

**EXAMINING SOCIAL INTERACTION
BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES ENGAGED IN PROJECT TRIPS**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of Project TRiPS on social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities. Project TRiPS is a program at the University of Tennessee offered to college students as a class where they go into public schools and implement therapeutic recreation activities to students with disabilities. A total of eighteen students with disabilities were observed on five social interaction behaviors: (1) motor gestural positive behaviors; (2) motor gestural negative behaviors; (3) vocal verbal positive behaviors; (4) vocal verbal negative behaviors; and (5) response to environment behaviors. Results indicated there were a few instances where there was an increase in the frequency of students with disabilities' social interaction behaviors. However, further examination of the activities implemented indicated why certain weeks had significant difference in some social interaction behaviors. Limitations of the study and a practical application are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Therapeutic recreation provides services that are based on the individuals' interests and lifestyle and applies their functional improvements to all areas of their life (American Therapeutic Recreation Association [ATRA], n.d.). These services are provided by a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) in a variety of settings, one being in special education departments (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). Project Therapeutic Recreation in Public Schools (TRiPS) is a unique service-learning program at the University of Tennessee (UT) that places UT students in Comprehensive Development Special Education Classrooms (CDCs) to work on engaging students with disabilities in activities to improve their functional skills. It began in 2001 and was created by Dr. Gene A. Hayes, who was a professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Tennessee (Waller & Wozencroft, 2010). Dr. Gene A. Hayes received a grant from the Tennessee Department of Education and developed Project TRiPS to offer graduate and undergraduate students an opportunity to gain hands on experience working with youth with disabilities in a public school setting (Waller & Wozencroft).

Project TRiPS has approximately 10-20 University of Tennessee (UT) students go into ten CDCs throughout local schools to conduct therapeutic recreation activities with children with disabilities each semester. UT students get a chance to interact with students with disabilities and practice writing progress notes on a student's behavior throughout the semester. By the end of the semester, UT student's review their progress notes on the student with a disability he/she was paired with and note in a final evaluation if there have been any improvements on the goal(s) they have been working on each

week. Project TRiPS is not only giving UT students an experience of what a CTRS job entails working in special education classrooms, but is also providing students with disabilities therapeutic recreation that aims to improve their independent functioning skills.

Purpose

The objective of this study is to determine the impact of Project TRiPS on social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities. By observing social interaction behaviors in students with disabilities, the researcher was able to establish how students with disabilities benefit from Project TRiPS and how it is effective by showing whether there was an increase or decrease in the frequency of social interaction behaviors recorded. This study asked the following research questions:

Within-subjects design questions:

1. Throughout the course of the semester, how did the target behavior, “social interaction,” vary in the cooperative plus social interaction strategy within school one?
2. Throughout the course of the semester, how did the target behavior, “social interaction,” vary in the physical plus social interaction strategy within school two?

Between-subjects design questions:

1. Throughout the course of semester, how did the target behavior, “social interaction,” change in the cooperative plus social interaction strategy compared to the physical plus social interaction strategy between the two schools?

2. Throughout the course of the semester, how did the target behavior, “social interaction,” change in the physical plus social interaction strategy compared to the cooperative plus social interaction strategy between the two schools?

Problem Statement

There is limited research on the outcomes for students with disabilities derived from the University of Tennessee’s Project TRiPS program. Considering how evidence based practice and measuring outcomes of individuals are a large part of therapeutic recreation, there needs to be research on students with disabilities who are engaged in Project TRiPS for UT’s Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies department. By collecting data on the outcomes experienced by students with disabilities, knowledge was gained on what the Project TRiPS program is and what it might be. This study provided a better understanding of what the Project TRiPS program entails and how it impacted students with disabilities’ social interaction behaviors.

Significance of Study

This study is significant due to the limited amount of research that examines the outcomes of students with disabilities derived from the University of Tennessee’s Project TRiPS. This study provided a better understanding of what Project TRiPS entails and how it impacts students with disabilities social interaction behaviors. It is important to collect data on the Project TRiPS program to consider how students with disabilities are impacted, what activities improve students with disabilities’ social interaction behaviors, and how UT students implement activities that improve students with disabilities’ social interaction behaviors.

Limitations

Although every effort was made to be thorough, there were certain limitations to the current study. One limitation was the amount of times the researcher was able to attend the two schools and observe each week. A second limitation this study had was the amount of students with disabilities absent from the two schools. A third limitation was that there were a limited number of students with disabilities who partook in this study, making the sample size small. Lastly, therapeutic recreation activities that students with disabilities were involved in were created and implemented by UT students who partook in the Project TRiPS program.

Delimitations

This study focused on students with disabilities in a Comprehensive Development Special Education Classroom. The sample population is delimited specifically to students with disabilities who partook in Project TRiPS. Also, this study is only delimited to observing social interaction behaviors. This is because social skills can occur in every activity implemented in Project TRiPS, whereas physical, cognitive, and emotional skills may not. Another delimitation was that only two of the ten schools of Project TRiPS participated in this study. With there being two strategies developed for this study, only two schools were needed to incorporate them (one strategy for each school).

DEFINITIONS

Project TRiPS: A program that consists of UT students interacting with students with disabilities between the ages of 7 and 21 in public schools. It incorporates therapeutic recreation activities that engage students with disabilities and helps them improve their functional skills.

Social Interaction: Focuses on how children learn new information from others by observing, imitating, or modeling their behaviors (Chavis, 2012).

Physical + Social Interaction Strategy: Incorporates an activity that includes physical movement while encouraging students to interact with one another verbally and non-verbally. A physical movement activity may be relay races, bowling, dancing, etc. Basically anything where the students arms and/or legs are moving around

Cooperative + Social Interaction Strategy: Incorporates an activity that is done in either a group or in pairs and has students work together to complete the task.

Communication is included by verbal or non-verbal responses to help others complete the activity.

Students with Disabilities: Students with various disabilities who partook in Project TRiPS and are between the ages of 7 and 21 years old. They received instructions in a Comprehensive Development Special Education Classroom.

TRiPS Staff: A University of Tennessee college student enrolled in the Project TRiPS service-learning course. He/she pairs with a student with a disability for one semester and also implements therapeutic recreation activities to the Comprehensive Development Special Education Classroom.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Project TRiPS

Project TRiPS is a unique program that is offered as a course for students to enroll in at the University of Tennessee. Some of the main topics of the course include how to write progress notes, make lesson plans, and implement activities for students with disabilities. By learning these skills, UT students prepare to go into public schools each week and interact with students with disabilities. Every UT student is assigned to go to two public schools each week, for one hour each, for the duration of 10 weeks. Upon the first visitation to a public school, the UT student is paired with one student with a disability for the duration of 10 weeks. The teacher of each public school provides the UT students with the goals and objectives from the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of each student with a disability. The UT students then pick one or two goals from the IEP to work on with the student with a disability they are paired with for the whole semester. By the end of the semester, UT students may see a change in the students with disabilities' goal(s) and include it in a final evaluation. By reviewing the UT student's initial evaluation, progress notes, and final evaluation of the student with a disability they were paired with, the UT students are able to evaluate if any progress was made on the goal(s) they were working on for the duration of 10 weeks.

Another aspect of Project TRiPS is having UT students implement therapeutic recreation activities each week for the students with disabilities. Each week there is a different UT student who implements an activity. They make a lesson plan and choose a goal that focuses on the students with disabilities' cognitive, physical, social, and affective skills. With the students with disabilities being engaged in activities each week,

the UT students can observe how they are working towards their IEP goal(s). By incorporating a therapeutic recreation activity each week that focuses on improving functional skills, the UT students are able to see if the students with disabilities benefited from Project TRiPS through their documentation and assessments.

Overall, “Project TRiPS aims to teach youth with disabilities the necessary skills to function independently in society through therapeutic activities” (Waller & Wozencroft, 2010, p. 225-226). According to Waller and Wozencroft (2010), “Project TRiPS focuses on enhancing the youth’s social, recreational, and behavioral skill, which will assist them in community transition” (p. 226). These strengths are enhanced when a TRiPS leader facilitates a therapeutic activity with a small group, while the rest of the TRiPS staff work one-on-one with the students with disabilities to demonstrate certain skills when needed. Considering that the majority of students with disabilities in Project TRiPS are diagnosed with a developmental disability, it is beneficial that they are taught both in a small group and one-to-one ratio, so that they stay engaged in an activity and learn from not only the group leader, but their TRiPS partner as well.

Therapeutic Recreation Activities

Therapeutic recreation is an approach that educators use to help children with disabilities be engaged in recreation activities that are therapeutic and reap the benefits of such participation. Literature indicates how recreation activities play a vital role in all our lives and are recognized by educators as being important for students with disabilities (Bambara, Browder, & Koger, 2006; Browder & Cooper, 2001; Kleinert, Miracle, & Sheppard-Jones, 2007; Rynders & Schleien, 1993). Kleinert et al. (2007) listed some recreation activities in their study that were based on extracurricular school activities

such as lessons on dance, drama, sports, music, swimming, and pottery. Incorporating recreation activities through extracurricular involvement would not only increase the likelihood of community integration and post school success, but also improve a person's quality of life (Heward, 2006). According to García-Villamizar and Dattilo (2010), the phrase "quality of life" enriches one's life in areas such as inclusion in social, leisure, and community activities that are based on an individual's values, beliefs, needs and interests of the individual. Meaningful opportunities and explicit instruction are needed for students with disabilities, so they can develop the critical skills they need for participating in recreation activities in a school atmosphere (Bambara et al., 2006; Collins, Hall, & Branson, 1997; Kleinert et al., 2007).

Meaningful opportunities are represented in Project TRiPS by UT students integrating a variety of therapeutic recreation activities with students with disabilities that are based on physical, cognitive, affective, and social skills. It is known that cooperative learning groups have been advocated as a promising instructional strategy for promoting interaction among students with and without developmental disabilities (Carter & Hughes, 2007; Demchak, 2005; Salisbury, Gallucci, Palombaro, & Peck, 1995). Cooperative learning groups involve dividing the class into small groups of students, establishing common learning goals, delineating student roles within each group, and establishing interdependent contingencies (Carter & Hughes, 2007). UT students usually work with students with disabilities on a one-to-one ratio in a small group. Literature specifies that one-to-one teaching is the common teaching arrangement for children with developmental disabilities (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014; Collins, Gast, Ault, & Wolery, 1991). In Aldemir and Gursel's study (as cited in Duker, Didden, & Sigafoos, 2004),

“One-to-one teaching is a structured arrangement in which the child has the chance to react with the teacher and be reinforced when they respond correctly” (p. 734). However, small groups can offer different learning opportunities such as the acquisition of instructive feedback and observational learning (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014; Collins et al., 1991; Colozzi, Ward, & Crotty, 2008). Both techniques are effective in teaching children, but sometimes may acquire different outcomes from a student. This is why Project TRiPS is unique because it integrates both techniques (one-to-one teaching and small groups) to students with disabilities.

When the leader facilitates their activity to a class of nine students each week this demonstrates how Project TRiPS incorporates working in a small group. The students with disabilities are able to receive guidance from the leader facilitating while also being able to observe their peers and UT staff. Furthermore, UT students are paired with a student with a disability for the duration of the 10-week Project TRiPS program, which demonstrates the one-to-one technique. Therefore, Projects TRiPS is providing students with disabilities a chance to interact with another UT student and be reinforced when they respond correctly by using the one-to-one teaching arrangement (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014). Also, Project TRiPS is providing students with disabilities a chance to improve their social and behavioral skills in a school environment by working as a small group (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014).

Developmental Disability

Although Project TRiPS works with students with various disabilities, the majority of students are diagnosed with a developmental disability. According to Boyle et al. (2011), developmental disabilities occur in about one in six children in the U.S., which

is 15% of children aged 3 to 17. In other words, there were about 10 million children who had a developmental disability between the years of 2006-2008 (Boyle et al., 2011).

A developmental disability is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5) as:

“A disorder with onset during the developmental period that includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in conceptual, social, and practical domains. The following two criteria must be met:

- A. Deficits in intellectual functions, such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience.
- B. Deficits in adaptive functioning that results in failure to meet developmental and sociocultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility. Without ongoing support, the adaptive deficits limit functioning in one or more activities of daily life such as communication, social participation, and independent living, across multiple environments such as home, school, work, community.”

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p.33)

A Developmental disability has been interpreted as an umbrella term for other conditions that share the same characteristics such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Seizure Disorder, Learning Disorder, stuttering or stammering, moderate to profound hearing loss, blindness, and/or other developmental delays (Boyle et al., 2011; Odom et al., 2007). Although someone with a developmental disability may have several functional

limitations in certain areas of their life, it is important that professionals use different strategies to help him/her learn how to overcome those limitations.

Social Learning Theory

One strategy that professionals may use when working with someone with a disability is through the application of social learning theory. According to Chavis (2012), “Social learning theory is one of the most recent approaches to addressing people in need and applying the theory to human problems within a social context” (p.54). This theory emphasizes how people learn from one another and gather new information by observing other people. Chavis states in her study, “Thus, the use of observational learning, imitation, or modeling explains a wide variety of human behaviors using social learning theory and approach” (p. 55). When referring back to Project TRiPS, the social learning theory could be applied in two ways. The first application of social learning theory is evident by the students with disabilities observation and modeling of the TRiPS staff that is paired with them during activities. The second application of the social learning theory is how the students with disabilities work together in small groups. This shows that students with disabilities are learning from their UT staff partner while also observing and modeling their peers.

According to Bandura (1969),

“In social-learning theory an identificatory event is defined as the occurrence of similarity between the behavior of a model and another person under conditions where the model’s behavior has served as the determinative cue for the matching responses. Although the matching process frequently involves

reproduction of specific patterns of behavior, in many instances a common attribute abstracted from diverse responses is modeled” (p.217).

In Bandura’s study he elaborates on social learning theory, identificatory processes, and how the terms “identification,” “imitation,” and “observational learning” refer to how we socially learn from exposure to modeling stimuli. Bandura stated, “identification refers to a process in which a person patterns his thoughts, feelings, or actions after another person who serves as a model” (p. 214). Some theorists believe identification produces imitation, while others believe imitation produces identification. Regardless of what other theorists’ assume about “identification” and “imitation,” Bandura specified, “essentially the same learning process is involved regardless of the content and generality of what is learned, the models from whom the response patterns are acquired, and the stimulus conditions under which emulative behavior is subsequently performed. Bandura gave further explanation of the social learning theory noting that one exhibits observational learning after modeling stimuli and coding it into images or words for memory representation to retrieve and reproduce a response (Bandura, 1969).

In a study done by Shukla, Kennedy, and Cushing (1999), they observed how children with severe disabilities interacted with a peer with whom they were paired. Shukla et al. explained how peer support strategies seem to be viable educational approaches because they facilitate the social participation of students with disabilities while focusing on improving functional skills for these students. Furthermore, the study focused on observing active engagement and social interaction of intermediate school students with disabilities, while being paired with a peer. The findings indicated that peer support strategies are a preferable alternative for assisting students with severe

disabilities in general education classrooms when compared to support from an instructional aide. It was also recommended that their needs be further investigated on how to best provide additional behavioral supports to encourage generalized social participation of students with severe disabilities (Shukla et al., 1999).

CHAPTER III

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To determine the behaviors of the students with disabilities of Projects TRiPS, this study utilized within-subjects and between-subjects design. Two Comprehensive Development Special Education Classrooms were selected from the ten CDCs that partake in Project TRiPS. The two CDCs were selected based on their similarities in age. A baseline score was established in the two schools to determine typical behaviors of the students with disabilities in their classroom based on the dependent variable of the study, social interaction, by using a behavior checklist. This occurred on the first week that Project TRiPS began, where UT students only observe the students with disabilities in their classroom environment and do not implement activities or interact with the students. After the baseline was established, the two alternate strategies, which are further explained, were introduced to the two schools for the duration of 7-weeks.

Each school was randomly assigned to the cooperative plus social interaction strategy or the physical plus social interaction strategy. School #1 implemented cooperative plus social interaction strategy in which the researcher provided review and approval of each week's activities prior to implementation to ensure that the strategy was incorporated during each visit of the 7-week period. School #2 implemented the physical plus social interaction strategy, in which the researcher also provided review and approval of each week's activities prior to implementation to ensure that the TRiPS staff incorporated the strategy during each visit of the 7-week period. By collecting observational data throughout the semester in the two schools, the researcher was able to examine how each of the schools varied between one another. Also, the researcher was

able to look within the two schools to see how the social interaction behaviors changed over the 7-week period of Project TRiPS.

This study applied a partial interval recording method. For the duration of the one-hour during Project TRiPS in the two schools, the researcher observed 30 of the 60 minutes for direct observation of the social interaction behaviors. The researcher only observed for 30 minutes instead of the full hour, because one activity lasts 30 minutes. The researcher incorporated a round robin method where the 18 students with disabilities from each of the two schools were observed by going around the classroom every minute of the total 30 minutes. The researcher observed one student with a disability for the first 30 seconds of a minute and recorded the social interaction behaviors each time they occurred. Once the clock got to 60 seconds, the researcher switched to the next student with a disability and began recording behaviors for 30 seconds. This process continued for every student with a disability in the class until 30 minutes were completed. The researcher recorded the behaviors of each student with a disability by putting tally marks on the behavior checklist, using a paper and pencil. Each week, the researcher began observing a different student with a disability to ensure that each participant got an equal amount of observation for the 7-weeks of the study.

Participants

Participants included eighteen students between the ages of 12 and 21 who are in Comprehensive Development Special Education Classrooms in the Knox County. There were nine students from school #1 and nine students from school #2. The students of the CDCs have one or multiple disabilities such as Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD),

and Cerebral Palsy. Two of the ten public schools that partook in Project TRiPS were randomly chosen to be involved in this study.

To guarantee that the participants identity is kept anonymous and that all data collected was be kept confidential, the researcher distributed consent forms to parents/guardians, participants 18 years or older, and teachers who partook in the study and kept them in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office (see Appendix A, B, and C). No names of students or schools appeared on the behavior checklist.

Instrumentation

The researcher used a prepared behavior checklist to record the observations of the students with disabilities each week (see Appendix D). The behavior checklist included five social interaction behaviors and a blank space by each behavior to tally the number of times the researcher observed them. The researcher incorporated a partial interval recording method to collect data. The researcher incorporated a round robin method where the 18 students with disabilities from each of the two schools were observed by going around the classroom every minute of the total 30 minutes. Each student with a disability was observed individually for 30 seconds of a minute before switching to another student with a disability to observe. Whenever the researcher noticed any of the students with disabilities exhibiting the five social interaction behaviors during the 30 seconds of observation, a tally mark was put next to that behavior on the behavior checklist. All of the behavior checklists were distinguished by dates in of observation.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through direct observation of students with disabilities done by the researcher and two trained graduate assistants during the scheduled hour of Project TRiPS. The two graduate assistants were trained on what each of the five social interaction behaviors were and how to utilize the behavior checklist during observation. The two trained graduate assistants had also gone through the Project TRiPS program as students and were the teaching assistants for the course during the semester the study took place, so they were very familiar with the Project TRiPS program.

During the study, the observers sat in close enough range (about 3 meters) to make accurate observations of the students with disabilities. Social interaction behaviors are defined in this study as:

1. **Motor-gestural:** All movements that cause a student with a disability's head, arms, or feet to come into direct contact with the body of the TRiPS staff or the student's peers; or that involve waving or extending arms directly toward another child; or that involve placing of hands directly on the materials of the activity being implemented.
 - a. **Positive:** Touch with hands, hug, holding hands, gives high fives, gives a thumbs up, waves, raises hand to speak, pointing at object/person, or nodding head up or down to respond to yes/no questions; all cooperative responses involved with sharing materials of the activity being implemented.
 - b. **Negative:** Hit; pinch; kick; butt with head; nonplaying push or pull; grabbing materials of activity from TRiPS staff or peers; destroying

construction of another peer. Any behavior displayed by a student with a disability where they appear to be very agitated, frustrated, upset, etc.

(Shafer et al., 1984, p.465)

2. **Vocal-gestural:** All vocalizations emitted while a child is directly facing any TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers. Also, all non-verbal responses emitted by a child that clearly indicate that the student is directing it toward a TRiPS staff, peer, or teacher.
 - a. **Positive:** When a student with a disability verbally or non-verbally responds to TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers during an activity being implemented. Positive vocal responses made by a student with a disability may be him/her saying, “hey you,” “yeah,” “uh oh,” or the person’s name they are trying to get attention from. Positive non-verbal responses may be when a student with a disability laughs or makes utterances (e.g. squealing) that clearly indicate that the student is directing it towards TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers. Also, when a student smiles during an activity it is considered positive.
 - b. **Negative:** Examples of negative vocal responses are saying negative words or phrases such as “I suck,” “this game is no fun,” or “ugh.” Some examples of negative non-verbal responses may be when a student with a disability screams, shouts, whines, covers his/her face with hands, or makes utterances that clearly indicate rejecting, oppositional, or aggressive

behavior. Any response displayed by a student with a disability where they appear to be very agitated, frustrated, upset, etc.

(Shafer et al., 1984, p.465)

3. **Response to environment:** Any behavior made by the student with a disability that follows in close contiguity (3 seconds or less) to the response of TRiPS staff or peer and shows a direct relationship to the TRiPS staff's, peer's, or teacher's previous response; or participating in an interaction focusing on some type of activity with TRiPS staff, peers, and/or teachers. When a student with a disability is engaged in an activity being implemented with another TRiPS staff, peer, or teachers.

(Shafer et al., 1984, p.465)

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22. The researcher ran a descriptive statistics test to get the mean scores of the social interaction behaviors each week. Considering the sample size was small, a Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the between school differences. By running this test the researcher was able to rank the median scores across the two strategies. A Wilcoxon Matched-Pair signed-rank test was used to examine the within school differences. This is a non-parametric alternative to the repeated measures t-test, which converted the scores to ranks to compare them from the baseline and at week seven (Pallant, 2007).

Inter-observer Reliability

For this study, two graduate students were trained to observe in each public school for a total of 2 weeks of the 7-week study. The two graduate assistants were

trained on each of the five social interaction behaviors and how to utilize the behavior checklist in order to record and analyze data accurately. The graduate students were qualified to assist in the data collection because they were from the Therapeutic Recreation department, had experience with the Project TRiPS program from being the teaching assistants for the course the semester the study took place, and successfully completed their graduate level research methods course. Once training was completed, the researcher randomly picked which weeks the trained graduate students went into the public schools.

CHAPTER IV

EXAMINING SOCIAL INTERACTION BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ENGAGED IN PROJECT TRIPS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of Project TRiPS on social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities. Project TRiPS is a program at the University of Tennessee offered to college students as a class where they go into public schools and implement therapeutic recreation activities to students with disabilities. A total of eighteen students with disabilities were observed on five social interaction behaviors: (1) “motor gestural positive” behaviors; (2) “motor gestural negative” behaviors; (3) “vocal verbal positive” behaviors; (4) “vocal verbal negative” behaviors; and (5) “response to environment” behaviors. Results indicated there were a few instances where there was an increase in the frequency of students with disabilities’ social interaction behaviors. However, further examination of the activities implemented indicated why certain weeks had significant difference in some social interaction behaviors. Limitations of the study and a practical application are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Therapeutic recreation provides services that are based on the individuals' interests and lifestyle and applies their functional improvements to all areas of their life (American Therapeutic Recreation Association [ATRA], n.d.). Project Therapeutic Recreation in Public Schools (TRiPS) is a unique service-learning program at the University of Tennessee (UT) that places UT students in Comprehensive Development Special Education Classrooms (CDCs) to work on engaging students with disabilities in therapeutic recreation activities to improve their functional skills. Project TRiPS has approximately 10-20 University of Tennessee (UT) students who go to ten CDCs throughout local schools to conduct therapeutic recreation activities with children with disabilities each semester. UT students get a chance to interact with students with disabilities and practice writing progress notes on a student's behavior throughout the semester. Project TRiPS is not only giving UT students an experience of what a CTRS job entails working in special education classrooms, but is also providing students with disabilities therapeutic recreation that aims to improve their independent functioning skills.

Project TRiPS has UT students implement therapeutic recreation activities to students with disabilities each week during a semester. Each UT student makes a lesson plan and chooses a goal that focuses on the students with disabilities' cognitive, physical, social, and affective skills. By incorporating a therapeutic recreation activity each week that focuses on improving functional skills, the UT students are able to see if the students with disabilities benefited from Project TRiPS through their documentation and assessments. These skills are enhanced when a TRiPS leader facilitates a therapeutic

activity to a small group, while the rest of the TRiPS staff work one-on-one with the students with disabilities to demonstrate certain skills when needed. Considering that majority of students with disabilities in Project TRiPS are diagnosed with a developmental disability, it is beneficial that they are taught both in a small group and on a one-to-one ratio, so that they stay engaged in an activity and learn from not only the group leader but their TRiPS partner as well.

Literature specifies that one-to-one teaching is the common teaching arrangement for children with developmental disabilities (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014; Collins, Gast, Ault, & Wolery, 1991). However, small groups can offer different learning opportunities such as the acquisition of instructive feedback and observational learning (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014; Collins et al., 1991; Colozzi, Ward, & Crotty, 2008). Both techniques are effective in teaching children, but sometimes may acquire different outcomes from a student. This is why Project TRiPS is unique because it integrates both techniques (one-to-one teaching and small groups) to children with disabilities. When the leader facilitates their activity to a class of nine students each week demonstrates how Project TRiPS incorporates working in a small group. Furthermore, when UT students are paired with a student with a disability doing the therapeutic activity the leader for the week presented demonstrates the one-to-one technique. Therefore, Projects TRiPS is providing students with disabilities a chance to react with a UT student and be reinforced when they respond correctly by using the one-to-one teaching arrangement (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014). Also, Project TriPS is providing students with disabilities a chance to improve their social and behavioral skills in a school environment by working as a small group (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014).

Supporting literature indicates how recreation activities play a vital role in all our lives and are recognized by educators as being important for students with moderate and severe disabilities (Bambara, Browder, & Koger, 2006; Browder & Cooper, 2001; Kleinert, Miracle, & Sheppard-Jones, 2007; Rynders & Schleien, 1993). Meaningful opportunities and explicit instruction are needed for students with disabilities, so they can develop the critical skills they need for participating in recreation activities in a school atmosphere (Bambara et al., 2006; Collins, Hall, & Branson, 1997; Kleinert et al., 2007). Project TriPS provides meaningful opportunities to students with disabilities by integrating a variety of therapeutic recreation activities that are based on physical, cognitive, affective, and social skills.

Although Project TriPS works with students with various disabilities, the majority of students are diagnosed with a developmental disability. A developmental disability is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Addition (DSM-5) as:

“A disorder with onset during the developmental period that includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in conceptual, social, and practical domains. The following two criteria must be met:

- A. Deficits in intellectual functions, such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience.
- B. Deficits in adaptive functioning that results in failure to meet developmental and sociocultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility. Without ongoing support, the adaptive deficits limit

functioning in one or more activities of daily life such as communication, social participation, and independent living, across multiple environments such as home, school, work, community.”

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 33)

One strategy that professionals may use when working with someone with a developmental disability is through the application of the social learning theory. This theory emphasizes how people learn from one another and gather new information by observing other people. Chavis (2012) states in her study, “the use of observational learning, imitation, or modeling explains a wide variety of human behaviors using social learning theory and approach” (p. 55). The first application of social learning theory is evident by the students with disabilities observation and mimicking of the TRiPS staff that are paired with them during activities. The social learning theory is also applied when students with disabilities work together in a small group, as they are not only learning from their TRiPS staff partner, but are also observing and modeling their peers.

According to Bandura (1969),

“In social-learning theory an identificatory event is defined as the occurrence of similarity between the behavior of a model and another person under conditions where the model’s behavior has served as the determinative cue for the matching responses. Although the matching process frequently involves reproduction of specific patterns of behavior, in many instances a common attribute abstracted from diverse responses is modeled” (p.217).

In Bandura's study he elaborates on the social learning theory, identificatory processes, and how the terms "identification," "imitation," and "observational learning" refer to how we socially learn from exposure to modeling stimuli. He stated, "identification refers to a process in which a person patterns his thoughts, feelings, or actions after another person who serves as a model" (p. 214). Bandura gave further explanation of the social learning theory noting that one exhibits observational learning after modeling stimuli and coding it into images or words for memory representation to retrieve and reproduce a response.

In a study done by Shukla, Kennedy, and Cushing (1999), they observed how children with severe disabilities interacted with a peer with whom they were paired. The findings indicated that peer support strategies are a preferable alternative for assisting students with severe disabilities in general education classrooms compared to support from an instructional aide. It was also recommended that their needs to be further investigation on how to best provide additional behavioral supports to encourage generalized social participation of students with severe disabilities (Shukla et al., 1999).

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of Project TRiPS on social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities. By utilizing the social learning theory in this study, the students with disabilities' behaviors are examined in connection with therapeutic recreation activities. This study demonstrates how students with disabilities learn by observing, imitating, and modeling TRiPS staff and their peers through therapeutic recreation activities.

METHODS

Two Comprehensive Development Special Education Classrooms (CDCs) were selected from the ten CDCs that partake in Project TRiPS based on their similarities in

age. Each school was randomly assigned to one of the two alternate strategies. School #1 implemented the cooperative plus social interaction strategy during each visit for the 7-week period. School #2 implemented the physical plus social interaction strategy during each visit for the 7-week period. A baseline of the students' social interaction behaviors was established before the two alternate strategies were introduced in the two public schools.

This study applied a partial interval recording method. For the duration of the one-hour during Project TRiPS in both schools, the researcher or one of the two trained graduate students used only 30 of the 60 minutes for direct observation of the social interaction behaviors. The researcher observed during one activity implemented to the class that lasted 30 minutes, so the researcher did not need to observe for the full one-hour. The researcher incorporated a round robin method where the students with disabilities were observed by the researcher going around the classroom every minute of the total 30 minutes. For the first 30 seconds of a minute, the researcher observed one student with a disability and recorded the social interaction behaviors each time they occurred. Once the clock got to 60 seconds, the researcher switched to the next student with a disability and began recording for 30 more seconds. This continued through every student with a disability in the class until 30 minutes were completed.

Participants

Participants included 18 students between the ages of 12 and 21 who are in Comprehensive Development Special Education Classrooms from Knox County. The students of the CDCs have one or multiple disabilities such as Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

(ADHD), and Cerebral Palsy. The participants were chosen randomly based on the public school they attend. There were two public schools that partook in Project TRiPS, which were involved in this study. School #1 had 9 participants and school #2 had 9 participants.

Instrumentation

The researcher used a prepared behavior checklist to record observations of the students with disabilities each week (see Appendix D). The behavior checklist includes five social interaction behaviors: (1) motor gestural positive behavior; (2) motor gestural negative behavior; (3) vocal verbal positive behavior; (4) vocal verbal negative behavior; and (5) response to environment behavior. The researcher observed the class as a whole. Whenever the researcher noticed any of the students with disabilities exhibiting one of the five social interaction behaviors, a tally mark was put next to that behavior.

Data Collection

Data were collected through direct observation of students with disabilities done by the researcher and one of the two trained graduate assistants during the scheduled hour of Project TRiPS. The observers sat in close enough range (about 3 meters) to make accurate observations of the students with disabilities. Social interaction was defined in this study as:

4. **Motor-gestural:** All movements that cause a student with a disability's head, arms, or feet to come into direct contact with the body of the TRiPS staff or the student's peers; or that involve waving or extending arms directly toward another child; or that involve placing of hands directly on the materials of the activity being implemented.

- a. **Positive:** Touch with hands, hug, holding hands, gives high fives, gives a thumbs up, waves, raises hand to speak, pointing at object/person, or nodding head up or down to respond to yes/no questions; all cooperative responses involved with sharing materials of the activity being implemented.
- b. **Negative:** Hit; pinch; kick; butt with head; nonplaying push or pull; grabbing materials of activity from TRiPS staff or peers; destroying construction of another peer.

(Shafer et al., 1984, p.465)

- 5. **Vocal-gestural:** All vocalizations emitted while a child is directly facing any TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers. Also, all non-verbal responses emitted by a child that clearly indicate that the student is directing it toward a TRiPS staff, peer, or teacher.
 - a. **Positive:** When a student with a disability verbally or non-verbally responds to TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers during an activity being implemented. Positive vocal responses made by a student with a disability may be him/her saying, “hey you,” “yeah,” “uh oh,” or the person’s name they are trying to get attention from. Positive non-verbal responses may be when a student with a disability laughs or makes utterances (e.g. squealing) that clearly indicate that the student is directing it towards TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers. Also, when a student smiles during an activity it is considered positive.

- b. **Negative:** Examples of negative vocal responses are saying negative words or phrases such as “I suck, “this game is no fun,” or “ugh.” Some examples of negative non-verbal responses may be when a student with a disability screams, shouts, whines, covers his/her face with hands, or makes utterances that clearly indicate rejecting, oppositional, or aggressive behavior.

(Shafer et al., 1984, p.465)

6. **Response to environment:** Any behavior made by the student with a disability that follows in close contiguity (3 seconds or less) to the response of TRiPS staff or peer and shows a direct relationship to the TRiPS staff’s, peer’s, or teacher’s previous response; or participating in an interaction focusing on some type of activity with TRiPS staff, peers, and/or teachers. When a student with a disability is engaged in an activity being implemented with another TRiPS staff, peer, or teachers.

(Shafer et al., 1984, p.465)

Data Analysis

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22. The researcher ran a descriptive statistics test to get the mean scores of the social interaction behaviors each week. Considering this study’s sample size was small, a Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the between school differences. By running this test the researcher was able to rank the median scores across the two strategy groups. A Wilcoxon Matched-Pair signed-rank test was used to examine the within school differences. This is a non-parametric alternative to the repeated measures t-test, which

converted the scores to ranks to compare them from the baseline and at week 7 (Pallant, 2007).

RESULTS

Between School Comparison

After analyzing the data between the two schools, there were four significant differences as shown in Table 4.1. During week 2, the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 ($M=6.14$, $SD=2.48$) did significantly better regarding the “response to environment” behavior compared to the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 ($M=3.50$, $SD=1.31$), $U=42.5$, $p=0.017$. During week 3, the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 ($M=3.38$, $SD=1.57$) did significantly better regarding the “response to environment” behavior compared to the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 ($M=1.57$, $SD=1.13$), $U=6.5$, $p=0.017$. During week 5, the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 ($M=3.25$, $SD=1.39$) did significantly better regarding the “motor/gestural positive” behavior compared to the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 ($M=1.56$, $SD=1.59$), $U=57.0$, $p=0.007$; however, the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 ($M=5.67$, $SD=3.00$) did significantly better regarding the “response to environment” behavior during the same week when compared to the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 ($M=2.75$, $SD=0.46$), $U=8.0$, $p=0.01$).

More specifically, when reviewing the activities implemented at the two schools during week 2 there were some marked differences in the lesson plans between the two schools. On week 2, the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 implemented an activity that required the students with disabilities to (1) get out of their

Table 4.1

Significant Difference in Social Interaction Behaviors Between School Comparison

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. Difference	Decision
The distribution of R2E-2 is the same across categories of School.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.017 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis
The distribution of R2E-3 is the same across categories of School.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.017 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis
The distribution of MGP-5 is the same across categories of School.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.007 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis
The distribution of R2E-5 is the same across categories of School.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.010 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis

Note. MGP = motor gestural positive and R2E = response to environment. The numbers after the dash marks on the abbreviations indicates the baseline and weeks of the studies.

desks and move around; (2) communicate with their peers and staff; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) cooperate with others to complete the activity (See Appendix I for more details on this activity). The physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 implemented an activity that required students with disabilities to (1) stay seated at their desk; (2) independently work on their task; (3) work on fine motor skills; and (4) listen to the leader only at the beginning of the activity for instructions (See Appendix L for more details on this activity).

When reviewing the activities implemented at the two schools during week 3 there were some distinctions between the lesson plans for each school. On week 3, the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 implemented an activity that

required the students with disabilities to (1) stay seated at their desk; (2) independently work on their task; (3) work on fine motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) get in front of class individually to show what he/she made (See Appendix L for more details on this activity). During the same week, the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 implemented an activity that required students with disabilities to (1) get out of their desks and move around; (2) communicate with their peers and staff; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; (5) cooperate with others to complete the activity (See Appendix L for more details on this activity).

When reviewing the activities implemented at the two schools during week 5 there were some disparity between the lesson plans for each schools that had a significant difference. On week 5, the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 implemented an activity that required students with disabilities to (1) get out of their desks and move around; (2) communicate with their partner; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) cooperate with their partner to complete the activity (See Appendix L for more details on this activity). The physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 implemented an activity that required students to (1) stay seated at their desk; (2) independently work on their task; (3) work on fine motor skills; and (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity (See Appendix L for more details on this activity).

Within School Comparison

After analyzing data within the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1, there was no significant difference in the five behaviors. The cooperative plus

social interaction strategy at school #1 demonstrated no significant difference regarding “motor gestural positive” behavior, “motor gestural negative” behavior, “vocal verbal positive” behavior, “vocal verbal negative” behavior, or “response to environment” behavior from week one to week seven.

After analyzing data within the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2, there was significant difference in two of the five behaviors as shown in Table 4.2. The physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 performed significantly better regarding the “motor gestural positive” behavior from week 1 to week 7 ($W=21.0$, $p=0.027$). The physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 also performed significantly better regarding the “vocal verbal positive” behavior from week 1 to week 7 ($W=21.0$, $p=0.027$). The physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 demonstrated no significant difference regarding the “motor gestural negative” behavior, “vocal verbal negative” behavior, or “response to environment” behavior from week one to week seven.

Mean Scores Comparison

After running a descriptive statistics test, the mean scores of the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1, as shown in Table 4.3, and the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2, as shown in Table 4.4, were reviewed to see which activity produced the highest mean score for three of the five behaviors. A chart with all the mean scores from the two strategy groups throughout the 7-week study was gathered from the descriptive statistics tests and included in Appendix E. The “motor gestural positive” behavior, “vocal verbal positive” behavior, and “response to environment” behaviors were examined in both schools.

Table 4.2

Significant Difference in Social Interaction Behaviors Within School Comparison

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. Difference	Decision
The median of differences between MGP-b and MGP-7 equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.027	Reject the null hypothesis
The median of differences between VVP-b and VVP-7 equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.027	Reject the null hypothesis

Note. MGP = motor gestural positive and VVP = vocal verbal positive. The numbers after the dash marks on the abbreviations indicates the baseline and weeks of the studies.

For “motor gestural positive” behavior, the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 (M=4.38) had the highest mean score during week 7 when comparing week 1 to week 7 in both schools. Also, for “vocal verbal positive” behavior, the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 (M=5.25) had the highest mean score during week 7 when comparing week 1 to week 7 in both schools. The activity implemented in week 7 in the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 was named “Balloon Balance Relay.” This activity involved students splitting into two teams and pairing off with a TRiPS staff member. The object of this activity was to have each student with a disability go through two obstacles, once using a hula-hoop and a second time bouncing a balloon with their hand without having it touch the ground. As one student is going through the obstacle, the other students are cheering their teammate on. This activity required students to (1) get out of their desks and move around; (2) communicate with their partner; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of “Cooperative Plus Social Interaction Strategy” in School #1

Strategies	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MGP-b	6	0	5	2.50	1.761
MGN-b	6	0	5	1.00	2.000
VVP-b	6	0	5	1.83	2.483
VVN-b	6	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-b	6	0	7	3.33	2.582
MGP-1	4	0	3	1.50	1.732
MGN-1	4	0	1	.25	.500
VVP-1	4	1	5	3.75	1.893
VVN-1	4	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-1	4	1	9	5.00	3.266
MGP-2	7	0	5	1.57	2.149
MGN-2	7	0	0	.00	.000
VVP-2	7	0	9	5.00	3.651
VVN-2	7	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-2	7	2	9	6.14	2.478
MGP-3	7	0	3	1.14	1.215
MGN-3	7	0	0	.00	.000
VVP-3	7	0	6	3.29	1.976
VVN-3	7	0	2	.29	.756
R2E-3	7	0	3	1.57	1.134
MGP-4	9	0	5	2.44	1.333
MGN-4	9	0	2	.33	.707
VVP-4	9	0	6	2.89	2.028
VVN-4	9	0	1	.11	.333
R2E-4	9	1	4	3.22	1.093
MGP-5	8	1	5	3.25	1.389
MGN-5	8	0	0	.00	.000
VVP-5	8	0	7	2.63	2.825
VVN-5	8	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-5	8	2	3	2.75	.463
MGP-6	9	0	9	3.56	2.920
MGN-6	9	0	0	.00	.000
VVP-6	9	1	6	3.67	1.732
VVN-6	9	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-6	9	1	6	2.78	1.787
MGP-7	9	1	6	3.11	2.028
MGN-7	9	0	3	.33	1.000
VVP-7	9	0	6	3.22	1.922
VVN-7	9	0	1	.22	.441
R2E-7	9	1	4	2.00	1.00

Note. MGP = motor gestural positive; MGN = motor gestural negative; VVP = vocal verbal positive; VVN = vocal verbal negative; R2E = response to environment. The numbers after the dash marks on the abbreviations indicates the baseline and weeks of the studies.

directions throughout the activity; and (5) cooperate with their partner to complete the activity (See Appendix L for more details on this activity).

For “response to environment” behavior, the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 ($M=6.14$) had the highest mean score during week 2 when comparing week 1 to week 7 in both schools. This was also the highest mean score among all five behaviors in both schools the baseline to week 7. The activity implemented in week 2 for the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 was named “Busy Balloons and Busy Bees. This activity involved students with disabilities pairing up with one of their peers. The object of this activity was to have each student listen to the activity leader for directions on what body parts they need to touch with their peer. For example, when the leader yells out “elbow to elbow” or “knee to knee,” the students connected to each other’s elbows together. The students must continue listening to the activity leader throughout the activity to know what they need to do next and to also know when to switch partners and pair with another peer. Once the students were familiar with what body parts to connect to with their peers, a balloon was integrated into the activity where the students with disabilities had to balance the balloon between the two body parts the activity leader called out. This activity required the students with disabilities to: (1) get out of their desks and move around; (2) communicate with their peers and staff; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) cooperate with others to complete the activity (See Appendix L for more details on this activity).

The three highest mean scores for “motor gestural positive” behavior, “vocal verbal positive” behavior, and “response to environment” behavior were established from

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics of “Physical Plus Social Interaction Strategy” in School #2

Strategies	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MGP-b	8	0	3	1.38	1.061
MGN-b	8	0	0	.00	.000
VVP-b	8	0	3	2.00	1.195
VVN-b	8	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-b	8	0	4	2.00	1.512
MGP-1	9	0	2	.67	.707
MGN-1	9	0	1	.11	.333
VVP-1	9	0	5	2.78	1.394
VVN-1	9	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-1	9	0	3	1.67	1.118
MGP-2	8	0	4	1.88	1.642
MGN-2	8	0	1	.13	.354
VVP-2	8	0	8	3.50	2.928
VVN-2	8	0	1	.25	.463
R2E-2	8	2	5	3.50	1.309
MGP-3	8	0	1	.50	.535
MGN-3	8	0	2	.25	.707
VVP-3	8	0	8	4.88	2.696
VVN-3	8	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-3	8	2	5	3.38	.916
MGP-4	9	1	4	2.89	.928
MGN-4	9	0	0	.00	.000
VVP-4	9	1	8	4.33	2.398
VVN-4	9	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-4	9	1	4	2.89	.928
MGP-5	9	0	5	1.56	1.590
MGN-5	9	0	1	.22	.441
VVP-5	9	0	7	3.00	2.236
VVN-5	9	0	2	.33	.707
R2E-5	9	1	12	5.67	3.000
MGP-6 ^a	0				
MGN-6 ^a	0				
VVP-6 ^a	0				
VVN-6 ^a	0				
R2E-6 ^a	0				
MGP-7	8	1	10	4.38	3.204
MGN-7	8	0	3	.38	1.061
VVP-7	8	1	9	5.25	3.059
VVN-7	8	0	0	.00	.000
R2E-7	8	1	4	2.63	1.188

Note. MGP = motor gestural positive; MGN = motor gestural negative; VVP = vocal verbal positive; VVN = vocal verbal negative; R2E = response to environment. The numbers after the dash marks on the abbreviations indicates the baseline and weeks of the studies.

^a There was no Project TRiPS at school #2 for week 6

activities that all exhibited five similar things when implemented: (1) having the students with disabilities get out of their desks and move around; (2) having the students with disabilities communicate with their peers and staff; (3) having the students with disabilities work on gross motor skills; (4) having the students with disabilities listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) having the students with disabilities cooperate with others to complete the activity. These five similarities seen in the three activities that produced the highest mean scores in “motor gestural positive” behavior, “vocal verbal positive” behavior, and “response to environment” behavior reflects tenets of Bandura’s (1971) social learning theory. By having students with disabilities work together in small groups to learn from their TRiPS staff partner and also observe and model their peers increased the frequency of the students with disabilities’ social interaction behaviors during these three activities (Aldemir & Gursel, 2014; Chavis, 2012). Additionally, Carter and Hughes (2007) explained how cooperative learning groups, such as dividing the class into small groups of students, appear to offer a promising strategy for furthering social goals of students with disabilities. Students had to imitate and model their peers when they were placed in pairs or small groups to accomplish these activities (Chavis, 2012). Also, the students with disabilities had to watch and listen to the activity leader throughout the activities so they could understand what to do and mimic what the activity leader was doing (Chavis, 2012). By doing all of these things, the students with disabilities’ increased in frequency of: (1) “motor gestural positive” behavior (2) “vocal verbal positive” behavior (3) “response to environment” behavior (Shafer et al, 1984).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of Project TRiPS on social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities. This study contributes to the literature pertaining to the social learning theory by observing five social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities: (1) motor gestural positive; (2) motor gestural negative; (3) vocal verbal positive; (4) vocal verbal negative; and (5) response to environment (Shafer et al., 1984). This study also further investigated how to best educate UT students in the Project TRiPS program by examining the activities implemented with the highest mean score for three of the five social interaction behaviors addressed in Shafer et al.'s (1984) work. The two negative social interaction behaviors that were observed on the students with disabilities did not have much data to report on, so the researcher decided to focus on the three positive social interaction behaviors instead. This indicated that students with disabilities were not displaying behaviors such as: (1) hitting; (2) kicking; (3) grabbing materials from TRiPS staff or peers; (4) saying negative words; (5) screaming; and (6) making utterances that clearly indicate rejecting, oppositional, or aggressive behaviors (Shafer et al., 1984).

Within School Comparison

When looking more in depth into the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 and why there was significant difference in “motor gestural positive” behavior and “vocal verbal positive” behavior from week 1 to week 7, several reasons were apparent. From the first activity implemented in week 1 to the last activity implemented in week 7 there was a slow progression of the two social interaction behaviors seen in the students with disabilities. At the beginning of the Project TRiPS program, the TRiPS staff

implemented activities that were not very engaging and did not require the students with disabilities to do much interaction. The activity implemented in week 1 had the students make a snow globe and required them to: (1) stay seated at their desk; (2) independently work on their task; (3) work on fine motor skills; and (4) listen to the leader only at the beginning of the activity for instructions. It was not until the middle of the Project TRiPS program that UT students started implementing more activities that required the students with disabilities to model their peers and TRiPS staff. By the last week, there was a noticeable difference seen in the students in the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 and how they interacted socially with their peers and TRiPS staff. This enhanced their social interaction skills by having them ask more questions, converse with their staff and/or peers to complete the task, and cheer on their partners/teammates during the activity. The activity implemented in week 7 had the students with disabilities do a balloon balance relay and required them to: (1) get out of their desks and move around; (2) communicate with their peers and staff; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) cooperate with others to complete the activity.

There was a noticeable progression in the way and types of activities that were being implemented from week 1 to week 7 in the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2 which helped improve the students with disabilities' "motor gestural positive" behaviors and "vocal verbal positive" behaviors. One of the noticeable changes of the activities from week 1 to week 7 was how students with disabilities worked independently in the beginning activities then started working in pairs and groups towards the end of the study. It is known that cooperative learning groups have been

advocated as a promising instructional strategy for promoting interaction among students with and without developmental disabilities (Carter & Hughes, 2007; Demchak, 2005; Salisbury, Gallucci, Palombaro, & Peck, 1995). Cooperative learning groups involve dividing the class into small groups of students, establishing common learning goals, delineating student roles within each group, and establishing interdependent contingencies (Carter & Hughes, 2007). This demonstrates why the two social interaction behaviors of the students with disabilities increased in frequency from week 1 to week 7 in the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2.

Also, Project TRiPS program is a service-learning course offered to UT college students. At the beginning of the Project TRiPS program, majority of the UT students appear to be nervous and intimidated to implement activities in front of their peers and the teacher of the Comprehensive Development Special Education Classroom. By the end of the Project TRiPS program, UT students appear to be more comfortable and relaxed since a lot of them were able to observe their peers implement activities in the CDCs. With the UT students improving on their implementation skills, they were able to help students with disabilities become more engaged in the activities. By being more engaged, students with disabilities were modeling more of what their TRiPS staff and peers were doing to complete the activities, which supports Chavis's (2012) work with the students being able to observe others and model their behaviors. They were also observing the activity leader throughout the activity to learn and retain certain behaviors the activity leader was demonstrating, which supports Bandura's (1971) work by the students demonstrating behaviors they have learned from modeling the leader's behavior.

With significant difference in the “motor gestural positive” behavior, there was also an increase in the frequency of students with disabilities displaying behaviors such as: (1) touch with hands; (2) hugs; (3) holding hands; (4) gives high fives; (5) gives a thumbs up; (6) waves; (7) raises hand to speak; (8) pointing at object/person; (9) nodding head up or down to respond to yes/no questions; and (10) cooperative responses involved with sharing materials of the activity being implemented (Shafer et al, 1984). Also, with significant difference in the “vocal verbal positive” behavior, there was an increase in frequency of the behaviors displayed by students with disabilities such as: (1) verbal or non-verbal responses to TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers during an activity being implemented; (2) saying, “hey you,” “yeah,” “uh oh,” or the person’s name they are trying to get attention from; (3) laughing or making utterances (e.g. squealing) that clearly indicate that the student is directing it towards TRiPS staff, peers, or teachers; and (4) smiling. All of these behaviors indicate that students with disabilities were socially learning from others by being engaged in the activities, communicating with his/her TRiPS staff and peers, and modeling actions of positive reinforcement from others.

Between School Comparison

After looking more in depth on why there was significant difference in the “response to environment” behavior during week 2 in the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 and during week 3 and 5 in the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2, there are some similarities in the activities implemented that could have increased the frequency of social interaction behaviors of the students with disabilities. Although one activity required the students with disabilities to get out of their desks and cooperate with others, the other two activities required them to stay seated

and work independently on their task. Knowing how the activities were different and that there was still significant difference in all 3 weeks indicates that the implementation style of the activity leaders helped increase the frequency of the students with disabilities social interaction behaviors. The UT students who implemented during these weeks presented clear and concise instructions continuously throughout the activity so that the students with disabilities were constantly getting guidance from the activity leader. By doing this they helped the students with disabilities observe the activity leader's actions, listen to instructions multiple times, and model what the activity leader was doing. Bandura (1969) noted that one exhibits observational learning after modeling stimuli and coding it into images or words for memory representation to retrieve and reproduce a response. This demonstrates how the students were socially learning from others with guidance and direction from the activity leader and communicating to their TRiPS staff verbally or nonverbally if they did not understand something.

With significant difference in the "response to environment" behavior, there was also an increase in the frequency of students with disabilities displaying behaviors such as: (1) being engaged in an activity being implemented with another TRiPS staff, peer, or teachers; (2) responding to TRiPS Staff or peers that shows a direct relationship to the TRiPS Staff's, peer's, or teacher's previous response; (3) participating in an interaction focusing on some type of activity with TRiPS Staff, peers, and/or teachers; and (4) any behavior made by the student with a disability that follows in close contiguity (3 seconds). According to Bandura (1969),

"In social-learning theory an identificatory event is defined as the occurrence of similarity between the behavior of a model and another person under conditions

where the model's behavior has served as the determinative cue for the matching responses. Although the matching process frequently involves reproduction of specific patterns of behavior, in many instances a common attribute abstracted from diverse responses is modeled" (p.217).

The researcher observed how the students with disabilities were modeling each other continuously by their "response to environment" behaviors. All of these behaviors demonstrate how students with disabilities improved on communicating with TRiPS staff and their peers, participated in activities, and responded to instructions. Students with disabilities were continuously learning from the activity leader's and TRiPS staff's modeled patterns and mentally rehearsing their actions to be able to remember what he/she was doing to accomplish the goal. This reflects Bandura's (1971) work when the students are able to mimic what they observe from others showing that they are learning.

Practical Application

By focusing on the significant differences within and between school comparisons assisted in recognizing why certain weeks and social interaction behaviors were significant. Once the significant weeks and social interaction behaviors were established, the researcher further examined the activities implemented on those weeks at the schools to see why the certain behavior(s) had significance. A lot of the activities implemented on the weeks with significance involved the students with disabilities to: (1) get out of their desks and move around; (2) communicate with their peers and staff; (3) work on gross motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) cooperate with others to complete the activity. There were also a few activities implemented on certain weeks with significance that involved opposite demonstrations

such as: (1) stay seated at their desk; (2) independently work on their task; (3) work on fine motor skills; (4) listen to the leader for directions throughout the activity; and (5) get in front of class individually to show what he/she made. Considering this difference, the additional examination was made in all the activities implemented on the weeks with significance. The activity leader's implementation style impacted the students with disabilities social interaction behaviors.

By examining the significant differences in depth, there were a couple of things that stood out that could have impacted the students' social interaction behaviors during Project TRiPS. One influence of Project TRiPS was the implementation style of the activity leader. According to Wozencroft (2008), a facilitators' leadership style and how they interact with those they work with derives positive outcomes from the program they initiate. Those activity leaders who implemented clear and concise instructions, continuously gave direction to students with disabilities throughout the activity, and were energetic and personable to everyone, influenced how the students with disabilities socially learned from others. The UT students of Project TRiPS are future practitioners and need to be trained more on how to implement effectively to get positive outcomes from students with disabilities to benefit from the Project TRiPS program.

Expanding on the first influence of Project TRiPS, UT students need to be trained to continuously give directions to students with disabilities throughout the activity being implemented. This study showed how those activity leaders who gave continuous direction and guidance throughout the activity helped students learn from their modeled patterns. Since the students with disabilities were able to observe and mimic the activity

leader and TRiPS staff continuously throughout the activity, their social interaction behaviors were positively impacted.

A second influence of Project TRiPS is how well the lesson plans were written to reflect a certain goal. Although the researcher provided UT students predetermined goals to incorporate into their lesson plans, several students did not understand how to create a lesson plan around the goal. The researcher trained the UT students at two formal meetings on what each of the school's lesson plans should look like, examples of activities they can implement, resources they can get ideas on what type of activity to utilize, and what specific goals they need to focus on for the students with disabilities. Although the researcher trained the UT students two times, having a lack of consistency with the structure and implementation of the activities may have had an effect on the within and between school comparisons. Considering this is a service learning course and UT students are learning the basics of a lesson plan, it might be beneficial to have protocols and/or practice guidelines for the UT students to follow. According to Buettner and Kolanowski (2003), having a strong theoretical base provides the framework for the selection, design, and implementation that successfully responds to behaviors. Selecting lesson plans with a strong design that have been proven to benefit students with disabilities in Project TRiPS in the past and give them to UT students to implement can influence students with disabilities' social interaction behaviors. Providing UT students with a guide line to follow and practice how to implement the predetermined goal and procedure of the activity can impact how students with disabilities learn. It would be a completed lesson plan the graduate teaching assistants or former UT students of Project TRiPS developed for the current UT students enrolled in the course to read and

understand, which they would take into the public schools and implement to a CDC. It may be beneficial to have a protocol to assign a goal to each of the public schools that partake in the program. This would give directions to the UT students on what to focus on while working with the student he/she is paired with for the semester. It would also give guidance to the UT students when implementing activities to students with disabilities. Having this kind of consistency in the Project TRiPS program can be beneficial for the students with disabilities as they work towards improving on one specific goal rather than multiple goals in one semester.

Limitations. Although every effort was made to be thorough, there were several limitations to the current study. First, the number of weeks was limited to 7 weeks instead of the full 10 weeks intended due to inclement weather and school closings. This made the data collection timeline smaller than what was originally intended. Having fewer weeks than anticipated made it more difficult to get sufficient results between and within school comparisons. Second, it was also more difficult to get sufficient results between and within school comparisons due to the amount of students with disabilities absent during the baseline data collection and other weeks during the 7-week study. Third, this study was limited to the number of times the TRiPS staff were scheduled to attend each public school each week. Since this is the requirement of the Project TRiPS program, it is out of the researcher's control to visit more than once a week to both the cooperative plus social interaction strategy at school #1 and the physical plus social interaction strategy at school #2. Consequently, this contributed to the small sample. Fourth, the therapeutic recreation activities students with disabilities were involved in were created and implemented by UT students who partake in the Project TRiPS program. The researcher

had to rely on the UT students to develop activities that were acceptable for the two strategies of the study: (1) physical plus social interaction activities and (2) cooperative plus social interaction activities. This was an issue due to UT students not understanding what kind of activities needed to be implemented that were appropriate for each of the strategies. Fifth, there were a limited number of students with disabilities who partook in the Project TRiPS program.

Future research would benefit from a bigger sample size, more participants, more weeks to observe, multiple baselines, and a consistency of activities implemented for each strategy. By doing this, there would be more data to analyze between and within the schools. To get more data on students with disabilities and have a bigger sample size, more schools need to be included. It is recommended to attend five of the ten TRiPS public schools to collect data for future research. By including five schools will help make the sample size larger. Moreover, additional weeks should be included for observing a full academic semester and attending every TRiPS session at a public school from the start to end of the Project TRiPS program without external factors interfering such as inclement weather or other academic restrictions. In addition, more baseline observations should be incorporated for future research by going into the public schools at least three times before the Project TRiPS program begins. This would allow for a better comparison between the baseline and the two strategies. Finally, there could be predetermined 30 minute lesson plans designed by the researcher for the TRiPS staff to utilize and implement each week. This would help to ensure that all lesson plans address the strategies in the manner in which the researcher intended. Therefore, future research could look at the growth of the TRiPS staff implementing activities overtime.

CONCLUSION

This study examined five different behaviors of students with disabilities through the lens of the social learning theory. There were some significant increases in certain weeks on three social interaction behaviors: (1) “motor gestural positive” behavior; (2) “vocal verbal positive” behavior; and (3) “response to environment” behavior (Shafer et al, 1984). Although this study did not support there being a lot of significant increases seen in the frequency of students with disabilities’ social interaction behaviors throughout the 7 weeks, it did provide a further examination of the few weeks that did show significant difference. With this study further examining the activities implemented on the weeks where there were significant differences, the researcher believes that Project TRiPS needs to: (1) train UT students to implement therapeutic activities effectively; and (2) have protocols and/or practice guidelines for UT students to follow. It is critical and imperative that future practitioners (UT students) be trained to implement effectively in order to derive positive outcomes from the Project TRiPS program for students with disabilities (Wozencroft, 2008).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Appendix A. Parental Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

Title: **Project TRiPS for Students with Disabilities**

Researcher: Heather Shultz

This research will look at how students socially interact with their peers and University of Tennessee students during Project TRiPS. Project TRiPS is a course offered to University of Tennessee students each semester to educate and train them to go into public schools and implement activities to students. Participating students will be paired with one or two UT students and will partake in the different activities a UT student implements each visit for the duration of a 10-week period. The intended purpose of this research is to see how effective the University of Tennessee, Project TRiPS is for students in the Knox County public schools that we serve.

The researcher will be recording social interaction behaviors of the students in the class for 30 minutes each week, for the duration of a 10-week period. I will keep data on how well each student does during each visit of Project TRiPS. I will be observing their behaviors and recording them in a checklist to gather data for UT's program, Project TRiPS. We will share these data with other people when we report the results of the study in an education publication. No one will know the student's name, class, school, or school district. In addition, no one will know the teacher's name. Data obtained from this study will be recorded and stored in a locked cabinet and office.

We are asking that you allow your child to be a member of this group of students. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your child will be a part of Project TRiPS, in which he/she may have already partaken in previous years.

If you agree, you or your child may stop participating at any time. If you do not want your child to participate, their regular instruction will continue without interruption.

If you have any questions you can contact the researcher, Heather Shultz at: 1914 Andy Holt Avenue, HPER 361, Knoxville, TN 37996; Phone: (937) 974-6047; Email: hshultz@vols.utk.edu.

I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign below. Also, you may stop participating at any time without penalty.

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

Appendix B. Student Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

Title: **Project Therapeutic Recreation in Public Schools for Students with Disabilities**

Researcher: Heather Shultz

You are invited to participate in helping Project TRiPS grow in Knox County Public Schools. We want to find out if Project TRiPS helps you in school each week.

I will keep data on how well you do each week during Project TRiPS. I will share how you did with other people after I watch you do activities each week. However, no one will know your name, class or school.

I am asking that you be a member of this group of students. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You will get to do activities with UT students each week for 10 weeks total.

If you have any questions you can contact the researcher, Heather Shultz at: 1914 Andy Holt Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996; Phone: (937) 974-6047; Email: hshultz@vols.utk.edu.

I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep, along with your caregiver. If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign below. Also, you may stop participating at any time without penalty.

Student's Name

Date

Student's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

Appendix C. Teacher Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

Title: **Project Therapeutic Recreation in Public Schools for Students with Disabilities**

Researcher: Heather Shultz

This research will look at how students socially interact with their peers and University of Tennessee students during Project TRiPS. Project TRiPS is a course offered to University of Tennessee students each semester to educate and train them to go into public schools and implement activities to students. Participating students will be paired with one or two UT students and will partake in the different activities a UT student implements each visit for the duration of about a 10-week period. The intended purpose of this research is to see how effective the University of Tennessee, Project TRiPS is for students in the Knox County public schools that we serve.

I will be recording social interaction behaviors of the students in the class for 30 minutes each week, for the duration of about a 10-week period. I will keep data on how well each student does during each visit of Project TRiPS. I will be observing their behaviors and recording them in a checklist to gather data for UT's program, Project TRiPS. We will share this data with other people when we report the results of the study in an education publication. No one will know the student's name, class, school, or school district. In addition, no one will know the teacher's name. Data obtained from the study will be recorded and stored in a locked cabinet and office.

I am asking that you be a member of this group of teachers. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you have any questions you can contact the researcher, Heather Shultz at: 1914 Andy Holt Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996; Phone: (937) 974-6047; Email: hshultz@vols.utk.edu.

I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign below. Also, you may stop participating at any time without penalty.

Teacher's Name Date

Teacher's Signature Date

APPENDIX D

Appendix D. Behavior checklist charts

School #1		Date:		Time:	
	Motor-Gestural (Positive)	Motor-Gestural (Negative)	Vocal-Verbal (Positive)	Vocal-Verbal (Negative)	Response to Environment
Participant #1					
Participant #2					
Participant #3					
Participant #4					
Participant #5					
Participant #6					
Participant #7					
Participant #8					
Participant #9					
Total number of times behavior occurred					

School #2		Date:		Time:	
	Motor-Gestural (Positive)	Motor-Gestural (Negative)	Vocal-Verbal (Positive)	Vocal-Verbal (Negative)	Response to Environment
Participant #1					
Participant #2					
Participant #3					
Participant #4					
Participant #5					
Participant #6					
Participant #7					
Participant #8					
Participant #9					
Total number of times behavior occurred					

APPENDIX E

Appendix E. Mean Scores from Cooperative plus Social Interaction Strategy in School #1 and Physical plus Social Interaction Strategy in School #2.

Strategies	Physical plus social interaction at school #1							Cooperative plus social interaction at school #2						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Motor/Gestural Positive	0.67	1.88	0.5	2.89	1.56	0	4.38	1.50	1.57	1.14	2.44	3.25	3.56	3.11
Motor/Gestural Negative	0.11	0.13	0.25	.00	0.22	0	0.38	0.25	.00	.00	0.33	.00	.00	0.33
Vocal/Verbal Positive	2.78	3.5	4.88	4.33	3.00	0	5.25	3.75	5.00	3.29	2.89	2.63	3.67	3.22
Vocal/Verbal Negative	.00	0.25	.00	.00	0.33	0	.00	.00	.00	.29	.11	.00	.00	.22
Response to Environment	1.67	3.5	3.38	2.89	5.67	0	2.63	5.00	6.14	1.57	3.22	2.75	2.78	2.00

APPENDIX F

Appendix F. Lesson Plan #1

Activity: Busy Balloons and Busy Bees

Goal: To improve cooperation and social skills

Objectives:

1. During the Activity, each student will correctly match with his or her partner 100% of the time.
2. By the end of the activity each student will successfully hold the balloon with his or her partner 3 out of 4 times.
3. During the activity the student will distinguish between right and left at least 50% of the time.

Procedure:

1. Before the activity, the leader will move the desk out of the center of the room.
2. The leader will explain the activity:
 - a. Leader will explain how each student will be assigned a partner.
 - b. Leader should then show the class how to stand back to back with their partner.
 - c. Leader will go over different body parts and demonstrate how to connect them with their partner.
 - d. Leader will then explain that after paired up back to back, the leader will call out two body parts; the players quickly connect these body parts (e.g., elbow to elbow, knee to knee, hand to foot, left hand to right shoulder.)
 - e. Leader will then explain that she will announce “busy bee” and the students will then need to find a new partner.
 - f. Leader will then explain that after a few minutes, the leader will introduce balloons for the students.
 - g. Leader will then explain that they will have to balance the balloon between the two body parts called out.
 - h. When “busy balloons” is called, one player will hold the balloon while the other finds a new partner with a balloon.
 - i. Students should not throw, pop, or step on balloons.
3. The leader will answer any questions that the students or support staff has.
4. Each support staff will help their students or any others if they need assistance or have questions about the activity.
5. The students will then each be paired up with a partner and stand back to back.
6. TRiPS staff will be paired with the students and assist them in knowing what to do when the words are called out. .
7. Once the students are paired up and standing back to back, the leader will start the game by saying “elbow to elbow”.

8. After the students and staff have connect their elbows, the leader will continue calling out body part connections (e.g., elbow to elbow, knee to knee, hand to foot, left hand to right shoulder.)
9. After students have found their fellow animals they must stay blindfolded until all animals are grouped together.
10. After the students have matched their body parts, the leader will call out “Busy Bee” and the students will need to find a new partner.
11. REPEAT with different body parts.
12. After each student has gone with every student, the leader will give one balloon to each pair of students.
13. The leader will then call out different body parts and the students need to hold the balloon between the two of them with the named body parts.
14. When the leader calls out “Busy Balloons”, one player will hold the balloon while the other finds a new partner with a balloon.
15. REPEAT with different body parts.

Balloon Lift

1. Have students stand in a circle side by side.
2. The first student will be handed the balloon to start the activity.
3. The students will then try to pass the balloon in the air between the circle of students without letting the balloon touch the ground
4. Ask them to limit themselves to hitting the balloon with different body parts (only use your elbows, fingers, head, knees, feet, etc.) to challenge them.
5. Time students to see how long they can keep the balloon in the air.
6. Repeat a few times to see if they can better their time.

Equipment:

- Balloons (already blown up)

Adaptations:

1. If any student has trouble with gross motor skills, TRiPS staff may get onto the floor and help them find their partner/body part.
2. If any student has a hearing impairment the TRiPS staff can help guide the student to their proper group. With these students it is ok to allow for them to watch the adult to see which body part she is pointing to and know to switch partners by a certain sign.

Evaluation:

Upon completion of the activity, each student will have:

1. Correctly identified their body parts.
2. Correctly found their new partner.
3. Used teamwork in finding and keeping the balloon up with their partner.

APPENDIX G

Appendix G. Lesson Plan #2

Activity: Love Potion

Goal: To improve Gross Motor skills.

Objectives:

1. While making their “Love Potions”, the students will scoop at least 3 spoonfuls of pudding into their individual cups.
2. During the activity, the participants will stir their pudding after placing the candy in their cups at least 5 times.
3. During Valentine’s Bingo, the participants will place the candy hearts in the correct square with 75% accuracy.

Procedure:

1. Before the activity, the leader will have previously made the pudding and candy in the bag.
2. Before the students begin, the will wash their hands.
3. Before the activity begins, the leader will set up each table with spoons, individual cups, bowls with pudding, and individual baggies of candy.
4. The leader will explain the activity before the students begin.
 - a. Leader will explain the steps of making the “Love Potion”
 - b. Leader will show what materials will be utilized.
 - c. Leader will encourage full participation.
5. After the directions have been explained, each student will work with a TRiPS member and begin the activity.
6. The students will begin to scoop out the pudding into their individual cups.
7. Each participant will then place different candy into their pudding cups.
8. After the candy has been placed, each student will use a spoon to stir their pudding.
9. Once their “Love Potion” has been made, the students will have the opportunity to eat their food if they wish.
10. The students will then be prompted to start the Valentine’s Bingo activity.
11. Before starting, the leader will set up the tables with bingo cards and a bowl of candy hearts.
12. Before the students begin the bingo, the leader will explain the activity.
 - a. Leader will explain how to play bingo
 - b. Leader will show how to use the candy hearts
 - c. Leader will explain when to yell “BINGO”
13. After the directions have been explained, the leader will begin to call out bingo numbers
14. The students will play bingo until the class is over.

Equipment:

1. Pudding
2. M&M's
3. Spoons
4. Cups
5. Food coloring
6. Candy Hearts
7. Bingo Cards

Adaptations:

1. If a student needs assistance in placing their candy or stirring in their Love Potion, the TRiPS staff can use hand-over-hand technique to assist.
2. If a student cannot have sugar, the activity staff can give them a replacement sugar-free candy.
3. If a student needs assistance in placing their candy hearts while playing bingo, the TRiPS staff can use hand-over-hand technique to assist.

Evaluation:

- During the craft activity, the students will stir the pudding 4 out of the 5 times,
- During the Valentines Bingo, each participant will place the candy hearts on the correct square 75% of the time
- During Simon Says, the students will follow the directions 75% of the time.

APPENDIX H

Appendix H. Lesson Plan #3

Activity: Bead and Food Bracelets

Goal: To improve physical and social skills

Objectives:

1. During the activity, each student will make at least one bracelet.
2. During the activity, each student will put at least 5 beads/apple jacks onto the string(bracelet).
3. During the activity, students will show at least one of their bracelets to the class.

Procedure:

1. Before the activity begins, the leader will obtain string, beads, apple jacks, scissors, and bowls.
2. Before the activity, the leader will need to cut the string ball into three smaller sections, about 3 feet long each, for each table.
3. Before the activity, the leader will place two bowls, the cut string, and a pair of scissors on each table.
4. Before the activity, the leader will fill one bowl at each table with assorted beads and the other bowl with apple jacks.
5. The leader then will explain the activity to the students.
6. The student will measure their wrist (or measure whatever they want to), and cut the string with the help of the TRiPS staff.
7. The student will tie a knot at the bottom of the string.
8. The students will pick out several beads/apple jacks that they wish to make a bracelet out of.
9. The student will put the beads/apple jacks on one by one until they are satisfied with their bracelet.
10. The student will put the two string ends together and tie a tight knot.
11. Students may repeat this process until they want or until materials run out.
12. After all students are done with their bracelets, each student will show at least one bracelet to the class.
13. The leader will gather all extra materials and make sure area is clean.

Equipment:

- String
- Scissors
- Assorted beads
- Apple jacks
- Bowls (at least 6)

Adaptations:

1. If student has rigidity or low motor movement, TRiPS staff can use hand-over-hand technique to assist participant.
2. If student has a visual impairment, the TRiPS staff will describe each step using very detailed descriptions.

Evaluation:

Upon completing the activity, the participants will have:

1. made at least one bracelet
2. put at least 5 beads/apple jacks onto the string (bracelet)
3. shown at least one bracelet to the class.

APPENDIX I

Appendix I. Lesson Plan #4

Activity: Switch, Change, and Rotate

Goal: To improve cooperation and social skills

Objectives:

4. During the activity, each student will be the lead player at least once.
5. By the end of the activity each student will have switched, changed, and rotated 2 times.
6. During the activity, each student will have teamed with each classmate at least once.

Procedure:

16. Before the activity, the leader will move the desks out of the center of the room.
17. The leader will explain the activity:
 - a. Leader will explain how each student will be assigned to a team.
 - b. Leader should then show the class how to stand in a line with their teammates.
 - c. Leader will then have the students in each group number off from 1-3 (1 being the lead player, 2 being the middle player, and 3 being the back player).
 - d. Leader will then explain that after standing in a line with their teammates, the leader will call out one of three words, "Switch," "Change," and "Rotate."
 - e. Leader will then explain that when she calls out the word "Switch," the lead player and the back player will switch places with each other.
 - f. Leader will then explain that when she calls out the word "Change," the players will turn and go the opposite direction (making the lead player the new back player and the back player the new lead player).
 - g. Leader will then explain that when she calls out the word "Rotate," the lead player will go to the back of the line, and the middle player will become the new lead player.
 - h. Students should not move out of their lines until instructed to do so.
18. The leader will answer any questions that the students or support staff has.
19. Each support staff will help their students or any others if they need assistance or have questions about the activity.
20. The students will then each be paired up in teams of three standing in a single file line.
21. TRiPS staff will be paired with the students and assist them in knowing what to do when the words are called out.
22. Once the students are paired up in teams of three and are standing in a line, the leader will start the game by saying either "Switch," "Change," or "Rotate."

23. After the students and staff have completed the task, the leader will continue calling out the words “Switch,” “Change,” and “Rotate.”
24. REPEAT until each player has been the lead, middle, and back player.
25. After each student has been each player, they will then find two different students to team up with.
26. The leader will then begin calling out “Switch,” “Change,” and “Rotate.”
27. REPEAT until each student has teamed with the other students.

Hit and Switch

7. Have students stand in two single file lines across from each other with a line separating the two teams.
8. The first student will be handed the balloon to start the activity.
9. The students will then try to hit the balloon back and forth to each team.
10. Ask them to limit themselves to hitting the balloon once to challenge them.
11. Time students to see how long it takes them to get each team to cross the line.
12. Repeat a few times to see if they can better their time.

Equipment:

- Balloons (already blown up)

Adaptations:

3. If any student has trouble with gross motor skills, TRiPS staff may help move the students to the correct spot.
4. If any student has a hearing impairment the TRiPS staff can help guide the student to their proper group. With these students it is ok to allow for them to find the correct spot and/or group by lip reading.

Evaluation:

Upon completion of the activity, each student will have:

4. Correctly identified the spot that coincides with the word called out.
5. Correctly found their new partners.
6. Used teamwork in finding the correct spot and new partners.

APPENDIX J

Appendix J. Lesson Plan #5

Activity: Friendship Art

Goal: To improve cooperation and social skills

Objectives:

1. During the Activity, each student will pick a partner by themselves.
2. at the end of the activity each student will answer at least, 2 of the 5 questions.
3. During the activity the student will mix all three colors with their partners hands.

Procedure:

1. Before the activity, the leader will lay out paint on a large piece of paper.
2. The leader will explain the activity:
 - a. Leader will tell the students they need to pick one partner to work with.
 - b. The leader will then tell the students that with their partner they will stick their hands in the paint and rub their hands together then put it on the sheet of paper.
3. The leader will answer any questions that the students or support staff has.
4. Each support staff will help their students or any others if they need assistance or have questions about the activity.
5. The students will then pick a partner.
6. Once the students all have a partner they will put on art shirts and stand at a place at the table with all three paints.
7. Once the students are separated leader will start the game by saying "GO".
8. Once everyone have found a space, then the students will put their art shirts on and put their hand in a paint color of their choice (just not the same color as their partner)
9. Once they have stuck a color on their hands they will rub their hands together and try to guess what color it will make.
10. Once they have done this they will both put their hands on the sheet of paper.
11. After that the trips staff will wash the students hands off with a baby wipe.
12. REPEAT.

Spring Break Adventures

1. The students will get a piece of paper and coloring utensils.
2. Once the students have gotten their materials they will draw a picture of what they did on spring break.
3. After they have had time to draw this, they will all take turns telling the class what the picture is.

Equipment:

- paint
- paper

- color utensils
- baby wipes
- art shirts

Adaptations:

1. If any student has trouble with rubbing their hands in the paint and sticking it against their partners or drawing their picture the TRiPS staff will help them with hand over hand..
- 2.

Evaluation:

Upon completion of the activity, each student will have:

1. During the Activity, each student will pick a partner by themselves.
2. at the end of the activity each student will answer at least, 2 of the 5 questions.
 - "What does the paint feel like on your hands?"
 - "What do you think will happen if you hold hands and mix your colors?"
 - "Can you create that color again?"
 - "How many different colors can you make?"
 - How can you make that color brighter?"
3. During the activity the student will mix all three colors with their partners hands.

APPENDIX K

Appendix K. Lesson Plan #6

Activity: Easter Bunnies

Goal: To improve fine motor skills

Objectives:

1. During the activity, the student will make one larger and one smaller pom-pom.
2. During the activity, the student will glue the two pom-poms together using a hot glue gun.
3. During the activity, the student will cut and glue felt to the pom-poms to create the ears for the bunny.

Procedures:

1. Before the activity, the activity leader will set out the supplies for the class.
2. The TRiPS leader will explain the activity and show an example.
3. The TRiPS leaders will show how to make the pom-poms with the yarn.
4. The student will choose which color yarn they would like to use.
5. The student will then create the pom-poms.
6. TRiPS staff will offer guidance when necessary.
7. The student will then glue the two pom-poms together using the hot glue gun.
8. The TRiPS leader will show how to create the faces for the bunnies.
9. The student will then choose and cut out felt for the bunny's ears.
10. The students will choose eyes and miniature pom-poms to create the face and tail.
11. The student will glue the pieces to the designated pom-pom to complete the bunny.

Equipment:

- Assortment of yarn
- Scissors
- Hot glue gun
- Regular glue
- Felt
- Miniature crafting pom-poms
- Googly eyes

Adaptations:

- If the student needs assistance while gluing or cutting, the TRiPS staff may use hand over hand assistance.
- If any student has a visual impairment, the TRiPS staff may present an in depth verbal description of the activity to the student.

- If any student has a hearing impairment, the TRiPS staff will demonstrate the activity step-by-step as needed while also promoting independent achievement.

Evaluation:

Upon completing the activity, the students will have:

1. Made one larger and one smaller pom-pom.
2. Have glued the two pom-poms together using a hot glue gun.
3. Have cut and glued felt to the pom-poms to create the ears for the bunny.

APPENDIX L

Appendix L. Lesson Plan #7

Activity: Balloon Balance Relay

Goal: To improve gross motor skills

Objectives:

4. During the activity, will walk down and back with their partner while balancing a balloon between elbows in at least one race.
5. During the activity, the student will walk down and back while bouncing a balloon at least five times in the air.
6. During the activity, the student will roll the hula hoop around obstacles down and back at least once.

Procedures:

12. Before the activity, the activity leader will collect twelve balloons and blow them up as well as four hula hoops.
13. The activity leader will begin by distributing one balloon to each student and putting tape down as a starting line across the floor.
14. The activity leader will give instructions on each relay that will take place.
15. The students will split up into two teams and line up with their partners for the first relay.
16. The student will begin the first relay by balancing a balloon between themselves and another partner with their elbows.
17. The student will complete the second relay by individually bouncing a balloon at least five times into the air while walking down and back.
18. The activity leader will then set out obstacles (chairs, backpacks, etc.) in the path of the race and divide students into groups of 3.
19. The activity leader will give each team one hula hoop and give instructions on the relay.
20. The student will roll the hula hoop around each obstacle to the end and back during the relay.
21. The activity leader will collect materials and set obstacles back in their correct place.

Equipment:

- Twelve inflated balloons
- Three hula hoops
- Duct tape

Adaptations:

- If the student has stiffness in their limbs, the TRiPS staff can use hand over hand assistance to assist in the activity.
- If the student uses a wheel chair, the TRiPS staff can assist them by pushing them down and back and use hand over hand to help roll the hula hoop and bounce the balloon.

Evaluation:

Upon completing the activity, the students will have:

4. Completed one relay with a partner by balancing between elbows.
5. Completed one relay by bouncing a balloon at least five times while walking down and back.
6. Rolled the hula hoop around obstacles down and back for one relay.

VITA

Heather Shultz was born in Springboro, Ohio to the parents of Margie and Greg Shultz. She is an only child. Heather attended Springboro High School. After graduation she headed south to Knoxville, Tennessee to attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in Psychology as well as a minor in Child and Family Studies. She was accepted into graduate school at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for Recreation and Sport Management with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation. Heather accepted a graduate teaching assistantship at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the Therapeutic Recreation Program. She will complete a Therapeutic Recreation internship at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina. Heather will graduate with a Master of Science degree in Recreation and Sport Management with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation. She has plans to pursue her doctoral degree in the near future.