

Running head: STRATEGIES FOR USE TEACHING EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED
DEAF CHILDREN

Strategies for Use Teaching Emotionally Disturbed Deaf Children
Shelley L West
University of North Florida

Strategies for Use with Emotionally Disturbed Deaf Children

According to the 2007-2008 Annual Gallaudet Research Institutes Regional and National Summary, there are approximately 36,710 deaf students in the United States, 630 (1.8%) of those students report having an emotional disturbance as well as deafness.

Although there are a significant number of students with EBD, our field lacks evidence-based strategies for teachers to implement with this population of learners. Moreover, emotionally disturbed deaf children need to be taught educational strategies as well as social and emotional tactics to successfully navigate through life.

It is vital for personnel working with students who are deaf and EBD to have the proper strategies needed to make an impact on the education of these students (Cohen, 1980), Students with both emotional disturbances and deafness need to be shown the proper strategies in order to succeed in school. Teachers of these students need to be trained in these strategies.

“Hearing-impaired children reported to be emotionally/behaviorally disturbed showed significantly lower need for achievement, greater aggressiveness, more anxiety, and greater degrees of hostile isolation” (Cohen, 1980). Since deaf students with EBD are at risk for lower achievement, professionals working with them must ensure the strategies they use to teach student offer motivation for achievement. Given the proper strategies, these students will be able to be involved in class and be motivated to achieve. This can be done by using three possible methods: programmed instruction, positively reinforcing appropriate behavior, and social/emotional growth.

Teachers lack the strategies needed to teach deaf students with EBD. This paper will focus on the classroom strategies that in which teachers of deaf students with emotional and behavioral disabilities should have training. In order for teachers to make an impact on these students and ensure they are given the same opportunities as other students, teachers must have the proper strategies. Deaf students with EBD struggle with academics because of their behaviors in the classroom. One strategy teachers can use to teach students in the classroom is programmed instruction.

Programmed Instruction

Programmed instruction leads the student to a correct response to a question (Espich and Williams, 1967). Programmed instruction is an approach that allows for students, to work at their own pace and achieve academic success. Students receive immediate feedback further fueling their want to achieve academically. There is a tremendous amount of preparation involved when using programmed instruction but, the results have show to be effective. The steps to develop the materials are as follows: 1. determine the skill level of the students 2. list instructional goals to be met by students 3. write frames (example one frame to teach each part of the body) 4. create a repetitive slide list repeating each word or picture several times for the student to become familiar with it 5. implement for students 6. observe students. The level of mastery the student is at is critical in order for the programmed instructions to be planned accordingly. Teachers may have to adjust materials several times to ensure the academic objective is being met.

Positive Reinforcement

Another strategy teachers should be familiar with is positively reinforcing deaf students with EBD behavior. Positively reinforcing appropriate behavior allows for the student to be rewarded for their good behaviors and understand what behaviors are expected. The teachers implementing the positive reinforcement give students

checkmarks over a period of time that then turns into either a monetary reward or an edible reward at the end of the day. The rewards slowly are removed, so the students start to take control over their own behaviors and decisions. This system serves a dual purpose- teachers are given a way to be objective in their assessment of student's behaviors and the child is given a learning environment that is built to give direction (Lennan, 1970).

Social-Emotional Strategies

Students need to be taught using strategies that will help them to learn the information that is presented to them and learn strategies to help them with their emotional/behavioral outburst. There are several types of strategies that teachers should implement so that students learn to control their emotional outburst. These strategies include: conflict resolution training, use of visual/oral feedback, and self managing behaviors.

Conflict Resolution Training

Conflict Resolution Training prepares students to effectively resolve problems using themselves using the skills gained from the training (Zylstra-Owner, 1981). "Temper tantrums, noncompliance, and aggressive behaviors often characterized such reactive outbursts. These resulting behaviors create a chain of events that can lead to a student being excluded from the opportunity to participate in his or her classroom learning environment" (Zylstra-Owner, 1981). Students who exhibit these types of behaviors may be sent out of the classroom or placed in an area in a different part of the room to calm down; this however takes away from their learning time with the rest of the class. Instructors of these students should want the students to stay in the classroom so they have the opportunity to learn. Teachers can teach students conflict resolution so the students can know the proper steps to solve their problems correctly and rejoin the class.

Research with Deaf EBD is limited; therefore examination of research with students with only EBD and not deafness was used to compare social emotional strategies that could be implemented with Deaf EBD students.

Visual and Oral Feedback

In a study done with EBD students with no other additional disability, data showed using oral and visual feedback together made a positive impact on the student's behavior. The study done by Lingo (2009) had one student with EBD named Joyce who was a fifth-grader who was constantly removed from her classroom because of her inappropriate behavior. Joyce was presented with oral feedback to begin with and slowly visual feedback was added in. By the end of the study Joyce had a mean of 85.8% appropriate behavior for six days and returned to her regular classroom for instruction. This study shows that visual and oral feedback can improve students behavior with EBD. This type of study could be implemented with Deaf EBD students using both visual and oral feedback. In the two studies that follow, visual and oral feedback are used separately with deaf students with EBD but have similar results to the study above.

In a study done by Lennan (1969), the use of programmed instruction was used on emotionally disturbed deaf boys. The study had sixteen subjects, ages 7 – 12. All the subjects met the following criteria: prelingually deaf 65db or worse hearing loss in better ear, intelligence quota of 85 or above, no neurological dysfunction, and a history of emotional problems that prevented them from participating in other programs for the deaf. The first part of the study required the researchers to develop programmed materials

for the students based on their skill level. Then the researchers listed the instructional goals that were to be met by the student. Then each of the teachers made a group of frames that were to be used to teach the subjects. For this particular example teachers were using parts of the body. These frames were shown to the students and then repeated. Observations were taking that allowed for teachers to add more frames or change frames students were struggling with. The results of this study were positive, students who were unable to sit for a few minutes started working for periods as long as 30 minutes. The limitations shown by this study is the amount of time it takes to prepare a certain lesson. Teachers must plan accordingly. In this study, only oral feedback was given to the students, there were no charts that the students could look to for feedback. The oral feedback alone worked in making a positive change in the students progress toward academic success.

Another study done by Lennan (1970) looked at positively reinforcing students behaviors through visual feedback. The study had sixteen subjects, ages 7 – 12. All the subjects met the following criteria: prelingually deaf 65db or worse hearing loss in better ear, intelligence quota of 85 or above, no neurological dysfunction, and a history of emotional problems that prevented them from participating in other programs for the deaf. This study used checkmarks during 15 or 30 minute fixed intervals for reinforcement. Students were then able to trade in checkmark cards for other rewards such as monetary rewards. The rewards were then gradually deferred over time. After year one- three students transferred to a regular deaf classroom, after the second year, six more transferred. Limitations of this study include: teachers can have tremendous power using behavior modification procedures but often do not have the proper training in behavior techniques. Unlike the study with only EBD students, these two studies with deaf students with emotional and behavior disorders show that visual or oral only have positive effects on students behaviors and can allow for the students to re-enter regular classroom settings for deaf students.

Self Management

Teachers need to provide students with EBD effective ways to control their behaviors and how to properly manage stressful situations. In a study done by Fitzpatrick (2009), called *Bringing Evidence-Based Self-Directed Intervention Practices to the Trenches for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* students were taught to self manage their behaviors. This requires students to take an active role in changing his or her behaviors in a positive way. Students are first taught how to adapt the skills they are taught to effectively handle difficult situations. Self- management involves internal and external controls. An internal control would be the student grading himself on specific behaviors; an external control would involve the teacher giving verbal feedback to the student. There is a gradual shift from using external controls to using more internal controls; therefore the students take more control over their behaviors. Students are then taught how to generalize these skills in order to apply them outside of the classroom. The literature in this article only focuses on students with EBD but in articles that involves both deaf and EBD students this strategy has been proven effective as well.

Teaching self managing strategies can be effectively used with deaf students with EBD. In *Conflict resolution training program: Problem solving strategies for hearing impaired students with behavior problems*, a study done by Zylstra and Ulissi (1981), the focus is on teaching social/emotional skills known as conflict resolution training. The

training is a 7 step program that encourages students to role play, discuss resolutions and problem outcomes. From these activities, students learn to take control of their own behaviors since they have the knowledge and proper tools to act appropriately in challenging situations. This program utilizes small groups and has shown to be effective in elementary and middle school age children. One problem with this strategy is if it will work outside of the small group, can these behaviors be generalized to the classroom and even real world settings.

In a study done by Morrow (1985), students were taught self managing techniques to change behaviors. This study had three different participants the first was a 17 year old female that suffered from hallucinatory behavior by the end of study noticed disappearance of target behaviors. The next participant was a 15 year old male who was deaf with EBD and by the end of the study two target behaviors eliminated, and reduced third. Lastly there was a 18 year old female with multiple disabilities and deaf and the evidence showed outcomes minimizing target behaviors. This study also shows that self-control procedures can be used with deaf students with EBD to change behaviors to allow the students to return to regular classrooms.

Discussion

The academic and social emotional strategies presented in this review represent only a few of the strategies that could be used by teachers of Deaf EBD students. These strategies have been shown to be effective in the situations where they were implemented, although they haven't been replicated to validate them as evidence-based strategies. Therefore, practitioners must deem these strategies as useful suggestions to use with Deaf EBD students, rather than research proven strategies. The strategies reviewed need to be replicated many more times to show that they would be effective you didn't finish this sentence or you need a period.

Additional research needs to be conducted with this population to provide teachers with validated strategies to use with their students who are Deaf EBD. There are many more articles on strategies for use with EBD students without additional disabilities. In the recent history research on the Deaf EBD population has decreased significantly. Most of the studies involving Deaf EBD students that were found are from the late 1980's. Although, there are other disabilities that are more prevalent than EBD with deaf students, there are still teachers that need information on strategies for use when teaching this population.

References

- Cohen, B.K. 1980. Emotionally disturbed hearing-impaired children: A review of the literature. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 125(9), 1040-48.
- Espich, J.E., and Williams, Bill: Developing Programmed Instructional Materials, Fearson Publishers, Palo Alto, Calif., 1967.
- Fitzpatrick, Michael & Knowlton, Earle. 2009. Bringing Evidence-Based Self-Directed Intervention Practices to the Trenches for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. *Preventing School Failure*. Washington:Summer 2009. Vol. 53, Iss. 4, p. 253-266 (14 pp.)
- Lennan, R.K. 1969. Use of programmed instruction with emotionally disturbed deaf boys. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 114(5), 906-11.
- Lennan, R.K. 1970. Report on a program for emotionally disturbed deaf boys. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 115(4), 469-73.
- Lingo, Amy S., Barton-Arwood, Sally M. and Jolivette, Kristine. Visual and Oral Feedback to Promote Appropriate Social Behavior for a Student With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. *Preventing School Failure*. Washington:Fall 2009. Vol. 54, Iss. 1, p. 24-29 (6 pp.)
- Meadow, P. K., & Trybus, J. R. (1985). Behavioral and emotional problems of deaf children: An overview. In L. J. Bradford & W. G. Hardy (Eds.), *Hearing and hearing impairment* (pp. 395-415). New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Morrow, L. 1985. Teaching self-control to dually diagnosed deaf students: Promising procedures. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 130(6), 502-507.
- Zylstra-Owner, S. and Ulissi, S.M. 1981. Conflict resolution training program: Problem solving strategies for hearing impaired students with behavior problems. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 126, 619-626.