"UNPACKING THE ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC SKILLS OF BLACK GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES," BY OLAJUMOKE E. OSHOKOYA

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Unpacking the Academic Interventions for Improving the Academic Skills of Black Girls with Disabilities: A Scoping Review

Olajumoke E. Oshokoya, D.A.Ed., Clift G. Oliech, M.S. Ed., & Dr. Temple S. Lovelace, BCBA-D

Abstract

Most research on Black girls has focused more on their behavior. Morris, 2007, when compared to their White peers. It is even worse for Black Girls with Disabilities (BGDs) who have continued to be academically marginalized along the intersection of race, gender, and disability. As more special education research exists for improving the academic achievement of students with disabilities across United States K-12 schools, it becomes critical to systematically scope the academic interventions that have been used to improve the academic skills of BGDs. Using the PRISMA-SCR checklist (Tripico et al., 2018) and Askey and O’Malley’s (2005) framework, 15 studies were scoped. Results from this scoping review revealed that nine academic interventions were used to improve the academic skills of BGDs across the 15 studies. With a narrative synthesis, themes on current strengths and gaps across the studies found are discussed in line with systemic reasons why they are important to improving the academic skills of BGDs. Overall, repeated reading interventions (RRIs) delivered through computer assisted instruction (CAI) were more prevalent at improving the academic skills of BGDs.

Methods

This review was guided by two scoping review frameworks
- Five stages of scoping review (Askey & O’Malley, 2005) scoping review framework
  - Identify the research question
  - Identify relevant studies
  - Study selection
  - Charting the data, and
  - Collate, summarize, and report the results
- The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis Extension For Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-SCR) checklist
- PRISMA-SCR Extension checklist (Tripico et al., 2018)
  - 25 essential reporting items, 2 optional items
- To identify relevant articles, an electronic search was conducted using 8 MEDLINE databases.
- Major search terms were academic skills, intervention, Black girls, and disabilities.
- Following the electronic search, the reference section of each included article was hand searched.
- Forward searches were conducted using the cite forward feature on Google Scholar and three practitioner journals.

Inclusion Criteria

- Published in English language
- The study included Black or African American girls with disabilities or at risk within U.S. K-12 school as participants,
- Studies with both experimental and non-experimental research designs were included.
- The study implemented at least an academic intervention.
- The study targeted at least one academic skill.

Exclusion Criteria

- A mix of other racial groups as participants
- No original data
- Unspecified race, gender, disabilities or if at risk or struggling.

Overarching Research Question

What are the academic interventions that have been used to improve the academic skills of BGDs within K-12 schools?

Results

- A total of 15 articles met the eligibility criteria. Reported results of BGDs and those at risk were singled from these 15 studies.
- Total number of studies coded and reported (N = 36)
- A total of 36 BGDs and those at risk (N = 36) participated in the 15 studies.
- Six (17%) Black girls had been identified for either or both high and low-incidence disabilities with individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Thirty (83%) Black girls were yet to receive a disability diagnosis, they had been identified to be at risk for special education and/or academic failure.
- Nine different academic interventions were used to improve the academic skills of BGDs across the 15 studies.
- All 15 studies targeted literacy skills and implemented interventions that focused on reading and writing skills.
- Eleven (73.3%) studies targeted reading skills.
- One (6.7%) study targeted both reading and writing skills.

Discussion

- Reading-Focused Interventions: Interventions that focused on reading skills.
- Multicomponent Reading Intervention: Most (N = 10) studies implemented six interventions (Critical Literacy approach (CLA), culturally relevant materials, CR mat, reading relevant and culturally engaging stories, Read Naturally Software, (Luxxru), BIKE, (like) drill, word box) that targeted at least two or more (oral fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic, and reading) components of reading.
- Repeated Reading Intervention (RRI): Of the six studies that implemented RRI, four incorporated CR mat which emphasized fluency practice in which a student repeatedly reads a passage aloud to increase oral reading fluency.
- Early Reading Intervention (ERI): Four studies implemented interventions that focused on early reading skills as either a packaged intervention (Narrative Retelling Self-monitoring, NSM) or a stand-alone interventions of WHI, Karzweil 3000, and Flashcard Drill.
- Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI): Nine studies utilized computer and software programs as tools or delivery strategy. Five interventions (BRACES, RNSE, Karzweil 3000, CR Mat, NR + SM) implemented CAI as a vehicle for delivering interventions.
- Writing-Focused Interventions: Interventions that focused on writing skills.
- Cognitive Strategy instruction: three studies utilized self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) intervention to teach students necessary cognitive processes and strategies to become proficient writers.
- Critical Literacy Approach (CLA): one study utilized student selected read aloud and collaborative sessions connected participant to her interests and personal experiences.
- Overlapped Identities and needs of BGDs
  - Lack of data analysis
  - Disability or at risk status was measured from a deficit-based point
- Understudied academic skills and grade level
  - No study targeted math and science skills of BGDs.
- Need to re-examine BGDs academic experiences and interventions
  - Disconnect between BGDs’ instructional identity and intervention
- Lack of empirical research on BGDs.

Conclusion & Recommendation

- All reviewed studies targeted literacy skills among BGDs and those at risk for academic failure across K-8 grade level.
- RRIs delivered through CAI were the most prevalent interventions implemented across studies reviewed.
- This scoping review revealed scarcity of research and academic interventions designed to improve the academic skills of BGDs.
- Further research should prioritize the intersectional needs of BGDs while designing and implementing academic interventions.
- There is a need for more studies that prioritizes research aimed at exploring academic interventions that are targeted towards improving other academic skills (e.g., math and science) of BGDs.
- Early interventions should seek to promote more writing interventions that are culturally sustaining to meet the needs of BGDs.

References

References available upon request. Please email oshokoyo@duq.edu