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Preferred mode:	Paper Session
Title of presentation:	Effects of Using Social Stories to Improve Social Behavior in a Middle School Student with Asperger's Syndrome
First index term:	8.8.2 personality/behavior disorders
Second index term:	8.10.2 individual
Division to submit:	16 - School
Other division appropriate for submission:	15 - Educational
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	<p>Abstract</p> <p>Few experimental studies have addressed the use of Social Stories as an effective instructional strategy for middle school students with Asperger's Syndrome (AS). The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the use of Social Story on increasing appropriate social behavior with peers and decreasing inappropriate social behavior during lunchtime on a 13-year-old boy with AS, who exhibited inappropriate social interactions. The study utilized an ABAB single-subject experimental design with reading a social story immediately prior to lunchtime as an intervention stage. It is expected that there is an increase in appropriate social behavior and a decrease in inappropriate social behavior with peers at lunchtime after the intervention phases.</p> <p>Statement of the Problem</p> <p>Students with Asperger's Syndrome (AS) are most often included in the regular education settings, however educators need effective instructional strategies to improve social skills for those students. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of social stories as an instructional strategy on improving social skills for a middle school student with AS. The significance of this study is the addition and expansion of the existing body of research available regarding the use of social stories with middle school students with AS. A social story was designed by Carol Gray and describes a situation in terms of social cues and appropriate responses (Swaggart, Gagnon, Bock, Earles, Quinn, Myles, & Simpson, 1995). It is written in first person and aims to show a student how to appropriately behave under a given situation by breaking down the situation into who, what, where, and why (Scattone, Wilczynski, Edwards & Rabian, 2002; Gray & Garand, 1993).</p> <p>Existing research supports positive behavioral changes in targeted elementary age students with autism in reducing noncompliant and disruptive behaviors such as screaming and temper tantrums (Adams, Gouvousis, VanLue, & Waldron, 2004; Agosta, Graetz, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2004; Kuttler, Myles & Carlson, 1998; Lorimer, Simpson, Myles, & Ganz, 2002; Ozdemir, 2008; Scattone, Wilczynski, Edwards & Rabian, 2002; Swaggart et. al., 1995), talking out inappropriately (Crozier & Tincani, 2005; Dodd, Hupp, Jewell, & Krohn,</p>

2008; Norris & Dattilo, 1999), developing appropriate free-play behavior (Barry & Burlew, 2004), as well as playing with peers (Crozier & Tincani, 2006; Swaggart et. al., 1995), increasing communication (Crozier & Tincani, 2006), and preparing students for novel events (Ivey, Heflin, & Alberto, 2004). Some studies, supporting positive effects of social stories interventions, combine the use of verbal prompting in addition to social story format (Crozier & Tincani, 2005) or utilize additional formats such as multimedia and videos (Bernad-Ripoll, 2007; Hagiwara & Myles, 1999; Sansosti & Powell-Smith, 2008; Scattone, 2008). Conflicting research also exists in showing the ineffectiveness of interventions with social stories for students with significant levels of intellectual disability (Reynhout & Carter, 2008). Reynhout and Carter's (2006) meta-analysis results showed highly variable effects of social stories on student behavior. Sansosti, Powell-Smith, and Kincaid (2004) also concluded after their research synthesis that empirical evidence was limited in support of the effectiveness of social stories interventions.

While most research supports positive behavioral changes after exposure to social stories, it also illustrates that students have difficulty generalizing the mastered skills to new environments (Hagiwara & Myles, 1999; Sansosti & Powell-Smith, 2008). Additionally, in comparison to empirical evidence available for students with autism, little research has been conducted specifically for students with AS and socially appropriate interaction with peers in middle school or high school. Sansosti and Powell-Smith (2006) produced mixed results of improving social behavior of students with Asperger's through social stories intervention.

Research questions are: Does using a social stories intervention for a middle school student with AS lead to decrease in socially inappropriate behaviors (inappropriate talking, inappropriate physical contact with peers) and/or increase in socially appropriate behavior (appropriate dialogue with peers, appropriate physical contact)?

Method

Participant

Summary: The participant, E, attended 7th grade in a public middle school. He attended a regular education classroom for the school day, with the exception of 50 minutes period, when he attended a communication disorder classroom. E was selected after direct observation and interaction with the researcher, in consultation with the special education teacher, school psychologist, and an instructional specialist, who believed that he would benefit from a social story intervention. E had a current diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome (confirmed by his pediatrician in accordance with DSM-IV criteria), displayed cognitive functioning level in the average range, possessed the ability to communicate orally with others, and demonstrated reading skills necessary to read a social story. E was a 13 years 3 months old Caucasian male. Various assessments demonstrated that E had average level intelligence. The Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales™ (RIAS™; Reynolds & Kamphaus) revealed that E scored in the 45th percentile on the verbal section and 81st percentile on the nonverbal section, providing him with the 63rd percentile composite score. Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2) was completed. E's teacher, parents, and E completed the rating scales. BASC-2 results concluded that E is at risk for interpersonal relations and self-reliance. E's grades on his report cards were inconsistent ranging from B to F. Over the last year in school, E had been continuously receiving suspension for sexual misconduct, threats against students, use of obscenity, and other disruptive behavior.

Design

An ABAB single-subject design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of social stories on the increase of the appropriate social behavior with peers. The first and third stages were baseline condition when no social story intervention was used. During the second and fourth phases, the intervention stages, the student read the social story one-on-one with the classroom teacher immediately prior to the lunch period.

Procedure

A camera recorded E's behavior at lunch during for a 15 minutes period. The graduate students and E's classroom teacher recorded the occurrence of behavior using a 10-s cued partial interval recording system 5 times per week.

Each phases (baseline and intervention) lasted two weeks (10 school days). Interobserver agreement was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by a total number of agreements and disagreements and multiplied by 100. During the observations, E's behavior was coded as either A for appropriate social interaction (initiating conversation, responding verbally or gesturally to peers), I for inappropriate social interaction (inappropriate verbalization of profanity, raised voice), or - for absence of social interaction (no responses or initiations occurred). The training on observing behavior occurred for the observers until they agreed with the standards at least 80% of the time.

Results

E's performance data will be recorded and plotted on a daily basis. Appropriate, inappropriate, and absence of social interactions are going to be plotted on a single graph. It is expected that this study will find decreases in inappropriate social behavior at lunchtime following the intervention of social stories and an increase in appropriate social behavior towards the peers.

Conclusion

If the expected results from the study are confirmed then the hypothesis of social stories intervention leading to the increase in appropriate behavior will be confirmed. The study will add to the existing body of research and begin to extend the external validity to the middle school students with AS in addition to students with autism. As research confirms the effectiveness of a social story intervention, social stories can become a research-based effective instructional strategy.

Note: References are omitted due to the limitation of the space.

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