PROMOTING POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN STUDENTS WITH E/BD
THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

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Mild/Moderate

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This graduate project is dedicated to all teachers of all grade levels who work tirelessly to enhance the education of their students. More so, this graduate project is dedicated to those teachers who focus their attentions on special education, those who come back day after day regardless of the amount of verbal and physical inflictions they receive, who not only share their knowledge, but give their hearts to ensure their students walk away with a better understanding of the world around them and a better chance for success.
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ABSTRACT

PROMOTING POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN STUDENTS WITH E/BD THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

By

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Masters of Arts in Special Education

Mild/Moderate

Teachers have a difficult time instructing a class while a student classified within an Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (E/BD) is having an emotional outburst or exhibiting problem behaviors. In these instances, collaborative teaching or differentiated instruction may not be enough to create a learning environment conducive to this type of student’s special need(s). Using cooperative or collaborative learning structures may provide the added environment to make the teaching material interesting and engaging enough to decrease disruptive behavior and increase learning opportunities for classrooms with students with differing learning styles and/or needs. This project will examine a variety of collaborative learning techniques and the possible effects of using these techniques specifically in a non-public school (NPS) classroom. This paper will also discuss whether teachers are using learning tools that match their students’ learning styles.

Keywords: emotional disturbance, emotional/behavioral disorders, cooperative and collaborative learning, inclusive education, learning styles
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When adults collaborate in the work place, they are often described as participating in team work. When students collaborate in school, they are often described as cheating. Why does this occur? Why, as adults, do we applaud and encourage collaboration, but provide so few opportunities for students to collaborate during their primary school years?

Traditional classrooms have been known for their strict rows of desks, all lined for students to work individually. As well, historical images of teachers in these classrooms have been of older individuals, wearing reading glasses pushed to the tips of their noses, and holding a ruler in one hand while slapping it on the palm of the other hand. These images less frequently include the students who presented problem behaviors, who threw paper airplanes in the classroom, teased their peers or spoke back to their teachers. Although problem behaviors are seldom the first thing associated with school classrooms, they existed.

Behavior problems continue to be an on-going concern and issue with students in both public schools and NPSs. Inclusive education, which is offered most frequently in the public school setting, is the practice of bringing children with disabilities into a general education classroom and providing education to both the general and special education students within the classroom. In the NPS setting, all of the students in the classroom have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that specifies each student’s special needs and accommodations and/or modifications to assist the student in accessing the grade level curriculum. A student is found eligible for an IEP when the student is classified as having E/BD, a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Other Health Impairment (OHI), or one of several other disabilities. It is in the NPS setting where teachers seem to be finding more challenges in classroom behavior management and promoting positive social interactions.
which enhance learning and the learning environment. These challenges are often directly related to the students’ special needs and sometimes their difficulties in verbalizing what is making them struggle when learning. Students classified as having E/BD are often students who have atypical responses to occurrences in their environment. Because of this, students with E/BD are often those students who present the most behavior challenges in the classroom. Teachers are then challenged to provide a learning structure or academic environment which will engage these types of students and motivate them to participate in the learning process.

Students’ different learning styles in each classroom forces teachers to provide instruction that meets each student’s need. In their study on differentiated instruction, Haar, Hall, Scheopp and Smith (2002) noticed that teachers were truly interested in seeing how well their students were mastering a presented goal or objective, and sought to teach in a manner that assisted students in gaining a deeper understanding of the content presented. The teachers’ approaches and methods often changed when informal assessments showed some students were having difficulty grasping concepts (Haar et. al). They would personalize the instruction and jump from one style to another as they evaluated how their students learned best. If the teachers did not have such concern for their students’ learning, the likelihood of the students participating in disruptive behaviors would increase. Even if their students do not have special needs, they do have individual needs, which if not met, can create disruptions in the classroom. Such disruptions could interrupt instruction and ultimately impede all students’ learning.

With the increasing frequency and intensity of behavior problems in the NPS classroom, teachers continue to build new teaching strategies to keep their students
engaged and learning. To some extent, these teaching strategies also include new classroom behavior management techniques. Collaboration can be easily introduced into school systems through the techniques of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is when two or more students actively interact with each other while in the process of learning a new concept. There are multiple techniques for collaborative learning, many of which can be easily integrated into most current school systems, including NPS classrooms. Finding a new way to incorporate collaborative learning structures in the NPS classroom should not only create an active learning environment, but also result in fewer behavior incidents.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Cooperative or collaborative learning – an instruction method in which students of various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common academic goal (Gokhale, 1995)

Emotional disturbance or Emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines emotional disturbance as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

(a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

(b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

(c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.

(d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
(e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Inclusion or inclusive education – classrooms that include students with special needs for support in general education for most the school day alongside their typically developing peers (Copeland & Cosbey, 2008)

Interteaching – a form of instruction which includes elements of personalized system of instruction, reciprocal peer tutoring, and cooperative or collaborative learning, helped participants perform (Saville, Zinn, & Elliott, 2009)

Learning styles – various approaches or ways of learning (Felder & Spurlin, 2005)

Student elaborations – student explanations that clarify processes and help classmates arrive at their own solutions (Vermette & Foote, 2001)
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning seems to be a simple topic, a very black and white issue easily determined. Learning is often times automatically done, a process most would say is natural, innate, not taught, but simply acquired at birth. The broad idea of learning is you either do learn or you do not – you either obtain the information or you do not. Learning is generally a simple process of discovering the world around us, absorbing all of the information that is presented to us in that work, and then using that new found information to help us better understand ourselves and our environment (Ranson, Martin, Nixon, & McKeown, 1996). Beyond this idea, learning involves the ability to evolve, and to use the information you currently have within you to obtain new information. Of course, this process can be disrupted by either internal or external factors. These disruptions introduce some negative connotations connected with learning, or rather, connected with the inability to learn, or inability to learn at a certain pace. These connotations often have little to do with the ability to learn. Rather, they more realistically pertain to the lack of motivation to utilize the ability. When we look at learning more in depth, we find there are many dimensions to the process.

Learning Styles

“Few can deny that persons of all ages learn, think and process information differently” (Frakas, 2003, p. 43). For students, these differences present themselves in a wide variety of ways, including the ways in which they best respond to instruction (learning styles), the ways they choose to study (orientations to studying and approaches to learning), and their perceptions and attitudes about learning, knowledge, and what they plan to do with that knowledge (levels of intellectual development) (Felder & Brent, 2005). Students have different strengths and weaknesses, different personal preferences to how they receive new
information, and how they process that information (Felder & Spurlin, 2005). Some prefer lecture, receiving information audibly. Some prefer the addition of pictures, diagrams, graphs and other visual images that relate to the material being presented. Some like to try out new ideas and see what happens, while others would rather just think about it, analyze it and come to their own conclusions before seeing it in action. A student’s learning style is developed through those preferences and how that student feels they receive and use the information best (Sze, 2009). Trigwell and Ashwin (2006) believe it is not so much how the students receive the information, but rather how receiving the information molds the students’ experiences and perceptions of their learning environment. This can be a basic discovery for most students, but for students with special needs, it may not be so instantaneous. Often times, students with special needs or a disability will keep it to themselves, avoid sharing it, or avoid discovering their own learning styles due to a fear of seeming unintelligent. Assisting students in unearthing their own personal learning styles can provide a conduit for those students to connect their learning styles with how they actually learn in the classroom. If there is an inconsistency with their learning styles and how they believe they are being taught, then this process can alert them to what learning needs or assistance they may require in order to appropriately and effectively grasp the concepts being taught (Felder & Spurlin). Educators must find ways to guide students into making these discoveries within themselves and to enhance lessons to accommodate the differing learning styles that may be present within their classrooms.

Teaching in a differentiated manner to ensure all types of learners have full access to the information being presented is not a new idea. Rather, this practice is one taught in most teacher education programs which introduce forms of effective pedagogy. If teachers can
guide their students into becoming more reflective of how they learn and what they must do to learn, then they are most likely able to retain more information (Sze, 2009). Cooperative or collaborative learning (terms often used interchangeably) may assist educators in this task. Cooperative or collaborative learning can also promote a positive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities.

COOPERATIVE OR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Summers, Beretvas, Svinicki, and Gorin (2005) define cooperative learning techniques as typically more structured tasks that are monitored more closely by the instructor than are collaborative learning techniques; and that cooperative learning techniques are a specific type of the more general collaborative learning activities. However, for the purpose of this project, the term cooperative and/or collaborative learning will be used to represent both cooperative and collaborative learning techniques and models.

According to Peterson and Miller (2004), research on cooperative and collaborative learning has grown extensively in the last 30 years. Cooperative or collaborative learning is when two or more students actively interact with each other while in the process of learning a new concept. This type of learning technique can be described simply as group work and is one in which teachers have been using for many years (Slavin, 1995). Definitions for cooperative and collaborative learning, however, are contrary for different theorists (Mueller & Fleming, 2001). Gokhale (1995) defines cooperative or collaborative learning as an instruction method in which students join together into groups and work together towards a specific academic goal. Slavin (1995) states that in cooperative or collaborative learning, students work together specifically in four-member teams to master material initially presented by the teacher via class instruction. Slavin working alongside Cooper (1999)
proposed cooperative or collaborative learning as involving small teams of students (with no exact number of students for each team) with differing academic achievement levels utilizing a variety of learning styles and activities to ensure each team member reaches full conception of the material being learned. The multiple types of cooperative or collaborative learning methods have specific titles, such as Student Team Learning, Group Investigation, Learning Together, Complex Instruction, Structured Dyadic Methods, among others.

Features of Cooperative or Collaborative Learning

Slavin (1995) believes that students natural behavior towards learning is to encourage one another, reinforce one another’s efforts, and celebrate each other’s academic achievements. All cooperative or collaborative learning methods have the same general basis and idea in creating a community of learners. The heart of each method is for the students to work together, support each other, learn the concept being introduced and take responsibility for the learning of their teammates along with their own. When working collaboratively with each other, students should be rooting for the learning and success of everyone. Through this supportive model, the learning that occurs with each member of the group should be more profound than had any of the group members learned a concept on his or her own.

Beyond their similarities, each type of cooperative or collaborative learning method also differs from one another. They each can be categorized according to each method’s individual principal characteristic. Slavin (1995) lists these six distinct characteristics as (a) Group Goals; (b) Individual Accountability; (c) Equal Opportunities for Success; (d) Team Competition; (e) Task Specialization; (f) Adaptation to Individual Needs.

Most forms of cooperative or collaborative learning methods use group goals (Slavin 1995). Group goals focus on the efforts of the whole group and the final outcome based on
the work of the group. In this characteristic, individual group members are not recognized for their independent efforts or input. Rather, the group as a whole is rewarded when the group’s goal is met. This can be in the form of a group certificate or group grade.

Individual accountability allows for rewards to be given in one of two ways. Each individual member can be recognized for his or her specific duties and contributions provided to the group. In this instance, each member’s responsibilities are unique and necessary for the group to reach the group goal. No two members of the team perform the same or similar tasks; therefore, each member’s actions are necessary additions for the group to meet the goal. Each member is then individually rewarded for working collaboratively in order for their group to produce the required outcome. The second form of reward can be given to the group by taking one additional step after making the calculation of each individual member’s rewards. Instead of finalizing rewards on an individual basis, the scores of each member can be put together to find the average of all the scores. The average score is then the score rewarded to the group as a whole.

Equal opportunities for success pertain to the provision of equal opportunities for each group member’s participation in the group. Each member is given an open chance to contribute to the work process which would result in the completion of the group’s goal. This characteristic is specific to the Student Team Learning method, which consists of points gained for improvement, competition among equals, or adaptation of tasks based on individual learning styles or academic performance abilities (Slavin, 1995).

Team competition refers directly to its title in that it uses friendly competition among the teams to motivate the students within each team to cooperate with each other to obtain the desired goal (Slavin 1995). The idea behind the use of competition is to hopefully motivate
each team member to participate in the completion of the group’s goal. With a competitive spirit, as one member or group begins to make progress, the momentum of the other members’ or groups’ learning should then increase, which would then result in the increase of the rate of progress for the entire group or class.

Task specialization within collaborative learning models creates an environment set up with a multitude of unique tasks (Slavin 1995). Each member has the opportunity to choose the task they would like to perform, which could closely relate to that member’s strengths and/or talents. Providing task specializations could also raise an individual student’s level of self-esteem as they each see themselves as providing the outcome for an integral piece to the whole group’s goal.

Lastly, adaptation to individual needs incorporates individualistic instruction. The teacher would focus on instructing each individual group member and ensuring each member understands the focus and goal of the group. The instruction would then be designed to adapt to the individual needs of the students versus providing group instruction and allowing time for the group to then further explain the instruction to each other if it is needed.

Elaboration Theories of Cooperative or Collaborative Learning

There are multiple theories that promote the use of collaborative learning, all of which state collaborative learning provides for a greater learning experience than those learning experiences obtained in a traditional classroom setting. In a study by Saville, Zinn, & Elliott (2009), findings showed interteaching, a form of instruction which includes elements of personalized system of instruction, reciprocal peer tutoring, and cooperative or collaborative learning, helped participants perform significantly better on a short multiple-choice quiz than participants in other groups which participated in either lecture, reading or
in a controlled setting. Although cooperative or collaborative learning seems to exclude the teacher from the learning process, it does not. If a teacher can identify and respond to students’ needs, students might work together more productively and be more likely to solve the problem correctly (Chiu, 2004, p. 391). The theories supporting cooperative or collaborative learning are separated into two major categories: motivational and cognitive (Slavin, 1995). Motivational theories focus more on the ultimate goal, reward or outcome of a collaborative learning experience. The idea is that if the only way an individual member can reach the expected goal is if that member works collaboratively with other members in a group, then that member would be motivated to not only perform at the member’s maximum ability, but would want the same of the group members. The member would then promote the same idea to the other group members. If the classroom setting was based on a more individualistic idea, then the likelihood of negative social labels being placed on those individuals who succeed in class is greater than it would be in a collaborative setting. A cooperative or collaborative learning set up would allow for the individual student who is able to accomplish the goals of the group as well as assist all of the other group members to accomplish the same goals to be praised by the group instead of being criticized. Clearly, cooperative and collaborative learning goals create an acceptance of pro-academic personas among students, which plays an important role in promotion of performance in students (Slavin, 1995).

Cognitive theories are further broken into two categories: developmental and cognitive elaboration theories. Developmental theories revolve around the idea that children will grasp critical concepts in a more meaningful manner when surrounded by other children of similar age and/or ability who are grasping or attempting to grasp the same concept. The
children are then learning at a faster rate when learning with other children than if they were to learn individually. The same idea is extended to children who are learning a concept from a more capable child. This type of interaction between the two children will increase the likelihood that the learning child will grasp the new concept in a more meaningful way.

Cognitive elaboration theories are similar to developmental theories in that they involve the concept of more meaningful learning when students are participating in a group of children of similar age and/or ability. The main differences between the two theories is that cognitive elaboration revolves around the idea that children learn best when they assist in the learning of another child.

The ability of one student to explain the material to another student is one of the most effective means of elaboration (Slavin, 1995). Research has shown that the learning benefits received by a peer tutor are just as great as the learning benefits being received by the tutee (Roscoe & Chi, 2007). The review by Roscoe et al. critically examined research on the actual tutoring process to better understand how tutor learning occurs. Included in their review were situations comparing individual studies between students who learned by tutoring versus studying a text, and by participating in regular classroom activities. When students were placed in a cooperative or collaborative model and asked to perform tutoring duties, whether it be presented by an instructor or found in class material, both the tutor and the tutee learned more or were better able to retain the recalled information than if they had been placed in a more individualistic learning model. Additionally, a study by Dodge & Kendall (2004) resulted in student self reports where they expressed their surprise with the extent to which they learned. They had expected to learn, but not to learn as much as they had. Additionally, in this recall/listen model with the tutoring set up, not only do both the
tutor (or recaller) and the tutee (or listener) learn more working together and elaborating to each other than had they worked alone, but the tutor’s learning becomes more concrete as the tutor provides elaborations. In this case, the evidence supports the idea that working collaboratively in a group, even if one member may take a leadership role or a position somewhat like that of an instructor, that member will not lose out on the learning experience or receive lesser opportunities to learn. Rather, because that member is being given the opportunity to recall or teach the other members, he/she may be benefitting more from collaborative learning than the other listening or receiving members.

**Social Implications of Cooperative or Collaborative Learning**

Beyond academics, cooperative and collaborative learning takes on a more multi-leveled shape. Cooperative and collaborative learning incorporates team work, social interaction and the utilization of each individual’s interpersonal skills. There are many schools of thought surrounding cooperative and collaborative learning, and how it can be seen as an experience where knowledge arises from the environment of collaboration, that it is a cooperative social construct for learning (Mueller et al., 2001). Research on cooperative and collaborative learning methods in secondary schools supports the usefulness of those methods for not only improving academic achievement for students in differing grade levels, differing learning styles or different subjects, but also for improving student relations within their groups and inadvertently increasing their self-esteem (Slavin, 1996). Each idea incorporates the increase or creation of ideas and knowledge through the social construct of collaboration. According to Slavin (1983), when students find moments of cooperation between each other, as each student plays an equal role within the group, it results in a positive relationship among the students. Learning appropriate social skills provides for the
use of those skills, which can then promote more situations for learning academics, and vice versa. Therefore, as students learn and practice more effective social skills for working collaboratively with their classmates, they subsequently increase the opportunities for academic improvement. A study by Mueller et al. (2001), which consisted of observations of 29 elementary students working collaboratively on a science assignment, found even with some problems or difficulties the students came across while working together, they were all able to cooperate with each other to the point of completing their task goal. The students noted that regardless of whether they enjoyed working in groups or not, they found the experience rewarding and effective in enhancing their academic experiences. They more specifically noted their appreciation of learning via trial and error rather than with just their text books and basic classroom experiments. They felt working with each other and using their own analytical skills enhanced the learning process as they discussed their individual ideas with each other.

Other studies which included the observation of secondary students participating in cooperative or collaborative learning models resulted in students responding to the model. These learning models seek to create meaningful in-school experiences by providing opportunities for students to collaborate with each other (Vermette & Foote, 2001). In situations like these, students often noted that they found their collaboration experiences more meaningful than had they been placed in a more traditional learning setting. The students felt more personally connected to the process of openly discussing their academic problems. Summers et al. (2005) had findings in their study which confirmed positive outcomes with the use of cooperative or collaborative learning models in higher education, namely in the academic classrooms. The use of cooperative or collaborative learning in these
classrooms provided more opportunities for students to build relationships and feel connected.

Students who construct explanations that clarify processes and help classmates arrive at their own solutions have been found to learn more than students who simply tell classmates the solution (Veenman, Denessen, van den Akker, & van der Rijt, 2005). They also were more appreciative of the discussion process in which they shared ideas of how the problems were solved rather than just sharing the solution(s) to the problems. Students can then see themselves in a more independent light and as a person of authority within their groups – this then creates a situation similar to sports in which the progress of each group member contributes to the success of the entire group (Slavin, 1996).

Slavin (1996) believed that when cooperative or collaborative learning resulted in individual rewards for individual learning it was meeting the developmental needs of adolescents (Slavin, 1996). Although the main perception of schooling is to increase academic performance, providing collaborative learning experiences during the developmental process should produce an increase in interest and learning. Although most researchers tend to focus on providing the appropriate environment conducive to learning, there stands the argument that more focus should be placed on social adjustment (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008). The potential increase in interest should then promote an increase in social interactions, which directly relates to the telling and sharing of this new material of interest to individual peers. Because cooperative or collaborative learning groups generally encourage positive social environments and promote interactions amongst students of diverse backgrounds, they have a great amount of potential to facilitate the building of cross-
ethnic friendships, which may reduce racial stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice, and create a cultural norm which promotes cultural acceptance (Slavin & Cooper, 1999).

Schools at large also play a major role in the socialization of students and creation of social norms (Slavin, 1983). School personnel should then allow all students to comfortably interact with each other, hence, pull from each others’ strengths and find accommodations for each others’ weaker areas. Obtaining a group of diverse learners and instructors in terms of knowledge and experience contributes positively to the learning process (Gokhale, 1995). This type of environment could create a balance among the students that would result in fewer behavioral concerns in the classroom and more opportunities for positive social interactions.

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC CLASSROOM**

Behavioral concerns exist in all classrooms, including inclusive classrooms. Although a socially successful set up could lead to more academic progress, academic progress does not naturally lead to social success. Instead, it is enhanced in the thoughtfully planned environments in which general and special education teachers instruct and concurrently practice classroom management techniques which may prevent behavior problems and promote positive social interactions (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008). Providing learning experiences which are consistent with the principles of cooperative or collaborative learning will produce an increase in work production and effective learning. These moments with the addition of collaboration could also promote situations and opportunities for social competence for students with disabilities. Such motivational situations could then assist students in learning better coping skills to accommodate their individual disabilities and to learn to participate in the general community.
Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

A disability which may impede social coping skills in students is emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD). “Although E/BD is a single federal category of education disability, students with E/BD may show various problems, primarily related to social, personal, and educational issues” (Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004, p. 157). Social alienation for students is an important factor when identifying causes for anxiety, depression, and conduct problems in students. On the same note, students who are at risk for E/BD may be seen as lonely or unlikable, possibly self isolating, or as provocative, and lacking in social competency (Davis, Young, Hardman, & Winters, 2011). Students with E/BD are often recognized for their challenging behaviors that appear to be demanding, unpredictable, and difficult to manage (Simpson, Peterson, & Smith, 2011). In an attempt to manage the behavior or prevent increase in inappropriate behaviors, a student with E/BD who is acting out or presenting disruptive behavior may be asked to take a time-out or other form of isolation, or to move their desk to multiple different locations (Osher, Morrison, & Bailey, 2003), which sometimes feeds the behavior the teacher is trying to prevent from being displayed. When teachers are reactive to disruptive behaviors in this manner, instruction stops and the student is highlighted for the negative behavior. This type of situation could potentially create an adverse effect towards school, and the student could then choose to not respond to the teacher, not learn the concept being taught, or participate in the learning process of the class. Because of this, students with E/BD may not have a desire to learn, and/or find the process of learning as cumbersome (Brunvand & Byrd, 2011).

Students with E/BD tend to be seen as having poor social skills or interpersonal relationship skills. According to Cullinan and Sabornie (2004), these students also seem more
likely to be rejected by their peers. Their defiant, aggressive and/or inappropriate behaviors may prevent other students, regardless of whether the other students have a disability or not, from wanting to be associated with them. Their often depressive mood could potentially also prevent other students from wanting to converse with them. This may play an integral part in why the most common behavior pattern of children with E/BD consists of antisocial behaviors (Heward, 2006). Other characteristics of E/BD include “inability to learn, relationship problems, inappropriate behavior, unhappiness or depression, and physical symptoms or fears” (Cullinan et al., p. 157). Certain forms of intervention, such as the introduction of specific and explicit social skills provide students the strategies for positive conflict resolution and positive problem-solving (Armstrong, 2011).

When the academic success levels of students with E/BD is compared to those with other learning or educational disabilities, students with E/BD tend to experience the lowest levels (Davis et al., 2011). Furthermore, the complications and struggles of students with E/BD with obtaining healthy interpersonal relationships extend beyond the classrooms (Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004), simply because the types of socially awkward feelings these students have may present themselves in other environments.

Students with E/BD are those who are most likely to drop out or leave secondary school before graduating (Osher et al., 2003). This statistic also includes students with other forms of disabilities. After high school, students with E/BD tend to jump from job to job, have unstable employment, and possibly struggle with additional challenges, including difficulties with their mental health (Davis et al., 2011). When looking at students with E/BD who do graduate, they have a lower rate of participation in post-secondary education than any other classification of students. These post-school outcomes can serve as
clear indicators that students with E/BD may have general skill deficits, including deficits in their academic skills, social skills, and behavior management skills. These deficits and drawbacks could result in a poor or challenging transition from school to adult life (Lane, Carter, Pierson & Glaeser, 2006). “Although a clear solution to this multifaceted dilemma has yet to be identified, the academic setting (public, private, therapeutic, and residential) plays a role in fostering the emotional development adjustment of youngsters identified with or at risk for developing E/BD” (Armstrong, 2011, p. 33).

Academic achievement in the secondary level can play a large role in providing a positive transitional experience into postsecondary schooling or postsecondary living for students with E/BD (Lane et al., 2006), especially since most employment opportunities tend to be more easily obtainable with academic success. There is widespread recognition and a clear agenda for the highlighting of effective strategy use to be placed as a central component of educational reform (Simpson et al., 2011).

Cooperative and collaborative learning experiences may not automatically lead to productive interactions among students. For students with disabilities, if collaborative experiences involving peer modeling is not positive and the student is unable to cooperate with the peers in the group in order to extract the right lessons from their observations, those experiences may be less effective than anticipated. These experiences, however, could also lead to the open awareness of the needs of specific group members. The result would be the awareness to provide assistance and elaborated explanations to their peers (Veenman et al., 2005). The idea behind this form of collaborative learning is that if students want to succeed as a team, they will encourage their teammates to excel and will help them to do so. Students can often provide an extensive amount of clarity to complex concepts by explaining difficult
ideas to one another by translating the teacher’s language into kid language; and, therefore, participating in positive social interactions.

What little we understand about child development supports the idea that children who exhibit consistent and stable maladaptive behaviors will most likely continue to consistently display those types of behaviors through adolescents and possibly into adulthood. In adolescence, the maladaptive behaviors could very well result in failures in education and academics, as well as failures in social relationships. Based on what is already know about effectively promoting behavior changes, there must be extra effort placed into the process of finding more effective, and possibly efficient ways, to address problem behaviors so that there is the greater chance that students will not form and follow predictable trajectories for academic and social failures (Nahgahgwon, Umbreit, Liaupsin&Turton, 2010).

**Academic and Social Outcomes of Students with E/BD**

The positive academic and social outcomes that are already associated with environments set up for peer support and cooperative or collaborative learning models leads to the notion that it would be advantageous to provide students access to these types of settings in the general education or inclusive classroom (Copelan&Cosbey, 2008). Providing more opportunities for collaborative learning now could better prepare students for their futures in the work force. Some believe many of today’s school systems continue to use antiquated instruction techniques which date back to the days when students were preparing for work on assembly lines, and calendars were directly related to harvest seasons. If students are truly to be prepared for all possibilities of job duties, then the schools should provide access to all forms of working relationships. Incorporating collaborative learning
into classroom with students with disabilities, including those with E/BD may yield positive outcomes.

This project will introduce multiple collaborative learning structures incorporating full class instruction, along with peer instruction and group work. The majority of the structures will involve working with at least one other individual in the classroom. This project will also provide ideas for accommodations and/or modifications to the structures so as to cater to the NPS classroom.
Chapter 3: Project

Collaborative Learning Structures and Accommodations for the Non-Public School Setting

In a Non-Public School (NPS), classroom sizes are often smaller than public school classrooms. Usually, there is a maximum capacity of 12 students for every pairing of a credentialed special education teacher and a teaching assistant (TA). In the case a credentialed special education teacher does not have a teaching assistant present, then the maximum number of students allowed in the class is also 12. In these circumstances, it is often difficult to incorporate collaborative learning. However, it is not impossible. Ideas for collaborative activities are already readily available in book format, in magazines, online, etc. They tend to incorporate activities which call for students to be divided into groups of four to six. In an NPS, that can easily mean one group already takes up the entire classroom. In these instances, the collaborative activity can be altered to accommodate the small class size. In this workbook, you will find how to edit, alter and simply shift around the already designed cooperative learning structures already offered to the open public.

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<td>Jigsaw</td>
<td>There is a grouping of five students. In a traditional class size of 20 to 30 students, there would be 4 to 6 groups. Each member is assigned a section of the lesson. The members across groups who are assigned the same section are given time to work on that section, decide what is most important within that section, and then return to their original groups to share what they learned about their sections.</td>
<td>This type of set up is still possible with a class of 10 to 12 students. There would then be two groups of five or six students. Each student would still be given a specific section, and the students with similar sections would then pair up to discuss what about their section they will teach to their original groups. In the case of a classroom with a student who has an emotional or behavioral disorder (E/BD), small alterations can be made to accommodate the</td>
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student's specific learning style. If, for instance, the student with E/BD has an aversion to working one-on-one with another student, but seems to perform well in a larger group, then fewer sections could be chosen for review so that the group sizes can be smaller, which will allow for more groups, and more students to review the individual sections they are assigned. If the student with E/BD finds it challenging to work in any size group, keeping the original set up for Jigsaw and ensuring the review and teaching periods are guided by the teacher will allow both the teacher and TA opportunities to steer students into the right direction when needed, to cue for learning moments if the students are stuck, and to deter problem behaviors. Providing the opportunities for one-on-one review with one peer, and group instruction with four peers will give the student with EBD moments to practice appropriate social interactions in two different settings. Allowing for both scenarios in one class period will also ensure the students are not stuck in one setting or the other for too long of a period of time. Once the student with EBD begins to find comfort in these two situations, those types of collaborative learning structures can be individualized and given longer periods of time to be implemented in the class.

| Think-Pair-Share | There are three steps dictated by the title. The first step is *Think*. During this step, the students are asked to think silently on their own about a... | In a smaller NPS classroom, Think-Pair-Share is still a very doable collaborative learning structure. Even with as few as four students, a teacher can split the... |

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question or concept introduced by the teacher. The second step, *Pair*, involves the students pairing up to share their thoughts with one other student. The third step, *Share*, allows the pairs to share their thoughts with other pairs, groups or the entire class. 

| Three-Step Interview | This entails partnering. After the teacher has introduced a question or concept, the students are divided into four pairs and then allowed to share their thoughts with another pair. | To provide more structure, it is a good idea for the teacher to assign a partner to each student to encourage sharing. |
new concept, the teacher then asks the pairs to ask each other clarifying questions. One student asks the other student a question; then the other student answers. Afterwards, the student who first asked a question is then asked the same question from their pair, and answers the question how they see fit. The third-step has the pairs sharing their answers with other pairs or the rest of the class.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Round Robin Brainstorming</strong></th>
<th>The class is divided into small groups of four to six students per group. Each group would then choose a recorder. The recorder would be responsible for writing down what the rest of the group would give in response to the assignment questions.</th>
<th>Because an NPS class could have only four to six students, in this situation, the teacher could tell the class they are going to have a group discussion among themselves without the teacher's involvement. The teacher would only supply the students questions they need to answer, and closely monitor the progress they participate in the brainstorming.</th>
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<td><strong>Three Minute Review</strong></td>
<td>Teachers stop the lesson at anytime to allow groups three minutes to review what has been covered or ask clarifying questions from each other.</td>
<td>For the smaller class, this could be done in pairs. If the students do not have clarifying questions, then the teacher should make it clear that the Three Minute Review time should be spent recalling the material that was just covered.</td>
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<td><strong>Number Heads</strong></td>
<td>The class is separated into groups of four. Each member</td>
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Number Heads

In an NPS, the teacher could alter this structure by allowing the
is given a number: one, two, three or four. The class is given questions to answer as a group. When the groups are done answering all of the questions, the teacher calls out one, two, three or four, and allows the students assigned the called number to answer the question. For example, if the teacher called out number two, then all of the students assigned the number two would answer.

### Team Pair Solo

**Team Pair Solo** is designed to run in the opposite order of Think-Pair-Share. Students are first asked to solve a problem in a group. They are then asked to solve the same type of problem in pairs, and lastly on their own.

This type of grouping and pairing can work in an NPS classroom without any or much modification. The teacher can allow the entire class to be a group, or for the students to choose to work with whomever and however many students they would like. If the class contains a student who is often isolative or has difficulty socializing, then the teacher can choose to skip the Team or group aspect of the structure, and simply move the class to work first with the teacher as the teacher instructs, then with a pair, and lastly solo.

### Circle the Sage

The class is separated into groups. The group size will be based on the number of points the teacher would like to discuss. The teacher then polls the class to see if any students have background knowledge that relates to the lesson the teacher will be introducing. When the teacher has found a volunteer in each group who has enough background knowledge to teach one of the points of the lesson, the teacher then places those point persons around the room. Each entire class to work as a group. Depending on the number of students, the teacher would then assign each student a number. If the class has six or less students, then each student would be assigned an individual number from one to six. If the class has more than six students, then the class could be divided into two groups. The students in each group would then be assigned numbers based on each groups' size.

In an NPS, this structure could still be performed. However, because an NPS classroom has fewer students, the size of the circle may be smaller. For example, if the NPS classroom has only six students, then the circle could be made up of only two students. The other four students would be paired so that each member can learn from the two point persons, and then share their knowledge with their pair partner.
member of each team is then asked to go to a different point person who is not on their team, and who will share their background knowledge. When they are done, the team members return to their individual teams and teach the team what they just learned from their point person. The end result is that each member of the group learns a new concept from a point person, and then teaches that new concept to the rest of the team. If there are four members per team, then one of the members is a point person, and the other three learn new concepts from the other point persons. Each team then learns four new concepts from each other.

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<th>Partners</th>
<th>The class is divided into groups of four. Each group of four is then split into a two sets of partners. The partners are each moved to two separate sides of the room. Each set of partners is given an assignment to master. The partners are able to consult with other partners until they have mastered the assignment and are able to teach the assignment to their peers. The groups are then brought back together so that each set of partners can teach the other set of partners the concept they have mastered. The end result is two students in the group of four learning a new concept together, and working together to teach the other two students in their group of four the new concept, and vice versa.</th>
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<td>In an NPS classroom, there may not be enough students to divide the entire class into groups of four. If there are twelve students (which is the highest number of students an NPS classroom can contain), then the teacher could divide the class into three groups of four. In this instance, the Partners structure would work. If the class is small, possibly with only eight students, the teacher could still separate the class into two groups of four and continue with the Partners structure. However, if the class is even smaller, possibly with only six or four students, the teacher could divide the class in half, have each half master an assignment, and then have each half teach the other half the new concept in a presentation like setting.</td>
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<td>Three-Stay One-Stray</td>
<td>After dividing up the class into groups of four, each group has to decide on a group spokesperson. The whole class is then directed to solve a problem. Once the groups have solved the problem and are confident in being able to share their solution, the groups then have their spokesperson &quot;stray&quot; from the group to another group to share the solution. This structure should not require more than one rotation of spokespeople. However, if there is any differing solutions or divergent thinking, the teacher may ask for an additional rotation to allow students to further discuss their solutions.</td>
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<td>Gallery Walk</td>
<td>Gallery Walk requires a visual. The visual should be large enough to present to a small group, and can be in the form of a drawing, diagram, graphic organizer or mind map. This visual is to be created by each class group to depict the new concept they have learned and will be sharing with the class. The teacher is to provide a specific amount of time for the groups to learn the concept, decipher which facts are most important to mention, and then place those facts into a visual display (preferably on butcher paper). When this is done, the group chooses one person to be the docent and stay with the visual. The docent will then explain the visual and how it relates to the concept they were assigned and are now teaching.</td>
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<td><strong>Value Line</strong></td>
<td>Students are placed on a pretend line based on their self report of how much they understand a given concept. The values on the line in which they are placed go from 1 to 10, with the &quot;1&quot; represents the idea that a student agrees strongly with a statement or has full understanding of a concept, and the &quot;10&quot; represents the idea that a student strongly disagrees with a statement or has no understanding of a concept. After the students decide which value best matches their self report, the line is then folded onto itself so that &quot;1&quot; is matched up with &quot;10,&quot; &quot;2&quot; is matched up with &quot;9,&quot; and so on. This matching is done so that the students can discuss and compare their levels of understanding, to peer teach, and for clarification.</td>
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<td><strong>Find the Fib</strong></td>
<td>Students are asked to write down three points, two of which are facts and one of which is a fib. The class is divided into teams. The teams are then responsible for finding each student's fib.</td>
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then create a fib which they must ensure is not a fact. So, in a sense, students will have to go through a double review of the subject, instead of just reviewing the facts. Students can be paired, or the entire class, being smaller in size, can utilize this structure without using up too much class time reviewing each student's facts and fibs.

<p>| <strong>ThinkPad Brainstorming</strong> | <strong>ThinkPad Brainstorming</strong> is virtually just basic brainstorming. Students are asked to brainstorm about a topic on paper and then are asked to share their ideas with their teams. | There is not much altering for this structure to be used in an NPS classroom. The most difficulty an NPS teacher may have is simply motivating the students to practice brainstorming. In this case, the teacher may want to brainstorm as a class, given that the class size is less than 12 students. The teacher could also divide the class into two (possibly two groups of six) and have the groups brainstorm together with one recorder. After a given amount of time, the teacher could then call the classes attention to the board, and have the teams' designated presenters to present the team's brainstorming ideas to the class, or have each team member, alternating between teams, state one idea as the teacher writes them on the board. The teacher could also have the team members come up to the board to write their ideas themselves; however, students in an NPS classroom may be more resistant to standing in front of the class alone, even if it is to share a team idea, not their own, about the subject being covered. The teacher could also do a quick &quot;whip&quot; around the room and have each student state the most important idea in their opinion, even if it is a |</p>
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<th><strong>Inside/Outside Circle</strong></th>
<th>This involves the whole class sharing information with everyone else in the class. The inside/outside concept is that the students will be moving around the classroom and sharing with everyone in the class. That means each person is working individually with their original ideas, but then are working with every person in the class while sharing those ideas.</th>
<th>Because behavior issues and distractibility can be an issue in an NPS classroom, a teacher in this position may not want the students to freely move about the class. Instead, the teacher may want to physically create an inside and outside circle, and have the students face each other (the outside circle would face in towards the center of classroom while the inside circle faces out towards the walls of the classroom). The students could then have one piece of information, whatever they believe is the most important about the concept being covered, and then have them recite that same piece of information to each student they face as the inner circle remains still and the outer circle rotates in either direction.</th>
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<td><strong>Talking Chips</strong></td>
<td><em>Talking Chips</em> provides two forms of classroom management. Students are given a certain number of chips - each with the same exact amount - and are to give up a chip each time they make a comment. They are also required to use up all their chips. In this structure, the amount of students' comments is limited; however, they are also somewhat forced into participating. This helps the teacher manage the comments of an overzealous student, and encourages the quieter students to speak up.</td>
<td>In an NPS classroom, there would be no need to alter this structure. If anything, an NPS teacher could incorporate not only participating grades, but behavioral points that are earned based on how much a student participates.</td>
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<td><strong>Mix-Pair-Freeze</strong></td>
<td>Each student is given a piece of the whole concept that is about to be introduced. This could be a question, a</td>
<td>For an NPS classroom, teachers should provide as much structure as possible to the <em>Mix</em> portion of <em>Mix-Pair-Freeze</em>. Instead of giving</td>
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vocabulary word, a statement, a date, main point, title, important person, etc. The students are then asked to walk around the room until they are signaled to stop (the signal could be the stopping of music, flashing of the classroom light, or an auditory signal like a click or alarm, etc.). Once they are given the signal the stop, the students must then pair up with a partner and share their piece of the concept they were given. Students can switch up their questions or change their points when the process is repeated.

each student a piece of the concept with variations in how the piece is presented, the teacher should stick to one form. For example, all of the students should be given a vocabulary word along with why it is important to the concept being introduced. Also, the teacher should pair up the students in a more controlled way than by asking the students to walk around and then stop when signaled. The teacher could assign the students numbers and then have certain numbers paired or groups (1s with 2s, 3s with 4s, or all even numbers together and all odd numbers together). The students could also be asked to simply turn to their desk partners via rows or columns, side-by-side neighbors, corners, or however the teacher can best pair students based on the desk arrangement.

The collaborative learning structures and their original explanations were retrieved from a website created by Kristy Cofer, a reading teacher at Oakwood Manor Elementary in Gladstone, Missouri (http://w4.nkcsd.k12.mo.us/~kcofer/social_cooperative_structures.htm). They are some of the most commonly used structures in elementary and secondary schools. These structures have also been used in higher education. All of the structures have areas that can be easily altered to accommodate the special needs or designs of certain classrooms, just like those of an NPS classroom. Ideally, the structures and suggestions provided above could work for inclusive, private school, or special day classrooms, although the original structures were meant for use in a general education classroom. The structures are incredibly flexible, and provide no limits to how they can be used.
Chapter 4: Evaluation

During the age of adolescence, most can agree that adults are often the least trusted individuals. Teenagers are less likely to go to adults and more likely to go to their peers for help and support, for fun and excitement, or for advice and consolation. With this idea in mind, it would seem more probable than not that teenagers would also benefit from their peer relationships while participating in the academic setting. This is where the ideas and practices of cooperative or collaborative learning structures could be logically introduced. Cooperative or collaborative learning models seem well-suited to the learning needs of adolescent students because it provides the students opportunities for observational learning, for peers to support each other in gaining new academic and social skills, and for enhancing students’ motivation to engage in the academic tasks presented by the teacher (Copeland & Cosbey, 2008). It is also not a form of instruction isolated to students in secondary education. Cooperative and collaborative learning structures have been regularly used in general education classrooms (as well as other types of classrooms) across all grade and academic levels (Copeland et al.). These general education, or inclusive, classrooms have been known to contain students with disabilities, including E/BD.

Ideally, as this paper suggests, cooperative or collaborative learning would be an obvious instruction model for teachers to use regardless of whether they are in a general education classroom, an inclusive classroom, or an NPS classroom. It would seem that students with or without disabilities would be provided more opportunities to learn in a more effective manner with the use of cooperative or collaborative learning structures than in a traditional classroom lecture model. More so, the use of cooperative or collaborative learning structures could promote the practice of positive social interactions for students who
have difficulty with such interactions – such as students with E/BD. However, research
providing evidence of academic or social benefits is limited. The lack of studies comparing
the types of learning processes for all students that occur during cooperative or
collaborative learning structures versus large-group lecture type instruction has resulted in
unverified claims for the academic and/or social benefits of cooperative or collaborative
learning (Peterson & Miller, 2004).

Additionally, there have been findings of pitfalls and potential negative consequences
with the use of cooperative or collaborative learning. The study by Veenman et al (2005), as
stated earlier in this project, concluded that cooperation does not automatically lead to
productive and effective interactions among students. It may, in actuality, make students
more aware of the needs of others in the group. This awareness would then result in time
concentrated on the need to help instead of the need to learn. This argument could turn
towards the benefits of recalling information, even if it is to help those in the group who are
having a harder time grasping the concepts. However, Slavin (1995) found that if not
properly constructed, cooperative and collaborative learning methods can allow for the “free
rider” effect, which is the result of some group members doing all or most of the work
necessary to meet the task goal, and most likely the majority of the learning, while the other
group members go along for the ride. The odds of the free rider effect occurring is during
those situations when the group is given only one task to complete, such as completing a
single worksheet, report, or project (Slavin, 1995). This is then counterintuitive of the
collaborative learning model. Instead of peers sharing ideas and enabling each other to learn,
the more active students are allowing the less active students get by with doing the least
amount of work possible while sharing in the same grade. Findings from the study by Baer
(2003) support this idea in that, with the use of cooperative or collaborative learning models, homogenous groups often outperformed heterogeneous groups. Higher achieving students were noted to also prefer homogeneous groups, whereas lower achieving students had no preference.

With the students’ best interests in mind, teachers must base their instruction and classroom practices on effective teaching methods and instructional strategies (Simpson et al., 2010). Therefore, if teachers are well aware of the free rider effect, then they may be able to provide enough guidance during the practice of a cooperative or collaborative learning structure so as to prevent the free rider effect from happening and to ensure all students are engaged in the learning process. Teachers must also use adequate assessments of their students to ensure learning is occurring. However, using cooperative or collaborative learning structures permits the teacher more opportunities for observation and assessment, thereby concurrently evaluating learning while providing learnable moments.

The true test for success of students, with or without disabilities, will be heavily dependent upon the skills gained and academic successes that are obtained and facilitated in the classrooms, (Alter, Hirn, & Scott, 2011). Educational professions should continue to explore the academic and social outcomes of all learning models before their benefits can be fully understood (Vermette et al., 2001), at which point, educators can better analyze the benefits of these differing teaching models and learning structures, and their effects on learning and the promotion of positive social interactions for students with E/BD and other disabilities.
References


Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act Amendments of 2004 [IDEA], 42 U.S.C. SS 1400-1487.


