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Action Research Report: The Use of Occupational Therapy Toys to Increase On-Task Behaviors

By Louris Otero

Young students are lively and active and need movement while they learn (Moyles, 2015). However, there are certain learning activities that require students to remain seated or keep their physical motions to a minimum. Many of today's classrooms offer alternative learning activities and seating solutions for students with and without diagnosed sensory integration issues. Many new techniques have been found to useful for students with specific needs and also help to serve the needs of the wider population. The use of fidget toys, wiggle seats and other tools based on occupational therapy offer students a possible solution to the need for movement while remaining attentive.

Occupational therapy supports students with disabilities in the classroom by looking at academic goals and functional goals (Hutchinson & Villeneuve, 2012). It helps to remove physical and attitudinal barriers to participation and recommends changes to activities and assistive technology as strategies to help students be successful regardless their disability (Case-Smith, Rogers, & Johnson, 2005). Additionally, the study by Hutchinson and Villenueve (2012) showed that students benefit from having educators and occupational therapists collaborate on treatment plans and academic and functional goals.

The purpose of this action research study was to determine whether the use of occupational therapy assistive technology and fidget toys during whole class instruction and independent work helped improve on-task behavior. This action research was important because Universal Design for Learning supports making assistive technology available to all students because all students, regardless of capabilities will benefit from using them to remove barriers to the curriculum.

The action research took place in a 1st grade classroom in a private school located in Coconut Grove, Florida. The participants were 15 first graders. Permission for participation was obtained from parents or the legal guardians of all participants. All students were provided with the opportunity to make use of various fidget toys during whole class instruction and independent work. The teacher collaborated with the occupational therapist to provide necessary materials for the study and related expertise in the proper use of the technologies. The following data was collected: choice of whether or not a fidget toy was used, a teacher checklist of whether or not the student was on-task, simple student pre and post questionnaire meant to self-determine accuracy of listening comprehension. Student work was also collected during the study.

Literature Review

Villeneuve and Hutchison (2012) looked at the effect of collaboration between the occupational therapist and the educator during the delivery of services on the goals and expectations of two students. There were two participants, 6-year old boy with Autism and a 6-year old female with a chromosomal abnormality. This was a qualitative study consisted of ethnographic observations, documents, interviews and the Socio-Cultural Activity Theory (Engestrom, 2001). The results of the study showed that collaboration between the educator and occupational therapist supported planning, transitions between services and learning, and accountability regarding recommendations and programming for students.

Miller, Coll, and Schoen (2007) tested the effectiveness of occupational therapy – sensory integration in children with sensory modulation disorder (SMD). Twenty-four children participated in the study: five with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), 3 with a diagnosed learning disability, 1 with anxiety disorder and 15 without any previous diagnosis.

A pilot randomized controlled trial (RCT) tested the effectiveness of occupational therapy (OT) and sensory integration (SI) techniques on children with sensory disorders. Twenty-four children with sensory disorders were assigned 1 of 3 treatments: (a) occupational therapy, (b) sensory integration, (c) activity protocol, and (d) no treatment.

Pretests and posttests were given to measure physiology, behavior and, sensory and adaptive functioning. Results concluded that OT-SI was effective in children with SMD more so than no treatment, or a placebo treatment (activity protocol).

This study in this article evaluated the effect of stability balls on in-seat and on-task behavior, and teacher and student perception of stability balls (Fedewa & Erwin, 2011) . The study Fedewa and Erwin (2011) was conducted across 3rd through 5th grade classrooms in an elementary school in rural Kentucky on 76 students. Eight students with a high or very high probability of ADHD were observed. Students used stability balls in place chairs for seating. Baseline data was collected for 2 weeks prior to beginning the study. The study lasted 12 weeks. In-seat on-task behavior improved. On average, students were seated 94% of the time and remained on-task for 80% of the time. Again, this article will inform the current study in that an occupational therapy tool will be offered to the students in an effort to study its effectiveness on on-task behavior in 15 first grade, female students.

This study by Devlin, Healy, Hughes, & Leader (2011) compared and examined the effects of sensory integration theory and behavioral intervention on the rates of challenging behavior in 4 students with autism. There were 4 male participants with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Participants were chosen because they had a history of challenging behavior. Participants attended schools that employ applied behavior analysis. All participants received speech and language therapy, along with corresponding occupational therapy including the use of sensory integration devices such as a net swing, a trampoline, a therapy ball, a bean bag, and various chewable and small tactile devices. Results showed that challenging behaviors were reduced with the use of behavioral intervention more so than with the use of sensory integration intervention (Devlin, et al., 2011). The study in this article will inform the current action research in that by offering fidget toys as a means to self-regulate, the students will be able to reduce the incidence of challenging or off-task behaviors. Although the study in this article suggests that using behavior intervention is more effective (Devlin, et al., 2011)

This study in this article is centered on the question of distractibility and whether or not it is caused by increased competition in sensory cortex, decreased capacity of cognitive control, or deficient feedback from control areas to sensory regions (Friedman-Hill, Gex, Leibenluft, Pine, Ungerleider, & Wagman, 2010). This study was conducted on 3 groups of students: 15 children with ADHD ages 8-13, 14 typically developing children aged 9-13, and 15 healthy adults aged 22 – 42. Participants were shown a photo that would morph from the face of an ape to that of a woman while other images meant to serve as distracters flashed in different places on the screen. Participants indicated the changes in the face while distractors flashed. Results found that healthy adults had substantially lower perceptual thresholds than healthy children (Friedman-Hill, et al., 2010). There was no difference in the results found among children with ADHD and healthy children (Friedman-Hill, et al., 2010). This article will inform the current study because of the information regarding distractibility. The focus of the current investigation is to reduce distractions with the use of fidget toys and in essence, keep the student focused on the lesson by satisfying the need to do something with their hands while they listen.

This study in this article measured whether or not there are differences in sensory processing behaviors in children with ASD and neuro-typical children (Tomcheck & Dunn, 2007). It measures the differences in sensory processing domains in children with ASD. Participants consisted of 400 children diagnosed with ASD, 1,075 children ranging in ages from 3 to 10 years old who were not receiving special education services. The Short Sensory Profile was administered to each participant. Children with ASD were reported to have sensory impairments, whereas typically developing children did not (Tomcheck & Dunn, 2007). Significant differences were found in performance when comparing children with ASD and typically developing counterparts (Tomcheck & Dunn, 2007). This article will inform the current action research by offering information on the performance of typically developing children and sensory processing.

This study by Collins and Dworkin (2011) looked to measure the effectiveness of a weighted vest attention to task. Twenty-five, 2nd grade students with difficulty attending while learning in general education classrooms. Data were taken of students while on-task, with and without the weighted vest. Results indicate that vests were not effective in increasing time on task (Collins & Dworkin, 2011). Results should be taken cautiously due to the small sample size and participant selection process.

Although the weighted vests were not effective in the study in this article, the information may prove useful in administering the current study. The sample in the current study will also be small, but a different OT device will be used hoping to yield effective results in focus and on-task behavior.

The purpose of this study by Bose and Hinojosa (2008) was to explore the interactions of occupational therapists with teachers and other school personnel in Kindergarten through 2nd grade inclusive education classrooms in the New York City metropolitan area. Fliers were sent out via mail to a list of occupational therapists working in the NYC metropolitan area. Thirty inquiries to participate were received and six were selected based on a specific criteria. In-depth interviews of the occupational therapists were conducted over a 20-week period. Participants viewed their experiences with faculty as difficult (Bose & Hinojosa, 2008). Problems included time constraints, lack of communication and teacher receptiveness. All occupational therapists noted professionalism of interactions and found collaboration valuable (Bose & Hinojosa, 2008). This article will inform the current study because of the collaboration that will occur between the classroom teacher and the occupational therapist while the action research is being conducted. During the action research the teacher will consult the OT for materials and best practices when offering students fidget toys, and how best to collect and analyze data.

The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence of and relationship between sensory processing difficulties and behavior difficulties (Fox, Snow & Holland, 2014). Participants were a sample of 38 children involved in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and Schools Early Action Program, which is a multi-modal early intervention program for children from Preparatory1 (Prep) to Year 3 (i.e. approximately ages 5–8) who had been identified as being at risk of developing conduct disorder. Behavioral problems were assessed using the parent-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire along with the 36-item Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory, which is a parent-rating scale that screens for disruptive behavior. Sensory processing difficulties were assessed using the parent-reported Short Sensory Profile. Also, the Children's Communication Checklist was used to screen for language impairment. The study in this article used face-to-face meetings for the purpose of administering the measures Fox, et al., 2014). A correlation was found between sensory processing difficulties and the prevalence of disruptive behavior (Fox, et al., 2014). This article will inform the current action research study in that the students in the investigation are within the same age group. The hope is that the use of an occupational therapy device such as fidget toys will thwart behavioral difficulties.

In the current study, students were offered fidget toys to use while listening and participating in a whole-class activity or instruction. The goal of this study was to determine if students with or without SMD benefitted from the use of fidget toys. Additionally, these studies regarding the benefits of collaboration supported the action research because of the collaboration that occurred between the classroom teacher and the occupational therapist while the action research conducted. The teacher consulted the OT for materials and best practices when students were offered fidget toys.

Action Plan/Methods
Name: Louris Otero   **School**: Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart
Research Question(s): What is the effect of occupational therapy assistive technology (such as fidget toys) on the on-task behavior of elementary students during whole-group and independent instructional time?
Intervention: *Describe the intervention you will implement to accomplish the outcomes you seek for your students?* The intervention consisted of making various fidget toys available for students to use during whole-group instruction or activity. Students were allowed to choose from fidget toys provided by the in-house occupational therapist. Silent fidget toys are self-regulation tools that keep restless bodies, fingers, and feet occupied. Silent fidget toys can be squishy toys made of rubber, tiny bean bags for squeezing, coiled rings for pulling, tension balls, Silly Putty for squeezing and pinching, or knead-able erasers. In this particular study, a variety of fidget toys were used.

The goal was to give students an opportunity to "fidget" or do something with their hands to keep them focused and on-task. The student was free to play with the toy of their choice in any way that they deemed appropriate. This play was unstructured because the point was to satisfy a sensorial need in an effort to keep the student on task.

Time Line: (separate sheet) Data collection took place over an 8 week period. Data collection started in January and ended in early late March/early April 2017.

Data Collection: *Describe the specific approaches you will use to collect data before, during, and/or after your intervention. You need to "triangulate" your data; thus, you need at least 3 different data sources (e.g., tests, observations, interviews). Also, be specific about what each data source measures (e.g., you are using a test that measures reading comprehension or using observation to tally bullying behaviors). Next, describe the type of data that you obtain with each source (e.g., scores from a test of subtraction facts or a frequency of bully events observed).*

Data Source 1: Prior to implementing the intervention, it was explained that fidget toys were available for everyone to use during a lesson that required listening comprehension and the need to remain on-task. The teacher observed and noted whether or not students chose to use toys. Students participated in a survey of their behavior prior to using fidget toys during the lesson and after the intervention was completed.

   Data: Pre and post survey responses from students

Data Source 2: Weekly, at the beginning of the lesson, students' prior knowledge was assessed during a group discussion. Student work was collected. Students completed a teacher-created survey to self-assess on-task behavior.

   Data: Weekly teacher-created survey

Data Source 3: Teacher tallied the number of students engaged in off-task behaviors during each lesson. The number of off-task behaviors will be averaged weekly.

   Data: Weekly checklist of on or off-task behavior for 8 weeks. Checklist to keep track of students' choices of toys.

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Time Line (use separate form): *The Time Line must include length of intervention and when materials (if needed) are prepared, when persons are notified and/or permissions are sought, and when you plan to collect all data – be very specific*

• Received parental permission to participate in study	January 23, 2017 –sent permission letter home with students for signature	• Letter
• Collaborated with occupational therapist regarding toys and confirmed method of use	January 25, 2017	• Fidget toys
• Explained fidget toys to students. • Administered pre-intervention self-assessment behavior survey • Administered bi-weekly post self-assessment	Week of January 30, 2017	• Pre/post survey • Fidget toys
• Conducted discussion to assess prior knowledge • Read/taught content area lesson in either history or science. • Students completed an "exit ticket" to assess on-task behavior during the lesson.	Week of February 6-10, 2017 Week of February 13-17, 2017 Week of February 20-24, 2017 Week of February 27-March 3, 2017 Week of March 6-10, 2017 Week of March 13-17, 2017 Week of March 20-24, 2017 Week of March 27-31, 2017	• Running record of students engaged in off-task behaviors. • Teacher-created "exit ticket" • Fidget toys • Checklist of toy selection

• Administered teacher-created summative assessment, including reflection question • Administered teacher-created post-intervention behavior self-assessment survey	Week of April 3, 2017	• Teacher-created summative assessment • Reflection question • Teacher-created student survey

Findings, Limitations, and Implications

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed by reviewing the results of the student self-assessment survey, the teacher checklist of students engaged in off-task behaviors, and the teacher-created exit tickets that allowed students to determine whether they had listened better with or without the fidget toy. In the first measure, the students were given a short survey conducted at the onset of the intervention. The first measure consisted of a short 3-question survey of the students used to help them assess their on-task behaviors:

The second measure consisted of a post-lesson question in the form of an "exit ticket" posed to the students. This question was used to self-assess their on-task behavior after having used a fidget toy in an effort to curb off-task behaviors. Students that chose not to use fidget toys were also given the "exit ticket" to fill out.

The third measure consisted of a simple survey administered at the end of the application of the intervention. This survey helped the students self-assess their on-task behaviors in relation to their use of the fidget toy. In the meantime, the teacher kept a checklist of students engaged in off-task behaviors.

Findings
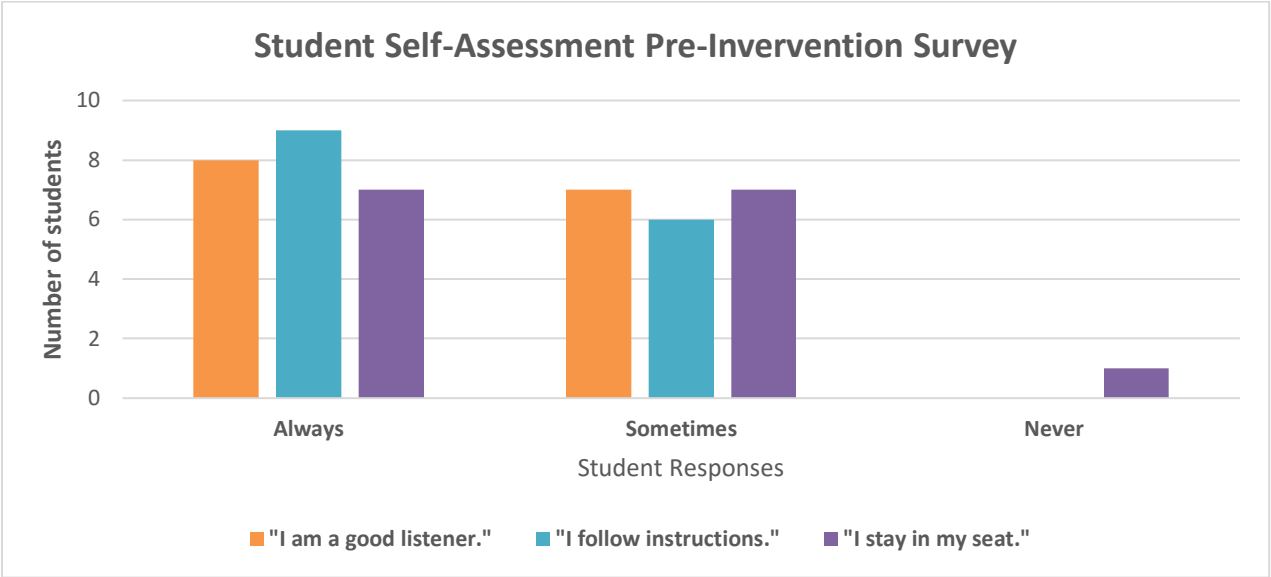
Figure 1. Self-assessment of students to self-determine listening skills, ability to follow instructions and remain in their seats

"Exit Tickets" - Week 3

Number of Students / Student Respnses
Better · Worse · N/A
Thursday · Friday

"Exit Tickets" - Week 4

Number of Students / Student Respnses
Better · Worse · N/A
Thursday · Friday

"Exit Tickets" - Week 5

Number of Students / Student Respnses
Better · Worse · N/A
Thursday · Friday

"Exit Tickets" - Week 6

Number of Students / Student Respnses
Better · Worse · N/A
Thursday · Friday

"Exit Tickets" - Week 7

Number of Students

Better | Worse | N/A

Student Respnses

■ Thursday ■ Friday

"Exit Tickets" - Week 8

Number of Students

Better | Worse | N/A

Student Respnses

■ Thursday ■ Friday

*Figures 2-9.*Bi-Weekly post-invention/post-instructional "Exit Tickets" to self-determine listening skill.
*The "Not applicable" designation was assigned to those students that chose <u>not</u> to use a fidget toy on that given day.

Student Self Assessment Post-Intervention Survey

Number of Students

Always: 13, 14, 13
Sometimes: 2, 1, 0
Never: 0, 0, 2

Student Responses

■ "The toy helped me stay in my seat." ■ "The toy helped me listen to my teacher."
■ "The toy helped me complete my work."

Figure 10. Post-intervention self-assessment survey.

*Figure 11.*Teacher checklist of students' usage of toys and frequency of the on-task behavior.

*Figure 12.*Teacher checklist of students' usage of toys and frequency of the on-task behavior.
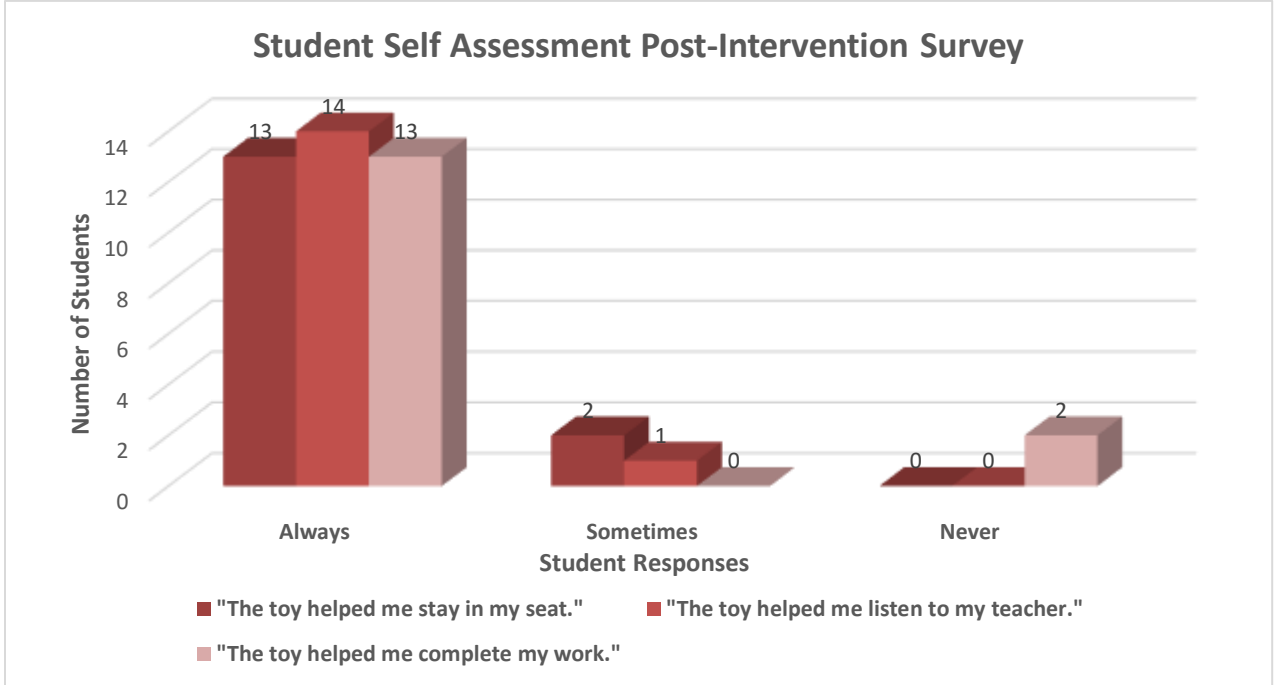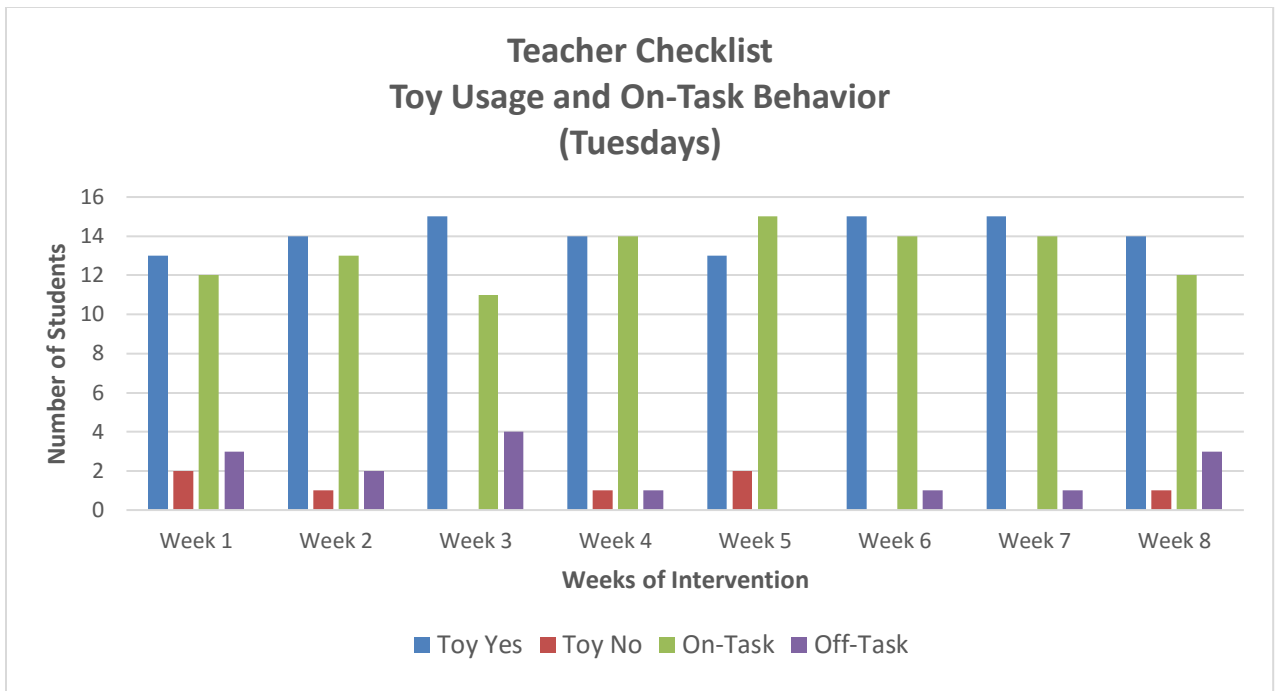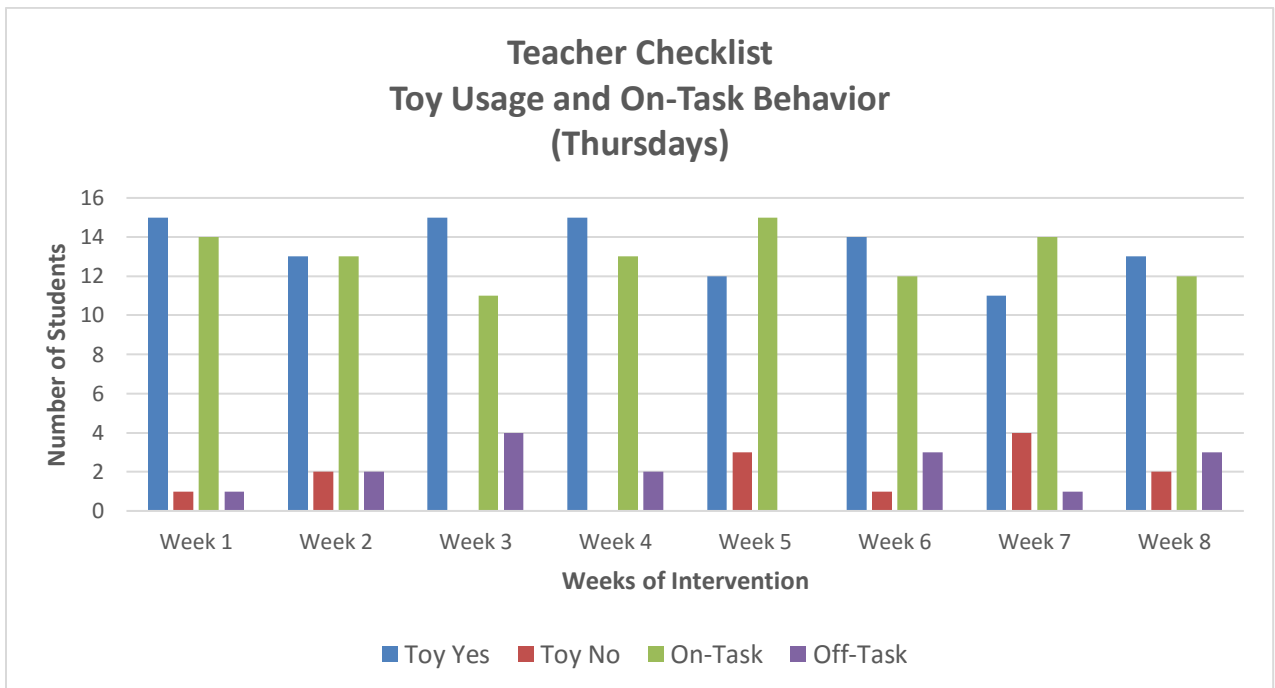On-task behavior is defined as a student's engagement in behaviors as expected by the teacher and as outlined by the classroom instruction.
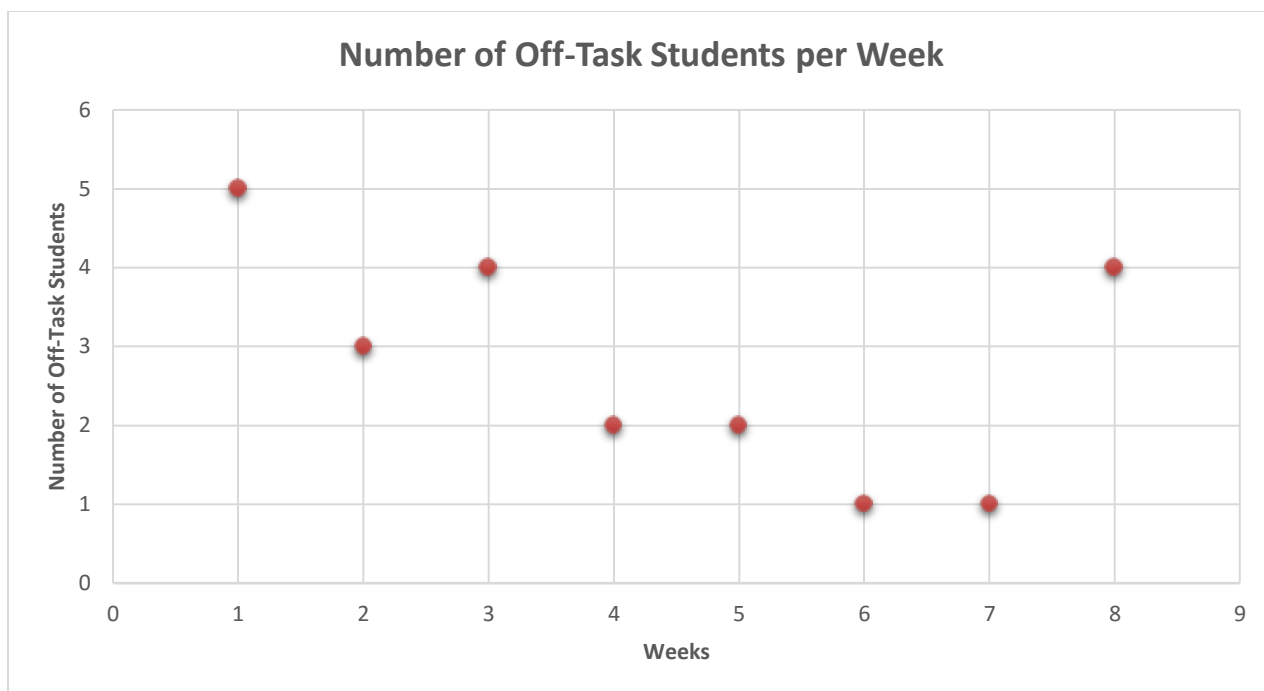
Figure 13. Number of students that were off-task per week during the intervention.

The findings as illustrated in Figures 1-13 show that students thought that they were "good listeners" already before, during and after the intervention. The teacher was able to correlate those results using the checklist to record observations of students' behavior and whether or not they chose to use a fidget toy. Based on the teacher observations, the fidget toys did not increase or decrease student engagement. This is due in part to the small sample group and its limitations which will be discussed below.

Pre and Post Intervention Student Survey of On-Task Behavior. Prior to implementing the intervention, it was explained that fidget toys were available for everyone to use during a lesson that required listening comprehension, and the need to remain on-task. The teacher observed and noted whether or not students chose to use toys. Students then participated in a survey of their behavior prior to using fidget toys during the lesson and after the intervention was completed. This simple survey consisted of three positive statements about their ability to be good listeners, follow instructions, and stay in their seats. The students were asked to circle the response that best matched their behavior, always, sometimes, or never. Figure 1 shows eight out of 15 students thought they were *always* good listeners pre-intervention. Nine out of 15 students thought they *always* followed directions, and seven out of fifteen students circled *always* when describing their ability to stay in their seats. Roughly half of the class thought they were good listeners, followed instructions, and stayed in their seats sometimes. Interestingly, no one circled *never* being a good listener or following instructions, but there was one outlier who circled *never* for staying in their seat.

The Post-Intervention Student Survey gave the students another opportunity to self-assess once the 8-week intervention was completed. Students were given a teacher-created survey with three positive statements about their behavior while using a fidget toy: The toy helped me stay in my seat, listen to my teacher, and complete my work. They students then circled the answer that best matched their behavior: always, sometimes or never. Students, with the exception of one or two, overwhelmingly chose *always* to describe their listening, their ability to stay in their seats and complete their work. Only two students chose *Never* to describe how well they were able to complete their work with a fidget toy. This may have occurred because the student either did not use a fidget toy or perhaps they misunderstood the statement. These students are young and perhaps lack the self-awareness needed to decide whether or not a fidget toy might be useful.

Post Lesson Exit Ticket. Weekly, at the beginning of the lesson, students' prior knowledge was assessed during a group discussion. Student work was subsequently collected and students then completed a teacher-created

survey to self-assess on-task behavior at the end of the lesson. This simple survey consisted of one question asking students to decide if they were better or worse listeners with a fidget toy. These data were collected twice per week for a total of eight weeks. Most students decided that they were better listeners when they used a fidget toy. Very few students considered themselves worse listeners when they used a fidget toy. There may have been a tendency to answer positively because they enjoyed playing with the toys regardless of the lesson or activity they were supposed to be engaged in at the time. In other words, if a student answers that the fidget toy helped, then the teacher will continue to let them use it during instructional time. Based on teacher observations, this is just typical behavior for the age group in the sample.

Frequency of Off-Task Behavior. Figures 11- 13 illustrate the frequency of off-task behavior during the intervention. The typical week showed that one to three students exhibited off-task behaviors such as talking with other students during instructional time or turning in incomplete assignments. Week one and three showed that five and four students, respectively, were off task during instructional time. The reason for the off-task behavior varied from lack of interest to distraction due to the fidget toy itself, based on teacher observations. Students were frequently redirected to turn their attention to lesson and students typically complied.

Limitations
This study had several limitations. The study was conducted during an eight-week span. During the course of the school day, there are many scheduled interruptions throughout the week such as assemblies, religious services, days off from school, and absenteeism. In addition to the interruptions, it became increasingly evident that the fidget toys could also serve as distractions, as observed by the teacher. The students were eager to use the toys, but at times the playing distracted the students from listening, and as a result, caused a disruption to the lesson. Initially, the intervention was to be administered daily, but the teacher quickly noticed the potential for disruption and only administered the intervention twice per week. The teacher also questioned the honesty of the student responses to the survey as they thought the toys were helping them listen and stay on task, but the teacher observed otherwise. This research might prove more interesting results if conducted with older students with better self-awareness.

Implications
Since this intervention, the use of and popularity of fidget toys has crossed over from being used strictly by students with sensory integration disorder and attention deficit disorder to neurotypical students. This causes an issue for teachers and students alike because of the potential for disruptions in classroom management. It potentially lessens the positive effects of the fidget toys as a method of therapy. By the same token, the use of fidget toys by most, if not all students, makes them accessible to all without the fear of appearing or feeling different from other students. If this intervention is applied with fidelity and the novelty is allowed to wear off, then it could be useful in the classroom as stress relievers and means of finding the movement that many students seek while sitting and listening.

Dissemination

The findings of this study were shared with my school administrators during a weekly Academic Team Meeting. Additionally, the findings were shared with the faculty of the Primary School during the weekly faculty meeting. The results of the study were also shared with members of the faculty at-large at a professional development day conducted at the school. Finally, results of the study were shared with Florida International University (FIU) graduate students during a poster board session.

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Louris Otero has been teaching first grade for 14 years at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Miami, Florida. She is currently pursuing her MS in Special Education with an endorsement in Autism from Florida International University. Ms. Otero has been happily married for 20 years and is the mother of two teenagers, Serena, 18 and Justin, 16. This is her third publication.

Appendix A

Student Surveys

Student Self-Assessment
Circle the best answer.

I am a good listener.	Always Sometimes	Never
I follow instructions.	Always Sometimes	Never
I stay in my seat.	Always Sometimes	Never

Student Exit Survey

Name _____
I am a   BETTER   WORSE   listener with a fidget toy.

Student Self-Assessment

The toy helped me stay in my seat.	Always Sometimes	Never
The toy helped me listen to my teacher.	Always Sometimes	Never
The toy helped me complete my work.	Always Sometimes	Never

Appendix B

Administrative consent for action research

Good Morning,
Yes, I give you permission to conduct your research while here working in the first grade at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart.
Paola Consuegra

Paola Arechabala Consuegra '87
Director of Montessori & Primary School
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Book Review: A Force for Change (Author: John Paul Kotter)

By Maria Ibarra

Kotter, P. John. *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*. New York: The Free Press, 1990. 177 pp. $ 17.00.

Introduction

Dr. John Paul Kotter has been recognized as a well-known expert on leadership. He is a professor of Organizational Behavior at Harvard Business School in Cambridge, MA. He has conducted intensive research in organizational change and he is the author of twenty successful books. Twelve of his books have been business bestsellers and two overall New York Times bestsellers.

Purpose and Thesis

John Kotter wrote "A Force for Change" in response to the growing debate regarding what constitutes good leadership. This author states that "leadership in complex organizations is an increasingly important yet often confused topic which can be further illuminated by exploring its relationship to management, a very different sort of activity and one that is much better understood today" (viii). The author further argues that many people have the wrong "notion that leadership is good and management is bad" and that "many firms today lack sufficient leadership, a deficiency that is increasingly costly, yet often correctable" (ix). The purpose of this book is to shed some light on the confusing concepts of leadership and management within complex organizations. The author provides a framework to guide administrators to effectively lead and manage their organizations.

The author's thesis is that effective leadership and competent management are two important processes needed for organizations to experience success and prosperity. The author argues that the primary function of effective leadership is to create "constructive or adaptive change" (5) whereas the primary function of management is enabling the organization to be kept "in order; on time and on budget." Furthermore, effective leadership produces movement while management produces consistency (4). The author thoroughly explains that "leadership produces useful change and management creates orderly outcomes which keep organizations in working efficiently" (7). In addition, the author also advises leaders that when leadership and management are used in conjunction, "an effective leadership can produce the changes necessary to bring a chaotic situations under control" (7).

Strength and Challenges

Kotter offers an in-depth analysis of what constitutes the leadership process as he provides a mere explanation of processes, function, and structure of what constitutes good leadership. He makes the critical distinction between leadership and management, and he recognizes the importance of both processes. The author argues that essential features that both processes share are: establishing goals, creating networks of people and relationship that enable all individuals to accomplish their goals; and ensuring that goals are accomplished (5). In a similar vein, Fullan (2001) supports the importance for leaders in being relationship builders with diverse groups and further emphasizes the importance in fostering interactions that promotes sharing expertise.

Kotter clearly describes three essential sub-processes that help administrators to successfully lead: establishing directions, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring. On the other hand, management is achieved through three processes: planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling as well as problem solving. Kotter highlights a key difference between the two processes. He states that an important outcome obtained from engaging in good management is consistency and order.

However, leadership differs from management in that it produces movement and change rather than consistency (4). Fullan's framework of leadership also supports the importance of understanding change in successful leadership. According to Fullan (2001), change creates disequilibrium, which could be uncomfortable, but if relationships are good prior to the changes, they become better during the process. Thus, it is important for people to make sense of the process of change.

One strength of this book is that the author provides great examples of effective leadership and clearly illustrates the function of leadership to produce useful and significant change. The examples throughout the book also illustrates how effective leadership combined with competent management can lead to great business success. Another important strength of the book is that if offers comprehensive postscripts that enable readers to understand key ideas discussed throughout the book, such as postscripts include: comparing management and leadership, the relationship of change and complexity to the amount of leadership and management needed in a firm, consequences of strong leadership and weak management in a complex organization, the interrelation of direction setting and planning in a complex organization, aligning people, motivating and inspiring, developing a human system/network for achieving an agenda, and management and leadership roles.

Kotter helpfully provides a framework to guide leaders to effective lead their organization as he successfully help readers understand what leadership is, why this process is important, and how leadership differs from management. Kotter argues that "organizations that are both, well-led and well-managed" have a clear sense of direction and relevant planning activities, "but they are in the minority today" (39). Kotter clearly explains that establishing direction is a core aspect of leadership because "it creates vision and strategies" (36), but he also acknowledges the importance of planning in management today as it creates consistency and predictability (38).

Kotter clearly explains the important role that vision plays as it provides guidance to people in what a company should achieve or accomplish. He states that "vision is a description of an organization, a corporate culture, a business, a technology, or an activity in the future in terms of the essence of what it should become" (36). The positive impact of vision in leading is also supported by Fullan (2001) framework of leadership. Fullan argues that vision can attract the commitment and energies of employees, but only when shared with all individuals in an organization.

The author provides a thorough explanation regarding the importance of direction and planning. These points were clearly articulated by arguing that vision and strategies involve taking risks, which are essential in order to make change happen. However, the planning process of management helps people accomplish goals in a consistent and predictable manner. The author also argued that "strong leadership can disrupt an orderly planning system and strong management can discourage the risk taking and enthusiasm needed for leadership" (7). These points are very relevant to help readers distinguish between direction as well as planning setting. The author emphasizes that it is critical to understand the difference between both and failure to recognize such a distinction results in "over-managed and under-led organizations" supporting "long-term planning" and lacking "direction." Consequently, these organizations fail "to adapt to increasingly competitive and dynamic business environments" (37).

One challenge that the author has is explaining the rationale underlying the practice of aligning, motivating, and inspiring in successful leadership as he overlooks the role of emotion in relationships. The author identifies aligning as a process that involves having people lined up behind a vision and enabling them to use strategies that result in change. He argues that a key aspect of aligning is communication. The author also warns us against the challenge of getting people to understand a vision and complying to make the direction a reality which consequently leads to making progress towards a target. The author further argues that motivation and inspiration involves energizing people to overcome obstacles they find as they try to achieve a vision. He also argues that successful leaders help people to be motivated for long periods of time. However, Fullan (2001) takes these ideas further by arguing that in a culture of change, emotion may have an impact on people's opinion which leads to reservations and opposition to new directions. In addition, leaders must appreciate resistance and help people work together in the change process. I tend to agree with Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) viewpoint about the role of emotions. They argue that individuals' emotions and feelings have to be shared in order to build mutual trust among individuals with different perspectives and motivations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The book is clear, readable and amply illustrated with sufficient examples. This book offers a great guide for administrators who need to lead and manage in their organization as they need to create a changing culture as well as consistency and predictability. The author encourages leaders to lead and manage to successfully create productive and meaningful change. A book on this topic is important to administrators in business and schools because it helps them to distinguish between what constitutes a good leadership versus good management in order to successfully create the culture that is needed to help others to lead. The topic of this book is also relevant to leaders who work in complex organizations such as businesses or schools that experience constant change. A Force for Change is an enjoyable and interesting book that offers excellent strategies to effectively lead and manage and it offers an outstanding resource for administrators.

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About the Author

Maria Ibarra is from Guayaquil, Ecuador. She is currently working as a middle school teacher in Broward County, Florida. Ms. Ibarra has a passion for working with 7th and 8th grade students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. She has her Bachelor's in Psychology from Florida Atlantic University and her Masters in Special Education with an endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorder from Florida International University. Ms. Ibarra is married and is the mother of an eight year old.

Montessori for Children with Learning Differences

By Joyce Pickering, MA, SLP/CCC, HumD

Abstract

In this article, Dr. Joyce Pickering—a Montessori educator, speech and hearing pathologist, and learning-differences special—explores why the Montessori Method, with its comprehensive multisensory curriculum, is critical to the progress of children who learn differently—including children with dyslexia, ADHD, communication disorders, intellectual deficiencies, and autism. Pickering provides a comprehensive and detailed suite of therapeutic strategies that can be used with this population, along with the Montessori Method, to enhance students' educational progress. The immediate past president of the American Montessori Society, Pickering is also executive director emerita of Shelton School & Evaluation Center in Dallas, Texas, the world's largest private school for children with learning differences.

In 1950, Dr. Maria Montessori gave a lecture at the University for Foreigners, in Perugia, Italy, in which she drew a diagram of the four planes of development (Grazzini, 1988). The triangles represent Montessori's fundamental psychological theory, with each plane representing one of the sensitive periods of development.

Four Planes of Development
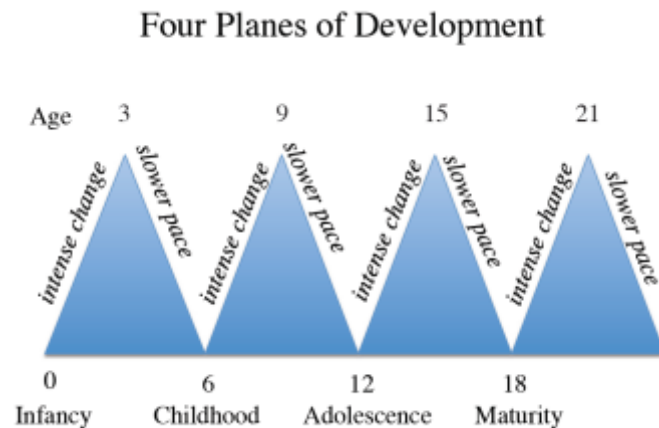
"Montessori education is geared to peaks and valleys of human formation." Dr. Montessori suggested we "divide education into planes and each of these should correspond to the phase the developing individual goes through".

This diagram represents the progression of typical development from birth to age 24. Montessori, who had worked with children with varying exceptionalities, at the Orthophrenic School, in Rome, recognized that children challenged in learning had what she referred to as an unequal development. As we look at the four planes for the typical child, we might envision all of the lines from birth to age 24 as wavy lines, indicating this unequal development.

Four Planes of Development
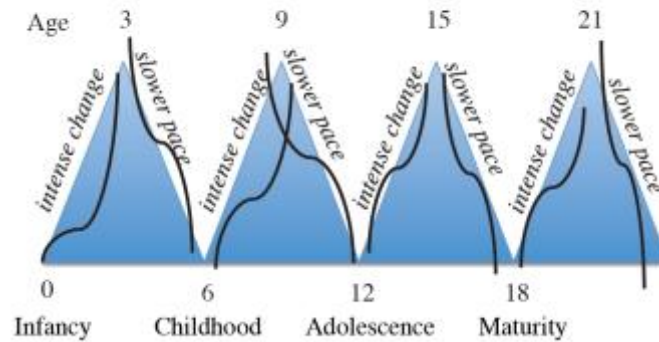
The development of the "at risk" child is uneven. Some areas are developing typically; others are not. The sensitive periods are different. Since the development in the first 6 years is different, all other periods of development are affected.

In a 1988 lecture, Dr. Sylvia Richardson suggested that to identify children at risk for learning differences with the goal of early intervention, the teacher should observe the development of coordination, language, attention, and perception. All of these areas can be clearly observed in the Montessori classroom. In particular, the Sensorial curriculum helps the teacher to observe the child's perceptual development and is diagnostic of uneven development.

In The *Absorbent Mind,* Montessori (1967) also described the early development of children between birth and 3 years of age as proceeding along different tracks. For example, coordination might be developing typically, while language and speech may show delays of disorder and attention and perception may be below average for typical development. There could be any combination of these unequally developing areas. It is important that these areas, which will contribute to cognitive ability and adaptive ability, develop evenly, because in the period between 3 and 6 years, Montessori indicates these important skills will be integrated, and if there is uneven development, it hinders the integration of these skills to assist the child in learning. This creates a domino effect, in which unequal early development and integration of these skills affect all of the planes that follow the first, hence contributing to learning differences.

Working from this premise, Montessori (along with French physicians Jean Marc Gaspard ltard and Edouard Seguin) explored ways that education could help minimize the differences between the typically developing child and the child who experiences learning and attention differences. This early work in sensory education led to the comprehensive multisensory curriculum of the Montessori Method. While the Method helps all children, it is critical to the progress of children who learn differently—including children with dyslexia, ADHD, communication disorders, intellectual deficiencies, and autism. I will briefly describe these learning differences and then discuss how the Montessori curriculum can be used with children with these differences.

The research of Dr. Gordon Sherman, at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, in Boston, has shown that the child with the specific reading disorder of dyslexia has a brain that is significantly different from the typical reader—not damaged or abnormal, just different (Sherman & Cowen, 2003). Using MRI studies of individuals with dyslexia reading, Dr. Sally Shaywitz, of the Yale University School of Medicine (2003), has found that the dyslexic brain is processing letters and sounds into words as the beginning reader does rather than as the typical reader, who, becoming fluent, primarily uses the word form area of the brain. Even in adulthood, the individual with dyslexia does not process visual and auditory information as the typical reader does.

Studies of ADHD indicate that this difference is a chronic neurobiological condition in which the person has difficulty with sustained attention and impulse control. Persons with ADHD have a physical, neurological challenge caused by a lack of release of neurotransmitters in the brain that assist with arousal and ability to concentrate and control impulses. Difficulty with executive function is noted in children with ADHD—they have trouble organizing and prioritizing.

For children with communication disorders, including speech and language development difficulties, we see differences in articulation, fluency of speech, language comprehension, and expression. The brain is not processing auditory information accurately or performing the task of bringing meaning to the words that are heard.

Students on the autism spectrum have challenges with oral language development and social skill development. Children with intellectual deficiency have low average mental ability to severe deficiency in intellectual development.

Each of the difficulties listed above can be found individually or in combination, preventing a student from learning as a typically developing student does.

To help the child who learns differently, when the usual presentation is not helping a student, Montessori educators can use several techniques:

- reduce the difficulty of an activity
- use more tactile-kinesthetic input
- create control charts
- focus on the development of oral language
- increase the structure for the child with impulse control difficulties, assuming the necessity to help the ADHD child to sustain attention, teaching how to make work choices and how to develop a cycle of work
- combine Multisensory Structured Language techniques with Montessori Language presentations.

Examples of these techniques are given below.

PRACTICAL LIFE:

- Use fewer dry materials in initial pouring activities (for example, 5 large beans versus many grains of rice) and less liquid.
  - Note: If the child is not holding the pitcher correctly, the lesson may have to become how to hold a pitcher and work up to pouring.

- Dressing Frames: lesson reduced to a first presentation of untying, unbuttoning, unbuckling, etc., with each step presented in separate lessons working toward the final step of mastering the direct purpose of the lesson
- Cutting bananas and bread before cutting more solid foods, like carrots
- Attaching language to the name of the presentation and all of the materials used in the lesson that is at the level of the child's oral language development

SENSORIAL:

- Pink Tower: Reduce the number of cubes to use every *other* cube, beginning with the largest, thereby increasing the discrimination to a 2 cm difference. Use more tactile kinesthetic exploration of each cube, if necessary, to show the child how to make the choice; arrange the cubes in random order on the mat and say "find the big one." Repeat this for the first 3 cubes. After the third cube, most children perceive how the choice is being made to build the cubes in gradation. This activity varies in 3 dimensions—height, width, and depth.
- Brown Prisms (Brown Stairs): Use the same procedures as described for the Pink Tower. This activity varies in 2 dimensions—height and width.
- Red Rods: Use the same procedures as described for the Pink Tower. It may be necessary to create a control chart for the child to practice building the rods from long to short, until he perceives the difference, which in this activity varies only by one dimension—length.
- Knobless Cylinders: Use the same procedures as described for the Pink Tower.

- Geometric Solids and Geometric Cabinet: Demonstrate to the child as you present the use of the senses of feel (tactile and kinesthetic), which will assist visual perception.
- Color Box III: Reduce the number of shades to be discriminated between, beginning with 3 dark, 3 lighter, and 3 lightest. Increase the range of discrimination until the child can perceive the differences in all 7 shades. A control chart can also be used.
- Memory Bag: Begin the year with objects in the bag that are made of different materials and are distinctly different in shape. During the year, increase the difficulty by making all of the objects of the same material, such as wood, and increase the similarity of the shapes of the objects. With all Sensorial activities, add as much language to the presentation as possible (after the initial silent presentation). Naming each object (e.g., *big, little; large, small; larger, smaller; largest, smallest)* expands the child's vocabulary. As the child is able, add describing words to each activity (e.g., *heavy, light, rough, smooth,* and the names of colors).

MATHEMATICS:

- As with the Sensorial materials, add the sense of feel, both tactile and kinesthetic, to the presentation of each Math material. This assists the child whose visual- al perception is faulty.
- Number Rods: As language is attached after the initial presentation, each rod should be touched and counted. For example, perceptually the 2 rod is not actually two things, but one rod painted in two different colors to represent the quantity 2. If, during the presentation, the teacher says, "This is 2," and touches and counts, "1, 2," the child's perception may be more accurate. This is true for all rods from 2 to 10.
- Spindle Box: When presenting, tap the rod into the palm of the other hand. This increases the sense of feel and assists the child when he imitates this movement in one-to-one correspondence in counting. If the child or other children in the room are sensitive to the sound of the rods dropping into the box, line the number slots with felt.
- Cards and Counters: If the child shows confusion with all 10 numerals and counters, reduce the number to S and build up to 10 as the child indicates he can accomplish the work. Use this activity in the Elementary program, and expand it to the realization that all numbers that end in 2 are even, including 12, 22, 102, 1002, etc.
- For math functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), children with learning differences usually need more repetition. It is very import- ant to attach language to each math function: Adding is putting amounts together, subtraction is taking an amount from a larger amount, multiplication is a fast way of adding, and division is a way to allot equal amounts to each person. All of these words are abstract and the Montessori Math materials provide ways to help make them more concrete and hence more understandable.
- Typically developing students seem to pick up math facts by using the Golden Beads for the math functions, along with the addition and subtraction strip boards. Those with visual and auditory processing difficulty have more challenges in learning these facts. In addition to manipulatives, practice writing number facts on a textured surface, thus using four VAKT channels (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) to help the student store information in memory. Various VAKT strategies include writing on the textured side of an 8" x 11" piece of Masonite board, writing in a sand tray, writing on a flat surface covered with shaving cream, and skywriting. Skywriting entails using the nondominant hand placed on the shoulder of the dominant hand while the student traces the letter or word in the air with a large arm movement.
- Making transitions from the Golden Beads to a more abstract work, like the Small Bead Frame, in which color represents quantity, usually takes more time and practice.

LANGUAGE:

- Since oral language skills may be a weakness for many students with learning differences, it is usually necessary to add a program of oral language development assessment and instruction to enhance vocabulary and verbal expression. The MACAR Oral Language Development Manual is one such program (Pickering, 1976).

- Written language, which includes reading, spelling, composition, and handwriting, requires the combination of Montessori language materials and the therapeutic techniques of a multisensory structured language (MSL) approach (e.g., Orton-Gillingham, Sequential English Education (SEE), Slingerland, Spalding, or Wilson Language).

- Use additional phonological awareness shelf activities (pat out each sound in a word; place a small floral stone or disk on a picture card for each sound in a word).

- Present the Sandpaper Letters in the sequence taught in the therapeutic program.

- Use the decoding pattern of blending the beginning sound to the word family of short and long vowel word family words. In this manner of decoding, the student is blending two units of sound rather than three or more, which is more difficult.

- Reduce the difficulty of word building by reducing the number of letters used and not presenting the full tray, which can be overwhelming to students with processing difficulties. For example, use a set of S pictures (cat, hat, sat, mat, bat) and just the letters needed to build the words (5 As, 5 Ts, and one each of C, H, S, M, and B). Students with processing challenges have difficulty seeing the patterns in words. These sets are put together by word family, such as at, ap, ab, an, ag, etc. The same types of sets are made for the other short vowel word families. After mastery of the short vowel patterns, long vowel word families may be used in a similar fashion.

- Montessori's excellent sequence of language materials are multisensory and sequential. The MSL pro- gram adds more detail to the strategies that work for students who learn typically in order to adapt them for those who learn differently. As the student proceeds to more irregularities of language, Montessori color-coded works provide for these higher-level language skills to increase accurate reading and spelling. Comprehension is embedded in the early word building by attaching meaning through the use of pictures for each word that is built.

- Use linguistic readers to practice the patterns the student is learning. Decoding and comprehension are included in these readers and subsequent readers as they master more patterns of the language. Handwriting is carefully taught by beginning with prewriting activities, including the Metal Insets. The formation of each letter is taught, preferably in cursive, beginning with the Sandpaper Letters. Students with learning differences experience spatial and directionality confusions. Cursive with letters connected into words and spaces between the words is an assist to these students. There are fewer reversals noted in cursive and the writing is more legible. There is no difference in the motoric requirements for one handwriting system over another. Students learning to write in cursive do not have a problem reading print.

- Montessori grammar is very helpful for all children, including those with learning differences. The gram- mar symbols help make a very abstract concept- parts of speech- more concrete. Grammar boxes and sentence analysis are organized in a way for the student to understand the structure of the language.

For students of all ages—Early Childhood through college—the strategies described here can be applied to the level of the concepts being taught. Developmental stage, rather than chronological age, is the critical factor in helping a child learn. The art of teaching is to match the level of the lesson to the student's individual developmental stage using the Montessori Method and therapeutic strategies, as necessary, to enhance the educational progress of the student.

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About the Author

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Book Review: What Great Principals Do Differently: 18 Things that Matter the Most (Author: Todd Whitaker)

By Norma Samburgo

Whitaker, T. (2013). *What Great Principals Do Differently: 18 Things That Matter the Most.* New York: Routledge. 146 pp. $39.90.

"Great principals never forget that is people, not programs, who determine the quality of a school" declares the author of this book while explaining the qualities that distinguish great school leaders. Todd Whitaker started his career as math teacher in Missouri and years later became a principal serving middle school, junior high, and high schools levels. Currently, Whitaker is professor of educational leadership at Indiana State University. His passion for education motivated him to research and study effective teachers and principals which made the basis for writing more than forty publications about staff motivation, teacher leadership, and principal effectiveness.

Dr. Whitaker wrote this book with the purpose of spreading the idea that, even though school leadership is extremely complex, there is a way to refine principal' skills and continuously work to be better. We can accomplish that by analyzing what great principals do, what distinguish them from others, how they reach success under their practice, and how we can implement what principals do best every day. All schools leaders should adopt the best practices used by their most effective colleagues. As stated by the author: "...if all schools had leaders like the best principals, the students who walk through their doors each day would face every school year with confidence" (3).

What Great Principals Do Differently consists of twenty chapters where characteristics of great school leaders are identified and developed. Whitaker talks about classroom management and how effective leaders promote individual teacher development to strengthen their skills, how they visit classrooms as a way to share problem solving decisions, and how they have to take responsibility for everything that happens in the school. From topics about respect and loyalty to teacher hiring process and dynamics of change, the author analyzes and transmits the best recommendations to be use for school leaders who want to succeed under their practice. In the last chapter, he resumes the book by asserting: "...The principals are the architects. The teachers establish the foundation. The students move into the building and fill it with life and meaning" (141).

The author uses three different perspectives to support his arguments and to demonstrate why every school leader should adopt the best practices of their colleagues' accomplishments. First, he uses the research studies he participated in during visits to school. Second, his experience as school consultant where he had the opportunity to observe principals, teachers, students, and staff and expanded his understanding of what conducts to achievement. The third perspective was his personal experience as school principal.

Todd Whitaker proclaims the need of school improvement by getting better teachers or improving the ones who are already in the school. He bases his assertion on the idea that it is people, not programs that govern the excellence of a school. This bring to my mind the words of Michael Fullan, in his book Leading in a culture of change, where he states that information is machines and knowledge is people, and that the information only becomes knowledge when it has a social meaning. This point in common with the two authors intensifies the importance of preparing teachers and using the knowledge of the best teachers to be shared with the rest in order to reach that school excellence that every leader should look for.

"My door is always open" (13) ... is what many leaders say, however, it does not mean that they are aware of everything is happening in the school. He remarks the ability of school principals who get out of the office, walk around the school to make themselves noticeable, visit the classrooms, and are constantly giving praise and nurturing teachers. Whitaker explains that effective leaders work to assist teachers to make an impact in their classrooms.

In order to do that, the first step is realizing that teachers are always the variable that will determine his teaching practice, students' achievement, and behavior management. He gives the example of an effective and an ineffective teacher and how they respond when students do poorly.

The best teacher will always take responsibility for the students' results and will improve to change those results. The role of the principals is to help teachers to accept responsibilities and to take the responsibility themselves. While conducting a study about principal effectiveness including eight middle schools, Whitaker observed that what distinguished effective from less effective principals is the degree of responsibility being taken and how they see themselves as the conclusive problem solvers. Less effective school leaders use to blame outside factors that influence the problems that arise in their schools, and certainly, they do not have the power to control them.

Another important aspect Whitaker analyzes in his book is that great principals apply many approaches in order to expand teacher performance: "Great principals focus on students by focusing on teachers" (42). An essential step is to recognize that people do the best they know and with that being said, school principals should teach the teachers or help them to improve what they already know. Once more, he expresses the necessity of leaders getting out of the office and visiting classrooms to help teachers to improve their skills. The difference between less and most effective principals is, even though they probably have an equivalent amount of demands, great principals always find the time to contact their teachers and act as a role model, especially with the ones that need it the most. Whitaker tells a story about an experience he had when he was principal: one of his teachers was always seating at his desk answering questions to the students using a book. When this teacher had the opportunity to share a classroom with another teacher, he learned different ways to teach and started to walk around supervising his students' work. Whitaker conclude that his previous behavior was simply because he did not what else to do. He mentions "talent exchange" as an effective approach to collaborate among teachers and improve teaching practices, or what Fullan would name as "knowledge sharing."

"Effective principals look beyond the storm of funding cuts and work to make sure the essential pillars are still standing after it passes" (62). The author affirms that effective leaders know that change is up to them and they need a purpose, a plan, and persistence. They know how to guide people through differences when changes occur, and that there will be disturbances (Fullan, 2001). Great principals learn to trust their best teachers in order to share their best strategies to navigate the change dynamic.

The author cites a theory that states that uncomfortable feeling make people change. At the time to make decisions, great principals ask themselves who is going to be more comfortable with the decision and who less. He compares behavior management decisions and realizes that sometimes the only ones affected are the well-behaved students. The same way, decisions that involve parents many times affect the good parents and not the ones that the focus should be on. Decisions should be made to build uncomfortable feelings in difficult people to promote their changing stage, however, from the education point of view that change has to be in a positive direction.

From my point of view, I identified a particularly strong component in each of the chapters, and that is putting students as the objective in which all decisions must base on. This probably sounds obvious since education is all about students, however, no all principals and teachers put children first. He points out that great principals and teacher have high expectations for students but the variables are not the students, the teachers are. A weakness I found in this book is the lack of comments about special education. In reality, everything said in the book applies for all aspects of education, however, as an especial education teacher, I would have like to see how special education is always taken in consideration.

In conclusion, What Great Principals Do Differently, by Todd Whitaker, is an excellent book that should be used in all school leader's programs. It is a small, attractive to read, and interesting book that includes real examples easy to visualize. Furthermore, it should be on all principals' desk as a valuable reference to help them make decisions in their everyday practice. Each of the chapters ends with a few words of wisdom that can be used to promote greatness in every leader and I want to cite one that is probably a synthesis of what a great principal should be: "Great principals are loyal to their students, to their teachers, and to the school. They expect loyalty to students and the school to take precedence over loyalty to themselves" (79).

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An Investigation of Whether Teachers Find Technology or Manipulatives More Effective For Teaching Students With Special Needs

By Shari Caranante

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Abstract

This study examines the field of education and the varying viewpoints on how manipulatives, technology and assistive technology impact the learning of students with special needs. This study summarizes the results of a survey that was administered to elementary school teachers in a district located in a suburb of Westchester County, New York. The purpose of this research is to find out whether teachers find technology or manipulatives more effective for these students, and to get a better understanding of strategies that teachers find successful in promoting academic growth and success in their classroom. The results of the survey will be used to learn what teachers find most effective for their students: manipulatives or technology, and what strategies they find effective so that they can be implemented in a classroom to accommodate the learning needs of students.

An Investigation of Whether Teachers Find Technology or Manipulatives More Effective For Students With Special Needs

Students with disabilities face numerous challenges in the classroom. Therefore, students with special needs frequently require support. The support needed, and the strategies used by educators vary from student to student depending on their disability, cognitive functioning as well as their executive functioning. There are many ways that students with disabilities learn. The challenge that educators face is that learning styles can vary for each one of their students. It is the role of the teacher to accommodate their students so that each one continually shows progress and succeeds academically.

The intended purpose of this investigation is to identify whether teachers find technology or manipulatives more effective when teaching students with special needs, and to identify key strategies teachers use to promote student success in their classrooms. This information will be used to help educate elementary school teachers with strategies that other teachers find successful so that they can improve their teaching methods to accommodate their students with special needs.

The use of manipulatives and technology have become an essential part of the teaching process (Martin, Shaw, & Daughenbaugh, 2013). This holds true not only for students with special needs, but for all students. With the rise of technology, there has been questions as to whether it helps or hinders students with special needs. Some educators feel that technology takes away from their involvement with the students and isolates their learning activities, but on the other hand, technology gives students access to a wide range of learning opportunities and increases their independence and prepares them for the future while providing additional academic supports. About manipulatives, there is question as to whether they help students improve their learning or if they distract learning based on the type of manipulative used in the classroom. Finally, there seems to be unresolved issues with assistive technology. Educators do not feel that they are getting the necessary training to find what devices can successfully assist their students.

Instructional adaptations consist of changes or modifications to teaching procedures, curricula, management, materials and technology, and the physical environment to facilitate learning. These adaptations are a necessary part of special education, and help students in compensating for the challenges associated with disabilities (Bryant & Bryant, 1998). When teaching students with special needs, teachers must find the appropriate strategies to foster academic growth and success in the classroom as well as nurture students' social and emotional needs so that they become confident, successful learners.

Research has shown that in the past few decades, there has been an increase in students with special needs. Additionally, there has been the rise of technology, assistive technology and the use of manipulatives in the classroom. However, there appears to be many controversial issues as to which, if any, are effective for students with special needs. Do these variables help or hinder when it comes to a student's academic success, and is one more effective than the other? There appears to be varying opinions, uncertainty and skepticism within the realm of education.

As we move forward, technology advances around us. Most special education teachers have used computers and software for teaching functional and academic skills to students (Brown, Miller, & Robinson, 2003). In the past years, there have been unparalleled changes in which an individual with a disability can accomplish through computer supports. Research shows that special educators, and educators in general, have been both excited and concerned about such developments. Some educators embraced the idea of new technologies, while others proceeded with caution due to their fear of too much reliance on technology in educational practice (Ludlow, 2001). Technology is known to make our lives easier, but can create more work and stress as we are pulled into this world of cyberspace where our focus is placed on the mere existence of technology instead of what that technology has to offer. The use of computer technology has become increasingly popular in elementary and secondary schools over the past several decades. There is very little doubt that technology has become a worldwide tool for teaching and learning (Qing & Xin, 2010).

Research shows that there have been mixed opinions about technology in special education. While some educators feel that technology allows students access to a broader range of resources that foster learning opportunities, others feel that computer mediated and web based instruction can become substitutes for real-life experiences, functional activities and hands-on learning. There are opinions that technology mediated instructional activities at times replace the interactions between an instructor and learners as well as among learners with independent isolated learning activities (Ludlow, 2001).

Educators recognize that emerging technologies have the potential to help with many crucial problems in special education and teacher education. On the other hand, there is the possibility that they can affect the quality of programs and services offered to students with disabilities as well as the training and support available for teachers who support these students. Educators feel that with a commitment to the right training, adequate research and solid values, there will be less problems with technology and instead, positive outcomes for teachers and for special education.

Research indicates that educators make limited use of new technologies even when they are readily available. In addition, investigations have shown that professionals may fail to implement technology even when they have been properly trained because they feel there is a lack of support and technical assistance (Ludlow, 2001). For technology to be effective for students with disabilities, teachers need to utilize the resources given and use them to the best of their ability so that they enhance the lives of students and promote success in the classroom. In earlier years, educators did not feel that they had sufficient information or were educated properly on appropriate and effective technology for special education. There were many underlying questions such as: Which technology will be best for a student, and How can technology be incorporated into learning? For teachers to promote technology use in their classrooms, they must receive the best training available so that they feel confident that what they teach their students will foster academic growth, understanding and success.

A study showed that when compared the effects of technology on mathematics achievement between special needs students and general education students, there were statistically significant effects among the students with special needs. The results showed the technology was way more effective in promoting mathematics achievement when used to help students with special needs rather than general education students. In fact, the students with special needs represented the most improvement within the study (Qing & Xin, 2010).

Classroom teachers who have a mix of general education students and students with disabilities may have trouble keeping all students on task; having them progress at the same time may be an unreachable task. In past decades, there was still question as to whether technology helped students with special needs. It was felt that to administer the appropriate technology to a student, an educator had to understand their student's needs and what their disability entailed. Although limited, research had shown strong evidence that using computer technology to assist with teaching writing to students with learning disabilities did have some value (Zang, 2000).

In the past few decades, educators have seen a significant increase in the availability of assistive technology devices that can allow students with disabilities to participate more in classroom and instructional activities to the same degree as their peers. Assistive technology also allows students with special needs to find a way around their disability related limitations. Research shows that students with learning disabilities working with their non-disabled peers in cooperative learning groups had social benefits, but did not show improvement academically, even with the use of assistive technology (Bryant & Bryant, 1998).

As teachers face the increasing demands to meet the needs of their students with disabilities, there is an increase in the need for professional development opportunities in assistive technology. Teachers need to become educated on assistive technology that will meet their students' learning needs so that they can successfully implement instruction. Research shows that most teachers reported that they need support in the areas of assistive technology, some are still unskilled, some are proficient, and none reported that they were very skilled. 86% of the teachers surveyed expressed that they were dissatisfied with their current level of skills and knowledge in this area (Chmiliar & Cheung, 2007). Research indicates that assistive technology achieves positive outcomes if teachers understand, use and integrate technology into the curriculum (Boyd, 2008).

A manipulative is a concrete model or object that appeals to several senses and can be touched and moved around by students (Swan & Marshall, 2010). Manipulatives assist students in solving problems and are used to support hands on learning. In past decades, studies have shown that teachers often comment that using manipulatives are "fun". This indicated that both teachers and students found enjoyment in using manipulatives for learning. The findings of much research have shown that students who use manipulatives, especially during mathematics instruction outperform students who do not. Although research generally supports the use of manipulatives, there is some evidence that mere presence of manipulatives does not guarantee the gaining of conceptual understanding (Moyer, 2001).

Additionally, in past decades, many teachers felt that teaching mathematics with manipulatives made learning more fun and that there was deep rooted enjoyment for their students. Teachers also felt that during lessons where manipulatives were used, students appeared to be interested, active and involved. Some teachers felt that manipulatives were used for "fun" only and by doing this, it sets up a classroom situation in which materials may not be used effectively. Studies also show that teachers may lack the knowledge of how to choose the correct manipulatives to use for a lesson, as well as how to connect them to the lesson so that they represent the concepts introduced by the teacher. In previous studies where manipulatives were used, they were viewed as a positive. However, it was concluded that using manipulatives was not enough. What also needed to be considered was how the classroom teacher was using them (Moyer, 2001).

Technology is a recent marvel in our everyday life that has taken off (Harris, Al-Bataineh, & Al-Bataineh, 2016, p. 370). During the last two decades, technology use has increased dramatically. Additionally, in the past few years, technology has been widely incorporated into teacher education in preparing general educators and special educators in changing program curriculum content. Computer literacy is now considered a critical skill for children and today, this starts in pre-school.

As in years past, research has shown that there are factors that are critical to successful use of technology in the classroom. As technology use increases in education, educators are challenged to find new ways to effectively incorporate technology into instruction (Drickey, 2006, p.115). Teachers need professional development and the appropriate training on the use of new and existing technology to be successful. They need to feel a certain level of confidence so they are comfortable with using technology in the classroom, and they need to have a positive outlook and attitude towards technology use (Almeida, Jameson, Riesen, & McDonnell, 2016). These factors are critical because computer and technology use has become increasingly important for students with special needs and in the special education classroom. Computers are now being used to teach a wide variety of skills to students with disabilities.

In recent years, the range of technology based interventions has increased in special education, and there is little evidence that special education teachers view themselves as confident and well educated in relation to using and implementing the quickly changing computer resources into their pedagogy. Some researchers feel that technology and computers are often not being used to their full capacity, and that this is due to teachers' perceptions of not feeling confident with their computer self-efficacy skills and their beliefs about technology which may contribute to the lack of use and misapplication of technology resources (Almeida et al., 2016). Through informal feedback from teachers, it seemed that many educators felt that they were being asked to use tools to teach students when they themselves had not been fully trained on how to use them. Many educators were reporting that they felt inadequate in teaching content to their students using new technologies, but felt pressure from school administration to use this technology in their classrooms. The use of technology has become a vital part of the teaching process. Technology use is no longer just encouraged, it has become necessary to prepare students to be globally competitive (Martin et al., 2013).

Research shows that in recent years, assistive technology has become a valuable source for students with disabilities by providing supports. When assistive technology is appropriately integrated into the classroom, students are equipped with several ways to complete their work and meet their educational goals. Teachers have the responsibility to guide students in learning how to use tools and supports (Vlasak & Ranaldo, 2012). Teachers need to have confidence and the proper training to use many of the assistive technology supports. Many educators feel that they do not have enough exposure to teach and guide their students successfully.

Despite the focus of assistive technology in federal legislation, the use in practice for students with disabilities is not always considered. In addition, there is not enough research being conducted. It is suggested that research on assistive technology for students with disabilities is usually narrowly focused on specific disability populations and often restricted to elementary age students. Research suggests an underutilization of assistive technology by students with disabilities (Bouck, 2016).

Huge advances in assistive technology have occurred over the past decade in addition to computer based technology. These advances have resulted in the increase in the availability of assistive technology tools to increase the participation of students with disabilities in the classroom. However, the benefits of these breakthroughs cannot be utilized by students unless teachers are sufficiently prepared to operate the equipment and integrate it into their classroom routine.

Studies show that manipulatives allow children to see and experiment with concepts that are much more abstract. In recent years, there is still evidence of controversy when it comes to the use of manipulatives in the classroom.

In some studies, manipulatives that were visually pleasing to the eye hurt student performance on learning outcomes. Some explanations as to why perceptual qualities impact learner performance are: manipulatives may remind students of something other than a tool in the classroom to assist with learning, which could cause distraction. Manipulatives could also focus attention on unrelated details, and they could encourage thoughts of play (Marley & Carbonneau, 2014). Research also suggests that when it comes to manipulatives, physicality is not important. Rather, their manipulability and meaningfulness make them educationally effective (Pouw, Gog, & Paas, 2014, p. 51). Results from several studies support the idea that perceptually rich manipulatives hinder children's learning and performance on tasks.

Other research shows that there are valid reasons to choose perceptually rich manipulatives because these objects stand out from their surroundings and not only attract attention, but stimulate further investigation of the objects. For this reason, manipulatives that are brightly colored, unusually textured, or highly dimensional may capture children's attention and help them to stay focused on the task at hand. They may also increase interest and keep the children from getting bored (Petersen & McNeil, 2013).

There are numerous ways in which manipulatives can be incorporated into classroom instruction to promote learning. Children often learn more easily when they are involved in hands on activities. Children's development is dependent upon interactions with objects. Learning from real objects can provide a firm foundation for the later development of skills and concepts (Cooper & Dunbar, 2016, p. 5). Manipulatives help students at all ability levels, but can be particularly helpful to students with special needs. Manipulatives can benefit students of all ages.

In past decades, and still today, there is controversy as to what is more effective for students with special needs. As technology use increases in education, educators are challenged to find new ways to effectively incorporate technology into instruction. To be effective, teachers will need be trained on how to use the new technologies provided in the classroom. According to research, assistive technology is not being utilized enough for students with disabilities. Again, educators need to be trained properly to determine the appropriate supports for their students. How and why manipulatives are used by teachers is a complex question. Simply using manipulatives is not enough if we don't consider how classroom teachers are using them.

Methodology

Participants

The survey was administered in one of the five elementary schools in a district located in a suburb of Westchester County, New York. The participants, all elementary teachers that worked in either general education, self-contained, inclusion or resource room.

Procedures

Based on the findings the researcher discovered while examining literary articles about technology, assistive technology and the use of manipulatives, a survey was designed to determine whether teachers find technology or manipulatives more effective for students with special needs. The survey was developed using google forms and was anonymous in terms of identifying characteristics such as the participant's name. Questions included basic demographic data such as the teacher's certification area, age group, number of years in the teaching field, highest level of education as well as questions about the three areas of focus. The thirty questions were based on a linear scale ranked from one to four. One referred to "strongly agree", two referred to "agree", three referred to "disagree", and four referred to "strongly disagree". The researcher obtained permission to conduct research from the college's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and from the principal of the participating elementary school. The survey was emailed to all teachers by the principal indicating that the survey was strictly voluntary and requested that participating teachers complete the survey at their earliest convenience. The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete, and was available for a ten-day period.

Data Collection and Analysis

Quantifiable survey data was analyzed through google forms and was based on percentages using pie charts and bar graphs. Raw scores were converted into percentages to frequency data. This will help the reader to better appreciate how participants perceived the criteria included in the survey.

Results

Demographics

Thirty-two educators working in grades K-5 participated in the survey. Of that number, 12.9% were kindergarten teachers, 29% first grade, 16.1% taught second grade, 16.1% third grade, 12.9% fourth grade and 12.9% taught fifth grade (see Figure 1). Of those who responded, 21.9% had been teaching twenty or more years, while 12.5% had been teaching between sixteen and twenty years; 40.6% had been teaching between ten and fifteen years, 12.5% between seven and nine years, 6.3% between four and six years, and 6.3% between one and three years (see Figure 2). Based on the results of the survey, most teachers surveyed were between ages thirty-six and forty-two (see Figure 3). They were experienced teachers who had been teaching at least seven years or more, with the highest number of respondents teaching between ten and fifteen years.

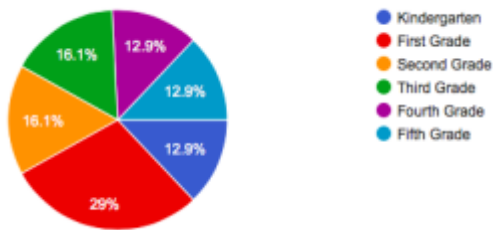**Figure 1.** What is the grade level you are currently teaching in?

Figure 2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
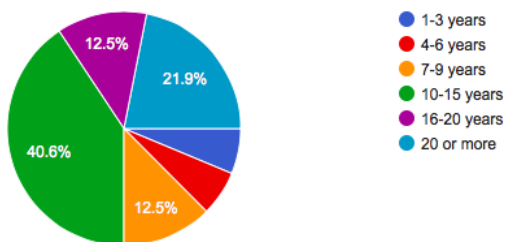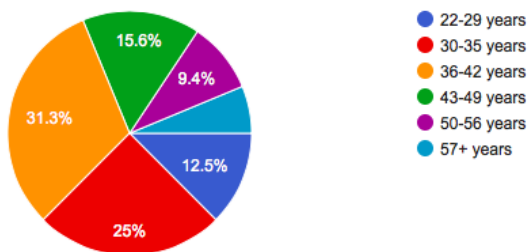

Figure 3. What is your age group?

Of the thirty-two participants, 81.3% are currently general education teachers, and 18.8% are special education teachers, while 62.5% work in a general education classroom, 28.1% work in an inclusion classroom, 6.3% work in a self-contained classroom, and 3.1% work in a resource room (see Figures 4 & 5). In addition, survey results show that 65.6% of teachers have students with disabilities in their classroom, while 34.4% do not. Therefore to sum up, most participants are general education teachers working in general education classrooms, and more than half have students with disabilities in their classroom.

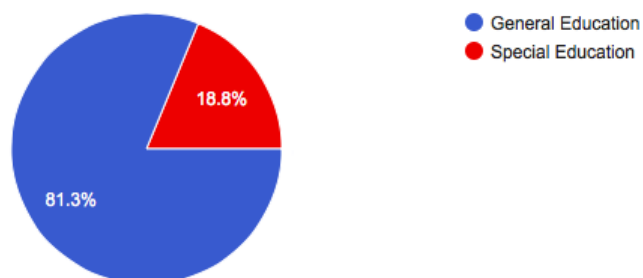*Figure 4.* Which area of certification are you currently employed?

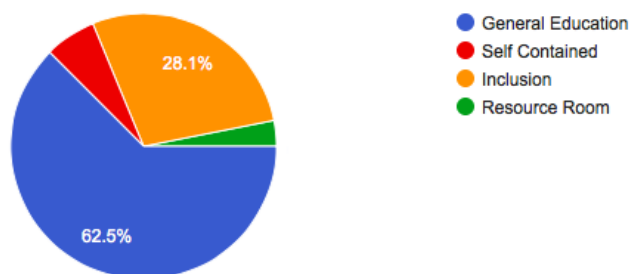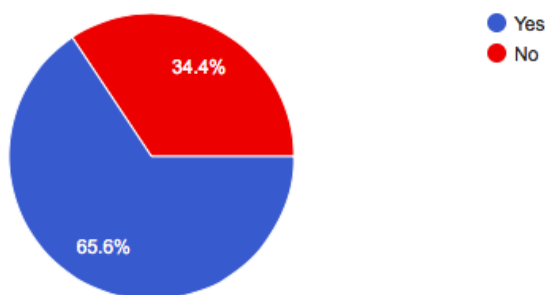*Figure 5.* What classroom do you teach in?

Figure 6. Do you have students with disabilities in your classroom?

Manipulatives

Of the thirty-two surveyed, 59.4% of teachers reported that they frequently use manipulatives in their classrooms, and 68.8% said their students benefited from using manipulatives (see Figure 7). Forty-four percent reported they use manipulatives not just for math, but for other subjects. Participants felt that manipulatives only benefit younger students in grades K-2, 78.1% strongly disagreed. While only 6.3% of teachers preferred manipulatives that are bland materials, 25.8% strongly agreed and 41.9% agreed that manipulatives that are brightly colored, textured or highly dimensional capture children's attention and help them stay on task. Results show that 3.1% surveyed felt that perceptually rich manipulatives hinder children's learning and performance on tasks, and 53.1% strongly agreed that children who are encouraged to view manipulatives as tools will have greater success connecting the objects to academic concepts. Of the thirty-two surveyed, 6.3% strongly agreed and 31.3% agreed that if students play with manipulatives they will have difficulty viewing them as symbols rather than toys.

Figure 7. I frequently use manipulatives in my classroom.
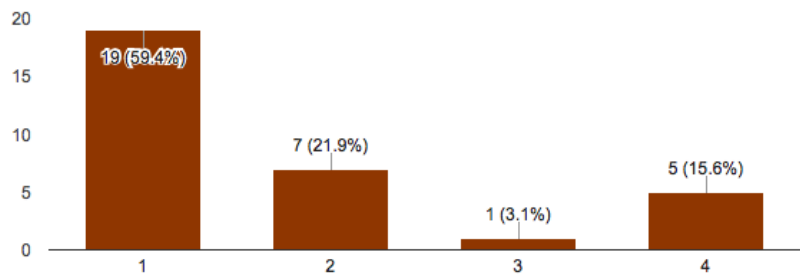
Technology

Of the teachers surveyed, 71.9% reported that they frequently use technology in the classroom (see Figure 8), and 84.4% strongly agreed that their students benefit from using technology. It was reported that technology was used not just for math, but for other subjects too; 84.4% strongly agreed. Most teachers reported that they were not inclined to wait until others have tried technology, before trying it themselves, while 6.3% said they would. Results show that 21.9% of teachers strongly agreed that they forge ahead in adapting or recommending new technologies, while 43.8% agreed. Eighty four percent strongly agreed that technology was effective in enhancing student's learning and increasing their motivation. Most teachers surveyed disagreed that technology replaces the interaction between themselves and their students; 40.6% strongly disagreed and 40.6% disagreed. Participants did not feel that technology isolates learning activities, while 3.1% strongly agreed. When asked if teachers felt that they didn't get enough technology training to support students, 6.3% strongly agreed and 31.3% strongly disagreed. While 18.8% agreed, they made limited use of new technologies even when they are readily available, 34.4% strongly disagreed. It was reported that 59.4% feel comfortable using an interactive white board and 9.4% use the white board only because they are required to do so.

Figure 8. I frequently use technology in my classroom.
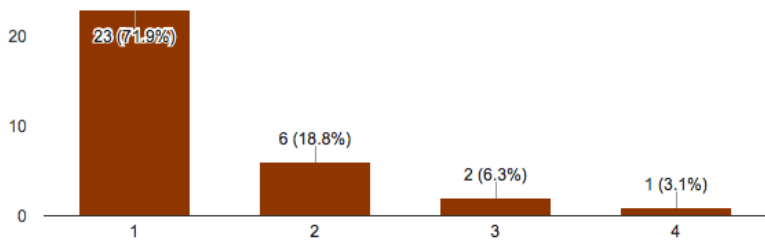
Assistive Technology

Most participants surveyed felt that assistive technology can be utilized by everyone in their classroom if needed because it makes lives easier, less complicated and more organized; 28.1% strongly agreed and 50% agreed (see Figure 9). Approximately Half of the people surveyed agreed that assistive technology enhances performances of students with disabilities, but does not help their involvement in cooperative learning; 16.1%% strongly agreed and 32.3% agreed. Results showed that 62.5% of teachers strongly agreed that when assistive technology is appropriately integrated into the classroom, students are equipped with multiple means to complete their work and meet their educational goals, while 38.7% of teachers felt that they don't get enough assistive technology training to support their students. It was reported that 3.2% of the participants surveyed felt that assistive devices interfered with their students' personal control and/or interpersonal relationships.

Figure 9. Assistive technology can be utilized by everyone in my classroom if needed because it makes lives easier, less complicated and more organized.
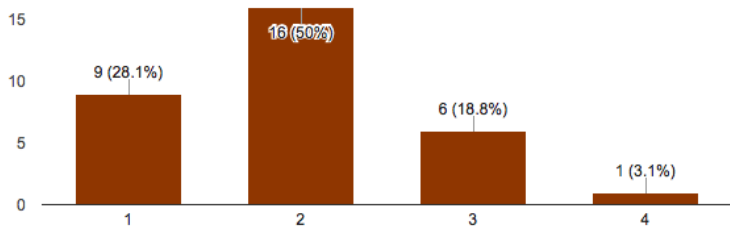
Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to find out whether teachers find technology or manipulatives more effective for students with special needs. The need for special education is on the rise, as is students with disabilities. It is likely that educators will have students with disabilities in their classrooms. It is imperative that teachers are aware of strategies that are successful for students with special needs to foster academic success.

Based on the author's findings, teachers frequently use manipulatives in their classrooms and felt that their students benefitted from them. They prefer to use manipulatives that are brightly colored to keep children on task and felt that children should be encouraged to view manipulatives as tools.

The author found teachers frequently use technology in their classroom and their students benefit from technology. Most teachers felt that they would try new technology, and were not inclined to wait for others before trying.

Teachers felt that technology was effective in enhancing student's learning, and they felt comfortable using an interactive white board. Teachers felt that assistive technology enhances the performances of students with disabilities and helps them to meet their educational goals, but feel they don't get enough training to identify the supports they would need for their students.

The author concluded that educators didn't feel manipulatives were more effective than technology and vice versa. It appears that educators frequently use both in their classrooms and students greatly benefit from each.

There are factors that limited the generalizability of the results for this project. Having a small population of participants limited criteria for analysis, and the distribution of the survey was limited to one of five elementary schools in the district. Additionally, the polled people were within one specific geographic area which further limits the generalizability of the findings.

Recommendations for future research would be to expand the distribution of the survey to as many elementary schools as possible and to distribute to different geographic areas to expand on the demographics of the teachers as well as the children. This will generate more participants and more feedback so that better decisions can be made to help students with special needs succeed academically.

The intended purpose of this research was to identify whether teachers find technology or manipulatives more effective when teaching students with special needs, and to identify key strategies teachers use to promote student success in their classrooms. This research is important because it can be used to help provide elementary school teachers with effective strategies so that they can improve their teaching methods to better accommodate their students with special needs.

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Book Review: Strengths Based Leadership – Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow (Author: Tom Rath)

By Rebecca A. Timmer

Rath, T. (20208). *Strengths Based Leadership-Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow*. New York, NY: Gallup Press. 256pp. $10.95.

Good Leadership does not require an individual to be well rounded and good at everything. In fact, according to Tom Rath, effective leaders are individuals who focus on their strengths, surround themselves with a well-rounded team of individuals and understand the needs of their followers.

Tom Rath, author of Strengths Based Leadership, is a leading business thinker in the area of leadership. He works at Gallup and has spent many years researching effective leadership and strengths. He is the author of many bestselling leadership books that use the Gallup StrengthsFinder to help individuals learn about their strength areas. Tom is a graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania. He lives with his family in the Washington D.C.area.

The book is written to present the findings of years of research conducted by Gallup scientists on leadership strengths. In the book Rath identifies three key components to being an effective leader: know your individual strengths, create a leadership team comprised of individuals that collectively represent all the different strength areas, and know and meet the needs of the individuals who look to you for leadership.

The book is divided into two major sections. In the first section Rath presents his arguments for the three key components of being an effective leader. He presents the idea that leaders should focus on leading by knowing and using their areas of strength. Rath states that, "Without an awareness of your strengths, it's almost impossible for you to lead effectively." (Rath, 2008, p. 10). The second key component of leadership that Rath presents is the idea that good leaders build well rounded leadership teams. Teams of leaders can possess all of the 4 basic domains of leadership when one individual person never could. When a team is made up of individuals who collectively have strengths in the areas of executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking, a strong and cohesive team has been formed. In that team individuals are asked to focus on using their individual gift set to the benefit of the team as a whole. The third key component of being an effective leader that Roth presents is that effective leaders know and understand how to meet the needs of their followers. The second major section of the book is made up of an explanation of the 34 different strength themes from the StrengthsFinder assessment. The 34 themes all fall into the four main leadership categories. When you purchase the book, a code is provided to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder test (that was developed by Don Gallup) online. The test then presents you with your top five StrengthsFinder themes and an explanation of those themes. An explanation of all 34 themes is provided in the second half of the book and could be useful when trying to understand the leadership themes of others.

The first argument that Rath makes is that effective leaders invest in their strengths. He points out that often leaders are unaware of what their individual strengths are and they spend their energy trying to imitate other leaders which usually leads to failure and frustration for those they lead. Often the self-concepts of individuals and what their talents are differ from actual reality. An individual cannot be an effective leader until she can understand what her individual strengths are. "The path to great leadership starts with an understanding of the strengths you bring to the table" (Rath 2008, p. 3). Once a leader knows and understands his own strengths, he can then give other people the opportunity to use their strengths and do what they do best on a daily basis. This argument is supported by the research conducted by Dr. Donald O. Clifton and the research conducted over the last 30 years at Gallup. When individuals are asked to spend all of their time working on improving their weaknesses, their self-confidence and motivation decreases. "If you focus on people's weaknesses, they lose confidence. At a very basic level, it is hard for us to build self-confidence when we are focused on our weaknesses instead of our strengths" (Rath, 2008, p. 14). This suggests that it is not only important for a leader to know their own strengths but that they also need to help other individuals determine what their strengths are as well.

Rath supports his argument by citing a study that Tim Judge and Charles Hurst of the University of Florida published in 2008 that looked at the self-confidence and success rates of adults after following them for 25 years. The argument that Rath makes is strong and it cites studies other than studies that were conducted by Gallup, his employer. However, he fails to take into account that as individuals, we can continue to grow in areas that are weaker for us. The education system is built around taking individuals where they are and growing their skills. Sometimes those skills improved using an individual's area of strength, often they are not. As educational leaders it is necessary to continue to grow in your areas of weakness. "The idea of one being able to focus only on five strengths – and ignoring weaknesses – isn't practical in today's complex workplace. Few jobs today are so unidimensional that they require only a few strengths." (Russel, 2016, paragraph 13). Michael Fullan (2001) in the book *Leading In A Culture Of Change* talks about the importance of effective leaders growing their emotional quotient and the emotional quotient of others (p. 74).

The second argument that Rath makes is that effective leaders maximize their teams. "Effective leaders surround themselves with the right people and build on each person's strengths" (Rath, 2008, p. 21). Too often leaders surround themselves with people who are like themselves rather than creating teams of diverse individuals who possess different talents and gifts. Studies conducted by Gallup have determined that there are four major domains of leadership strengths. They include executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking. Individuals with strengths in the area of executing know to make things happen. Individuals with strengths in the area of influencing are able to help the team reach a broader audience. Individuals with strengths in the area of relationship building are often the people who hold a team and group of people together. Individuals with strengths in the area of strategic thinking are the people who help people focus on what could be or what the future might hold. Rath argues that a team of individuals with different gifts is stronger than one dominant leader or a team of leaders who share the same gifts. "Instead of one dominant leader who tries to do everything or individuals who all have similar strengths, contributions from all four domains lead to a strong cohesive team" (2008, p. 23). Rath supports his argument by presenting four case studies of effective leaders who had strengths in the four different leadership domains who were extremely successful in their leadership roles because they surrounded themselves with successful teams. The case studies of Wendy Koop, Simon Cooper, Mervyn Davies and Brad Anderson provided real life examples of individuals in different areas of business and education who were able to take their companies and organizations to higher levels of success by focusing on their individual strengths and surrounding themselves by teams of individuals who rounded out the different leadership domains. While the case studies provide compelling examples of effective leaders using their strengths and creating effective leadership teams, Rath does not provide any outside research studies to support his claim. He only uses studies conducted by Gallup.

The third argument that Rath makes is that effective leaders understand why people follow them. "what the people around you need and expect from you" (Rath, 2008, p. 80). In a study conducted by Rath and others at Gallup they interviewed individuals to determine what people said they wanted and needed from a leader. The results of the study found that followers have four basic needs: trust, compassion, stability and hope. Trust is not something that effective leaders spend time talking about, rather trust is earned through integrity, honesty and respect. Brad Anderson the CEO of Best Buy said that the "key to building trust is being authentic, even if that means letting people see his flaws" (Rath, 2008, p. 84). Compassion is something that followers want from their leader. They want to feel like their leader cares for them as an individual. The research by Gallup showed that followers who felt like they had a leader who cared about them were more engaged, productive and produced a greater profit for their company than followers who did not feel like their leader had compassion for them. "Followers want a leader who will provide a solid foundation" (Rath 2008, p. 87). Stability helps followers feel secure and makes them more willing to take risks and make changes. Companies and organizations need to change over time and the feelings of safety and stability help followers be more willing to make the changes needed. Rath states that "at the company-wide level, nothing creates stability as quickly as transparency" (2008, p. 88). Hope is the final thing followers expressed they needed from their leaders. Hope provides followers with direction and gives them something to look forward to. Without hope "people lose confidence, disengage, and often feel helpless" (Rath, 2008, p. 9). Once again Rath does not back this argument with any research done outside of Gallup. However, other outside leadership books support the notions that effective leaders are trustworthy and compassionate or relational. Fullan in his book emphasizes the importance of a leader building relationships. "The role of a leader is to ensure that the organization develops relationships that help produce desirable results" (Fullan, 2001, p. 68). Walter C. Wright (2009) in his book, *Relational Leadership,* supports the idea of the importance of followers trusting their leader (p. 175) and having hope for the future (p.100).

There are many different leadership styles and theories that have been implemented over the years. Three current theories in educational leadership include Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership and Instructional Leadership. In Transactional Leadership, the leader is the manager who focuses on supervision and tends to promote compliance through rewards and punishments. In Transformational leadership, the main leader inspires and motivates her teams to move forward toward a common goal or purpose. In Instructional leadership, the leader is concerned with setting clear goals, managing resources and promoting teacher and student growth. Rath seems to support the Transformational leadership theory. One of Rath's major arguments centers around the need for leaders to create diverse teams to help achieve the organization's goals. Fullan (2001) also supports parts of this leadership theory when he discusses the importance of leaders having a moral purpose, building relationships and understanding the process of change. In Instructional leadership, the major focus is on learning and student outcomes. In Instructional leadership, it is important for the administrator to serve as the leader of leaders. The administrator needs to create teams of leaders within the school setting. The administrator needs to articulate a clear mission and vision and articulate that vision to the rest of the school community. The administrator also needs to create pathways for change to happen so goals can be met. Fullan (2001) clearly supports the Instructional leadership style in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change*. Fullan states the need for the administrator to create and set clear vison and purpose that is focused on student outcomes. He also supports the idea that administrators need to provide their teams with the time to work collaboratively to help grow knowledge. Fullan (2001) states that changes in instructional practices happen when working through problems with peers and practicing the skills in one's own classroom (p. 97). Of the books I examined, none of them supported the transactional leadership theory.

The book Strengths Based Leadership was a good read for anyone looking to learn their own areas of leadership strength. When individual know their strengths, they are able to lead more effectively. "Leaders stay true to who they are – and make sure they have the right people around them" (Rath, 2008, p. 93). While the book encourages the readers to know their strengths and surround themselves with a team of individuals with different strengths, it provides very few strategies in how to use or implement your leadership strengths.

Resources

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About the Author

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A Survey of Special Educational Services Delivered to the Individuals with Disabilities at Special Education Institutes and Centers in Kingdom of Jordan.

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Abstract

This recent study has aimed at identifying the special educational services available in Jordan governorates during the time period of 2015/2016. The study involved data collection related to the services available in 294 special education centers in all Jordan governorates which are 14 province area. To achieve the purpose of this study a special tool was built by the researcher and judge by a group experts individuals from different specialized areas in the field of special education in Jordan Kingdom. . Data were obtain from the web site of the Higher Council For Individual with Disabilities In Jordan (HCD, 2016),and a group diploma students in my college had interviewed the principals of these special education institutions.

Data were analyzed by using SPSS (Version 21). Results indicated that some severe physical therapy is present in all governorates but speech and language therapy is not available in Al tafeelah governorates. However support service and integration is present in all govern governorates except Madaba governorates.

Finally, the study confirms that there is a shortage in special education in most of the Jordanian governorates. Furthermore, the type of service is needed to be studied in details. This study is not enough. The types of all programs included in the services should be explored and evaluated.
Results indicated that there was significant correlation between disability and the service available in Balqa , Amman which means that the services provided meet the needs of the disability of Population ($p<0.05$)

Also results indicate that there was correlation between governorates and institutionalization. Though Amman governorate provides the highest level of institutionalization services. And there was marginal significant correlation between the governorates and the early intervention services (p= 0.058), Moreover, there was significant correlation between governorates and physiotherapy service. Though Amman has the highest indicators. Support service was significant in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa , Mafraq, Balqa.

In general there was a significant correlation between service provided by special education centers and the type of disability.
Key words: Special education service, Disability, Jordan

Introduction

In the late of the 19th century, special education services started in Jordan by the local churches at that time. It was clear that these services were mainly focused on people who were visually impairment and deaf. Those who had disabilities which were obviously physical instead of related to learning (Hadidi,1998).

This can be attribute to increment of population, and also due to injuries of civil war and other disasters (Turmusani,1999). However, Hadidi (1998) explained that the report excluded many cases of disabilities like behavior disorders and learning disabilities. This goes back to main reasons, which were because numerous parents abstained on given exact information on the one hand and on the other there was a lack of reference make to particular categories.

In 1979, the first national survey of exceptional children was conducted in Jordan. Over 18,000 people with disabilities were determined, and in 1996 this number increased up to 55,000. The most predominant classes were physical disability and hearing impairments, 60%, 19% respectively (Hadidi, 1998 A & Dos, 2008).

Turmusani (1999) emphasized that predominantly these surveys comprised open-ended questions and socio-cultural values played part in defining disability in the answers by individuals of family. In fact, cultural values played a part in defining disability because they do not want to be associated with the stigma of disabilities. As a result, families of the disabled were overwhelmed with the feeling of shame. Hence most Jordanian families did not report disabilities fearing scrutiny and shame which in return affects the accuracy of the disability number.

 According to Jordanian statistics, the number of people who were determined to have disabilities amounted to 62,986 in 2004 (Al Zyoud, 2011). However, considerable doubt still existed in distinguishing disabilities in young children, such as there were 8-12% of children in regular schools who having learning disabilities (LD). Later, discovered information such as this was not considered after the last survey so the statistics are still vague (UNICEF, 2007). In the late of 1970s, many efforts were taken towards exploration and improvement of special education services. University of Jordan has paying attention to especial education needs through focusing especially measurement and assessment of children with disabilities. In 1996 the University of Jordan graduated the first regiment of special education teachers. In the 1980s and 1990s the Jordanian researchers developed a version of Standard ford Benet Intelligence Scale (IQ) For Jordanian environment (Alrosan, 1996). At the same time, a lot of tests were developed in order to evaluate and measure children's abilities with general and specific learning disabilities (Alrosan, 1996). As a result of this attention an increasing amount of individuals with special needs has enforced the government to build interest in educating them in public school. However, under the Jordanian constitution everyone has the right to free public education. Educational policies in Jordan were obligated to focus on the necessities of basic and comprehensive service for students with learning disabilities. In the late 1960s, primary services toward disabled individuals in Jordan began. At the same time, the individuals who are deaf, blind and intellectual disabled started to receive services through the establishment of the first institution (Zainudin, 2013). In 1979 the government instituted the first initiative founded by the ministry of social development (MSD, 2005) in order to be accountable for providing educational, vocational rehabilitation and other services through organizations, schools and special classes under its supervision. In addition to this implementing rehabilitation engagement programs and deliver burden- free amenities and tax exemption for the disabled persons and the institutions which provide services to them (MSD, 2005). In 1993, a law for the Well – being of disabled people was approved and passed. The law stated the viewpoint of government of Jordan for the treatment of students with disabilities (MOE, 2009). The law stem for Arabic values, the constitution, the law of human rights and the international act. Consequently, the Ministry Of Education (MOE,2009) founded a department of special education services in order to satisfy the needs of the students with learning disabilities and incorporate students with special needs within the regular classroom and develop the competencies of the teachers in resource room(RR) (Al-Natour et al., 2008). In addition. The remedial department, was founded by ministry of education in 1994 ,which is accountable for special education training (MOE,2012). In 2000 the Ministry of Education established a diagnosis unit for gifted students which ended to establish an Excellency schools in each province area for the talent students (Abu-Humour & Alhmouz, 2014). Moreover, the Ministry of Education established departments which offer an inclusive services for the students with special needs (Unisco/WDE/Jordan 2006/2007).

Upon the previous background, this cross-sectional study will explore the reality of services delivered to the disabled children.

Aim: the study aim to investigate the reality of special education services in Jordan.

To achieve the aim of this paper, the following questions were thrown:

1.   What are the services available in Jordanian special education institutions?
2.   Do the services meet the need of the individuals with disabilities?
3.   What is the relationship between the type of the service deliver and the governorate?
4.   What is the relation between the service available and the disability?

Definition of terms

Special educational services: (Operational definition):

For the purpose of this study , special education services include any act related to the following services ,diagnosing, , teaching, learning& instruction, vocational rehabilitation, institutionalization, training courses, physical therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language pathology, early intervention, transportation transport, and integration.

Jordan is an Arab Kingdom located in the Western Of Asia, on the East of the Jordan river It is boarded by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iraq and Palestine. It is Capital is Amman and it is the most populous city in this country.

Disability : The American Disability association (ADA) defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity(Alzyoud. 2011). This includes people who have a record of such impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability (CEC, 2014). The ADA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on that person's association with a person with a disability.

Methodology and Procedures

Research Tool: A special form was developed by the researcher. It consists of eleven dimensions of services which include, the following services that delivered to the individuals with disability: institionalization, diagnosing, rehabilitation, speech- language, physiotherapy, Physical therapy, Integration, early intervention, transportation, courses, and teaching services. The name of governorates and type of disability was included in the research instrument.

Data collection: Permission form was signed from all institutions in Jordan. Also a letter for co-operation was obtained from the Jordanian Higher Council for persons with disabilities (HCPD). Data were obtained from the documentations presented in the Higher Council of persons with Disability web site (HCPD, 2017). 298 institutions deliver special education services in 14 province areas in Jordan (HCPD, 2017).

Data analysis; statistical procedures were used to analyze the data by using SPSS program version 21; correlation coefficients (Phi and spearman's Rho), frequencies and percentages were calculated.

Results

This section represents the results of data obtained about the services delivered to the individuals with disabilities in Jordan province areas.

Analyzing the frequencies of services delivered to individuals with disabilities in Jordan indicated some severe variations among governorates. Amman governorates has the highest rank for all services available that is, because it is the capital and has high number of people with special needs(Al Jabery, M. & Zumberg, M. 2008). In the other governorates there was a shortage in some services. So in AJloon , Altafela , Jarash and Madaba there were no services related to diagnosis. Teaching and rehabilitation are available in all governorates. Institionalization is not present in most of governorates (Ajloon,Al mufraq, Irbid,Madab, however Albalqa, Jarash, Karak is rarely present.

Physical therapy is present in all governorates but speech and language is not present in Al tafeelah governorates. Support service and integration is present in all governorates except Madaba governorates.

Finally, the study confirm that there is a shortage in special education services in most of the Jordanian governorates. Furthermore the type of service is needed to be studied in details. This study is not enough. The type all program included in the service should be explored and evaluated.

Results indicate that there was significant correlation between disability and the service available in Balqa , Amman which means that the service provided meets the needs of the disability of Population (P<0.05).

The results indicate that there was correlation between governorates and institutionalization. In Amman governorates provides the highest level of institutionalization   services. And there was marginal significant correlation between the governorates and the early intervention services (p= 0.005), Also there was significant correlation between governorates and physiotherapy services, though Amman has the highest   indicators. Support service was significant in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa , Mafraq and Balqa.

In general there was a significant correlation between services provided by special education centers.

Table 1
Availability of services in the governorates

Service	Governorates n (%)									
	Amman	Ajloon	ALbalqa	ALmafraq	ALtafela	Aqaba	Irbid	Jarash	Karak	Ma
Diagnosis										
no	74 (79.6)	5(100)	11(78.6)	17(100)	4(100)	6(85.2)	41(93.4)	5(100)	15(88.2)	7(8
yes	19 (20.4)	0(0.0)	3(21.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(14.3)	3(6.6)	0(0.0)	2(11.8)	1(1

Teaching											
No	24(26.1)	2(40.0)	2(14.3)	5(29.4)	1(25.0)	3(42.9)	13(29.5)	4(80.0)	6(35.3)	1(1...
Yes	68 (73.9)	3(60.0)	12(85.7)	12(85.7)	3(75.0)	4(57.1)	31(70.5)	1(20.0)	11(64.7)	7(8...
habilitation											
No	47(51.1)	2(40,0)	5(35.7)	11(64.7)	3(75.0)	5(71.4)	23(52.3)	0(0.0)	9(52.9)	3(3...
yes	45(48.9)	3(60.0)	9(64.3)	6(35.3)	1(25.0)	2(26.6)	21(47.7)	5(100.0	8(47.1)	5(6...
ionalization											
No	69(75.0)	5(100.0)	11(78.6)	17(100)	4(100.0)	7(100)	44(100)	4(80,0)	16(94.1)	8(1...
Yes	23(25.0)	0(0.0)	3(21.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(20)	1(5.9)	0(0...
Courses											
No	30(32.6)	2(40.0)	7(50.0)	8(47.1)	2(50.0)	3(42,9)	11(25.0)	1(20.0)	6(35.3)	4(5...
yes	62(67.4)	3 (60.0)	7(50.0)	9(52.9)	2(50.0)	4(57.1)	33(75.0)	4(80.0)	11(64.7)	4(5...
ical therapy											
No	43(46.7)	1(20.0)	7(50.0)	10(58.8)	2(50.0)	4(57.1)	25(56.8)	2(40.0)	7(41.2)	3(3...
yes	49(63.3)	4(80.0)	7(50.0)	7(41.2)	2(50.0)	3(42.9)	19(43.2)	3(60.0)	10(58.8)	5(6...
h- language											
No	36(39.1)	2(40.0)	3(21.4)	12(70.6)	4(100.0)	5(71.4)	24(54.5)	3(60.0)	9(52.9)	5(5...
yes	56(60.9)	3(60,0)	11(78.6)	5(24.4)	0(0.0)	2(28.6)	20(45.5)	2(40.0)	8(47.1)	3(4...
ntervention											
No	54(58.7)	4(80.0)	11(78.6)	12 (70.6)	0(0.0)	5(71.4)	33(75.0)	4(80.0)	12(70.6)	3(3...
yes	38 (41.3)	1(20.0)	3(21.4)	5(24.4)	4(100.0)	2(28.6)	11(25.0)	1(20.0)	5(29.4)	5(6...
ysiotherapy											
No	45.8)	5(100)	7(50.0)	13(76.5)	3(75)	5(71.4)	32(72.7)	4(80)	11(64.7)	6(7...
Yes	51(51,1)	0(0.0)	7(50.0)	4(25.5)	1(25)	2(27.3)	12927.3)	1(20)	6(35,3)	2(2...
nsportation											
No	25(27.2)	2(40,0)	4(28.6)	6(35.3)	1(25.0)	2(28.6)	15(34.1)	1(20.0)	11(64.7)	3(3...
Yes	67(72.8)	3(60.0)	10(71.4)	11(64.7)	3(75.0)	5(71.4)	29(65.9)	4(80.0)	6(35.3)	5(6...
Integration											
No	63(68.5)	4(80,0)	8(57.1)	10(58.8)	1(25.0)	4(57.1)	31(70.5)	3(60.0)	9(52.9)	3(3...
Yes	29(31.5)	1(20.0)	6(42.9)	7(41.2)	3(75.0)	3(42.9)	13(29.5)	2(40.0)	8(47.1)	5(6...

Support

No	59(64.1)	2(40.0)	6(42.9)	4(23.5)	1(25.0)	7(57.1)	7(15.9)	3(60.0)	9(52.9)	1(1…
yes	33(35.9)	3(60,0)	8(57.1)	13(76.5)	3(75.0)	37(42.9)	37(84.1)	2(40.0)	8(47.1)	7(8…

Table 2
Correlation between service and disability: *Rho(*253) = 0.190, *p*=0.002

Service	Governorate	
	Phi	*p*
diagnosis	0.226	0.227
teaching	0.222	0.327
Rehabilitation	0.208	0.458
Institionalization	0.338	**0.005***
Courses	0.163	0.837
Physical therapy	0,154	0.893
Speech language	0.268	0.067
Early intervention	0.271	0.058
Physiotherapy	0.279	**0.036***
Transportation	0.196	0.557
Integration	0.240	0.199
Support	0.401	**0.000***

* *phi* coefficient is significant at α 0.05 level.

Results indicate that there was a significant correlation between service of institutionalization and the governorate in Jordan. That means the institutionalization service meet the needs of the individuals with disabilities in all governorates in Jordan (*Phi* =0.338. *p*= 0,005).Also there was a significant correlation between service of physiotherapy and governorates in Jordan which mean that physiotherapy services meet the needs of the individuals with disabilities in all governorates in Jordan (*Phi* = 0.279, *p* = 0.036) Also there was a significant correlation between service of support and governorates in Jordan which mean that support services meet the needs of the individuals with disabilities in all governorates in Jordan (Ph=0..401, P=0.000).

Recommendation

Further studies are needed to be achieved to investigate the programmes related to each service and the quality of services delivered to individuals with disability in each centre in Jordan.

Acknowledgements

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SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGAL ALERT

Perry A. Zirkel

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This latest monthly legal alert summarizes two recent officially published federal court decisions that respectively illustrate (a) a novel issue under the IDEA, and (b) a set of continuing issues, including procedural FAPE (e.g., parental participation), substantive FAPE (e.g., *Endrew F.*), and eligibility for extended school year (ESY). 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.

In *M.L. v. Smith* (2017), the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals addressed the novel issue of whether school district's FAPE obligation extends to religious and cultural instruction. The particular child in this case was a member of the Orthodox Jewish faith and eligible under the IDEA classification of intellectual disability. Upon his enrollment in the public schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, his parents rejected the proposed IEP because it did not provide functional instruction to prepare him for life in the Orthodox Jewish community. They sought tuition reimbursement and prospective placement at a private special education program serving this religious community. The Fourth Circuit ruled in favor of the school district.

First, based on the definition of FAPE in the IDEA, the Fourth Circuit concluded that religious and cultural instruction does not fit within the school district's duty to provide access to the general curriculum or the scope of the child's "other educational needs."	Although binding only in the five states in the Fourth Circuit (MD, NC, SC, VA, and WV), the reasoning of this decision, which is limited to the IDEA and which is not specific to any particular religion, appears to be persuasive for the remaining jurisdictions.
Second, acknowledging that the Supreme Court in *Endrew F.* refined the substantive standard for FAPE "progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances," the Fourth Circuit concluded that "[t]he relevant circumstance here is that [this child has a disability], not that he is of the Orthodox Jewish faith."	The scope of the relevant "circumstances" under *Endrew F.* is still otherwise subject to question, but its non-extension to a child's religious and cultural identity seems now relatively settled. In any event, the preliminary finding in the May 2016 Legal Alert that the effect of *Endrew F.* is undramatic continues to be the case.
Finally, the Fourth Circuit found it unnecessary to reach any issues under the First Amendment's establishment clause or free exercise clause.	Although strictly adhering to the IDEA, the Fourth Circuit (a) noted that the district provided reasonable accommodations for the child's religious preferences and (b) avoided addressing the limited case law that found tuition reimbursement under the IDEA not to violate the establishment clause.

F.L v. Board of Education of Great Neck U.F.S.D. (2017) is one of the latest in a long line of FAPE-related court decisions in New York. The child in this case was a teenager with ADHD and various specific learning disabilities. The successive IEPs at issue were for ninth grade (2012–13), tenth grade (2013–14), and eleventh grade (2014–15). The hearing officer ruled in favor of the parents' procedural FAPE, substantive FAPE, and ESY claims, ordering relief that included reimbursement for the IEE and Lindamood Bell courses. The review officer reversed the hearing officer's decision, and the parents appealed to federal district court.

For the statute of limitations under the IDEA, the court concluded that the parents' attendance at the 5/24/12 IEP meeting established the date that they knew or should have known about the denial of ESY for summer 2012; thus, their filing for due process on 6/24/14 covered the previous two years but not summer 2012 ESY.	The overlapping issues of determining the so-called KOSHK (knew or should have known) date and its application of this date are not clearly settled. For more information about the key case law to date, see, e.g., the 2015 "Of Mouseholes and Elephants" article that is available at perryzirkel.com under in the "Due Process Hearings" section of "Publications" at perryzirkel.com
For procedural FAPE, the court rejected the parental participation claim, concluding that the district actively had sought the parents' meaningful participation at IEP meetings, including "discuss[ing] and consider[ing] each of their concerns."	Although recognizing the central and special significance of parental participation for procedural FAPE, the court applied a relatively relaxed standard representative of the case law more generally—see the 2015 "Parental Participation" article n the "FAPE" section of "Publications" at perryzirkel.com
For substantive FAPE, the court cited *Endrew F.* and blended it with various previous Second Circuit and New York court rulings to uphold the three successive IEPs. Here are two examples of the court's conclusions: • "a school district does not deny FAPE by developing an IEP that is the same as a prior year's IEP so long as it 'enables [the child] to … make progress" • "an IEP need not 'mention … a particular teaching methodology' to be substantively adequate"	As with procedural FAPE, the court's application of the substantive standard, although illustrative of the general judicial trend, is clearly distinct from the norms of professional best practice for both avoidance of litigation and achievement of excellence. Moreover, the illustrative conclusions, along with the court's express deference to districts' educational personnel for programming decisions, should not be overgeneralized. Finally, the court relied on subjective and objective evidence of progress within the "snapshot" of what the IEP team knew or had reason to know at the time of their meeting.
For ESY, the court concluded that the parents failed to fulfill their burden of proof for the regression-recoupment criteria for eligibility.	As with substantive FAPE, the key for this ruling was the evidence available to the IEP team upon making their timely eligibility determinations for the relevant two summers.

Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

Director of Special Education

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Job Category: Director of Special Education

Description:

National Heritage Academies (NHA), one of the nation's leading charter school management organizations, currently operates 84 schools across nine states serving over 58,000 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Founded in 1995 and based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, NHA is a for-profit organization with nearly 5,000 employees.

National Heritage Academies is seeking an experienced and knowledgeable Director of Special Education to lead a department in meeting the needs of NHA's student population nationwide. NHA's vision is to transform the lives of students and enrich communities by delivering high-quality educational choice to families. This vision relies on both differentiation and Special Education to meet the needs of each student by ensuring all achieve to their fullest academic, personal, and social emotional capabilities. The Director of Special Education will lead a dedicated team of regional supervisors who collaborate with schools to create customized programs and standardized reporting and data collection. Building on a strong foundation of Special Education curriculum and effective placement practices, the team will continue to raise the caliber of services provided.

Reporting directly to the Vice President of Operations and collaborating with other NHA leaders, the Director of Special Education will have the opportunity to work within a vibrant, results-oriented, professional culture filled with other thought leaders. The Director of Special Education will be part of a team that is focused on sharpening best practices and sharing best ideas with the goal of better educating more students. The Director will manage several regional experts and act as the resident expert in practice, procedures, federal and state law, and regulations related to Special Education. This is a full-time role based in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

NHA's system of schools is designed to eliminate the achievement gap and provide a public school choice to families so that their children are prepared for success. NHA has the highest renewal rate among charter schools, a key indicator of value and prominence in the market. NHA offers a rigorous and challenging curriculum designed to prepare students for high academic achievement in successive schooling environments. The NHA goal is to graduate students who have not only had the opportunity to achieve academic excellence, but who have also acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in high school, college, and beyond. A passion and dedication to the mission of serving children and partnering with communities to provide an excellent educational experience permeates the culture of the organization.

For more information about National Heritage Academies, please visit www.nhaschools.com.

Qualifications:

- Deep knowledge of Special Education law and practice; experience leading Special Education at a district-level
- Prior experience leading a department serving student needs at multiple locations dispersed geographically; management experience, with the ability to build trust within the team
- Strategic, systems-orientation with the ability to formulate and promote the future structure of NHA's Special Education department; experience building processes to increase effectiveness
- Comfort with funding sources and the associated reporting requirements
- Solutions-orientation with the ability to learn quickly and incorporate new and nuanced information into strategy and practice
- Demonstrated relationship building skills with the ability to collaborate with various internal and external stakeholders

- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Previous experience as a 504/ADA Coordinator for a large school district or EMO a plus
- Passion for education and dedication to the vision and values of NHA
- Master's degree or higher in the field of education or a related field

Benefits:

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience.

Contact:

National Heritage Academies has engaged Koya Leadership Partners to help in this hire. Please submit a compelling cover letter and resume to Alena Guerra here: https://koya.refineapp.com/jobPosting/apply/1796.

National Heritage Academies is an equal opportunity employer.

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ESE Preschool Teacher

Sunrise, Florida

Job Category: Education

We have an opening in our Preschool for an ESE Preschool Teacher to provide high quality, comprehensive and developmentally-appropriate instruction and child care to meet the individual needs of children and their families.

Ideal candidates will have some experience teaching preschool students with disabilities, possess exceptional interpersonal and communication skills and have a passion for teaching young children.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- Provide a safe, healthy stimulating educational and therapeutic environment, which support each child's growth and independence.
- Provide leadership in the classroom and individualized instruction to children.
- Provide a stimulating, safe and healthy learning environment.
- Develop learning strategies to meet the varied individual needs of the children.
- Implement teaching procedures and behavioral strategies.
- Ensure engagement in meaningful activities at all times.
- Develop appropriate lesson plans and activity schedules.
- Write Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) and keep accurate data on goals and objectives.
- Provide individual and group instruction to meet the needs of the classroom population.
- Complete, maintain and submit all required documentation in a timely manner.
- Ensure compliance with all health, safety and security SOPs.
- Ensure that children served are free from abuse and neglect.
- Respond to incidents, accidents and health concerns.
- Function as a member of a person-centered team.
- Provide leadership and training to the classroom team.
- Keep required licensure up to date.

Requirements

- Experience working with developmentally disabled children.
- Florida Certification ESE K-12/Letter of Eligibility in Special Education.
- Bachelor's Degree in Special Education, Education or related field required.
- Certification in an area of Special Education and Pre-K/ Primary.
- Reliable, consistent attendance is a requirement and essential function of all positions. Employees are expected to be punctual and dependable in order to meet the needs of their department.

Salary

$37,000 Per Year

Benefits

- We offer an employee-friendly working environment that provides for professional enrichment and growth.
- We offer competitive salary and benefits package.
- Generous Paid Time Off Policy.
- Employer subsidized health insurance.
- Voluntary Dental, Hospital confinement, Short-term, Long-term disability, and Life Insurance plans.
- Tax-Sheltered Annuity Retirement Plan with employer contribution after six months of employment.
- Employee Assistance Plan.

How to apply

- Submit resume via e-mail to recruiter@arcbroward.com
- Apply in person at 10250 NW 53rd Street, Sunrise, FL. 33351
- Apply online at www.arcbroward.com

We are a Drug Free Work Place and an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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<u>Special Education Teacher</u>

Philadelphia, PA

Job Category: Full Time Certified Special Education Teachers

The Opportunity:

We are seeking inspired and dynamic educators to join our team and provide a top quality education for all of our students. Whether you are starting your teaching career or are looking to launch a new chapter, your passion and experience will be deeply valued and your opportunities for growth and impact will be limitless. Your natural talents will be fostered and we will provide the training and support to help you be an incredibly effective teacher. As a Mastery team member, you will be trusted to make decisions and held accountable for critical results. You will engage in a positive and professional workplace embedded in a warm, joyful, student-centered, and welcoming school culture.

Qualifications:

- Genuine interest, belief, and care for students' personal and academic success
- The ability to motivate, support, and challenge students in a student-centered, standards-driven classroom community
- Commitment to professional growth, self-reflection, receptiveness to feedback, and a desire to continuously improve
- A positive mindset and a drive for personal excellence
- A strong sense of professional responsibility as well as personal accountability for student achievement
- Solutions-oriented resiliency to respond positively and effectively to challenges
- Outstanding instructional skills driven by data and delivered through rigorous and engaging strategies

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Commit to ongoing professional development in the spirit of continuous improvement
- Develop rigorous and appropriate lesson plans, assignments, and assessments in cooperation with Mastery school-based leadership and curricular resources developed by Mastery's Central Office Academic Team
- Work closely with school leaders to analyze student assessment data to measure progress and use data to inform instruction
- Collaborate in grade level teams to discuss student work, share best practices, plan events for joy and humor, and ensure student mastery of standards
- Engage families in their children's education by building relationships and maintaining regular communication

Education and Experience:

- Bachelor's degree required with a record of personal, professional, and/or academic achievement
- Teacher certification- completed or in process
- Commitment to and experience working with underserved communities
- Determination to drive student achievement and set high expectations for all students
- Demonstrated expertise in subject area

About Mastery:

Mastery Charter Schools, founded in 2001, is a nationally-recognized non-profit charter school network of 20+ schools serving over 13,000 students in Philadelphia, PA and Camden, NJ. Mastery Schools are free, neighborhood public charter schools open to all students living within the schools' respective catchment zone. Mastery schools are organized around a common vision: "Mastery schools are joyful, authentic communities where students learn how to think critically and act independently so they are truly prepared for post-secondary success." Mastery's work is rooted in an unwavering belief that all students can achieve at the highest levels. To fulfill this vision, Mastery recognizes that it must attend to the whole child – Mastery values personal as well as academic skills, and schools match high expectations for students with high levels of support.

Mastery Charter Schools is an equal opportunity employer and actively encourages applications from people of all backgrounds. Compensation is competitive and commensurate with experience. Mastery offers a full benefits program and opportunities for professional growth.

Contact:

Please apply online at http://masterycharter.org/careers

Reach out to us at recruitment@masterycharter.org if you have any questions!

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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

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;
- 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

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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Special Education Teacher

West Rogers Park, IL

Job Category: Therapeutic Day School

Description

Jewish Child & Family Services (JCFS) provides vital, individualized, results-driven, therapeutic and supportive services for thousands of children, adults and families of all backgrounds each year.

JCFS is currently seeking a Special Education Teacher to work with individuals and small groups of children (K - 12) with emotional and behavior disorders, which may include aggressive behaviors, in a therapeutic special education classroom. The students attending the Therapeutic Day School have been referred from their home districts to our School to receive an individualized and intensive educational program in our supportive and therapeutic environment. The Therapeutic Day School is located in West Rogers Park, Chicago, IL.

Are you someone who?

- Is flexible and able to shift gears quickly based on situations or changing priorities?
- Is independent with sound professional judgment and the ability to establish and maintain boundaries?
- Demonstrates the ability to remain calm in high-stress situations while maintaining an understanding and supportive demeanor?
- Strongly desires to work with those students who have not been able to achieve success in the public/private educational system?
- Has developed efficient and effective time management skills?

What will you do?

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHING

- Develops and implements individualized curriculum and therapeutic programming in accordance with each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Provides classroom management that recognizes, and includes consideration of, the characteristics of and the methodology of the student population.
- Collaborates with team members to develop and execute an IEP-driven, multidisciplinary program for each student.
- Prepares and maintains a safe, healthy, academic, and behaviorally-effective classroom environment appropriate to ongoing and changing classroom activities.

- Uses therapeutic and general education materials and methods, and plans for their appropriate use.
- Tracks and records academic and behavior data to determine student progress.
- Completes a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, weekly lesson plans, weekly grade reports, IEP reports, surveys and assessments.

STUDENT SAFETY

- Must provide constant supervision to ensure the safety of students at all times.
- Effectively manage and intervene in disruptive student behavior, both verbal and physical; including use of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) prescribed methods to de-escalate critical situations.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

- Maintains records and writes agency required behavioral reports in timely manner.
- Participates in qualitative professional development activities.
- Maintains ongoing communication relationship with all members of the interdisciplinary team to achieve a social and educational benefit for the student.
- Successfully completes training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI); successfully complete all requirements to maintain certification in TCI.

Requirements

- Completed a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from an accredited college or university.
- Obtained ISBE certification as a Special Education Teacher; LBS1/Type 10 certification
- Developed proficiency in Microsoft Office programs, e.g. Word, Excel, and Outlook.
- Experienced working with special needs students is strongly preferred.
- Experienced the Chicago Public School electronic IEP systems is preferred.
- Successfully complete the physical and testing requirements for the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training (Agency provided).

What does JCFS offer?

JCFS offers an array of benefits including Medical, Dental, Vision, Wellness, Paid sick, follow CPS schedule plus paid Agency holidays, Pension, 403(b), Flexible Spending Plans, Life Insurance, Long-Term Disability, Short-Term Disability, and Long-Term Care.

Want more information?

Follow us on Facebook! JCFS Chicago
Follow us on Twitter! JCFS Chicago (@JCFSChicago)
Please visit us at http://www.jcfs.org

To Apply: www.jcfs.org/careers and select Special Education Teacher position.

Jewish Child and Family Services (JCFS) is committed to serving the needs of the diverse Chicago metropolitan area. Accredited by COA. Charter member of CWLA. Licensed by DCFS.

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Chief Program Officer

St. Louis, MO

Job Category: Non-Profit Program Management

Description:

• **FORWARD OUR MISSION** (*Executive Leadership*): Serve as a key member of the Executive Team and partner closely with the Executive Director and CEO to further mission-specific and core competency goals. Interface with the Board of Directors in matters related to program operations. Participate in strategic planning and provide guidance necessary to assist the organization in setting vision, determining direction and implementing strategy.

• **LEAD AN INNOVATIVE TEAM** (*Team Management*): Provide oversight for a team of employees and directly manage our Program Director. Direct the full lifecycle of staff development including recruitment, hiring, training, managing, motivating, and terminating as appropriate. Provide supervision and ongoing guidance to our Program Director. Develop a culture that promotes employee engagement, teamwork and accountability, and, coach and enable program staff to effectively and productively interact with other departments.

• **ENSURE EXCEPTIONAL PROGRAMMING** (*Program Development & Delivery*): Provide leadership and vision for the creation, design, promotion, delivery, and quality of Variety's programs and services. Collaborate with Variety's Des Lee Endowed Professor and engage independent consultants as necessary to identify gaps in service and to resolve unmet programming needs.

• **STEWARD OUR ASSETS** (*Fiscal Responsibility*): Oversee the development and execution of all program budgets with profit and loss accountability. Ensure programs meet the objectives of Variety's strategic plan. Make recommendations to ensure effective and efficient service delivery processes for current activities and activities related to projected growth.

• **MEASURE OUR SUCCESS** (*Outcome-Based Impact & Quality*): Develop and implement program assessments that measure and validate established outcomes and goals for children with disabilities in core competency areas, including skill development, self-esteem, socialization and independence. Develop continuous improvement initiatives to identify program strengths, challenges, and, ROI based on measurable impact and revenue deployed.

Ensure all operations are carried out in compliance with the organization's policies and procedures, including applicable regulations and standards. Develop policies and procedures to assure compliance.

• **ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITIES** (*Community Relations*): Proactively seek opportunities to participate in committees, workgroups and task forces that will enhance our reputation and expand our recognition in the communities in which we serve to further our reputation as a leader in empowering children with disabilities. Advocate for our children by informing community groups, congregations, and others about Variety's services and how we foster core competencies for children.

• **SERVE OUR CONSTITUENTS** (*Client Care & Service*): The Chief Program Officer will believe in the organization's mission and that quality client service is of top priority. Respect for the clients, employees, Board members, and all other constituents, coupled with professional and ethical behavior is expected at all times.

Requirements:

- Minimum of 10+ years of experience in a social service, healthcare, and/or clinical environment, including a minimum of 5+ years senior management experience.
- In-depth knowledge, clinical foundation, and/or prior administrative experience in therapeutic recreation and education is strongly desired.
- Non-profit experience (working within or voluntary leadership) and familiarity in supporting a Board of Directors a plus.
- Familiarity with 3rd party insurance reimbursement systems and/or prior hospital experience also strongly desired.
- 4-year degree is required – graduate degree in business and/or related field is strongly preferred (M.B.A., M.Ed, M.S., M.S.W., or M.A.).

Contact:

Please apply at: http://www.csiapply.com.
With questions you can confidentially email application@csi-mail.com.

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Private Teacher

Lincoln Park, IL

Job Category: Full-time private teacher with travel

Description:

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. This position includes the opportunity to travel and an interest in sports is a plus! The family is willing to hire the right person immediately for a full-time role to perform tutoring until the 2018-19 school year. This is a full-time position with compensation of $90,000 to $110,000 offered, depending on experience, with benefits. Local candidates are preferred. For consideration, please apply for position #410 at www.mahlermatch.com for consideration. Qualified applicants will be contacted.

Requirements:

Local candidates are preferred.

Benefits:

This is a full-time position with compensation of $90,000 to $110,000 offered, depending on experience, with benefits.

Contact:

Apply for position #410 at - http://www.mahlermatch.com

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Special Education Teacher - LEAD Public Schools

Nashville, Tennessee

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

Description

Special Education (SPED) teachers are champions for the cause of equality within the school and make sure that their students' needs are being met. Our ideal SPED teacher is passionate about supporting our students with IEPs, loves working with students who need the most support, is flexible, is coachable, and wants to grow as a teacher.

The LEAD Environment

Our SPED teachers work relentlessly with their teammates to ensure that all of their students not only are receiving additional support to enhance their learning and understanding of classroom material, but also meet the established Tennessee standards by the end of the year. This incredible work is done through coaching and support from administration, implementing regular feedback, collaboration with colleagues, data analysis, and working to make sure that students who come in below grade level rise above the challenges they face.

Requirements

Above all else, we look for teachers with the belief that all students, regardless of background and current ability, can succeed in high school, college, and life. In addition, we seek individuals with a data-driven mindset, willing to reflect and continuously improve their practice through observations, coaching, and feedback. These beliefs must be coupled with current certification or ability to be certified for the 2017-18 school year in Tennessee (required) (SPED K-12 certification in mild/moderate or comprehensive).

Benefits

In addition to a competitive salary and full benefits, we offer a relocation stipend and the opportunity to improve your practice through coaching and support.

Contact

If interested, apply online at: https://www.applitrack.com/leadacademy/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Middle+School+Teaching

If you're curious about LEAD and want to learn more, please direct all questions to Krista Oleson at krista.oleson@leadpublicschools.org.

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Regional Special Education Teacher

Denver, CO

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

Essential Duties & Responsibilities:

- Create, review and implement Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students.
- Effectively progress monitor student achievement and gather evidence in order to deliver individualized instruction and supports that are aligned to students' goals.
- Plan and teach at least one section of reading, math, or English Language Development intervention, and/or plan and teach one section of PE (teacher's choice, i.e. yoga, crossfit, weightlifting etc.).
- Lead an advisory that assists in planning and supporting school-wide events including Morning Meetings and off-campus learning opportunities.
- Collaborate with general education teachers, school leaders, curriculum specialists and the special education team to ensure that instruction is always meeting the needs of all learners.

- Use network-aligned unit and interim assessments to track student growth.
- Analyze student assessment data and use it to determine next steps.
- Assist with necessary school-wide systems to ensure a successful school day including (but not limited to) supervisory duties on a rotating basis in the morning, during lunch and after school.
- Chaperone community service learning projects, college campus visits and local trips with students.
- Complete and submit all necessary paperwork in a timely and professional manner.
- Attend and participate in all staff meetings and professional development.
- Maintain a positive, safe and organized learning environment for all students.
- Learn and utilize Restorative Justice practices in the classroom.
- Communicate regularly and often with families (by phone, email and/or home visits) to both solicit their input and share student social/emotional and academic progress.
- Actively participate in all teams including grade-level, content, and other teams designated by the leadership at STRIVE Prep - RISE.
- Provide fair, accurate, and constructive feedback to students on their progress.
- Update gradebooks on a weekly basis.
- Participate in summer Culture Academy in June 2017 for a stipend, and attend STRIVE Prep's Summer Training Institute in July 2017, as well as other professional development throughout the school year.
- Additional duties as assigned.

Our Aspiring Teachers:

- Consciously choose to teach and transform the lives of high school scholars every day as a founding teacher at a growing school.
- Proudly hold a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree (required) and a license to teach Special Education in Colorado, or be able to:
  - Add a Special Education Endorsement to a current Colorado Teacher License; OR
  - Transfer a Special Education license from another state; OR
  - Enroll in an alternative licensure program to obtain a Special Education license.
- Read more about the available pathways to becoming a Qualified Special Education Teacher.
- Understand, appreciate and can pull from experience teaching in an urban setting (strongly preferred).
- Speak Spanish or have experience working with bilingual students (strongly preferred).

What we Offer our Teachers:

- Ongoing coaching and professional development.
- 100 minutes of structured planning time built into the school day to plan the highest quality lessons.
- A laptop and access to classrooms equipped with Smartboards and document cameras.
- Competitive compensation package and annual performance based raises.
- Participation in the Colorado PERA retirement program including a PERA 401k contribution option.
- Funding of 100% of individual medical benefits and a wide range of insurance plans.
- Additional stipends available for participation in athletic and extracurricular programs.

Contact:

Contact Rachel Medlock - Recruitment Manager at rmedlock@striveprep.org for more information

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Special Education Specialist

Multiple Locations

Description:

The primary responsibility of the Special Education Specialist is to provide instruction and other related services to Special Education students. The Special Education Specialist will also facilitate diagnostic assessment including administration, scoring and interpretation. Will review and revise IEP's as needed. Will support instruction in reading, math, and written language for students, tutor individual and small groups of students, administer and score academic testing, write individualized education plans and support other academic programs as needed. The Special Education Specialist will work under the leadership of the Program Specialist and the Director of Special Education. This position will be available to provide direct instruction to students 6 hours a day.

Essential Functions include, but are not limited to the following:*

- Provide instruction to students with special needs and identified learning disabilities in a special education program.

- Tutor individual and small groups of students, reinforcing language and reading concepts.

- Administer and score individual and group tests.

- Schedule IEP meetings, coordinating schedules with parents, general education teacher(s), administrator, and all appropriate special education staff.

- Conduct IEP meetings.

- Communicate and coordinate special needs evaluation and testing with speech teacher, psychologist, and other service providers.

- Communicate with parents regarding individual student progress and conduct.

- Maintain progress records and record progress toward IEP goals.

- Record progress within the independent study program.

- Perform other duties in support of the Special Education Specialist program.

- Support other academic programs offered within the independent study program.

- Various openings in Burbank region, San Gabriel region, Victor Valley region, Inland Empire region, San Bernardino region, and San Juan region.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required:

- Special Education Specialist Certificate or ability to obtain Mild/Moderate Certificate.
- Ability to teach students of grades K-12.
- Ability to work with children of all ages.
- Ability to understand, adopt, and support the independent study program, concepts and their philosophies.
- Ability to organize and present ideas effectively in oral and written form.
- Ability to make skillful decisions.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.

- Ability to operate a PC computer, word processor, copier, FAX, and other office machines.

Education and Experience:

- BA/BS Degree
- Valid California Teaching Credential in Special Education (Mild/Moderate)

Contact:

Nehia Hearn
Human Resources Assistant
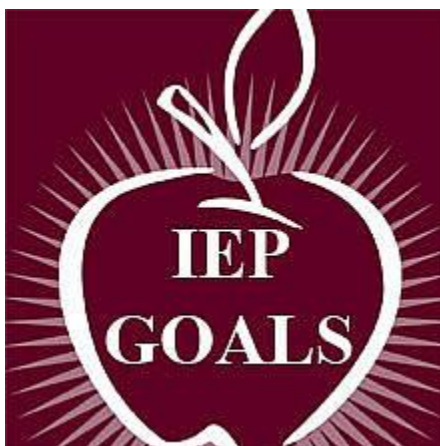Direct: 626) 204-2552 Fax: 626) 685-9316
nhearn@ofy.org

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Acknowledgements

NASET Application for iPad and iPhone

To learn more click on the image above or - Click here