

**EDUCATING ERIC Q:
A Student with an Emotional-Behavioural Disability in an
Inclusive Education System**

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This qualitative study adopted a social ecological approach to explain the support structures that were in place to mediate the education needs of Eric Q, a student with an emotional-behavioural disability in a general education classroom, at a primary school in Trinidad and Tobago. That exploration also gave light to how the supportive elements were being used. Purposeful sampling was used to select the eight participants and data used in the analysis were from interviews, observations of lessons, and a questionnaire. A Semantic Differential Scale was used with Eric. The findings indicated the presence of elements of support, but an absence of (a) teacher professional development related directly to managing Eric's challenging behaviours, (b) a positive partnership between the school and Eric's home, (c) motivational supports to Eric in the classroom, (d) a broad-based approach to the provision of social work support, and (e) a lack of teacher self-efficacy for educating Eric in the general education classroom. The insights gained from the study can sensitize a range of stakeholders in education, within a Trinidad and Tobago context, to issues that may need to be addressed for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Introduction

Globally, educators are faced with a worrisome growth in the occurrence and classroom manifestation of challenging and disruptive behaviours that impede instruction and student learning, as well as a rapidly accelerating number of students who are failing to develop reading competency; many

of those students have been identified as having an emotional-behavioural disorder (EBD) (Kamps & Tankersley, 1996; Trout, Nordness, Pierce, & Epstein, 2003). Educating students identified as having an EBD in the general education classroom is perhaps one of the most complex and daunting task for teachers and one of the most difficult challenges facing public education today (Osher, Osher, & Smith, 1994; Trout et al., 2003). The changing intensity and growing number of children in public schools who have an EBD have created an urgent need for educators to develop a fundamental conceptualization of how to meet socio-emotional, academic, and behavioural needs of those at-risk students, and broaden their understandings of support for meaningful inclusion (Forness & Kavale, 2000; Trout et al., 2004).

While almost all teachers in general education classrooms have at least one or two students who have an EBD, and while inclusive education can serve to effectively educate those students, that success is dependent upon the provision of appropriate support (Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004). Nevertheless, the literature reviewed articulated issues that emerge out of a lack of provision of professional development opportunities, clear communication of higher expectations for teaching students with EBD, social work services, motivational supports, and home-school partnership which are key support structures required for meaningful inclusion of this at-risk student population.

Inclusive Education

Throughout the world, many definitions of inclusive education have emerged that range from “a set of principles which ensures that the student with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the community in every respect” (Uditsky, 1993, p. 88) to, extending the scope of ordinary schools to include a greater diversity of children (Clark, Dyson, & Millward, 1995). Within the last thirty years, there has been a growing consensus among policy makers in education fields that all children have the right to be educated together. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004) which posited that all children with disabilities have the right to receive their education in the least restrictive environment, and the UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) which asserted that general education classrooms should accommodate all children regardless of their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, linguistic or other conditions, promote principles of inclusive education.

By the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, general education was considered by policy-makers in non-Caribbean countries to be the least restrictive environment for all learners. That thinking gave rise to the

provision of support services into the regular classroom, and the provision of a continuum of support became the principle for successful inclusive education (Villa & Thousand, 2003). The Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago followed international trends in the key objectives of establishing as priorities accessibility to educational opportunities for all children, and the delivery of quality education to citizens, at all levels of the education system. In seeking to effect those priorities, the Student Support Services Division was established to provide on-going support to all students in the education system wherever needed. Local initiatives of inclusion were situated within the Ministry of Education's reform and Seamless Education approach which was designed to facilitate all learners from Early Childhood Care and Education to tertiary education, inclusive of those like Eric Q who might otherwise be marginalized.

Eric Q: A Brief Description

Eric Q had reportedly been exhibiting externalizing behaviours for seven years. He reportedly demonstrated the following behavioural characteristics to the extent that they were significantly apparent at both his school and home during that period of time:

- Fighting, hitting others
- Blaming others for his actions
- Destroying property
- Becoming angered, annoyed, and upset easily
- Agitating and provoking his peers to a level of verbal or physical assault
- Making inappropriate comments to others, for example, students and teachers
- Bothering other students who are trying to listen or work
- Not resolving conflict situations appropriately
- Grabbing things away from others
- Indicating that no one likes him and no one cares about him

- Failing to work appropriately with peers
- Becoming physically aggressive with teacher

Due to the nature of these characteristics, Eric's disability was categorized as a conduct disability. His word recognition, reading comprehension, and overall reading level were two years below his then current class level. While Eric could successfully be educated within a system of inclusion, certain support structures had to be in place to make his inclusion meaningful.

Purpose of the Paper

This study was done to describe the service provided for Eric under inclusive education and proposed to do so by determining what supports for meaningful inclusion were in place at Eric's school, and how the supports were being used. The objectives of this paper are twofold, namely to (1) identify the supports present at the participating school and (2) describe how the supports were being used.

Delimitations of the Study

The investigation was delimited to eight participants and one primary school located in Trinidad.

Significance

This small-scale study can serve to enhance understandings of the kinds of support structures and networks needed for the meaningful inclusion of one of the most challenging categories of students, and can sensitize teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers at the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago to issues that may need to be addressed for successful implementation and maintenance of inclusive education.

Theoretical Overview

Inclusion is not just a school issue; it extends to the communities in which the children and their families live. Inclusion is not only a disability issue but is built on the premise that all children are members of families, communities, and a general society that contribute toward the shaping of their character; the conditions of which often influence their behaviours at school (Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005). Educator's beliefs about inclusion influence its implementation, and the perceptions of families, teachers, and administrators about inclusion

influence how inclusion practices are planned and carried out (Wagner et al., 2005). Thus, what emerges as important in exploring inclusion practices is to be explicit in discussing the stakeholders' perceptions at all levels of the student's environment. Social ecology is a theoretical framework that provides for a study of people in an environment and the influences on one another (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, & Rinderle, 2006). Oetzel and colleagues add that this framework allows for the integration of multiple levels and contexts to establish the "big picture" (p.126). A socio-ecological orientation, as it pertains to educating children with EBD, provides the foundation for this kind of interaction among various subsystems.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory was most aligned with the contextual background, problem, and purpose of this study, and facilitated the exploration not only of Eric's perceptions based on his experience of support but allowed the voices of key stakeholders at different levels of his network to be heard. Bronfenbrenner posited that in order to understand human development, one must consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs. Ecological systems theory describes the environment in terms of four levels - macro-system, exo-systems, meso-systems, and micro-systems (Bronfenbrenner). *Micro-systems* refer to the relationships between a developing person and the immediate environment, such as school and family. *Meso-systems* refer to the organizational factors that shape the environment within which interpersonal relations occur, for example, the relations between Eric's home and the school in which he was a member. *Exo-systems* comprise the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that directly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the person lives. For Eric, an example of this was the relationship between his home and his mother's workplace, while for his mother, an example was the relation between Eric's school and the neighbourhood peer group. The *macrosystem* is composed of the overarching pattern of the other subsystems that are characteristic of a given culture, with particular reference to the beliefs systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, hazards, and opportunity structures that are embedded in each of these broader systems (Bronfenbrenner).

The Literature Review

Students with Emotional-Behavioural Disability (EBD)

Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1982) defines EBD as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree which adversely affects educational performance:

1. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intelligence, sensory or health factors.
2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
3. Inappropriate types of behaviour or feelings under normal circumstances.
4. A general mood of unhappiness or depression.
5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
6. The term may also include children who have schizophrenia. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance (Section 300.7 (c) (4) (i)).

To be eligible, the student must have a problem in at least one of the aforementioned areas, to a marked degree, and to the point that it adversely affects educational performance (intensity), over a long period of time (duration), in two different settings, one of which is the school (pattern) (Forness & Kavale, 2000; Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). Students with EBD can be grouped into two categories that tend to overlap; internalizing and externalizing disorders (Coleman & Vaughn, 2000). Coleman and Vaughn refer to externalizing behaviour as being “uncontrollable, aggressive, acting out, and conduct disorder” (p. 25).

Children with EBD were historically treated within restrictive community and school settings through the use of behavioural- change procedures commonly used with children classified as being mentally ill. In spite of the representation of EBD as a single federal grouping of educational disability, students with EBD may possess a range of educational and social issues (Wagner et al., 2005; Walker, Zeller, Close, Webber, & Gresham, 1999). In the dimension of conduct disability, (a multivariate of teacher-rated behaviours such as disobedience, aggression, and irritability), students identified as EBD far exceed their peers without EBD across all grade levels and across genders (Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004; Wagner et al., 2005).

Inclusive Education and the Education of Students with EBD

Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, and Shaw (2002) stated “inclusion is seen to involve the identification and minimizing of barriers to learning and participation and the maximizing of resources to support learning participation” (p. 13). When applied to education, inclusion is primarily about responding to student diversity, respecting differences, being open to new ideas, and empowering all levels of stakeholders (Booth et al., 2002; Carrington, 1999). Hegarty (2001) describes inclusion as a process whereby the school reforms its curricula and organizational provisions in response to students’ individual differences. Stockall and Gartin (2002) and Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001) similarly opine that inclusion implies a sense of acceptance of all students. That process is often viewed as having more to do with principles of teacher attitude and response to individual differences than with specific instructional configurations. Such thinking has led to concentrated emphasis on physical placements and affective components with neglect of other aspects of the educational process (Stockall & Gartin, 2002; Voltz et al., 2001).

Generally, students with an emotional-behavioural disorder have been found to perform less well academically than their peers who have learning disabilities, and those who do not have disabilities (Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004; Wehby, Lane, & Falk, 2003). Sutherland, Copeland, and Wehby (2001) reported that in the classroom setting, teachers provided less direct instruction to students identified as high aggressors, and such students received less attention educationally. The prominent idea was that the behaviour of students with EBD needed to be controlled before they could be taught, therefore placing less emphasis on their academic needs (Wehby et al., 2003). Without knowing the challenges and strengths of students with EBD within specific content and skill areas, it was difficult to know what interventions were necessary to improve educational outcomes (Trout et al., 2003). Additionally, the limited attention given to their academic needs created a major gap in understanding how to meet the academic needs of this at-risk group, resulting in outcomes of high rates of absenteeism, and low grade-point averages (Trout et al., 2003).

If all children should learn together, then the diverse needs must not only be recognized, but there must be some proactive response to meeting those needs. Nevertheless, school systems, in many cases, do not individualize programmes for special needs students (Sutherland et al., 2001). Consequently, these students generally do not receive the special attention they need and to which they are entitled within inclusive

education (Sutherland et al., 2001; Trout et al., 2003). What thus occurs is actually descriptive of exclusionary practices.

Motivation as Support

Bai (2006) defines motivation as “an internal state that serves to activate or energize behaviour and give it direction” (p. 7). The behavioural and academic challenges that students with EBD present require teachers who are motivated to work with this population of students and place an onus on schools to provide ongoing motivational supports to teachers. In school settings, teachers exhibit both internal and external motivation. Internal motivation includes their personal values and beliefs that they use to decide what they want to achieve, while external motivation is acquired over time. This is influenced by their accumulated experiences, interactions with others, education, training, and environment (Bai, 2006; Margolis & McCabe, 2006). To motivate students, it is important for school administrators to motivate teachers to accept responsibility for student learning. Teachers who are motivated exhibit efficacy, goal setting, and persistence. For struggling learners (like many students with EBD), one of the keys to success is having teachers who can motivate them to believe that they can succeed (Alderman, 2004; Margolis & McCabe, 2006). If students with EBD are to rise to the expectations of higher standards, the kinds of motivation that teachers provide can be critical to their academic success (Alderman, 2004).

Expectations for Teaching Students with EBD

Teachers often identify students with EBD as the least desirable to have in the classroom and many are uncertain about how to best serve students at risk for learning and behaviour problems (Lane, Gresham, & O’Shaughnessy, 2002; Wagner et al., 2005). Hayling, Cook, Gresham, State, and Kern (2008) state that burdensome class sizes, confusing role expectations by school administrators, and a lack of administrative support have been identified by teachers as examples of negative experiences they have encountered in attempting to educate students with EBD in general classrooms. Hayling and colleagues as well as Trout et al. (2003) stress that support from school leaders, in treating with an at-risk category of students perceived as in need of more individualized and intensive services, is critical.

It is important for teachers to convey clear expectations to their students. Central to improving student outcomes for low-performing students are the provision of clear expectations for instruction and student learning, and dedicating resources to build the knowledge and skills of

teachers (Alderman, 2004; Hayling et al., 2008). Within inclusive education, school administrators are expected to provide teachers with the support of well-defined expectations for improving the performance of students with EBD (Wehby et al., 2003). Teacher professional development plays a key role in that support system.

Professional Development as Support

Although teachers generally support high standards for teaching and learning, many are not prepared and need additional support to implement effective teaching practices based on high standards. Sawka, McCurd, and Mannella (2002) and Sutherland et al. (2001) described the academic performance of students with EBD as inversely related to their antisocial behaviour. Those researchers similarly suggested that teachers need professional development training for specific instructional and behaviour management strategies that are designed to improve students' academic and adaptive skills. Sutherland et al. (2001) emphasized the perceptions that students have of teachers and administrators can impede student learning and impact their behaviour in the classroom. In addition to the use of professional development supports, teachers also need support in understanding the importance of how they are perceived by their students. In more effectively addressing challenging behaviours of students with EBD, working hand-in-hand with the provision of professional development, is ready access to and use of the services of support personnel such as those provided by school social workers (Sutherland et al., 2001).

The Social Worker's Role

Over the last twenty years, educators have highlighted the growing need for expanding traditional school services to accommodate the needed comprehensive and coordinated services to students and their families through social work services (McKinnon 2001). The increasingly volatile nature of family structures and communities has affected a growing awareness that there are significant numbers of students at risk in the educational process due to their social context. McKinnon and colleagues posited that the child and the structure of his relationships outside of school have a marked influence on his or her performance in the classroom, hence the need for coordinated and comprehensive services to the child and his family through social work services.

Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that the school social worker should be placed at a critical point in the natural ecology of the child, his or her family, and community. The social worker, working collaboratively with

teachers and parents, contributes greatly toward more effective educational practices for at-risk or disadvantaged students (Constable & Walberg, 1988; Frey & Nichols, 2003; Hare, 1988; Wagner et al., 2006). This is descriptive of a socio-ecological model in which the social worker strives toward the development of the child's personal control over his or her own life through improving the quality of interactions between the child and his social environment. The collaborative interactions between the service providers and families, while increasing the visibility of the social worker in the classroom, simultaneously enhance the likelihood of positive change in the education of children with EBD (McKinnon et al., 2001; Wagner et al., 2005).

Family Support Systems

The primary mean to supply human needs is expected to be provided by the most important of all mediating systems; the family. Constable and Walberg (1988) reported that children with EBD are put in a better position to cope with the complexity of life through the networking of families, support systems, and schools. Whereas, traditionally, some schools have exhibited rejection of parents in a variety of ways, many schools have begun to move away from a narrow focus on the child as an individual to consider the child as a member of a family unit. Any dominant attitude of rejection of the child's familial background is commonly passed on to the child, and when cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of families prevent students from performing well, or developing a positive attitude toward their school experience, strong support of home becomes critical if children are to succeed in school (Bardi, 1998; Constable & Walberg, 1988).

Krueger (1994) described the curriculum of the home as the kinds of informed parent-child dialogues about everyday events, the monitoring of television and peer activities, discussions of leisure reading, encouragement, expectations of affection and interest in the child as a person and in his academic achievement. Krueger further asserts that this home curriculum is commonly much more predictive of academic learning than characteristics of, for example, socio-economic status of the family. Constable & Walberg (1988) supported calls for moves toward school interventions aimed at strengthening home-school relationship as such moves create the potential for significant positive effects on students' learning and behaviour, especially in the early grades. Collaborative efforts between the family and school have the potential for reversing what might otherwise be the inevitable disadvantage of children with EBD (Constable & Walberg, 1998).

The exploration of support in the study was framed within the reviewed literature and organized under the following: (1) Communication of Expectations, (2) Professional Development, (3) Social Work, (4) Motivational Support, and (5) Home-School Partnership

Methodological Approach

Case Study Design

This study employed a single-case design that was of a descriptive exploratory nature aimed at understanding the kinds of support (if any) provided for Eric's inclusion and determining how the supports were being used. That was done in terms of listening to the subjective voice of the case, Eric Q, as well as key people who were involved in the education of the student-participant, and who Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) described as "information-rich" (p.56) and who would best assist in fulfilling the purpose of the study.

Participants

The researcher needed to select participants from which the most could be learned and needed to explore and understand Eric's situation. Consequently, purposive sampling was used (Merriam, 2009). Eight participants were involved in the study: Eric Q, one of his parents, his teacher, an assistant teacher assigned to his class, a social worker, two administrators at the school, and a supervisor of a supportive service. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and contingent upon permission from Eric's mother for his participation in the research during one school term. For the purpose of the study, the researcher divided the participants into three stakeholder groups and the confidentiality of each participant was maintained via a coding system. Table 1 provides a brief description of the three groups and the code assigned to each participant.

Data Collection Methods

Data for the study were collected via three methods: a qualitative questionnaire, interviews, and observation of lessons. Questionnaire data were collected from E3, E4, E5, A6, A7, and A8. That instrument was designed to capture the self-expressed beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of participants pertaining to, for example, the provision of professional development and special education services at the participating school, any role of the social worker in addressing challenges experienced in efforts at educating Eric, any partnership between the school and Eric's home, expectations communicated

Table 1. Description of the Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	Sample size	Participant	Code assigned to participant	Description
Consumer	n=2	1. Eric Q 2. Eric's parent	C1 C2	This group consisted of participants who used services provided for students having an emotional-behavioural disability.
Expert	n=3	1. Teacher 2. Assistant teacher 3. Social Worker	E3 E4 E5	This group consisted of participants who had expertise and experience in working with EBD students or directly providing some training (specialized or otherwise) in working with Eric. The social worker had extensive experience in working with EBD students. The teacher and assistant teacher had no training in special education, nor had they engaged in professional development in educating students with EBD.
Authority	n=3	1. Supervisor 2. Vice-Principal 3. Principal	A6 A7 A8	This group consisted of participants who had authority and autonomy to make important decisions pertaining to, for example, the organizational provisions at Eric's school in response to his individual needs. The principal and vice-principal had extensive years of service in the teaching profession but had sparse experience with students officially identified as having EBD. The supervisor had extensive experience in coordinating services to both students and their families.

regarding teaching students with EBD and, more specifically, teaching Eric, and motivational supports to improve teaching and learning outcomes (with a focus on motivating Eric).

A semantic differential scale was used with Eric (C1). The researcher considered that he was a struggling reader and administered a questionnaire that was not too wordy. The researcher proposed that would be more appealing to C1. That instrument was designed to capture, for example, how Eric felt in class during reading and other tasks, his experience in receiving extra assistance in class, and in getting a reward or praise. The questionnaires were administered over a three-day period and time spent by the respondents ranged from 30 to 52 minutes.

Individual interviews were conducted with the participants over a four-week period. The data generated via the interviews supplemented the questionnaire data. The researcher used semi-structured interview questions focused primarily on understanding what supports (if any) existed at the school for Eric's inclusion, and how those supports were used. Each interview lasted fifty-five to sixty minutes on average.

Observation data were collected from 12 lessons for a total of approximately 720 minutes of observed teaching in Eric's classroom. A protocol that incorporated core elements of the reviewed literature guided the observation process. The protocol consisted of two columns containing questions pertaining to specific behaviours and activities, for example, "What is C1's role during the activities?" "What is C1 doing during a particular activity?" "Is he on or off task?" "Are antecedents and/or consequences used?". Observations allowed the researcher to observe "in the natural field setting" and gain "a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009, p. 94).

Ethical Considerations

To minimize the likelihood that the participants would be identified, specific demographic details were withheld. Bogden and Biklen (1998) described researching the personal feelings, experiences, and perspectives of children and others as an intrusive activity that places an onus on the researcher on guaranteeing and maintaining the personal anonymity of the participants. Thus, the name of the site and the class level were not identified, a pseudonym was used for the student, and codes were used to protect the identities of the participants so that the data collected would "not embarrass or in other ways harm them" (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998, p. 44). The participants were provided with full information about what the study involved, informed that they had the choice to withdraw from the

study at any time, and each participant's consent was given freely. Permission for Eric's participation was also obtained from his parent.

Establishing Credibility and Trustworthiness

The researcher used member checking as a way to establish credibility and trustworthiness in the study (Creswell, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That process also allowed participants to spot information that could identify them and, consequently, also served as a protection mechanism that could build trust and enhance data quality. Additionally, triangulation was used as a strategy for further enhancing the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2011).

Data Management and Analysis

At the end of administering each questionnaire, interview, and observation each document was dated and an identification of each participant by the appointed participant code was included. The field notes, artefact contents (from each completed questionnaire), and interviews were transcribed and stored electronically. Significant chunks or segments of each interview, field notes, and questionnaire data were reduced to short phrases (codes) that summarized the basic topic. Then, the researcher moved on to managing the data manually using the cut-and-file technique (Bodgen & Biklen, 1998) to extract and group data chunks with similar codes. Multiple copies of each data set for the purpose of cutting and creating labeled folders according to code names were made. The researcher went through the data and marked each segment to identify its source and page number. Having applied such identification labels, pages of data were cut and placed in appropriate folders to facilitate later data triangulation (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

The categorizing process involved looking for threads or recurring commonalities that tied together or linked bits of data. The initial summaries were grouped into themes (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994), and a list of themes from each interview was developed. When reviewing the first set of observations the same steps were followed. The themes that were generated from the three units of analysis namely, feedback from participants' responses to questionnaire items, one-to-one interview feedback from each of the eight participants, and field notes from observations of classroom instructional practices were triangulated for the purpose of determining convergent evidence (Yin, 2011). That process facilitated the consolidation of understandings and, ultimately, allowed findings to be confirmed.

The Findings

This section reports the findings based on the two objectives of the paper namely to (1) identify the supports present at the participating school, and (2) describe how the supports were being used. For ease of reading, the reader is reminded of the following codes that represent the participants: Eric (C1), Eric's mother (C2), Teacher-participant (E3), Assistant teacher (E4), Social worker (E5), Supervisor of a service provided to Eric (A6), Vice-principal (A7), and the Principal (A8).

The Kinds of Support for Meaningful Inclusion present at the School

Communication of expectations regarding the teaching of Eric Q

Although A7 and A8 provided oral communication to E3 and E4 of their expectations regarding the delivery of the general education curriculum to all students, the findings indicated there were no communications from A7 and A8 regarding expectations of teaching methods for engaging Eric in reading, nor for working collaboratively with the social worker (E5) to develop an individual plan to treat with Eric's holistic needs (see Table 2).

Table 2. Communication of Expectations for Supports

Expectations	Authority group	Expert group
I provide/receive written guidelines or policies regarding expectations of teaching methods/strategies for engaging Eric in reading	A7 No A8 No	E3 No E4 No E5 No
I provide/receive expectations for making sure that a general education curriculum is being taught.	A7 Yes A8 Yes	E3 Yes E4 Yes E5 Not Applicable
I provide/receive expectations for working collaboratively with others, such as, Eric's social worker, to develop an individual plan to treat with Eric's holistic needs.	A7 No A8 No	E3 No E4 No E5 No

In the follow-up interview, E4 shared she was expected to give Eric assistance when needed. E3 reported she was expected to deliver the normal curriculum to all her students. When asked what she meant by “normal”, the participant explained “*the primary school curriculum and not a special education curriculum*”. Findings showed that what was communicated was that the general education curriculum was expected to be delivered to all students, and the teacher-participants’ responsibility was to deliver that content. There was no evidence of a specific plan at the administrative or classroom level for meeting Eric’s specific needs. The social worker (E5) described using an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with Eric as “*an ideal to work towards*” and as something that “*could be quite helpful...if implemented*”. In the absence of an IEP for Eric, E5 offered suggestions to A8 and E3 pertaining to how they should manage Eric’s behaviour at school, and while E5 seemed to expect her suggestions would be implemented, there was no coding for data that indicated her suggestions were adopted at any level in the participating school.

Additionally, E3 and E4 articulated that they did not feel confident in their ability to effectively educate Eric. What emerged as important was an issue of a lack of teacher self-efficacy for interacting with Eric in positive ways and effecting positive learning outcomes. For example, during an interview E3 shared:

I must be provided with the necessary tools to help me meet those expectations set for teaching Eric.....While I am expected to teach the contents of the curriculum to all of my students, I don't feel I have the kinds of skills ... nor the knowledge to deal with Eric's behaviour and still get him to improve his reading at the same time. (E3/Interview)

Professional development supports

The findings showed that professional development supports were provided to the teachers for motivating reluctant readers, differentiating instruction, reading strategies to build comprehension, vocabulary and word recognition skills, and using assessment data to plan for instruction and monitor student progress (see Table 3).

There was no evidence of professional development supports for managing challenging student behaviours. The findings showed that E5 and A6 received professional training in managing the behaviours of EBD students. When asked about the support provided to the school in terms of managing Eric’s behaviour, E5 and A6 reported that the support was provided directly to the student when school visits were made.

Table 3. Professional Development Supports

Professional development supports	Expert group	Authority group
I provide/receive professional development on motivating reluctant readers through the use of appropriate resources	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes E 5 No	A 6 No A 7 Yes A 8 Yes
I provide/receive professional development on differentiating instruction to meet the diverse needs of students	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes E 5 No	A 6 No A 7 Yes A 8 Yes
I provide/receive professional development on using assessment data to plan for instruction and monitor student progress	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes E 5 No	A 6 No A 7 Yes A 8 Yes
I provide/ receive professional development on reading strategies to build comprehension, vocabulary and word recognition skills	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes E 5 No	A 6 No A 7 Yes A 8 Yes
I provide/receive professional development on managing the challenging behaviours of students with EBD	E 3 No E 4 No E 5 Yes	A 6 Yes A 7 No A 8 No

E5 further explained:

We have so many schools to visit and so many children with serious issues many of them more intense than ---- (Eric) that we function according to priority. On my last visit, I came because of the calls concerning his fighting. I spoke with his teacher to get the details ... but I really don't tell her how she should manage him in class. (E5/Interview)

Those statements suggested the presence of particular difficulties such as, numerous schools to visit and the large number of students with special needs, impeded the efficiency of the service offered by E5.

Additionally, factors of negative teacher attitude and feelings of frustration emerged through various statements offered by E3. Those factors were suggested in the statements, “*I really don’t feel I am prepared to teach this child* (referring to Eric). *The things I learn...the strategies and so on, do not help this child* (Eric)” (E3/Interview) and again, is suggested in the following:

No amount of professional development could prepare me to teach dis child! Right now, ... Every day is just fighting. I spend more time on dat boy and his nonsense than I do on teaching my students! (E3/Interview)

Motivational supports to the teacher-participants

The questionnaire data provided by A7 and A8 suggested the presence of good motivational supports to E3 and E4. However, E3 and E4 described a different picture (see Table 4).

A7 and A8 reported that they motivated E 3 and E 4 as well as the other teachers on staff by providing additional professional development outside the school, direct feedback to teachers for a job well done, assistance to the teachers in understanding Eric’s (and other students’) issues, help for the teachers to get involved in the planning for what Eric and other students need, and some kind of recognition at staff or PTA meetings. Findings indicated that E3 and E4 believed they had not received any of the motivational supports reported by the two participating administrators.

Motivational supports to students

E 3 and E 4 each indicated that they motivated their students by giving rewards and praise for working well and for good behaviour, allowing each student a turn to be a leader of a group, scaffolding students’ efforts at reading and writing tasks, and conferencing with students to help them understand the importance of setting personal goals and providing positive feedback on performance and improvements (see Table 5).

Table 4. Motivational Supports to Teachers by School

Motivational supports	Authority group	Expert group
I provide/receive additional professional development outside the school setting.	A 7 Yes	E 3 No
	A 8 Yes	E 4 No
I provide/receive direct feedback for a job well done.	A 7 Yes	E 3 No
	A 8 Yes	E 4 No
I provide/receive assistance in understanding Eric's (and other students') issues, so as not to take issues personally.	A 7 Yes	E 3 No
	A 8 Yes	E 4 No
I provide/receive help for the planning for what Eric and other students need.	A 7 Yes	E 3 No
	A 8 Yes	E 4 No
I provide/receive some kind of recognition at staff or PTA meetings.	A 7 Yes	E 3 No
	A 8 Yes	E 4 No

Eric reported in his questionnaire that he did not receive praise nor rewards on any occasion. In exploring this issue further, Eric stated in his interview, “*I doh get any reward. Miss does give de other children in class but not me*” (C1/Interview). When asked about receiving praise at any time, he stated “*Dem doh like me. I doh get any praise!*” When asked if he felt he deserved praise and why, Eric said, “*Yes, even when I get things right ah still doh get any.*” I asked Eric if he had ever volunteered to answer a question posed by any of his teachers and if he had been allowed to be the leader in any group in class. He answered “*Yes*” to the former and “*No*” to the latter question. Out of the twelve transcripts of classroom practice observation data, there was one instance of coding for praise received by a group in which Eric was a member. There was no instance of coding for praise received directly by Eric. The observation data seemed to support Eric’s perceptions of the non-provision of motivational supports to him.

Table 5. Motivational Supports to Students by Teacher-Participants

Motivational Supports	Expert group	Consumer Group
I provide/receive rewards and praise for working well and for good behaviour.	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes	C 1 No
I provide each student a turn to be a leader of a group/ I have been allowed a turn to be a leader of a group.	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes	C 1 No
I provide/receive scaffolding of efforts at reading and writing tasks.	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes	C 1 No
I provide/receive conferencing to bring about understanding of the importance of setting personal goals.	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes	C 1 No
I provide/receive positive feedback on performance and improvements.	E 3 Yes E 4 Yes	C 1 No
I provide/receive self-esteem activities to build confidence	E 3 No E 4 No	C 1 No

There were two instances of coding for Eric volunteering to respond, but there were no instances of coding for him being chosen to respond having volunteered. On the first occasion Eric “*steupsed*” loudly after not being selected by his teacher. The teacher (E3) told him that is not the way to behave in class. Eric responded with another “*steups*”. On the second occasion (on another visit), after not being selected to respond, Eric placed his head on the desk and did not participate further in the lesson. E3 told him he would have to stand in front of the board at recess time if he did not raise his head off the desk. Eric did not comply. After those two occasions, the observation data did not provide any evidence of further volunteering by the student-participant.

Social work support

Social work was provided by the Students Support Services as a form of direct support to Eric and his family. When asked the primary aim of her interventions with Eric, the social worker (E5) indicated, *“It is to teach ... (Eric) how to manage his feeling, particularly his anger, so that he is able to respond more acceptably to conflicts in his life.”* When asked about the approach used to accomplish the intervention, E5 reported, *“Right now we focus directly on ... (Eric) and his home situation.”* When the researcher asked that participant about the extent to which the school was included or supported through their service as stakeholders in Eric’s life, E5 reported:

If you knew how outmatched we are in numbers compared to the large numbers of children in our school system who need our services, you would understand why our service, although we know it is the ideal approach, does not always accommodate a high degree of collaboration with the school. (E5/Interview)

Eric revealed that he liked talking with the social worker. When asked why, he said, *“She doesn’t get vex with me. She does listen to me and help me”*. When asked to say how the social worker helps him, Eric said, *“Ah learning how not to get so angry so fast and to talk to people about how ah feeling instead of hitting”*. When asked if he thought he was learning from talking with the social worker, Eric said *“Yes”*. He added *“Ah doh fight as much as ah use to anymore”*. Those statements commonly suggested that Eric had a positive perception of the support provided directly to him by the social worker.

Support for building a partnership between the school and Eric’s home

The principal (A8) highlighted the importance of partnering with Eric’s mother. Although that participant reported it was a school policy and a part of their School Development Plan to *“build a school culture where all parents feel welcome and can contribute to their children’s education”*, there was no evidence to suggest a partnership between Eric’s home and school was present. When asked if Eric’s mother attends PTA meetings or has been invited to serve on a committee, A8 stated, *“No, ...we throw out the offer and whether or not they respond is up to them.”*

In the follow-up interview of E3, that participant described her relationship with Eric’s mother as *“strained!”* In exploring the response further, E3 added *“She always wants to defend her son’s actions and I have no time to waste in arguing with people who don’t want to take responsibility for their children’s poor behaviour.”* When asked about the

school policy for forming a partnership with parents, E3 acknowledged the existence of the policy but stressed, “*certain policies look well on paper but are difficult to carry out.*”

How the Supports Were Being Used

Communication of expectations

Findings from questionnaire and interview data showed the communicating of expectations was present at the school as a form of support. For example, in an interview, A7 explained:

As we try to move forward, we are looking to standardize certain expectations for all teachers. Class time-tables are expected to be put on the wall in each of the classrooms where the teachers will focus on what they plan to do during the block of time they have with the students. This support for the teachers is so that they don't have to guess what they have to do. (A7/Interview)

Additionally, findings from questionnaire data indicated a consensus was present among A7, A8, E3, and E4 that expectations for ensuring a general education curriculum was being taught. While a system of communicating expectations was in place, there was no evidence, that system was being used to communicate expectations regarding Eric. For example, A7, A8, E3, and E4 commonly attested that no written guidelines or policies regarding expectations of teaching methods or strategies for engaging Eric in reading were provided. Similarly, no expectations for working collaboratively with E5 to develop an individual plan to treat with Eric's holistic needs were provided.

Professional development

There was evidence of the provision of professional development opportunities at the school, but no evidence of professional development opportunities to build teacher-participants' and the participating administrators' competencies for more effectively managing students' challenging behaviours, and, by extension, more effectively interacting with Eric. The support of professional development opportunities organized by the participating administrators was being used to build teacher competency for more effectively delivering the curriculum. Notably, the participants, A7 and A8 reported that even when professional development was provided, there was meagre transference of what was thought of as more effective practices into classroom practice. That was suggested in, for example, the following statements:

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Although we try our best to provide professional development, very often there is not enough effort to implement what was done, and so ... not enough, not many of our students, including ---- (Eric) benefit as much as they could from our teachers engaging in such training. (A8/Interview)

Similarly, A7 reported, “*We organize the professional development and they attend session after session, but yet still, they go back to class and continue to teach the same ole way!*” Both excerpts suggested an issue of a lack of implementation and carried an inference to resistance to change.

Motivational supports

There was evidence of the presence of motivational supports in Eric’s classroom. Findings from field notes data supported findings from questionnaire and teacher interview data that praise for working well, good behaviour, and providing students a turn to be a leader of a group was being used by the teacher-participants as scaffolds in the classroom. There was no evidence however, that those scaffolds were being used with Eric.

Social work support

A7, A8, E3, and E4 each identified the work of the social worker as a form of support that they had at the school. That support was provided directly to Eric and his mother. Findings suggested that support was being used to equip Eric with skills, to manage in a positive way, the negative emotions he experienced. Eric’s parent (C2) reported that she also communicated with the social worker. She reported, “*We talk about how what is happening at home affect Eric.*” When asked to further explain, C2 added, “*Well, ... the constant fighting and bacchanal does affect his work at school We does fight so much!*” The social services support received by C2 emerged as a positive factor. That participant reported the support encouraged her to make changes in her lifestyle concerning her relationships and was helping her learn how to better cope with Eric’s behaviour. She reported she was trying to make personal changes at her home, but admitted that that was very difficult.

Findings suggested that in spite of the availability of the service of a social worker, that service was not being used as efficiently as it could be. E3, in discussing how that service was used reported:

I think more can be accomplished if we work together. Sometimes she (the social worker) visits and I’m not told a thing. She doesn’t

know what I am doing and I don't know what she is doing. Yes, we do talk but not enough, not often either. (E3/Interview)

That excerpt suggested that E3 believed that greater collaboration between herself, as Eric's teacher, was needed and that collaboration could be beneficial to Eric.

Support for Building a Partnership between the School and Eric's Home

There was a written school policy that articulated an aim of the school to build closer school-home relationships. That written policy suggested a value was placed on a positive school-home partnership; a relationship that could make a positive contribution to the development of the students at the participating school. In spite of that written policy, there was no coding that evidenced a positive partnership between Eric's parent and the school, and more specifically, his teachers.

C2, when asked about her involvement in her son's school life shared, *"I don't feel welcome there at all!"* and added, *"They does only call me there to complain!"* When asked to describe her relationship with her son's teacher, C2 responded, *"She just like the rest a dem! All a dem is the same!"* When explored further, the respondent stated, *"I avoid going there."* When asked why, she explained, *"I does always leave vex."* When asked if she meets with her son's teacher privately, C2 stated, *"No, we talk right in the classroom."* C2 added *"She does tell me about my son in front of the whole class and I does answer she back in front of the whole class!"* Those statements suggested Eric's mother held a negative perception of the school and Eric's teachers.

Discussion of Major Findings and Implications

This section discusses the major findings in terms of the two objectives of the paper and the literature reviewed. Implications of the findings are presented in terms of the issues that emerged out of how the supports were being used.

Communication of Expectations and Professional Development as Support

Lane et al. (2002) stressed that many teachers are uncertain about how best to serve students with EBD in the general education. From the perspectives of the two administrators who participated in this study, their communication to Eric's teacher and the assistant teacher pertaining to expectations of support to be provided to Eric Q was clear. However, from

the teachers' perspectives, while the expectations of the administrators were communicated, they believed they did not possess the required repertoire of skills and knowledge needed to match the expectations of the administrators. Importantly, what emerged for the participating teachers was an issue of a lack of sense of self-efficacy for educating Eric in the general-education classroom.

Trout et al. (2003) highlighted the importance of addressing the concerns and supporting the professional needs of teachers who are expected to educate students with EBD within a system of inclusive education. The issue of teacher-participants' lack of self-efficacy for meeting Eric's educational needs carries implications for teacher professional development geared toward bridging existing gaps in their knowledge, skills, and ability to successfully implement pedagogical practices for more effectively interacting with Eric. Whether it is the expectation for one's job responsibilities, improving Eric's reading outcomes, or managing his challenging behaviours at school, it is important that Eric's teachers not only have clarity about their role as educators, but the tools for meeting those expectations must be provided.

The teachers working with Eric, not unlike many teachers working with behaviourally challenging students, felt defeated, frustrated, and overwhelmed (Wagner et al., 2005). Inclusive education has often placed an emphasis on physical placements and treating with affective components regarding the EBD student with neglect of other aspects of the educational process (Hegarty, 2001; Stockall & Gartin, 2002; Voltz et al., 2001). While meeting the physical and affective needs of at-risk students is vital, not much emphasis has been placed on meeting the affective and professional needs of local, and perhaps other teachers within the wider Caribbean who play a direct role in inclusive education. That lack of attention may be viewed as a neglected aspect of the educational process and bears implications not only for on-going teacher professional development, but what is offered to all teachers as part of teacher training programmes.

Motivation as Support

In this study, the school administrators indicated that they were making an effort to motivate Eric's teachers. Those teachers, in turn, indicated they were making an effort to provide motivational support to Eric. Teachers working with EBD students need ongoing motivational supports that transcend the typical supports for teachers of students without EBD (Alderman, 2004; Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Having to treat with challenging behaviours that are complex, and confusing can daunt a

teacher's ability to effectively educate students with EBD. The participating administrators did not seem to have a clear understanding of what it takes to motivate the teachers who directly interacted with Eric nor the importance of not just providing that support but ensuring that it was ongoing and consistent.

Fulfilling their motivational role for any of their students, places an onus on developing competencies in pro-active decision-making skills (Alderman, 2004). Motivation is situational and contextual, and teachers of students with or without EBD who understand the importance of actively planning how to motivate their students, and not giving reactionary responses to problems as they occur, commonly realize rewarding results. The teacher-participants provided students with a mixture of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. However, much more effort is needed in not only providing this support to Eric Q, but in maintaining the effort. Managing Eric's behaviour and effecting higher learning outcomes is a challenge that carries an implication for the direct provision of motivational supports to that student, and, by extension, other at-risk students who have found a place in the general education classroom.

Social work as Support

McKinnon et al. (2001) contend that the child and the structure of his relationships outside school has a marked influence on his performance in the classroom, hence the need for coordinated and comprehensive services to the child and his family through social work services. Hare (1988) and McKinnon et al. advise a broad-based team approach that embraces the chief stakeholders, children, along with general classroom teachers, special educators, administrators, parents, support services staff, as necessary for successful implementation of best practices for students with EBD. Eric Q and certain members of his family received services of a social worker. However, the data in this study could not support any claim of a presence of the kind of broad-based approach advised by McKinnon and colleagues.

That broad-based approach is the kind of socio-ecological approach that allows the social worker greater capacity in working toward the development of the child's personal control over his own life through improving the quality of interactions between the child, and his or her particular social environment (Frey & Nichols, 2003). The social work support seemed to rest primarily on Eric and his home. The common perspective of the teacher-participants that any social work intervention aimed at helping Eric develop control over his own life should more

effectively embrace them is significant because they play an important role in Eric's social context. Perhaps if the difficulties expressed by the social worker are overcome, then the kinds of broad-based approach advised by Frey and Nichols can be more readily facilitated.

Partnership Between the School and Eric's Home as Support

Parents of children with EBD who are being educated in a system of inclusion commonly report they do not feel their role as a collaborative partner is encouraged by the school (Constable & Walberg, 1988; Krueger, 1994). Building positive relationships, whether between the teacher and parent, or the student and parent, is a crucial step to establishing a strong home-school partnership. In spite of the presence of a school policy that articulated a value placed on fostering a higher quality of partnership with parents, it was clear that Eric's mother did not buy into the notion that she was welcomed or valued by the school. What was articulated by that parent was more aligned to a perception of disenfranchisement from the school than a sense of belonging. Such negative parent perception of the school carries an implication for more effective communication which is central to beginning and nurturing the process of cultivating a positive home-school connection. Perhaps Eric's parent and teachers can decide at the start of every school year how they will facilitate clear and informative two-way communication. The existing structures at the participating school and other schools, such as the PTA and school committees where parents are members, can provide a foundation for reducing deterrents to involving Eric's mother and other parents, and nurturing a more amicable partnership. Successful inclusion, for Eric and others may require positive changes or shifts in the attitudes and beliefs of school administrators, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders; changes that reflect they truly believe that students with EBD and other disabilities can successfully be educated in the general education classroom.

Conclusion

There is a tremendous amount of work and effort that needs to occur for the meaningful inclusion of Eric at the school and this should be a broad-based effort by all stakeholders in Eric's ecological system. Taken separately, supports such as professional development, social work services, motivation, and a positive home-school collaborative effort can have a positive impact on the quality of education that Eric Q and other EBD students receive. However, when those supports are adopted as part of a cohesive and comprehensive approach within a system of inclusive

education, it is possible that attaining more favourable education outcomes can more effectively be accomplished. As Trinidad and Tobago strives to make inclusive education a part of the local education landscape, providing the necessary supports and developing policies that articulate how those supports are expected to be used are a sine qua non for successful inclusive education.

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