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The Importance of Teacher Behavior in Increasing Student Success: Are Teachers Prepared to Meet the Needs of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders?

Abstract

Despite the dissemination of specific instructional practices including High Leverage Practices and other pedagogical strategies that are considered fundamental to the success of students with emotional/behavioral disorders, research suggests that many of these practices are occurring in schools at unacceptably low rates. This research-to-practice gap is not a new phenomenon. This paper provides an overview of some of these specific teacher-driven instructional behaviors and the implications of the paucity of their use in schools. In addition, the importance of the role that teacher preparation programs play, and steps that they can take to alleviate the research-to-practice gap are discussed.

In the changing climate of teacher preparation, some might say the field of education is facing a perfect storm. We continue to see an increase in the attrition rates of veteran teachers in the field while also experiencing increased student enrollments in most school districts across the country. Couple this with policies geared toward reducing class size and the increasing demand for qualified teachers becomes even more apparent. While the demand for teachers continues to increase, the supply to meet this growing demand appears to be decreasing. There are fewer high school students who are expressing an interest in entering the teaching field, there are declining enrollments in traditional teacher preparation pathways, and we are even experiencing a decrease in program-completers with college students who have been admitted to traditional teacher preparation programs (Barth, Dillon, Hull, Holland, and Higgins, 2016). This mismatch in supply and demand presents a bleak picture for education in general, but the situation is even more dire for historically hard-to-staff certification areas like special education.

Anyone who has worked in the field of special education for even the shortest time is likely to be aware of the critical teacher shortages the field has faced over the past several decades. One of the most prevalent teacher shortage areas in the area of special education is that of teachers who work with students with emotional or behavior disorders (EBD). Arguably, students with EBD are the very students who need the most highly trained and effective teachers, yet are in rooms that are often staffed by emergency-certified teachers or teachers who have entered in to alternative certification routes and are serving as the teacher-of-record in classrooms before they have had coursework in classroom and behavior management or instructional methodology (George, George, Gersten, & Grosnick, 1995; Rosenberg, & Sindelar, 2001; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). Compounding the fact that EBD classrooms are often staffed with teachers with little training in effective instructional practices is that even in classrooms where students with EBD are being served by more experienced teachers, the experienced teachers are often not consistently implementing instructional practices that have been known to increase the probability of students success for students with EBD (Scott, Him, & Cooper, 2017). This is, in part, due to a research-to-practice gap that has long-existed in special education.

The research to practice gap in education can be simply defined as the phenomenon that exists when teachers are either not implementing, or not implementing at desired rates instructional practices in the classroom that research has demonstrated to be effective. Theoretically, this means that preservice teachers are being taught to implement specific instructional practices in their teacher preparation programs, but then failing to implement them, or at least implement them at desired rates in the classroom. This is not a new phenomenon. It has been discussed in the literature for decades (e.g., Korthagen, 2007; McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). There can be a variety of reasons why the gap exists. Often, new teachers can be influenced by the practices of senior teachers when they begin a new job. This is acceptable if senior teachers are consistently using effective practices. Many beginning teachers may feel unsupported by their new school/district in their teaching placements, and at the same time they can feel disconnected from their teacher preparation program once they graduate and move to a teaching position (Eaton and Sisson, 2008). Regardless of why the research to practice gap occurs, it is essential to consider the impact that such a gap can have on the students being served.

While the research-to-practice gap has been around for a long time and shows no sign of dissipating, it does seem that the field of special education is at a critical juncture. Because of the increasing demand for special education teachers and the decreasing supply of potential special education teachers, states have initiated alternative pathways to certify teachers in critical shortage areas. In some cases, this could mean that institutions of higher education are left completely out of the process of certifying teachers. This, in turn, makes it likely that students with EBD will likely be served by teachers with less training in effective behavior management and specific instructional practices designed to promote success for struggling students. Given that we already see a gap in the use of effective instructional practices by teachers who have gone through a traditional teacher preparation program, a scenario where students requiring intensive instructional efforts are served by teachers with less training is very troubling. The need to insure that teachers of students with EBD are implementing instructional practices that promote student success is greater than ever before. This paper provides an overview of selected teacher specific practices that are not occurring in practice at expected rates, as well as implications for the lack of their use, and discusses actions that teacher preparation programs can take to help alleviate the research to practice gap in teachers who serve students with EBD.

Effective Instructional Practices Matter

There is a demonstrated link between academic success and behavioral success for students in schools (Najaka, Gottfredson, & Wilson, 2002; Sipperstein, Wiley, & Forness, 2011). Logically, a lack of use of effective instructional practices designed to promote academic success in a classroom is detrimental to the overall success of students and can act as a catalyst for increased problem behavior observed in students (Gest & Gest, 2005; McEvoy & Welker, 2000). While effective instruction is obviously important for all students, it is essential for students with EBD. Because these student often have academic deficits and demonstrate behaviors that interfere with their ability to acquire academic knowledge and skills, the use of effective teaching practices being delivered at high rates is paramount. The teacher of record in any classroom is the primary change agent for impacting academic and social behavior, both in positive and negative ways (Cooper, Hirn, & Scott, 2015).

The selection and implementation of effective instructional practices is the responsibility of the teacher (Cooper & Scott, 2017). However, the selection of instructional practices should be done in a systematic way, letting evidence, data, and student need guide the process. While everyone may not universally agree on the efficacy of every instructional practice, research suggests that some practices provide students a greater probability of success than others (Cook, Tankersley, & Landrum, 2009; Odom et al., 2005). And considering the extensive range of instructional practices available, some empirically validated and others that are not, it is absolutely critical that educators select and implement the practices that have been found to provide a greater probability of promoting student success (Hattie, 2009). Unfortunately, research suggests that some instructional practices that have a strong evidence base for promoting student success are not being implemented at the rates that we should see in classrooms (Scott et al., 2017).

Teacher-driven Instructional Practices

Recently, the field of special education has made a concerted effort to identify specific practices for persons entering the field of special education that are considered essential in promoting student learning and success. The culmination of that work has been a set of practices known as High Leverage Practices in Special Education (HLP; McLeskey, Maheady, Billingsly, Brownell, & Lewis, 2019). The HLP are a set of 22 specific practices separated in to 4 domains: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction. Each HLP has demonstrated the ability to increase the probability of student success when implemented with intensity, consistency, and fidelity. The use or lack of use of each practice is the sole responsibility of the teacher of record in the classroom.

With one of the domains of the HLP being specific to social/emotional/behavioral practices, it is easy to get caught in the trap of thinking that these are the only practices integral to the success of students with EBD. That could not be further from the truth. Actually, practices from each of the four domains are critical to the success of students with EBD. The ability of teachers to collaborate with other professionals and families has obvious implications for the success of students with EBD. The effective use of assessment practices to drive instruction is also critical for all students, with students with EBD potentially benefitting more than others through effective assessment practices. The domain that is essential to the academic achievement of students with EBD is the instruction domain. I would argue that it is the most critical domain when providing students with EBD the greatest probability for success. The use of explicit instruction, strategies to promote active student engagement, and providing positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior is essential for teachers to employ in designing, delivering, and analyzing instructional practices. Pedagogical practices that make use of HLP from all four domains is critical to the overall success of students with EBD.

To determine the actual use of certain practices that have been shown to increase the probability of student success, Scott and colleagues (2017) analyzed data from over 6,000 15-min observations of teacher instruction across different grade levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high) and different content areas (i.e., reading, math, social studies, and science). The following sections, while certainly not exhaustive of all effective practices in special education, discuss some of the specific teacher behaviors that were observed that have the potential to promote student success, academically and socially, when implemented consistently at desirable rates. The results of the observations include time spent teaching, promoting active student engagement, and the provision of feedback to students in classroom settings.

Time spent teaching. It stands to reason that a cornerstone behavior for teachers to demonstrate to promote student success would be making efficient use of instructional time available in the classroom. It also would seem to be a reasonable expectation for students, parents, and school administrators that teachers would make efficient and effective use of time allotted to instruction. The concept of effective time use becomes absolutely critical when thinking about the significant instructional needs of students with EBD. However, Scott et al. (2017) found the amount of time spent teaching in classrooms to be an area of concern. The operational definition used for the term teaching was the percentage of time that teachers engaged in modeling, demonstrating, or providing verbal or written examples to students. No

effort was made to delineate between effective or not effective teaching; just simply a recording of the percentage of time that teachers spent teaching during identified instructional time. When looking across grade levels, teaching was found to be occurring approximately 86 percent of instructional time overall. However, when separated out by grade level, elementary and middle school classrooms spent 93 percent of instructional time teaching (and 7 percent not teaching), while high school teachers spent only 72 percent of instructional time teaching (and 28 percent not teaching). When looking at time spent teaching across content areas, there was relatively little difference in different content areas with a range of 85 percent of time spent teaching in math to 90 percent of time spent teaching in social studies.

While it is likely that no one expects a teacher to be engaged in the act of teaching 100 percent of the instructional day, it can be very telling to look at what appear to be small amounts of time spent not teaching over time. If data are extrapolated over time, the true impact of those percentages of time not teaching become evident. If we assume that a typical school day has approximately 5 hours of instructional time, looking at time spent not teaching takes another form. For example, if elementary and middle school teachers spend 7 percent of overall instructional time not teaching, over the course of the school year, that equates to approximately 63 hours, or 12.6 school days (Scott et al., 2017). It is fair to assume that if asked, no teacher would say they were going to spend two and a half school weeks of the school year not teaching, but that is what we see. Now consider the high school setting where 28 percent of instructional time is spent not teaching. Extrapolated data over time would suggest that high school teachers spend 10 weeks, or nearly two and a half months of the school year in a non-teaching mode. While the impact of this missed instructional time is troubling for any student, the implications of this missed instructional time can be devastating to students with EBD due to their complex instructional needs and their academic and behavioral skill deficits.

Student engagement. A second specific effective teacher behavior is the ability of the teacher to promote student engagement in the lesson at hand by taking specific actions to increase the probability that students will actively engage during instruction. Berliner (1990) indicated that the level to which students are engaged with content is possibly the greatest predictor of student achievement. While there are various ways to promote student engagement, one of the most prevalent ways in the field of special education is through the provision of opportunities to respond (OTR). An OTR can be delivered to an entire group or to an individual and can take the form of any teacher-directed opportunity to respond to, and interact with the curriculum. OTR include directions, questions, or simple commands that act as discriminative stimuli by setting the occasion for a student to deliver a response. Research supports the use of OTR in improving academic and behavioral outcomes (Haydon, Mancil, & Van Loan, 2009; Kern & Clemens, 2007; Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010).

Over the years, the provision of OTRs has been studied in an effort to determine an optimal rate for the delivery of OTRs. While there has been some variance on recommended levels, recent research has indicated that rates of three or more OTR per minute are predictive of desired levels of student engagement (Gunter, Hummel, & Conroy, 1998; Haydon et al., 2009; Partin, et al., 2010; Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, 2003). In their study, Scott and colleagues (2017) explored the rates of providing OTR across different grade levels and across different content areas. Overall, the rates of providing OTR were found to be lower than desired. As one

might expect based on the levels of interaction between teachers and students in elementary school settings, elementary schools had the highest rate of total (i.e., group and individual combined) OTR provision at .97 per min while high schools had the lowest rate of OTR provision at .53 per min. Middle schools fell in the middle with .69 per min. It is important to note that although elementary schools provide a higher rate of OTR than middle or high schools, all three school levels are lower than desirable rates of OTR. In fact, all three settings demonstrated a rate of less than one OTR per min.

When looking at the provision of OTR across content areas, a similar pattern existed with total OTR in content areas ranging from .60 per min in Science to .84 per min in mathematics. Again, all content areas demonstrated less than one OTR per min; far less than the desired three per min. When combining the variables of grade level and content area, middle school mathematics teachers demonstrated the highest rate of OTR provision at .82 per minute (Whitney, Cooper, & Lingo, 2015). Regardless of the variable, the provision of OTR is far below desired rates. The provision of OTR presents itself as another teacher-driven practice that research suggests has the ability to improve student outcomes, yet it is not being used in classroom practice at desired rates that would provide students with a greater probability of success.

Provision of feedback. Another effective teacher-driven practice with empirical support for its use is the provision of feedback. Hattie (2009) rated feedback as one of the top instructional practices for promoting student success. Feedback can be either positive or negative in nature and can be thought of in a simplistic way as notifying students if their responses are correct or incorrect. Research in the field of special education has long-supported the notion that feedback can be used by teachers to promote student success, both academic and behavioral (Brophy, 2006; Cameron & Pierce, 2002, Gable, Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009). However, like the use of instructional time and the provision of OTR, researchers have found the use of acceptable rates of feedback lacking in schools (Scott, Alter, & Hirn, 2011; Stichter et al., 2009). This is even more pronounced with students who exhibit challenging behaviors. Sutherland, Wehby, and Yoder (2002) found that students with challenging behaviors tend to receive less feedback than peers without challenging behavior. Further, feedback for students with challenging behavior tends to be more heavily weighted toward negative feedback (Scott et al., 2011).

When considering an optimal ratio of positive and negative feedback, researchers in the field of special education have provided a fairly consistent range of three positives to one negative, and six positives to one negative (3:1 to 6:1) to be predictive of future success (Gable et al., 2009; Stichter et al., 2009). During their observations, Scott and colleagues (2017) found the ratio of positive to negative feedback in typical classrooms to be approximately 3:1 at the elementary level, 2:1 at the middle school level, and .66:1 at the high school level. This indicates that elementary students are in the lower end of the range of hearing the desired level of positive feedback statements to negative feedback statements. However, middle school students are below the optimal rates that would predict future success and high school students are actually receiving more negative feedback than positive feedback.

Implications of Limited Use of Effective Practices

So if the previously-mentioned practices have the ability to provide a greater probability of success for students, then it begs the question, why are teachers not using these practices at greater rates? It is a complicated question that has a complicated answer. While it is difficult to discern exactly why we are not, as a field, implementing effective practices with greater consistency, I think the discussion begins by looking at the instructional environment in which students with EBD are served. While many people, even those in the field of general education still have the perception of students with EBD being predominately served in segregated self-contained settings, special classrooms, or special schools, in actuality, well over one half of students with EBD are served in general education settings (Mitchell, Kern, & Conroy, 2018). Additionally, approximately 47% of students with EBD spend 80% or more of their day in the general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This is concerning because in theory, teachers who are prepared in a special education preparation program should receive training that is designed to specifically address the significant and unique needs presented by students with specific disabling conditions, including EBD. However, considering that many students with EBD are being served by general education teachers, it is likely that the majority of students with EBD are being served by teachers with limited training in specific instructional practices designed for use with students with significant learning or behavioral needs like students with EBD. Another possible explanation for the limited use of effective instructional practices could be that students' teacher preparation programs did not adequately prepare them with the knowledge or skills to effectively serve the diverse student population in their classrooms.

Teachers who go through a general education teacher preparation program will often have one class during their program that is specific to behavior management. Additionally, a general education teacher preparation program may not prepare teachers to use specific instructional methodology that has been designed for students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally. If research suggests that teachers who have been trained specifically to work with students with significant and unique needs like EBD are not implementing key instructional practices at appropriate rates, it is entirely understandable that general education teachers with limited training in working with students with challenging behaviors would also be implementing those practices on a limited basis. Regardless of the reason for their lack of use, and regardless of the preparation background of the teacher working with students with challenging behavior, there are serious implications for students when teachers do not consistently demonstrate key instructional practices in the classroom.

Student Success

The first, and most obvious implication of the limited use of effective instructional practices is the impact it has on student success. Nothing that teachers do in the classroom is a sure thing, but it is the teacher's job to do everything in their power to arrange an instructional environment in such a way that provides all students with an optimal opportunity for success. If teachers are not selecting and implementing effective practices, students are sure to pay the price in terms of experiencing academic and behavioral failure. In a recent study, Gage, Scott, and Hirn (2018) found that teachers who demonstrated the least amount of three of the variables discussed in this

article (i.e., time spent teaching, OTR, and Positive Feedback) in their classrooms were more likely to have students who spent more time off task, and who exhibited more disruptive behavior in the classroom when compared to classrooms that demonstrated higher rates of those practices.

Student success can be measured in many ways, both academic and social-behavioral. The HLP identified for the field of special education (McLeskey et al., 2019) are designed to improve student success in both areas. The idea that these practices have a dual focus is important because with students with EBD it is imperative that we assess and monitor both progress and ability on academic skills and social-behavioral skills. By definition, students with EBD are going to have demonstrated behavioral issues that are likely to interfere with academic success as well. Only focusing on one area, academic or social-behavioral, does a disservice to the student by not providing an accurate assessment of their progress as a student. Granted, for many students with EBD, behavioral success will be the metric by which overall student success is often measured and discussed. Unfortunately, a lack of effective instruction on the part of the teacher can lead to troubling behavioral outcomes for students as well.

Increased Suspensions

When we don't know what to do, we often turn to the easiest response, or the path of least resistance. Unfortunately, with challenging behavior, the easiest response for teachers is often to do something that removes us from the behavior (or the behavior from us). In too many cases, this takes the form of suspensions from school for students with challenging behaviors. High suspension rates for students with EBD has long been an issue. Even for students who have not been identified as EBD, but still exhibit challenging behaviors, suspension is often the go-to practice for many teachers and school administrators. Over time, the research has been clear- African American students and students from most disability categories are suspended at rates greater than those of their Caucasian peers and their peers without disabilities, and students with EBD have the highest probability for suspension of all students (Krezmien, Leone, & Achille, 2006). Statistically, an African American student with EBD faces a strong probability that they will face suspension at some point during their school career. The irony of using suspension as an educational practice is that the use of suspension is correlated with decreased student achievement (Christle, Jolivet, & Nelson, 2005; Hwang, 2018). Therefore students with EBD often enter in to a vicious cycle of poor academic performance- challenging behavior- suspension- poor academic performance. While this has long been noted as a problem for students with challenging behavior, a review of the current education landscape indicates the suspension problem may only be getting worse.

A recent review of suspension rates for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) in Louisville, Kentucky indicates that suspension rates in that district are at record rates (Ross & McLaren, 2018). JCPS is a large district with nearly 103,000 students. During the 2017-2018 school year, over 2,000 elementary students were suspended, resulting in approximately 7,600 instructional days lost to suspension during the school year. Just as we have seen in other school districts across the country, the elementary school suspension in JCPS disproportionately represented both African American students and special education students. Students with disabilities represent 14 percent of the total student population in JCPS, yet account for 30

percent of all elementary student suspensions in the district. The most common reasons provided for suspending students in the district were fighting and general disruptive behavior; both common characteristics in students with EBD. Is it possible that many of these suspensions could have been avoided if teachers and administrators were aware of more proactive practices that could have been implemented and assessed prior to taking the steps of suspending students? If teachers and administrators don't know what to do or have exhausted other alternatives, they often seek the path of least resistance to alleviate the problem behavior. Unfortunately, for students with EBD suspensions or other zero-tolerance policies and practices simply exacerbate their problems. Students deserve better and it is imperative that educators work to find alternatives to suspension by integrating effective instructional practices in to teaching practices.

Implications and Recommendations for Teacher Preparation

The research-to-practice gap that has long existed in special education is present due to various reasons that involve both practicing teachers as well as professional teacher preparation programs. This impacts student success, both academically and socially, for students with EBD, as well as increased suspension rates for students who exhibit challenging behavior in schools. It is neither completely possible nor productive to try to place blame for the research-to-practice gap. While teachers have the responsibility of selecting and implementing practices in their classrooms that provide all students with the greatest probability of success (Cooper & Scott, 2017), the responsibility of ensuring that teachers enter the field with both content knowledge and knowledge of, and ability to implement effective pedagogical practices falls on teacher preparation programs. It is also the role of the school district to support teachers and provide continued professional development as teachers enter the profession. However, perhaps the greatest impact on decreasing the gap could come from evaluating and revising how we prepare special education teachers to work with students with challenging behaviors.

As previously stated, many education teacher candidates proceed through a teacher preparation program having received one, and in some cases two classes focused on effective behavior management. While it would seem inconceivable that teachers could exit a program with limited training on effective instructional practices for students with challenging behavior, research suggest that this indeed is often the case (Freeman, Simonson, Briere, MacSuga-Gage, & Sugai, 2014, Oliver & Reschly, 2010). Teacher preparation programs must consider changing the process for preparing teachers to work with students with challenging behaviors. If the majority of students with EBD are being served in general education classrooms (Mitchell et al., 2018) it is apparent that all teacher candidates, not only those preparing to be special education teacher must be knowledgeable about the implementation of practices that provide students with challenging behavior the greatest opportunities for success. One recommendation would be for all preservice teachers to have a minimum of two courses in the curriculum focused on assessing and addressing challenging behavior. This could include one course that focuses on effective teacher practices at the knowledge level, while a second course closer in proximity to the student teaching experience would provide teacher candidates an opportunity to apply those practices in a classroom setting.

A second recommendation for teacher preparation programs would be to systematically teach effective practices including HLP (McLeskey et al., 2019) to all teacher candidates.

Additionally, these practices and other foundational behavior management practices should be engrained across the teacher preparation program for all teacher candidates so that behavior management practices are not seen in isolation as only being necessary for special education teachers, but rather for all teachers (Cooper & Scott, 2017). Teacher preparation programs must convey the concept that behavior and academic content are inextricably linked. If a teacher wants to be successful in conveying academic content, they must also be effective at managing student behavior. Thankfully, many of the same teacher-driven behavior that help to manage behavior (e.g., time spent teaching, provision of OTR, delivery of feedback) are also effective practices for teaching content. Taking it a step further, simply teaching these concepts to teacher candidates will not, on its own, be enough. It is imperative that teacher preparation programs also take steps to actively ensure that the effective practices taught during teacher preparation programs also are generalizing to practice in schools. Effective preservice training has been shown to have a positive effect on the ability of teachers to support students with EBD in general education settings (Klopfer, Scott, Jenkins, & Ducharme, 2019). Teacher preparation programs must move away from the aging process for preparing teachers if we want to see improved outcomes for students with EBD, and students with challenging behavior in general.

Summary

The key to changing student behavior is a changing teacher behavior. In other words, the practices of teachers have the ability to change the measurable outcomes for students. There is no single procedure or practice that will ensure student success in the area of behavior. To be certain, positive behavior change will always be the product of hard work and the implementation of practices that have been demonstrated to provide a higher probability of success than other practices. The field of special education has identified several practices (e.g., time spent teaching, provision of OTR, delivery of feedback, HLP) that potentially provide teachers with the tools to give their students a greater opportunity for academic and behavioral success (McLeskey, 2019). However, a research-to-practice gap continues to exist in the field of special education. Therefore, many of the practices that could potentially provide students with the best opportunity for success are not being implemented in classroom settings at acceptable rates (Scott et al., 2017). The fact that many students with EBD are being served in general education settings, combined with the present teacher shortage, creates a situation where student success may be a casualty of the system because of teachers' lack of ability to implement effective practices on a consistent basis.

If we are truly concerned with the academic and behavioral outcomes for students with EBD, teacher preparation personnel must be certain they are doing all that they can from a programmatic standpoint to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to work with students with challenging behaviors. Special education teachers who generally have more training and instruction on working with challenging behavior are often leaving teacher preparation programs without effective behavior management skills (Zabel & Zabel, 2002). It only stands to reason that general education teachers with less instruction in behavior management would experience similar deficits in behavior management skills. As long as teachers are coming out of teacher preparation programs ill-prepared to work with students with challenging behavior, we will continue to see students with EBD struggle with academic and behavioral success. This, in turn,

will result in continued high rates of suspension in students with EBD, and students with challenging behavior in general.

Given the acknowledged research-to-practice gap, teacher preparation programs must make a concerted effort to decrease this gap by ensuring that all teachers, general and special education, are prepared to meet the needs of students with EBD and students with challenging behaviors in general. This means making sure that teacher candidates have the knowledge and applicable skills necessary to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students before they enter the workforce. This may entail restructuring existing teacher preparation programs to ensure that teacher candidates have sufficient experiences with content related to behavior management, as well as sufficient experience implementing behavioral interventions in applied settings. This could also mean making sure that effective behavior management instructional principles are embedded across the teacher preparation curriculum and not only in specific behavior management courses. Finally, teacher preparation programs must actively work to ensure that the skills and practices taught in their programs generalize to applied settings. Train-and-hope has never been an effective strategy for teaching anyone to apply content knowledge in applied settings, therefore the practices we teach persons entering the teaching profession to manage behavior must be purposeful and will not happen naturally. There is too much at stake for our students. There are no sure things when working with behavioral challenges, but there are things that stand a better chance of success than others. It is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs, teachers, and school districts to ensure that teachers are prepared to provide the highest probability of success for students with EBD.

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