

Teacher Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Feuerstein's
Instrumental Enrichment and Mediated Learning Experiences Curriculum

A Dissertation

By

Esther Gill Brassell

Submitted to the Graduate School

Appalachian State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

December 2001

Major Department: Educational Leadership

Teacher Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Feuerstein's
Instrumental Enrichment and Mediated Learning Experiences Curriculum

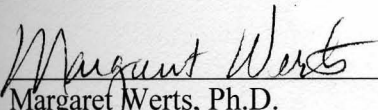
A Dissertation

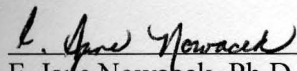
By

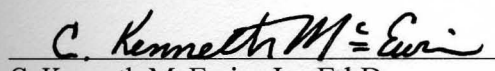
Esther Gill Brassell

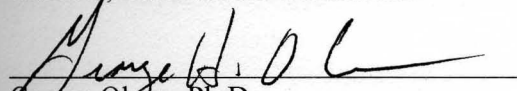
December 2001

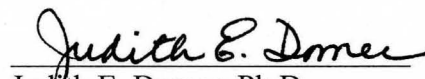
Approved by:

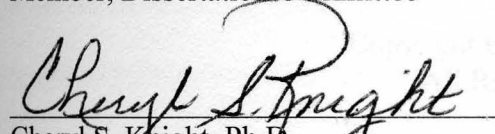

Margaret Werts, Ph.D.
Chair, Dissertation Committee

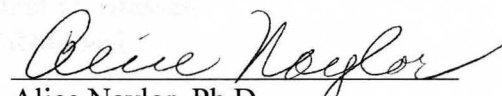

E. Jane Nowacek, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee


C. Kenneth McEwin, Jr., Ed.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee


George Olson, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee


Judith E. Domes, Ph.D.
Dean of Graduate Studies and Research


Cheryl S. Knight, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee


Alice Naylor, Ph.D.
Director, Doctoral Studies

Abstract

Teacher Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment and Mediated Learning Experiences Curriculum

Esther G. Brassell, B. A., Mercer University

M. A., Auburn University

Dissertation Chairperson: Margaret Werts

This study examined teachers' perceptions of the effects of Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) and Mediated Learning Experiences (MLE) Curriculum, during the third year of implementation, in a middle school serving students with hearing loss. FIE/MLE implementation evolved from long-term, teacher-directed change with no administrative mandate.

Fourteen teachers in the school, nine of whom taught FIE/MLE, completed Q-Sorts, surveys, and semi-structured individual interviews. Data also included document review findings from 47 student Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Six Q-Sorts revealed perceived relative importance of, and successful change with, Feuerstein's list of 28 cognitive deficiencies. IEP reviews documented FIE/MLE integration with an unexpectedly high number of references to Feuerstein's cognitive deficiencies. Rating

distribution for all 55 survey items in four categories was positively skewed toward effectiveness. Systematic content analysis of interview transcriptions expanded the four survey categories and demonstrated perceived direct and indirect student effects from FIE/MLE. Triangulation with four methods of data collection protected the validity of the mixed-method case study by demonstrating strength and overall consistency of teacher perceptions.

Teacher perceptions were overwhelmingly positive toward FIE/MLE. According to every data source, perceived effects and FIE/MLE goals for decreasing cognitive deficiencies were compatible with needs of the middle school students with hearing loss. Teachers perceived FIE/MLE as improving classroom performance, increasing metacognitive skills that generalized to content, and enhancing academic growth. Teachers reported FIE/MLE involvement of the school community had provided common group goals for staff and students. Teachers consistently perceived time spent on FIE/MLE as worthwhile in spite of the complexities of the Curriculum and additional time required for planning.

In addition, participants reported that FIE/MLE involvement had positively expanded their teaching skills, heightened teacher efficacy, increased positive attitudes toward students with learning or behavioral difficulties, and improved school climate. Teachers believed teaching FIE/MLE fostered collegiality and cooperation that resulted in improved staff morale and increased collaboration in other instructional areas.