

Everyday

Life

FAVOR



Cover Story:
The Favor of God

"If a church wants to experience God's Favor, it must pursue God's Priorities."

– Rev. Tim Hatch

Featured Articles:

The Favor of God is Your Inheritance

Favor in a Leader's Life

Beauty: Anti-Aging Peptides

FROM THE EDITOR

Always Hope

Dear Readers:

The theme for this issue is "Favor." This word is so powerful that many people have even named their child "Favor." Let's take a deeper look at this word "favor." The English word "favor" is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, "Hanan." What God is saying to His children is that He has bestowed upon us great mercy and grace. I jump for joy for this all-encompassing love of God for us. His favor abounds with overwhelming kindness towards us. This should bring us to our knees, thanking Him with a heart of gratitude, understanding that the God we serve knows all about what is happening in our lives and in the world. Squarely in the middle of all trouble He is going to provide us with His lovingkindness. His peace surpasses all understanding regardless of the fierce battles that try to instill fear, anxiety, and evoke depression. His kindness showcases like fireworks in the sky. *"Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee,"* Psalm 63:3 KJV.

Life is precious. Yet life is meaningless without God. We have one life to live literally. We cannot live this life peacefully without the favor of God. It's all about His favor that carries us from the lowest of moments to the highest of moments. His favor is a shield all around His children and knowing this should make us swell with gratitude and thanksgiving to a great and loving God who cares so deeply for us. Favor does not exempt us from the troubles of this life. But having God's favor upon our lives makes life's troubles a little easier to bear as well as having the comfort that comes only from His favor. His favor grants us victory and makes us more than conquerors because He loves us.

The favor of God was upon Joseph even though he was thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, accused of rape, and hated by his brothers. That doesn't sound like favor. However, all of that brought him to the position of being second in command to Pharaoh of Egypt and rescuing the Israelites from famine. Joseph tasted bitterness. But the hand of favor rested upon him so that he was not destroyed. Joseph was more than a conqueror because of the Lord's mercy and grace. God's favor was on his life. Ruth, a Moabite, did not know the Living God. However, she saw the favor of God on Naomi, her mother-in-law. This astonishes me because the woman of faith, Naomi, who knew the God of the Hebrews, had just lost her husband and both her sons. Certainly, we could say the favor of God seemed not to be on Naomi based on her circumstances. However, the Moabite daughter-in-law, Ruth, saw the powerful hand



**His favor
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overwhelming
kindness
towards us**

of God's favor on Naomi. So much so that she declared with steadfastness and stubbornness that she would not leave the woman on whom God's favor rested. To her mother-in-law, Naomi, Ruth declared, "Your God shall be my God." She recognized Naomi had the favor of God and Ruth wanted that too. Ruth got exactly what she wanted, which was the favor of God. Here is this Moabite who ends up marrying the most eligible, wealthy, and godly man in Israel, becoming the future great grandmother of King David, a king who had the favor of God upon him.

In the two stories above, we can clearly see God's faithfulness, kindness, mercy, grace, and love. These are all characteristics of God Himself that spell out the word: FAVOR.

Friends, I have good news for you today, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come." (Psalm 102:13) Today is the day of favor for you if you accept Jesus Christ into your heart, make Him Lord of your life, live for Him, obey Him, and follow Him.

"For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," Psalm 30:5 KJV. No matter what we have done, He forgives our past. We don't have to earn His forgiveness. Forgiveness is given to us freely and now we have His favor. Therefore, we need to remain walking in a state of righteousness, holiness, and obedience. Then, we will have a lifetime of His favor.

Personally, I have seen the favor in my own life and that of my family and my home church. While all churches were shutting down, my church was flourishing. In the midst of a world pandemic, we were busy opening another campus in the state of Massachusetts where I live in addition to a campus in Tampa, Florida. To top it all off, we opened another one in Guatemala. You see, the favor of God does not stop in the midst of any calamity. In fact, the church of Jesus Christ always flourishes under adversity and affliction. I asked one of the leading pastors to write the feature article regarding how the Lord blessed us and showed his powerful favor over obedient servants of God.

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Waters Church is a representation of its name. Since Jesus is the Living Water, Waters Church was busy bringing the Living Water to the people in the midst of a world that had been shut down due to the pandemic. Waters Church brought hope and healing. It brought hope and healing to a world that was hurting. Please

read this amazing, wonderful, and excellent article on God's favor upon a church that loves people and is fully committed to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ across our country and the world. Well done, Waters Church. Those that give a cup of water, they shall be blessed as it says in Mark 9:41 KJV, *"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."* This is what the favor of God looks like upon the church.

In His Service,
Rev. Dr. Teresa Allissa Citro
Everyday Life Editor-In-Chief

FAVOR

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THE FAVOR OF GOD

REV. TIM HATCH

When it comes to the Favor of God most people consider the term in the way American's use the word "Favor." As in, God is doing us a favor by throwing us a bone for good luck once in a while. But as is often the case, words in the Bible are not what they reflect in modern American vernacular. The favor of God is a wonderful experience of God's grace in hard times. And let's face it, the last 18 months have been one long hard time globally. Yet, through all of it, the Lord has been dispensing His Favor in our church and in our lives every step of the way.

The first time we see "Favor" in the Scriptures is in the days of Noah. Talk about hard times! The whole world was evil and corrupt. God would send a flood but first raised up a man to save some. That man "found favor" (Genesis 6:8) with God and built an ark to save humanity from God's wrath. Today, the Church exists with the same calling, to build an Ark to save people from the wrath of God before the end comes. When we keep that mission on the front burner, I believe the Church experiences godly favor.

Waters Church in North Attleboro Massachusetts, where I have pastored for 18 years, has two timelines. The first timeline extended from our beginning to the year 2010 in which we were an average contemporary church with drums, acoustic guitar, and friendly church people greeting each other before and after a time of pleasant worship and a sermon. The second timeline of our church began the day we started to implement a strategy to intentionally reach non-believers through our church gatherings. I had an epiphany of sorts. Almost everyone who came to our church and joined our church was

ALREADY a Christian and comfortable with a very Christian setting. After a conversation with a trusted church leader, a number of church leadership conferences, and a few important secular and Christian books on leadership, I was convinced we were doing church wrong. We had to change. We had to be a group of people radically dedicated to the lost sheep that Jesus Himself came to save (Matthew 18:12). We had to believe the Church was a mission organization. More importantly, we had to live it.

Decisions were made. Friendships were severed and new ones were forged. Styles were transformed and the experience of being at our church became centered on the mission of bringing lost people to a personal encounter with the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Now, don't misunderstand me. We do not think it is

our job to make the message more attractive to unbelievers as many churches currently practice. No. We believe it our job to make the message heard by more people by making our gathering attractive. The gathering of the Church should be open to unbelievers (see 1 Corinthians 14:23). From the inception of the Church in Acts 2, unbelievers were present and witnessed what God was doing in the lives of those who followed Christ. They saw the FAVOR of God on believers and they were attracted to the LIFE of Jesus exhibited through them. This happened for our church when we intentionally made our gatherings a conducive place for unbelievers to hear the message of Jesus and respond. God put in my heart a phrase that still sticks with me today. "If we will go after the lost sheep He loves, we will never know financial need. Instead, we would be financially blessed."

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I can say confidently after 14 years, a global recession and global pandemic later, God's FAVOR has rested on our church because of that continued commitment to show Jesus to those who are far from Him. Thousands have been reached, hundreds have been baptized, and our church is now operational in three states and two countries with much more to come. Why? Because we made God's mission our mission.

Let's talk about Covid-19. During the lockdowns, our church was already prepared to bring our services online. We had made up our minds years before to bring the message of Jesus to where people were by making heavy investments in video, lights, and other technologies to spread the gospel on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The global pandemic did not pause our ministry one bit. This favor of God was already upon our church because of the decision to be less focused on church "for us" and instead build a church "for those not yet here." Not only did we continue holding online services as usual, but our YouTube subscriptions shot through the roof as more people engaged with our church because of the confusing and dark times early on in the pandemic. Two years before Covid, the Lord put on my heart to bring Wednesday Bible study back, but not in the old way of getting to the church building. We went completely online beginning with Facebook and then branched off to YouTube and other emerging online experiences. The weekly show I host, *The Deep End*, is a deep look at news, culture, and the Scriptures to empower God's people to live wisely in divisive and overtly secular times.

What must never be forgotten, however, is that just because you have had some modicum of success, it does not mean you have made it. You can never rest on your laurels. While the lockdowns were in full swing we began to seek God about what would be next for our church beyond this particular season. We had already planned to begin locations in Florida, Guatemala, and one more in Massachusetts. These intentions were only paused because of the pandemic and we had to keep planning to move forward to continue building that Ark. We knew that if we kept the mission of God (reaching lost people) our mission, God would make a way. He did. Offerings went up, not down. We raised \$100k in a single weekend offering just after our in-person services restarted. While attendance in-person after the lockdowns was only at about 40-50%, giving was at or above the levels of pre-Covid numbers. Why? Because we kept the purpose of the Church (which is God's purpose - see Matthew 28:19-20) reaching people far from God. We did not know lack.

In the end, the growth of our ministry during one of the World's darkest times can only be attributed to God's blessing on what God is doing. If a church wants to experience God's favor, it must pursue God's priorities. The Church is not a waiting room for saints on the way to Heaven, it is and has always been the extension of Jesus to a world God sent Him to save. If you build the Ark with God, if you partner with Jesus to save lost sheep, and if you are willing to MOVE (see my book) and live out a faithful expression of gospel-witness in your context, I fully believe you will never experience a season in which the favor of God is unseen.

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GOD'S FAVOR UPON YOU

AN INTERVIEW WITH REV. DR. TERESA ALLISSA CITRO

Favor is a word that has been thrown about all over the place, whether it be in one-on-one conversations or social media platform statuses. There seems to be a misconception about God's favor and what one must do to have God's favor. Everyday Life staff and writers have explored and studied about the favor of God, and so we are sharing with you all that we have learned about God's favor. In this conversation, I talked with Dr. Citro about God's favor, what God's favor is, and why having God's favor upon us is significant.

Linda: Dr. Citro, the world is in a state of chaos. And yet here we are talking about God's favor in the midst of the things we see going on in the world. I know that over the years you have spoken much about God's favor. For this issue of EL, we chose the theme "Favor." Why was "favor" chosen as the theme for this issue?

Dr. Citro: The theme "Favor" was chosen because God showcases His favor in the midst of disasters. Even now as we speak a year later, the world is still dealing with this demonic plague called COVID-19. COVID-19 has unleashed havoc in every single corner of the earth for every nation and every tribe, and now we're dealing with its effects. People are plagued with fear, anxiety, anger, and depression. It feels like there is no way out of this catastrophic maze. "BUT" (one of my favorite words). "But" changes things. There is another word that changes all outcomes for the positive and that word is "favor." In the midst of all this confusion, deception, and hopelessness, favor appears.

Linda: God clearly wants to shower His children with His grace. We know the Word says that the Lord blesses the righteous and is a shield all around them. We know the Word says His favor is for a lifetime. I think there may be some asking,

"Where is the favor of God in the middle of what we can only call a mess?"

Dr. Citro: Linda, the question you just asked is so important. Let me explain. Believers who walk in righteousness and holiness automatically have the favor of God on their lives. Let me explain. There is a piece to this favor that no one wants to hear. It's a bit long so bear with me. First of all, there is something that we have to do. We have to choose that which is pleasing to God. We have to abide under the shadow of His wing

just like it says in Psalm 91. Psalm 91 screams the favor of God. But it starts with the first verse, "Those who abide under the shadow of the wings of the Most High God." We are sheltered when we abide by His holy commandments, when we walk the straight and narrow path, when we put our hand to the plough and don't look back. Have you ever seen a duck spread its wings? When it spreads its wings, it gathers all its little ducklings. They are protected under the shelter of her wings.

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Linda: Dr. Citro, I see that you are making the analogy of a duck gathering her ducklings just as God figuratively spreads his wings in order to gather His children to keep them protected. Is this what you are saying?

Dr. Citro: That's right, Linda, as long as we are abiding under His wings, we are kept safe. The only way we can forfeit that protection is when we choose not to obey and do things our own way. Linda, the only way we can be in danger is when we remove ourselves from under the wings of God. As long as we abide in Him and He abides in us, we are under His favor of protection, grace, mercy, and goodness all wrapped up in one word: "Favor."

Linda: We've been discussing favor and God's favor is something we should all desire. However, Dr. Citro, some would say that God's favor seems to be missing from their lives, situations, and circumstances. May I ask, if someone is feeling they do not have God's favor, what are some things you would suggest they do? What should they ask themselves if they feel they are missing God's favor in their life?

Dr. Citro: Linda, the Word of God is very clear. Examine yourself and let God search you to see if there is any wicked thing in you. That is what the Bible tells us to do. You have to let go of your own thought patterns and preconceived ideas whether or not you think something is fair. You must be real and sincere before the throne room of God. This is why we have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts us of all sin. He rebukes us when we do wrong and He points us to Jesus who is our Savior and example as to how to live abundantly. We go before the Lord with a broken spirit and contrite heart. That wing of protection is constantly open for us to run into. King David said that the Lord is a strong refuge and that we can run into that refuge and be safe. Linda, we need to understand another important truth. The favor of God was on King David. He was anointed to be king in his teen years. But he never actually became king until he was 30. David's life looked nothing like the favor of God was on him, running for his life from a madman named King Saul who wanted to murder him. The reason for King David's success in the beginning was that he refused to sin. That's the reason the favor of God was upon him. The moment he sinned with Bathsheba, that favor was lifted and he had nothing but disaster after disaster fall upon him and his household.

Linda: Wait a second! You said the favor of God lifted from him the moment he sinned. Why was the favor lifted even though he was still God's anointed and sitting on the throne?

Dr. Citro: Linda, sins have consequences. He committed adultery with a married woman. Then, she became pregnant. He tried to pass off the baby as her husband's. Then, he got Uriah drunk so he would sleep with his wife while they were still at war. That was a no-no. And when Uriah refused to sin, King David ordered him to be put on the frontlines to have him killed. We see the unthinkable here, Linda. Even though God said David had a heart after Him. You can see the murderous spirit David had when trying to cover up his sin. God saw his heart and God dealt with his heart. That is called the grace and mercy of God. Clearly, David removed the favor of God from his life the moment he did that because then you see the destruction that followed and fell on his family. The very baby that Bathsheba had died. You see the rape of a daughter by his son Amnon. You see the murder of Absalom in order to take vengeance for his sister who was raped. You see King David's own son trying to overthrow him. Then you see that son being murdered for trying to overthrow King David. He took one life. God took three lives from among his children. That is not the favor of God. He forfeited God's favor because of his sinful actions. However, David repented. But his life was filled with grief, sorrow, and, I'm sure, regret.

Linda: So the question each person must ask him or herself is, "Do I want the favor of God to rest upon me, my life, and those in my home?" It's not a difficult question to answer after hearing about the lives of certain people from the pages of Scripture. Dr. Citro, if you could give any word of encouragement to the readers, what would those words be?

Dr. Citro: You were created with the favor of God upon your life. One of my least favorite sayings is, "The favor of God will locate you." Please understand me. I'm not trying to be rude. The favor of God doesn't locate anyone. From before conception, the Lord God Himself formed you in your mother's womb. The favor of God was already there. Inside the womb, God Himself created you and me as individuals with the whole intention and purpose for our lives being blessings to showcase His favor and empower us to live the abundant life He created us to have.

Linda: I believe that in today's church it has been forgotten that God's favor rests upon those who are truly serving and loving Him with all their hearts, those who are fully surrendered to Him. When I hear someone say, "The favor of God will locate you," I automatically think to myself that His favor doesn't have to locate me because I didn't lose His favor. God's favor rests on those who walk in obedience to Him. Dr. Citro, would this be a correct statement to make?

Dr. Citro: Absolutely correct, Linda. You got it.

Linda: Everyone wants God's favor. What would you say to someone who wants to live their life in the way they want to and yet still expect God to show them favor?

Dr. Citro: I'm saddened to say it will never happen. God is clear. Favor is upon the righteous. The favor of God was upon Abraham. The favor of God was upon Noah. The favor of God was upon King David. The favor of God was upon Ruth and upon Esther. The favor of God was also upon Mary the mother of Jesus. Didn't the angel say to Mary that the Lord had found favor in her? Do you get this picture? What do those people all have in common? They obeyed God and refused to do that which was evil before His eyes. All of those people, on any given day, could have just totally disobeyed God.

Linda: So what was different about Abraham who lied to protect Sarah twice, Noah who got stone cold drunk, and King David who committed adultery and murder? They were disobedient at certain points when they committed these sins. Could you please help our readers understand why God favored them?

Dr. Citro: Linda, I'm so glad you asked this question. I was hoping you would. First of all, let me address Ruth and Esther. Notice how they both did everything they were supposed to do in obedience. Both of these women had Godly influences (Naomi for Ruth and Mordecai for Esther) who encouraged them in the ways of God. This is why you don't see anything in the Word of God that would be contradictory to sins or mistakes that they did because we know that these women went down in history as women of excellence and godly behavior, real role models for womanhood throughout the centuries. Now having said that, Abraham, Noah, and David were men who had hearts after God. They repented and never went back to committing the same sins. We always have to remember two things. First, God knows the real intention of the heart, not man. Second, they paid a huge price for their sins before God. God didn't let them get away with it.

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Linda: Both Saul and Samson started with the favor of God. However, we can see in the life of Saul that he ended up being rejected by God and losing His favor. In the life of Samson we see that Samson removed himself out of the favor of God because he treated what was holy with contempt. These two cases seem to be very significant. Could you please explain how Samson removed himself from God's favor and how Saul got rejected?

Dr. Citro: Linda, it is very sad what we have seen take place in the lives of Saul and Samson. In Samson's situation, he was born into a family that feared and honored God. Samson's mother was infertile. God honored her by giving her a child. Not just any child, but a special child. The angel who appeared to Samson's mother said that the favor of God was upon her child. This child was to bring Jehovah God massive glory. Samson's father asked God to send the angel to him just as he had sent the angel to his wife. Samson's father wanted the instructions as to how to raise Samson. They did everything the angel told them to do. However, Samson had no desire for the things of God. He did everything he could in a way that displeased and dishonored God. The favor of God was already with him even in the terrible choices he made. Samson's choices made it impossible for God to fulfill His favor upon Samson's life. He married a woman from the very nation he was called to destroy. Yet God still gave him a second chance. Samson then chose another woman from that enemy nation, only this time a prostitute. Finally, God removes His hand. We see what ended up happening to Samson. He got his eyes gouged out and then he was being put to death. Samson realized too late that he had removed himself from the favor of God. In King Saul's case, God had chosen him to be king. And, like Samson, Saul disobeyed God. He always acknowledged his sin, but he never repented. We see God removing the hand of

favor from Saul's life as the prophet Samuel had prophesied. You see, Linda, what happened is that they removed themselves from God's hand of favor. This is what happens today too. The favor of God is not locating anyone. It is given to us from inside our mother's womb. The question that I have for our readers is this: What will you decide to do with the favor of God you have been born with?

Linda: It should be known to those who are in Christ that God gave us His favor from the moment He intricately knit us together. He is the One who has ordained our steps and our destiny. In closing, Dr. Citro, how great and awesome are God's thoughts about us? In other words, how valuable are we to God?

Dr. Citro: We are extremely valuable to God. Every person on the face of the earth was born with purpose and the favor of God. That word favor is so important that it appears in the Bible 145 times. Therefore, I pray over all those who are reading this: "Let the favor of the Lord, Our God, be upon us and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands." (Psalm 90:17)

We are a blessed people, friends, for we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," (Psalm 139:14). Take joy in the God of your salvation, the One who has created you, for His favor surrounds you like a shield. Remember that the favor of God is upon you and has established the work of your hands. "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." (Numbers 6:24-26)

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GOD'S FAVOR IS THE FIRST AND LAST WORD

REV. BRIAN HUNTER

**"You have granted me life and steadfast love,
and your care has preserved my spirit." -Job 10:12 ESV**

**"Behold, he passes by me, and I see him not;
he moves on, but I do not perceive him." -Job 9:11 ESV**

Expressive of the invisibility of God, Job 9:11 reminds us that God is God all by Himself and requires nothing outside of Himself in order to be God Almighty. Every good and perfect thing comes from above where God abides and He makes His face, His favorable countenance, to shine upon us because we are the apple of His eye. The eternal power of the Godhead is perfectly just, graceful, and plenteous in mercy (Psalm 103:8) most notably in the face and person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the express image of the invisible God (Hebrews 1:3) and, through Him, the blessed hope of seeing Him as He is, face to face in the greatest radiant display of His glory. Yes. His essence and the essence of His favor are invisible. But this is why it is impossible to please Him without faith (Hebrews 11:6).

Favor as ascribed to God must be viewed as being consistent with His omnipresence. How can God move from location to location when He is everywhere and fills heaven and earth with

His presence? Job experienced God's blessings of providence and the blessings of His grace in the time of his prosperity. Even after the weight of affliction seemed overwhelming to Job, He never doubted God's presence nor belittled His preeminence.

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Though Job could not see Him, he knew that God had "passed by" him in and had looked graciously on him. See (Job 23:3, Job 23:8, Job 23:9).

Favor wields the entire weight of God's glorious and omnipotent goodness! His favor is infinite in power and influences the affairs of His beloved. Since we are the apple of God's eye (Psalm 17:8) and His most prized possession (James 1:18), we are

hard pressed to outrun the Lord's favor because His blessings will come upon us and overtake us (Deuteronomy 28:2). Hallelujah!

Favor admonishes peace in that we are too royal to respond, too powerful to be petty, too respected to retaliate, and too blessed to remain upset!

Whether a perceived dishonor or disrespect is subtle or not, we choose perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3), ascending above the offense of the situation to avoid the snare of the fowler. We hereby exercise our power to choose God's love, sanity, peace of mind, favor, and clarity despite any seemingly unfavorable circumstance. We think on these favorable things (Philippians 4:8) which nurture hope.

Favor is indeed the result of being in God's will.

We preserve God's favor when we effectively silence the noise in our personal environment. We cannot afford to pay attention to every voice or consider every worldly opinion contradicting God's Word. His Word and His favor are inseparable.

"God will fight the battle for you. And you? You keep your mouths shut!" (Exodus 14:14 Message Bible)

Husbands, that good thing by which we obtain the gracious favor of the Lord (Proverbs 18:22) is only a hint (Romans 8:23, 2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:14) of salvation eternally fulfilled, the absolute fortuitousness of God's glory that will be revealed when the perfect has come (1 Corinthians 13:9-10).

"For Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt Thou compass him about as with a shield." -Psalm 5:12

I have heard it said that favor is not fair. I would have to agree. God's favor is over and above any worldly concept of fairness or equitability. When it comes to explaining favor, God is the first and the last word.

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The Favor of God is Your Inheritance

REV. KENYON WATSON

I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW THAT THE DIVINE WILL OF GOD IS FOR HIS CHILDREN TO INHERIT HIS FAVOR AND BLESSING (PROVERB 3:1-4). HOWEVER, GOD'S FAVOR CANNOT BE ATTAINED UNLESS A CERTAIN PRE-REQUISITE IS FULFILLED. THAT PRE-REQUISITE IS THE OBEYING AND HONORING OF HIS SPIRIT (HOLY SPIRIT), WHICH I WILL DISCUSS LATER.

ACCORDING TO WIKTIONARY.ORG, FAVOR IS A HELPFUL DEED OR DEMONSTRATION OF GOODWILL TOWARD ANOTHER PERSON. THIS MEANS THAT FAVOR IS SOMETHING A PERSON RECEIVES FROM ANOTHER WITHOUT WORKING FOR OR EVEN DESERVING OF IT.

SO, WHAT IS THE FAVOR OF GOD? THE FAVOR OF GOD IS HIS MERCY AND GRACE EXTENDED TO A BELIEVER THROUGH THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS MEANS THAT GOD'S FAVOR IS HIS MERCY QUALIFYING THE UNQUALIFIED. TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT POSITION TO ATTRACT GOD'S FAVOR YOU FIRST MUST TEST YOURSELF BY FINDING OUT THE ANSWERS TO THESE THREE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS:

1. WHO ARE YOU?
2. WHO IS GOD TO YOU AND WHAT POSITION DOES HE HOLD IN YOUR LIFE?
3. WHAT IS THE CORE PURPOSE OF YOUR EXISTENCE?

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS? HAVING AND WALKING IN THIS KNOWLEDGE WILL PUT YOU IN THE POSITION TO ATTRACT GOD'S DIVINE FAVOR AND BLESSINGS.

SO LET US WORK TO FIND THE ANSWERS. FIRST, 'WHO ARE YOU?' GENESIS 1:27 TELLS US THAT GOD CREATED MANKIND IN HIS IMAGE. GENESIS 2:7 SAYS THAT GOD FORMED MAN OUT OF THE DUST OF THE EARTH AND THEN BREATHED HIS BREATH (GOD'S SPIRIT, JOB 32:8) INTO MAN AND HE BECAME A LIVING SOUL. THE SOUL IS COMPOSED OF THE MIND (ABLE TO THINK AND REASON), THE WILL (ABLE TO MAKE CHOICES) AND EMOTION (ABLE TO EXPRESS HIS FEELING THROUGH HIS PHYSICAL BODY).

THIS MEANS THAT YOU WERE PERFECTLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE (PSALMS 139:14). GOD IN HIS AWESOMENESS PUT YOU UNDER HIS DIVINE MICROSCOPE AND PERFECTLY WIRED EVERY CELL, BLOOD VESSEL, ORGAN, AND NERVE; MAKING SURE THERE WERE NOT ANY FLAWS OR MISTAKES. THIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS (GOD'S

IDENTITY) ARE NOT PHYSICAL BUT SPIRITUAL. THE SCRIPTURE IN JOHN 4:24 SAYS THAT GOD IS A SPIRIT AND THOSE WHO WORSHIP HIM MUST DO IT IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. I WILL TOUCH ON THIS A LITTLE LATER.

SECONDLY, 'WHO IS GOD TO YOU AND WHAT POSITION DOES HE HOLD IN YOUR LIFE?' I BELIEVE THAT THIS QUESTION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE THREE BECAUSE FOR YOU TO FIND YOURSELF, YOU FIRST MUST FIND THE SOURCE OF YOUR EXISTENCE (WHICH IS GOD) BECAUSE IN HIM IS YOUR IDENTITY. (COLOSSIANS 3:3)

LET US USE THIS EXAMPLE OF A PRINCE. WHILE HE WAS JUST A BABY, HE WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM HIS KINGDOM AND BROUGHT TO A DIFFERENT COUNTRY TO BE BROUGHT UP BY A BEGGAR. AFTER GROWING UP HE HAD NO IDEA THAT HE WAS A

It is God's desire for every believer to live in freedom and enjoy His benefits.

PRINCE. IF THIS PRINCE REMAINS IN THIS STATE, HE WILL NEVER KNOW HIS REAL IDENTITY AND IN THE END, WILL LOSE ALL THE INHERITANCE THAT IS RIGHTFULLY HIS.

SAD, TO SAY, THIS IS HAPPENING TO MANY CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS DUE TO LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS IN STORE FOR THEM AND HOW TO TAP INTO IT. MY AGENDA HERE TODAY IS TO HELP YOU TO LEARN HOW-TO WALK- IN GOD'S DIVINE FAVOR.

THE LORD WANTS YOU TO WALK IN EXTRAORDINARY FAVOR. FAVOR THAT WILL CAUSE THOSE AROUND YOU TO BECOME JEALOUS. AFTER SEEING YOUR BLESSING, THEY REALIZED THAT YOUR FATHER IS THE MASTER AND LORD OF ALL AND THAT HE ALONE CAN BRING BLESSING AND FAVOR IN THE TIME OF FAMINE (GENESIS 26).

AND THIS BRINGS ME TO MY FINAL POINT: 'WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR EXISTENCE?' THE BIBLE TELLS US IN ISAIAH 43:21, "THE PEOPLE WHOM I FORMED FOR MYSELF THAT THEY MIGHT DECLARE MY PRAISE" AND PROVERBS 3:3-4 SAYS LET LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS NEVER LEAVE YOU; BIND THEM AROUND YOUR NECK AND DOING THIS YOU WILL GET FAVOR AND A GOOD NAME IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AND MAN.

SO, FROM THIS, WE GATHER THAT GOD CREATED MAN TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND DECLARE HIS NAME TO ALL MEN, AND IF THEY DO THIS, THEY WILL BE HIS PECULIAR PEOPLE. THE LORD REQUIRES HIS CHILDREN TO WALK IN FAITHFULNESS AND LOVE BECAUSE DOING THIS WILL REFLECT THE NATURE AND THE CHARACTER OF GOD THROUGH US. THIS IN TURN WILL ATTRACT THE FAVOR AND BLESSING OF GOD IN OUR LIVES. HONORING GOD IS A VITAL PRINCIPLE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND NOT DOING THIS WILL MAKE YOU A REBELLIOUS CHILD. SO, YOU MIGHT BE THINKING 'IN WHAT WAY CAN I HONOR GOD?.' THE GREATEST HONOR YOU CAN GIVE TO GOD IS BY HONORING HIS PERSON. WHAT DO I MEAN BY THIS? THE PERSON OF GOD CAN BE FOUND IN THE HOLY SPIRIT BECAUSE GOD AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE THE SAME. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD AND GOD IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SO HEARING AND OBEYING HIM (HOLY SPIRIT/GOD) IS THE NUMBER

ONE PRE-REQUISITE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A MYSTERY TO MANY BELIEVERS THIS SHOULD NOT BE SO SINCE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ONE WHO GUIDES AND AIDS A BELIEVER. HE HELPS THE BELIEVER TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL THINGS AND THE PURPOSE OF THEIR EXISTENCE. AS MENTIONED EARLIER, YOU CANNOT RECEIVE GOD'S FAVOR IF YOU REFUSE TO HONOR AND OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT BECAUSE HE (HOLY SPIRIT) IS THE LIFE FORCE THAT LIVES IN YOU. A BELIEVER CANNOT FULFILL THE WILL OF THE FATHER WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT IS THE REASON WHY JESUS TOLD HIS

DISCIPLES THAT THEY SHOULD TARRY AT JERUSALEM UNTIL THEY RECEIVE AND BECOME EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (ACT 1:8). JESUS KNEW THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE ANY POWER OF THEIR OWN TO LIVE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS OR TO DO GOD'S WILL WITHOUT

TAPPING INTO THE POWER SOURCE (HOLY SPIRIT) OF HEAVEN.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS READY TO ALIGN AND PREPARE YOU TO RECEIVE GOD'S FAVOR AND BLESSING. IF YOU CONTINUE TO WALK HUMBLY, TRUSTING, AND HONORING GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH YOU WILL ALL BE A MAGNET TO GOD'S FAVOR. NOW, WHAT DECISION WILL YOU MAKE AFTER READING THESE WORDS? WILL YOU TAP INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY FAVOR OF GOD BY HONORING HIS SPIRIT OR WILL YOU REMAIN AS BEFORE AND LOSE WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY YOURS (GOD'S FAVORS AND BLESSING). THE BALL'S IN YOUR COURT.

**The Lord wants
you to walk in
extraordinary
favor.**

Shower of Favor Granted

EDDIE MASIH

**"You have granted me life and favor,
And Your care has preserved my spirit." (Job 10:12)**

**"Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them
with your favor as with a shield." (Psalms 5:12)**

Dear precious remnant, like Moses on the mountain of God saw the Glory of God and shared it with the clan, so I am sharing with you today how I have experienced the great favor of God in my life. We know from the above Scriptures that "Favor comes from The Lord." We have not just experienced the favor of God in a few areas of our lives. When we look back we realize we are surrounded by countless favors in every curve and turn of our life. Even to the smallest of the challenges we went through, those that seemed so difficult, tough, rough and sometimes impossible, we have seen the hand of God stretched upon us in favor. It is the favor of God that is holding us, keeping us, sustaining us, and helping us in this journey called life. May our hearts be filled with gratitude towards God for the shower of favors we have received from Him.

Since December 2019, the world has seen a terrible catastrophe because of Covid-19 taking thousands of lives, leaving many families in debt, and leaving children destitute. In the midst of all this, we realize our eyes can see the glory of God, our ears can hear the voice of God, our heart can sing praises to God, our hands can be lifted up in thanksgiving, and our knees can be bent in His honor. All we can say is, "We are highly favored because we are alive." On one hand the global economy was struck badly. But the children of God didn't lack any good thing and all their needs were met according to Philippians: 4:19. It's absolutely the favor of God. Where has our help come from, our help came from the "I am," the creator of the heavens and the earth (Psalms

121:1). When someone is gazing upon the face of God, he shall never be put to shame. I have personally experienced it in my life.

Fear and Death

I come from the nation of India. Covid-19, after travelling to various nations like China, many nations in Europe, and in the United States, lingered in India for some time. The negative impact it made will never be forgotten by the Indians. Honestly, this bad patch has left people in trauma and the event is registered in the dark pages of the history of our country. The newspapers daily showed us a picture of the worst waiting ahead in the days to come. Fear gripped everyone. People were terrified, living in a dilemma and not knowing who would go next in the family.

Those who believe in Christ Jesus came out victorious. Hallelujah! There is a saying, "The one who fears is half dead." The Bible records 365 mentions of the phrase "Fear Not" because we have 365 days in a year. One "Fear Not" for each day. Whenever fear haunts newspapers or news channels, we declare favor. The more it suppressed the more we proclaimed and here we are, alive and singing glory to our Father God. A believer is a warrior and the ones who have passed this phase of life have trampled fear and death under their feet in the name of Jesus. Because Jesus gave us the power to do so according to Ephesians 1:21-22.

Hospitals and Cremations

My mother is a senior nurse at our district hospital. She has spent her life running back and forth in the hospital, saving lives, nursing people, and sharing the gospel as the situation permitted. I am thankful to the Lord to be blessed with such a mother. Every day, after returning back from the hospital, she shared with us the story of what was going on there. She said she had never seen such a scene in the hospital ever in her lifetime. Almost all the hospitals in the country ran out of beds due to Covid patients. Many wealthy people tried bribing the hospital to get a bed to save their family members. But their big money didn't work for them. Money was devalued. But prayers gained value like never before. Due to the lack of beds in the hospitals, many patients were made to sit on chairs outside of the hospital with the oxygen masks on. Scarcity of oxygen cylinders was also at its peak. Hospitals were running out of oxygen and the moment the cylinders were empty all the patients died at once. The hospital rooms echoed with bitter cries and mourning. The scene was heartbreaking. But the Bible tells us in Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by faith." Faith is like oxygen for a believer. It is by the grace and favor of God that we are freely breathing fresh oxygen every day without tubes attached to our nostrils.

The death rate went up so high that people had to form a line to gain entry in the cremation centers. The mortuary was full and flooded with so many dead bodies lying heaped up on the floor that it became difficult for anyone to walk around. The crematorium was burning dead bodies 24 hours a day. So much that the chimneys melted and fell off. The situation was so out of control that hospitals started throwing dead bodies in the rivers to get rid of them. One state in the north of India found around 2,000 dead bodies floating on a bank of the river. Imagine the situation and also think of how people reacted to this. As a family we were cancelling what the Devil was telling us. We were telling the Devil what God had already said about us. "We shall not die; we shall glorify

the name of God!" That's how we are standing strong, standing tall, and standing upright to proclaim Jesus is Lord. Hallelujah!

Church and Family

My retired dad and my 7-months-pregnant sister tested covid positive. After my mom left for the hospital I was to take care of them during the day. My dad is a man of discipline. I am yet to reach his level. This young father of mine became so weak and deteriorated in health that he couldn't get up. He got sick a little here and there sometimes and that was normal. But how I saw him this time was something that I never saw before. It was the favor of God. The situation was under control for both my dad and sister. They were home but we didn't isolate them according to the government Covid regulations, thinking that would depress them all the more. This was my mom's idea and she was recognized as the best nurse at the hospital on many occasions. We were meeting with them both, talking to them, providing them food, administering medications, etc. And all this contact with no masks, no gloves, no distancing, no nothing. Yet, we were not affected by Covid because we are covered by the blood of Jesus. As a minister of God, I receive many prayer requests. During this pandemic I have to touch many Covid patients and pray for them. This was the time for me to practice what I have been preaching. I was claiming Mark 16:18: "They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." And, indeed, they were healed and recovered. Glory be to God! I have seen the favor of God manifested very closely these days. Let His name be praised forever and ever.

There are around 350 people in our church. My senior pastor, Rev. Victor Francis, is a man of prayer and firmly rooted in the Word of God. I am blessed to have such a shepherd in my life. Concerning what was happening, he cried out bitterly to the Lord. The Holy Spirit led him to organize fasting and prayer. The prayer was announced and the church was praying with tears in their eyes, burdens on their hearts, and

praises on their lips. The more Covid impacted India the louder we cried and prayed to God. Our prayers were heard and there was not a single Covid affected believer in our church. Our church is absolutely Covid free. There were hundreds and thousands of men of God that went to be with The Lord, death after death all over. But not a single death in our church. This was the answer to our prayers. The Bible tells us in James 5:16, "The fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much." When the church prayed of one accord, Peter's chains fell off and iron bars were broken. Acts 12 repeated with us during this pandemic. When we prayed, the bondage of Covid was broken. The effect diminished and life got back to normal. Isn't it the favor of God? No doubt about it.

In closing I would like to encourage you with these words. The more intimate we are with the Lord, the more our faith is built up. More faith brings more courage and more boldness. More boldness will help us use the sword of the spirit and the sword helps us to come out victorious. Furthermore, when we look back to what The Lord has done, our hearts will be filled with gratitude and we shall sing with tears of joy, "I am under the shadow (favor) of the Almighty!"

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The Grace of God is the Favor of God

PASTOR MICHAEL HEIL

It is certainly sad that many of the Saints of God, born again by the blood of Jesus Christ, are walking in a slumped-over posture that seemingly indicates defeat in their lives. God does not ever want you and me to think through the filter of defeat or discouragement. Truth be told, our redemption through Jesus Christ has given us a self-worth that all of heaven marvels at and all of hell trembles before. God has favored us so much that He now considers us sons and daughters! Like Paul, we can constantly say, "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is never right to boast about who we are in and of ourselves, but it is always proper and a step of faith to boast about who we are in Christ. The devil, the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), works overtime to keep us unaware of the truth of God's favor upon us.

Let us take a quick look at what Scripture says about God's favor resting upon us. The first thing that we notice when we look at Scripture is that God's grace is extended to all mankind; whether a person is born again in Christ, or still in the world, God's favor is extended onto them. God reveals to us in John 1:14 that Jesus Christ came to the earth "full of grace and truth." The most basic definition of grace means unmerited favor. So, when Christ came to the earth as a babe in the manger, he came not only for the church but onto the whole world. We read in the Gospel of John 3:16, "for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believe it's on him should not perish but have everlasting life." God giving his son was a gift out of his grace

to all mankind; Jesus came for the righteous before the unrighteous. Jesus came not only for the Billy Grahams and the Mother Therasas, but he came also for the Hitlers and Stalins, and, of course, He came for you and me. The incarnation of Jesus Christ into history was the grace of God presented and made available to all. This is a very basic truth about God to understand, His favor is always and ever upon us. I find this to be the general, and universal, nature of God's love

towards all of mankind. Yet they are also the special grace of God that comes onto the righteous.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ into history was the grace of God presented and made available to all.

Let us note, the first time God ever mentions his grace in Scripture is in Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." This first expression of God's grace reveals that Noah, amongst all the inhabitants in the earth at that time, found favor with God. Later, in 2 Peter 2:5 it says, "but saved Noah, one of eight people, a

preacher of righteousness." This would indicate that God gave special favor to Noah over the rest of mankind because of his righteousness. Being before the covenant of Jesus Christ, and even before the covenant with Israel, Noah attained righteousness by faith fully doing the will of God. God had given unto him a chore, or a work, to build an ark in preparation for the flood. Noah walked faithfully for 120 years, building this ark! Because of his faithfulness, and his holiness according to the light he had received from God, God gave him special favor which saved him from the flood.

For you and I, who are the saints of Jesus Christ, we have attained a special favor from God

through walking in the righteousness we possess. The Scripture tells us in Ephesians 2:8, 9 that we are, "saved by grace through faith." There is that word again-grace-which indicates God has given us unmerited favor; we don't deserve it, we can't earn it, it doesn't come to one person at the expense of another, it is wholly based on God's love for us. Once we are born again, this special anointing of grace and favor rests upon each one of us. The apostle Paul had a specific pattern to his writings, and as we examine his epistles we will always find he opens him with some variation of this phrase: "grace and peace be unto you" (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2). In fact, Paul uses this greeting 13 times in the Bible. This would indicate to me the body of believers in Jesus Christ always have the special favor from God resting upon them. Does it rest upon us if we fail in sin? The answer to that would be yes, because God's favor doesn't rest upon what we do, rather it rests upon His character. God is love (1 John 4:8) and because He is love He extends His grace unto us generally as members of the human race, and then specifically as the righteous in Jesus Christ. So, since grace also is defined as unmerited favor, we can never get out from under the favor of God.

Are you feeling blessed yet? Are you feeling victorious in Christ? Does your heart flood with joy knowing how deeply God loves you? You and I need to stay ever conscious of the favor of God. Once we let the favor of God fill our heart, many excellent changes will start to appear in our lives. First, we will gain confidence in who we are in Christ which will strengthen our faith. God tells us in the book of Hebrews 10:35, "do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward." How would a believer in Christ cast away confidence but by believing the lies of Satan that our sins, or our mistakes, and life cause God to look upon us with anger. God specifically tells us, not to cast away our confidence by believing these lies. Of course, the greatest example of this would be when parents do not like or agree with what their children might do. The parents might be discouraged or disappointed, but they never stop loving the child; the parent never stops acting with the best concerns for that child in mind. Recognizing and walking in the favor that we have from God will strengthen our faith because of our confidence.

Another blessing that comes through understanding God's favor is upon us is a strengthened devotion unto our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 2:4 shares with us a very important truth of our relationship with Christ, it says, "do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance". Knowing God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering will

**Recognizing
and walking
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impact our desire to repent and follow him. Too often the church thinks, "if I think too much on God's goodness and forgiveness, I will start taking sin for granted." God tells us in his word the exact opposite. The more we are conscious of who we are in Christ, the more we are conscious of the love of God unto us, the more we will desire to repent of our sins. The reason for that is very easy to see even if we look at human interactions. If I have a friend who believes in me, supports me, thinks the best about the even when I mess up, that isn't going to inspire me to take advantage of that friend. No, just the opposite! I'm going to do my best to prove the belief in the support and the love of this friend is correct; I'm going to bend over backwards to measure up to his high standard of me. Brothers and Sisters, we should be Christ conscious rather than sin conscious. Sin consciousness focuses on our failures; Christ consciousness focuses on His victory for us.

Brothers and Sisters, You Saints of the Living God, I exalt in who Christ is in you. I remind you that Jesus, your Lord and my Lord, thought so highly of you that it kept him on the cross. That should be enough to exalt the lowest saint in Christ, that should be enough to humble the highest saint in Christ. I remind you that you are anointed by the Holy Spirit, and that you are loved by and highly favored by God; and walk in this confidence daily. Selah.

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CITRO

COLLECTION FINE JEWELRY

Citro Collection has expanded even during our lockdown. We have now designed a brand new necklace: two hearts combined as one. As believers, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become one with God. For anyone who struggles through anything, this necklace is a constant reminder that we belong to God and He resides in us. In addition, this heart necklace was designed with the intention of purchasing as is (no stones) or with stones to be given to mothers, grandmothers, fiancées or wives for birthday necklaces. You can place your desired stones to represent the months of children, grandchildren, and the one you love; or if you lost a loved one you can place the color of the birthstone as a reminder that your loved one is in Heaven.



The heart is available in silver, white and yellow gold, platinum, and stainless steel.

Prices of the jewelry varies according to which metal or stone, semi gems, gems or lab created gems and stones you choose. You can send an email to info@threadofhope.org for prices. All of the jewelry will be created and shipped all over the world by our jeweler Princess Diamonds. All of our jewelry will come in a jewelry box. Shipping charges will be applied in accordance to where you live. No taxes will be charged as all proceeds will benefit **Thread of Hope, Inc.**

This exclusive beautifully custom-designed bracelet is the first piece of jewelry released from THE CITRO COLLECTION FINE JEWELRY with the inspiring Thread of Hope Logo which represents hope and reminds those who wear it that no matter what they're going through there is hope. This bracelet can come engraved with initials or date of a special occasion or loved one. Please send us an email to info@threadofhope.org for prices.

TOH HOPE COLLECTION: 1ST PIECE IN THE COLLECTION

This exclusive beautifully custom-designed is the first piece of jewelry released from THE THREAD OF HOPE COLLECTION, called Rahab's Thread of Hope, with the inspiring Thread of Hope Logo which represents hope and reminds those who wear it that no matter what they're going through there is hope. The bracelet is available in silver, white and yellow gold, platinum, and stainless steel.. All proceeds go to help women and children who are victims of sex trafficking. When you receive your purchase, it will come in a jewelry box. Don't forget to order yours today for your loved ones. You can purchase Rahab's Thread of Hope at www.threadofhope.org.





This section on education is important to us and is there to help encourage parents for better communication between home and school for a successful academic career.



Arabella is a high school student who has been gifted in many ways, one of them being art. These beautiful paintings deserve to be shared and recognized. Way to go, Arabella! We are proud of you!



FAVOR IN A LEADER'S LIFE

DR. EDWARD A. ADDISON

Favor in a leader's life is the divine influence of God upon the heart and it's reflection for all to see:

The year was 1991 when a scrawny young man found himself in Cleveland, Tennessee, a small town down South in the USA. To my own chagrin I had initially booked a flight across the Atlantic from London, England to Cleveland, Ohio rather than Cleveland, Tennessee! That's how ignorant I was about the existence of this town of just 30,000 residents. Anyway, Bible college was not quite my idea. I was simply following what I believed to be God's leading, reluctantly so. But who can argue with God and win? Job enquired about it and Jonah actually tried it. Both of them wound up flummoxed and floored by the dealings of the Almighty.

One rainy afternoon, I lay on the floor with my worn Bible open when a verse suddenly leapt out at me. I found myself reading this verse for the next five to six days.

"I am the vine; and you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

It was actually the last seven words that left an impact on me, "without me you can do absolutely nothing." It was an awesome and transformative experience that left an indelible impression upon my walk with the Lord from that day onwards.

We are told that Daniel prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10). We need not ponder what impact his exemplary prayer life had upon his work in the marketplace. The fruitfulness of his devotion and dedication was seen in all that he did. It manifested itself in a life of favor before men. Through his life we catch a brief glimpse into what favor looks like in the work of a leader who is committed to a lifetime of a walk with God.

Daniel's work was exquisite at all levels. He distinguished himself above all others (Daniel 6:2-3). Undoubtedly, the favor of God was evident in Daniel's life. It is impossible to miss the fact that Daniel first sought to seek favor with God before he found favor with man. It was his devotion upon his knees and his consistent lifestyle of meeting with God that led to success in every area of Daniel's life.

We see in Daniel's life that favor is not something that the leader primarily seeks from others. The Psalmist said, "let the favour of God be upon you and establish the works of your hands" (Psalm 90:17). Favor is therefore first seen in the divine influence upon the heart before it is manifested in the work of a leader's hand. It is first seen in Daniel's character, in his conduct, and in his refusal to compromise. Thereafter it is also seen in the favor he finds with Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:48) Belshazzar (Daniel 5:29) and with King Darius. Daniel's prominence and position in the Persian empire is fuelled by nothing other than the favor of God upon his life. Favor is seen

**"...without
me you can
do absolutely
nothing."**

John 15:5

in the grace God gives a leader to fulfill his or her calling. It is in God's provision of wisdom to solve complex problems.

These seven words 'without me you can do absolutely nothing,' were also echoed by Joseph who saw God's favor in his life most eminently: 'Do not interpretations belong to God (Genesis 40:8). It is the leader's uttermost acknowledgement of God's sovereignty, omnipotence, and omnipresence that leads to favor with man. Often we get it wrong. We scheme, strategize, and look to greener grass all in the desire to curry favor with men. Yet we are told time and time again it is the inner working of the Spirit upon our hearts that ultimately shows itself in our walk and in our work. It is only then that others say, "There goes a leader favored by God."

Jesus is our example in all things. His desire was to please the Father and to do the Father's will. We find favor with men when we have first sought to find favor with God: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and favour with God and men" (Luke 2:52). We eviscerate favor of its truest meaning by solely focussing on its outworking before man rather than the inner working of God in our lives as leaders. There is no working out of favor, no ministry doors opening, no reception of our message, no miraculous provision other than when we first find favor with God for without Him we can do absolutely nothing.

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EMBRACING YOUR FAVOR

BY DR. DARIEL "D.T." HENRY

**"You will never see a team play harder than
we will the rest of the season."**

~ Tim Tebow

One great speech can change the mindset of an entire football team. It can change their effort and the outcome of a game. It can change the outcome of a season.

I think back to the 2008 College Football season when the University of Florida Gators were predicted to go undefeated for the first time in school history. Tim Tebow was the superstar quarterback, just coming off a Heisman Trophy-winning sophomore season. The team was stacked with future NFL players and it looked as if they would be the team to finally bring UF an undefeated season. However, the season turned out differently than expected. On September 27, 2008, the University of Mississippi, aka "Ole Miss," spoiled Florida's plan to go undefeated. While driving for a game-winning field goal with 40 seconds left, they stopped Tim Tebow on a fourth-quarter 4th and 1 play to win the game 31-30.

After the loss, at the end of an interview with reporters, Tebow paused, took a deep breath, grabbed the podium, and had a personal moment with the fans. That moment became the speech known as "The Promise."

"To the fans and everybody in Gator Nation, I'm sorry. I'm extremely sorry. We were hoping for an undefeated season. That was my goal, something Florida has never done here. I promise you one thing, a lot of good will come out of this. You will never see any player in the entire country play as hard as I will play the rest of the season. You will never see someone push the rest of the team as hard as I will push everybody the rest of the season. You will never see a team play harder than we will the rest of the season. God Bless."

~ Tim Tebow, 2008

The speech was so powerful that head coach Urban Meyer had it engraved on a plaque outside the stadium while Tebow was still a student. The Gators went on to win every game afterward and the national title.

I related to Tim Tebow that day because I knew how he felt at that moment. There are times when you know a setback has just unlocked something

powerful inside of you. You know this is going to change you. You know you have more to give. You know you can lead even better than before, but you have to get your team to believe in you. You have to get people around you to see something that they may have never seen before. But you see it. You have been blessed with the vision. You have been given the foresight to see the completed version of that vision and the path to get you there. You also see the gift and the curse. When you are the one who received the vision, you might have to stand alone. It may take time for others to believe in you. And when the vision includes others going harder, they are not specifically doubting you. They doubt themselves. Part of your vision includes helping them remove that doubt. It is one of the burdens of leadership.

I understand doubt. I understand how seeing yourself in a place different from your current position requires imagination. For some people imagination is foolish dreaming. They may ask themselves how could they be more than what they already are? I understand why they ask themselves this when we live in a world that constantly reminds us not to dream. But I am motivated by a higher source and walk a different path.

Recently, I have been more open about motivating people after looking at a year-end report from the mentoring department of my company. Some of my college football players have signed Arena Football contracts, and a few made NFL practice squads. Several of my female mentees are in graduate school or graduating this semester. The response from my Change 101: Race and Diversity Course for White and Non-Black People Seeking Change has been amazing, and I have had some life-changing conversations with my brothers and sisters from other cultures.

Yes, I am saying this to brag about God's favor in my life, and to tell those of you out

there who are struggling with adding your voice or gift to the world to just do it! Some of you have a worship song that you want to write. Some of you have a children's book that you want to write or illustrate. Some of you want to shift careers. I encourage you not only to look at your present life and your finances, but also look inside at the things that are holding you back and work on removing them.

One of my steps in getting through the struggle of holding myself back is to research the Scriptures. I look to Psalm 90:17 which proclaims, "Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!" Do not fear the favor of God on your life. Having favor does not eliminate certain struggles in your life. Instead, you could develop the capacity to handle a higher level of struggle with confidence. You could also become a blessing to those that are now facing struggles you once faced.

Embrace your gifts and use them to move this world forward.

Remind yourself of Isaiah 58:11 which states, "The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

You got this!



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Power Surge God Notices...

DR. CAROL DRAKE WHEATLEY

There is an inherent desire in the heart of man to be favored. Everyone wants to be special and everyone, deep down inside, wants to be recognized. But sometimes the desire for favor gets out of hand and the quest for recognition becomes an idol.

The error occurs when we seek someone or something other than God to fulfill the desires of our heart. Psalm 145:16 tells us that God opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. As we all know by now, that does not mean that God will grant your wish for a new Rolex or a new boat so you don't have to go to church on Sunday. We are talking about righteous desires.

Proverbs 12:2 says, "A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of wicked devices He will condemn." This pretty much sums up how the Lord differentiates between good and wicked, and between favor and condemnation. This is the perfect entry into a look at the Lord's true love for us and His true desire for us to walk in His favor.

Does God Really Condemn Us?

Thankfully, the answer to that question is, "NO!" When Jesus died on the Cross, He died carrying all of your wickedness with Him. He overcame all sin – including all of your sins. And when He died, He rose again through the power of the Holy Spirit and all of your sins and all of the sins of the entire

world from "eternity old" to "eternity future" were eradicated. The Scriptures tell us that "cursed" is the man who hangs on a tree. That means that all of the curses that were placed on evil mankind were now broken and no more curses can harm you. That's an absolutely wonderful thing to know. Isn't it? But it is, however, conditional.

**A good man
obtains favor
from the Lord,
but a man
of wicked
devices He
will condemn.**

Proverbs 12:2

In order for you to stand righteous before the Living God, you must be born from above, often called born again. This simply means that you have, at some point in time, been given an opportunity to acknowledge the finished work of Jesus Christ, accept His forgiveness, and ask Him to be the Lord of your life.

Because of His righteousness and not your own, you are then able to stand before the Holy God and never have to worry about being condemned no matter what your sins were.

There is Therefore Now NO Condemnation

The love of God is completely unconditional. But there are conditions which govern forgiveness. Is everyone forgiven? Yes. Does everyone go to Heaven when they die? Only if they are born from above and have a relationship with God the Father.

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,

who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." When we are born again, we begin to realize through the revelation of the Holy Spirit that we are now living in the favor of God.

Grace, Favor, or Both?

Both. Grace and favor mean the same thing in that the person who is favored receives satisfaction from the Lord. Remember, in Psalm 145 we just read that it is God who provides us with His favor and that is what satisfies us. We all know people who are totally dissatisfied with their lives. Sometimes that dissatisfaction comes because of lack of finances, or lack of job promotion, or a miserable marriage, or even not being able to find a good church. Dissatisfaction can be caused by a large number of circumstances. But dissatisfaction can only be mitigated by one thing: God's favor.

Knowing and following God's will puts you in a very special position. It enables you to receive His righteousness because of His favor. Now, let's not confuse "favor" with "righteousness." There is only one way to stand righteous before God and that is to be born again. That's all you have to do. As a matter of fact, it's all you can do to be righteous. Chris Blackeby, an amazing teacher from California via Australia, puts it this way, "Your behavior didn't qualify you for God's love, so your behavior doesn't disqualify you for God's love."

Profound in its clear simplicity, right? You can't do anything except be born again which just means that you have decided to turn from the way you've been living and turn to God so you can live by the Spirit. It's really that easy. Jesus did the work. You are no longer condemned. You are loved. You are favored.

Living in Favor

We opened this article by acknowledging that everyone wants to be favored and everyone wants to be noticed. When you begin living by the Spirit, you begin to see that you are favored and that God does recognize you. In the world today, it's so easy to forget who we are. Am I fat? Am I rich? Am I beautiful? Do I have the perfect job? Do I even count for anything? Am I worthless? Do

I really need to eat certain foods or take certain meds or wear certain clothes to be of value to my community? Of course not!

You are loved. The Father thought you were special enough to send His Son to die for you so that you could have eternal life. How's that for favor? The Bible tells us that God knew us before He placed us into our mother's womb and that He watched us as each one of our tiny bones were created. How's that for recognition? You were created for a special purpose and you were created in His image. But what image is that?

Projecting the Right Image

We all project an image of what we want the world to see in us. Do we dress and behave in a corporate manner? Are we very Bohemian in our culture? Do we reflect years of neglect by the way we talk or behave? The image you project tells the world how to treat you. And some of us have been mistreated for a very long time. But...

Never lose sight of the fact that God is your Father. You are made in His image. Not an image with toes and eyes and arms and legs, but rather an image of love and compassion and kindness and understanding. He has made you in His image even as He made Jesus in His image. What does God look like? He looks like Jesus and He looks like you! Does He have curly hair or a tan complexion? It doesn't matter. What does matter is the image that is projected. The evidence of God's presence in your life is defined in Galatians 5:22. It is a clear depiction of the image in which we have been created and the image in which we should walk:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

There is no question as to the image we are to project when we decide to become sons of the Most High God. How do we get to that image? Favor. God's favor. Not performance.

When becoming like God is the focus of your life, His favor will enable you to live as Jesus lived. 1 John 4:17 says, "As He is, so are we in this world." We can't get there by ourselves, we have to have God's favor guide us and provide for us...and He will. Verse 11 in the same scripture tells us that, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

How do we demonstrate God's image? By extending favor to one another through love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

But Guard Your Heart

In our quest for favor and recognition, we can be led astray when we do not seek these things from God alone. Galatians 3:5 warns, "Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry." And then 1

John 5:21 clearly tells us to keep ourselves from idols, which means don't do that stuff! So, if you are involved in these types of activities in order to find favor from people or to gain recognition from them, remember that this type of behavior is idolatry because it is not focused on God.

When we guard our hearts and focus on projecting God's image in our lives, the enemy cannot touch us (1 John 5:18). He has no legal ground for accusing you of anything because Jesus forgave your sins. When you asked Him into your life, you became a life-giving spirit even as Jesus was on Earth. You are righteous because of Him. You are righteous because of God's love for you. When you live in the Spirit, you begin to project God's image and that is a life of favor.

(Visit Chris Blackeby at www.AsHelsMinistries.org)

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LOOK INSIDE ↴



Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal

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Evidence-Based Systematic Review of Literature on Algebra Instruction and Interventions for Students With Learning Disabilities

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It is imperative teachers use evidence-based practices to instruct all learners. Yet, there are limited reviews focused on educational practices to support secondary students with learning disabilities in algebra. This evidence-based systematic review focused on research published in peer review journals between 1999 and 2019. Eighteen studies across 17 articles were reviewed and analyzed, of which 14 met the Council of Exceptional Children standards of high quality. Researchers identified eight mathematical instructional approaches to teach algebra related content to secondary students with learning disabilities. The main result was that no instructional approach met the necessary criteria to be considered evidence-based for this particular demographic and mathematical content. However, five mathematical practices (i.e., CRA, manipulatives, enhanced anchor instruction, schema based instruction, and peer assisted learning strategy) were found to be potentially evidence-based.

Keywords: algebra, evidence-based practice, students with disabilities, learning disabilities

INTRODUCTION

Algebra is considered by many to be the mathematical gatekeeper, and mastering algebra skills gives students a passport to educational opportunities and an expansive job market (Ralston et al., 2018). Although often conceptualized as a stand-alone course, algebra is a strand of mathematics requiring a set of skills used across topics (Ralston et al., 2018; Stephens et al., 2015). Basic algebraic reasoning includes such problems as $3+2 = \underline{\quad}$, with more complex algebra studied at the secondary level involving multiple steps and imaginary numbers [e.g., $4(3m - 7) = 2(6 + 9m)$]. Algebra may include the manipulation of numbers and symbols to solve for an unknown, identifying and analyzing patterns, examining relationships, making generalizations, and interpreting change (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], 2000; Stephens et al., 2015).

According to the NCTM Standards (2000) and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM, 2010), algebraic reasoning should be incorporated into all grade levels. Foundations of algebra are introduced upon entering school and students begin by developing fluency with numbers, exploring structure in operations, and describing relationships (Kieran, 2014; Stephens et al., 2015). Students build on these skills every year and should learn to express algebraic relationships symbolically using appropriate mathematical language by middle school. This

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includes solving basic expressions and equations, analyzing patterns between independent and dependent variables, and solving both real-life and mathematical problems using numerical and algebraic knowledge (CCSSM, 2010). Once students enter high school, they are challenged to create and reason with equations, inequalities, and systems of equations at an even more advanced level (Kieran, 2014).

There are several unique challenges associated with learning algebra. To begin, algebra requires a considerable amount of abstract thinking and in order to further advance their mathematical understanding, students must learn to navigate the gap from concrete to abstract reasoning (Stephens et al., 2015; Witzel, 2016). Further, language plays an integral part in gaining proficiency in mathematics, and the novelty associated with algebra creates additional challenges (Witzel, 2016). Specifically, assigning appropriate meaning to symbols is difficult for some students. For this reason, it is important to generate opportunities for students to practice using algebraic language as they converse about strategies, concepts, and mathematical procedures (Star et al., 2015). Finally, many students struggle to recognize and understand the structural characteristics of algebra (Star et al., 2015). For example, often students believe a variable can only stand for one number, instead of recognizing it could represent a large set of values. Each challenge creates barriers as students work to develop their algebraic thinking and strategies. While these challenges can be difficult for all students, they are especially demanding for students with learning disabilities (Star et al., 2015).

Algebra and Students with Learning Disabilities

When analyzing questions involving algebra (i.e., understanding of patterns, using variables, algebraic representation, and functions) on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2019), students with disabilities scored an average of 40 points lower as compared to their same-aged peers without disabilities (NAEP, 2019). The average for eighth-grade students with disabilities was below the score for basic on the NAEP, while the average for students without disabilities was above basic but below proficient. Previous researchers also suggested students with learning disabilities can face challenges in algebra due to difficulties with working memory and organization (Scanlon, 2013), representing the algebraic problem (Maccini & Ruhl, 2000), as well as recall of basic facts or computational processes (Maccini & Hughes, 2000). In order to close the gap between students with learning disabilities and those without, it is imperative teachers use effective teaching strategies to give students with learning disabilities access to and support with the general education curriculum, such as algebra (CCSSM, 2010; Stevens et al., 2018). One way to determine effective—or evidence-based practices—for teaching algebra is through systematic reviews of the literature or evidence-based practices syntheses (Cook et al., 2014; Witzel, 2016).

Within the last decade, researchers conducted three systematic reviews focused on effective mathematical practices to teach algebra-related content to students with disabilities (Hughes et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2019; Watt et al., 2016). Hughes and colleagues (2014) limited their analysis to quasi-experimental and experimental designs, and included more than peer-reviewed articles (e.g., dissertations). They analyzed 12 manuscripts including 13 different studies spanning from 1983-2013.

Participants included students with disabilities, with three studies involving elementary students and 10 studies focused on secondary students. Researchers identified six intervention categories: (a) cognitive/model-based instruction, (b) co-teaching, (c) concrete-representational-abstract (CRA) framework, (d) graphic organizer, (e) single-sex interventions, and, (d) technology. All intervention categories had a positive effect on algebra achievement, except single-sex interventions. However, only two categories—cognitive/model-based instruction and the CRA framework—had enough information to calculate a weighted effect size. Both practices indicated moderate effects on students' algebra achievement and included systematic and explicit instruction as part of the intervention.

Watt et al. (2016) included only students with identified learning disabilities and expanded on the previous review by Hughes et al. (2014) by including single-case design along with quasi-experimental and experimental design. Although their search for articles meeting criteria spanned 1980-2014, the publication dates of studies that met the inclusion criteria were limited to 2000-2014. In all, they reviewed 15 studies, including five single-case and 10 group design. Watt et al. suggested large effects from the interventions, but often an intervention package was used making individual interventions difficult to disentangle. They identified five interventions that constituted the majority of research regarding algebra and students with learning disabilities. Some interventions were consistent with the findings by Hughes et al. (2014), such as the CRA framework, cognitive strategy or modeling-based instruction, and graphic organizers. In addition, Watt et al. also suggested researchers have examined enhanced anchor instruction and tutoring to support the learning of algebra by students with learning disabilities. All of the studies included in the review by Watt et al. used explicit instruction as part of the intervention, and all but three used some type of visual representation.

Hwang et al. (2019) also focused on students with learning disabilities—with attention to secondary students—but examined problem solving and cognitive processes relative to algebra. Hwang et al. (2019) identified 11 studies focused on middle school students with learning disabilities involving algebra. Across the 11 studies, four cognitive processes emerged: the CRA, the virtual-abstract (VA), the integrated CRA (CRA-I), and solely abstract. Across all the studies, Hwang et al. (2019) concluded the interventions were effective and that researchers explicit instruction was used throughout the studies.

Purpose of the Study

Due to the importance of using evidence-based practices (EBP) to teach mathematics to students with learning disabilities, there has been an increase in systematic reviews exploring instruction used to support students with disabilities in general—and learning disabilities in particular—in the area of mathematics (e.g., Bouck et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2019; Marita & Hord, 2017; Watt et al., 2016). However, two reviews exist in the last ten years that focus explicitly on effective algebraic instruction for students with learning disabilities (Hwang et al., 2019; Watt et al., 2016). Yet, neither examined the quality of the studies in comparison to quality indicators and standards relative to determining evidence-based practices. The aim of this evidence-based synthesis was to identify and critically ana-

lyze the practices for teaching secondary school appropriate algebraic concepts to secondary students with learning disabilities. By applying the quality indicators and practice standards set by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC, 2014; Cook et al., 2014) to the current research base, the authors sought to identify EBP in teaching algebra to secondary students with learning disabilities. The research questions included: (a) What educational practices have been used to teach algebra to secondary students with learning disabilities? (b) According to CEC standards, which of these educational practices used to teach algebra to secondary students with learning disabilities are evidence-based?

METHOD

Literature Search

This evidence-based synthesis focused on research regarding algebraic instruction and students with learning disabilities. To begin, the authors conducted a keyword search of existing databases. Specifically, the authors searched three databases: ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar. Search terms were chosen to identify studies focused on practices used to teach algebraic content to students with learning disabilities. The author used a combination of different search terms in an effort to obtain all available research in this area: (algebra OR linear equations OR equations OR systems of equations OR expressions OR multi-step equations) AND (high-incidence disabilit* OR mild disabilit* OR learning disabilit*) AND (teach OR learn OR support OR intervention OR instruction). The authors also conducted similar searches in the following journals: *Exceptional Children*, *Journal of Special Education*, *Remedial and Special Education*. Finally, the authors conducted ancestral searches of accepted articles as well as reviewed the included articles of systematic reviews focused on secondary students and mathematics (e.g., Marita & Hord, 2017; Watt et al., 2016) published within the time period.

The search was restricted to articles published in English in a peer-reviewed journal between 1999 and 2019. The authors limited articles to the last twenty years to ensure practices being evaluated were still relevant to current educational standards (Sahlberg, 2016). Two hundred and four articles were initially identified through searches; an additional 10 articles were screened through the ancestral search. Each was screened for adherence to inclusion criteria: (a) one dependent variable relative to algebra learning or skill acquisition described under the Expressions and Equations (Grades 6–8) or Algebra (Grades 9–12) domains of the CCSS; (b) target population as students with learning disabilities (LD); (c) conducted with students enrolled in sixth through 12th grade; (d) involved a single case design (SCD) or a group comparison design; (e) results could be disaggregated for students with disabilities; (f) the instruction delivered in English; and (g) the impact could be connected to an algebra instruction. Researchers excluded studies if they did not meet the inclusion criteria. For example, articles were included if (a) students were in grades PK-5 or out of school; (b) the target mathematics was not algebra; (c) the results were not disaggregated for students with disabilities or the impact of an algebraic instruction; (d) the group design involved a pretest/posttest, meaning there two groups were not compared; and (e) the study was a secondary analysis of a previously included study.

Further, articles were excluded if they addressed related, foundational, or precursor content to learning algebra (e.g., fractions, proportional reasoning), but not linear or advanced algebraic concepts explicitly. The screening was done by examining the title and abstract and—if needed—the entire article for eligibility or exclusion.

After applying the screening procedures, 18 studies (17 articles; one article included two studies) met all inclusion criteria. Once the studies were identified, the researchers recorded the study characteristics. Study characteristics included: (a) study descriptions (e.g., title, author, and date of publication), (b) sample (e.g., number of participants, age or grade), (c) participants' identified disability or inclusion criteria, (d) the mathematical content, (e) the instruction used to teach the algebraic concept, (f) the measure used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction (design), and (g) the results of the study.

Coding for Quality

In quantitative research, methodological rigor refers to the precision of a study in terms of design, data collection, analysis, and distribution of results (Cook & Cook, 2013; Cook et al., 2014). To establish methodological rigor in the 18 studies that met inclusion criteria, the author used specific quality indicators identified and categorized by the CEC (Cook et al., 2014). The categories included: (1) context and setting; (2) participants; (3) instructional agent; (4) description of practice; (5) implementation fidelity; (6) internal validity; (7) outcome data/dependent variable; (8) data analysis. Each category included anywhere from one to nine specific quality indicators based on the type of study (i.e., SCD or group). A majority of the quality indicators were the same for both SCD and group design, however some variation existed. For instance, internal validity was assessed using different quality indicators for each design, and group design also had an additional quality indicator related to outcomes and data analysis. Thus, 22 quality indicators applied to SCD studies and 24 quality indicators to group studies (Cook et al., 2014). Using these standards, a study is methodologically sound only if it meets all of the quality indicators for the specified research design (Cook et al., 2014).

When assessing the study for quality using the indicators proposed by the CEC, the reviewers first determined whether the authors provided sufficient information when describing the setting. This includes describing the general location like the geographic location and community characteristics such as socioeconomic status, as well as more specifics about the space being used for the instruction. For a school this may include whether it is public or private, the type of program and/or physical layout of the classroom (Cook et al., 2014). Next, the reviewers assessed whether authors included adequate information to describe the participants. This includes relevant demographic information such as specific disability diagnosis and/or whether the student is at-risk in a particular area (Cook et al., 2014). In a quality study, authors describe the method used to determine status (e.g., national or state assessments, teacher nomination, curriculum-based measurement probes).

The reviewers then assessed the presence of the instruction agent, description of practice, and fidelity of implementation. A quality study reports on critical characteristics of the person or people implementing the instruction including pertinent demographics, their background as relevant to the study, and proof they are

appropriately qualified to implement the instruction (Cook et al., 2014). In addition, each study should provide sufficient information regarding the critical features of the instruction in a way that it could be replicated by those reading the description. This includes detailed instructional procedures, instruction agents' actions, and detailed explanation of the materials (Cook et al., 2014). If this information is not included, the study should indicate how the information can be accessed (e.g., cite original source). The study should use direct reliable measures to evaluate and document procedures for implementation, including frequency and intensity, regularly throughout each component of the instruction and for each participant.

Reviewers then checked that authors established internal validity. This is demonstrated when the researcher manipulates the variable in a consistent manner, and participants have very limited or no access to the instruction. For single-case research, researchers should also describe the baseline, and for group studies details of the control and comparison conditions need to be explained (Cook et al., 2014). In group studies, assignment to group must be clearly established and described using one of the following methods: (a) randomly; (b) nonrandomly, but comparison and interventions groups are matched (c) nonrandomly, but using techniques to measure and control statistical differences; or (d) nonrandomly, but using a practical cut-off (Cook et al., 2014). Quality group studies should also demonstrate low attrition both across groups (i.e., <30% in a 1-year study) and between groups (i.e., ≤10%) or controlled for by adjusting for those who do not complete the study. In single-case research, the design selected should control for common threats to internal validity (e.g., history, maturation, testing), document three demonstrations of experimental effect at three different points in time, and include a minimum of three data points during baseline indicating unfavorable results in the absence of an instruction (Cook et al., 2014).

Quality studies demonstrate adequate psychometrics as they appropriately apply measures to determine the effect of the instruction on study outcomes. In quality research, the outcomes are socially important and the study establishes reliability (e.g., internal reliability, interobserver reliability, test-retest reliability, parallel-form reliability; Cook et al., 2014). In addition, authors clearly define the study and adequately describe the measurements of the dependent variable, the time and frequency of data collection are considered appropriate, and all effects of the instruction are reported and not just those with positive results (Cook et al., 2014). For group methods, the study should also provide sufficient evidence of validity (e.g., content, construct, criterion, social validity).

Finally, in a quality study, authors use appropriate data analysis and report effect size. For group studies this includes using techniques capable of analyzing change in performance of two or more groups and either reporting effect size or providing the necessary information to calculate effect size (Cook et al., 2014). For single-case research, a graph or graphs that clearly represent all data collected is necessary in order to determine the effect of the instruction using standard visual analysis procedures (Cook et al., 2014).

Determination of Evidence-Based Practice

To determine whether identified instructional approaches met criteria to be considered evidence-based, the author assessed the status of each category of practice. Based on the CEC standards, instructional approaches are classified as (a) evidence-based; (b) potentially evidence-based; (c) mixed effects; (d) insufficient evidence; or (e) negative effects (Cook et al., 2014). For each category, there is set criteria that must be met and in order to classify practices in special education research, methodologically sound studies need to report positive, neutral/mixed, or negative effects. Dependent on the research design, number of participants, and ratio of positive to neutral outcomes, an educational practice may be considered evidence-based with as few as two methodologically sound studies (Cook et al., 2014).

A practice is considered evidence-based if it meets specific criteria established by the CEC. When reviewing group designs, a practice must be supported by at least two methodologically sound studies including random assignment, positive results, and at least 60 participants across studies. If non-random assignment is used, there needs to be at least four studies and 120 participants across studies. When reviewing SCD research designs, a practice must be supported by at least five methodologically sound studies with positive effects and at least 20 participants across studies (Cook et al., 2014). If various research designs are used to evaluate a practice, it is evidence-based if it meets at least 50% of the criteria for two or more of the study designs. In addition, there must be at least a 3:1 ratio of studies conducted with positive results to studies yielding neutral or mixed results. If any of the studies result in negative effects on students, the practice will not be considered evidence-based (Cook et al., 2014).

A practice may be considered potentially evidence-based if there are positive results, but too few high-quality studies. When reviewing group designs, a practice must be supported by at least one methodologically sound group design with random assignment and positive effects. If nonrandom assignment is used, the practice must be supported by a minimum of two or three methodologically sound group studies. When reviewing SCD research, the practice must be supported by two to four methodologically sound SCD research with positive effects (Cook et al., 2014). If various research designs are used to evaluate a practice, it is considered potentially evidence-based if it meets at least 50% of criteria for each of the study designs. In addition, there must be at least a 2:1 ratio of studies conducted yielding positive results to studies yielding neutral or mixed results. Further, if even one study yields negative results, the practice will not be considered potentially evidence-based (Cook et al., 2014).

Interobserver Agreement

Agreement for inclusion of articles in the study and coding of study characteristics were through the consensus of the first author and a doctoral student. Twenty-five of the original 67 studies (i.e., 37.3%) were coded based on the set criteria by the two reviewers. Interobserver agreement (IOA) was determined by dividing the number of agreements by the number of agreements plus disagreement. The IOA was calculated as 97%. When a disagreement occurred, the researchers reviewed criteria and discussed until 100% agreement was reached for both inclusion and study

characteristics. Due to the acceptable IOA, the first author independently coded the remaining studies to determine inclusion for the review.

All studies that met inclusion criteria were coded independently by the first and third author for the application of quality indicators (i.e., 100%). The researcher chose to have all of the studies coded by two people because failure to meet all standards eliminated the study from being categorized as methodologically sound research. When the coders believed there was not a meaningful threat to validity and that the design issue was addressed adequately, a study was considered to have satisfied a quality indicator (Cook et al., 2014). Each coder recorded a Y when the quality indicator was met, and a N when the quality indicator was not met. A disagreement was highlighted red to indicate a need for further discussion. The researcher divided the number of agreements by the total number of indicators and then multiplied the quotient by 100 to determine interrater reliability. The IOA for quality indicators was 98.1%. Once the coders discussed the indicators of disagreement they came to agreement on 100% of the indicators and sixteen studies were classified as methodologically sound.

RESULTS

Eighteen studies (17 articles) met the criteria to be a part of this systematic review spanning from 1999-2019. One study was published in the 1990s, 13 in the 2000s, and six in the 2010s. All studies focused on algebra-related concepts such as word problems including algebraic processes, operations with integers, and solving linear equations. All studies had neutral or positive results, and statistical results indicated moderate to large effects.

Participant Characteristics

Participants were in sixth through twelfth grade. The number of participants across all studies reported was 449. However, a portion represented peers without disabilities. Of the students with disabilities, participants were identified as having various high-incidence disabilities including learning disabilities, disabilities in mathematics, emotional or behavioral disabilities, ADHD, and mild intellectual disability. However, the majority of students with disabilities included in the research were students with learning disabilities. Specifically, 253 students across the studies were identified, as reported in the included articles, as having a learning disability (56.4%).

Study Designs

Of the 18 studies, 12 involved single-case research methodology and 6 used group design methodology (see Table 1 for characteristics and information of included studies). Within the SCD studies, one used alternating treatment design, eight used a multiple probe design, and three used a multiple baseline design. The group design methodology included two experimental designs and six quasi-experimental designs. For the quasi-experimental designs, participants were generally assigned to either a treatment or control group based on their class at school.

Table 1. Study characteristics

Study	Participants	Disability	Content	Practice	Design	Results
Bottge et al. (2002)	n= 100 6-12th grade	LD, EBD, CD, SL	pre-algebra	EAI	quasi- experimental	SWD benefited from EAI and retained a majority of what they learned over time.
Bottge, Rueda, Laroque et al. (2007)	n = 42 8 SWD 7th grade	LD, EBD	pre-algebra	EAI	quasi- experimental	Participants in EAI outperformed TPI group on contextual posttest and transfer. No difference in computation and word problems. All SWD in EAI group had higher scores on the word problems, but 75% had lower computation.
Bottge, Rueda, Serlin et al. (2007)	n = 128 13 SWD 7 th grade	12 LD (1 ADD)	pre-algebra	EAI	quasi- experimental	Students (inclusive of LD) benefited from EAI, including students with LD making comparable progress to students without LD
Bouck et al. (2019)	n = 4 middle school	ID, LD, ADHD	linear algebra equations	VA	SCD: multiple probe across behaviors replicated across participants	All four participants acquired the algebra skills, but were unable to maintain skills when instruction was not provided directly before completing the probe.
Calhoun & Fuchs (2003)	n = 92 9th-12th grade	LD, EBD, ID	operations & algebraic thinking, measurement, & geometry	PALS	quasi- experimental	PALS + CBM group outperformed the control group on computation scores. Both groups increased comparably on concepts/applications.
Ives (2007a&b)	n = 14 (GO) n =16 (CG)	LD	solving systems of linear equations	graphic organizer	experimental	Participants who used graphic organizers outperformed those who did not when solving systems of linear equations. In Study 1, participants maintained learning over a couple of weeks. In Study 2, students had more success actually solving the problems.
Jitendra et al. (2002)	n = 4 8 th grade	LD	word problems	SBI	SCD: multiple probe across participant	All participants improved word problem-solving performance and maintained performance over the duration of the intervention. All participants demonstrated high scores during generalization.
Jitendra et al. (1999)	n = 4 6 th -7 th grade	LD	word problems	SBI	SCD: multiple baseline across participants replicated across behaviors	All participants improved from baseline to intervention in using correct operations. Participants generalized strategy. 2 participants maintained, 1 slightly decreased, 1 drastically decreased.
Maccini & Hughes (2000)	n = 6 ages 14-18	LD	problem solving with integers	CRA	SCD: multiple probe across participant	Problem-solving skills dramatically improved following instruction at the concrete, semi concrete, and abstract levels. Participants' strategy use increased and they were able to generalize skills to novel situations.

Table 1. Study characteristics (continued)

Maccini & Ruhl (2000)	n = 3 8th grade	LD	subtraction of integers	CRA	SCD: multiple probe across participant	All participants demonstrated an improvement in strategy use, accuracy on problem representation, and average accuracy on problem solution from baseline to concrete instruction. Participants were able to maintain skills over time, and were able to generalize to near tasks, but have lower transfer skills for far generalization.
Satsangi et al. (2016)	n = 3 11 th -12 th grade	MLD	linear algebraic equations	manipulatives (virtual & concrete)	SCD: alternating treatment	All participants solved more algebraic questions correctly with both types of manipulatives. 2 students learned the material quickest with concrete, and one student learned quickest with virtual. All 3 students had fewer prompts and completed problems quicker using virtual manipulatives suggesting greater independence.
Satsangi et al. (2018a)	n = 3 9 th grade	MLD	multistep algebraic equations	manipulatives (virtual)	SCD: multiple baseline across participant	Using virtual manipulatives all participants scored above their baseline scores during intervention, maintenance, and generalization. All participants said they benefited and enjoyed using the virtual manipulatives.
Satsangi et al. (2018b)	n = 3 9 th grade	MLD	multistep algebraic equations	manipulatives (virtual)	SCD: multiple baseline across participants	All participants improved from baseline. Accuracy scores ranged from 70-100% during intervention and maintenance. Independence scores ranged from 78-100% during intervention and maintenance.
Scheuermann et al. (2009)	n = 14 6th-8th grade	LD	one-variable equations	Explicit Inquiry Routine (EIR)	SCD: multiple probe across participant	All participants made substantial progress, all but 1 student reached mastery criterion (80% accuracy) by the final instructional probe. Participants were able to generalize their skills to new problems written in the same format and maintained performance for up to 11 weeks.
Strickland & Maccini (2012)	n = 3 8 th -9 th grade	LD	multiplying linear expressions	CRA-I + Graphic Organizer	SCD: multiple probe across participants	All participants substantially increased overall accuracy from baseline to intervention. 2/3 demonstrated mastery level during maintenance, 1 was improved from baseline, but not mastery. Participants transferred info to novel situations but were not able to transfer to higher level mathematics. Participants reported that they found the intervention beneficial and enjoyable.
Strickland & Maccini (2013)	n = 5 high school	LD, MD	quadratic expressions within area word problems	CRA-I + Graphic Organizer	SCD: multiple probe across two groups	Participants' accuracy improved and they maintained their skills over time. Participants reported the intervention was beneficial and they would recommend it to peers.
Van Garderen (2007)	n = 3 8th grade	LD	word problems (algebra skills)	Diagrams	SCD: multiple probe across participants	Students improved ability to generate diagrams and use them to solve 1 and 2-step word problems. Participants generalized their skills to solve different types of word problems.

Note: EAI = enhanced anchored instruction, VA = virtual-abstract; PALS = peer-assisted learning strategies CRA = concrete-representational-abstract, SBI = schema-based instruction

Categories of Mathematical Practice

After analyzing the mathematical practices described in each study, eight instructional categories emerged: (a) concrete-representational-abstract (CRA) framework (b) schema-based instruction, (c) enhanced anchor instruction, (d) manipulatives, (e) peer-assisted learning strategies, (f) virtual-abstract (VA) framework (g) graphic organizers and diagrams; and, (h) explicit inquiry routine. Three studies explored the CRA instructional sequence, three manipulatives outside of an instructional sequence, and one virtual manipulative-based sequence. Two studies investigated schema-based instruction (SBI) and three studies investigated enhanced anchored instruction (EAI). One study explored peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS), one the impact of visual displays like graphic organizers and diagrams, and one study explicit inquiry routine.

Applying Quality Indicators

After applying the criteria established by the CEC, four studies did not meet the requirements to be considered methodologically sound research. Four of the six group design studies had all 24 quality indicators (See Table 2) and 10 of the 12 single-case studies had all 22 quality indicators (see Table 3). Studies not meeting quality indicators included (a) Scheuermann et al. (2009), who did not include adequate implementation fidelity information; (b) Ives (2007), who reported two studies in one publication with both missing several key indicators including adequate procedural information, proof of fidelity of implementation, and adequate internal validity; and (c) Strickland and Maccini (2012), who only included two baseline data points for one of their participants.

Based on the CEC standards and the 14 studies that met all quality indicators for algebraic instruction and students with high-incidence disabilities, no interventions met the criteria to be considered evidence-based. All studies yielded neutral or positive results, but the research base lacked adequate quantity of high-quality studies for each practice. Five mathematical practices can be considered potentially evidence-based including: CRA, manipulatives, EAI, SBI, and PALS (see Table 4).

Three quality studies explored the CRA framework and all yielded positive results. Two studies paired the CRA framework with the problem-solving strategy STAR (search, translate, answer, review; Maccini & Hughes, 2000; Maccini & Ruhl, 2000), and one modified the CRA strategy to include a graphic organizer during the abstract phase (Strickland & Maccini, 2013). When only including studies that explored manipulatives as a stand-alone mathematical tool, and not part of an instructional sequence, three SCD studies with nine participants existed. One study compared concrete and virtual manipulatives and found both to be effective for secondary students with disabilities (Satsangi et al., 2016), and two paired virtual manipulatives with explicit instruction and reported a functional relation (Satsangi et al., 2018a, 2018b).

Table 2. Cook et al. (2014) Quality Indicators (QI) Applied to Group Design Algebra Studies Involving Students with Learning Disabilities

	1.1	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2	5.3	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.8	6.9	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	8.1	8.3
*Bottge et al. (2002)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Bottge, Rueda, LaRoque, et al. (2007)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Bottge, Rueda, Serlin, et al. (2007)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Calhoun & Fuchs (2009)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ives (2007a)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ives (2007b)	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Note: Y = yes, quality indicator present & N = no, quality indicator not present. Quality indicators 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, and 8.2 only applied to single case studies and are not included here. See Cook et al. (2014) for the complete list of quality indicator (e.g., 1.1 – 8.2). Note, Ives (2007a and 2007b) were reported both in one article

* means the study met all quality indicators

Table 3. Cook et al. (2014) Quality Indicators Applied to SCD Algebra Studies Involving Students with Learning Disabilities

	1.1	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2	5.3	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	8.2	
*Bouck et al. (2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Jitendra et al. (2002)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Jitendra et al. (1999)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Maccini & Hughes (2000)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Maccini & Ruhl (2000)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Satsangi et al. (2016)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Satsangi et al. (2018a)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*Satsangi et al. (2018b)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scheuermann et al. (2009)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Strickland & Maccini (2012)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
*Strickland & Maccini (2013)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
*VanGarderen (2007)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note: Y = yes, quality indicator present & N = no, quality indicator not present. Quality indicators 6.4, 6.8, 6.9, 7.6, 8.1, and 8.3 only applied to group design studies and are not included here. See Cook et al. (2014) for the complete list of quality indicator (e.g., 1.1 – 8.2).

* means the study met all quality indicators.

Table 4. Evidence-Base Categories of Practices

Practice	Group	Single	Participants	Random	Results	Category
Manipulative-Based Approaches	0	7	27	N/A	Positive	Evidence-based
Enhanced Anchor Instruction	3	0	142	No	Positive/Neutral	Potentially Evidence-Based
Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies	1	0	92	Yes	Positive	Potentially Evidence-Based
Schema Based Instruction	0	2	27/8	N/A	Positive	Potentially Evidence-Based
Graphic Organizers & Diagrams	0	1	3	N/A	Positive	Insufficient Evidence

This review included three group designs that investigated EAI. Two of these studies yielded positive results (Bottge, Reuda, Laroque, et al., 2007; Bottge, Reuda, Serlin, et al., 2007), while the other had neutral results where participants in the EAI outperformed the control group and students with disabilities scored better on word problems using EAI, but their computation skills were lower (Bottge et al., 2002). Two SCD studies with eight participants (Jitendra et al., 1999; Jitendra et al., 2002) investigated SBI and one group design with 92 participants explored PALS (Calhoon & Fuchs, 2003). These three studies yielded positive results categorizing these two practices as potentially evidence-based.

DISCUSSION

This evidence-based synthesis analyzed the literature on teaching algebra to secondary students with learning disabilities. Eighteen studies were reviewed and analyzed, of which 14 met the CEC standards of high quality (Cook et al., 2014). Across the 18 studies, researchers investigated eight different mathematical instructional approaches to teach algebra related content to secondary students with learning disabilities. The main result of the review was that none of these instructional approaches met the necessary criteria to be considered evidence-based for this particular demographic and mathematical content. However, five mathematical practices (i.e., CRA, manipulatives, EAI, SBI, and PALS) were found to be potentially evidence-based. From this systematic review, educators can make informed decisions about the instructional practices they use to teach algebra to students with high-incidence disabilities, and researchers can plan future studies to fill the gaps in literature.

When focusing specifically on instruction to support secondary students with learning disabilities in the area of algebra, no one instructional approach category met the CEC's (2014) standards of evidence-based. The lack of evidence-based practice determinations is likely due to a lack of literature on the topic. Researchers found 18 studies in the past 20 years focused on algebra interventions and instructional practices to support secondary students with learning disabilities. This number is relatively small compared to research pertaining to interventions and instructional practices to support students in reading (Wood et al., 2018) and mathematics interventions and instructional approaches focused on more foundational content (e.g., early numeracy, basic operations; Dennis et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2018). Further, there was a decrease in the last decade as compared to the previous decade (almost double in the 2000s to that in the 2010s). Combined, these findings demonstrates the need for more high-quality research to be conducted to provide practitioners with evidence-based practices for teaching algebra to secondary students with learning disabilities.

Nearly one-fourth of the studies analyzed in this review failed to meet the standards established by the CEC to be considered methodologically sound (Cook et al., 2014). CEC's standards were published in 2014, resulting in the majority of included studies published before the standards were established. While quality indicators and standards existed previous to this date (e.g., Horner et al., 2005 for single-case and Gersten et al., 2005 for group), nearly half of the included publications published before these earlier quality indicators and standards. In this evidence-based synthesis, we applied indicators and standards ex post facto to studies published prior

to such guidelines. Further, the CEC quality indicators and standards applied here may be more rigorous than other options, because they require studies to meet all quality indicators in order to be considered methodologically sound (Cook et al., 2014; Cook & Cook, 2013). Applying quality indicators with such high standards means only the most credible studies are included when determining whether a practice is evidence-based (Cook et al., 2014; Cook & Cook, 2013). Thus, when a practice meets evidence standards, practitioners can use it with confidence. However, the authors also acknowledge the problem when applying quality indicators—they can only be applied to studies that actually get published. Studies with negative results or insignificant results are likely not published and hence evidence-based syntheses are subject to publication bias (Cook & Therrien, 2017).

Five mathematical practices met the criteria for potentially evidence-based: CRA, manipulatives, EAI, SBI, and PALS. Consistent with previous reviews, the implementation of these instructional approaches yielded positive results for students with disabilities acquiring algebra skills (e.g., Marita & Hord, 2017; Watt et al., 2016). A classification of potentially evidence-based means there were too few studies and/or participants to confirm the effectiveness of the practice (Cook et al., 2014). However, within the case of EAI and SBI, Bottge and colleagues and Jitendra and colleagues examined issues related foundational algebra concepts—including fractions and proportional reasoning—but fewer examining algebra as defined in this review. If the review was expanded to include these fundamental concepts, EAI and SBI would likely be determined EBPs for secondary students with learning disabilities. However, there is a need for more research focused on algebra and students with learning disabilities in order to validate that seemingly effective instructional approaches are backed by multiple sources of high-quality evidence as well as continue to explore the efficacy of new instructional approaches that take into consideration emerging technologies and understanding of algebra in mathematics education. Yet, the results offer secondary educators options for consideration when teaching algebra, given only practice could be considered evidence-based for teaching algebra to secondary students with learning disabilities.

Over one-third of the high-quality studies reviewed involved manipulatives either as a stand-alone tool (e.g., Satsangi et al., 2016) or as part of a framework (e.g., Bouck et al., 2019, Maccini & Ruhl, 2000). If combined, the category of manipulative-based instructional approaches—inclusive of CRA, VA, and manipulatives—would have been an evidence-based practice. Yet, the differences of the instructional approaches within this larger category are great and as such, the authors opted not to combine or aggregate. However, the potential evidence-base determination for the CRA and manipulatives aligns with the recommendation of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to use manipulatives for teaching mathematics at all levels (NCTM, 2013). Further, Bouck et al. (2018) found the CRA to be evidence-based for students with learning disabilities generally across mathematics, not disaggregated by domain.

Implications for Practice

The results of this systematic review hold implications for practice. The first is that there are five potentially evidence-based practices to teach algebra to students

with learning disabilities. When implemented with fidelity, researchers demonstrated these practices support student learning in mathematics (Maccini & Hughes, 2000; Satsangi et al, 2018a). While they are not guaranteed to work for every student, these mathematics instructional approaches should be a consideration in algebra instruction decision making for secondary students with learning disabilities (Cook & Cook, 2013). Although secondary students with learning disabilities are making gains in mathematics, gaps still exist between those with disabilities and those without (NAEP, 2019), thus it is imperative teachers use practices that are shown to be effective for students with disabilities (NCTM, 2013).

A final implication for practice is the emergent of the use of virtual manipulatives to support secondary students with learning disabilities in the area of algebra. The four most recent studies included in this review involved virtual manipulatives in some capacity (e.g. Bouck et al., 2019, Satsangi et al., 2018a; Satsangi et al., 2018b; Satsangi et al., 2016), suggesting virtual manipulatives represent an up-to-date and relevant practice. Accessible through Chromebooks, iPads, or computers, virtual manipulatives do not take up extra space in the classroom, allow for individualized scaffolding within the program, and are often less stigmatizing to older students compared to concrete manipulatives (Satsangi & Miller, 2017). Secondary teachers delivering math instruction may want to consider using virtual manipulatives during whole group instruction or for small group interventions targeting specific skill deficits.

Limitations and Future Direction

This evidence-based systematic review is not without its limitations. Although steps were taken to ensure all relevant peer-reviewed research was included, there is a chance the inclusion criteria excluded literature that could add to the results and discussion. Further, only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were considered, leaving out both dissertations and chapters from books. Future researchers should consider including non-peer-reviewed publications to gather a larger scope of the existing literature. Regardless, the low number of peer-reviewed published studies is a call to action for researchers to expand research on algebra interventions and instructional approaches for students with learning disabilities.

Another limitation was that the instructional approaches examined among studies were sometimes an intervention package (i.e., a combination of instructional components, such as manipulatives plus explicit instruction) making it difficult to credit the effects to a single element (e.g., manipulatives; Watt et al, 2016). In some situations, the intervention or instructional approach was paired with a strategy already established as evidence-based to teach mathematics to secondary students with learning disabilities (e.g., National Center on Intensive Intervention, 2016; Satsangi et al, 2018a). When paring explicit instruction with other practices, like manipulatives, it is difficult to determine whether the use of the manipulatives or the quality instruction was the source of success. Future researchers should include direct comparisons of instructional practices in order to help educators in determining the most effective evidence-based practices for teaching algebra to students with learning disabilities. However, the researchers also acknowledge that intervention packages are more likely to help educators achieve the acquisition, maintenance, and generalization of algebra they seek to achieve for their secondary students with disabilities (Park et al., 2020).

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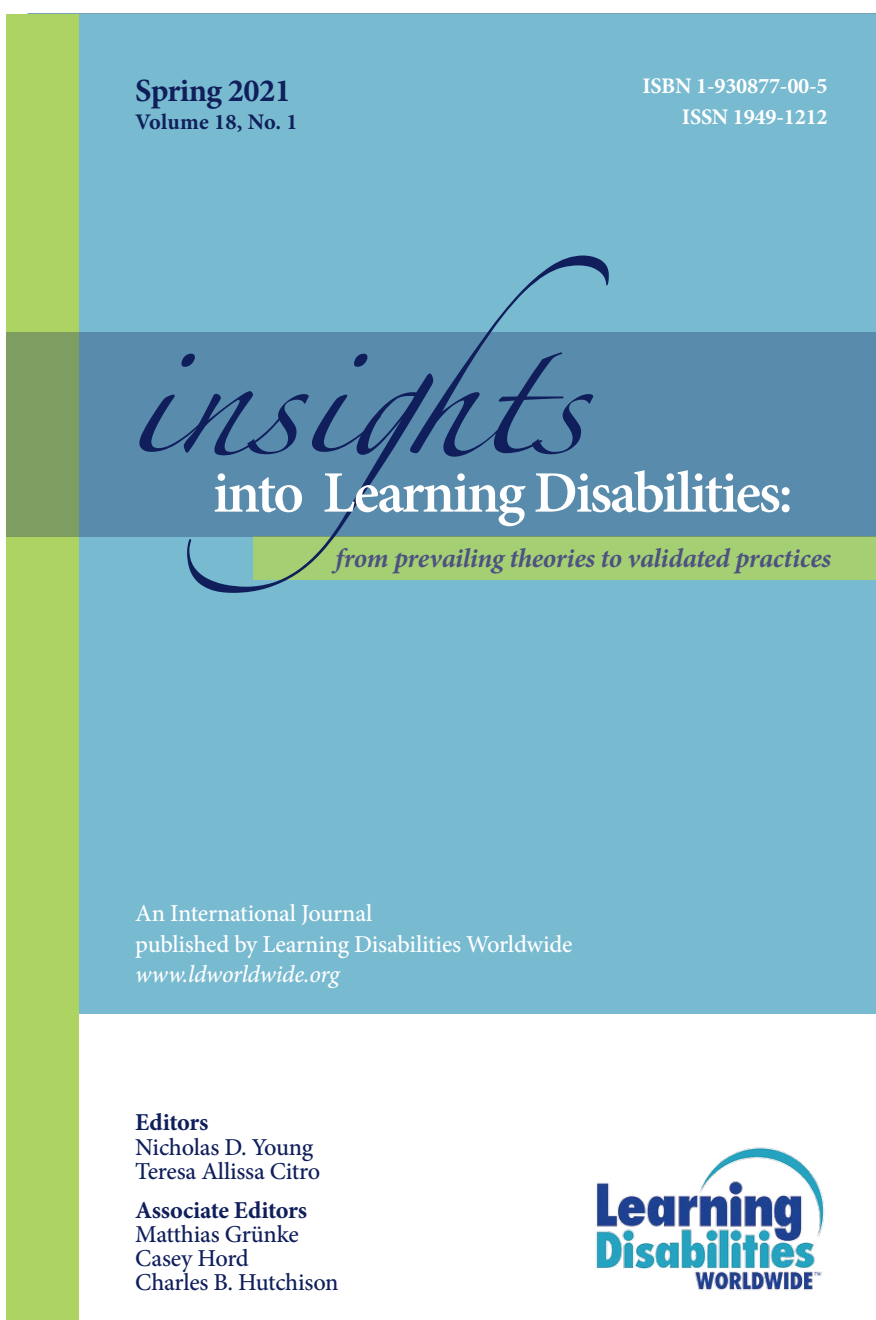
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Mathematics Intervention for College Students With Learning Disabilities: A Pilot Study Targeting Rate of Change

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Research on mathematics interventions for college students with learning disabilities (LD) is sparse, yet mathematics is critical for post-secondary success. Prior research indicates that many effective strategies for teaching mathematics to secondary students with LD (e.g., manipulatives and cognitive strategies) can also improve the mathematics performance of college students with LD. In this article, we summarize mathematics intervention research conducted with college students with LD, and report the findings of a pilot single-case design intervention implemented with one college student with LD, Ada. Results indicate that Ada made improvements in solving rate of change word problems following participation in a six-week intervention that incorporated an integrated Concrete-Representational-Abstract framework and a problem-solving heuristic (POD✓). Effect sizes were largest for the specific outcome of calculating the correct answer. These results provide initial directions for future research and practice to improve the mathematics performance of college students with LD.

Keywords: mathematics instruction, instructional strategies, college teaching, Learning Disabilities, transition

INTRODUCTION

Mathematics Difficulties for Students with Learning Disabilities

Students' mathematics skills play an important role in academic achievement, critical thinking, degree attainment, and career selection (Forgione, 1999; Ketterlin-Geller & Chard, 2011). Moreover, the vitality of a country's economy is dependent on a workforce with strong mathematical skills (Forgione, 1999). However, students in the United States lag behind, especially students with disabilities. Only 7% of twelfth-graders with disabilities are at or above proficiency

in mathematics and 75% are below even a basic level (NCES, 2019). Word problems present particular difficulty for many students (Martin & Bassok, 2005), especially for students with learning disabilities (LD; Hwang & Riccomini, 2016). Students with LD in the area of mathematics often struggle with factors central to mathematics problem solving, such as fluency, nonverbal reasoning, working memory, task organization and planning, and attention regulation (Agrawal & Morin, 2016; McGlaughlin et al., 2005), as well as forming conceptual and representational understandings of mathematics (Hwang & Riccomini, 2016; Lewis, 2014).

Underachievement in mathematics causes both short-term and long-term consequences. In the short-term, students may experience frustration and decreased motivation (Nguyen, 2015; Sierpinska et al., 2008). When mathematics underachievement is not remediated, students are likely to experience long-term setbacks, in part because higher-level mathematics (e.g., algebra) act as a gatekeeper for post-secondary education (Ketterlin-Geller & Chard, 2011; Nguyen, 2015). Not only do mathematics deficits prevent students from entering college, but many students with LD who enter college do not graduate, and even fewer of these students complete degrees within STEM fields (Newman et al., 2011).

Mathematics Interventions for Secondary Students with Learning Disabilities

Several reviews of the research demonstrate that interventions improve the mathematics performance of secondary students with LD (Hughes et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2020; Marita & Hord, 2017). Based on such reviews, the most effective interventions for teaching algebra and related pre-requisite concepts to secondary students with LD include multiple representations, visual strategies, explicit instruction, a systematic sequence of examples (Hughes et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2020; Marita & Hord, 2017), as well as cognitive and metacognitive strategy instruction (Hwang & Riccomini, 2016). Studies that utilize the Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) approach and schema or model-based strategies and explicit instruction have high effect sizes (Hughes et al., 2014).

Effective Interventions for Problem Solving

In a review of problem-solving interventions for students with or at risk for LD, Hwang and Riccomini (2016) highlight three intervention approaches determined to be effective: heuristic, semantic, and authentic. Heuristic approaches involve the use of metacognitive strategies (e.g., acronyms and checklists) that guide students through the problem-solving process. Semantic approaches highlight the underlying structures of problems, primarily through the use of visual representations, diagrams, or concrete manipulatives. Authentic approaches primarily use video-based realistic scenarios to introduce problems and prompt students to identify possible solution approaches. In a systematic review of algebra interventions, Lee and colleagues emphasize visual represen-

tations when teaching word problem solving to secondary students with LD to address difficulties they encounter with problem representation and because research demonstrates that teaching students to represent problems accurately can improve word problem performance (Lee et al., 2020).

The Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) Teaching Sequence

One research-based intervention that improves students' conceptual and procedural understanding of mathematics concepts is the Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) teaching sequence (Bouck et al., 2017), in which concepts are taught using physical materials (e.g., centimeter cubes, base-10 blocks), representations (e.g., pictures, diagrams), and abstract depictions (e.g., standard algorithms). In an evidence-based practice synthesis examining CRA for teaching mathematics concepts, Bouck and colleagues (2017) conclude that the research base provides particularly strong support for using CRA to teach operations to elementary and middle school students with LD, but that additional research is needed to examine the use of CRA for building the conceptual understanding of algebra and geometry concepts for older students with LD. Recent research on teaching algebra concepts to students with learning disabilities and other high-incidence disabilities has utilized an integrated CRA approach (CRA-I), in which concepts are simultaneously taught using concrete materials, visual models, and algebraic notation (Bundock et al., 2019; Strickland & Maccini, 2012). The results of these studies indicate that CRA-I can help students build conceptual and procedural understanding of linear expressions, quadratic expressions, and rate of change word problems, but more research is needed to investigate the effects of CRA-I on the performance of secondary and post-secondary students with LD.

Mathematics Interventions for College Students with Learning Disabilities

Research indicates that college students with LD generally fare worse than their peers without disabilities on many indicators, including employment and college completion (Newman et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2020). Given that many majors or collegiate programs require students to pass mathematics courses or exams, it is possible that mathematics challenges may be one barrier students with LD encounter in college that contributes to their poorer outcomes. McGlaughlin and colleagues investigated the characteristics of college students with mathematics LD and found that college students with LD have similarities to elementary and secondary students (i.e., difficulties with reading comprehension, nonverbal reasoning, working memory, and mathematics fluency; McGlaughlin et al., 2005). Based on this, college students may be supported with the same types of interventions that are effective for secondary students, leading to improved post-secondary outcomes (Street et al., 2012).

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Little research has examined the effectiveness of strategies to improve the mathematics performance of post-secondary students with LD (Hodara, 2013; McGlaughlin et al., 2005). In a working paper for the Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment (CAPSEE), Hodara reviewed research on mathematics assessment, instruction, and interventions for college students (Hodara, 2013), and found only one study focused specifically on college students with learning disabilities (Hodara, 2013). Based on our review of the literature, we found three studies related to mathematics interventions for college students with LD. Zawaiza and Gerber (1993) evaluated the effects of two interventions for solving word problems (translation training versus diagramming) compared to a control group on the performance of college students with and without LD. Students in the diagram group made fewer errors on a post-test than students in either of the other groups, and students with LD made similar types of errors as students without LD. While not statistically significant, the results indicate that strategy instruction for word problems may benefit college students with LD.

Kitz and Thorpe (1995) investigated whether incoming freshmen with LD improved their basic algebra skills after receiving explicit instruction delivered via videodisc (with teacher-facilitated practice) compared to a control group (textbook instruction). Students in the videodisc condition made statistically significant improvements from pre to post-test compared to the control group. Kitz and Thorpe recommend researchers examine cognitive strategy instruction for solving word problems.

Sullivan (2005) conducted an action research study with three college students with LD within a college mathematics class. The qualitative study used manipulatives, journal writing, and multiple forms of assessment for a unit on finances. The unit emphasized making sense of mathematics, explaining one's work, and incorporating discourse about mathematics. All three students made improvements during the unit. Sullivan calls for more research in this area, in part to provide guidance to college mathematics teachers working with students with LD.

The results of these three studies demonstrate that access to interventions can help college students with LD improve their mathematical performance. All three studies recommend the use of strategies to help students make sense of problems, such as cognitive strategy instruction, manipulatives, and diagram representations of problems. However, because these studies were all conducted prior to 2005, they do not incorporate specific intervention strategies that have been found to be effective for teaching secondary students with LD in more recent years (e.g., CRA-I). Additionally, none of the studies included a specific measure of the extent to which college students with LD found the interventions and strategies to be socially acceptable.

Mathematics Focus: Rate of Change

Rate of change (i.e., slope; ROC) is one key mathematics concept pertinent to success in academic courses, professional careers, and independent living. Examples of ROC problems include calculating average miles per gallon, creating budgets, and determining appropriate quantities when converting recipes. ROC is a foundational concept for success in algebra and higher-level mathematics, but many students struggle with understanding and using ROC (Hattikudor et al., 2012; Teuscher et al., 2010). College students without LD have difficulty understanding the concept of slope, often due to conceptual misunderstandings (Bezuidenhout, 1998; Christensen & Thompson, 2012). Researchers have yet to examine the ROC understanding of college students with LD.

Only one study thus far has investigated the effects of an intervention on the ROC understanding of students with disabilities (Bundock et al., 2019). In this study, researchers found that an intervention consisting of CRA-I and a problem-solving heuristic (POD✓) resulted in improvements in three ninth-grade students' (with high-incidence disabilities) scores on ROC assessments. Students' improvements were gradual and smaller for more complex skills, such as solving ROC word problems. Given these results, as well as the difficulties college students without LD face understanding ROC (Bezuidenhout, 1998; Christensen & Thompson, 2012), it is important to determine the efficacy of such an intervention with college students with LD.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this pilot study was to conduct a preliminary investigation of the effects of an intervention consisting of explicit strategy instruction within a CRA-I framework to teach ROC concepts to a college student with LD. Building from prior research, we developed an intervention including visual representations and a problem-representation strategy to teach concepts and procedural steps involved in solving ROC word problems. We employed single case research design (SCRD) methods to conduct a thorough analysis of the student's overall mathematics scores and specific component scores relevant to the intervention. Considering the extremely limited research in this area, the use of a small-n design is a logical preliminary step to inform future, larger intervention studies. The purpose of this pilot SCR D study is to determine initial support and proof of concept for the potential effectiveness of conducting targeted mathematics interventions with college students who have LD. Our research questions were:

1. Does implementing an explicit instructional strategy (POD✓) within a CRA-I framework result in improvements in solving rate of change problems for a college student with LD?

2. Is an explicit instructional strategy (POD✓) within a CRA-I framework socially acceptable to a college student with LD?

Method

Participant and Setting

This study was conducted at a public land-grant university within the Intermountain West in the United States of America. The in-person sessions for this study were conducted in empty conference rooms in the building that houses the College of Education and Human Services, and the virtual sessions were conducted over Zoom. After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, participants were recruited for this study by distributing an informational flyer through an email list serve organized by the university Disability Resource Center. One potential participant (Ada - pseudonym) contacted the researchers as a result and was screened to determine her eligibility for the study. The screening procedures included Ada verifying her disability status and completing two screening assessments. The first screening assessment consisted of the Applied Problems and Calculation subtests of the Woodcock Johnston Tests of Achievement- Fourth Edition (WJ IV ACH). The WJ IV ACH (Schrank et al., 2014) is a standardized test of achievement for individuals ages 2-90+. Overall, the test evidences high reliability in secondary school populations (0.99). Mathematics domains (.98-.99) and mathematics subscales (.88-.94) are also highly reliable within this age group. The Applied Problems and Calculation subtests provide standardized scores in Mathematics Problem Solving and Mathematics Calculation Skills. Participants were eligible for the study if they scored in the bottom 25th percentile on any of the domains. The second screening assessment was a researcher-created Rate of Change (ROC) assessment (see description in measures). Participants were eligible for the study if they earned less than half of the points available on the assessment.

Ada was determined to be eligible for the study, based on having scores that were in the bottom 25th percentile; Ada scored in the bottom 10th percentile on the Applied Problems subtest, and the bottom 8th percentile for the Calculation subtest. Ada also completed a ROC assessment and was eligible for the study, based on earning less than 50% of the points available; Ada earned a total of 12 points (40%) on the ROC screening assessment.

Ada was a white 21-year-old Sophomore female majoring in Special Education. Ada reported that her income was in the range of 0-\$9,525, and that she received special education services in mathematics when in K-12 school under the category of LD. The highest level of mathematics Ada reported completing in high school was Secondary Mathematics II. Ada indicated that on average, she earned C grades in her high school mathematics courses. At the time

of this study, Ada had completed 4 semesters of college course work and was not enrolled in a college mathematics course.

Study Design

We used an ABC (i.e., baseline, intervention, maintenance) single-case research design (SCRD). This design was used as the intervention targeted academic skill acquisition, wherein a return to baseline (i.e., reversal design) is inappropriate. To produce evidence of an intervention effect, SCRD studies must include replication of effects across at least three points in time (Horner et al., 2015). Due to only having one participant and the ABC design, the current SCRD does not meet What Works Clearinghouse standards (Kratochwill et al., 2010; WWC, 2020). Although this limits the generalizability of the conclusions we can draw, this design is adequate for a pilot study because our purpose is to provide proof of concept.

Dependent variables

The primary dependent variable was overall points scored on the ROC assessment. We also evaluated scores on specific components of the items on the ROC assessment that consisted of the following: determining the correct answer, writing an accurate equation, creating a table, creating a graph, and including accurate numbers and labels on the graph axes. A secondary dependent variable in this study was self-regulated learning and motivation, as measured by task-specific interviews. The details and results pertaining to this dependent variable are outside of the scope of this manuscript, and are reported in another manuscript (Authors et al., under review).

Independent variable

The independent variable for this study was an intervention consisting of 12 lessons (see Figure 1) that used an explicit instructional sequence (i.e., model, guide, practice, test) to teach students how to interpret and solve ROC word problems. Two key components of the intervention were the use of a CRA-I framework, as well as the POD✓ problem solving strategy.

Lesson 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prereqs/review (vocab, slope, graphs, POD✓ & CRA-I) 	Lesson 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prereqs/review (match linear equation word problem representations) 	Lesson 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing y without y-intercept problems • Introduce 6 problem types
Lesson 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing x without y-intercept problems 	Lesson 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing m without y-intercept problems 	Lesson 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing y, x, or m without y-intercept problems (mixed practice)
Lesson 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing y with y-intercept problems 	Lesson 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing x with y-intercept problems 	Lesson 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing m with y-intercept problems
Lesson 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing y, x, or m with y-intercept problems (mixed practice) 	Lesson 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed practice with all problem types (missing y, x, or m with or without y-intercept) 	Lesson 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed practice with all problem types (missing y, x, or m with or without y-intercept)

Figure 1. Scope and Sequence of the Intervention Lessons

CRA-I. Through a CRA-I framework, Ada was taught concrete representations of ROC using interlocking centimeter cubes, diagrams, and abstract notations (equations, tables, graphs). To depict ROC concepts using centimeter cubes, white cubes represented a foundation to build from (i.e., the x axis), and colorful cubes were used to model the problem in a similar way to graphing an equation. The representational level consisted of drawing lines to represent how each y value corresponded to each x value (see Figure 2). This representation lent itself well to bridging to the abstract notation used in tables and graphs. Ada was taught how to use CRA-I to work through the problems, and during practice problems and exit slips, was given the choice of which representation (C, R or A) to work with.

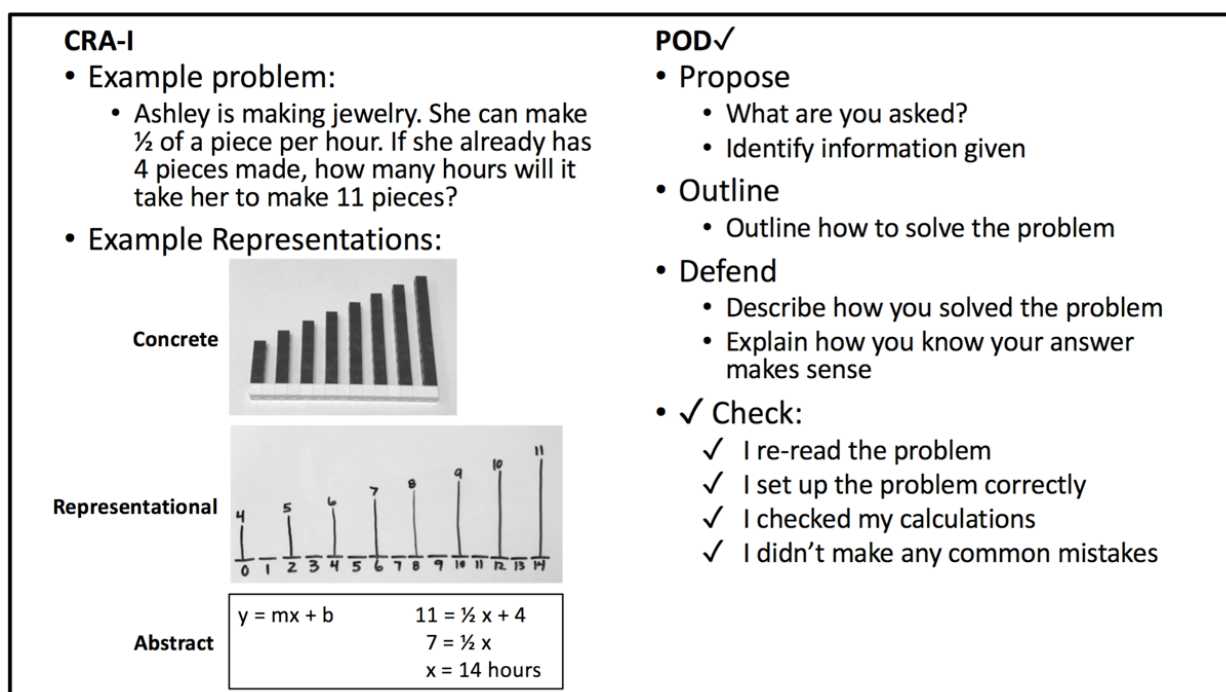


Figure 2. Key Components of the Intervention

POD✓ Problem Solving Strategy. In addition to CRA-I, a problem-solving strategy was also used as a key part of the intervention. The POD✓ strategy included the following components: Propose the problem, Outline steps to solve the problem, Describe how you solved the problem, Defend how you know your answer makes sense, and Check your work by re-reading the problem, checking the set-up of the problem, checking calculations, and checking for common mistakes. A graphic organizer was used to introduce the strategy to Ada, and was gradually faded. Memorization of the strategy was supported through review questions at the start of each lesson, and gradually reducing prompts for the strategy components throughout the lessons. Ada used the POD✓ to solve at least two problems per lesson.

Materials and Measures

Rate of Change Assessments

The measure used to assess Ada's progress on the main dependent variable was a researcher-created Rate of Change (ROC) Assessment. The ROC assessment included six ROC word problems for which Ada was prompted to write an equation to represent the problem, solve the problem, create a table, and sketch a graph. Six problem types were represented on the assessment (one question per type), all based on the slope intercept equation ($y=mx+b$). The problem types reflected different missing information in each word problem and included: missing y variable, missing x variable, missing m variable, missing y variable with a y-intercept, missing x variable with a y-intercept, and missing m

variable with a y-intercept. Each item on the ROC assessment was worth 1 point with partial credit (i.e., 0.5) possible. The first author and a team of research assistants scored the assessments using a rubric, which specified what categories of responses should receive 0 points, 0.5 points, or 1 point. For each word problem, Ada received up to 1 point for writing an accurate equation, up to 1 point for finding the correct answer to the problem, up to 1 point for creating a table with at least 3 correct pairs of values, up to 1 point for setting up a graph (correct axes labels and numbering), and up to 1 point for accurately graphing at least 3 coordinate points. There were 36 total possible points on each assessment.

Researchers created a pool of 30 different ROC assessments for this study. To help create assessments of equal difficulty, the researchers ensured that there were three problems that used fractional rates and three that used whole number rates on each assessment. Additionally, only common fractions were used (denominators of 2, 3, 4, or 5), and all numbers within the problems (including the answers) were one or 2-digit numbers. Researchers first created a pool of 30 items for each of the six different problem types (for a total of 180 problems), and then reviewed the problems within each pool to control for difficulty. Second, researchers created each assessment by randomly selecting one of each of the six problem types to assign to each of 30 assessments. The researchers reviewed each of the 30 resulting unique assessments for consistency, reading accessibility, and difficulty. Following this review, the researchers randomized the completed assessments to determine their administration order for the study.

Social Validity Questionnaire

A modified version of the Children's Intervention Rating Profile (CIRP) was used to evaluate the social validity of the intervention (Arra & Bahr, 2005). The version of the measure used in this study was electronic (via Qualtrics) and included eight items, each rated on a 1-6 Likert scale, that evaluated the appropriateness and perceived effectiveness of the CRA-I and POD✓ strategies.

Materials

The materials for this study included paper ROC assessments, worksheets corresponding to each lesson, interventionist lesson scripts, centimeter interlocking cubes, individual dry erase boards, a ruler, and a calculator. During baseline and maintenance sessions, Ada had a paper ROC assessment, a calculator, and a ruler. During intervention sessions, Ada had a lesson worksheet, individual dry erase board, a set of centimeter interlocking cubes, a calculator, a ruler, and a paper ROC assessment (given at end of specific intervention sessions).

The ROC assessments were each six pages long and included one word problem on each page. For each problem, there was a two-by-two grid with one of the different problem prompts (i.e., equation, answer, table, graph) included in each of the four cells. A standard 12-inch (30.48 cm) ruler was provided for

Ada to use as needed during assessment and lesson sessions. Ada also had access to a Scientific calculator for use at any time in the lessons or on the assessments.

The worksheets corresponding to each lesson were typically five pages long. The first page included review problems, the second through fourth pages included new problems for teaching and practice, and the last page consisted of an exit slip to assess understanding of new content. The material on each page was arranged in two columns, with the problem and prompts for associated tasks (blanks for equation, key information, table, graph, and blank space) in the left-hand column and a POD✓ graphic organizer in the right-hand column. The POD✓ graphic organizer included prompts aligned with the strategy, which were gradually faded over the course of the lessons to single word prompts and eventually blank lines for the student to fill in. The interventionist lesson scripts consisted of a step-by-step script that interventionists used to conduct each lesson, and included the answers to each problem. Interventionists used the script as a guide, rather than reading from the script verbatim. Each step in the lesson was numbered and interventionists attended to addressing each step in each lesson.

In regards to the additional lesson materials, the interventionists and student used the centimeter interlocking cubes to create concrete depictions of the word problems. Individual dry erase boards were used as an instructional tool for the interventionists to model examples of diagrams, as well as how to solve equations, create tables, and sketch graphs. Each dry erase board included a blank side, as well as a side with a coordinate grid. Ada was also provided with an individual dry erase board of the same style that she could use to follow along with interventionist modeling of concepts, and/or to work through problems, as an alternative to writing on only the worksheet.

Measures of Treatment and Assessment Fidelity

To assess the fidelity of assessment administration in all phases of the study, researchers created and used an assessment fidelity checklist. The assessment fidelity checklist included places to record the date of assessment administration, total time of the assessment administration, person administering the assessment, and participant ID code. The checklist then included columns to mark whether each component of administration was completed, not completed, or not applicable. The components evaluated included whether the assessor read the scripted directions for assessment administration, provided the student with a calculator, asked the student if they would like any of the questions read aloud to them, and provided appropriate clarifications in response to student questions (if applicable). Clarifications were considered to be appropriate if they did not give away the answer or how to find it (i.e., re-read the prompt, simplifying vocabulary in the prompt, etc.), and inappropriate if they included any explanation of how to solve the problem (i.e., explanation of what slope/rate of

change is, providing an example of an equation, etc.). Researchers calculated fidelity by dividing the total number of components completed by the total number of applicable components, and then multiplying by 100%.

To assess the fidelity of lesson administration, researchers created and used procedural checklists that were unique to each lesson. Each checklist included prompts for the researcher to fill in the date, the time the lesson started and ended, participant ID code, and the name of the person completing the checklist. Each checklist included rows that corresponded with each numbered step of the scripted lesson (aligned with the lesson scripts), and columns to indicate if the step was completed, not completed, or not applicable. Each checklist included an average of 32 steps (range 26-46 steps). Researchers calculated fidelity by dividing the total number of steps completed by the total number of steps possible, and then multiplying by 100%.

Procedures

Training

The assessments and intervention sessions were implemented by an assistant professor of special education (first author) and a doctoral student in school psychology. Both interventionists were present for the majority of all intervention lessons (each missed one session due to conferences or schedule conflicts), and took turns delivering instruction using scripted lesson plans. The doctoral student conducted most of the assessment sessions across all phases.

Prior to the beginning of the study, the first author trained the doctoral student in assessment administration and intervention lesson delivery. As part of the training, the doctoral student administered a practice assessment and completed a fidelity checklist to self-assess, while the first author also completed a fidelity checklist. The doctoral student administered the assessment with 100% fidelity. The first author also modeled how to teach each intervention lesson, with the doctoral student serving as a mock participant, across 10 training sessions. The first author highlighted key components of the intervention (i.e., CRA-I and POD✓), and both the first author and doctoral student completed fidelity checklists during these training sessions.

Rate of Change Assessment Administration and Scoring

Baseline

Ada started baseline after meeting the eligibility criteria. During baseline, the interventionists met with Ada three times per week to administer the ROC assessments (twice weekly). Once per week the doctoral student conducted brief task-specific interviews to evaluate Ada's self-regulated learning and motivation (the details and results of which are outside of the scope of this manuscript, and are reported in another manuscript). Ada completed a total of five ROC assessments during baseline, which occurred over the course of two weeks. No additional activities were completed during baseline.

Intervention

The intervention phase started after five baseline data points were collected, and baseline data were stable with a slightly decreasing trend. During intervention, Ada met with interventionists to engage in lessons three times per week. Ada completed 12 lessons, which were taught by the first author and doctoral student interventionist using highly-structured lessons. Each intervention lesson followed the same format, which entailed a review of concepts taught in prior lessons (pre-requisite skills were reviewed at the start of Lesson 1), modeling of new concepts with frequent opportunities to respond incorporated, practice of new concepts with scaffolded interventionist support, and Ada's independent completion of an exit slip problem aligned with the content introduced in the lesson. Within each lesson, the interventionists taught and guided Ada in how to use the centimeter interlocking cubes to create concrete depictions of the word problems, and how to represent these concrete depictions through diagrams. The interventionists also taught Ada how to interpret word problems to set up equations, and reviewed how to solve equations, create tables, and sketch graphs. The interventionists guided Ada in how to use the POD \checkmark problem solving strategy to work through the problems.

Following each lesson, Ada completed either a ROC assessment (twice weekly) or a task-specific interview (once weekly). Ada completed ROC assessments at the end of the intervention sessions in which she completed Lessons 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 11, and task-based interviews at the end of intervention sessions in which she completed Lessons 2, 5, 9, and 12. Intervention sessions lasted an average of 64 minutes per session (range 51-86 minutes) for a total of 8 weeks. There was a pause in intervention procedures in week 4 for the university spring break.

Additionally, the university IRB paused all in-person research procedures after week 5 of the intervention due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a two-week pause to transition to a virtual format. The last week of intervention as well as all of the maintenance phase sessions were delivered over Zoom. Ada was provided with paper copies of all materials, a calculator, a ruler, an individual dry erase board, and her own set of manipulatives to use at home. Intervention procedures remained the same and continued at a frequency of three times per week via Zoom. Ada completed each ROC assessment at the end of each Zoom session, with the interventionists present. Immediately after the Zoom session, Ada took pictures of each page of the assessment she completed and emailed them to the first author.

Maintenance

Maintenance began after Ada completed all 12 intervention lessons. Ada met with the interventionists 1-2 times per week for a total of 5 sessions. During maintenance, no instruction was provided and Ada completed 1-2 ROC

assessments as well as 1-2 task-specific interviews per week. In maintenance sessions 2, 4, and 5, Ada completed a ROC assessment and a task-specific interview; In maintenance sessions 1 and 3, Ada completed only ROC Assessments. Maintenance lasted 4 weeks, and Ada completed a total of 5 ROC assessments. After Ada completed the last maintenance session, the interventionist emailed her a link to the electronic social validity questionnaire and prompted her to complete it independently within one week. Ada completed the social validity questionnaire on her own, without an interventionist present.

Fidelity and Inter-Observer-Agreement (IOA)

During all phases, researchers conducted fidelity checks on ROC assessment administration and intervention implementation. Both interventionists independently completed intervention fidelity checklists that were specific to each lesson. Based on checklists completed by the first author across all 12 sessions, the overall fidelity of intervention implementation was 99.7% (range 96.9-100%). To assess IOA, the ratings on the fidelity checklists completed by each interventionist were compared to determine agreement on a total of 9 of the 12 sessions. Checklists were compared for point by point agreement, which involved identifying whether marks from each interventionist matched on each item on each fidelity checklist. Average agreement was 99.6% (range 96.9-100%).

Fidelity and IOA were also assessed for ROC assessment administration. The doctoral student interventionist administered the majority of the assessments, and self-rated fidelity using an assessment fidelity checklist (100% fidelity). To conduct IOA checks, the first author reviewed and completed a checklist for 7 of the 18 video recorded assessment sessions (100% agreement).

Assessment Scoring and Inter-Rater-Reliability (IRR)

During all phases, a team of research assistants scored Ada's completed ROC assessments. The first author scored all of the assessments. Since the first author was also an interventionist, IRR was calculated for 88.89% of the assessments. The first author developed and refined a scoring rubric with the assistance of a third-year special education doctoral student. The first author then trained a fourth-year school psychology masters' student and three undergraduate research assistants in the scoring procedures. Each person first scored three sample assessments (not completed by Ada). The scoring team then met to discuss any disagreements. The first author clarified rubric misunderstandings, and any remaining disagreements were discussed until the scoring team came to a consensus. The team then repeated this process by scoring three of Ada's assessments. Initial agreement on these assessments was 91%, and 100% after discussion. The remaining assessments throughout the study were distributed across scorers, with one scorer completing IRR for each assessment. Average agreement was 90% (range 67-100%) and was only below 80% on the first assessment.

Data Analysis

We visually analyzed the data for level, trend, immediacy, and variability of overall scores and component scores on the ROC assessments. We also calculated two effect sizes appropriate for SCRD (Rakap et al., 2020; Yücesoy-Özkan et al., 2020): Percentage of Nonoverlapping Data (PND; Scruggs et al., 1987) and Percentage of Data Exceeding a Median Trend (PEM-T; Wolery et al., 2010). We selected these effect sizes based on recommendations of Yücesoy-Özkan and colleagues (2020), and because there was a positive baseline trend for two component scores we analyzed. The intervention effectiveness for Ada was interpreted based on PND guidelines: highly effective (at or above 90%), moderately effective (70-89%), questionably effective (50-69%), and ineffective (below 50%; Scruggs et al., 1987). No benchmarks have been published for interpretation of PEM-T (Yücesoy-Özkan et al., 2020).

RESULTS

Mathematics Outcomes

Overall Mathematics Scores

During baseline, Ada had a mean score of 54.32% correct (range 53-58.3%), with a slightly decreasing trend and low variability (see Figure 3). Ada started intervention in the sixth session, and completed a total of 8 ROC assessments during that phase. During intervention, Ada had a mean score of 77.07% correct (range 48-66.67%) with a noticeable increase at the second and third data points and continued to have an overall slightly positive trend for the remainder of intervention. There was low variability during intervention, and the level of performance was higher than that during baseline. The PND and PEM-T effect sizes for overall scores were each 87.5% (moderate).

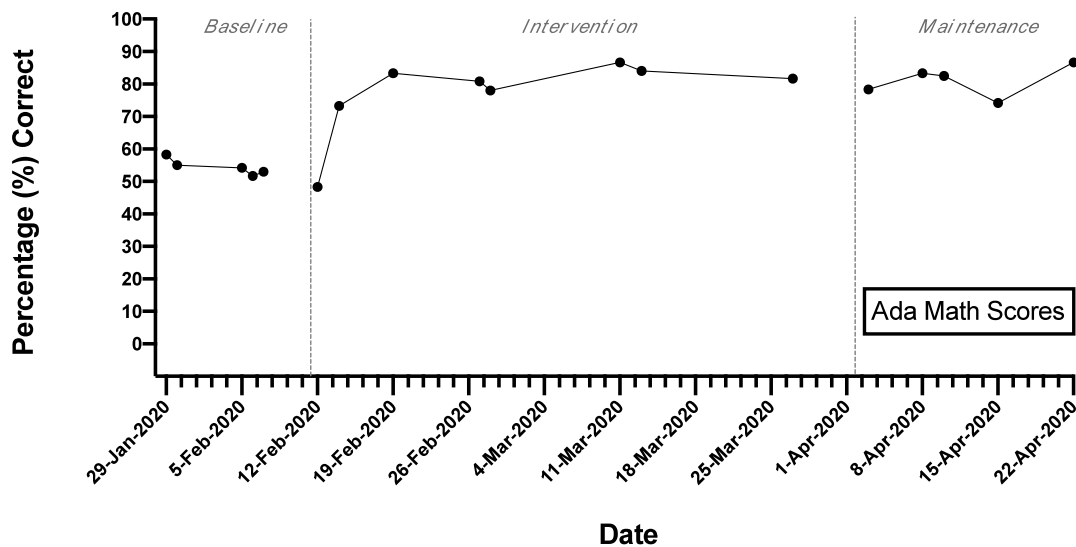


Figure 3. Graph of Ada's Overall Rate of Change Assessment Scores

During maintenance, Ada completed five assessments (1-2 per week), starting approximately 2 weeks following the last intervention session. Ada's scores continued to remain relatively stable, with slight increases in scores occurring during the second and fifth maintenance sessions, and slight decreases in scores occurring during the third and fourth maintenance sessions. During maintenance, Ada had an overall mean of 80.99% correct (range 74.16-86.87%). The PND and PEM-T effect sizes during maintenance compared to baseline were each 100.00% (very effective).

Answer Scores

For the component score of computing the correct answer to the word problems, Ada had a mean score of 57% correct during baseline. Her scores were somewhat variable, ranging from 50-66.67%, with a slightly decreasing trend (see Figure 4). Ada calculated the correct answer to the word problems during intervention on average 84.37% of the time (range: 58.3-100%). There was an increasing trend during intervention, with a large increase in scores on the third intervention data point, at which point Ada found the correct answer on 100% of the word problems. The increase in level was maintained throughout intervention, with moderate variability (range 58.3-100%). Lower scores occurred on the fifth and seventh intervention data points. The PND effect size was 62.5% (questionably effective), but the PEM-T effect size for this component was 100%.

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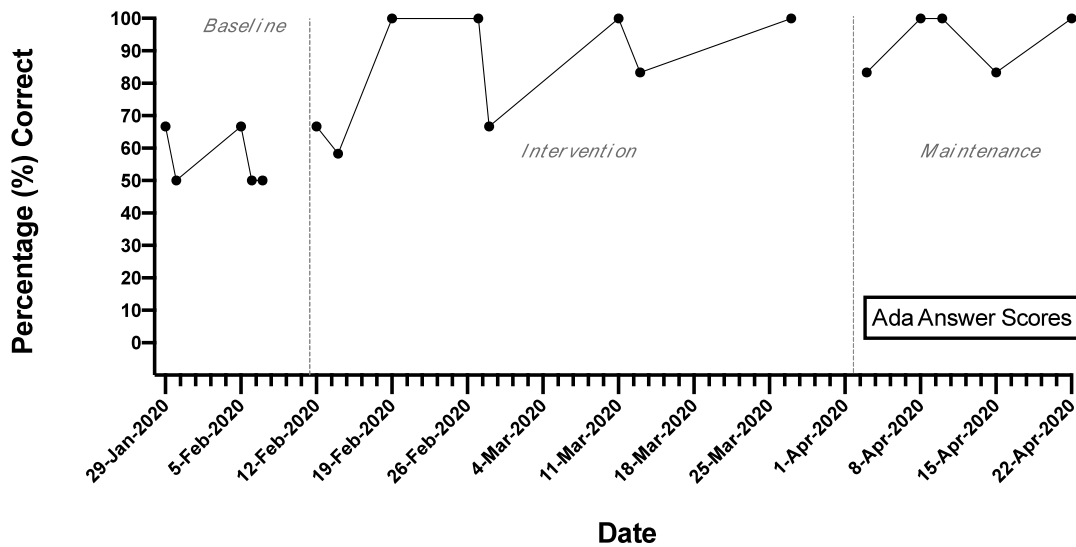


Figure 4. Graph of Ada's Rate of Change Assessment Answer Component Scores

On average, Ada calculated the correct answer to the word problems 93.32% of the time during maintenance. There was slight variability during this phase (range 83.3-100%), but less so compared to intervention. The level of performance on this component score was at a higher level compared to both intervention and baseline. The PND and PEM-T effect sizes during the maintenance phase compared to baseline were each 100.00% (very effective).

Equation Scores

During baseline, Ada wrote an accurate equation to represent each word problem on average 29.99% of the time. Equation scores overall were low during baseline, with moderate variability (range 16.67-41.66%), and an increasing trend (see Figure 5). During intervention, Ada wrote an accurate equation to represent the word problem on average 81% of the time (range 9-100%). After an initial drop in scores on the first intervention data point, Ada had a substantial increase in scores compared to baseline starting with the second intervention data point, and her scores continued to increase throughout intervention. Ada earned 100% of points on intervention data point five, and maintained 100% scores for the duration of the intervention. There was very low variability between the second through last intervention data points, but wider variability when the first intervention data point is considered. There was an increasing trend during the intervention phase. The PND effect size for writing an accurate equation was 87.5% (moderately effective) and PEM-T was 50%.

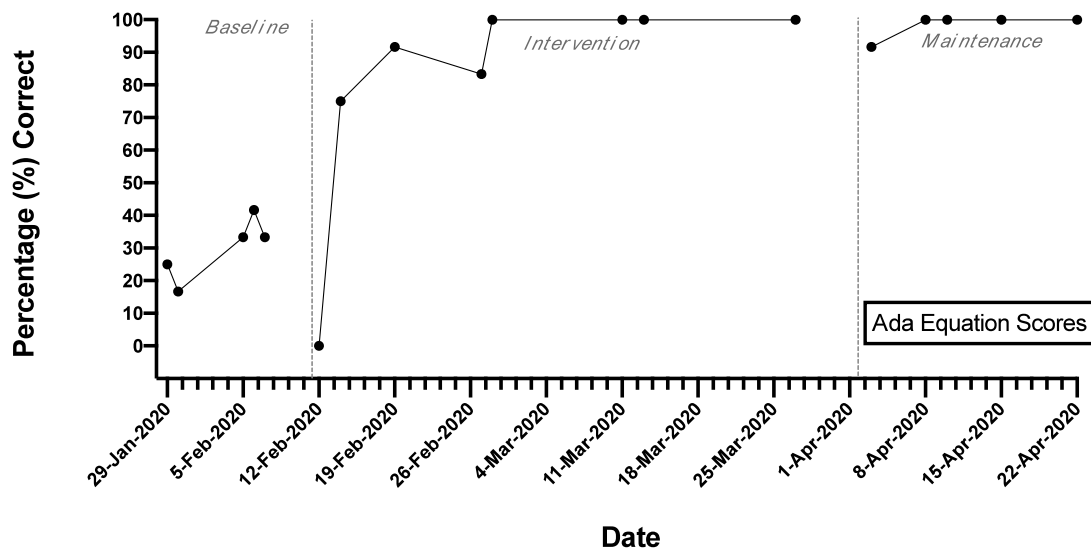


Figure 5. Graph of Ada's Rate of Change Assessment Equation Component Scores

Ada wrote an accurate equation aligned with the word problems on average 98.33% of the time during maintenance (range 91.6-100%). The level was high overall, with all but one data point at 100%. There was also low variability, and the variability was lowest in this phase compared to the intervention and baseline phases. The PND for writing an accurate equation during maintenance compared to baseline was 100.00% (very effective), and PEM-T was 0%.

Table Scores

Ada created an accurate table that aligned with the word problem on average 47% of the time during baseline, with moderate variability (range 33.3-66.67%), and a slightly increasing trend (see Figure 6). Ada created an accurate table that aligned with the word problem on average 53.1% of the time (range 33.3-66.67%). There was similar variability compared to baseline, a slightly increasing trend, and a slight increase in level compared to baseline. There was not clear evidence of an immediate increase in scores. The PND was 0.00% (not effective), and PEM-T was 25%.

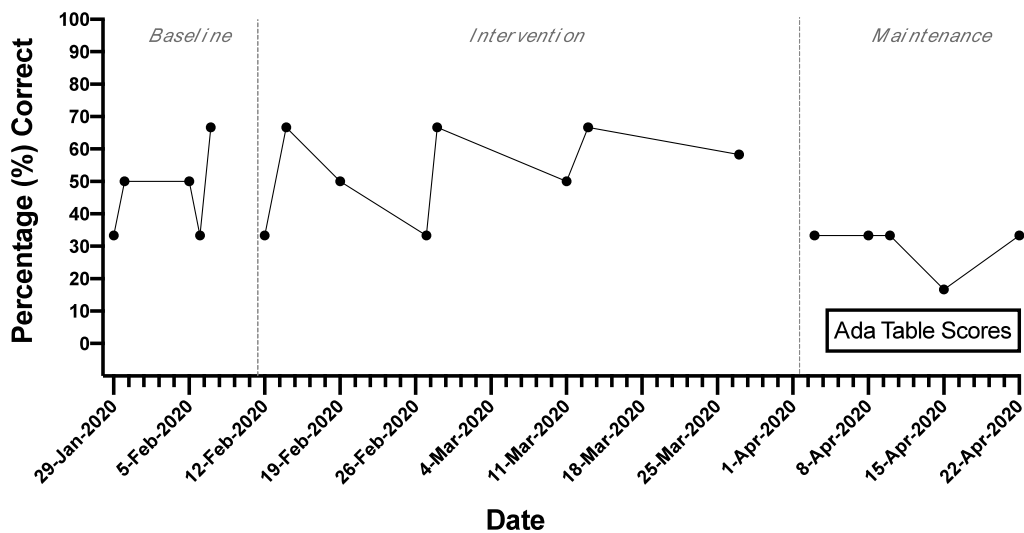


Figure 6. Graph of Ada's Rate of Change Assessment Table Component Scores

Ada created a table that aligned with the word problems on average 29.97% of the time during maintenance. Scores were more stable during maintenance than during baseline or intervention (range 16.66-33.3%), but the level also dropped to below the level of scores in either intervention or baseline. There was an immediate decrease in scores corresponding with the start of the maintenance phase. The PND and PEM-T effect sizes during maintenance compared to baseline were both 00.00% (not effective).

Graph Scores

During baseline, Ada created accurate graphs on average 91.66% of the time, indicating a high level of performance. There was moderate variability (range 75-100%), and a slightly decreasing trend (see Figure 7). Ada created accurate graphs on average 98% of the time during intervention (range 91.66-100%). The level was high; only two points fell below 100%. There was lower variability compared to baseline, and an immediate increase in scores compared to the last data point of baseline. The trend overall was flat throughout intervention. The PND was 0.00% (not effective), and PEM-T was 100%.

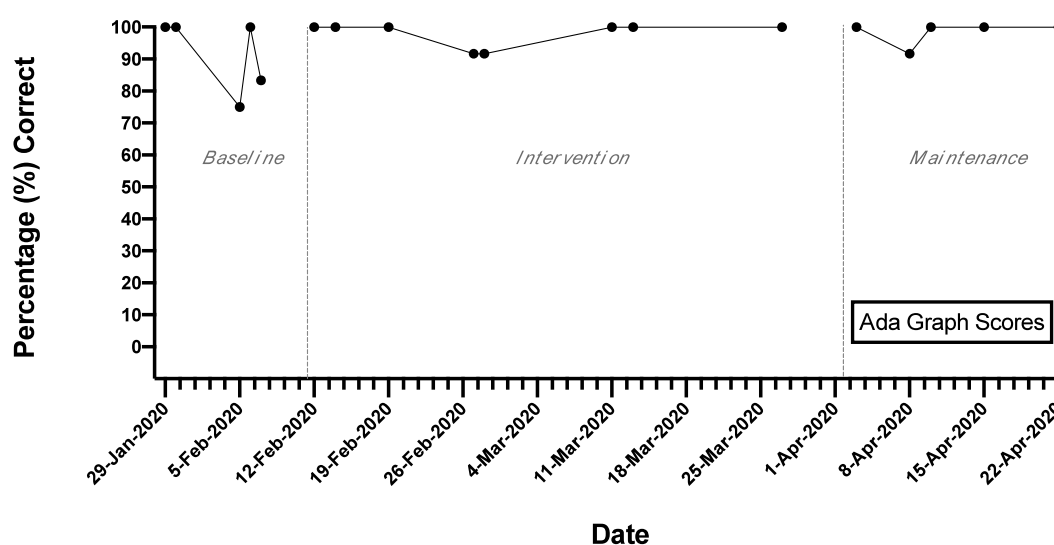


Figure 7. Graph of Ada's Rate of Change Assessment Graph Component Scores

During maintenance, Ada created an accurate graph on average 98% of the time (range 91.66-100%). Level remained high with low variability; only one data point fell below 100%. There was not an increase or decrease in level compared to intervention, although the overall level in maintenance was higher than the overall level during baseline. The PND during maintenance compared to baseline was 0.00% (not effective), while PEM-T was 100%.

Axes Numbering and Labeling Scores

For the component of including accurate axes labels and numbers, Ada had a mean score of 46.65% correct during baseline, with moderate variability (range 29.16-66.67%), and a decreasing trend (see Figure 8). During intervention, Ada had a mean score of 68.75%. There was an increase in scores starting at the third intervention point, which continued through the fourth intervention data point. There was wide variability during intervention (range 41.66-95.83%), and evidence of a slightly decreasing trend, although the overall level of scores remained higher in intervention than the level of scores during baseline. The PND was 75.00% (moderately effective), and PEM-T was 100%.

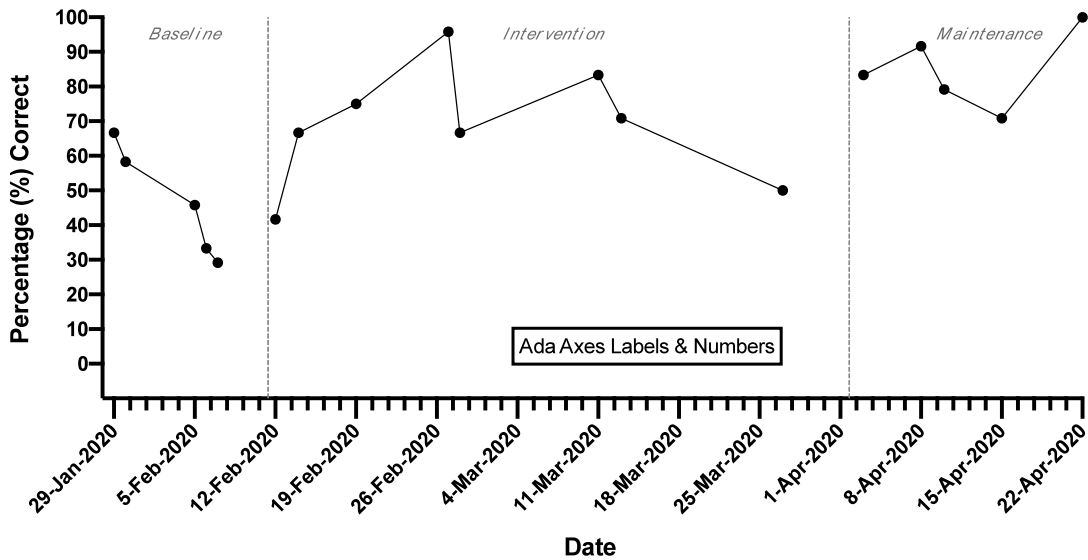


Figure 8. Graph of Ada’s Rate of Change Assessment Axes Numbering and Labeling Component Scores

For the component score of axes labels and numbers, Ada had a mean score of 84.99% during maintenance. There was an immediate increase in scores that corresponded with the start of the maintenance phase, less variability compared to baseline or intervention phases (range 70.83-100%), as well as a higher level of performance. The PND and PEM-T effect sizes during maintenance compared to baseline were each 100.00% (very effective).

Social Validity Results

Ada completed the modified CIRP during the maintenance phase of the study in the format of an online survey (Table 1). Overall, Ada provided answers of “strongly agree” to questions 3 (easy to use), 4 (satisfied), and 6 (future use for unrelated word problems), and answers of “agree” to questions 1 (useful), 2 (practical), and 7 (helpful for other math classes). On questions 5 (future use for rate word problems) and 8 (recommend for other students), Ada answered “somewhat disagree”.

Table 1. Modified CIRP Social Validity Questionnaire, With Ada's Responses

Question	Rating*
1) The cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies are useful for solving rate of change word problems.	5
2) The cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies are practical for solving rate of change word problems.	5
3) The cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies are easy for me to use for solving rate of change word problems.	6
4) I am satisfied with using the cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies to solve rate of change word problems.	6
5) I will use the cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies to solve rate of change word problems in the future.	3
6) I will use the cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies to solve other word problems in the future (for word problems that relate to concepts other than rate of change).	6
7) Using the cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies will help me do better in mathematics classes.	5
8) I would recommend that other students learn how to use the cubes, diagrams, and POD✓ strategies to help them solve word problems.	3

Note. *Ratings were on a six-point Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=somewhat disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=agree; 6=strongly agree.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Key Findings

The results of this study indicate that Ada improved in her ability to solve rate of change word problems following participation in an intervention involving CRA-I and the POD✓ strategy. There were slightly variable results across the six different outcomes we analyzed.

Strongest Improvements

Visual analysis, PND, and PEM-T all provide consistent evidence of the intervention being highly effective for improving Ada's overall ROC scores. Notably, the effect sizes appear to be moderately effective when baseline and intervention phases are compared, but highly effective when baseline and maintenance are compared. These promising results are consistent with prior research with secondary students (Bundock et al., 2019), because they indicate that Ada continued to make improvements up to four weeks following the end of intervention. We found similar results for the component of calculating the correct answer, although these scores were more variable during intervention than over-

all scores. Additionally, the PND and PEM-T effect sizes vary from one another for this component, with PEM-T being higher than PND, likely due to PEM-T controlling for the decreasing baseline trend.

Visual analysis, PND, and PEM-T offer slightly different interpretations of the results for the component score of writing an accurate equation. Visual analysis appears to show an effect based on the increase in level and decrease in variability in intervention and maintenance phases compared to baseline, as well as the relatively immediate improvement between baseline and intervention phases. When baseline trend is accounted for, these results should be interpreted more cautiously, as evidenced by the PEM-T effect size of 50%. However, rate of improvement was higher in intervention than baseline, and the effects were maintained well during the maintenance phase, with Ada scoring 100% four out of the five data points during maintenance.

For the component of using accurate numbers and labels on the graph axes, visual analysis, PND, and PEM-T all provide consistent evidence of the intervention being at least moderately effective in improving Ada's performance. For this component, Ada had the sharpest decreasing trend during baseline. There was evidence of an immediate effect during intervention, although there was some variability during the intervention phase. While there is still a higher degree of variability during maintenance compared with other component scores, both PND and PEM-T indicate that the intervention is highly effective when that phase is compared to baseline.

Components With Evidence of Small to No Effects

The graph and table components did not show clear evidence of intervention effectiveness. Each of these components were related, because we scored graphs based on how accurately Ada graphed the points that she included on the table, rather than how accurately her graph represented the word problem. Ada had the highest level of baseline performance on the graph component compared across outcomes, which may reflect a ceiling effect related to how we scored this component. PND and PEM-T effect sizes provide conflicting evidence of intervention effectiveness for this component. In this case, PEM-T accounts for the slightly decreasing trend during baseline, while PND does not. We consider the intervention to be questionably effective for the graph component, primarily because Ada's scores in intervention and maintenance decreased in variability and increased in overall level when baseline is compared to intervention and maintenance. Additionally, Ada scored 100% for this component four out of the five data points during the maintenance phase.

For the component of table, visual analysis, PND, and PEM-T all provide consistent evidence of the intervention being unlikely to have made an effect. This is interesting, because Ada's scores in answer and equation did show evidence of intervention effectiveness. Ada often had lower scores for the table

component on the assessment because she regularly constructed the table with the correct rate of change, but the incorrect y-intercept. The table results indicate that, while Ada did improve in calculating the correct answer to the word problems, she might not have made improvements conceptually regarding understanding the y-intercept. These results are consistent with prior research indicating that students struggle with understanding the concept of the y-intercept (Hattikudor et al., 2012). Future research should examine college students' understanding of the y-intercept, and strategies to improve their creation of tables and graphs for rate of change word problems.

Implications for Research and Practice

While the results of this study cannot be generalized due to the inclusion of only one participant, there are several contributions this study makes to the research base on mathematics interventions for college students with LD. First, Ada made similar improvements in solving rate of change word problems compared to those made by high-school students with high-incidence disabilities in prior research who participated in a similar intervention (Bundock et al., 2019). This finding supports Hodara's (2013) recommendation that research be conducted with college students with LD to evaluate the use of instructional strategies and interventions that are effective for teaching mathematics to secondary students with LD. Future research should be conducted with college students with LD to determine if this intervention, and other research-based interventions, lead to improvements in students' performance in specific mathematics topics and college level mathematics courses.

Second, prior mathematics intervention research conducted with college students with LD did not incorporate a specific measure of how students felt about the intervention. Ada found the intervention to be socially acceptable overall. She provided high ratings regarding her satisfaction with the intervention, ease of use of the strategies, and her likelihood to use these strategies for other types of word problems. Ada indicated that she somewhat disagreed that she would use the strategies for future rate of change word problems, and whether she would recommend this intervention for other students. Due to the measure not including open-ended questions to prompt Ada to provide more information, we cannot know why Ada included the ratings she did. Additionally, there is a chance that Ada's responses to the social validity questionnaire were biased, due to Ada being the only participant. Ada may have been hesitant to provide honest feedback, since the feedback could be attributed to her. Future research should delve further into the views of college students with LD in the context of their participation in mathematics interventions, to identify factors to consider when developing and implementing interventions.

Third, prior mathematics intervention studies conducted with college students with LD were all conducted within the context of intact mathemat-

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ics or study skills classes (Sullivan, 2005; Zawaiza & Gerber, 1993), or within summer transition programs (i.e., programs students participate in during the summer before their Freshman year; Kitz & Thorpe, 1995). The current study is unique in that it involved one-on-one intervention sessions tied to a specific mathematics concept. Research is needed to identify strengths and weaknesses of different intervention delivery models within a college context.

Limitations

There are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. First, we only had one student contact us in response to our recruitment efforts. This limits the generalizability of the results, and also indicates that recruitment may be a potential challenge for conducting intervention research with college students with LD. We recruited participants for this study through the university's Disability Resource Center. However, research indicates that only approximately 17% of students with LD receive supports or accommodations through their post-secondary school (Newman et al., 2011). This may be due to the differences in how students access supports in post-secondary contexts compared to K-12 contexts; in post-secondary contexts students have to proactively pursue formal access to any accommodations, which can often present a challenge (Williams et al., 2020). Future research should include broader and more innovative recruitment efforts to reach college students with LD who might not yet be accessing supports through their post-secondary institution. Additionally, one strategy future researchers should consider using when faced with low participant numbers is the use of a multiple-baseline design across sets, which would entail examining students' response to the same intervention (e.g., CRA-I and POD✓ problem solving strategy) across different mathematics concepts.

Two additional limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. First, this study occurred as the COVID-19 pandemic initially hit the U.S., resulting in an abrupt pause in the study and then a transition to virtual sessions. The COVID-19 disruption and switch to virtual sessions may have impacted Ada's performance, in particular because it encompassed a change in intervention procedures and because the maintenance phase could not be a return to the exact conditions of baseline. However, the study procedures were consistent enough across the in-person and virtual sessions that it is unlikely the virtual delivery significantly impacted Ada's performance. Second, the intervention amounted to a total of 12.7 hours across 12 lesson sessions; this may be too much time to reasonably expect of college students, in particular if they are managing challenging coursework as well as employment. Future research should focus on designing interventions that are time and resource efficient to maximize broader implementation and impact.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this pilot study was to conduct a preliminary investigation of the effects of an intervention consisting of explicit strategy instruction within a CRA-I framework to teach ROC concepts to Ada, a college student with LD. Results indicate that Ada made improvements in solving rate of change word problems following her participation in an intervention that incorporated an explicit instructional strategy (POD✓) within a CRA-I framework, and Ada found the intervention overall to be socially acceptable. Given the lack of mathematics intervention research conducted with college students with LD, the results of this study provide proof of concept and promising preliminary evidence to support implementing targeted mathematics interventions with this population. Given that college students with LD currently complete post-secondary school at a lower rate than their peers without disabilities (Williams et al., 2020), researchers and practitioners should direct more efforts to exploring the effectiveness of a variety of different interventions, with the goal of improving the post-secondary outcomes of students with LD.

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AUTHORS' NOTE

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Are you looking to have young and vibrant skin? Are you looking for skin care that reduces fine lines? Great looking skin doesn't just happen. It's something we do. There are so many great products out there for all skin types and all budgets. The important thing is to make sure you get plenty of water, eat clean as much as possible, protect your skin from the sun, and use good cleansers and proper moisturizers, along with anti-aging products.

CITRO

ANTI-AGING PEPTIDES

BY LISA BRISBOIS DYER

BEAUTY CONSULTANT FOR CITRO COSMETICS & SKINCARE



In today's society, both women and men want to know the answer to that question. How to stop the skin aging process? Use PEPTIDES products for anti-aging mature skin to slow it down and make it appear to have younger looking skin.

"Peptide is the Miracle Collagen Maker," said Dr. Teresa Allissa Citro, President and Chief Executive Officer, Citro Cosmetics and Skin Care. Peptides are amino acids that make up specific proteins which are much required by the skin. These peptides are what is needed to stimulate our skin in order to produce collagen. Collagen is made of three polypeptide chains. This means that adding peptides leads to making more collagen. Collagen is what keeps our skin young looking. As we get older the skin begins to age, and wrinkles appear. This is because collagen begins to diminish. Therefore, using products that have peptides is the way to slow down the aging process, and keep wrinkles and fine lines from forming and deepening.

"I recommend peptide products because the more collagen the skin can make the more it can

lead to a much firmer, and younger looking skin. The idea is to promote youthful, healthy, and resilience skin," said Dr. Citro.

In essence, peptides are critical to the skin because it delivers protective antioxidants. These peptides become extremely important because they are very powerful to rejuvenate the aging skin. Remember this, "Peptides promote youthful and healthy skin that glows. This is why we should use peptides on our skin," she said. Of course, everyone should ask their aesthetician or dermatologist before applying anything. "I like to test everything first on my hand to be sure I have no sensitivity to any products. Then, I use a very small amount on the side of my face to be on the safe side. This would be my suggestion with any products, and my practice," she added.

To know more about peptides, what they do, how to apply them, and what is in the ingredients, visit www.citroc cosmetics.com. Citro Cosmetics and Skincare peptides are formulated without parabens. Made In U.S.A. All proceeds will go to benefit **Thread of Hope, Inc.**

www.citroc cosmetics.com

EYESHADOWS ORGANIC

BY LISA BRISBOIS DYER

Citro Cosmetics and Skin Care unveils its Organic Eyeshadows in 18 fabulous colors!

As a beauty consultant for the company, I am honored and pleased to be a part of a cosmetic and skin care company that actually cares about women's health, understanding the hidden dangers of the many harmful chemicals used in cosmetics and skin care. My background before retiring and joining the company was in the medical field. I am a registered nurse by profession. I am well aware of the health issues that can arise from using harmful ingredients found in skin care and cosmetics products.

Some of these ingredients not only you should think about not putting on your face, but also if you are pregnant, you should consider not using them while pregnant. In fact, you should consider not using them at all.

Make up that contains products like retinoids or salicylic acid should be avoided. Lipsticks with toxic ingredients that contain retinyl, palmitate, acetate, and tocopheryl, and lead are to be avoided completely. Pigmenting chemicals as well as colorants are just as equally harmful. These ingredients can pose a potential risk for pregnant woman.

"Citro Cosmetics takes skin care seriously. There is plenty of organic make up as well as skin care that women can use that are and will not bring harm to them or their unborn child," said Dr. Teresa Allissa Citro, Citro Cosmetics and Skin Care, President and Chief Executive Officer.

"I am proud of our team for delivering an incredible line of eyeshadows to the women

who use our products," said Dr. Citro. "Imagine we worked hard in the middle of a pandemic to research and test products we felt were the best and, most importantly, safe," said Dr. Citro. She went on to say, "It is of the utmost importance and most top priority to continue to bring the best possible products to our clients. My daughter, Ellianna, just turned 16 years old, this month. The deal was she would be able to use makeup at 16, but had to be organic. I was not going to compromise on this. That was our deal. It was to my best interest to present my daughter with the safest and best products. I feel I have done this. Not just for her, for me, for my family, and my friends. But now for the rest of the world. I thank God for this opportunity to make an impact in our world."

Today, we unveil 18 beautiful colors that are 75% organic, gluten free, non GMO, and vegan! Our eyeshadows are highly pigmented. They apply velvety-smooth and with a ceaseless finish. They are free from artificial colors, harsh preservatives, and are fragrance free. Many women have allergic reactions to fragrances. We don't use any fragrances so our products are ideal for those who have sensitive eyes.

I am excited to be a part of this company, representing our cosmetics as well as the skin care. These organic eyeshadows are made in the USA, and these days this is a plus. The bottom line is this, we need to consider using natural and organic cosmetics as much as possible. Beauty products that are considered clean are usually free of harmful ingredients and they are safer for those who have sensitive skin. We have to protect our skin as much as possible, especially when we are putting makeup on our eyes and lips. They are

more likely to get inside our bodies. After all that has happened to our world in the last 18 months. We need to consider cleaning up our beauty routine and really pay attention to what we put on our skin. If we have children, we must teach our daughters the importance of using products free of ingredients that will cause their skin future possible problems. If you are pregnant, then you have to be double safe.

Here is a list of ingredients you should avoid all together, especially if you are pregnant. I would suggest you speak to your aesthetician, dermatologist, obstetrician, or your physician. Parabens: Keep away from propyl, butyl, isopropyl, isobutyl and methyl parabens. Phthalates: Found in products with synthetic fragrances and nail polishes; avoid diethyl and dibutyl especially. Retinol: Vitamin A retinoic acid, retinyl palmitate, retinaldehyde, adapalene, tretinoin, tazarotene and isotretinoin.

"Lisa, we live in a world where everyone is health conscious and understands the importance of eating organic and locally grown foods. We read ingredients carefully before purchasing other food items, and yet, we forget just how important it is for us to do the same when it comes to our skin especially the face. This is my habit. I am very careful what I put in my body and on my skin. I have taught this to my daughter and those who are close to me because of the research I do. Now I share it with the readers of Everyday Life."

This is the reason why I chose to represent Citro Cosmetics and Skin Care because of this statement Dr. Citro said, "I am proud of the impact we are making by delivering clean, and as much as possible, organic products. I am working in bringing eye liners and lip gloss, and lipsticks for the Fall and Christmas Seasons. Stay tuned..."

To know more about eyeshadow and other cosmetics, what they do, how to apply them, and what is in the ingredients, visit **www.citroc cosmetics.com**. Citro Cosmetics and Skincare eyeshadows and other cosmetics are formulated without parabens. All proceeds will go to benefit **Thread of Hope, Inc.**

SPRING/SUMMER 2021 FABULOUS HAIR COLORS FOR ALL AGES

BY PAULA ST. CYR BASTRACHE

**Nice way to brighten up a winter color
with some Balayage highlights.**



Before



After

**How about some peekaboo highlights
to spruce up dark winter hair**



Before



After

**Summer Pastel Smokey Silver color
with a textured Bob**



Before



After

A well-balanced diet is important for good health. For a real transformation, it starts from the inside out. Exercise is also important to control weight, build healthy bones, and tone muscles. There are so many exercise programs out there to try. Walking, swimming, jogging, body lifting and sculpting are just a few. Speak with your doctor which is best for you. It's important for our self-esteem, and after a workout, we're infused with energy. Enjoy the health benefits of eating organic, exercising, and replenishing your body with the right vitamins and what they can do for you.





Recipes by Michael

RECIPES BY MICHAEL ANZINVINO

Spaghetti with Peas, Parmigiano and Pancetta

Ingredients Needed:

1 lb. Spaghetti

4oz. Pancetta, diced

1 Cup Reggiano Parmigiano, grated

1 Cup Frozen Peas, defrosted

4 Eggs

1 Small Onion, finely diced

3 Garlic Cloves, thinly Sliced

1/4 Cup Fresh Flat Leaf Parsley, Chopped

2-3 T. Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt, Black Pepper, Chili Flakes - to taste

Directions:

Place 6qts. of water in a large pot. Add 4 T. of kosher salt, cover, and bring to a boil. When boiling, add in 1lb. of spaghetti, and cook, uncovered, until al dente (Approximately 8 minutes)

While the pasta is cooking, in a large, separate pan, over medium/high heat, heat 2 T. Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Add in diced onion, and sliced garlic. Cook for one minute.

Add in 4oz. (or more) diced pancetta and cook for a few minutes. At this point add 1 Cup thawed Peas, pinch of chili flakes, pinch of fresh ground black pepper. Lower the heat to medium/low.

In a small bowl, beat 4 eggs together with 1 Cup Grated Reggiano Parmigiano. Slowly whisk in about 2oz. of the hot pasta water. Set aside.

When the pasta is done, or even slightly under, remove the pasta from out of the water with tongs, or a strainer (do not discard the pasta water just yet) and add to the pancetta/peas pan Turn off heat. Add in the egg and Parmigiano mixture, along with a ladle of the pasta water.

Add in 1/4 Cup, chopped fresh parsley, mix together, and serve. Buon Appetito!!

Panna Cotta

Ingredients Needed:

2 1/2 Cups Heavy Cream
1/3 Cup Sugar
1 Cup Sour Cream
2 T. Vanilla Extract
2t. Gelatin (dissolved in 3T. warm water)
Pinch of Salt

Directions:

Heat cream and sugar till just under a simmer.
When sugar has dissolved, stir in vanilla, gelatin, and salt.
Remove from heat. Add in sour cream, and stir.
Pour into 6 individual serving vessels.
Refrigerate for about 6 hours, or overnight.
Serve with seasonal fruit/berries.

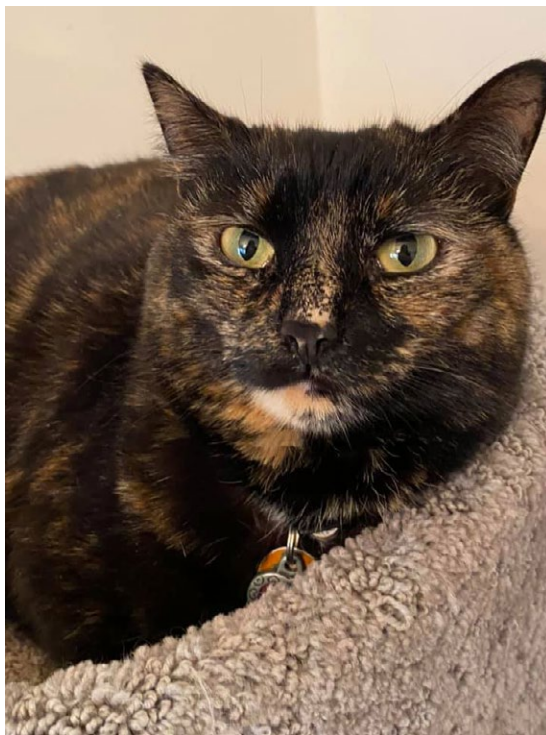


Feeding Your Cat or Dog a Healthy, Balanced Diet: Dry Pet Food

ELLIANNA DESTINEE CITRO

Feeding your pet the proper, nutritional food is crucial. There are many pet foods out there that do not contain the proper nutrients or ingredients that your cat or dog needs. There are some brands that are within a lower price range, but often times they lack the necessary ingredients, or they contain ingredients that are not ideal. However, there are plenty of great pet food choices that are within budget and that your pet will love.

Always check the ingredients list. Just like you would at the grocery store, when purchasing pet food, be sure to read the ingredients. There are certain things that you should avoid, and some that you should be sure that the food contains. The following are the "don'ts and do's" for **dry pet food**.



Several ingredients to avoid in dry pet food:

Unidentified by-products - Meat by-products are the unwanted leftovers of a butchered animal carcass, such as the organs. By-products that are identified on ingredients lists (such as "chicken by-products" or simply "chicken liver", etc.) can be a good source of vitamins and nutrients. However, certain pet foods may not specify what animal the by-products come from. Those should be avoided. Additionally, it is ideal

for any by-product to not be the first ingredient.

Grain fillers - Dogs are omnivores, cats are carnivores. They're both designed to eat food that contains a good amount of meat. Most dry pet foods contain unnecessary amounts of grain fillers in their kibbles, such as corn,

wheat, rice, etc. While grain is not immediately harmful, it should not be a primary ingredient in your pet's diet. There are some brands of grain-free pet foods, but they may not be the best option. The FDA investigated DCM (dilated cardiomyopathy) in dogs that were fed grain-free diets and diets that contained potatoes or legumes as some of the first ingredients. There was no proof that grain-free food and those ingredients caused the DCM, however

you should ask your veterinarian if you are interested or concerned about those diets.

Ethoxyquin, BHA, and BHT - Ethoxyquin, butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) are artificial preservatives sometimes used in dry pet food. Ethoxyquin causes irritation when in contact with skin or eyes, and is harmful if swallowed. BHA and BHT have been suspected to possibly cause cancer. When purchasing pet food, foods that contain natural

preservatives are a better option than those that contain chemical preservatives. Vitamin C is a good example of a natural preservative.

Several ingredients to look for in dry pet food:

Real meat (and other animal proteins) - Again, cats are carnivores and dogs are omnivores. Meat is a necessary ingredient in their diets. Real meat provides an excellent and much needed source of protein. Preferably, at least two or three sources of protein should be found listed as some of the first few ingredients (however, remember that cats require more protein than dogs.) Those sources of protein aren't limited to just meat. Eggs, fish, etc. are also good proteins. More sources of protein shouldn't be a concern, dogs and cats typically are not harmed by excess protein. Like by-products, avoid unidentified meat. Be sure the ingredients specify what animal the meat comes from (chicken, salmon, etc), the same applies for meat meal.

Taurine - Taurine is one of the important amino acids that is needed by both cats and dogs. Dogs can make their own taurine, however they may not create the required amount. Their food should

provide the rest of the necessary amount. Cats, however, cannot make their own taurine, so it is extremely important that it is found in their diets. Meat is also a great source of taurine, which is another reason why real meat is very important.

Vitamins - Vitamins are crucial and many should be included in your pet's diet. A few of them include: Vitamin A, K, E, C, and D, biotin (vitamin B7), niacin (vitamin B3.) Be sure to read the ingredients label for a variety of vitamins, not only those listed here.

Conclusion:

No matter what brand or variety you are purchasing, always be sure to properly read the ingredients that are in your pet's favorite kibble. The great options don't always have to be expensive. Do your research to find the best brand for you, one that is affordable and healthy for your beloved pet!

Every animal is unique, be sure to consult your veterinarian about any questions or concerns, or to help choose the best food option for your pet.

ELLIANNA DESTINEE CITRO IS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH A PASSION FOR ANIMALS. SHE ASPIRES TO GO TO VETERINARY SCHOOL. SHE HAS AN INTEREST IN DIGITAL ART AND HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED FOR PET PORTRAITS. HER ART HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY POPULAR ACTORS AND A POPULAR FASHION BRAND. SHE ENJOYS SINGING, READING, AND WRITING; HER WRITING HAS ALSO BEEN PUBLISHED.



RAISING RIGHTEOUS CHILDREN

By Dr. Teresa Allissa Citro



Thirty Days of Wisdom, Encouragement, and Prayer for Christian Parents Raising Honorable and Pure-Hearted Young Men and Women

Teaching children how to live godly lives in a world geared toward selfishness is beyond difficult. Moral character, self-respect, respect for peers, respect for authority, the sanctity of life, purity, and honoring God in all things, are the character traits of a righteous child.

Through real-life examples and practical application, Dr. Citro shows parents how to instill Godly-character, confidence, and success from birth to adulthood. In this easy-to-read and easy-to-understand thirty-day devotional, Dr. Citro uses personal examples of challenging situations, taboo topics, and biblical ways to handle each.

Each daily devotion includes teaching surrounding a specific issue, a practical example of the topic, along with a parental prayer for spiritual power and dominion. Dr. Citro explains how to effectively put the Armor of God on our children while personally living a life of holiness and righteousness.

"Grandchildren are the crown of grandparents, and parents are the glory of their children." *PROVERBS 17:6*

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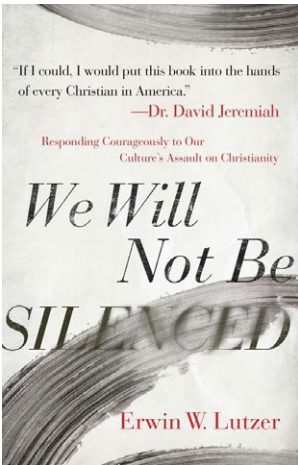
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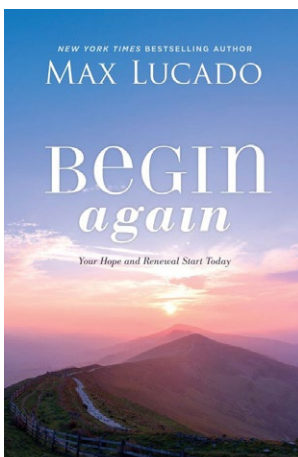
Must Read Books for 2021



WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED

By Erwin W. Lutzer

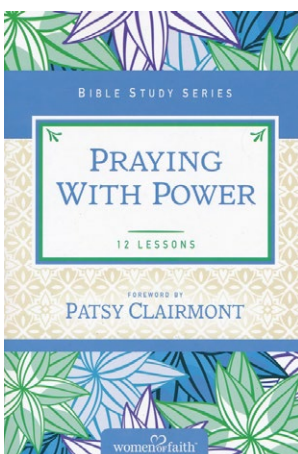
Publisher's Description: "Each day, you watch America turn further from Christian values and the core principles of liberty. It's frustrating to feel you can't assert biblical truth without facing condemnation, and fearful to witness outrage and victimhood replace respect and reason. Amidst this dissent, how can you not only stay rooted in your own faith, but continue publicly testifying for Jesus? In *We Will Not Be Silenced*, Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer prepares you to live out your convictions against a growing tide of hostility. Gain a better understanding of nonbelievers' legitimate hurts and concerns regarding issues like racism, sexism, and poverty—and identify the toxic responses secular culture disguises as solutions. In the process, you'll see how you can show compassion and gentleness to those outside of the faith without affirming their beliefs. *We Will Not Be Silenced* will ready you to move beyond fear and boldly accept the challenge of representing Christ to a watching world that needs Him now more than ever before."



BEGIN AGAIN

By Max Lucado

Publisher's Description: "In *Begin Again*, pastor and New York Times bestselling author Max Lucado celebrates God's promise to restore and renew. Max will prepare you for the journey ahead by encouraging you to: Believe in Your Trustworthy God, Enjoy God's Good Gifts, Ground Yourself in His Promises, Influence Your World, Nurture an Eternal Perspective. This compilation—which also includes original content from Max—assures us of the new possibilities ahead. Take the next step toward hope and renewal. It's never too late to *Begin Again*."



PRAYING WITH POWER

By Patsy Clairmont

Publisher's Description: "If you are like most Christians, you know you should be praying more often, taking it more seriously, and giving it more priority in your life. But what often gets missed is that prayer is not a requirement but a privilege! Prayer is the pathway to building a relationship with the Savior. Through prayer, the Creator and Sustainer of everything actually listens to us. In *Praying with Power*, you will explore what the Bible has to say about this fascinating two-way communication with God. You will explore journaling prayers, praying the Scripture, and how to pray your way through a desert or valley. You will also discover the incredible power of prayer and the promises God provides when you go to Him with your needs. The Women of Faith® Bible Studies provide intriguing insights into topics that are relevant to women's lives today. Each guide includes twelve weeks of study, down-to-earth illustrations, and reflections to help you move the truth from your head to your heart. A leader's guide for use with small groups is also included."



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& Disease

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& Disease

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to solve your trouble!”**

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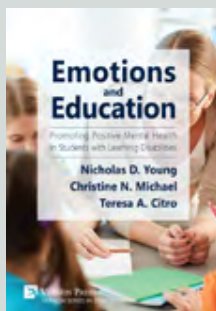


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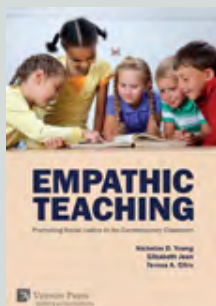


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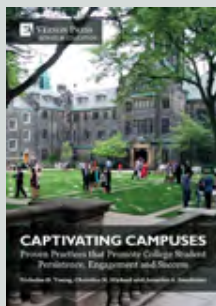


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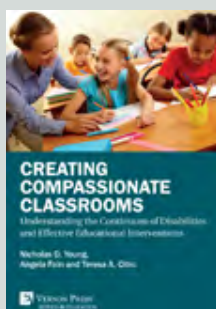


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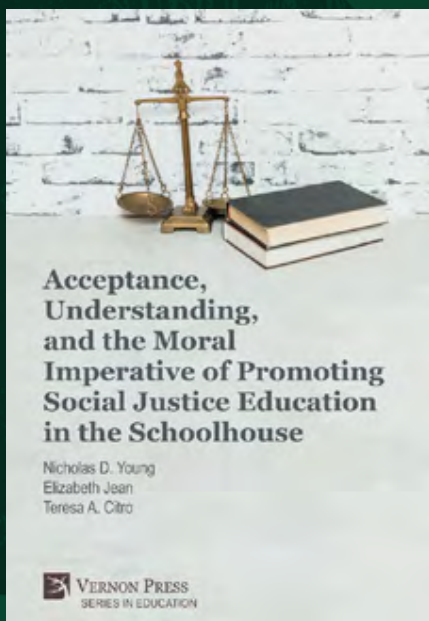
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“Offers a fresh look at the concept of equity between students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and other defining characteristics. The book takes a brief look at the fundamentals of social justice as well as federal law before turning to the more important job of identifying students and the benefits that social justice can bring to each and every individual.”

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This book examines the critical issues associated with the topic of social justice in primary and secondary education. Emphasis is placed on programs, approaches and strategies to increasingly teach tolerance, respect, and understanding within and between these groups and members of the majority culture. This book is for teachers, psychologists and other education professionals who wish to gain a better understanding of how social justice can and should become a valuable part of the educational landscape.

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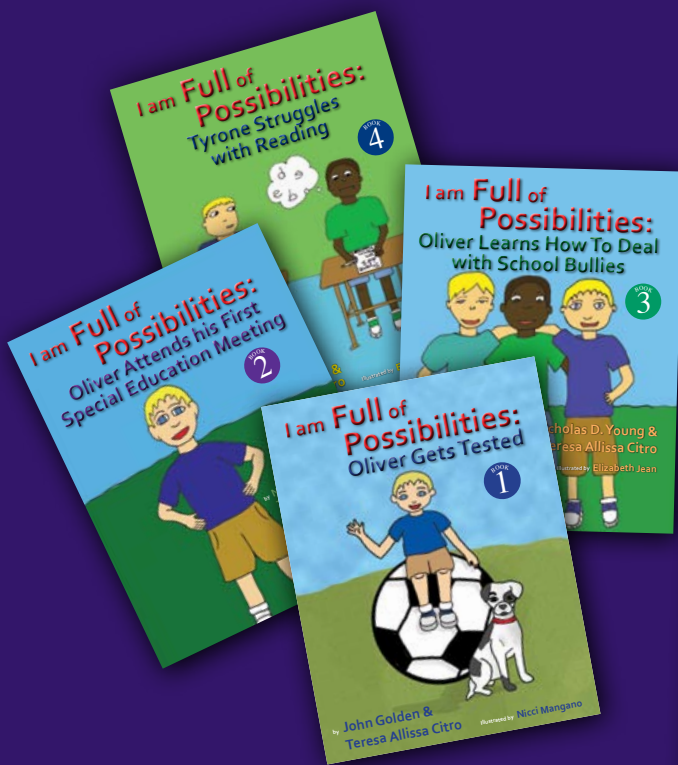
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