observed in the classroom and gathered by observation. Teacher knowledge was used to collect this data. To provide reliable data the teacher referenced enrollment paperwork completed by parents/guardians of students to determine ethnicity or race. Quantitative data was collected to determine students who receive Title 1 services. The teacher gathered data through teacher collaboration as well as FAST scores from spring of kindergarten and fall of first grade to determine students at high academic risk. Those students who scored red, or high-risk both in spring of kindergarten and fall of first received Title One services. Those students received Title One at the beginning of the

school year. The research study was conducted over the winter and spring testing periods of first grade.

Statistical data was collected from FAST and recorded on an Excel spreadsheet in order to understand and analyze student growth. Quantitative data was collected through teacher observation while using the Resiliency Touch Points intervention and used to assess the student using SAEBRS. Comparing FAST and SAEBRS scores in an Excel spreadsheet enabled the teacher to compare and understand the impact of the intervention on student academic achievement and social/emotional growth. This action research study was a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data.

In the following tables, the data collected from SAEBRS and FAST Early Reading is recorded for each student. In the tables the teacher recorded the names of the students, the composite score, and sub-test scores used to compile the composite score. The students are listed on the left side of the table, while the composite and sub-tests are listed along the top. This data was used to determine students who were at-risk emotionally and academically and receive the Resiliency Touch Points intervention (see Figure 1) and one-on-one guided reading instruction. The guided reading curriculum is *Journeys* by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Leveled readers and high frequency words used came directly from the *Journeys* reading series.

Table 1

SAEBRS Screening Data - Winter

Student	SAEBRS Composite	Social	Academic	Emotional
DB	54	18	15	21
KB	40	12!	13	15!
KBR	56	18	18	20
LB!	28!	9!	4!	15!
ZC	54	18	15	21
AC	47	18	15	21
BC	53	18	15	20
KE	50	18	12	20
MF!	35!	14	4!	41!!
CS!	32!	15	6!	10!
KW!	30!	14	4!	12!

The table represents the data that was recorded on the SAEBRS screener for the intervention students. The teacher recorded the composite score, social, academic, and emotional behavior score. Students that are highlighted are at-risk emotionally and academically when analyzing SAEBRS and FAST screening data.

Table 2

FAST Screening Data - Winter

Student	Composite	Sight Words	Word Segmenting	Nonsense Words	CBM-r
DB!	50!	50	31	17	29!
KB!	47!	38	32	17	31!
KBR!	51!	40!	32	22	31!
LB!	37!	17!!	32	22	31!
ZC!	54!	45!	32	23	36!
AC!	49!	38!	32	19	35!
BC!	46!	31!	34	17	34!
KE!	54!	47!	33	19	42!
MF!	41!!	29!!	34	15!	20!!
CS!	52!	52	34	23	45
KW!!	38!!	21!!	31	17	12!!

The table represents the data that was collected on the winter FAST Early Reading screener. The teacher recorded the composite score, sight words, word segmenting score, nonsense words score and CBM-r score. Each sub-test was timed for one-minute.

Table 3

Resiliency Intervention Students – Progress Monitoring

Student	Winter Composite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Spring Composite	Growth
LB	37	22	31	21	48	41	41	51	43	41	44	50	50	50	+13
MF	41	43	48	52	59	55	52	70	70	73	71	76	62	63	+22
CS	51!	55	48	52	62	52	61	71	76	67	68	64	73	69	+18
KW	37!	18	21	23	25	30	23	33	34	40	28	40	33	48	+11

The table represents the data that was collected during Progress Monitoring for 12 consecutive weeks. The teacher recorded the winter composite score, correct words read per minute when reading progress monitoring passages, and the spring composite score on the FAST

screener. These students were determined to be at-risk emotionally and academically and received interventions for both. The interventions included Resiliency Touch Points and one-on-one guided reading interventions.

Table 4

Non-Resiliency Intervention Students – Progress Monitoring

Student	Winter Composite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Spring Composite	Growth
DB	50	51	48	49	62	55	58	67	71	84	73	81	70	69	+19
KB	47	50	38	61	49	47	56	57	53	50	46	58	49	59	+12
KBR	51	52	56	63	55	58	80	74	91	68	63	73	70	83	+32
ZC	54	43	51	48	48	58	49	66	68	64	53	62	71	73	+19
AC	49	57	74	58	58	61	71	76	70	71	62	77	72	70	+21
BC	46	48	44	35	47	32	26	50	45	40	45	41	42	47	+1
KE	54	47	59	55	51	62	76	71	78	72	68	61	70	72	+18

The table represents the data that was collected during Progress Monitoring for 12 consecutive weeks. The teacher recorded the winter composite score, correct words read per minute when reading progress monitoring passages, and the spring composite score on the FAST screener. A small group intervention was implemented using the districts chosen reading curriculum, *Journeys* by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Leveled readers and high frequency words were chosen from this curriculum.

Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

Inclusion of social-emotional learning and interventions are linked to positive academic and psychological outcomes (Gresham, 2018). Considering students' emotional needs is just as important as their academic needs. Implementing interventions that address students emotional and academic needs can help at-risk students develop positively emotionally and academically. This twelve-week action research study worked with four first grade students who were at-risk social-emotionally and academically to build resiliency and fluent reading skills. The teacher used strategies from Resiliency Touch Points to build a positive relationship and address each students social and emotional needs. One-on-one guided reading was implemented to address each student specific reading needs.

The Resiliency Touch Points intervention alongside the one-on-one guided reading instruction gave students the tools they needed to be successful academically on the FAST Early Literacy Screener. Specifically, the data shows that students who received the Resiliency Touch Point Intervention as well as one-on-one guided reading instruction increased an average growth of 16 correct words per minute on the FAST Early Literacy screener. During the intervention process, students were involved in predictable daily routines, the use of an activity choice board, and targeted one-on-one reading instruction. Students who were at-risk social-emotionally and academically and received both Resiliency Touch Points intervention and one-on-one guided reading instruction made almost the same amount of growth as students who were only academically at-risk and only received small group reading instruction. The results from the research study are evident when table 3 and 4 are examined.

Students that were only at-risk academically and received guided reading small group interventions using *Journeys* leveled readers and high frequency words averaged a growth of 17

correct words per minute, according to the data collected over 12 consecutive weeks. Students who were part of the Resiliency Touch Points intervention and one-on-one guided reading instruction averaged a growth of 16 correct words per minute. The data suggests that with the Resiliency Touch Points interventions and targeted one-on-one guided reading instruction students who were at-risk social-emotionally and academically can improve over time and perform as well on assessments as students were are only at-risk academically. The twelve-week intervention process was beneficial to the teacher, the students, and the classroom setting. At-risk students were becoming fluent readers as well as connecting with the teacher and building resiliency. The teacher was able to meet with students individually and in small group to assess their individual needs and target instruction. The intervention took time and preparation, but the benefits were worthwhile as students made academic and social-emotional growth.

Limitation of Study

The limitations of the research include student attendance, student motivation, time and rate of developmental growth of elementary students reading skills. Attendance of emotional, social and academically at-risk students could impact the consistency of the intervention. Students who regularly miss school and/or show little motivation will show limited intervention impact due to exposure. Resiliency and building positive relationships should help build motivation. Due to school cancelations the initial FAST screening data could be less reliable due to lack of routine. The researcher must also take into considerations the natural rate of developmental growth of students reading skills. Classroom environment, classroom management, and student behavior are also variables or limitations for this action research project.

Further Study

Future studies of the impact of Resiliency Touch Points interventions on academic and social-emotional growth over a longer period of time may provide valuable insight and understanding for teachers, support staff, and administrators. Research should include data from a full year of school and over several grade levels. This research would show the impact of resiliency building on academic growth over a student's academic career. By conducting further studies and gathering data on resiliency in the classroom districts may want to provide training to teachers. Further studies may include exploring research-based reading interventions, trauma-informed practices, and strategies for building resiliency in the classroom may also be valuable to this research.

Conclusion

Without early intervention, students at-risk social-emotionally are more likely to show learning difficulties and an escalation of negative interactions with parents, teachers, and peers. Using a research-based intervention program to address student emotional and academic needs can provide the tools and support needed in order to be academically and socially successful. Implementing Resiliency Touch Point interventions, targeted one-on-one guided reading instruction, and providing teacher support for students who were at-risk social-emotionally and academically develops positive attachments and relationships which can increase the well-being of at-risk or troubled children. Social connections or touch points are interactions with individuals we trust, who see and notice our strengths, interests, passions, and challenges, and who understand us (Desautels, 2018). Research points to the power of relationships and how they help students embrace a safe and predictable connection.

Teachers who teach resilience could impact the social-emotional and academic success of their student's lives. Teaching resilience requires interaction, engagement and building positive relationships. When students have resilience, they are more open to learning. They believe they can learn and are receptive to teacher support because relationships have been built on trust and understanding (Russell, 2013). Social-emotional and academic growth go hand in hand and without addressing a student's mental health and emotional needs a child's academic success may be at-risk

In conclusion, students who are at-risk emotionally or have experienced childhood trauma are more likely to have missed opportunities for development of emotional impulses and are more likely to have elevated and activated stress response. These students are prone to shutting down and disengaging in the classroom. Having just one trusted adult makes it less likely social-emotionally at-risk students will develop behavior problems, anxiety, stress, and more likely to improve mental well-being, academic success and optimism as an adult. Building resilience by using interventions that are targeted and intentional can help students emotionally and academically. Consistently implementing resiliency touch points can lessen the feelings of despair and hopelessness of students who are bringing their significant adversity and trauma to school (Desautels, 2018).

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Appendix

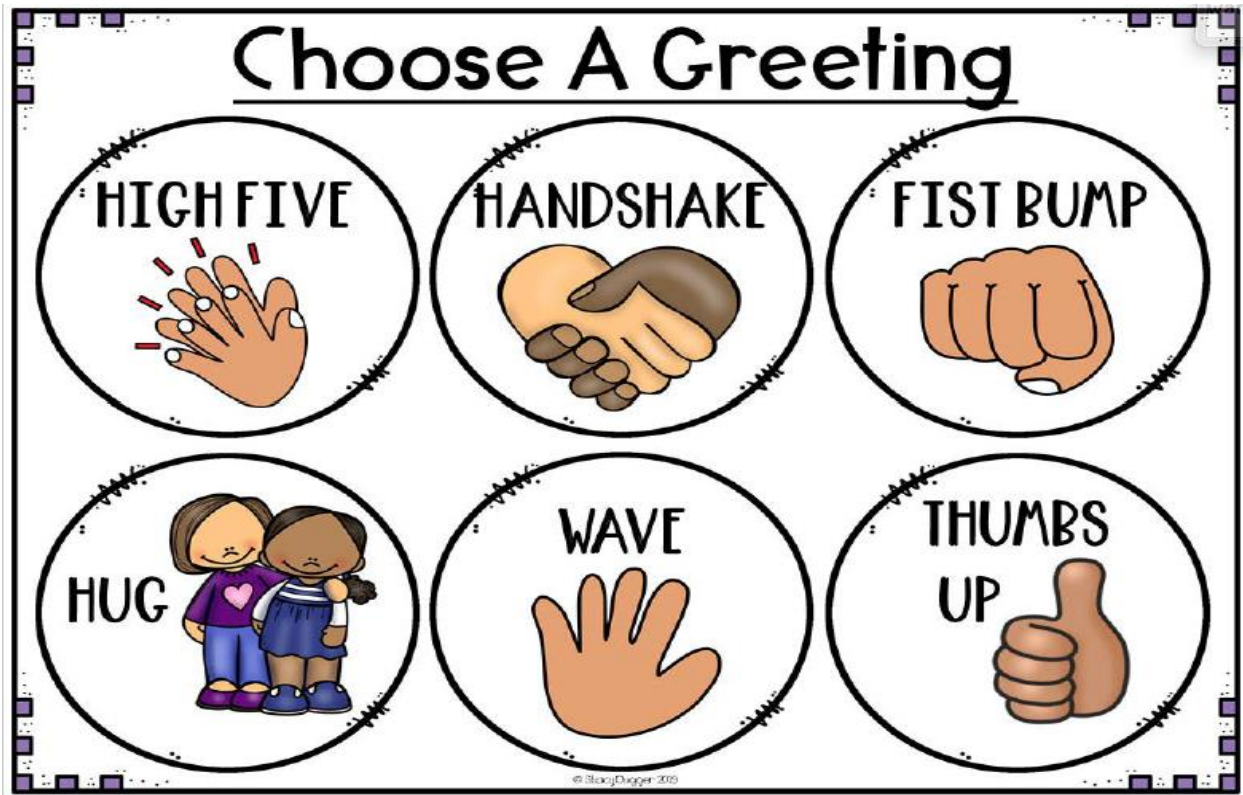Resiliency Touch Point – "Choose A Greeting"

Figure 1. "Choose A Greeting" was used when implementing Resiliency Touch Points intervention. The teacher began by exchanging greetings after students chose from the "Choose A Greeting" poster. The teacher then listened to learn about the student's life, asked questions and built a positive relationship and resiliency.