

Whole School Educational interventions for students with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties:

A review of evidence

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Principles

- Whole School (or 'school wide') approaches exploit the power of the collective to provide a consistent and thus self reinforcing approach to the promotion of **academic engagement, pro social behaviour and emotional well being.**
- Importance of clarity of purpose.
- Sharing of purpose.
- Consistency of approach.

Two types of whole school approach

- Targeted programmes.
- Universal programmes.

Targeted Programmes

- Address particular groups (e.g. children with SEBD; children with anger management problems; children with anxiety problems)

Universal Programmes

- Address the whole school population in order to promote the development of pro social and self management skills and to prevent the development of problems.

Evaluating the Evidence

- There are many programmes and approaches to choose from.
- Importance of systematic quantitative evidence.
- The highest standard of evidence is produced by the random controlled trial (RCT).
- There are, however, limitations to a solely 'evidence based' approach ...

Success for All

Borman et al (2005a, 2005b, 2007)

- specifically designed for 'at risk' students
- classroom instruction in reading is given each day in a 90 minute session in which children are regrouped out of their regular classrooms and into smaller groups containing children of whatever grade flexibly re-grouped for reading ability only.
- In the early years of the programme, kindergarten and pre-kindergarten emphasis is placed on phonemic and phonics awareness and reading-preparation.
- Peers read to each other, and engage in encourage comprehension and summarizing exercises
- all learning is collaborative and fast-paced, employing not only printed text, but multi-media technology.
- Students who make limited progress are targeted for additional tutorials.
- The scheme has an in-school facilitator, carrying a .5 contact timetable, overseeing all aspects of the scheme.
- Members of a Solutions Team liaise with other members of staff, and students, to give instant response to any problems which might arise during implementation, and work with parental issues, absenteeism, and behaviour problems as and when these occur.

Evidence

- SFA has been shown to be highly successful in promoting improvements in reading achievement for a wide range of pupils including those with SEBD.
- See RCT studies by Borman et al (2005a, 2005b, 2007)

Factors contributing to the conspicuous success of SFA

- the emphasis on **cooperative learning** which involves working with students to develop their social interaction skills
- the use of intensive **one-to-one mentoring** for pupils who may have difficulty in keeping up with the programme
- the use of a **Family Support Team to encourage parental involvement** in the programme and in the school as a whole.

Circle Time

- Aims to promote unconditional positive regard and empathy among students.
- Deceptively simple.
- Easy to misuse.
- Importance of training and placement within a whole school context.
- Lack of firm empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of CT.

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

(Weare and Gray, 2003)

- SEAL's purpose is to add to the school-wide curriculum an additional element which includes five broad social and emotional issues:
 - self-awareness,
 - managing feelings,
 - motivation,
 - empathy
 - social skills.
- Delivered by TAs
- Heavy investment in SEAL by UK govt.
- Absence of rigorous evidence to support its efficacy.

Essential Features of SEAL (see Humphrey, et al. 2008)

- senior management commitment to the principles and understanding of the implications;
- school or setting systems which make sure that all individuals feel valued and listened to;
- positive relationships in the school or setting: adult–child, child–child, adult–adult;
- teacher (or practitioner) insight and knowledge into the emotional factors that affect learning;
- clear and consistently implemented policies on behaviour, bullying, race equality and inclusion;
- high professional standards;
- skilful teaching which arouses pupil interest and motivates;
- proactive work with parents;
- the active involvement of children themselves

However...

- It is unclear how these 'essentials' are operationalized/evaluated.
- SEAL does not have a built in evaluation programme (i.e. data is not gathered as part of the scheme)

Hallam et al. (2006)

- covered various outcome measures, in the main concerned with behaviour and attendance with the purpose of encouraging school improvement, The purpose of this pilot evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of a range of measures proposed by the DfES, singly and in combination which involved:
 - improvements in behaviour, attendance and attainment for individual children (the small group strand, enabled by the use of a health worker attached to schools)
 - teacher skills and confidence in presenting the material (the Continuing Professional Development, CPD, strand, enabled by the use of 'leading teachers' to visit schools, observe, and coordinate CPD)
 - the promotion of whole-school approaches to positive behaviour, attendance and achievement (the school improvement strand, enabled by the use of a 'teacher coach' to work with existing services)
 - Findings indicate no significant effects in relation to unauthorised absences. There were small gains in academic achievement, but no significant gains in relation to social development.
 - All pilot groups reported difficulties in engaging parents

Hallam et al. (2006) cont'd ...

- the integrity of implementation was poor, making evaluation difficult.
- Findings indicate no significant effects in relation to unauthorised absences. There were small gains in academic achievement, but no significant gains in relation to social development.

Second Step

- Similar to SEAL is USA-based *Second Step*, which is a curriculum modification intervention, used throughout a school, which engages students in a variety of theoretically-modelled interventions, to enhance social, emotional and behavioural skills.
- Second Step incorporates: anger management, social problem-solving, perspective-taking and behavioural social skills training.
- Unlike SEAL it is typically embedded in the school curriculum, delivered usually by teachers but sometimes by psychologists and counsellors, within relevant subjects such as English, Social Studies and Health Studies. Success in the programme, therefore, contributes to overall academic success.

Effectiveness of Second Step

- Studies in North America (Van Schoiack-Edstrom et al, 2002) and Norway (Holsen et al, 2008) have found the Second Step Programme to produce significant reductions in aggressive and anti-social behaviour, indicating the effectiveness of the programme in promoting mastery of cognitive self management strategies.
- An adaptation of *Second Step* in Germany (*Faustlos*), found the most significant effects to be on students with 'acting in' anxiety problems (Schick & Cierpka, 2005; 2006)

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support

(Walker et al, 1996; Sugai et al, 1998; Sugai & Horner, 2002, 2006)

- Define three to five school-wide behavioural expectations
- Provide a 'defining rule' for each expectation
- Build a culture of competence by teaching the school-wide skills to *all* students
- Teach behavioural expectations in a variety of school settings.
- Teach specific social behaviours that are examples of the behavioural expectations
- Teach behavioural expectations with 'negative' examples
- Give students the opportunity to practice appropriate behaviours
- Reward appropriate behaviour
- Acknowledge appropriate behaviour on a regular basis after the skill is learned.

(Source: Walker et al, 2004, pge137)

Evidence of success for SWPBS

- SWPBS has been repeatedly shown to produce significant positive results both in terms of student behaviour and academic performance (McIntosh et al, 2006; Luiselli et al, 2005; McIntosh et al, 2008)

Restorative Practices

- RP attempts to create a school-wide climate of community-shared values for all students, and reduce levels of aggressive or bullying behaviour.
- In practical terms, the intervention consists of eliciting responses to several questions from participants involved in aggressive or disruptive behaviour:
 - **What has happened?**
 - **Who has been affected?**
 - **How can we involve everyone who has been affected in finding a way forward?**
 - **How can everyone do things differently in the future?**
- The dialogue can take place informally in 'corridor conferences', or more formally in mini-conferences, sometimes adopting problem-solving circles similar to those used in Circle Time.

Evidence of Effectiveness of RP

- As yet, there is little concrete evidence to support the efficacy of RP (Burssens and Vettenberg, 2006; Kane et al, 2008). However, this is because little systematic, quantitative research has been carried out on RP.

FRIENDS

Barrett et al (2006:406)

- a brief cognitive–behavioural intervention designed and validated as an individual or group-based treatment for clinically anxious children [...] The programme assists children and youth in learning important skills and techniques that help them to cope with and manage anxiety and emotional distress through the application of learned coping and problem-solving skills.

FRIENDS

- F = feeling worried (i.e. self-monitoring skills);
- R = relax and feel good (i.e. self-control skills);
- I = inner helpful thoughts (i.e. self-management skills);
- E = explore plans (i.e. skills for identifying options and making choices);
- N = nice work, reward yourself (i.e. self-reinforcement skills);
- D = don't forget to practice (i.e. maintenance skills);
- S = stay calm for life (i.e. extended maintenance skills)

Evidence of Effectiveness of FRIENDS

- The findings from several robust studies indicate that the FRIENDS intervention is an extremely effective intervention for children (aged 7-13) with clinically- significant anxiety problems and low self-esteem.
- It has also been shown to be effective in improving the emotional coping skills of children and young people in the general population.
- See: Stallard et al, 2007; Barrett and Turner, 2001; Lowery-Webster, 2001.

Universal Programmes ...

- (1) capture all students who may benefit personally from the intervention
- (2) mobilize all students in supporting one another
- (3) promote resilience and have a preventive effect for all participants.
- (4) Are generally more effective than targeted programmes.
- (5) Are most effective when embedded in the curriculum and delivered by all teachers.