The effectiveness of multicultural based Social Stories to increase appropriate behaviors of children with developmental delay

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTICULTURAL BASED SOCIAL STORIES TO INCREASE
APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

NING HSU

Department of Educational Psychology and Special Services

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Dean of the Graduate School
This thesis is dedicated to

my parents, Jian-wen Hsu and Rui-fen Chang,

my lovely sister, Jou Hsu,

and my trustworthy boyfriend, Yi-chen Lo
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTICULTURAL BASED SOCIAL STORIES TO INCREASE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

by

NING HSU

THESIS

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MASTER OF ART

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ABSTRACT

The needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse background have become a growing concern in America. It is a great challenge for educators to provide appropriate education for culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Although there are some researchers that espouse effective principles of multicultural special education, there have been few empirical on the effectiveness.

Social Stories are a practical behavioral intervention which has been regarded as an individualized intervention since the student’s needs, background and learning style should be took into consideration. This present research used an ABA design to compare the modified social story with and without cultural familiar components. Three culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional students live in El Paso, Texas area participated in this study. Results are discussed in relation to study limitation, applications for future research.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The United States is one of the most culturally, ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse countries in the world (Tepper & Tepper, 2004). Special education teachers and administrators in the United States are mandated to improve services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students with disabilities (Gakken, O’Brien & Shelden, 2006).

All students have the legal right to be provided with adequate educational opportunities according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, many CLD students with disabilities still do not receive the quality of appropriate education that they are legally guaranteed (Baca, 2004). Minority students and students with disabilities both experience low expectations and weak instruction (Heubert, 2002; National Research Council, 2002). Researchers also have found that the culturally and linguistically diverse students are identified and placed in special education with disproportionate percentages (Gallegos, A. & McCarty, 2000; Osher, Woodruff & Sims, 2002; Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higareda, 2002; Obiakor 2007).

To decrease the overrepresentation of CLD students in special education, researchers have developed multicultural instructional practices and teaching strategies (Gallegos & McCarty, 2000; Correa, Hudson & Hayes, 2004; Tepper & Tepper, 2004; Baca, 2004). Moreover, IDEA and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) set legislation to ask for the improvement of the outcomes for all students by using research-based instructional practices (Cumming, Atkins, Allison & Cole, 2008). Klingner & Edward (2006) stated that to decide if a practice is appropriate for CLD students; educators still need more empirical research to show whether instructional strategies are effective. The research data should also include information about the
CLD students’ cultural and language background, language proficiency, life experience and other related characters (Keogh, Gallimore & Weisner, 1997).

It is validated that the Social Stories is an effective behavioral intervention by prompting meaningful of sharing social information with a child (Gray, 2004). Social Stories are written from the student’s point of view and confirm to the student’s cognitive level. The main objective of a Social Story is to explain an unacceptable behavior, how to correct the behavior, and to describe an expected response in certain situations (Wissick & Schweder, 2007). Reynhout and Carter (2006) consider Social Stories to be an intervention for students with mild and moderate disabilities that is clear-cut and applicable to a wide range of behaviors. However, there is still limited research focused on the effect of Social Stories on culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional students. More evidence-based research is needed to support the intervention of Social Stories as beneficial to students with diverse backgrounds.

Moreover, teachers or parents should consider the child’s learning style, abilities, interests and the child’s impact of view when developing a personalized Social Story (Gray, 2004). In other words, the Social Stories should be combined with the child’s cultural background and prior experience to make it meaningful to the child. Unfortunately, there is no research demonstrating the influence of cultural factors in Social Stories.

1.1 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the intervention of Social Stories in increasing appropriate behaviors on three culturally and linguistically diverse students with developmental delay in the El Paso, Texas area. Furthermore, two different Social Stories with and without cultural familiar components, were implemented to identify whether a
multicultural-based Social Story is more effective than one without cultural elements. Three different cultural familiarity components, including illustrations, names, and languages, were added into the multicultural-based Social Stories.

1.2 Research Questions:

1. Is the Social Story an effective intervention in increasing appropriate behavior of Hispanic students with developmental delay?

2. Does the Social Story become more powerful when the cultural familiar components were added into it?
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional learners are students with culturally and linguistically diverse background who also diagnosed with a disability under special education laws (Hoover, Klingner, Baca & Patton, 2007). During the past decades, the number of students with culturally and linguistically diverse background has increased (Tyler, Yzquierdo, Lopez-Reyna & Flippin, 2004), but the needs of CLD students who also exhibit disabilities that are recently receiving empirical attention (Klingner, et al., 2005). Although Baca & Cervantes (2004) state that the bilingual and multicultural special education can benefit diverse students with disabilities, it is difficult for most schools to provide appropriate educational services to those students because of the shortage of well-trained teachers.

In this chapter, the researcher provides an overview of the development and essential elements of multicultural special education. In the second part of literature review, the intervention of Social Story is introduced and the cultural components in Social Story will be discussed.

2.1 Legislation Development of Special Education

In the late 1800s, in order to reduce the stress on the teachers and other students, children with disabilities were segregated from the general education. The separation of special education and general education continued for years. The concept of educating children with disabilities in the mainstream setting developed simultaneously with the civil rights movement. It also helped fracture the idea of “separate but equal” and lead to the determination that separating children
was detrimental to children with disabilities (Rothstein, 2000). After the civil rights movement on behalf of minorities, parents started endeavoring after equal educational right for their children with disabilities (Meyen and Skrtic, 1988).

Following the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v, Board of Education, states required to provide education based on the federal constitutional right to education. Simultaneously, public consciousness on equality began rising and the policy for the handicapped children initiated to establish (Meyen and Skrtic, 1988).

Generally speaking, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (1997) provide procedural and federal protection for students who have been misclassified and/or placed in overly restrictive settings (Rothstein, 2000). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” The Americans with Disabilities Act protects the civil rights of people with disabilities in private-section employment and in public services (Banks & Banks, 2004).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was a federal antidiscrimination law that prohibited discrimination based on disability and is applicable in public schools (Losen & Welner, 2002). Public Law 94-142, which is known as the Individual with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), was designed to protect the rights of the handicapped children by ensuring them an appropriate education at public expense and in the least restrictive environment (Gelb, 1982). Obiakor (2007) stated that under the IDEA, special education is provided a free
and appropriate public education to all learners including those from multicultural backgrounds. All learners have the legal rights to receive a free education which is suitable to their needs.

Most recently, the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 indicates that all students, regardless of their background and disability, have to reach the statewide educational standards. Schools should set high educational expectation and provide adequate educational opportunity to assist students to meet the achievement (Hoover, Klingner, Baca & Patton, 2007).

2.2 Development of Multicultural Education and Bilingual Education

For these minority students, the civil rights movement brought out legal protections. Among the most important was Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964, which provided that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Losen & Welner, 2002). The goal of civil rights movement had a great progress in demanding that the schools and other educational institutions has to improve their curriculum to help culturally diverse children reflecting their experiences.

The Bilingual Education Act passed in 1968 regulates school districts to be provided with federal funds to establish educational programs especially for students with limited English speaking ability. The act encourages the school districts to give instructions in English in the wake of the Civil Rights movement. The Bilingual Education Act also encourages the school districts to provide bilingual program although it is not required (Bennette, 1999).

Lau and Nichols in 1974 is the most significant court case in protecting the equal educational right of non-English-speaking students (Menchaca-Ochoa, 2006). Lau and Nichols
was a lawsuit by a group of Chinese-speaking parents against the San Francisco School District for their children’s equal rights. The district disputed that they were providing equal educational opportunity by offering students the same textbook, same curriculum, and same resources under the same teachers. Ruling for the plaintiffs, the court stated there is no equality by providing students who do not understand English with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, curriculum, and textbooks. For students who are not proficient in English, school districts have to provide meaningful opportunities to participate in the education system (Lau v. Nichols, 1974).

2.3 Multicultural Special Education

Recently, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001 was enacted to guarantee that schools set high educational expectation and establish education standards. The NCLB also requires all students, regardless of the students’ socioeconomic background, race, language, gander, and/or disability, should be provided with statewide education and meet the achievement standards (Hoover, Klingner, Baca & Patton, 2007). Furthermore, NCLB signify the use of research-based program and teaching strategies that had been proven to result in greater achievements of all students (Dooley, 2007).

Despite the official permission of overcoming the barriers of disabled and disadvantaged populations as expressed in our legislation, it is clear that many of our programs still do not fully support social justice, equity, and human dignity to CLD students with disabilities (Simon, 2001). Cultural competence is lacking when school personnel are unaware of culturally-based differences in communications and learning styles. The mismatch may cause student’s low academic achievement, erroneous test results, and incorrect eligibility decisions (Ogata, Sheehey & Noonan, 2006).
Gelb (1982) considered that being handicapped and belonging to an ethnic and linguistic minority group both have certain similarities. First, both groups have been subject to stigmatization by the non-handicapped majority. Second, both groups have been victims of educational discrimination. Minority children with disabilities all too often experience inadequate services, low-quality curriculum and instruction (Losen, Orfield 2002).

Rueda and Chan (1979) stated that those culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities were considered as “triple-threat” students because of their disability, limited English proficiency, and lower socioeconomic status (Baca, 2004). Gallegos and McCarty (2000) addressed the needs of CLD students that have disabilities and determined that their needs are a growing area of concern, especially as the demographic composition of the nation’s public schools continues to change.

Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higareda (2002) investigated eleven urban school districts in California that have high proportions of English learners and high poverty levels. They found overrepresentation of English learners in special education. Valenzuela, Copeland and Qi (2006) examined 17,824 school-age children (preschool to 12th grade) in special education services in 2002. They found that minority students were disproportionately enrolled in special education and placed in more segregated settings. These studies show that it is a very important issue for the United States to provide appropriate and equal educational opportunities for students from different backgrounds.

2.3 Hispanic Students in the United States

The word “Hispanic” represents a diverse group of people (Bennett, 1999). The U.S. Census Bureau currently defines "Hispanic" a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or
Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. Recent demographic data shows that Hispanics is the fastest growing and largest minority group in the United States (National Research Council, 2002).

Although national wide analyses show that overrepresentation of Hispanic students in special education is not a national trend, but varies across the states and school districts (Meyer & Patton, 2001), Giberson (2007) found that more Hispanic students are identified with learning disabled or speech-language impaired, whereas fewer students are identified as mental retardation. Furthermore, a study from National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that 58 percent of Hispanic student’s reading is below basic level while 63 percent of African American students, 27 percent of White student, and 22 percent of Asian student are below the basic level of a fourth-grade reading level. (National Research Council, 2002). Those researches may reflect that the Hispanic students in the United States are still struggling in school and the schools are not able to provide adequate education for all students regardless of language and cultural background (Guiberson, 2009).

2.4 Elements and Principles of Multicultural Special Education

Biological and social sciences researches indicate that cognitive, social, and emotional development is a consequence of the interaction between the children and significant others in their environment (National Research Council, 2002). Historically, school problems encountered by culturally and linguistically diverse students were blamed on such factors as cultural deprivation, family low income, and genetic inferiority (Gallegos & McCarty, 2000). Even in the 1920’s, the cultural and language differences of minority children were still considered as problems to be overcome. From the 1930’s to 1960’s, articles stated that some cultures are
disadvantageous to minority language children in areas and educational system need to support children’s cognitive development. Under this atmosphere, schools continued to convince minority students to conform to majority pattern until the IDEA regulated in the 1970’s brought a new social climate that provided more equal educational opportunities for CLD students with disabilities.

In describing the classroom needs for the minority children, Gels (1982) has stated that:

*Children bring knowledge, learning style, way of communicating and experiencing things, and their sense of identity from their homes. All these have developed over the years. If a school allows no place for a child’s culture, it serves him or her from the foundation of past experience on which all future knowledge is built. It creates an identity crisis for the child by forcing a choice between school ways and home ways. The goal is for minority students to function effectively in the mainstream culture as well as in their own, Students should be able to maintain pride and identity in their heritage, while recognizing that their group’s way is one among others. (p.14)*

Harry and Kalyanpur (1999) stated that if courses do not consider the cultural knowledge of their students, the possibility of negative outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children will exist due to clashes with the dominant cultural. Baca (2004) stated that when schools teach these students in their native language, they build on their cultural and linguistic strengths. Ogata, Sheehey & Noonan (2006) stated that students do not respond well to adults who look, speak and behave in a manner quite different from their experiences.

Obiakor (2007) stated that special education works when the programs are based on multicultural learners’ needs, the collaboration and consultation of team members, and culturally responsive strategies. Gallegos and McCarty (2000) believed the educators must be conscious of
cultural differences and have the ability to critically review and select instructional materials that allow CLD students to master the subjects, improve their language ability, and enhance self concept.

Gelb (1982) addressed that the alternative approach is using student’s culture to build upon for learning and the enhancement of self concept. Children are more interested in learning when they perceive that the curriculum is relevant to them. A multicultural curriculum makes content more meaningful and links student’s emotions to the material to be learned. Student’s sense of worth is also heightened when the home experience is represented in school learning tasks (Baca, 2004).

Ogata, Sheehey & Noonan (2006) identified several issues pertinent to Native Hawaiians and special education. First, curriculum and instructional approach may contrast markedly from the cultural style of student’s background. Second, behavior management procedures may not reflect discipline methods used by the family.

2.5 Theory of Social Stories

Social Stories provide interesting, age-appropriate reading material for use with students with autism and moderate disabilities. Typically, Social Stories are short stories that explain to the student an unacceptable behavior, and provide a response that should be expected once the behavior is improved (Lorimer, Simpson, Myles & Ganz, 2002; Wissick & Schweder, 2007). The goal of the Social Story is to share social information and provide a prompt of other’s feeling (Quilty, 2007).

Social Stories aim to teach social-perspective-taking by helping children interpret social cues and identify appropriate responses (Delano & Snell, 2006). By coordinating several
researchers’ statements, Crozier and Tincani (2005) stated that Social Stories are potentially beneficial for several reasons. First, Social Stories provide a visual stimulus which is applicable to the learning style of students with autism (Quills, 1997). Second, they can create a friendly effective and unobtrusive learning opportunity which allows the student to practice the skill until they master it (Smith, 2000). Moreover, Delann and Alper (2006) considered the intervention of Social Story can be easily embedded into the normal school environment because reading and listening to stories occurs naturally.

Scattone, Wilczynski, Edwards & Rabian (2002) conducted a research to examine the effectiveness of Social Stories in decreasing disruptive behaviors in the natural environment. Crozier and Tincani (2005) conducted research using a reversal design to compare the effectiveness of the modified Social Story on the disruptive behavior with and without verbal prompts. The disruptive behavior decreased during both phases of the intervention but a greater degree when the Social Story was paired with prompting. Delano & Snell (2006) used a multiple-probe design across three elementary-age students with autism to evaluate the effects of Social Stories to promote appropriate social engagement. The research showed the number of target social skills displayed during the ten-minute play sessions and two students generalized to classroom settings. Sansosti and Powell-Smith (2006) also used a multiple-baseline-across participants design to examine the effects of Social Stories on the social behavior of three children with Asperger’s syndrome. Data exhibited that two of the three participants had an increase on the social behavior, but failure to demonstrate skill maintenance and poor results for one participant highlighted possible limitations of the use of Social Stories. Further, Soenksen and Alper (2006) conducted a Social Story intervention in teaching a young child with
hyperlexia. The results of the study indicated that the Social Stories was effective in increasing the appropriate way of gaining attention from his peers.

Although the popularity of Social Stories as an intervention for children with autism has grown, most of the research is based on single subject designs or multiple-probe design which has to be repeated in order to establish validity. (Sansosti & Powell-Smith, 2006; Rwynhout & Carter, 2006) Moreover, a limitation of generalization is also involved of the study of Social Stories to other children with autism or other disability. (Delano & Snell, 2006)

Research on Social Stories has frequently failed in isolating the improving the contribution is drawn by Social Stories because they may have been contributed by other strategies, including reinforcement (Raynhont & Carter, 2006). Besides, Gray (2003) stated that the comprehension test needs to be conducted after the Social Stories is introduced. In recent studies, the participant’s comprehensions about the Social Stories have not been evaluated (Raynhont & Carter, 2007).

2.6 Developing Social Stories

Gray (2000) described social stories as composed of descriptive, perspective, cooperative, directive, affirmative, control, and partials sentences. Descriptive sentences are used to describe the situation, including the location, event, who is involved and what people are doing. Perspective sentences state what another individual may think or feel. Cooperative sentences are used to remind adults how they can assist the student to learn a new skill. Directive sentences are the individual statement with “I will try” or “I will work on” about the student’s reaction to the social situation. Affirmative sentences generally stress the directive in the Social Stories. Control
sentences are written by the student and help him or her to remember the directive. Partial sentences are written by the student and ask them to provide the correct response.

The social story intervention can be implemented in one of three ways and the approach is dependent upon the particular needs and abilities of the child (Gray, 1982; Reynhout & Carter, 2006). If the child is able to read, the instructor can read with the child initially and then ask the child to read the social story by himself. Secondly, if the child is not able to read, the instructor can record the story and teach the child to use the recorder, and how to find the correct page when receiving a prompt signal from the recorder. Third, peers can read the social story when certain situation happens to provide prompt of an appropriate reaction.

Social stories are carefully designed to be within the comprehension level of the target child (Crozier & Tincani, 2005). Furthermore, Gray (2000) stated that Social Stories can be illustrated with photographs or provide visual support to assist the child to understand. Social stories require students to gain information from the text and connect this text to the world around him (Wissick & Schweder, 2006). The author must adopt and maintain the perspective of the child for whom the story is written, and the behavior response should be stated in positive terms (Reynhout & Carter, 2006).

2.7 Social Stories as a Multicultural Educational Design

Gallegos and McCarty (2007) stated that every CLD student with disability should be considered through multiple paradigms. Furthermore, traditional educational program must be reexamined and restructured in order to reflect the cultural and linguistic background of the students. Social Stories is a behavioral intervention to provide an individual short story in explaining the daily situation with a language that the child can understand (Gray, 2000, Scattone,
Tingstrom & Wilczynski, 2006). The Social Stories should be meaningful to the child. In other words, instructors need to have the assumptions of considering a child’s thinking, learning style, interests, and how a social concept may be perceived from the child’s point of view (Gray, 2000). When a Social Story is designed for a CLDE student, the student’s cultural and linguistic background should be considered as a part of it in order to make the Social Story meaningful to that student.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.1 Participants

The predominant microculturals in Texas are Hispanic, African-Americans, Asians, and Native-Americans (Mitchell & Salbury, 2000). El Paso is a city of El Paso County, Texas, and United States. Hispanic resident is the major population in the El Paso area because of its unique geographic and historic background. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, Hispanic of any race was 81.3% in El Paso. About 7.6% of El Pasoans are non-Hispanic white.

Three Mexican American students who live around the El Paso area participated in this research for five to six weeks. The participants were preschool-aged and first-grade culturally and linguistically diverse background children who were identified with developmental delay. Three Hispanic children who speak Spanish as the home language, but were still capable to communicate using short sentences or vocabulary in English participated in this research. Students with developmental delay were nominated by the school teacher and researchers by their multicultural background and observation of disruptive behaviors. Participants had high rates of school attendance. After the nomination by the school teacher, the researcher had an interview with the parents to ensure the participants’ culturally and linguistically diverse background. Furthermore, the parental consent form was sent to parents to explain the study and request them to give permission for their child’s participation.

Miguel. Miguel, a 7-year-old boy, was placed in an inclusive first-grade classroom with 19 students without disabilities consisting of one teacher. He has been studying in the public school
for almost two years. He was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome and placed in an English dominate classroom setting, in which all the instructions are given in English. He was able to finish in class tasks individually. Miguel’s reading level is higher than average. He is able to read a third-grade level book. His auding level, as measured by the auding test, yielded an auding-listening ability level in English of second grade and seven-month.

Miguel was born in El Paso. He is the only child in his family. His father has a college education. Both parents worked outside of the home. Miguel’s parents had a high expectation to him. They pay much attention to Miguel’s education. Furthermore, they spend a lot of time participating in workshops and looking for the appropriate education strategies to his child.

Spanish is Miguel’s home language. Both of his parents speak fluent Spanish. He understands daily conversation in Spanish, but he is now more English dominate since he participated in the American public school for almost two years.

Although Miguel is capable of meeting educational expectations, he has a difficulty in following classroom rules. He needs extra time and redirections to concentrate on the classroom activities, especially during the transition time.

**Jose.** Jose, a four-year-old boy, was a member of a self-contained Pre-K special education classroom consisting of one teacher, two assistants, and seven other students with developmental delays. He was diagnosed with developmental delay, and he was placed in the special education classroom because of speech-language pathology. It was not a bilingual program which the main instruction was given in English. Teacher and assistants were able to speak Spanish. They would translate the direction and instruction into Spanish to help Spanish dominant students understand. Jose has been studying in the classroom for six months. Jose was able to follow the teacher’s
direction and answer basic questions in English, and his auding level is still unknown due to the shortage of related assessment tools for such a young child.

Jose was also born in El Paso. He is the youngest child in his family. Jose lives with his parents in a middle-class area. His mother is the first generation of immigrant from German who came to El Paso since eight years old. His father is a second generation Mexican American. Both of them spoke Spanish fluently. They spoke both English and Spanish at home. Although Jose’s parents are more Spanish dominant, Jose speak English more than Spanish.

Jose will enter the kindergarten next semester. His self-help skills were good. The teacher planned to teach him with the classroom rules before he goes to the kindergarten.

Fabian. Fabian is a three-year-old boy diagnosed with developmental delay. He was placed in a self-contained special education classroom with five other students with developmental delay. It is an English dominant classroom and the teacher would translate some direction into Spanish. Fabian was placed in this classroom for four months. He was more Spanish dominant and still able to follow instruction in English.

Fabian was born in El Paso. He lives in a single-parent home. Fabian’s mother, a second-generation of Mexican American, works outside of the house, and Fabian’s grandmother is the main caregiver. Spanish is the home language. Fabian spoke Spanish better than English. He is able to use single vocabulary in English to answer some simple questions. He was able to use short sentences in Spanish to express his needs.

Fabian was placed in this classroom for four months, and he needed some extra direction when the teacher was asking him to finish a task. Sometimes he might refuse to follow direction.
### TABLE 3.1  Participant Demographics

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<tr>
<td>Home language</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auding level</td>
<td>Second grade/ 7 month</td>
<td>Below first grade</td>
<td>Below first grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home language</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.2 Settings

This research was conducted in two different classrooms, a Pre-K self-contained special education classroom and a first-grade general education classroom, in three different sections. Although there were different between each setting, all were similar types of instruction time during the school day. Sessions for each participant were held at the same time and same place each day. Only one session per student occurred each day.

#### 3.3 Social Story

Based on the information gathered by observations and interviews, the researcher wrote a personalized Social Story for each participant. Each Social Story provided a socially appropriate behavior as a replacement behavior. The Social Story was written by using the sentence types described by Gray (2000) and adhering to the Basic Social Story Ratio. The Social Story was typed on white, letter-sized paper and compiled into a book-like format. Each paper had one or two sentences and collocation with illustrations which fit in with the content of the Social Story to help the participant understanding the story.

After the Social Stories were written, each story was reviewed by the classroom teacher to check for adherence to Gray’s guidelines. The school teacher also reexamined whether the social
skills included in the Social Story appropriate. Furthermore, the culturally familiar components in the Social Stories were examined by people who are familiar with the participant’s cultural and linguistic diverse background.

3.4 Experimental Design

A multiple-baseline design across participants (Gay, Mill and Airasian, 2006) was applied. The multiple-baseline design across participants is suitable for this study because of the difficulty to obtain enough size of simple of this group and would provide very convincing evidence. Additional, the changing criteria design was employed to examine the effectiveness of cultural familiarity components in each phase. An event recording was used to collect the frequency of disruptive behaviors of the participants.

Treatment Integrity

Teachers were instructed to read the Social Story to the participant one time per day, four days a week. The Social Stories were read prior to the scheduled activity. A checklist was provided to the teacher and explained the steps of conducting the intervention. The teachers were asked to read the Social Story without prompting participants to behave in any way. The observer recorded whether the teacher follow the steps and made notes as to whether the participant answer the comprehensive questions correctly or made any comments during the intervention.

Treatment integrity was the percentage of accomplishing the checklist steps. Teachers were required to get the participant’s attention, and then introduce the Social Story. The Social Story was read to the participant by the teacher, and then the participant answered basic
comprehension question followed by the Social Story. If the participants had difficulty answering the comprehension questions, the answers needed to be explained to that child clearly and ensure the participant are able to answer the questions at least 80% accurately.

The teachers were asked to read the Social Story without explaining the meaning. After the Social Story was read, the teacher should give instruction as usual. No reinforcement or prompt were provided to the participants.

Treatment integrity was 100% for all of the three participants. Furthermore, Miguel was able to answer the question at 100% accurately. Jose was able to answer at 90%, and Fabian at 100% accurately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2 Checklist of conducting Social Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get participant’s attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the Social Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain the answer if needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Baseline**

In the baseline phase of the study, the observer collected data of the participant’s target behavior in the classroom activity where the target behavior is naturally occurs. There was no Social Story implemented during this phase. The baseline concluded when a stable pattern of the target behavior is established.

**Intervention**
The independent variable in this study was the cultural familiar components in Social Stories. In the intervention session, the Social Story was presented to the participant with the whole class approximately ten minutes before the classroom activity begins. After the intervention of Social Story complete, the participant back to activity. The observer started to record the participant’s target behavior.

During the first phase of the intervention, a formal Social Story without multicultural elements (Intervention A) was implemented. The personalized Social Story was written in English and combined with a Caucasian illustration and characters which does not correspond with participant’s cultural and linguistic background.

In the second phase of the intervention, cultural familiar component was added into the Social Story by changing the Caucasian illustration and characters into Hispanic ones (Intervention B). The Social Story was read in the participants’ home language, Spanish. However, the content of the Social Story remind the same.

In the third session, the intervention reversed to the Social Story without cultural familiar components (Intervention A). The English Social Story with Caucasian illustration and characters was read to the participants.

3.5 Procedures

Data Collection

Based on the character of the target behavior, event-based methods and time-based methods were conducted to record the frequency or interval of the target behavior. Frequency recording is appropriate to measure a uniform behavior that have a clear beginning in an equal period of time (Umbreit et al., 2007). The observer attended during the entire length of the observation and
recorded the occurrence of the target behavior with tally mark. At the end of the observation, the total number of tallies was counted and identified the frequency of the behavior during the session.

Furthermore, the interval recording is appropriate to collect the latency of the target behavior. The observation period was divided into blocks of time, and the observations were recorded separately for each interval (Umbreit et al., 2007). Partial interval recording was conducted, and the trained observer recorded whether the target behavior occurred at all during the interval. Observer simply circle a “+” or “-” for each interval to indicate the occurrence of non-occurrence of the target behavior. When the observation was finished, the observer calculated the percentage of intervals.

**Target Behavior**

The effectiveness of the intervention of Social Story was evaluated by measuring the percentage of interval or the frequency of appropriate behavior. A socially acceptable behavior was selected by the researcher as the target behavior for each participant. The target behavior for Miguel was set as sitting in the seat while individual work time during 20 minutes observation across baseline and intervention phases, and the interval recording was conducted. The target behavior for Jose was to raise his hands before talk in class. The observation lasted for ten minutes across baseline and intervention phase. The frequency recording was conducted to measure the occurrence of the target behavior. Fabian’s target behavior was set as following the teacher’s direction during class. The observation also lasted for ten minutes, and the interval recording was conducted.
### Table 3.3 Definitions of Target Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Miguel**<br>To sit on the seat<br>Instance in which Miguel stays on his seat when the teacher asks him to finish an individual task, such as solving Mathemetic questions or writing sentences. | Instances in which Miguel stays on his seat when the teacher asks him to finish an individual task, such as solving Mathemetic questions or writing sentences.  
Example:  
- Sitting on the chair with both feet on the floor.  
- Sitting on his chair with legs across.  
- Kneel on the chair  
Nonexample:  
- Walking around in the classroom.  
- Standing up.  
- Sitting on the floor without teacher’s permission.  
- Squatting down |
| **Jose**<br>To raise his hand before talk<br>Instance in which Jose raises his hand before he talks to the teacher during the class. | Instances in which Jose raises his hand before he talks to the teacher during the class.  
Example:  
- Raising hands quietly.  
Nonexample:  
- Speak out.  
- Speak out and raise his hand at the same time  
- Physically touch the teacher to get teacher’s attention. |
| **Fabian**<br>On task<br>Instances in which Fabian pays attention to the teacher and finishes the task given by the teacher during the class. | Instances in which Fabian pays attention to the teacher and finishes the task given by the teacher during the class.  
Example:  
- Listening to the teacher  
- Watching the teacher to demonstrate.  
- Doing the work assigned by the teacher.  
Nonexample:  
- Talking to other students  
- Refusing to follow the direction  
- Observing other students or assistant in the classroom. |
**Interobserver Reliability**

Two observers were trained by the researcher in data collection procedures by observing the video of nonparticipating student during the class. Observer training continued until the interobserver agreement reached 80%.

Interobserver agreement was measured during at least 30% of the observation for each participant during the baseline and intervention phase. Percentage of interobserver agreement was computed by dividing the number of agreements by the total number of agreements and disagreements and multiplying by 100% (Scattone, Tingstrom & Wilczynski, 2006).
Chapter 4
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Interobserver agreement

Interobserver agreement occurred 35% of the observation for Miguel (four times), 40% of the observation for Jose (seven times), 31% of the observation for Fabian (seven times). For Miguel, the mean level of interobserver agreement was 98% (range= 96%-100%). The mean level of interobserver agreement for Jose was 96% (range= 86%-100%), and mean the interobserver agreement for Fabian was 81% (range= 75%-86%).

4.2 Data analysis

Each participant’s target behavior across baseline and intervention are graphed as a percentage of intervals of the frequency of the target behavior based on the character of the behavior. The interval percentage and frequency of the target behavior across baseline, intervention A and intervention B for each participant are presented in Figure 4.1. In additional, the mean of display of each participant across baseline and intervention are presented in Table 4.1.
Figure 4.1 Participants’ interval percentage or frequency of target behavior across phases
According to the data, the appropriate behaviors for Miguel and Fabian did increase after the introduction of the Social Story. However, the effectiveness of multicultural-based Social Story varies. From the result, the mean relative to Miguel during the intervention of Social Story with Hispanic cultural familiar components is lower than the intervention of Social Story with Caucasian cultural familiar components, and data for Fabian during Hispanic cultural familiar components is higher than the one Caucasian cultural element. In addition, the cultural familiar components in the Social Story did not affect the frequency of target behavior to Jose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Miguel</th>
<th>Jose</th>
<th>Fabian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interval of Target behavior (%)</td>
<td>Frequency of Target behavior</td>
<td>Interval of Target behavior (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention A</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention B</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention A</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Miguel*

The mean level of target behavior for Miguel during baseline was 84.33% (rang=76.5%-89%) of interval and 91.8 (range=72.5%-100%) during intervention. The percentage of interval during intervention A, Social Story with Caucasian cultural elements which was read in English is higher than intervention B, the Social Story with Hispanic cultural elements which was read in Spanish. The average of interval during intervention A was 91.1% and 94.9% which was slight higher than the interval average during intervention B (89.5%). The appropriate behavior of sitting on the chair during individual time increased after the Social Story was read to Miguel.
Jose

The frequency of appropriate behavior as the researcher defined in Chapter 3 did not increase to Jose. The target behavior of raising his hand and waiting for teacher to call remains absents. However, it was discovered that the behavior of raising hand did occur, but the participant spoke out at the same time which conflict with the target behavior definition. If the behavior of raising hand still counted even though the participant also speaks out at the same time, the frequency of target behavior would be different. The total number of the revised target behavior increase from 3 during the baseline to 6 and 9 during intervention A, and 8 during the intervention B. Moreover, the number of teacher-student interaction was not stable. Jose would like to interact more with the teacher when he was interested in the activity topic. In order to examine if the target behavior increased, the percentage of target behavior occurrence presents as Figure 4.2

In addition, to ensure the intervention of Social Story is the sole independent variable in this study, the teacher was required not to provide any prompt and reinforcement to Jose’s target behavior of raising hands. During the baseline and intervention phases, the frequency of teacher response was also recorded during the intervention for Jose. The teacher’s response of the speak-out behavior is very stable during baseline and intervention phases (range=70%-79%).

It can be observed that the percentage of revised target behavior did increase. The mean percentage of target behavior was 7.9% during the baseline, and then increases to 20% during intervention A, 26.5% during intervention B, and 28.8% during the reverse intervention A.
Table 4.2 The Mean Percentage of Occurrence of the Revised Target Behavior of Jose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Intervention A</th>
<th>Intervention B</th>
<th>Intervention A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency of raising hand*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of interaction</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean percentage of target behavior **</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean percentage of Teacher’s response to the speak-out behavior</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The revised definition of the target behavior is to raise his hand regardless of waiting quietly or speaking out to get the teacher’s attention.

** Percentage of target behavior was computed by dividing the frequency of target behavior by the total frequency of teacher-student interaction.

Figure 4.2 The percentage of revised target behavior for Jose

*Fabian*

Fabian demonstrated the largest increase in appropriate behaviors during intervention.

Fabian’s target behavior of intervals during baseline was 46.3% (range=27%-63%). Throughout the intervention, the mean of interval increased to 63.6% (range= 25%-85%). Furthermore, the
mean of interval during the Social Story with Caucasian cultural familiar components increases from 50% to 78.5% during the intervention of Social Story with Hispanic cultural familiar component, then reverse to 62.4% during the last phase of Social Story with Caucasian cultural familiar component. For Fabian, the Social Story with Hispanic cultural familiar components is more powerful than the one with Caucasian cultural elements.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusion

This research evaluated the effectiveness of Social Story to increase appropriate behaviors, such as sitting on the chair during individual work time, raise the hand before talk during class, and being on task. Overall, the intervention of Social Story had a positive influence on increasing appropriate behaviors. The result of this study is consistent with founding reported by Soenksen & Alper (2006), Sansosti& Powell-smith (2006), and Reynhout & Carter (2007). Following implementation of the Social Story intervention, all of three participants showed an increase in percentage of using appropriate behavior. Furthermore, in this research, the target behavior for Jose is a new skill that he has not been taught before. The result shows that the intervention of Social Story is also have influence in instructing a new socially appropriate behavior.

However, the effectiveness of multicultural-based Social Story still varies. For Miguel, the participant who studies in an American school for almost two years, the Social Story written in English with Caucasian cultural familiar components is more powerful than the Social Story in Spanish with Hispanic cultural familiar components. For Jose, who studies in a Pre-K classroom for six months, the cultural components did not make significant changes. It was also observed that the target behavior increase by time, regardless of the cultural familiar components in the Social Stories. For Fabian, the youngest participant who studies in American school for only four months, the Social Story written in Spanish and collocated with Hispanic cultural familiar components had greater influence than the English one.
Furthermore, the researcher found that the intervention of Social Story is beneficial for Miguel to transit from one activity to another. He was able to get into the new activity and concentrate on the tasks after the Social Story was introduced. Social Story provides Miguel with hints and expectation to help him to understand the school routine and assist him to transit.

This research is noteworthy for several reasons. First, to date, there is no research indicates the participants’ cultural and linguistic background. The present research provides the information about the participants’ cultural, linguistic, and family background. The result shows the Social Story have a positive influence in increasing appropriate to Hispanic students regardless of the cultural elements added into the Social Story. Secondly, this study indicates that the influence of cultural familiar elements in the Social Story varies although all of three participants were from Mexican American family. It is very interesting to discover that the longer the participant studied in an English dominant classroom, the less effective the multicultural-based Social Story is. The students’ learning experiences and language proficiency should also be considerate as important factors when developing a Social Story to culturally and linguistically diverse student.

Several researches evaluated the intervention of Social Story as a naturally occurring activity that allowed the intervention to be easily embedded into the normal school environment (Soenksen & Alper, 2006). However, it was also found in this study that the participants started questioning why they need to read the same story every day. The repetition of the Social Story affected participants’ interest and concentration.
5.2 Limitation

It is important to note several limitations to this study. First, the boundary between Caucasian and Hispanic cultural is difficult to define. Culture is an abstract concept. Educator should have the cultural awareness. However, there is no standard to evaluate whether the cultural familiar components really fit the participant’s diverse background.

Secondly, the participants’ language proficiency in English and Spanish was a very important factor. Three participants had different length of time studying in an English dominant classroom. The effectiveness of multicultural-based Social Story might be varies when the participants’ English proficiency are different.

A third limitation involves the generalizability of the study’s result to other students with developmental delay and to other behaviors beyond this investigation. All of the participants in this study are able to understand the content of the Social Story and answer comprehensive question with a 80% of accuracy or higher. It is still unclear if the intervention of Social Story be effective with children with moderate or severe cognitive disability.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

These findings suggest several additional researches. First, it would be valuable to eliminate the language element of the Social Story to examine the effectiveness of cultural-based illustration and character in the intervention of Social Story to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Another research need relates to the language proficiency of the participant. It would also be important to examine how the multicultural-based benefits students who are enrolling longer and shorter in American school. Besides, the three participants in this study
were placed in an English dominant classroom. Future research efforts adapting the intervention in a bilingual classroom would be benefit.
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Appendix 2: Social Story for Jose ................................................................. 54
Appendix 3: Social Story for Fabian ................................................................. 66
What I should do when the teacher is asking me to finish a task.
We have different kinds of activities at school.

Sometimes the teacher will give us some tasks.
It might be some Mathematics questions of to write some sentences.

I will probably learn new things and practice what I have already knew by doing the tasks.
When the teacher is asking us to finish the tasks, the students usually sit on their seats and pay attention to the tasks.

When the teacher is asking me to finish the tasks, I will try to sit on my seat and do it my best I can.
- We should aim to serve and meet others' needs, not just our own.

\begin{align*}
2 \times 1 &= 2 \\
2 \times 2 &= 4 \\
2 \times 3 &= 6 \\
2 \times 4 &= 8 \\
2 \times 5 &= 10 \\
2 \times 6 &= 12 \\
2 \times 7 &= 14
\end{align*}

If I walk around in the classroom, I might bother other students' learning.

I will try to raise my hand and sit quietly when I need help.
Other students will be happy if I try to sit quietly.

My teacher will be happy if I learn to sit on my chair and finish the tasks.
Que es lo que debo hacer cuando la maestra me pide que termine mi trabajo
En la escuela tenemos diferentes actividades. A veces la maestra, nos da tarea.
Puede que sean ejercicios de matematicas o escribir oraciones.

Probablemente aprendere cosas nuevas y practicare lo que ne prarendido.
Cuando me levanto de mi silla, y camino por el salon, distraigo a mis companeros cuando hacen su trabajo.

Cuando necesite ayuda levantare mi mano y trate de permanecer callado.
El que no vive para servir no sirve para vivir

Cuando la maestra nos pide que terminemos nuestra tarea, casi siempre nos sentamos en nuestros escritorios y ponemos atención.

Cuando la maestra me pide que termine la tarea trataré de sentarme en mi escritorio y hare lo mejor que pueda.
Mis compañeros estarán contentos cuando permanezco en mi silla y quede silencio.

Mi maestra estará contenta cuando yo permanezco sentado en mi silla y termino mi trabajo.
Social Story for Jose

Getting my turn to talk in class

There are many students in a classroom.
Everyone likes to talk to the teacher.
It is very hard for a teacher to hear one student talking if everyone else is talking.

I like apples, bananas, grapes. My sister likes apples, too.

Teacher, I know it.

I think Jack can help me with this.
It is very important for one person to talk at a time.

I like school.
When I want to talk to the teacher in class, I will try to raise my hand and sit quietly.

Sometimes the teacher will call on me to talk.
Other students may want to talk, too. Sometimes the teacher will call their name.
I will try to wait quietly until the teacher calls on me.

My teacher will be very happy if I learn to raise my hand before talk.
Esperando mi turno para hablar en la clase

Hay muchos estudiantes en la clase.
A todos les gusta hablar con la maestra.
Es muy difícil para la maestra escuchar hablar al estudiante, cuando mis compañeros hablan al mismo tiempo.

A mi me gustan las manzanas.

Creo que Ruben me puede ayudar.

Maestra yo se la respuesta.
Es importante que solo una persona hable a la vez.

Maestra yo sé la respuesta.
Cuando yo quiera hablar con mi maestra en la clase, primero voy a levantar mi mano y voy a permanecer sentado en silencio.

A veces mi maestra me llamará.
Mis compañeros a veces querrán hablar también. Otras veces mi maestra los llamara.

Esperare en silencio hasta que mi maestra me llame.
Esperare en silencio hasta que mi maestra me llame
Mi maestra estará muy contando si yo aprendo a levantar mi mano antes de hablar.

Intervention B- page 6
Finishing the drawing at school.

We go to school.
We learn at school.
The teacher says “draw”, I draw.
I am good at drawing.
The teacher will be happy if I draw.
Terminando mi dibujo en la Escuela

Nosotros vamos a la Escuela.
Nosotros aprendemos en la Escuela.
La maestra nos pide que dibujemos, y yo dibujo.

Intervention B- page 2
Yo se dibujar muy bien.
La maestra estará muy contenta si yo dibujo.
CURRICULUM VITA

Ning Hsu was born in Hualien, Taiwan. The first child of Jian-wen Hsu and Rui-fen Chang, she graduated from the National Hualien University of Education, Hualien, Taiwan, in 2000. After pursuing a bachelor’s degree in special education, she served in Fonglin Elementary School as a preschool special education teacher. The experience working with children with special needs inspired her to pursuing a higher education in the United States. She attended the University of Texas at El Paso in August 2007 majoring in Special Education for pursuing her Master of Art. She received her Master degree in May, 2009.