# NASET Special Educator e-Journal

## December 2017

# Table of Contents

# Special Education Legal Alert

## Perry A. Zirkel

## © November 2017

This latest monthly legal alert summarizes two recent federal appeals court decisions that respectively illustrate the scope of (a) the Section 504/ADA non-interference protection for special education personnel, and (b) the "prevailing party" status of parents for IDEA attorneys' fees. The layout follows the usual format of a two-column table, with key rulings on the left and practical implications on the right. For automatic e-mailing of future legal alerts, sign up at **perryzirkel.com**; this website also provides free downloads of various related articles, including those specific to FAPE-parental participation.

**The Seventh Circuit in *Frakes v. Peoria School District No. 150* (2017) ruled against a special education teacher who claimed that her defense of her teaching methods was protected under the Section 504/ADA anti-interference, or anti-retaliation, provision. A new supervisor gave this tenured teacher an "unsatisfactory" rating. The result, based on Illinois law, was a reduced status on the list for reduction-in-force (RIF). A few months later, the district RIFfed the teacher. The teacher filed suit in federal court, asserting that this adverse employment action violated the ADA provision that prohibits coercion, intimidation, or interference with any individual who exercises ADA-protected rights. Although only binding in the three states in the Seventh Circuit (IL, IN, and WI), this officially published decision demonstrates the likely outcome in other jurisdictions.**

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| First, as a basis for determining whether the teacher's opposition to the evaluation was protected, the court provided examples of ADA-protected rights—formal complaints of disability discrimination or reporting a district's failure to provide FAPE to students with disabilities. More specific to this case, the court posited a situation where the supervisor's instructions forced the teacher to violate the terms of a student's IEP. | Even if the teacher had established the requisite protected conduct, she would have still faced the additional hurdles of preponderantly proving that the district had engaged in interference, or retaliation, and this interference was causally connected to the protected conduct. Moreover, for the common remedy of money damages, the teacher would also have to prove discriminatory intent, such as deliberate indifference or bad faith. |
| Second, the court concluded that the teacher failed to show her opposition to the unsatisfactory evaluation, including her refusal to change her teaching methods, was a challenge to disability discrimination or an assertion of rights of her students with disabilities. | Special education personnel have generally fared poorly under not only the Section 504/ADA anti-interference provision but also First Amendment expression and state whistleblower laws. The problems include establishing proof of the required elements for |

| | these legal claims and confusing ethical norms with legal protections. |
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**In *H.E. v. Walter D. Palmer Leadership Learning Partners Charter School* (2017), the Third Circuit ruled that parents who had obtained a court order for a due process hearing qualified for "prevailing" status for attorneys' fees under the IDEA. The defendant had argued that the court's order was not a final decision on the substantive issue for the hearing, which was compensatory education, but the Third Circuit concluded that "if a parent vindicates a procedural right guaranteed by the IDEA, and if the relief she obtains is not 'temporary forward-looking injunctive relief,' then she is a 'prevailing party' under the IDEA attorneys' fee provision and is eligible for an award of attorneys' fees."**

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| First, the Third Circuit concluded that the court order that the parents had obtained was final, because the substantive issue was subject to a separate decision rather than being consolidated in this same case; thus, the court order was final in there was nothing else for the court to address. | "Prevailing" status does not guarantee that the parent will receive the requested amount for attorney's fees. For example, a timely settlement offer, unreasonably protraction of the proceedings, and an unreasonable rate or excessive time may reduce or preclude an award. Nevertheless, attorneys' fees amount to a significant factor for both parents and districts in IDEA litigation and settlements. |
| Second, the Third Circuit concluded that "even a purely procedural victory under the IDEA can confer prevailing party status." This conclusion is much broader than the lay conception of a parent prevailing in a special education case. | This decision, which was not officially published, may not be generalizable beyond the three states in the Third Circuit (DE, NJ, and PA). The reason is because the court relied on and further expanded its previous rulings that are subject to disagreement or at least open question in other jurisdictions. |

# Buzz from the Hub

## All articles below can be accessed through the following links:

### Family Caregiver Toolbox

November is National Caregivers Awareness Month. And there are so many caregivers in the world, aren't there? Visit the Caregiver Action Network and find dozens of resources to support caregivers (such as the *Family Caregiver Toolkit*). There's also a Care Community (online forum for exchange) where you can share with others who give care.

### State-by-State Help for Family Caregivers

The Family Care Navigator helps family caregivers locate public, nonprofit, and private programs and services nearest their loved one who is living at home or in a residential facility. Resources include government health and disability programs, legal resources, disease-specific organizations, and more. From the Family Caregiver Alliance.

### And Don't Forget to Take Care of Yourself

Caring for yourself is one of the most important–and one of the most often forgotten–things you can do as a caregiver. When your needs are taken care of, the person you care for will benefit, too.

### CDC's Milestone Tracker Mobile App

From birth to age 5, a child should reach milestones in how he or she plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves. Parents can track their child's milestones with CDC's easy-to-use illustrated checklists; get tips from CDC for encouraging their child's development; and find out what to do if they are ever concerned about how their son or daughter is developing. Photos and videos in this app illustrate each milestone. Download the app for free to iOS and Android devices.

### Updated Fact Sheet on Lead Poisoning

The end of October is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. Share our updated fact sheet on lead poisoning in your community!

### Understanding Childhood Trauma

This publication from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) gives parents and caregivers an overview of the types of traumatic stress that commonly affect children and details on the effects these events have on their physical and psychological health. Includes a list of resources for assisting with recovery.

### Creating an Inclusive Halloween

Sensory-friendly Halloween tips, allergy/food-free tips, anxiety-friendly tips, and other great tips.

### Exceptional Parent's Annual Transition Issue

Articles galore, including: Group Empowerment Groups and Self-Advocacy, Transition for Young Adults with Complex Care Needs, and Employment and Transition.

### Are You Ready for Transition to Adult Health Care?

Take the quiz! It asks about important issues surrounding the transition years and provides guidance on topics such as what legal changes happen at 18 years old and how to sign up for health insurance.

### Looking for Early Childhood Resources in Arabic, Spanish, or Portuguese?

Visit the Center for Developing Children at Harvard. At the link above, you'll see available resources in Arabic as "featured" and to the right are links to Spanish and Portuguese resources.

**Best Practice in Outreach** | *Online for Your Viewing Pleasure*

This CPIR webinar was held October 9, 2017. It featured Parent Center presenters who elaborated on the **high-quality resource collection** they assembled for Parent Centers.

We invite you to read, enjoy, and share the latest blog from the U.S. Department of Education: **Things People Say**.

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**To table of contents**

# Alternative Approaches to IEP Conflict: A Review of the Literature

## Laura Sinkonis, M.Ed.
## Liberty University

## Abstract

The originators of special education law anticipated disputes and provided due process hearings as a means to settle the disputes. However, due process proved to be unfair, costly (financially and emotionally), and destructive to school-family relationships. Years later, lawmakers offered mandated mediation along with resolution meetings in attempts to lessen the usage of due process. While the number of due process hearings has decreased, mediation and resolution meetings may occur too late in the resolution process to repair broken trust and communication in relationships between families and school districts. Alternative dispute resolution strategies offer means to end conflicts sooner, less expensively, and with fewer damaged relationships.

## Alternative Approaches to IEP Conflict: A Review of the Literature

Conflict is unavoidable when disagreement arises between parents and schools; consequently, communication and cooperation break down (Cope-Kasten, 2013; Mueller & Carranza, 2011). Sometimes, due to budget cuts, schools do not offer solutions for meeting students' learning needs in a way that satisfies parents (Gesler, 2014). Unresolved or ineffectively handled conflict in special education leads to costly resolution. Traditional methods of dispute resolution, such as due process hearings, mediation, or resolution sessions are often unfair to either or both parties and are very costly, financially, emotionally, and in lost productivity (Cope-Kasten, 2013; Goldberg and Kuriloff, 1991). Alternative forms of conflict resolution address disputes earlier, enhance communication and cooperation, and provide for solutions that are more equitable. Moses and Hedeen (2012) provide a continuum of dispute stages and levels of intervention beginning with Stage I, which is early in the IEP process and where prevention strategies are useful to avoid conflict, to Stage V, where disagreements have already produced conflict and legal review and litigation are needed.

## Traditional Approaches to Dispute Resolution
### DUE PROCESS HEARING

Within the development of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), Congress provided procedural safeguards including due process hearings. Congress viewed due process as a means of ensuring parental involvement in the education of their children and as a way of settling disputes between school districts and parents. Additionally, hearings were viewed as providing equity for individual conflicts (Friendly, 1975).

However, due process is not fair; it destroys relationships, and it is costly (Cope-Kasten, 2013; Fritz, 2008; Goldberg and Kuriloff, 1991; Hendry, 2010; Mueller, 2009b). Due process hearings fail to meet requirements of three types of fairness—subject, outcome, and objective (Cope-Kasten, 2013; Goldberg & Kuriloff, 1991). In their study, Goldberg and Kuriloff (1991) found that most parents felt that they did received timely notice of hearings. However, less than half felt that the school provided either records or explanations in a suitable manner (Goldberg and Kuriloff, 1991). Further, the fact that parents cannot navigate the complexities of a due process system unaided supports the premise that, even in terms of objective fairness, due process is not fair

(Cope-Kasten, 2013).  Additionally, due process presents roadblocks to minority and low-income parents (Erlichman, Gregory, & St. Florian, 2014).

Due process is costly, both financially and emotionally (Fritz, 2008; Hendry, 2010; Moses & Hedeen, 2012).  Parents' legal costs include $1500-$7500 plus 10-20 billable attorneys' hours (Moses & Hedeen, 2012; Understanding IEP Due Process, 2009).  Parents are emotionally involved due to their concern for their children.  Both parties are strongly invested, therefore, emotions run high, and the proceedings can become contentious.  However, even though parents may win a case, the preceding conflict may bring about so much anger and animosity that winning a hearing may only provide validation of, rather than healing of, resentment caused by the conflict (Cope-Kasten, 2013).  Relationships are damaged and hostility is common after due process hearings (Cope-Kasten, 2013; Mueller, 2009b).

## MEDIATION

Because of the overuse of due process hearings and the facts that hearings that are often hostile and financially burdensome, the 1997 IDEA reauthorization introduced mediation as an option for dispute resolution and then made mediation a requirement in the 2004 reauthorization (34 § § C.F. R. 300.506, 300.510).  Mediation is a way to manage conflict between two parties by enlisting the help of an impartial mediator (Hendry, 2010).  Mediation has several benefits over due process.  Mediation is less costly than due process.  Many times, parties seeking mediation have the aim to work together to resolve the dispute.  In those instances, mediation has a high success rate (Fritz, 2008).  As such, school and family relationships can recover to focus on students and their needs (Hendry, 2010).

However, mediation has its limitations.  Mediation is used in Stage IV of disputes where relationships are already damaged (Moses & Hedeen, 2012).  State (SEA) and local education agencies (LEA) can make the road to and through the mediation process easier to navigate.  Eliminating or minimizing the roles of attorneys, politics (such as mediators needing to provide donations or favors for particular elected officials or when advocacy groups push for litigation in order to change laws), finances, and procedures are positive steps (Fritz, 2008; Mueller, 2009b).  Other ways to improve mediation include making it easier to obtaining mediation information, using creativity, providing training and early intervention, and sharing what works (Fritz, 2008).  However, when parents or school districts only use mediation as a way to appear reasonable, to garner sound bites to use against the other party in a hearing, or because a school district is forced into mediation, it has a lower chance of success (Fritz, 2008).

## RESOLUTION MEETING

In addition to requiring mediation before a due process hearing, IDEA 2004 reauthorization required a school to hold a resolution meeting within 15 days of receiving word that parents have filed for due process with the aim of addressing and resolving concerns without going to a hearing (34 § § C.F. R. 300.510).  Like mediation and due process, Resolution Meetings are formal sessions that only occur after cooperative working relationships have disintegrated and are not at all preventative in nature (Mueller, 2009b).  Further, Resolution Meetings are not confidential which could further foster mistrust that one party will use the contents of the discussion against the other (Mueller, 2009a).  Resolution Meetings are used in Stage IV of disputes (Moses & Hedeen, 2012).

# Alternative Approaches

Alternatives to traditional methods of dispute resolution often begin in earlier stages of conflict and even before conflict arises (Moses & Hedeen, 2012). Numerous alternative dispute resolution strategies exist, including Third-Party Consultation, Parent-to-Parent Assistance, Case Manager, IEP Facilitation, and others (Henderson, 2008; Mueller, 2009b). However, SEAs and LEAs do not use alternative methods of conflict resolution as widely as they could (Hazelkorn, Packard, & Douvanis, 2008).

## FACILITATED IEP MEETINGS

Facilitated IEP meetings are useful in Stage III, the *conflict* stage (Moses & Hedeen, 2012). However, use of a facilitator can occur earlier to avoid further animosity and tensions (Diliberto & Brewer, 2014). Similar to regular IEP meetings, Facilitated IEP meetings, include an additional participant, the facilitator. The facilitator is an objective member who maintains order, focus, and civility during a meeting. Facilitated IEP meetings are free to parents and more relaxed than traditional approaches to dispute resolution (Mueller, 2009b). Mueller (2009b) shares seven necessary pieces for fruitful Facilitated IEP meetings. First is a neutral facilitator. Second is an agenda. Lack of meeting agendas was one thing fathers of students with special needs found frustrating about the IEP process (Mueller and Buckley, 2014). Third are goals for the meeting developed by both parties. Next are guidelines for behavior, a collaborative environment, and a communication plan that prevents one party's domination of the meeting. Finally, the use of a "parking lot," which is an area to hold ideas or comments that are important to the meeting but not to the current discussion so the team can consider those ideas later, is an integral part of a facilitated IEP meeting.

States, such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and North Dakota have coordinated facilitated IEP meetings. Most states use trained mediators to serve as facilitators for these meetings (Henderson, 2008). Beginning in 2004 in Wisconsin, states found high success rates using Facilitated IEP meetings. Additionally, some LEAs provide Facilitated IEP meetings. Oregon and Maryland SEAs provide support for LEAs with lists of professional mediators or funding to promote IEP facilitation (Henderson, 2008).

### Dispute Resolution Case Managers

Case Managers, personnel who manage formal or informal complaints by providing information about the dispute resolution process and procedures and respond to questions, are useful in Stage II, the *disagreement* stage (Moses & Hedeen, 2012). After parents make a formal complaint, SEAs assign case managers to oversee the dispute issues in order to resolve the problems without going to a due process hearing (Mueller, 2009a). The case manager evaluates the conflict, answers legal questions, and determines the most appropriate dispute resolution procedure. In 2008, 13 states used case managers to help resolve disputes (Henderson, 2008). Related to case managers are Telephone Intermediaries who respond to phone calls requesting assistance. These are used in several states, including Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota (Henderson, 2008; Mueller, 2009a).

## THIRD-PARTY ASSISTANCE

Third-Party Assistance is a process-focused approach used during bitter disputes. Third-Party Assistance in the forms of opinion and consultation is useful in Stage III, the *conflict* stage (Moses & Hedeen, 2012). Trained consultants combine objectiveness and personal, intuitive aspects to solve current disputes and work to prevent future conflicts (Mueller, 2009a). Few states actively use Third-Party Assistance. Oregon, Washington, and Connecticut use the Third-Party Assistance approach. Connecticut uses the approach most frequently, and in

the 73 meetings held between July 2000 and 2008, 92% of disputes did not go to due process (Henderson, 2008).

## PARENT-TO-PARENT ASSISTANCE

Parent-to-Parent Assistance programs are useful in Stage II, the *disagreement* stage (Moses & Hedeen, 2012). Parent-to-Parent Assistance includes parent support groups, parent training and information centers, and mentorships (Henderson, 2008; Mueller, 2009a). Parent-to-Parent Assistance can provide legal assistance and support in navigating the IEP process, the special education system, and learning about parent rights (Mueller, 2009a). Parents are trained to support and help other parents prepare for meetings and provide support through meeting processes and during the meetings themselves (Henderson, 2008). In her study, Henderson (2008) found that at least 26 states use Parent-to-Parent Assistance**.**

Kutash, Duchnowski, Green, and Ferron (2011) found that, although there is limited research on the topic, parents of students with emotional disturbances show increasing interest in parent-to-parent assistance programs. Further, they found that Parent-to-Parent Assistance, in addition to supporting parents through the special education system, can aid in improved academic achievement and emotional function of students (Kutash et al., 2011). Additionally, Mueller, Milian, and Lopez (2009) found that Latina mothers of special needs children benefited from Parent-to-Parent Assistance, grew in their parenting skills, and increased confidence in their participation in the special education system and the IEP process.

# Other Alternative Approaches

Ombuds, Alternative or Non-IDEA Mediation, and Stakeholder Management or Oversight Councils are other strategies to resolve special education conflict (Henderson, 2008; Mueller, 2009b). Ombuds are informal, neutral brokers of justice and conflict resolution who examine the issues with the parties, study the law, and recommend a resolution (Alcover, 2009; Magritte, 2009; Mueller, 2009a). Ombuds are useful in Stage III, the *conflict* stage (Moses & Hedeen, 2012).

Alternative or Non-IDEA Mediation is different from mediation mandated by IDEA 2004. In Alternative Mediation, two or more mediators work together to settle disagreements (Henderson, 2008; Mueller, 2009a). This type of mediation is useful in Stage II, the *disagreement* stage (Moses & Hedeen, 2012). Some states use Stakeholder Management or Oversight Councils to provide counsel on resolving special education conflicts. Stakeholder Management or Oversight Councils generally operate at the state level, rather than the local level. Some states use the IDEA mandated advisory panel as an Oversight Council. Some states, such as North Dakota, meet on a regular basis to inspect dispute resolution data (Henderson, 2008).

# Conclusions and Areas for Further Study

The originators of special education law anticipated disputes and provided due process hearings as a means to settle disputes. However, due process proved to be unfair, costly (financially and emotionally), and destructive to school-family relationships. Years later, lawmakers offered, and then mandated, mediation along with resolution meetings in attempts to lessen the usage of due process. While the number of due process hearings decreased due to mediation and resolution meetings, they may occur too late in the resolution process to repair broken trust and communication in relationships between families and school districts. Alternative approaches to conflict resolution exist and SEAs and LEAs use them with success in many states. Alternative dispute resolution strategies include Third-Party Consultation, Parent-to-Parent Assistance, Case Manager, IEP Facilitation, and others.

Although the literature mentioned Pennsylvania as using several alternative approaches to dispute resolution, I, as a 16-year special education teacher in urban, suburban, and cyber school districts and a parent of children with special needs, never heard of any of them as options to mediation or due process.  Thus, several questions arise.  Who on the local level is aware of alternatives that would be less costly financially and emotionally to parents, teachers, and school districts?  If special education administrators are aware of alternative approaches to dispute resolution, which alternatives are used, how often are they used, and which are the most successful?

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# Current Assessment Practices in Five Kenyan Schools: A Case Study in Government and Private Schools in Kenya

## By Erin Brennan Allan

# ABSTRACT

# INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine assessment and diagnostic practices in Kenya in five schools across the spectrum from public to private schools for children with special needs. Using interviews with key educators within each establishment to collect data, this paper looks at the Background, Special Needs Services, Mainstream and Assessment Practices of each school with specific Recommendations made for each school.

## SUMMARY- SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT IN KENYA

According to Kenyan Law, Special Education has been provided in special schools or units attached to regular schools and, more recently, at inclusive settings in regular schools. However, the government schools and units only cater for children with special needs in hearing, visual, mental or physical disabilities. Excluded from the programs are children with other needs - the gifted and talented, autistic, multiple-handicapped and those with learning difficulties and communication disorders.

The government schools are poorly funded and not all costs are included in the education meaning that it is not accessible to all. There are a number of schools in more urban areas, where there is a denser population concentration that cater to students with intellectual disabilities and severe learning disabilities though these too are out of reach financially for most Kenyans.

While Special Education in theory is acknowledged in Kenya, in practice it is still in its infancy and assessment practices and policies lag further behind. Research would indicate there are assessment centers in every district throughout the country however, I was unable to find any operating centers- showing that while law makers may have addressed the issue, the lack of funding or other priorities mean this is a not a reality. It does not appear that training opportunities for assessment and diagnosis of Learning Disabilities are available meaning many people are practicing without proper training.

Unlike in the States where there are identification and referral processes in place and practiced, there is no universal system in Kenya. There does not seem to be a governing body overseeing this- presumably to due lack of infrastructure and budget as well as lack of public demand. Many people do not have the basic awareness of learning disabilities or student rights so will not know that their child could be assessed or helped.

Cultural beliefs and lack of awareness of Learning Disabilities are another factor in the lack of services available to students with special needs. The lack of knowledge amongst some of the educators I met led me to believe that assessment practices are not a priority and will not be a priority until these educators have a better grasp on the concept of Learning Disabilities. Likewise, parents themselves need to be educated to lessen shame associated with poor academic performance which prevents them from acknowledging their chidlrens' issues and needs.

**NASET** | Current Assessment Practices in Five Kenyan Schools: A Case Study in Government and Private Schools in Kenya

13

# RESEARCH

I visited five schools – four in Nairobi and one in a rural area. I spent roughly two hours at each school touring the facilities and speaking with key teachers or decision makers to discern their current assessment practices. This was done in a non-scientific manner so the results of this survey are anecdotal and highly influenced by the personal opinions and experiences of the people interviewed.

# BRAEBURN SCHOOL

## BACKGROUND

Braeburn School is located in Nairobi with a population of 1000 students from ages 3-18. I met with Inclusion Leader Nicki Newing who has been at the school for three months. Braeburn follows the British Curriculum and is a private school with 16 campuses throughout Kenya and Tanzania. Fees are approximately $13,000 per year. The school has an international population with students from many different countries. Many students are ELL. The teachers and staff are from abroad and Kenya and most have British teaching credentials. Braeburn campus covers about 8 acres and is well maintained with top range facilities including swimming pool, theater and sports fields.

## SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

Roughly 120 students receive Learning Support in the Primary School in Nairobi and there are 9 staff in the Learning Support department. Their training ranges from Bachelor's Degrees, Masters' Degrees to additional training in dyslexia.  Their experience ranges from 1-17 years in Special Needs Education. While the school is not selective, they do not accept students with severe Learning Disabilities. Students take an entry exam devised by the school and if they are seen to need extra help (by performing below par for their age group), they are accepted and placed in Learning Support upon enrolment. Children receive up to 5 hours a week of instruction with Learning Support staff- either in the Learning Support rooms or while in their normal classes. ELL students get one hour a day of instruction and students who are not performing well get up to 3-4 hours a week depending on their need. They will miss classes in Modern Foreign Languages or Topic while they attend Learning Support. Teachers find the weaknesses and target these gaps using techniques that are not designated as UDL but integrate the principles- hands on learning, etc.

The Learning Support department also runs a Social/Emotional support group which is a 'club' for children with either learning or behavioral problems- they are identified by the teachers. There are 2 school counsellors available as well but they tend not to work with Learning Support as their duties are more pastoral.

The school evaluates and records children's progress using the teacher and LS team to track and monitor. Nicki observes all of the LS children in class to help identify where issues are and advise on the students' needs. They use tracking in reading, spelling, writing and math every half term or term.

The LS department meets with new parents of children who need support and uses a 'Learning Passport' to communicate both short term and long term targets and activity to the parents. During these meetings, the LS team tries to get as much information as possible about the child's medical, family and educational history.

Learning Support staff work with students in groups that are often ability based although this is not guaranteed. The students are not taught according to their learning styles or diagnoses, rather by ability.

## MAINSTREAM ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT

Learning Support members help support teachers with co-teaching, classroom assistance and reports on students' progress. Children are normally identified when they are entering the school as needing support when their entry test (which are given by grade level and are norm based) shows a discrepancy between their age-mates performance and their own. Teachers and staff will informally assess whether the discrepancy can be attributed to language, poor foundations or other factors. Nicki says it is rare that a child will be put into Learning Support after being enrolled but also acknowledges she has not been there long enough to determine a real pattern in this regard. In the past, the school has recommended that if students are suspected to have a learning disability that they get assessed in their home country as there are few known educational diagnosticians in Nairobi.

LS staff and mainstream teachers meet every few weeks to discuss students of interest. For every year group, there is a LS staff member assigned so there is a strong relationship between that year group's teachers and their respective LS staff member. The school has recently obtained assessment tools from the UK which will help them with math and writing assessments although they have not been trained to use them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Braeburn has a robust program in place for students with who require extra help in learning. While the program is not geared towards learning disabilities specifically, there is a solid teacher student ratio as well as a number of teaching tactics in place. Nicki is impressed with the staff's willingness to learn and open-mindedness but says training is a real issue. The need is for both instructional and informational training- to help the LS department learn how to better teach children with specific and non-specific learning disabilities but also the main teaching staff. Even amongst the considerably more educated and relatively well-off population that makes up the Braeburn student body, there is a lack of understanding of Learning Disabilities- what they mean and what can be done for them.  Many of the learners are not diagnosed which hampers efforts to teach according to needs so it would be helpful to have the students who are able to get properly assessed and diagnosed if necessary.

# BROOKHOUSE SCHOOL

## BACKGROUND

Brookhouse is a private school from nursery through secondary based in Nairobi. In the primary school there are 400 students of which 76 are registered for learning support. The fees are roughly $15,000 per year. The school grounds are well equipped with a beautiful theater, music rooms, spacious and well stocked classrooms and a three-story library. The main building is fashioned as a castle with a moat to create a magical learning environment.

## SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

The primary school has a spacious Learning Centre on the top floor with four full time staff members. I met with SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) David Wasilwa who has been working in Special Needs Education for 15 years. He received his undergraduate degree in Kenya and a Masters in Inclusive Education in South Africa. He has been at the school for three months having worked at Braeburn School the previous five years. He is passionate about his job and his work. David also does a lot of work with ELL but there are only

seven ELL students at the school so his focus is on the children who need learning support. His aim is to lessen the number of children registered in Learning Support as he feels teachers need to find out why students are not learning and address it in their classrooms. He has held many insets and plans to hold many more to train the teachers on ways to identify those who really need special support and those who need to learn in different ways as they are not affected by learning disabilities. The three other teachers are not formally trained in Learning Support so learn on the job.

Out of the 76 children who are registered in Learning Support, about 75% are diagnosed with dyslexia being the main diagnosis. David is currently auditing the other 25% to see if they need assessments and diagnoses. There are 2 students with Autism who attend a modified schedule and one student with Asperger Syndrome.

While Brookhouse is not selective, they do screen incoming students. David interviews the incoming students and then gives them an online test called Lucid which gives immediate results. The results include a percentile result for the age of the test taker as well as the current age of operation in reading comprehension, spelling and reading. He has developed a system called Educational Gap Bridging which can help students who are performing below their grade level so that he feels comfortable accepting student who are up to three years behind their chronological age. If a student scores more than two years behind, he will recommend they repeat a year of school.

## MAINSTREAM- ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT

Currently, students are monitored by their mainstream teacher and there is a system set up for referral to the Learning Centre. The teachers must provide documentation that they have tried other techniques of teaching and learning for the child. Then David comes in to observe the child both in the classroom and during play times. He looks at their portfolios and makes a summative assessment from those. He will then proceed to present the case to the Senior Leadership Team if he thinks the child is a candidate for Learning Support. Once that is approved, parents are contacted to get their approval for the child to be withdrawn from their regular classes for individualized instruction in the Learning Centre. At this point David will usually advise the child is assessed by an external assessor but again the parents must agree. He prefers to use external assessors so that the results are seen as objective. Then David will use the results and his knowledge of the child and their learning style to create a 'Programme' (similar to an IEP.)

Through David's observations, David will try and put together the symptoms of a child to look for the cause. He does not like to label children until a comprehensive assessment is done but once this is complete, he is adamant that the teacher, parents and student are involved in a very specific program to meet their goals. David uses many kinds of observation such as looking at the child's posture to indicate muscle weakness or immaturity, their language and social skills before administering tests. His extensive knowledge and insight into learning problems means that he is less likely to want to diagnose a child who may just need some remediation.

David asks that the teachers do not 'over-refer' by making referrals on a 'one-off' discrepancy. He asks that they look at the child's performance in all topics and subjects, at different times of day and how they interact socially. He feels it is important to look at all aspects of a child's performance and all potential factors including diet, sleep, family relations before assuming a child needs Learning Support outside of the classroom.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

David's personal approach to assessments and diagnoses comes from many years of experience and exposure. As he was trained in South Africa where he feels Special Needs Education is more evolved, he has unique insight to how Kenyan teachers, parents and children see learning disabilities. I learned a tremendous amount from him in the hour and a half I spent with him and feel he has a lot to teach the staff at Brookhouse.

His ideas to make the Brookhouse assessment and diagnosis procedure smoother are that the teachers need to be trained to catch problems early. Through training and increased support, he feels, and I agree, that the teachers can help students at an earlier age so that their issues are addressed before they become ingrained patterns or problems. With more trained staff in the Learning Centre, Brookhouse can dispatch teachers to mainstream classrooms so that fewer children are withdrawn to the Learning Centre and teachers will have more support to identify and rectify learning issues children may have while they are still small.

# KILIMANI PRIMARY SCHOOL

## BACKGROUND

Located in Nairobi, Kilimani Primary is a state primary school (ages 4-13) covering about three acres with roughly 1300 students. Class size is normally 60 students. Tuition is free but students must pay for their uniforms, books and school materials. The campus is fairly well-maintained- there are many trees and a few open spaces for the children to play in although the buildings are in disrepair with broken windows and in need of painting. Free primary education has been in practice in Kenya for nearly ten years. The budget per child is roughly $16 per year so materials such as textbooks and stationary are not included- therefor teachers must work with minimal resources.

## SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

I have previously met with Mary Maragia the head of the Visually Impaired section of the school who has been teaching for 11 years in Special Needs and 18 years total.  The school set-up is unique for Kenya- usually government schools do not integrate children with special needs into the mainstream or even on the same campus and Mary did not know of any other schools with a similar philosophy.  There are three different divisions for students with visual disabilities at the school. Children with visual impairments who have some vision attend mainstream classes with a minimal amount of assistance- there are 17 such students at Kilimani Primary. Children who are completely blind attend a special unit catering to their needs and children who are deaf blind attend another special unit where there are physical therapists who come twice a week and specially trained teachers. This section of the school also has a boarding facility as many of the students have mobility issues so it is easier to keep them at school during the week and arrange transport on the weekends.

While the School for the Blind is not technically integrated, Mary says many students will come and assist the students with visual impairments and there is a lot of interaction and awareness amongst the student population about learners with special needs.

## MAINSTREAM- ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT

Paul Ndwauru is a mainstream teacher who covers math, science, PE and Social Studies. He had one unit of Special Needs education at his teaching college before he began teaching 18 years ago. His knowledge of Learning Disability terminology is limited. Often these children will withdraw from school as there is no

support and many come from difficult backgrounds so parents do not have the knowledge or resources to help these children. The government policy is that children are not allowed to repeat a year of school. There are no government mandated assessment policies in place at the school- there is a more informal system whereby teachers look at exam results to determine which students are far behind their peers. If Paul notices a child is suffering academically, they are advised to attend remedial classes which Paul holds after classes. About 10 out of 60 students take advantage of these classes. He holds about 3 hours of these classes a week with a similar style of instruction to his classroom instruction although at a slower pace. As the class size is smaller, he feels he is better able to reach these children.

Within the mainstream school, there is one child in a wheelchair and one child with 'a mental disability.' Paul thinks there are 5 students who have learning disabilities out of the total population. Paul and Mary believe they have a very 'nice environment' at Kilimani that accepts and embraces children with different abilities. They would like to become a center of inclusion for children with mental and physical disabilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

My recommendations for Kilimani would be two-fold.

1.  As the teachers at Kilimani have an awareness of children with special needs, it would be advisable to extend and expand their knowledge of less visible disabilities such as dyslexia. They are receptive and open minded so could benefit from more training and insight into learning disabilities. This awareness alone could help in classroom management, identifying students who may need support and acceptance of children with special needs. Although Kilimani seems particularly open to this concept, the teachers noted that parents often do not have this knowledge and suffer greatly when their children do not perform academically and the parents do not know why.

2.  While resources are tight and differentiated instruction is not always possible in a class of 60 students with few materials, it would be helpful if the teachers had some alternate teaching techniques as the current practice of rote memorization does not suit all students, nor does it encourage understanding of materials. However, practices such as group work, peer instruction and some UDL techniques could be implemented to give the teachers more teaching tools. This could help both the students who have more intensive needs as well as the general population.

# MAKINI SCHOOL

## BACKGROUND

Makini is a private school in Nairobi with students from 3 years through secondary school. The school caters to the Kenyan middle class population with school fees of about $3000 a year and follows the Kenyan 8-4-4 curriculum. There are 25 students per classroom and teachers rotate teaching about three subjects each. The primary school is located near the secondary school but on a separate campus with outdoor play structures and a large paved parking lot. The buildings are in decent repair although fairly aged.

## SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

There is no Special Needs department at Makini. I met with Monica Otieno who is the Head Teacher for the Early Years group- ages 3-8 years old. Monica did a Special Needs course at Nairobi University from 2009-13. She has been teaching for 37 years. There are two other teachers who have special needs training at the school,

including one teacher who has a son with autism who does not attend the school. The teachers have seminars to train them in coping with students who have special needs, giving them tactics to work with children whose behavior can be disruptive. Some of the tactics taught are to deny the children things they want if they misbehave and to keep the volume low in a classroom.

Makini is not selective although students will take a test before entering the school. There is no cut off for who can be accepted as 'every child is an achiever' and once they enter Makini children 'go at their pace.' Monica will talk to parents about their child if she suspects they may have learning problems but finds that parents tend to deny problems. She will ask about the child's medical history and diet to determine if there are problems. She does not have any formal assessment procedure as she feels that most learning disabilities are caused by problems during birth or premature birth. One in twenty parents will actually have their child looked at, according to Monica. Most will avoid a diagnosis due to shame. Monica estimates out of the 211 students in the Early Years section of the school, there are 3 with potential learning disabilities.

## MAINSTREAM- ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT

There are no formalized procedures in place for assessment of children with learning disabilities at Makini. With only three teachers with any exposure to special needs education, there is little awareness of Learning Disabilities or other special needs education issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

I would recommend that the teachers at Makini have specific insets to address early intervention for children who may have special needs. A basic course on Learning Disabilities and the implications of early intervention could be very helpful in creating some awareness and acceptance amongst the teaching staff which would then hopefully lead to parents being more open to helping their children. Kenyans hold education in high regard so by creating a more knowledgeable teaching staff, all children, their parents and the community at large would benefit from a more educated teaching staff, specifically with regards to Learning Disabilities.

# OLKEPRESI PRIMARY SCHOOL

## BACKGROUND

Olkepresi School is a five-hour drive outside of Nairobi, far from any villages or towns. While it is a government school, they receive help from some American Missionaries- when I was there, there were about 7 college aged students there to work with the 'girl children' specifically. A lot of the buildings and facilities were funded by the Missionary group. Most of the student population belong to the Masai tribe- they are traditionally a pastoralist and nomadic tribe. The school offers boarding as it is a very remote area and for many of the students it would not be possible to walk to school every day. There are 800 children in the school which caters to children ages 4-12 technically, although many students are older as they will have missed some years due to lack of school fees or pregnancy. There is a maximum of 103 students per classroom- an average of about 80 students to one teacher. Gender ratio is skewed to boys as girl students often 'became' pregnant although many returned after having their babies so was not seen as an issue. During my visit the children were sent to gather firewood and drinking water- an indication of the lack of facilities at the school. I also witnessed children being beaten with a cattle switch.

The teacher mentioned that the government had a law to say that all children in Kenya deserved and should receive an education but that culturally, many Masai will not invest in a child who does not have 'full potential.' While the school is free, food and boarding costs are not, nor are uniforms or learning materials so families still have to consider whether it is worth sending a child to school when they could be herding livestock, helping at home or may not use the education in the future.

## SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

The school has one child with a 'gammy leg'. The teacher was not aware of the cause of the physical disability or if the child had any other disabilities. The teacher was unfamiliar with the concept of learning disabilities said children with behavior issues in class would be beaten, but 'not until they were ten years old.' His belief was that children who were disruptive should not be encouraged to attend school- for a teacher having to deal with a classroom of 80 children, he felt it was unfair to the other children's education.

## MAINSTREAM- ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT

For students who might not be able to grasp early literacy concepts, there is an Early Childhood Centre- ECC- a separate building for the younger children. School policy states that children who do not pass the exams for their grade will be sent to ECC regardless of age to learn literacy and numeracy basics. There were no desks or chairs although the room was large and sturdy. Despite the claim that children were sent to the ECC for remediation, there were no older children in the room.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It seemed obvious that the teachers and students were struggling for basic amenities and concepts like UDL or disability awareness would not have much place when basic needs such as water and firewood for cooking have not been met. It is difficult to make recommendations for more evolved practices such as assessments when basic educational tenets are not being addressed. Nationwide, there are more schools like this where facilities and resources are so lacking that the focus is not on education itself. It was evident from this school that many teachers were not even present, students were left unattended and I did not witness any teaching taking place. These fundamental issues need to be addressed before special needs education can be considered.

## CONCLUSION

Assessments practices vary greatly throughout Kenya depending on the school. In government schools, there is little awareness of learning disabilities although there are accommodations made for more visible disabilities. Within private schools, the assessment practices depended on the knowledge of the teachers about learning disabilities. The availability of Learning Support is directly proportional to fees being paid as it is seen as an extra cost and most private schools in Kenya are run as businesses so the correlation reflects this.

As the five schools I looked at varied greatly, there is no one recommendation I can make. Starting at the governments schools it is apparent that there needs to be more awareness of special needs education – simply educating the teachers about what Learning Disabilities are would be the priority. The education system is poorly funded with such a small budget per student that it is not a priority. Culturally, people with disabilities are not seen as productive members of society and with such limited resources, they are not seen as a worthwhile investment. These beliefs are embedded deeply and will take a long time to change, despite laws in place stating that education is a right for all.

Amongst the middle tier schools such as Makini, awareness is still an issue although there is at least acknowledgement of Learning Disabilities. This is a substantial step up from government schools but the Kenyan system which is exam based, will prove to be a hindrance to individualized education. Cost is the main factor in providing training to teachers as well as additional staffing- particularly of Special Educators.

Amongst the international schools with the highest fees, the profile of students in Learning Support is more reflective of a developed country although practices still lag. This is due to a dearth of educational diagnosticians as well as the need for more awareness and acceptance of children with special needs.

Amongst all the schools I profiled the common thread was that awareness is key. While there may be laws in place, they will not be possible to implement without substantial investment in awareness and education about special needs education. Kenyans value education and are striving to make it available to all but face many hindrances in achieving this for students without disabilities so I think it will be a while before those with special needs are properly educated.

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# Implementing Project-Based Learning for Middle School Students with Learning Disabilities

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## Abstract

Project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional method used to teach problem solving skills while students learn the content.  PBL instruction allows students with diverse learning needs and disabilities to learn curriculum in inclusive classrooms and interact with peers (Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010; Guven & Dunman, 2007).  This qualitative study examined teacher implementation of PBL and students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) participation in PBL group learning in a middle school setting.  A university education department and a school district formed a collaborative partnership to implement PBL instruction in English/Language Arts (ELA) and reading classrooms.  Teacher and student observation and interview data analysis suggested students with SLD who participate in PBL instruction may experience improved collaboration and communication skills in addition to learning the content.  The findings indicate effective PBL implementation requires intensive and ongoing teacher training including strategies to support students with SLD in PBL instruction.

*Keywords:* problem-based learning, students with specific learning disabilities, Inclusion, teacher training, diverse learners

## IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Schools are charged with preparing all students to move beyond meeting the traditional preparation for success in the workplace after graduation to preparing all students to work collaboratively to identify and solve social, economic, and global problems.  Based on these expectations, schools strive to implement research-based instructional and curriculum methods to meet the high stakes testing and accountability demands for all student populations including students with learning disabilities. Project-based learning (PBL) is one method of instruction schools are implementing to meet those demands.  PBL is student-centered and student-driven demonstrated in a constructivist framework requiring students to be responsible for making problem-solving decisions regarding how to address the challenges presented to create their own solutions (Holm, 2011; Gallagher, Stepien, Sher, Workman, 1995; Savery, 2006). This study explores PBL implementation in a middle school utilizing classroom observations and teacher interviews focusing on teacher perceptions and the instructional progress of students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) who participated in PBL group learning.   The information gleaned from the observations and teacher interviews in this study will inform the development of best practices for implementing PBL at the middle school level for students with SLD.

## Project-based learning

Project-based learning is an instructional method used to teach problem solving skills identified as necessary for success in the 21st century workplace while learning the content curriculum.  The PBL model involves a small group of students identifying, investigating, researching, and providing solutions to both local and global problems.  The basic elements of PBL include hands-on learning of the prescribed curriculum through the

development of a project. The PBL project focuses on research of a topic and development of a product based on real application of the curriculum objectives (Thomas, 2000; Walker & Leary, 2009). The PBL objective is to teach the prescribed grade level curriculum objectives by developing a meaningful project based on an identified current issue or problem.

PBL project components include developing a driving question related to a problem, investigating and analyzing the problem, and reporting results that address the driving question (Thomas, Mergendoller, & Michaelson, 1999). The teacher prepares the project criteria based on the curriculum objectives and provides resources and project parameters. The teacher acts as a facilitator who guides the PBL student groups through problem-solving in an effort to help them learn the required curriculum objectives enabling students to find their own solution to the driving question or problem (Gallagher, et al., 1995; Savery, 2009). Teachers use authentic, real-life topics to provide context for content learning making learning relevant and engaging for students (Gallagher, et al., 1995; Savery, 2009).

An important component to PBL implementation requires students work in collaborative groups to interact with their peers to research the topic, problem-solve, and develop a final product. The group work requires each student to be assigned a job and to collaborate and interact with their peers in order to successfully complete the unit (Grant & Branch, 2005; Savery, 2009). The PBL groups are required to generate multiple products based on teacher and peer feedback as they develop skills in critical thinking, self-assessment, and problem-solving. PBL incorporates assessment that is performance-based and encompasses both skills and content (Gallagher, et al., 1995; Savery, 2009).

# Theoretical Framework and Empirical Research

Although PBL is considered an effective method, quality research to support the benefits of learning in PBL groups for students with learning difficulties is limited (Guven & Dunman, 2007; Institute of Education Sciences (IES), 2013; Thomas 2000; Walker & Leary, 2009).

The theoretical foundation of PBL is based in the constructivist theory (Fosnot, 2005). The PBL model presents a research-based alternative to lecture-type instruction and objective-type assessment. Experiential learning establishes the foundation for learning through inquiry, action and experience utilizing both individual and group learning (Fosnot).

The framework of PBL is based on the theory that students actively construct knowledge through activity, and the goal of the learning experience designed by teachers is to facilitate learning through peer collaboration solving real-world problems (Fosnot, 2005; Hernandez-Ramos & De La Paz, 2009). The objective is to engage students in instruction and to challenge and motivate students to problem-solve (Fosnot). Activities focus on the learners developing problem-solving strategies, as well as, a thorough understanding of the content. The classroom interactions and learning engage students in activities that relate knowledge gained at school to relevant current problems (Fosnot).

The majority of PBL research has focused on effective implementation while few studies focus on achievement gains for students. Multiple researchers found that teachers struggle with teaching the large amount of content in PBL units that is required to be taught by schools at each grade level (Lee & Bae, 2008; Rogers, Cross, Gresalfi, Trauth-Nare, & Buck, 2011). Other study results indicate teachers report the need to provide answers to students and to control group tasks rather than allowing the groups to monitor their own activities

(Goodnough and Cashion, 2006; Ladewski, Krajcik, & Harvey, 1994; Lee & Bae, 2008) as they implement PBL. Additionally, a study of twenty-seven junior high school teachers from four high schools found that teachers focused on teaching collaboration and problem-solving skills rather than spending the majority of instructional time facilitating the groups to learn content (Rosenfeld, Scherzo, Breiner, & Carmeli, 1998). Even though studies found teachers were highly focused on teaching collaboration and problem-solving skills, other studies found that academic scores improved as a results of PBL instruction. Achievement results were noted in a three year study that compared student mathematics achievement in two similar secondary schools, one school implementing traditional instruction and the other school implementing PBL instruction (Boaler, 2002). Students in the PBL school performed significantly higher than the traditional school students in mathematics skills and concepts. Thomas (2000) found evidence PBL improves the quality of student learning of the content and is also effective for teaching learning strategies such as problem solving, decision making and collaboration.

## Project-Based for Students with SLD

A strength of the PBL instructional method is the focus on problem solving, creativity, and collaboration. These skills are especially important for diverse and exceptional students, as they help with social, communication and language development (Kanter & Konstantopoulos, 2010; Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). Multiple studies of teacher perceptions and student results indicate PBL is an effective instructional method for general education and diverse student learning groups (Brusca-Vega, Brown, & Yasutake, 2011; Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010; Guiven & Dunman, 2007; Lambert & Arize, 2008; Lee, Buxton, Lewis, & LeRoy, 2006; Lewis, Lee, Santau, & Cone, 2010). PBL instruction allows students with diverse learning needs to participate in groups and interact with peers and the curriculum content to effectively meet project requirements (Brusca-Vega et al., 2011; Kanter & Konstantopoulos, 2010).

Studies have shown the design of PBL as an instructional method can effectively engage students with SLD who exhibit various ability levels (Belland, Ertmer, & Simons, 2006; Brusca-Vega et al., 2011; Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010). While research indicates PBL is effective for students with disabilities, further study is warranted to identify the required components for successful PBL implementation in schools that includes strategies for addressing the needs of students with SLD.

## Methods

A qualitative study of an exploratory design was used to analyze implementation of PBL for middle school students with SLD to identify teacher perspectives related to effectiveness of PBL instruction and student benefits and actual achievement outcomes. The study explored teacher implementation and oversite of PBL units, in addition to the provision of accommodations and/or modifications for students with SLD participating in the PBL groups. The research questions include: 1) How do general education teachers provide support and accommodations/modifications to students with learning disabilities during PBL units?; 2) How do students with SLD participate in PBL teams, complete project tasks and make progress in the curriculum?; 3) Does PBL teacher training provide strategies to support students with SLD? Classroom observations and teacher interviews were completed in year 2 of PBL implementation. The interview questions focused on teacher perspectives regarding students with SLD academic/social progress, effective instructional strategies, and training needs regarding instructing students identified as SLD in PBL classrooms.

# Participants and Setting

The study was implemented in an urban middle school in a southwestern state in collaborative grant project with a university education department located in the same city.  The middle school had approximately 600 students and 17% eligible for services as students with disabilities and 73.3% of the student population are listed as economically disadvantaged.  Of the 17% eligible for special education services, 93% were identified as learning disabled.  The selection of teacher participants for the observations and interviews was based on the number of English/Language Arts (ELA) and Reading teachers who participated in the PBL training and implementation for the grant project school district and university collaboration.  Participants included all general education teachers in ELA and reading classrooms where PBL was implemented as a requirement of the grant project.  The general education teachers were assigned a number, one through twelve, for identification and for anonymity of documentation. Of the classrooms where teachers implemented PBL, the students with learning disabilities who participated in PBL groups were observed also. No identifying student information was documented as the teacher simply pointed out the student with a learning disability participating in the PBL group to the observer.  There were four observers that included one faculty and one research assistant from the special education department from the university, one faculty member from the curriculum and instruction department from the university, and one special education coordinator from the middle school campus. The observers identified the student on the observation checklist by the teacher's assigned number.  A total of 12 teachers were interviewed and 12 students with SLD were observed in PBL groups. Both teacher and student participants were given numbers for interview and observation data gathering and to ensure confidentiality.

This study was conducted with six ELA teachers and six reading teachers in a middle-school in grades six through eight with two teachers from each grade and each subject. Participation in the interview was voluntary and informed consent was obtained and no identifying teacher or student was obtained. Teachers participated in the observations and interviews in the second year of a two-year implementation of PBL while receiving ongoing training, coaching and support from university education faculty.

# PBL implementation

As part of a grant project, university education faculty and school district personnel formed a partnership and collaborated to implement PBL to address low reading and language arts scores on state mandated testing.  The school district chose to adopt PBL in a low-performing middle school with the assistance of university faculty.  The school district provided teachers with expertise in teaching the curriculum and the university faculty provided expertise in research-based strategies for teaching ELA and reading.

Three months prior to year one of implementation of PBL, teachers were trained in the PBL methodology, goals and strategies for developing projects based on grade level standards tested on state-based assessments was provided  the university faculty support.

The training was not specific to students with SLD only; however, the PBL methodology is a hands-on approach to learning that would include the provision of many types of instructional accommodations to meet the different learning styles and needs of students who require additional support in learning the content.

General and special education Teachers were trained in methods of instructing students to problem-solve in collaborative groups while learning curriculum content in projects that required students to research a driving

question, develop a product and present findings. The university faculty, campus teachers and administrators developed a plan of implementation and provided PBL training. Teachers implemented PBL in ELA and reading classrooms while receiving ongoing PBL training and support from university faculty and campus leaders. The university faculty provided weekly support, observation and oversite for teachers to develop and implement projects with fidelity.

Teachers designed projects and rubrics based on the required grade level curriculum standards. The PBL projects include a problem to research based on the grade level curriculum standards, group collaboration with assigned tasks, problem-solving, a final product and formative/summative assessments. During the training, teachers learn strategies to group students and to design project activities and rubrics for learning. Student groups of three or five follow a protocol that included assigning team roles, establishing norms for student participation in completing assignments and signing a contract pledging to follow the appropriate protocol. The groups follow the rubric components to learn skills needed to complete the tasks to produce a product.

## Data Sources

During year two of PBL implementation after the teachers had received training and support and had completed year one of implementing PBL projects, observations and interviews were utilized to gather data. All the participating teachers and students had experience in PBL at the end of year one. The 12 teachers were observed (Figure 1) and interviewed and the 12 students were observed (Figure 2) during PBL lessons.

The observations were 45 minutes each for 24 weeks with two special education university observers, one faculty and one research assistant; one curriculum and instruction education faculty from the university, and one teacher supervisor from the middle school. The observers used an observation checklist that addressed both teacher and student activity (Figures 1 & 2). Prior to completing the observations, the observers established the rating levels for each component to ensure observers use the same criteria for each component. Four observers for each teacher observation were utilized to control for inter-observer reliability established at .676 indicating moderate to substantial agreement. The observation checklists documented how the teachers involved students with disabilities in a PBL group and the students' level of participation during the lesson. The observable components documented on the observation checklist included: 1) formative feedback provided by the teacher to students with learning disabilities; 2) differentiation/accommodations/modifications provided; 3) SLD student team role; 4) SLD student level of participation; 5) SLD student met daily project assignment goal. Teacher activities, such as the provision of feedback and accommodations/modifications were documented to determine level of student support. Student activities, such as on/off task behavior, team role and completion of assigned task were documented to determine level of participation. The observation data were analyzed by examining the percentage of teachers and students level of accomplishment of the checklist components.

In addition to the observation, each of the teachers completed an interview at the end of the 24 weeks of observations. The interview consisted of three yes/no questions and one probe for information that included: 1) did students with SLD make progress toward ELA and/or reading grade level curriculum in a PBL classroom based on results of PBL formative assessments? 2) does PBL improve collaboration/communication skills for students identified as SLD? 3) would teachers benefit from additional/ongoing training in implementing PBL for students with SLD 4) identify effective strategies used to implement PBL with students with SLD regarding team involvement. The interview data were analyzed by examining the percentages of yes versus no responses

and documenting the strategies reported by teachers in response to the probe regarding PBL implementation for students with disabilities.

# Results

All 12 of the teachers participated in the observations throughout the 24 week period and the interview at the end of 24 weeks.  The observers completed a checklist for the dates of the observation to document teacher provision of 1) feedback identified by student monitoring, assessment, communication, questioning/discussion and 2) differentiation and accommodations and modifications.  The checklists were tallied to determine the percent of teachers who provided a form of feedback and/or accommodations/modifications to students with SLD during some (1-6), most (7-12) or the majority (13-24) of the observations.

The observation checklist provided information to address research question one, "Did general education teachers provide support and accommodations/modifications to students with learning disabilities during PBL units in an inclusion setting?"  Ten of the twelve teachers, 83%, provided feedback a majority of the time.  Eleven of the twelve teachers, 88%, provided accommodations/modifications the majority of the time.  The results indicate a majority of general education teachers are providing some form of feedback that included monitoring, assessment, questioning and/or discussion with the students with SLD.  The observers noted the feedback most often provided were answers to questions, rather than students guided to find the answers. The observers also noted, group peers provided the students with SLD answers to questions and assistance with their tasks. Also, the majority of teachers are providing students with SLD the accommodations/modifications as required to complete the project assignments in the form of allowing oral or written product, provide audiobooks, provide layered options of completing team assignments, provide laptops, work on task with a partner. Eighty-eight percent of teachers reported PBL is an effective method for teaching students with SLD in an inclusion setting.  In addition, 69% of teachers reported students exhibited improved collaboration and communication skills as a result of participating in PBL.

Both the observations and interviews provided information to address research question two, "Did students with disabilities participate in a PBL team role, complete project tasks and make progress in the curriculum?"  The majority, 94% of the 12 students with SLD observed served in at least one project unit as the time manager team role, monitoring the timeframe allowed to ensure the group completed the required tasks.  The next most often role for student participation was photographer as 73% provided photo documentation of the development of at least one project.  Students with SLD also participated in at least one project as workshop manager scheduling students in the group to attend teacher topical lessons, 26%; resource gatherer collecting required task materials, 18%; and, communications lead reporting on progress to team and teacher, 6%.  None of the students with SLD were chosen or volunteered to be the group leader.  Tasks were assigned for each lesson of the project for each student as required by the particular role responsibilities. Seventy-seven percent of students completed all the assigned tasks each lesson observed.

Student engagement level in the projects throughout the 24 observations were recorded as 16% highly engaged, 51% engaged, 14% moderately engaged and 19% not engaged.  The majority of teachers, 82%, reported students with SLD made progress in the content curriculum taught based on project grades, however, the majority of teachers commented there were no improvements in standardized test scores for the students with SLD.

According to the teacher's interviews, 97% report the need for ongoing training to implement PBL for students with learning disabilities. Anecdotal comments made by teachers and noted in the interviews indicate the majority of teacher's report ongoing training was beneficial and would rely on training opportunities for learning strategies to assist students with SLD as different needs arise.

# Discussion

The findings from this exploratory study provide administrator and teacher information related to the methods of implementing PBL to support successful participation of students with SLD. There are three important discussion points as a result of this study. First, the level of intensive and ongoing teacher training and coaching provided ensured teachers had the knowledge to implement PBL following the prescribed protocol, however, data analysis indicates teachers were not equipped to provide the level of support required for students with SLD to make improvement in learning the grade level ELA and reading content. Even though teachers implemented the PBL units with an effort to support students with SLD, the majority of teachers provided those students with more concrete answers rather than leading them to discovery of information as required by the PBL protocol. This supports research findings that indicated teachers tend to provide answers or lead students to finding answers (Goodnough, & Cashion, 2006). The feedback provided by teachers during PBL instruction to students with SLD was in the form of monitoring, question/answer, discussion and explanation of material and accommodations/modifications to students participating in the groups for both individual and group assignments. As found in previous studies, teachers reported that even though student course grades were generally indicative of learning the objectives for the projects, they had difficulty ensuring the required grade level curriculum content was learned due to lack of improved scores in grade level state assessments (Lee & Bae, 2008; Rogers, CrossGresalfi, Trauth-Nare, & Buck, 2011; Rosenfield et al., 1998). This finding relates to reports from previous studies that there is little evidence of comprehensive curriculum content learning or improvement as a result of PBL instruction (Cook & Weaver, 2015; Ertmer & Simons, 2006; Rosenfield, et al. 1998)

The second discussion point refers to the findings that even though teachers are providing the appropriate PBL instruction and required accommodations and the majority of teachers report the benefits of a PBL setting to involve students with SLD in the ELA and reading content; observations indicate thirty-three percent of students with SLD were reported as moderately engaged or not engaged in group work during the 24 observations based on the rating of engagement found in Figure 2. The data indicates there is disconnect in actual meaningful engagement and the perception of teachers in reporting students with SLD were highly involved in the group work. The majority of students' engagement level was not consistent as it fluctuated weekly based on the weekly student engagement data chart. Additionally, the majority of students with SLD participated as time manager or photographer which did not require involvement with the content or collaboration to complete the task. None of the students with SLD participated in the role of group team leader suggesting that while students with SLD are generally involved in the team projects and are assigned team roles that keep them on task, their participation does not require them to take the lead responsibility for the team project. This indicates teachers' perceptions of students with SLD involvement in team work may not be representative of meaningful involvement defined as collaboratively working to provide quality content work.

The third discussion point supported in this study is that students with SLD exhibit improved collaboration and communication skills as a result of working in PBL peer groups. More than two-thirds of teachers reported

students exhibited improved collaboration and communication skills as a result of participating in PBL. Teachers reported students with SLD exhibited an improved ability to communicate more effectively with peers and teachers regarding lesson content and project work. Students also were observed by teachers and the researchers working cooperatively with their group peers to complete tasks the majority of the time. The result of positive interaction with peers and teachers in an instructional setting improves student attitudes and self-esteem regarding their learning capabilities (Thomas, 2000). These findings suggest students with SLD who successfully participate in PBL instruction may experience improved collaboration and communication skills resulting in a more positive outlook towards their ability to learn.

# Limitations and Implications

Exploratory research is not used alone for decision-making; however, it was used to glean useful insight into methods for effective implementation of PBL. The results of this study may not be generalized to a broad range of students with SLD as it was limited by a small sample size in one geographic location. The study included only twelve teachers and twelve students making it difficult to establish generalizations regarding PBL implementation for students with SLD. The teacher experience level instructing students with SLD can affect the outcomes for addressing the needs of instructing students with SLD. In addition, teacher knowledge and understanding level to effectively implement PBL may provide varied results for students with SLD. This exploratory study used only observations and interviews to gather qualitative data. The observation and interview components were created by the researcher to provide insight into the implementation efforts of teachers and the participation of students with SLD.

There are implications for further study in the area of PBL instruction and students with SLD as there are few studies related to students with disabilities. Expanding the study to include a broader participant pool from multiple settings would provide more in-depth and reliable information in the area of providing PBL instruction to students with SLD. This study and previous research regarding the positive impact of PBL instruction for diverse learners suggests the importance of future study of how students with SLD in PBL instruction learn more independently and collaboratively (Brusca-Vega et al., 2011; Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010; Guven & Dunman, 2007).

# Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest the appropriateness of PBL instruction for students with SLD in regard to improved communication and collaboration. In addition, the findings have implications for best practices in implementing PBL for students with SLD. The teachers received training in the PBL model of instruction, however, in order to effectively meet the needs of students with SLD participating in inclusion PBL classrooms, the majority of teachers agreed the training should include methods specifically targeting the needs of students with SLD (Cook & Weaver, 2015; Hovey & Ferguson, 2014). Teachers require ongoing training and development to improve knowledge of facilitation strategies to ensure students with SLD are fully engaged in the group roles and content learning. Developing teacher training modules targeting the support and engagement of students with SLD as part of the PBL model training would enhance student learning. The reports of teachers regarding improved communication and collaboration skills suggests the appropriateness of PBL instruction for students with SLD.

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## FIGURE 1. TEACHER OBSERVATION CHECKLIST. OF TEACHER PROVISION OF THE FOLLOWING FEEDBACK OR
## PLACE A 1 AND/OR 2 IN THE BLANK FOR THE DATE IF EVIDENCE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.

1) Teacher provides feedback/response, monitoring, assessment, communication, question/discussion

2) Teacher provides differentiation/accommodations/modifications

| Teacher | 9/10 | 9/17 | 9/24 | 10/1 | 10/8 | 10/15 | 10/22 | 10/29 | 11/5 | 11/12 | 12/5 | 12/12 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## FIGURE 2: STUDENT OBSERVATION CHECKLIST: ROLE AND ENGAGEMENT

Student Roles: Communications (C), Resources (R), Leader (L), photographer (P), Time Manager (T), Workshop Manager (W)

Document Engagement: Highly Engaged (H), Engaged (E), Moderately Engaged (M), Not Engaged (N)

Highly Engaged (H) – Meaningful engagement, Students take responsibility for their team role and collaboratively working on group learning activities, ask questions, pursue answers, provide quality work and participation in the content

Engaged (E)- Students are involved in the learning activity and evidence of effort to understand and complete the task. They do not simply follow directions.

Moderately Engaged (M)- Student participates in learning activities for most of the lesson and stays on task with some teacher intervention. Student work consists of following directions with no evidence of pursuing additional information or improving quality of work.

Not Engaged (N) – Student is unable or unwilling to participate

Identify student by Teacher Number 1-12 and indicate the student role (first) and engagement by date

| Student by Teacher No. 9/10 | 9/17 | 9/24 | 10/1 | 10/8 | 10/15 | 10/22 | 10/29 | 11/5 | 11/12 | 12/5 | 12/12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | T, E | T, E | T, E | T, M | T, M | T, M | T, N | T, M | T, E | T, E | T, M | T,E |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | 34 | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

# Working with Children with Visual Impairments in Saudi Arabia

## Neda  F Aldajani

**Abstract**

This research involves working with children who are visually impaired at home and in school.  The goal is to help parents and teachers to work with children who are visually impaired effectively. This research includes a lot of strategies that can help parents and teachers and anyone who will work with children with visual impairment. This research highlights the main point of working with children with visual impairment such as; supporting, education, and collaboration.

"Your child is blind." Those words can be the worst words you can hear in your life. You will start to imagine how your life will be  when you should take care of a child who cannot be normal as other child, a baby who will  grow up and not find  a good job, who will think about the future with what they cannot do rather than with what they can achieve (Jackson, p.1).

You are not alone! More than 600,000 children in the United States live with some degree of visual impairment. Of these, over 95,000 are unable to read newspaper print, and over 50,000 are legally blind, meaning that their visual acuity with corrective lenses is less than 20/200 in their better eye or that their visual field spans less than 20 degrees. It is estimated that more than 1.5 million children in the world are legally blind. (Jackson, p. 1**)**

This research paper will be about working with children with visual impairment at home, using supporting strategies for families, and in school by giving advice for teachers about how to work with children with visual impairment using good strategies and how to accommodate classroom environment.

Before we begin we should define what a visual disability is and describe the characteristics of students with visual impairments.  The IDEA defines a visual disability as "impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance .The term includes both partial sight and blindness" (Turnbull, 2004, p. 458).  Visual impairment is a term used to describe the loss of sight because of different medical conditions. Some common medical causes are cataracts, glaucoma, and retinal detachment (Visual Impairments,P1). For educational purposes, teachers need to determine that the visual impairment affects the child's ability to learn, so they need to collaborate with the agreement of the IEP team to confirm access to special education services and create convenient classroom accommodations for students with visual impairment. Students with a visual disability are classified according to their level of functional vision:

- Low vision – students use their vision as their primary sensory channel functional.

- Blind – students can use limited vision for functional tasks but need their tactile and auditory channels for learning.

- Totally blind – students use tactile and auditory channels for learning and functional tasks (Visual Impairments,P1).

# At Home
## Emotional Reactions of Families:

The birth of a child who is blind or visually impaired upsets the family and they will have low self-esteem. The family will experience different emotions including anger, shock, depression, guilt, and denial."Families need opportunities to express themselves, and they need acknowledgment of their feelings by others. They need specific, relevant information regarding their child, presented in an honest, empathic manner" (Pogrund, 1992, p.2).

## The First Step: Getting Help:

As soon as you know that your child is blind, you need to get all the help that is necessary for your child. You need to identify who can give you help and what kind of help you really want. Parents of blind children and agencies for disabled are good places to start.

"Many parents believe that getting involved with other blind people is the last thing they want to do. They have this highly mistaken image of blind people that is based on TV programs, movies or books they have seen or read. Consequently, they fear that, if their child associates with "those people," he/she will turn out as helpless and dependent as all of those wrongly portrayed blind characters". (Jackson, p.1) You cannot go away from the truth. No matter whether you like it or not, your child is blind or visually impaired and if you isolate your child from other people who are visually impaired or blind, you are taking his/her chance of the best role models, education, experiences, and learning he or she can get. (Jackson, p.1)

## Family Support:

"Support and encouragement are the vital factors in strengthening all human relationships. These are especially important contributory elements in building the foundations of life-long relationship" (Gabby, 2010, p.1). In fact, families usually have difficulties to know what services are available and what the good services for their child are. In order to take care of children who are blind and visually impaired, families must access outside support. There are two support services families need first: formal services and informal services .Formal services include social services, education, and health care in a diversity of forms and combinations (Judy, 2009). Many departments provide formal support, and each of these departments gives specific services. For example, The Department of Health will offer good medical insurance for blind and visually impaired children and cities offer health services for disabled children.

Moreover, The Department of Education provides educational services. For example, in many public schools there are classes available for students who are blind and visually impaired. Also, the Department of Education provides psychologists services in schools to develop a plan for each child with a disability and provides a large number of teachers who specialize in teaching students who are blind and visually impaired. Many cities in America provide free education services for disabled people.

Also, The Department of Social Services offers social services that include the organization "placements providing overnight care for children with learning disabilities to give families respite and provide the child with an opportunity to socialize away from the family and review the quality of placements, which means they visit the child and communicate with them, using sign language if necessary"(social workers, Ali).

In addition, every family who has a child with disability has the right to get formal services no matter which kind of disability their child has.

Second, informal services include emotional support. (Judy, 2009) Informal support can be defined as recommendations, information and support that are provided by family members of the child with a disability, including grandparents, friends and neighbors. For example, new parents might get advice about their child's education and development from extended family members and friends. (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

Families always get emotional support from family who have children with disability or from people around them. The new Parents who are concerned about their child with disability will find it so comfortable to talk with other families who have the same situation and get some advice or try to solve some problems together and share their experiences with others.

In addition, sources of emotional support can increase the families' support and provide for them opportunities for temporary periods of respite and relief from care giving demands.

However, some families said it is difficult to find people they trust; other families do not have relationships with people around them to get this support or cannot find families who have similar situation. Luckily, a good way for these families to find all what they need is searching by online. "[T]hrough various online discussion boards, caregivers may post questions, provide answers, and share experiences and suggestions to help provide support to one another throughout the caring process"(Social and Emotional Support, 2009, p.1).

"While the internet has made searching for disability and health information a lot easier, it can be overwhelming. Here are some hints on determining whether the site you visit is relevant and reliable: Is the site run by a reputable organization? When was the information updated? Is it current?"(Social and Emotional Support, 2009).

Online parent forums can be useful, but families should remember that they are presenting their personal experiences only. Families should balance between what is found in the internet with information from professionals, educators, or academic sources to have different thoughts and opinions. They do keep up with 'the latest' as part of their ongoing professional development, but if families find something the professional haven't heard about, families should ask them to check into it, rather than ignoring or discounting their own information. Honesty is important, writing information online, the parent should be truthful because many parents will read it and get information from it. (Social and Emotional Support, 2009)

The good thing that families can find in the internet is support groups. Support groups are organized by the patient with particular medical conditions. Families of children who are blind and visually impaired can search for the support group by date, or locations, so families can find the near location for them. Also, families can find religious institutions support, so they need to check with each institution's main office to see if this kind of service is available. (Social and Emotional Support, 2009)

To sum up, all families who have a child with disability need informal support, whether from people around them or from families who have the same situation, because that will help them to face problems.

# Supportive Communication:

A positive communication strategy is a good way professionals can use when working with families of children who are blind or visually impaired. Supportive communication means moving from thinking of answer to seeking solutions. To create supportive communication, professionals can use different tips such as;

- Giving them importance  information instead of advice

- Sharing information and answering questions of the family.

- To make sure the family is understanding; professionals should use different ways to present information.

- Professionals should use language that the family could understand.

- Professionals should understand the different culture of the family.

- Siblings of blind and visually impaired children should be involved to talk about their feelings.(Pogrund, 1992, p.5)

# Supporting Families through Transition:

Family of children who are blind and visually impaired will experience a lot of transition; for example, hospital experience, hospital to home transition, home to school transition and school to school transition. In the hospital family of children who are blind and visually impaired will usually have to contact with medical personal and some of these families will need to change their daily routine because they spend a lot of time in hospital. After that, at home the family may have some concern about the balance between the work and the child care. Also, the family will need to learn a new vocabulary to communicate effectively with professionals. When children who are blind and visually impaired went to school, many new issues will be obvious for example; the transportation to and from school. Also, at the school when a child who is blind and visually impaired changes his/ her class, he/she and their family should deal with other students' curiosity. (Pogrund, 1992, p.5).

# Strategies for Working with Children who are Blind and Visually Impaired:

Children who are Blind and visually impaired may require special consideration. Parents should learn the effective way to work with their children because the child's progress depends on this. Good strategies parents can use with their children are:

- Call your child by his/her name when you need his or her attention.

- Seat your child in a room with good light.

- "Use clear words, such as "straight," "forward," "left," or "right," in relation to the child. Be specific when giving directions, and avoid the use of vague terms, such as "over there," "here," or "this.""( Strategies for Working With Visually Impaired Children, p.1)

- Identify yourself by name; don't assume that the child will recognize you by your voice. (Strategies for Working With Visually Impaired Children, p.1)

# How to Deal with Children who are Blind:

The blind are like anyone else and they are not that different from you. Do not show the blind and visually impaired kindness and compassion overload, especially the word "poor," this word makes them feel really helpless.

When you talk with children who are blind they don't know that you're talking to them. They do not see your eyes so they do not know that you are talking to them. So when you speak with them you should address their name first, especially when your speech transitions from one person to another. Also, when you talk to children who are blind and visually impaired do not try to raise your voice, but have a conversation just like normal because the high volume might offend him and lead to harass him.

If you want to talk with child who is visually impaired, you must look at them. Children who are visually impaired know if the speech is being pitched to him or not through the sound direction. If you're in a public place with child who is visually impaired tell him what surrounds it in order to avoid the occurrence of problems.

If you want to guide children who are blind to the subject of something, do not say to him "there," he does not see you, but be careful explaining and say, for example: on your right after three feet.

## At School
## Cognitive Development in the Preschooler:

"Our beliefs are important because what we believe affects the way we behave. Our beliefs about blindness will affect how we act toward the children who are blind with whom we work, our expectations for them, the way we teach them, the messages we give them." (Castellano, 1996, p.1) Parents and teachers must have high expectations, offer good education and training, and open all the doors of opportunity for children who are blind and visually impaired. Blindness surely does not have to stop a person from do well and satisfying dreams. Parents and teachers should assist the children to becoming independent and competent adults.

## Teacher and Teacher Assistant:

- Provide the same or equal information and experience for all students in the classroom.

- Help students to become independence in all areas— personal, social, and academic.

- Should expect the same responsible behavior from all students in the classroom; they should speak with them directly and clearly.(Castellano, 1996)

## Strategy for Classroom Teacher:

Many classroom teachers try to enhance the classroom experience for all students in the classroom. Some specifics strategies teachers use are:

1-        Use more verbal interaction. Verbal description is a good way for students to know what is going on in the classroom.

- Use students' names when calling on them.

- Explain and spell what you write on the board for students.

2- Teach the blind and visually impaired students about the classroom routine such as:

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- Focus should be on the teacher;

- Response to teacher's instruction should be immediate.

- Respond to instruction appropriately-- for example, raising the hand.

- Move when it is appropriate around the classroom.

3. Clean the child disk.

4. Adapt the child materials if it is needed.

5-Give a student's more information instead of helping them. (Castellano, 1996)

In every public school, a child with a disability who receives special education services must have an Individualized Education Program under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a Federal law that describes how public schools are required to serve children and youth from 3 years of age through 22 years of age free and appropriate public education (FAPE); the IDEA also requires certain information to be included in each child's IEP. So the IEP must be a truly individualized  document designed for a specific child and that creates opportunities for school administrators, teachers, parents, and the student to work together to improve educational results for the child with disabilities.( Overview of Special Education in California, p.1)

According to Marcy McGahee-Kovac (2002) "IEP stands for Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a written document that describes the educational plan for a student with a disability. Among other things, your IEP talks about your disability, what skills you need to learn, what you'll do in school this year, what services your school will provide, and where you're learning will take place." Teams should include professionals, the child's parents, and the child with disability. Specific information the IEP team must discuss about the child, for example, the strengths of the child, what the parents' ideas about improving the child's education is, what is the results of recent evaluations for the child, and what the child score is on state and district wide tests (National Center for Education in Maternal, Child Health and Georgetown University, 2003)

Some families don't realize why the Individual Education Program meeting is important to their child and they just assume that the meeting is all about writing notes. The meeting lasts between 30 to 60 minutes, but it is usually what everyone sees and thinks about the child.

"Federal and state estimates used for planning educational services do not adequately account for the number of children in the United States who are blind or visually impaired. For example,24,877 children with visual impairments are reported by the U.S. Department of Education" (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). "Visual impairments change the way children obtain information about the world in which they grow and function, and limit opportunities to learn through observation of visual elements in the school curriculum and the people around them" (Educating Students With Visual Impairments for Inclusion in Society, p.1) This means that, students who are blind or visually impaired must learn from regular and special education teachers, how to use some special skill to achieve in classroom and how to use their ability to move in classroom.  Students who are blind and visually impaired must learn how to use technology. For example, students can use computers which adapted to meet their needs. Also, students who are blind and visually impaired must learn how to read and write with Braille, how to read the large print and how they can benefit from the available vision. Moreover, they should learn how to use the mobility tools such as white canes to become more independent in their

life. Also, an important thing for students who are blind and visually impaired to learn is social interaction skills. Students need to know how to use their body language effectively to communicate with other people around them. Finally, students who are blind and visually impaired need to learn some skill that will help them to become more independent in their life such as, cooking, cleaning and how to manage money.

Students who are blind and visual impairments can receive educational services in regular schools, resource rooms or in special schools for the blind. Students who are blind and visually impaired education should be based upon their individual needs and upon students plan. Student's parents also can choose the place where their child will receive his/ her education.

## Adopted Environment for Blind and Visually Impaired: Seating position:

Many children hold the reading and the writing materials near to their face when they read or write. So, schools should provide an adjustable desk top for students who are blind and visually impaired. By having an adjustable desk top students will not need to bend during the class time. Teachers should not discourage students who bring the reading materials near their face, but teachers need to encourage students all the time. Some students cannot see clearly if the book is so far from their face. (Educational Service for Hearing and Vision, P1)

## Lighting:

Lighting is so important for students who are blind and visually impaired. Students with low vision need extra light in the classroom to read and write while other students who wear lenses prefer working in dimmer areas. Teacher should know what his/ her students really need and adjust it. (Educational Service for Hearing and Vision, P1)

The glare in classroom can make a problem for students who are blind and visually impaired while they do their job. Also, a shiny paper can affect students learning because they will have a problem reading this shiny book. It is good for teacher to have window blinds in the classrooms because that will help students to get benefits from classrooms. (Educational Service for Hearing and Vision, P1)

"Students with visual impairments have unique learning needs that must be addressed if they are to access the general education core curriculum and become independent, productive citizens" (Educating Students with Visual Impairments for Inclusion in Society, P1).

## What are the Challenges Facing Children who are Visually Impaired?

Although there are many school programs that offer custom service for students who are visually impaired, and there are significant opportunities to improve these services. Many students who are visually impaired leave school without the benefit of them and without mastering basic educational skills. (Specialized Education Services for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, P1)

Unfortunately there is a severe shortage in the number of qualified teachers and specialists to work with the visually impaired. Many workers who work with the visually impaired do not have sufficient knowledge of the Braille System or orientation and methods needed by the student movement. IN addition to that, many of the

villages do not have access to services for the visually impaired. (Specialized Education Services for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, P1)

It is a mistake to believe that public schools are the best suited option to teach students who are visually impaired. It is also wrong to think that since private schools are financially expensive so it's better not to study there. It is important for parents and teachers to choose the most appropriate place to learn visually impaired on the basis of their abilities and the services provided to them. The study of the human visually impaired, whether in the public or private school. (Specialized Education Services for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, P1)

## What Can You Do to Help Children who are Visually Impaired reach their Highest Potential?

- Support all cities and regions to provide integrated services for the visually impaired, including the construction of schools, provision of special classes, and providing specialized teachers

- Provide adequate support for the professionals in the field of special education to be able to help students in academic terms or in terms of mobility and movement.

- Providing the latest teaching aids needed by the visually impaired, such as computer

- Provide sufficient information for parents. (Specialized Education Services for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, P1)

"Blindness and low vision don't affect what students can learn as much as they affect how students learn. As a result, the majority of students with visual impairments attend public schools and spend at least part of the school day in the general education classroom"(U.S. Department of education, 2001). Students who are blind and visually impaired can study in regular classroom through collaboration between regular and special education teachers. Also, students with low vision can benefit from resource rooms, which provide private instruction. In fact, the only students who attend residential school are students who have intensive educational needs.

"Educators should be cautious about how they apply the principle to curriculum and instruction for students with visual impairments. That is because educators tend to underestimate these students' abilities and to provide too much support, leading to learned helplessness (Turnbull, 2004, p.469).When educators work with blind and visually impaired students he/ she should expect that they can learn, master their skill and achieve in school with using some adapting method.

## Role of the Teacher of Students Who Are Blind or Visually impaired:

The teacher of students who are blind and visually impaired have many roles include:

### Assessment and evaluation:

- Help working with visually impaired in an appropriate assessment

- Evaluation and interpretation of the results of tests visually impaired students

- Discuss the findings with specialists working with visually impaired student(2010Guidelines for Working With Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired In Virginia Public School)

# Supporting educational teams:

Teachers of students who are blind and visually impaired need to give information and educate the family of students who are blind and visually impaired. Also, teachers must collaborate with the family to help students improve their skills. The TBVI supports include:

- Encouraging families to write and address early childhood goals which relate to their visual Impairment child.

- An amendment to the environment to suit the visually impaired

- Hold models for appropriate teaching techniques for visually impaired

- Provide various types of education such as cooperative learning and direct instruction

# Administrative/recordkeeping duties:

- Maintain all student assessment files.

- Attend IEP meetings.

- At the end of each year completing IEP reports should submit to DBVI.

Eye examine report should be given to the DBVI if any change happened to the contact. (2010 Guidelines for Working With Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired In Virginia Public School)

# Adopted Methods to Access to Print:

Students with low vision access can read print books, newspapers, and magazines by using some aides such as glasses, magnifying lenses, and telescopes. In some cases, students with visual impairments may read large print books. The advantage of amplification devices is that amplification allows the visual impairment students to access material provided around them. For example, material in school, work, home, and in the community can use amplification devices. So, using assessment aides with students who have low vision is a good way to achieve in school. (Turnbull, 2004)

Students who cannot read efficiently through their visual sense need to access the academic curriculum through using braille. "Braille is a code, a way of presenting spoken language in written form. There is one braille symbol for each of the 26 letters of the English alphabet" (Turnbull, 2004, P469). Braille is formed as symbols known as Braille cells. Each cell of Braille consists of six prominent points arranged in the form of two columns, each row three points. Each one of these points represents the character of the alphabet character. For example letter A represents point 1 and letter B represents points 1 and2. (American foundation for the Blind,P1)

# Tips for Teachers:

- Learn information about the student's visual impairment. What is affecting students' learning, and what is affecting the student's ability.

- Learn some helpful information about accommodations that can improve students who are blind and visually impaired learning. Make sure that needed accommodations are available in classrooms, and are created in tests and homework you give for students.

- If students have IEP plans and you are not a part of it ask to have a copy of the IEP. From the IEP you can know what the educational goal for students is.

- Collaborate and consult with everyone who can give you good strategies to teaching and supporting student also help you to write students educational goals.

- Some materials and resources that are good for blind and visually impaired students is available in some states so ask to find if it is available in your state.

- Share information about students learning and improving with their family.(Visual Impairment, Including Blindness, p.1 **)**

# Collaborate to Meet Students Need:

Teachers, principals, and family must collaborate with each other to meet students' needs. They should try to do their best to help students to achieve their goals in school. The need of collaboration is because students who are blind and visually impaired need more time to do their assignment even in school or at home. When the IEP team writes students' plans they should keep in mind that students who are blind and visually impaired require more time to understand and complete the lesson. Also, teachers should encourage students in class to collaborate with each other. For example, when students who are blind and visually impaired struggle with math assignments, other students can help them solve the problems. Moreover, teachers and principals need to collaborate to create an appropriate classroom environment for students who are blind and visually impaired. Appropriate classroom environment that allow students to move in class and in school safely.(Turnbull, 2004)

In conclusion, we all know that the birth of children who are blind and visually impaired will make families experience pressure and feel sad, shame and guilt. Also, they may feel lost because they don't know when and where they should start getting help. Families should know that they are not alone and many families around the word have the same situation. The first step a family can do to help their child is to accept them. If the families accept their child and support them, people around them will accept the child. After that families can search for help outside the home. Good news for families is that the communities provide help for disabled people in many ways. They provide health, social and educational services. So, when children who are blind and visually impaired receive huge care and support from their family and from people around them such as, teachers, principals, doctors, friends, and neighbors they will be an effective person in communities. Children who are blind and visually impaired can learn and do what other children do if they find good care and education from people around them.

There are many examples about people who are blind and visually impaired who become a famous person and do a lot for the word even though they are blind. Helen Keller "was an American author, activist and lecturer. She was the first deaf/blind person to graduate from college. (Famous People with Vision Impairments Past and Present, 2008, p.1)." Louise Braille "Louis Braille became blind after he accidentally stabbed himself in the eye with his father's awl. He later became an inventor and designed braille writing, which enables blind people to read through feeling a series of organized bumps representing letters." (Famous People with Vision Impairments Past and Present, 2008, p.1).Galileo Galilei "Galileo Galilei was a Tuscan (Italian) astronomer, mathematician, physicist, and philosopher being greatly responsible for the scientific revolution. Some of his accomplishments include improvements to the telescope, accelerated motion and astronomical observations." (Famous People with Vision Impairments Past and Present, 2008, p.1).

Despite the care the blind and visually impaired can find in the community, whether in   general education or higher education, there are many people who still ask for more services. So, if parents, teachers, professionals, psychologists and friends collaborate with each other people who are blind and visually impaired around the word will get their right. In Fact, the development of service for blind and visually impaired should not come from simply kindness and compassion, but from the principle of the right to equality.

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## About the Author

My name is Neda F Aldajani a Saudi female. I'm a lecturer in special education department at King Saud university. My background is in  education of deaf and hearing impaired students, as well as blind and visually impaired. I start teaching since 2014. I received a bachelor's degree from King Saud University in Special Education and my master from the university of Akron in special education too.

# Book Review: Schools that Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education

BY VALERIE A. BUSTAMANTE

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## Abstract

A review of Senge's *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education.* The book explores the need for schools to constantly evolve to meet students needs. Senge focuses on collaboration between classrooms, schools and communities. The basis of his approach lies in the five disciplines of organizational learning: personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning, systems thinking. These disciplines are applied to each of the components of schools to guide their evolution. The book is well suited to teachers, administrators, community members and families who wish to engage in change and growth of their education system. There are suggestions, practices, and exercises that can be adapted to meet the need of a variety of settings.

"If we want the world to improve we need schools that learn", a powerful message that author Peter Senge (2012) explores in his book *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education.* Senge, a lecturer at MIT who has dedicated his career to promoting collaboration and leadership to create better systems, writes in response to the need for schools to adapt to the current fast paced climate. Schools must, in essence, constantly evolve to meet needs of students.

The book, as its title suggests, is a guide for parents, educators, and administrators in creating schools that learn. Senge posits that using the five disciplines of organizational learning classrooms, schools, and community partnerships can be designed and lead in a way that will allow them to be fundamental by growing, adapting, and collaboration which in turn prepares children to flourish.

The book has useful content from cover to cover, and at 598 pages it is lengthy but there is no shortage of exercises, practices, resources, and articles. The detailed index is the saving grace, as you can easily find an area of interest and dive right in without having to search or follow a rigid progression. The introductory section contains a very detailed description of the five disciplines of organizational learning: personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning, systems thinking. Senge outlines the uses of the disciplines to build schools that learn in the books subsequent sections classroom, school, and community. The classroom section of the book extensively explores applying the five disciplines of learning to classrooms can effectively design classrooms that evolve and stimulate desire for learning in each student. The practices heavily emphasize addressing student's unique needs by focusing on "exercises that teach reflection and inquiry" and "methods that improve the quality of thinking and interacting" (162). The school section of the book again uses the disciplines of learning with a focus on how schools can be a place for "people learning together, on behalf of their common purpose" (320). The communities section emphasizes building communities that learn to meet the needs of children. Schools that learn need "a community that fosters learning all around it" (463).

The approach to change is not new, but is well supported. Fullan (2001) also notes that successful change must have the commitment of internal and external actors who work towards a common purpose. The application of the learning organization disciplines is innovative and provided with laudable depth. One of the great strengths

of the book is the laser focus on the school as center of a system, and each person's role in focusing on the common goal of creating the best environment for the students.

*Schools that Learn* is a very timely book in today's climate, which addresses need for constant evolution in educational systems to meet the changing needs of students and society. The book is well suited to teachers, administrators, community members and families who wish to engage in change and growth of their education system. The book has wealth of information and resources from enacting change on small to large scale. There are suggestions, practices, and exercises that can be adapted to meet the need of a variety of settings.

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# Literature Review: The Academic and Social Effects of Inclusion on Students with ESE Services

BY FELICHA SAINTINE

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## Abstract

My topic of interest is the effects of inclusive practices on the academic and social outcomes of students with disabilities. According to McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, and Hoppey (2010) in 1990 34% of students with disabilities were in general education classrooms for most of their school day. Two years ago inclusion was implemented in all schools in Lee County. It was expressed that inclusion would positively affect students receiving ESE services socially, academically, and emotionally. From my experiences I have not witnessed this. This topic needs to be researched further to learn how to truly use inclusion to benefit the students' with disabilities. This paper will be a literature review. The following articles will be reviewed and used to aid in my research School Participation of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, A Case Study of a Highly Effective Inclusive Elementary School, Inclusion or delusion: Can one size fit all?, and Meeting the Needs of Special Education Students in Inclusion Classrooms. The search engines I used to find these articles were ERIC and FIU Libraries.

## Literature Review: The Academic and Social Effects of Inclusion on Students with ESE Services

After reading numerous articles I have noticed that each had a slightly different definition or model of inclusion due to inclusion not being given a solid common definition. LeDoux, Graves, and Burt (2012) defined inclusion as students with Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services receiving all services within the general education classroom. Students are only pulled out for services that cannot be delivered in the general education setting. According to McLeskey, Waldron, and Redd (2012) inclusion is the effort to meet all students' needs particularly students with disabilities. Full inclusion is mainstreaming students with disabilities and still catering to their needs (Hornby, 1999). Overall all definitions of inclusion expressed the want to meet the needs of students receiving ESE services in a general education setting.

The perception of inclusion is mixed throughout the articles. Hornby (1999) states parents were indifferent when told that their children with disabilities will be mainstreamed. The parents were happy as long as they knew their child was being educated. McLeskey et al. (2012) expressed that inclusion is an effective practice when the correct components are implemented. Teixeira De Matos and Morgado (2016) found that being in a general education setting affected the participation of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). They found that mainstream students move away from students with ASD during recess. By an interviewee it was also observed that in middle school the students that are mainstreamed do not adapt well and harm other students' learning process. LeDoux et al. (2012) stated inclusion was not an effective practice due to communication, collaboration, and lack of professional development. Through reviewing several pieces of literature it is safe to infer that many people have various opinions and feelings on inclusion.

After the inclusion movement some educators struggled with the implementation. LeDoux et al. (2012) claimed three major factors when teaching in an inclusive classroom. The three factors are communication,

collaboration, and professional development. A lack of communication between the general education and special education teacher results in someone being ill informed and not being able to help the student to the best of their ability. According to LeDoux et al. (2012) general education teachers need communication on students with special needs placed within their class, schedule changes, and the individual goals and objectives for each student.

Collaboration was also a big issue. LeDoux et al. (2012) expressed a disconnection between the special education department and general education teachers. In this article it was expressed special educators and general educators were not planning lessons and interventions together. It was also articulated that there were time and schedule restraints when it came to collaborative planning. General educators also experience disconnection with their students and fear special educators pulling students out of the classroom will further the disconnection.

Teachers that had little to no professional development on teaching students with special needs are struggling with inclusion. Consistent professional development helps teachers' attitudes toward inclusion change (LeDoux et al., 2012). General educators with little training in teaching students with special needs don't have confidence to do so, because of the lack of training. McLeskey et al. (2012) states a component to effective inclusion instruction at Creekside Elementary School was immersing the teachers in professional development to improve teacher practice.

In a couple of the articles I read they spoke on inclusion being effective and the different factors that make it successful. Hornby (1999) pointed out some components that should be included to help inclusion be effective. Some components are letting teachers choose if they would like to teach an inclusive class, maintaining services and pulling out when needed opposed to seeing full inclusion as the only alternative, and creating a philosophy of inclusion that is discussed rather than just implemented. McLeskey et al. (2012) also presents key factors that should be included to help inclusion be effective. The key factors presented are immersing teachers in professional development opportunities, a positive attitude of wanting to meet the needs of all students, shared decision making, making data driven decisions, and having ongoing progress monitoring on individual students.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed presented many different perceptions of inclusion. It also gave different reasons of why inclusion is or is not effective. All aspects have offered knowledge that will further my investigation of the effects of inclusive practices on the academic and social outcomes of students with disabilities.

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# Book Review: The Difference "When Good Isn't Good Enough"

## BY ARLEEN A. RODRIGUEZ

Chowdhury, Subir The Difference: When Good Enough Isn't Enough. New York: First Edition. 2017. 143pp. $23.00.

"Quality is everyone's business" in The Difference: When Good Enough isn't Enough, Chowdhury, Subir author of 15 books that have sold over a million copies, global leader in quality consulting and training, and recognized as the "50 most influential Management Thinkers in the world"

In The Difference: Good Enough isn't Good enough the author Subir Chowdhury uses his own personal and career experiences to expand his thoughts on how a caring mindset can set a foundation for success in all areas of our lives "Quality is everyone's business". (Pg. 29) Through his experiences as a consultant and personal experiences he realizes an acronym that sets forth the tone in his book. The acronym being "STAR" Straight forward, thoughtful, accountability, and Resolve. These four qualities are the root to a caring mindset that protrudes through all aspects of our life if followed. Chowdhury wants to expand and create an open mind that the janitor is not less than the CEO and everyone contributes to the success of any business.

Chowdhury's first theme was being Straight forward the S in star. Being straight forward and honest is the first part of making a difference in your personal and business life. In Chapter 1 Chowdhury discusses how important it is to be honest in all that you do and proceeds to tell a story about a manager at a financial services firm who demanded the truth from his employees and he would say, "If you tell me the truth when things go wrong, we can work together to fix it. But if you lie to me, we are both screwed." (Pg. 22) This quote outlines how some employees are fearful of the truth, but working through a lie is far more damaging to any business than working through a problem that has a solution. The benefits of being straightforward speak for themselves and the adverse effects of dishonesty can make a business crumble.

Being thoughtful, one would believe comes naturally but in the personal and business world we become selfish and forget we are all human. Chowdhury describes that being thoughtful is a "two-step process" (Pg. 65) where listening is step one, and being empathic is step two. "As a society, we need them all. No one person's contribution is less important than another's. Empathy requires only that we value another person as a human being who, like all of us, process worth to the community, to our society, to our country, and to everyone else. We are all connected; we all impact one another." (Pg. 73) In the book, leading in a Culture of change by Michael Fullan, describes a constellation of the framework for leadership as energy-enthusiasm-hopefulness constellation (Pg. 7). Being thoughtful in all that you do compares to this constellation where certain characteristics are required by leaders for success.

Third step to a caring mindset is accountability or taking responsibility. Chowdhury visits a school and asks a simple question, when was the last time your teachers have been formally trained on what core values mean? The principal answered not recently. The five factors involved in being accountable are being aware, taking personal responsibility, making a choice or decision to act, thinking deeply about the potential consequences of that choice, and setting high expectations. (Pg. 83) Accountability compares understanding change in a culture

of change by Michael Fullan. He describes that change is not having the best ideas, appreciate the implementation dip, redefining resistance, reculturing, and be mind of not using check-lists rather complexity. (Pg. 34) Understanding change as a whole is like taking accountability and acting on it for the big picture or end result.

Lastly, Chowdhury talks about Resolve the last letter in the star acronym that defines this book leading a change to a caring mindset both professionally and personally.

The point to the book Good isn't good enough is about shifting to a caring mindset both professionally and personally using a systematic approach. This approach is a framework of attitudes "STAR" the acronym used by Chowdhury to narrate his strong beliefs of a caring mindset and how your mindset can alter your successes for the greater good. A caring mindset involves being straight forward, thoughtful, accountable, and have a sense of resolve. The Difference; is an easy to read straight to the point book on characteristics needed for success and how shifting a mind-set allow things to work flawlessly. This book is only 143 pages long and the experiences told by Chowdhury keep the readers engaged. This is a great book for leaders, and those who are seeking to become leaders.

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# About the Author

Arleen Rodriguez, is a special needs educator who has a Bachelors in elementary education, and a Master's in Special needs education with an autism endorsement. Arleen loves the ocean, her bulldog Rex, and biking. When she not being an adventurous teacher, she is being a loving mom to two handsome boys named Jacob and Joshua. Arleen's children are her biggest motivator and they play a huge role in who she is today.

# Book Review: Managing To Change How Schools Can Survive (and Sometimes Thrive) in Turbulent Times

BY JACLYN SACHS

## Purpose and thesis of book

The purpose of the book *Managing To Change How Schools Can Survive (and Sometimes Thrive) in Turbulent Times* is to share insight and information about what it takes for schools to make improvements. For instance, the author (Thomas Hatch) studied a small number of schools from a number of other districts that had cultivated relatively good reputations over long periods of time. He also sought to choose schools that were either high-performing or low-performing but had consistently worked on making some improvements and changes in their structures. He emphasized the relationships between the following components: the understandings, experiences, as well as attitudes of the teachers. Second, the understandings, experiences, as well as attitudes of the students. Last but certainly not least, another component includes the content (the type as well as quality of the instructional materials, technologies, and tasks) (Hatch, 2009). For instance, capacity reflects the relationships among all three. For instance, a teacher who is not effective with a particular group of students in one content area may achieve fantastic results with a different class or in another content area. Hatch also explains why even schools that have strong principals, hard-working teachers, and involved parents continue to struggle while other schools can survive without showing the usual features of effectiveness. Hatch explains a small set of key practices that schools can use to manage external demands, gain resources, as well as build their capacity to make and maintain improvements over time. Therefore, schools need to organize the conditions for their own success.

## Outline the main themes

The book highlights capacity, change, and improvement. Additionally, the book emphasizes critical practices for managing change. The book really indicates how changes can be good, not so good, or neutral. However, establishing the capacity to make improvements largely depends on how organizations deal with changes of all kinds. The book teaches how there are no fast rules about what actually counts as change. Changes range from minor and typically insignificant shifts to moving transformations. Reflecting this idea, the same reforms and change efforts that leaders view as major transformations expected to improve an organization can be viewed by staff and others as unlikely to cause real change and provide solutions, and just as likely to cause problems (Hatch, 2009). While educators cannot plan change efforts completely in advance, they can prepare. To be specific, they can make an attempt to comprehend current circumstances and the local context and try to assess what it will truly take to make advancements. Overall, change occurs all the time as individuals develop, cultures flourish and decline, populations grow and expand, and climates evolve. Moreover, change occurs when technologies develop. It's important to note how changes in one context, or for one purpose quickly merge into changes in others (Hatch, 2009).

## Include key quotes from the book

Regarding the external environments, according to Hatch (2009), "Getting "insiders" out of the school and "outsiders" in builds relationships between school staff and parents, community members, district administrators, reform organizations, and others." (p. 47). Those relationships provide staff members hope to learn about as well as influence what is occurring outside the school and to develop requests when needed. Additionally, turning those relationships into networks of allies who will maintain support in times of crisis allows schools to create conditions more useful to their success. There exist key internal and external practices

that allow schools to create and sustain improvements. The internal practices include the following: Creating a productive work environment, developing shared understanding, as well as working on hiring and turnover. This prepares schools staff with the expertise, knowledge, and authority they need to work efficiently outside the school. Moreover, external practices include the following: reshaping external demands, building networks of contacts and allies, as well as getting "insiders" out and "outsiders" in (Hatch, 2009). According to Hatch (2009), "Change is often imagined as a one-dimensional cause and effect, but changes in one context, one arena, or for one purpose quickly merge into changes in others" (p. 11). Essentially, there are constant as well as at times unpredictable interactions among the planned and unplanned changes underway at any given time. Change is truly a complex occurrence. Moreover, according to Hatch (2009), "Developing an inquiry orientation throughout the school provides another way to connect activities over time and can help to bind individuals together in common pursuits" (p. 103). To be specific, this inquiry orientation helps to drive informal and informal analyses that both serve as a means of professional development as well as help inform decision making. Additionally, they also act as another invitation for staff to work together and share their views and knowledge.

## List weak and strong points from the book

There were many strong points from the book. I personally appreciate how the book emphasized capacity, change, as well as improvement. Developing the amplitude to make improvements relies upon how organizations deal with changes of all kinds. For instance, the book fortunately emphasized how change is a natural process that is always ongoing. Change occurs all the time. Populations grow and shift, people mature, economies expand and contract, technologies develop, and climates evolve. Second, it was excellent how the book emphasized how change is a multidimensional experience. Changes in one context or for one purpose quickly merge into changes in others. Additionally, given subjective and uncontrollable nature of changes, schools need to develop the capacity to manage change. Schools need to influence changing conditions wherever possible and to take advantage of the changes underway to facilitate work and maximize performance (Hatch, 2009).

However, there also exist weak points. The book is very wordy. It reflects the contributions of several groups and individuals. Moreover, the work in the book evolved directly out of the experiences the author (Thomas Hatch) had working on several educational reform projects early in his career. It became a little convoluted, and not so straight-forward.

## Compare and contrast to other books/theories on educational leadership/administration.

According to Fulan (2001), information becomes knowledge only when it relates to people and takes on a social aspect. One needs to know information in order to have knowledge. I learned how information only becomes valuable in a social context. It's important to note how change leaders work on changing the context, helping develop new settings favorable to learning, as well as sharing that information. Knowledge sharing and creation is so very important. Knowledge is closely attached to human emotions, aspirations, intention, as well as hopes. There is the link among knowledge building and internal commitment on the way to making good things arise. In order to share personal knowledge, people must rely on individuals to listen and react to their ideas. Helpful relations fortunately allow individuals to share their insights and discuss their concerns. Hatch (2009) emphasizes how developing good rapport among co-workers is so critical. Creating the relationships necessary

to managing the environment means that schools have to not only get "insiders" out of the school and into the surrounding community but also give "outsiders" some opportunities to get inside the school. Developing connections among staff members and parents, community members, as well as district administrators and others allows them to discover common interests and create the understanding as well as trust they need to work very hard toward common goals.

Regarding differences, Fullan spoke more about intervisitation and peer networks than Hatch. Regarding beneficial knowledge sharing, I learned about intervisitation and peer networks. Principals are encouraged to use visits as well as peer advising as management strategies for teachers within their buildings. For instance, a principal who is having difficulty getting a certain teacher involved in improvement may be advised by the district staff to pair that teacher with another teacher in the building or another building in the district. Additionally, principals themselves may be encouraged to speak with other principals on certain areas where they have experiencing difficulties.

Hatch (2009) highlights how schools function in a turbulent environment where several demands as well as conditions continually change. In this type of environment, it is mostly difficult to predict, anticipate, or even prepare for the future. Edwards (2001) emphasizes how an error made by several school administrators as well as other policy makers is to assume that teaching is easy. They believe that teaching includes certain basic skills that can easily be acquired and employed and that teachers can be easily assessed. This is not true at all. Teaching requires a lot of hard work and motivation.

# References

Edwards, C (2001). *Educational Change From Traditional Education to Learning Communities.* Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Fullan, M (2001). *Leading In A Culture Of Change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hatch, T (2009). *Managing To Change How Schools Can Survive (and Sometimes Thrive) in Turbulent Times.* New York: Teachers College Press.

# Book Review: What Great Principals Do Differently

## BY LINDSEY SANDS
## FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

## Introduction and Purpose

Leadership is a skill that many do not possess to the fullest extent.  There are a plethora of key qualities that create a truly effective principal or leader in the world of education.  This review discusses and dives into the book *What Great Principals Do Differently* written by Todd Whitaker.  After years of teaching and administrative experience prior to writing his series of works, Whitaker's purpose for writing this book is to clearly define what makes a great principal different from others.

## Thesis

Whitaker's thesis is grounded in the theory that qualities in a great principal are essentially the same as those found in great teachers.  The main difference, according to Whitaker, would be that teachers are geared at being great educators towards children, whereas principals are trained and geared at being great administrators who educate and inspire a school.

## Themes Addressed

*What Great Principals Do Differently* contains a clear and concise eighteen points that Whitaker believes to be key qualities in an effective principal.  With some overlapping themes, the main ones will be noted as follows.

Throughout this book, Whitaker (2012) aimed to differentiate the "great" from the "good" principals.  A key to a great principal is the understanding that education itself is people-based, not program-based, and, "...if they [principals] have great teachers, they have a great school" (p. 5).  Whitaker (2012) also notes that great principals are always "on", and possess the "withitness" of being nice and professional to all by means of setting a positive example.  Noting the positive outcomes of this quality, Whitaker states, "If you always respond appropriately and professionally, everyone else will be on your team" (p. 28).  The contents and theme within chapter 5 goes similarly to that within chapter 7.  Chapter 5 revolves around the old saying, "treat others the way you would like to be treated" in terms of respect and positivity; Chapter 7, on the other hand, relates to a concept of "teach the teachers" (Whitaker, p. 42).  In Chapter 7, Whitaker (2012), discusses how teaching the teachers is the administrative means of educating the educators and their students on respectful behavior.  From here, teachers will display a positive and respectful example to their students, which, according to Whitaker (2012), are the ones that great principals remain the most loyal to.

Other noteworthy themes in Whitaker's book include the concept of embracing change, and that great principals understand that, "...effective change is up to them" (p. 60).  This could be related to statements made in Michael Fullan's book, *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2001), which will be elaborated on further in this review.  On the note of change, Whitaker (2012) also includes this theme in Chapter 13, as it pertains to great principals always considering what their best teachers might think of a certain change within the school.

An important theme noted in Chapter 10 is the fact that, "Great principals keep standardized testing in perspective and focus on the real issue of student learning" (Whitaker, p. 70). This chapter is somewhat related to caring for students, as well as the chapter appropriately called "Make it Cool to Care" (p. 105), where Whitaker discusses the importance of displaying care and compassion for students as well as staff members, and overall care and concern for student learning.

Overall, it appears that Whitaker's themes of what makes a great principal so great revolve around positivity, clarity, loyalty, and overall motivation and passion to do their very best for their school and all those within.

## Strength and Weakness in the Literature

It did not appear that there were many weaknesses throughout Whitaker's book. The only noticeable weakness upon reading would be that the book does not note exceptions to certain scenarios. In greater detail, some chapter scenarios appear to be – occasionally – generalized. One example would be a scenario he mentioned where there was the "great" teacher and the teacher who was seen "wedged behind the desk" (Whitaker, p. 45). In some cases, this may not necessarily be seen as a negative aspect or what does not make a great principal/ teacher. For example, it is important for educators to also allow students to work freely in various instances such as a "Socratic Seminar", where the teacher is encouraged to move away from the students to allow for free-flowing speech among the group. Along with this, it also appeared that certain areas could have had additional strategies provided. For example, Whitaker (2012) notes that effective principals understand how to maintain "… a new teacher's level of energy" (p. 50); However, as the chapter continues, no strategies are noted, it was a statement on what great principals simply can do.

*What Great Principals Do Differently* had a variety of strong points throughout the book. Whitaker provides a variety of examples throughout his 18 key points in what makes a great principal, which was and may be helpful to any future leaders reading the text. Another strong point was that Whitaker covers a wide range of topics. From standardized testing (chapter 10), to setting positive examples for staff (embedded throughout), even on the concept of making it "cool to care" in chapter 16 (p. 105). The text was also not too lengthy, which may be a "perk" to administrator coaches. Overall, this appears to be a book that would be recommended to potential or first year principals, similar to books on teaching during the first days of school.

## Compared and Contrasted to Fullan

There are many points throughout Whitaker's book that can be easily compared and contrasted to the work of Michael Fullan's book, *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2001). Both works have a variety of suggestions and strategies in what makes a great leader in the school system. For this section, all points of comparing and contrasting will be based off of figure 1.1 in Fullan's text (p. 4).

In figure 1.1, the first sector Fullan (2001) creates is the topic of what makes a great leader. Fullan (2001) notes that acting and leading on a moral purpose to create change may be problematic due to the concept of diversity within schools. Similarly, Whitaker (2012) discusses the concept of change via "uncomfortable feelings" among staff members with differences in opinion compared to administration (p. 92).

Another similarity between Fullan (2001) and Whitaker (2012), would be there opinions on the need for administrators and leaders to possess a level of emotional intelligence and aware of others (especially staff members). Fullan (2001) states that the greatest principals and leaders may not have the highest IQ out of the

entire school, but may "combine intellectual brilliance with emotional intelligence" (p. 71). Whitaker (2012), notes a similar point, and discusses the fact that great principals will "…focus on more important things like nurturing staff members" during a time of need, a sign of awareness of others in their environment as well as compassion towards staff (p. 14).

One contrasting point that stood out between Fullan and Whitaker were their perspectives on leadership for a large community. Fullan (2001), emphasizes the more fundamental concept in his book on how, "…internal commitment… cannot be activated from the top" (p. 133). In short, there have to be many leaders in various sectors to create effective and positively flowing leadership. Whitaker, on the other hand, bases many portions of his book on the concept that the principal, or "leader", will be the one to inspire a school to push themselves harder to match the bar that has been set by the principal. Both Fullan and Whitaker make excellent arguments in their cases for what makes an excellent leader, although their perspectives vary in some areas.

## Conclusion

There are many pieces to the puzzle of a great leader, some pieces coming naturally to individuals, while others have to acquire them. What makes a great principal is what also makes a great teacher, which then may potentially inspire great students. Despite the varied opinions in some areas, Fullan and Whitaker both stand by one key feature than all great principals must possess: In order to be a great principal, the focus, passion, loyalty, commitment, and reason to be proud, should relate back directly to the students in the school, and all that they accomplish.

## References

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a Culture of Change* (1st ed.). San Fracisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Whitaker, T. (2012). *What Great Principals Do Differently: 18 Things That Matter Most* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

## About the Author

I was born and raised in South Florida with my mother, sister, and a plethora of pets. I was a dual-enrolled student throughout high school at Broward College where I completed my Bachelors of Science degree in Special Education. From there, I attended Florida International University where I received my Masters of Science degree in Special Education with a focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders. I also hold endorsements in Reading and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction. I am currently teaching in an autism cluster classroom at the elementary level in South Florida. To this day, I credit my amazing mother, sister, and plethora of pets for my accomplishments thus far.

# Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET
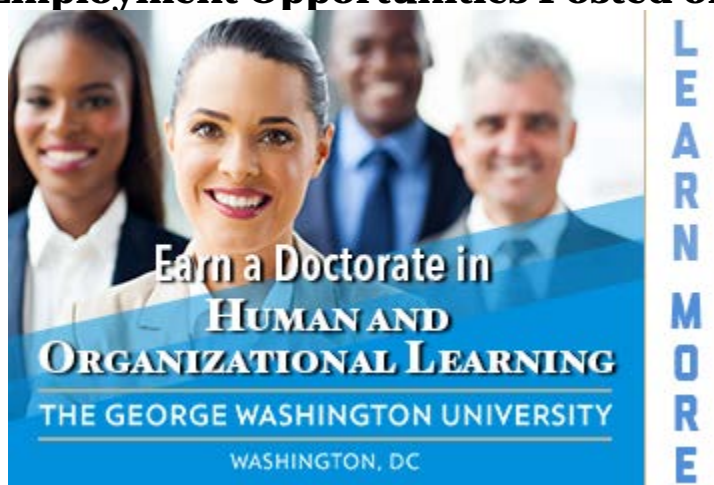


# Licensed Special Education Teacher

**Memphis, TN**

Job Category: Teaching

## Description:

**Now Offering $2,000 sign on payment** and **$2,000 relocation allowance (if applicable)**

## Program Overview:

Youth Villages' Residential Treatment programs serve children with emotional and behavioral problems. Our residential campuses provide the setting for an intensive treatment program that combines the unique balance of structure and freedom. This enables children and their families to identify, understand and cope with their individual needs and develop the skills necessary to succeed in less restrictive settings. We have three different types of facilities—Intensive Residential Centers, Open Campuses, and Group Homes. Located in Tennessee, Georgia, and Oregon, all of these facilities utilize the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children therapy model (Re-Ed). The majority of these youth attend the fully accredited schools which are located on our residential treatment campuses.

## Position Overview

- Plan for individual and group activities to stimulate growth in language, social, and other skills.

- Participate in training and in-service activities.

- Administer and interprets testing to determine academic needs.

- Develop and uses a variety of teaching techniques.

- Produce lesson plans that reflect the individual educational needs of students.

- Prepare reports in compliance with school guidelines.

- Maintain progress notes, attendance records, and grade scores in a timely manner.

- Other essential duties as needed.

- Candidates may have the opportunity to teach in specialized subjects

- Monday – Friday, 7:30am to 3:30pm.

## Additional Information:

Small Class Sizes to allow more one on one attention to individual students and their educational needs. The standard Youth Villages class size ranges from 8-15 children. Tuition & Licensure reimbursement, and training for your career growth and advancement. Our schools operate year-round

## Requirements:

- A Bachelor's degree in education with appropriate certification is required (K-12)

- Active Licensure in TN with an endorsement in Special Education is required

- Experience in special education or teaching experience in a clinical environment is preferred

- Experience working with at-risk youth a major plus

- Experience working with youth is required

- Excellent written, verbal, and oral skills

- Ability to manage multiple priorities simultaneously

- Basic computer knowledge

- Ability to maintain a flexible schedule

## Benefits:

- Medical, Dental, Prescription Drug Coverage and Vision

- Retirement Savings Pension Plan

- 403 (b)

- 2 weeks paid vacation

- 12 paid sick days per year

- 10 paid holidays

- Mileage &amp; Cell Phone Reimbursement (when applicable)

- EOE

# Contact:

Pamela Gordon

901-251-4895

Pamela.gordon@youthvillages.org

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# Director of Student Services

**Peterborough NH**

Job Category: Director

## QUALIFICATIONS:

- Master's Degree from an accredited college/university.

- Three years successful teaching experience or equivalent.

- Three years successful administrative experience or equivalent

- NH State Certification #0006.

- Demonstrated evidence of excellent written and oral communication skills.

- Excellent interpersonal skills, including group facilitation.

- Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the School Board may find appropriate and acceptable.

## SUMMARY:

The Director of Student Services is a Central Office 12-month position. The Director plans, directs, and reviews the activities and operations of student services. The position is responsible for Special Education staff, Guidance, 504, and District Nursing, as well as assessing needs, developing programs and implementing services. The Director coordinates assigned activities with outside agencies, psychologists, speech language pathologists/therapists and speech assistants, OT/PT, social workers, nurses, Transition Coordinator, Crisis Prevention Counselor, and Section 504 accommodations. The Director is responsible for homeless, home education, ELL and provides support to the Assistant Superintendent for instructional services.

## APPLY:

For more information, and to apply, please go to www.convalsd.net, click Careers and begin the application process.

## BENEFITS:

Full Benefits Package

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# Teacher of the Visually Impaired

**New Orleans**

Job Category: Teacher of the visually impaired

## Description:

Help Lighthouse Louisiana to build a better tomorrow for our students with vision impairment, while living in an exciting city with food, fun, and festivals galore.

Lighthouse Louisiana is seeking a Certified Teacher of the Visually Impaired who is eager to use his/her skills and creativity to provide itinerant vision services and to develop youth programs for children with vision loss in the Greater New Orleans area.

Lighthouse Louisiana is dedicated to ensuring that our youth are receiving well-rounded opportunities to learn through quality instruction and play. Our programs expand beyond the classroom to include Goal Ball, recreation, transition skills training, and a summer camp. If you want to make a difference in the lives of children who are blind in a holistic environment with an interdisciplinary team, contact Lighthouse Louisiana today.

Applicants who do not meet the following requirements listed need not apply.

- Education:  BA in Education or M.Ed. with VI certification from an accredited university.

- Special Knowledge or Skills:  Proficiency with Braille, Assistive technology for the blind, magnification, and adaptations for children with varying degrees of vision loss; Able to screen for referral to O&amp;M services; excellent written and verbal communications; proficient in use of Internet, email, and standard software applications (i.e. Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint); proficiency with Nemeth code Braille and methods of teaching math to blind students.

- Experience:  At least 1-year teaching as a TVI.  Itinerant experience preferred.

## Requirements:

See the job description.

## Benefits:

Signing Bonus - $2000/ Health, Dental, Vision, Flexible Spending Account, Basic Life, Voluntary Life, Short and Long-Term Disability, Retirement, Vacation, Sick and Holiday.

## Contact:

Terri J. Brown

HR Manager

P. 504-899-4501, x229

F. 504-895-4162

tbrown@lighthouselouisiana.org

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# Private Teacher

**Chicago, IL**

Job Category: Education

## Description:

Flexible start date between now and Spring/Summer of 2018! Family based in Lincoln Park, IL seeks a Private Teacher to co-develop, manage, and implement the education plan/home school program for an elite student athlete who is entering high school next year. Must have a four-year degree, with a special education or learning disability certification; advanced degree in special education strongly preferred. Experience with individualized education plans (IEPs) and at least two years of classroom teaching experience is required. The family is looking for someone who is excited about this opportunity and has a passion for what they do! If you have experience teaching at a Jesuit school or other private school environment, working as a private tutor or specialized camp counselor, or teaching in another unique learning environment, please apply! Must be happy to travel to Florida and Arizona during the winter months. The family is willing to hire the right person immediately for a full-time role to perform tutoring until the 2018-19 school year. The family is also willing to wait and hire the private teacher to start this Spring/Summer. This is a full-time position with compensation of $90,000 to $110,000 offered, depending on experience, with benefits. Relocation assistance is available; must be willing to live within a reasonable commute to Lincoln Park. For consideration, please apply for position #410 at www.mahlermatch.com. Qualified applicants will be contacted.

## Benefits:

This is a full-time position with compensation of $90,000 to $110,000 offered, depending on experience, with benefits. Relocation assistance is available; must be willing to live within a reasonable commute to Lincoln Park.

## Contact:

For consideration, please apply for position #410 at www.mahlermatch.com.

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# Special Education - Bard High School Early College

**New York City**

Job Category: Teaching Position - Special Education in mathematic

## Description:

Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) Queens, a ten-minute subway ride from central Manhattan, is founded on a partnership between Bard College and the New York City Department of Education. We invite applications for a full-time special education faculty position in mathematics and/or science beginning immediately. BHSEC, a national model in the field of public school reform, enables talented and highly motivated students to move in four years from the ninth grade through the first two years of college, earning an associate of arts (A.A.) degree from Bard College as well as a New York State Regents high school diploma. The academic program emphasizes small class size and a commitment to teaching a diverse student body in a liberal arts environment.

We seek to hire an individual with experience working with special education students who has significant background in mathematics and/or science. The successful candidate may work in one of our ninth or tenth grade integrative co-teaching classrooms and as a one-on-one special education teacher for a student with severe physical disabilities. The position allows close work with colleagues to find avenues for students to enjoy learning and to prepare students to enter the college curriculum at the end of the 10th grade.

## Requirements:

The successful candidate must have either a Ph.D. in special education or certification to teach special education in any state, and be available to start as soon as possible.

## Contact:

All applications are submitted through Interfolio com at: http://apply.interfolio.com/41835. To apply, upload a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae including contacts for references, and a brief (c. 250 word) description of an experience you had as a student or as a teacher that has influenced your teaching. For relatively recent graduates, please also include a copy of your undergraduate and graduate school transcripts.

Inquiries may be directed via email to: Valeri Thomson, at thomson@bard.edu

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# Lead ED Special Education Teacher

**Washington, DC**

Job Category: Special Education Teacher - Secondary

## Description

The Lead Special Education Teacher for Cornerstone is an integral member of the academics team whose focus is to guide students in their social-emotional and academic development.  In this role, the Cornerstone Lead Teacher will serve as a case manager for all students enrolled in the program (6-10 students), they will ensure compliance with all special education regulations and timelines and ensure all  students are receiving services. The ED teacher is responsible for all students engaged in academic experiences guided by high expectations, research-based pedagogy and care for each child's developmental needs.

The Lead Special Education teacher is responsible for ensuring the services are delivered with fidelity. This teacher will collaborate with the academic, wellbeing and student life teams, external partners and services providers as well as parents to provide an unparalleled personalized academic experience.

Monument Academy values the personal well-being and professional growth of our staff. The Lead Special Education Cornerstone teacher will create a personalized development plan collaboratively with the Principal and will receive weekly coaching to ensure progress toward personal and professional growth.

## Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Promote Monument Academy's core values and model the highest behavior standards for staff and student at all times

- Create and implement personalized learning plans for each student that are data-informed and Common Core State Standards aligned.

- Deliver grade level curricula identified by Monument Academy with fidelity and consult on strengths and challenges of the curricula

- Collaborate with the Academic Team to improve lesson plans and instructional materials

- Assist in the development of IEP goals and objectives and ensure appropriate implementation of student interventions through collaboration with the Classroom Teachers

- Utilize provided supplemental resources for intervention and enrichment and identify or create additional resources, as necessary

- Demonstrate commitment to the implementation of Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions and Positive Action to maintain a positive, safe, productive, and child-centered learning environment

- Utilize data to assess student learning and the effectiveness of teaching practices

- Collaborate with academic team members as well as other teams within the school to share student information

- Implement student-specific interventions and track related progress for both academic and social-emotional needs

- Communicate regularly with parents and caregivers regarding student progress and challenges

- Conduct home visits with another staff member as needed

- Fully participate in professional development opportunities on and off property throughout the year

- Provide and seek feedback from other members of the Academic Team and Monument Academy staff and leadership

- Three or more years of classroom teaching experience in an upper elementary or middle school in an urban setting, inclusive classroom and/or co-teaching experience preferred

- Experience working with at-risk youth, foster youth, or youth with high social emotional needs highly desired;

- Demonstrated ability to set ambitious goals with students and data-supported evidence that these goals were met;

- Experience with the IEP process from assessment to identification and creation to monitoring and review;

- Thorough knowledge of special education laws and regulations;

- Cultural competency in working with students and families from different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and sexual orientation backgrounds;

- Ability to connect with families/caregivers;

- Highly qualified designation as recognized by District of Columbia Public Schools

- Bachelor's degree required. Special Education certification required

- Relocation package available plus a signing bonus of $1000

- Competitive compensation commensurate with experience. Monument Academy is committed to its policy of full inclusion and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national and ethnic origin in hiring and employment, nor in the administration of its educational policies, or admissions policies.

## Requirements

- Three or more years of classroom teaching experience in an upper elementary or middle school in an urban setting, inclusive classroom and/or co-teaching experience preferred

- Experience working with at-risk youth, foster youth, or youth with high social emotional needs highly desired;

- Demonstrated ability to set ambitious goals with students and data-supported evidence that these goals were met;

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## Benefits

- Relocation package available plus a signing bonus of $1000

- Competitive compensation commensurate with experience. Monument Academy is committed to its policy of full inclusion and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national and ethnic origin in hiring and employment, nor in the administration of its educational policies, or admissions policies.

## Contact

Marcia Sandifer, Recruiter

Marcia.Sandifer@monumentacademydc.org
www.monumentacademy.org

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# Assistant Professor of Education

**Bethlehem, PA**

Job Category: Assistant Professor in Special Education

## Description

The Moravian College Education Department invites applications for a tenure-track position in educational psychology with a focus on special education, inclusive education, and/or disability studies in education, beginning the Fall Term 2018. Members of the Moravian College Education Department view and carry out their work in the context of the College's liberal arts ethos.

Preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate expertise in and a commitment to inclusionary practices and critical disability studies. The Department seeks candidates with experience and knowledge in multicultural education and culturally and linguistically diverse students. Candidates must be ready to share in the work of a thriving Education Department with a clear commitment to social justice, critical perspectives in education, and strong communities of practice.

# Requirements

Qualified applicants must have a record of at least three years of successful child-centered, public school teaching experience and hold an appropriate doctorate degree. ABD considered. In addition, successful candidates must demonstrate a genuine desire to participate fully in a liberal arts environment and be committed first to teaching and next to scholarship and service.
All positions are subject to budget availability.

# Benefits

Successful candidates will have opportunities to teach additional undergraduate courses in early childhood/elementary, middle level and secondary education Other instructional opportunities exist, including the teaching of foundations, Social Studies methods, and educational research. The undergraduate program offers certificates in early childhood education (PreK-Grade 4), middle level education (Grade s 4-8), most areas in secondary education (Grades 7-12), as well as certification in the PreK-12 areas of art, music, and world language.

Opportunities to teach in other undergraduate areas in support of the liberal arts curriculum,as well as within the graduate education program, are also available. In addition to awarding the Master of Education and Master of Arts in Teaching degrees, the graduate education program offers certification for principals, supervisors of curriculum and instruction, reading specialists, ESL teachers, and special educators.

# Contact:

Dr. Joseph Shosh

search.education@moravian.edu

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# Acknowledgements

To table of contents