

EBD-LD-ASD EVALUATION SETTING

Students who participated with the Hocus Focus Curriculum were identified as having a disability under Minnesota law to receive special education services. In hopes of decreasing behaviors of one student with an EBD label and increasing self-advocacy skills of one student with learning disabilities and one student with Asperger's disorder, I selected them to implement the magic tricks and present them to a larger group of 12 students. Interestingly, these three students that typically would not be friends worked collaboratively on reading the lessons, presenting to the class, and performing the magic trick.

DESIGN AND METHODS

Data was systematically collected and evaluated utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. These methods include observation, pre/post student surveys, and interviews with students and teachers.

RESULTS

1) What are the strengths of the curriculum?

The strengths of the curriculum are the reading units to connect science to the trick. For example, the Floating Pen trick incorporates a lesson about gravity. From the teacher's perspective it was fascinating to facilitate a group reading and discussion about gravity. Each of the three students was given a highlighter and they highlighted the key features of which they wanted to present to the larger group. **Each student was willing to be involved and was enthusiastic about sharing his knowledge** with the class along with performing the trick. The students were **very attentive to task** and appeared proud to be a leader.

From the students' perspective each one had something to offer to the group.

- The **student with the EBD label was able to be a productive leader.**
- The student identified with a **learning disability was able to read and comprehend the material.**
- The student with **Asperger's was able to socially interact with two other peers with whom he normally would never communicate.**

The three students worked together remarkably well.

2) What are the weaknesses to the curriculum?

In my opinion, the major weakness was the step-by-step directions were not provided as a part of the curriculum. I found it difficult to always have to refer to the DVD.

NOTE: The curriculum does include – on a separate CD – step-by-step illustrations and written directions for each trick that work in conjunction with the DVD. Illustrations are also included in the TEACHER'S MANUAL for each trick in each lesson plan.

It would be helpful for the standards to be included so it could be more accessible in a science curriculum.

3) What is the cost/benefit for the teacher?

The cost benefit for the cost being time for the teacher and benefit being student growth is quite different. I chose a way for the students to take the time to learn and present the material because I simply did not have the time to learn a new curriculum. However, the students were able to identify tricks they wanted to learn and teach to others.

- Each student walked away with a higher self-esteem and greater self-advocacy skills in my opinion.

People in the real world always have to learn to interact with others of differing abilities. In the class where we incorporated the Hocus Focus curriculum, I feel like I offered learning experiences that **focused on authentic outcomes**.

Students:

- learned communication skills and had a better picture of how they could function effectively in a setting in which they had previously had difficulty.
- learned from each other and had greater incentives to work harder.
- increased motivation was perhaps the most notable improvement.
- were more apt to try to complete their homework so they could be on a rotation for participating as being a leader in the magic trick presentation.

4) What areas on RSE demonstrated the greatest improvement?

The RSE in my opinion, helped prevent weaker students to have low expectations or perceptions on themselves. If they are grouped based on their abilities, it may convince someone who is in a class based on "lower ability" that he/she is dumb or limited and should not expect to achieve as much in life as the "higher ability" students. We all know that low self-expectations usually result in a low level of accomplishment. Therefore, the current policy can avoid stereotyping any kind of students.

5) What areas of Self Efficacy demonstrated the greatest improvement?

In addition to increased motivation, other areas of improvement included:

- self-advocacy
- attention-to-task behavior
- and collaboration with peers.

School should do anything that benefits students' intellectual, academic, physical, dispositional, social, and emotional development. It is difficult to find strategies that address both academically capable students and students who require more intensive instruction. The Hocus Focus curriculum is one strategy that addresses this concern.