Methodology

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The topic I am researching is the effect of the full-inclusion special education delivery model on students with social, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. More specifically, I am researching potential methods for helping this population of students to integrate more successfully into general education.

My methodology consists of the following steps:

1. Review of the Literature

Through my review of the literature on this topic, I learned that one of the most important factors in the successful integration of special education students with social, emotional, and behavioral disabilities is explicit instruction in social skills. I also learned that this is a weakness in many full-inclusion programs because general education teachers feel that they are unqualified to teach those skills in their classrooms. Some articles proposed school-wide policy changes to address this problem, but that is not a practical solution for my situation given that I teach a very small group of these students at a school that is unlikely to support a large school-wide change. Given this situation, I require an intervention for teaching social skills to my students in a separate classroom, then supporting the generalization of those skills to their general education settings. I have been trained in teaching social skills, and have access to a research-based curriculum titled *Skillstreaming* which was provided by my school district, but I have not had success with this program because the students do not find it engaging. Further research led me to an intervention method that utilizes technology to teach social skills, which I predict will be intrinsically motivating. This method involves the same four components used in the *Skillstreaming* curriculum: modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and generalization, but they do these steps with the support of a digital camera and video editing software to create a multi-media presentation for their peers.

1. Draft Intervention Plan

Using the template provided in the article, “Using Technology to Create Motivating Social Skills Lessons,” by Therese M. Cumming, I will apply the *Skill Streaming* material to create a set of 6 weekly lesson plans. I chose six weeks because that is the duration of one grading period and allows for a sufficient amount of time to train the students to use the new materials and adjust to the new routine. Each week will focus on one social skill. I will select six skills that are most relevant to the students’ social and behavioral IEP goals.

1. Consult with Experts

I will meet with Jason McPhail, a supervising behavior specialist, as well as Dr. Schumacher, a veteran school psychologist, to review my lesson plans. Those two experts have extensive experience working with severely emotionally disturbed students in many settings and have already consulted with me on several cases. I will ask them for feedback on my plan, including the following questions:

* + Does this intervention plan seem feasible, especially the timeframe?
  + What would you add, eliminate, or amend and why?
  + Do you think that the video modeling method seems promising?
  + Have you ever implemented a similar strategy in the past, and if so, what were the advantages and disadvantages of it?
  + Do you think I selected the most appropriate set of skills to focus on given the students’ needs as outlined in the IEP?
  + Is the order of the social skills sensible, or should I rearrange the schedule to address prerequisite skills?

Consulting with these two highly experienced professionals will increase the likelihood of designing and executing a successful intervention.

1. Analyze the Data

After meeting with both experts I will analyze their feedback to find commonalities and differing opinions. I will amend my intervention plans to reflect their suggestions. If I do not make a recommended change, I will develop a rationale for rejecting or replacing the suggested alterations to the plan.

1. Rewrite the Intervention Plan

Using the feedback from the experts, I will rewrite the six-week intervention plan to reflect the best pacing and sequence of social skills lesson components, incorporating any additional suggestions for lesson delivery and classroom management.