

Author: Debra L. Byrne

Title: The effects of Participative Goal Setting on Aggression Replacement Training for Middle School Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

Advisor: Gloria Miller, Ph.D.

Degree Date: June 2008

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of adding a participative Goal Setting approach, to an already employed classroom intervention, Aggression Replacement Training (ART). It was hypothesized that by utilizing a targeted intervention such as ART with the added component of participative goal-setting (PGS), students with emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) would evidence more behavioral and academic gains than if ART was utilized alone. Additionally, by adding PGS, student's motivation and commitment to setting personal goals would foster an improved sense of personal control within their school environments resulting in increased responsibility for student actions, both academically and behaviorally.

Thirty-five participants from 4 middle schools in an urban school district were randomly assigned to 4 groups, two groups received ART only and two groups received ART + PGS. Each participant had previously been identified as EBD and was receiving their education in a self-contained classroom setting for more than sixty percent of their day. Students were asked to complete pre-post self-report behavioral questionnaires on their perceptions of their behaviors and feelings of personal control, as well as, a bi-weekly measure on monitoring their skills learned during ART. Teachers were asked to complete pre-post rating scales of their impressions of student behaviors in school and to complete daily Behavioral Point Sheets (BPS) on each student. Students in the PGS

condition wrote one weekly academic goal and one behavioral goal with the support of their teacher.

The findings of this study indicate all groups progressed in their development and performance of ART skills over time however, the ART + PGS group showed enhanced improvements by achieving higher levels of progression over time ( $p > .01$ ). In addition, the students in the ART + PGS group reported feeling more competent in transferring these learned skills to other academic and social settings ( $p > .01$ ). ANCOVA results revealed there was a significant increase in cumulative GPA scores ( $p > .01$ ), as well as a significant decrease in teacher reported conduct problems ( $p > .05$ ), aggression ( $p > .05$ ), and in the overall overt disruptive behaviors ( $p > .05$ ) of each student. Large effect sizes were found ( $\eta^2 = .130$  to  $.475$ ).