

SUPPORTING PRACTITIONERS' USE OF PIVOTAL RESPONSE TRAINING WITHIN  
EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Jena K. Randolph

Dr. Janine Stichter, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the viability of Pivotal Response Training by practitioners within educational contexts. A concurrent multiple baseline design across 4 practitioner-student dyads consisting of phases baseline, training, follow-up and consultative probes was utilized. Data was collected on the practitioners' levels of fidelity of implementation and on the students' social-communication and play behaviors across three educational contexts.

The results of the study indicate that once practitioners were trained as intervention agents to implement PRT: 1) there was variability among the practitioners' maintenance of the fidelity of implementation over time, 2) there was variability among the practitioners' generalization of PRT with fidelity across untrained educational contexts and, 3) the use of PRT by the practitioners had a positive effect on the students' social-communication and play behaviors of appropriate engagement, responses, and verbal initiations within naturally occurring educational contexts. Additionally, the results of the study indicate that in spite of the lack of consistent treatment fidelity at the rate of 80% as proposed in previous literature on PRT, the students with ASDs still achieved social-communication and play behavioral benefits across untrained educational contexts. Considerations for interpretation of the current study's specific research questions are presented, and are followed by a discussion of the implications for practice and future research.