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NO Ifs ANDS or Buts… Semantic Prosody Eliminates In-School Suspensions in Middle School: A Case Study in Behavioral Conduct

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ABSTRACT

This study describes a before school program (90 minutes) in the US. It focuses on two brothers who had challenges with social and emotional engagement that included episodes of fighting, running away, extreme profanity, resentment, egocentric selfishness, bullying, and aggressive competition. The program was led by 7 para-leads (mean age 24.1) who had no training in teacher education. The children disliked (did not trust) school and arrived daily armed with retroactive inhibitions aimed at adult caregivers, school equipment, and personnel. The null hypothesis states that "Use of cognitive neuroscience to inspire para-leads with a nuanced mental model about how school works and how children learn would have no appreciable impact on the brothers' behavioral outbursts." The study was an opportunistic quasi-experimental design that served a population in daily need, with a solution that involved caring for children. This study was grounded in neuroscience teacher education literature involving mental models that illuminate classroom management techniques. Findings highlighted that para-leads were able to acquire nuanced mental models that delivered long-lasting change to the brothers' singular and shared behavioral patterns. Future studies are suggested to disambiguate effects of semantic prosody on brain function and right hemisphere upregulatory efforts to clarify the impact of both individually.

Keywords: semantic prosody, co-create, Just-in-Time training, para-lead