Poster: Perspectives of Pre-Service Teachers on Students with Emotional Disabilities

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### Perspectives of Pre-Service Teachers on Students with Emotional Disabilities

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify changes in perceptions of pre-service teachers enrolled in an undergraduate-level behavioral management course by conducting a pre- and post-test survey at the beginning and at the end of the course, with an intervening 18-hour course, embedded practices experience at an alternative school. The pre-service teachers were required to observe an alternative education special education classroom which contains students with emotional disabilities and learn strategies during a 16-week course to help prepare them in the area of behavioral management.

Methodology

Participants (n = 33) were education major students enrolled in an undergraduate-level behavior management course at a private, Christian university. Participants were asked to complete a survey reporting their perceptions about ED students (Table 1, below) before and after an 18-hour embedded course practices observing an alternative school for ED students and 5 weeks of instruction in behavior management. The majority of the Liberty-scale type survey questions were worded such that higher values expressed a higher level of disagreement with negative perceptions and typical misconceptions associated with ED students. In essence, a higher mean score of respondents indicates a better perception of ED students. We hypothesized that the practical experience with ED students in an alternative school setting and the instruction in behavior management strategies would positively affect the participants’ perceptions of ED students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Pre-test mean</th>
<th>Post-test mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Each participant’s 20 survey responses were averaged and a paired t-test was conducted on the data to assess the pre- and post-test scores for each of the 5! participants (see Table 2, below). An analysis of the means of the responses for each individual question was also conducted to determine if there were any outliers.

Implications

An analysis above, this research gives trig to many this the effect of practical field experience in education programs. It would be useful to explore this study with this survey questions and a larger, more diverse sample. It would also be interesting to conduct similar surveys to gauge the effectiveness of field experiences in other settings where such field experiences are not otherwise conducted. While the value of field experiences has been recognized for many years, such studies could benefit from this inquiry.