

McGoey

Personal Research Agenda

Many classroom interventions for children with Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD) have been found to be empirically supported in the scientific literature (Brestan & Eyberg, 1998; Pelham, Wheeler, & Chronis, 1998). However, these interventions have been proven efficacious, not effective. The practice of school psychology and teaching has not been influenced by this scientific literature, thus, preventing the study of the effectiveness of these interventions. My personal research agenda proposes to implement the efficacious, empirically supported classroom interventions for young children with disruptive behavior disorders to test their effectiveness, examine the barriers to implementation and practitioner's acceptability and attitudes toward the interventions. This research will impact the practice of School Psychology by helping to bridge the gap between research and practice.

The professions of School Psychology, Clinical Psychology and Counseling Psychology have experienced a surge in emphasis on synthesizing information regarding empirically supported interventions within the past few years (Lonigan, Elbert, & Johnson, 1998; Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2000; Stoiber & Kratochwill, 2000). Interventions such as behavioral parent training and behavioral interventions in the classroom for children with disruptive behavior disorders have been shown to be empirically supported (Brestan & Eyberg, 1998; Pelham, Wheeler, & Chronis, 1998). However, many of the studies reviewed were implemented in the clinic setting, by a large team of university researchers and under highly controlled settings. Therefore, these interventions have been found to be efficacious but not necessarily effective (Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2000).

The applied nature of the field of School Psychology forces equal emphasis to be placed on effective interventions as on efficacious interventions (Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2000). Although the identification of efficacious interventions, those that have been empirically supported in clinically controlled settings, provide important information regarding treatment options, their potential for success in applied settings is unknown. Conditions in the real classroom rarely match controlled conditions in the lab or experimental classroom. Therefore, efficacious interventions “may not tell the whole story regarding whether interventions are empirically supported or beneficial.” (Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2000, p. 234). Indeed, Kauffman (1996) asserts that there is an inverse relation between implementation of an instructional practice and its research support. That is, practices with empirical validity are infrequently applied by teachers.

As stated in Kratochwill and Stoiber (2000), school psychology should place a priority “on interventions tested in the school and community settings where contextual and ecological factors may vary from clinic settings”(p. 235). Interventions should be designed, implemented, and monitored in collaborative interdisciplinary teams of school psychologists, teachers, parents, and administrators. The interventions must look at the child contextually, taking into consideration all of the factors influencing the child’s behavior. Specifically, research reflecting this agenda and guiding principles would address the following research questions:

1. Are the efficacious interventions also effective in reducing and preventing the disruptive behavior of young children?
2. What modifications must be made to the efficacious interventions to render them effective?
3. What barriers effect the successful implementation of the efficacious interventions in the school setting?

4. What supports do practicing school psychologists and teachers require to implement effective interventions?
5. Do teachers, students and parents find the efficacious interventions acceptable?

Abstract

The following proposal describes the goals and objectives of a multi-site project designed to implement and test the effectiveness of efficacious interventions to manage disruptive behavior in the school setting. A collaborative conjoint consultative model will be proposed. The consultants will work with the school based intervention assistance team to test the effectiveness of the interventions. In addition, the consultant will educate and mentor the school based team with the goal of creating independence in assessing problem behavior, designing, implementing and evaluating interventions in the school setting. The following research questions will be addressed:

6. Are the efficacious interventions also effective in reducing and preventing the disruptive behavior of young children?
7. What modifications must be made to the efficacious interventions to render them effective?
8. What barriers effect the successful implementation of the efficacious interventions in the school setting?
9. What supports do practicing school psychologists and teachers require to implement effective interventions?
10. Do teachers, students, and parents find the efficacious interventions acceptable?

The following goals and objectives support the purpose of the project:

- a. Goal 1: Functionally assess problem behavior, design, implement, and monitor empirically supported classroom interventions to manage the disruptive behavior of young children.
- b. Goal 2: Train and mentor teachers and administrators in the design, implementation, and evaluation of empirically supported classroom interventions to manage disruptive behavior.
- c. Goal 3: Examine the barriers to implementing effective interventions and the acceptability of the interventions.

The program will be implemented in three school districts across the United States, one urban, one suburban, and one rural. Districts will be chosen that serve a preschool and elementary population, have an existing intervention assistance team, and a population of

students at-risk for developing Emotional and Behavior Disorders. Number of student participants will depend on the amount of referrals to the intervention assistance team.

Multi-Site Research Program

The following proposal will present the goals and objectives of a multi-site project designed to implement and test the effectiveness of efficacious interventions in the school setting. A collaborative conjoint consultative model will be proposed. The consultants will work with the school based intervention assistance team to test the effectiveness of the interventions. In addition, the consultant will educate and mentor the school based team with the goal of creating independence in assessing problem behavior, designing, implementing and evaluating interventions in the school setting. The following research questions will be addressed:

11. Are the efficacious interventions also effective in reducing and preventing the disruptive behavior of young children?
12. What modifications must be made to the efficacious interventions to render them effective?
13. What barriers effect the successful implementation of the efficacious interventions in the school setting?
14. What supports do practicing school psychologists and teachers require to implement effective interventions?
15. Do teachers, students, and parents find the efficacious interventions acceptable?

The following goals and objectives support the purpose of the project:

Goal 1: Functionally assess problem behavior, design, implement, and monitor empirically supported classroom interventions to manage the disruptive behavior of young children.

The aim of this project is to implement and evaluate empirically supported interventions in the classroom. Researchers will collaborate with the school administrators, teachers, individual assistance teams, and parents to assess the problem behavior, design appropriate interventions, implement the interventions with integrity, and collect data on the effectiveness of the intervention.

Goal 2: Train and mentor teachers and administrators in the design, implementation, and evaluation of empirically supported classroom interventions to manage disruptive behavior.

Teacher training programs rarely provide adequate instruction in empirically supported classroom interventions for students at-risk for behavior disorders (BD). The research to practice gap has not been successfully bridged by inservice presentations and advanced workshops indicating that teachers and school psychologists require direct and indirect support to translate the scientific literature to practice. This project will provide that support through collaboration with the interventions assistance team. Support will include staff trainings, consultation, and direct support (e.g. role play, modeling, ongoing feedback) in the classroom. Teams will not only learn about empirically supported interventions for young children at-risk for BD but will also receive direct support to implement the practices in their classroom. Key team members will then be used as mentors to other teachers in the building and school district to support the dissemination of the effective interventions. Once the school-based team has achieved mastery of the preceding goals, the research team will fade from the proceedings and allow the school-based team to take ownership of the effective interventions. The research team will still be available for consultation, mentorship and education purposes.

Goal 3: Examine the barriers to implementing effective interventions and the acceptability of the interventions.

Throughout the project, the research teams will examine the barriers to implementation and the acceptability of the consultation process and the interventions. This will be accomplished through interviews, rating scales and direct observations of the environment and consultative interactions.

Participants

The program will be implemented in three school districts across the United States, one urban, one suburban, and one rural. Districts will be chosen that serve a preschool and elementary population, have an existing intervention assistance team, and a population of students at-risk for developing Emotional and Behavior Disorders. Number of student participants will depend on the amount of referrals to the intervention assistance team.

Estimated Budget

To properly implement the proposed project, the budget would require considerable allocations to create a research team at each site. The team would consist of a Co-Investigator, project coordinator, and two graduate assistants. Grant monies would be needed to cover materials, travel for the Co-investigators to meet about the progress of the project, and dissemination efforts. An estimated \$250,000 per year per site would be needed to effectively accomplish the project goals.

Advantages and Challenges

The advantages of a multi-site project outweigh the challenges. For example, it is difficult for one site to collect enough intervention outcome data to test the effectiveness of each possible intervention, however, with three sites collecting data, the sample size should be powerful. In addition, each research team would approach the consultative task with different personalities and nuances, this will allow the investigation of different styles within conjoint consultation, different barriers and paths to success. By creating three sites, one urban, one rural and one suburban, the external validity of the study will be increased. On the other hand, the coordination of three large research sites may prove difficult. The diversity of the populations

may bring threats to internal validity as it promotes external validity. Through communication and coordination these challenges should be prevented and overcome.

In sum, this project will provide the support necessary for teachers and staff to implement empirically supported interventions in the school setting. In addition, the project will test the effectiveness of efficacious, empirically supported interventions to manage disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

References

- Brestan, E.V., & Eyberg, S.M. (1998). Effective psychosocial treatments of conduct-disordered children and adolescents: 29 years, 82 studies and 5,272 kids. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 27(2)*, 180-189.
- Lonigan, C.J., Elbert, J.C., & Johnson, S.B. (1999). Empirically supported interventions for children: An overview. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 27(2)*, 138-145.
- Kauffman, J. K. (1996). Research to practice issues. *Behavioral Disorders, 22*, 55-60.
- Kratochwill, T.R., & Stoiber, K.C. (2000). Empirically supported interventions and school psychology: Conceptual and practice issues – Part II. *School Psychology Quarterly, 15(2)*, 233-253.
- Pelham, W.E., Wheeler, T., & Chronis, A. (1999). Empirically supported interventions for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 27(2)*, 190-205.
- Stoiber, K.C., & Kratochwill, T.R. (2000). Empirically supported interventions and school psychology: Rationale and methodological issues – Part I. *School Psychology Quarterly, 15(1)*, 75-105.