

# **Self-Regulatory Skills to Enhance Academic Success**

## **Abstract**

Students with disabilities in Pre-Kindergarten exhibit disruptive behaviors during whole group lessons and potentially lose opportunities to learn academic content and social interactions due to a lack in self-regulatory skills. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of teaching self-regulatory skills on disruptive behavior and academic learning.

## **Statement of the Problem**

All six students in my Pre-Kindergarten class for students with disabilities have developmental delays and social emotional behavioral issues. As a result, they are missing valuable speech therapy time, learning opportunities, becoming distracted by disruptive behaviors, and possibly learning maladaptive skills. They lack social, self-regulatory and communication skills and have difficulty attending during whole group instruction.

The goal for improvement is to teach students self-regulatory skills to participate successfully in whole group story time. In order to help students during this difficult time, the teacher will teach self-regulatory skills three times a day, on every school day. Bailey's (2011) five step self-regulation model will be the method used as it incorporates many of the evidence-based components found in recent research articles reviewed. Bailey (2011) described a five step self-regulation process which not only addresses teaching self-regulatory skills to students, but also teaches adults how to use the process themselves prior to teaching it to children. The five steps are: I am, I calm, I feel, I choose, I solve. The strategy utilizes mindfulness strategies for both adults and children to use in learning how to calm themselves. It uses context and practice to teach these skills and helps foster independence and internalization of skills. Self-regulation

fosters strong relationships between children, their peers, and their teachers (Williford, Whittaker, Vitiello, & Downer, 2013). Disruptive behaviors will be analyzed using anecdotal records, time-sampled observations, interviews, and teacher research journal.

### **Purpose and Research Question**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of teaching self-regulatory skills on disruptive behavior and academic learning using Bailey's five-steps to self-regulation (2011). The following research question will be investigated: How effective is teaching self-regulatory skills to Pre-K ESE students in helping students to participate in story time as a whole group with total extinction or significant reduction of disruptive behaviors?

### **Literature Review**

A common theme throughout research is that self-regulatory skills and academic success are positively related (Bulotsky-Shearer, Fernandez, Dominguez & Rouse, 2011; Flook, Goldberg, Pinger & Davidson, 2014; Williford, Whittaker, Vitiello & Downer, 2013 ). This relationship establishes the importance to further evaluate training students in self-regulatory skills to help them succeed in school. Flook et al (2014) addresses early childhood: "There is particular interest in training during early childhood, given the malleability and plasticity associated with this period of development" (p. 44).

Williford et al., 2013 maintains that self-regulatory skills are burgeoning during early childhood and that even children who face multiple social and environmental risks can tremendously benefit from self-regulatory training, as it can impact their future. Flook et al. (2014) findings expand by saying that children who are identified as at-risk may gain even more

skills, and that learning self-regulatory skills can not only impact them but society in the larger context.

Bulotsky-Shearer et al. (2011) shows that children engage in problem behaviors because their social and emotional skill set does not match the skills necessary to complete the given tasks. Furthermore, that these skills are necessary pre-requisites to be able to learn reading and mathematical skills.

Lastly, Raver, Jones, Li-Grining, Zhai, Bub & Pressler (2011) explored the effects of implementing a multicomponent training to teachers and how it affected their practice and consequently their students' self-regulatory skills and pre-academic performance. The study confirmed the hypothesis as the treatment group ended up with better self-regulation skills.

### **Research Methodology**

This study will be conducted in a Pre-kindergarten ESE class. The current students enrolled in the class will participate. All students in the class have an Individualized Educational Plan and are between the ages of 4-5 years old. The classroom teacher will be implementing the intervention of teaching self-regulatory skills three times a week for six weeks. The teacher will be collecting data during story time, while the Speech and Language Pathologist leads story time.

Data will be collected using timed-sample observations during story time. Other staff members will be interviewed in order to examine differences in perceived baseline and improvements in behavior. Anecdotal records will be maintained to monitor changes, challenges and progress.

### **Results**

Research findings will be available following completion of action research. It is expected that the results will be in congruence with the literature, and show a decrease in maladaptive behaviors during intervention period in comparison with baseline.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>Inform principal and parents.</b> <b>Make a poster of 5-Step model</b> <b>Make Feeling Buddies</b> <b>Develop interview questionnaire</b> <b>Set-up anecdotal record notebook</b>	<b>December 2015</b>	<b>Letter</b> <b>Poster paper, poster printer, computer</b> <b>Printer, poster board, markers, laminator.</b> <b>Paper, printer</b> <b>Binder, lined note paper, dividers</b>
<b>Interview SLP, Paraprofessional and BIA</b> <b>Collect baseline data M-F</b> <b>11:00-11:30am for 2 weeks.</b>	<b>1/5/15</b> <b>1/5/15-1/14/15</b>	<b>Interview Questionnaire , Pen</b> <b>Datasheet, Pen</b>
<b>Teach 5-Step self-regulatory skills model</b> <b>Collect timed-sample data</b> <b>M, W, F</b> <b>11-11:30am for 6 weeks</b> <b>Collect anecdotal records every Friday.</b>	<b>1/19-1/26</b> <b>1/20, 1/22,</b> <b>1/25, 1/27, 1/29</b> <b>2/1, 2/3, 2/5,</b> <b>2/8, 2/10, 2/12,</b> <b>2016</b> <b>2/17, 2/19, 2/22</b> <b>2/24, 2/26</b> <b>1/8, 1/15, 1/22, 1/29,</b> <b>1/5, 1/12, 1/19, 1/26</b>	<b>Poster, Feeling buddies</b>  <b>Datasheet, Pen</b>  <b>Notebook, Pen</b>
<b>Interview SLP, Paraprofessional and BIA</b>	<b>1/26/2015</b>	<b>Interview Questionnaire, Pen</b>

### **Implications**

If the study confirms the relationship between self-regulatory skills and academic success, as measured by participation in story time without exhibiting disruptive behaviors, the study has the potential to serve as a learning tool for teachers of early childhood education. Furthermore, it can provide an avenue to advocate developmentally appropriate practice such as an emphasis in teaching self-regulatory skills as pre-requisites for teaching academic skills. Finally, it can help provide a framework to use when teaching self-regulatory skills, which addresses the needs found in the literature regarding early childhood education.

### References

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