

EXAMINING TEACHER PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF EMBEDDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS

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Embedded Learning Opportunities (ELOs)

- ELOs are child-focused instructional exchanges consisting of an antecedent, a child behavior and a consequence that are implemented during typical routines and activities (Johnson, Rahn, & Bricker, 2015; Sandall & Schwartz, 2008).
- Early childhood special education (ECSE) teachers may not use ELOs often enough to facilitate skill acquisition (Noh, Allen, & Squires, 2009; Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker, 2001).

Objectives of Study

- Describe ECSE teachers' use of ELOs to address children's IEP goals
- Understand teachers' perceptions of ELOs, barriers to implementation, and supports needed to increase use of ELOs

Design and Method

- Mixed method (descriptive and qualitative)
- Research questions examined: 1) the extent to which teachers use ELOs and in what context they use them, and 2) teachers' perceptions of and experiences using ELOs.
- Participants: Eight ECSE teachers in three school districts
- Procedure: Teachers videotaped themselves teaching during circle, mealtime, and free play routines on 3 days and then participated in a 12-question phone interview.
- Data coding and analysis: Undergraduate students coded sixty-seven 10-min videos for teachers' use of ELOs during 15-s intervals. We analyzed data using descriptive statistics and ANOVA. Interview questions were coded using qualitative methodology.

Results

| Research Question | Results |
|---|--|
| What is the proportion of 15-s intervals within 10-min videos that teachers use ELOs? | On average 9% of 15-s intervals contained ELOs (range across teacher = 0% - 77%) |
| During which activities are teachers most likely to use ELOs? | Adult-directed (circle time) = 3.6% intervals Child-directed (free play) = 12.7% intervals Routine (meals) = 11.2% intervals No significant difference across activities ($p = .116$) |
| To what extent do teachers vary in their use of ELOs? | Mean use of ELOs varied between .03% and 30% of intervals Use varied significantly across teachers ($p = .003$) |

Results Cont'd.

| Research Question | Results |
|--|--|
| Which types of antecedents are teachers using most frequently? | Most frequent (49 - 69% of intervals with ELOs): directives, questions, prompts, verbal models Least frequent (0 - 3% of intervals with ELOs): clues, physical models, information, singing/reading/signing, directs others |
| Which types of IEP goals are teachers most likely to address using ELOs? | Communication goals were addressed most frequently (52.8% of intervals with ELOs) |
| What is the rationale for when and how teachers implement ELOs? | Use ELOs across activity types Identified specific strategies (e.g., in sight out of reach) Functional use of skills noted as rationale |
| What barriers or challenges do teachers perceive in the use of ELOs? | Large class sizes Lack of materials and time Difficulty planning for some skills |
| What supports do teachers need to implement ELOs more frequently? | Smaller class sizes Additional staff More time Training on ELOs |

Discussion Points

- How often should teachers be using ELOs? What would we expect in ideal circumstances?
- What are the implications of the study for teacher preparation programs and inservice teacher training?
- What are the limitations of the current study and how could they be remedied in future studies?

References

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