

ABSTRACT

Educating Eric Q: A Struggling Reader With an Emotional-Behavioural Disability in an Inclusive Education System: A Case Study

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This qualitative case study sought to explore the support provided within inclusive education, by a primary school in Trinidad and Tobago, to meet the needs of an emotional-behavioural disabled (EBD) student who is a struggling reader in a general education classroom. Data were collected through interviews held with a male student, his mother, his teacher, an assistant teacher, a social worker, two administrators at the school, and a supervisor of a service provided to the student and his parent. The study was guided by the following research questions: 1) What kinds of support are present at the school? 2) How are the supportive elements (if any) currently used? 3) What contributes to the student's deficiencies in reading? and 4) What contributes to his behaviours at school? Among the findings of the study were that: 1) the school's administrators had specific expectations of the student's teacher and assistant teacher. These included: (a) collaborating with the social worker to develop a plan of work specifically suited to the student's needs, (b) delivering the general education curriculum and ensuring that the class level was being taught, and (c) using engaging teaching strategies to effect improvement in the student's reading outcomes; 2) the teachers of the EBD student felt defeated, frustrated, and overwhelmed, and this was compounded by the fact that the teacher training programme did not prepare teachers for managing challenges associated with EBD students; and 3) the teachers in the study appeared to provide motivation to students, but greater and sustained effort was required to motivate the student under study.

Keywords: Educational strategies; Struggling readers; Case studies; Inclusive education; Emotional problems; Behaviour problems; Primary school students; Trinidad and Tobago