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# Special Education Legal Alert

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This month's update concerns two issues that were subject to recent, published federal appeals court decisions of general significance: (a) tuition reimbursement under the IDEA, and (b) over-identification of "504-only" students for unwarranted accommodations. For further examination of such issues, see Publications section at [perryzirkel.com](http://perryzirkel.com)

**In *D.L. v. St Louis City School District* (2020), the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals addressed the high-stakes issue of tuition reimbursement for a specialized placement. The student was a 13-year-old with multiple medical diagnoses, including autism, and a history of behaviors that posed a serious risk of injury to self and others. Upon his discharge from a medically necessary residential placement and a psychiatric recommendation that included full-time direct occupational therapy (OT), the school district belatedly proposed an IEP without OT and with placement at a district alternative school that lacked services specific to autism, such as sensory supports. His parents timely notified the district of unilateral placement at a private school for students with autism. The hearing officer decided that the district's proposed placement provided FAPE, but the district court reversed, ordering tuition reimbursement. Its award, however, was limited to the period before the hearing, when the alternative school constructed a sensory room for students with autism. Both parties appealed.**

For the initial issue of whether the district's proposed placement provided FAPE, the district argued that its IEP at the alternative school met the *Endrew F.* substantive standard, per the hearing officer's findings and conclusions.

The Eighth Circuit concluded that the hearing officer's findings actually established the inappropriateness of the district's proposed placement, including that (1) the school was limited to correcting purely voluntary behavior, and (2) the IEP lacked direct OT services and sensory supports, both contrary to his well-documented autism and individual needs.

Because the unilateral placement addressed his needs and yielded notable progress, the Eighth Circuit easily ruled that it was appropriate, but the district challenged reimbursement based on the parents' move out of the district after the hearing started.

The Eighth Circuit rejected the district's challenge based on the parents' subsequent change in residence, concluding that the relief they sought was not prospective. Instead, the court observed, the parents only sought compensation for the denial of FAPE that occurred while they were residents of the district.

The parents' challenge was to the limitation of the tuition reimbursement award to when the district corrected its school's lack of needed sensory supports.

The Eighth Circuit ruled that "limiting an award based on improvements *not communicated to the parents* is inconsistent with the IDEA's purpose" [emphasis added].

The bottom line is that, whether viewed as "in light of the child's circumstances" under *Endrew F.* or "the equities" for tuition reimbursement, this student's misfortune and this district's unresponsiveness contributed to the outcome of this case.

**In *Powers v. Northside Independent School District* (2020), the district terminated the principal and assistant principal of an elementary school after an investigation determined that they intentionally over-identified students for 504 plans that provided them with testing accommodations, including for the state-mandated ESSA assessments. The investigation started when the district’s 504 coordinator, after reviewing their eligibility determination for one of these students, concluded that the student did not meet the qualification criteria. When she informed them of her correction of their determination, they called the state education agency (SEA) and claimed that she had engaged in unlawful conduct. Per state law, upon the school board’s proposed termination decision, the SEA appointed an impartial hearing examiner, who concluded that the board had just cause for terminating them. The board adopted the hearing examiner’s recommendation. The two administrators then filed suit on various grounds, including the state Whistleblower Act and First Amendment freedom of expression. The federal district granted the defendants’ pretrial motions for all claims except the Whistleblower Act, which went to trial. The jury decided in favor of the district, finding that their reports to the SEA did not meet the Act’s good faith requirement. They filed an appeal with the Fifth Circuit, challenging the Whistleblower Act and First Amendment free speech rulings.**

For the Whistleblower Act, one of their challenges was to the judge’s instruction to the jury that, because the two administrators had not appealed the hearing examiner’s findings, the jury must accept that the board had just cause and instead must focus on the requirements of the Act, which included (1) making a report in good faith and (2) the report (rather than their 504 actions) being the reason for the termination.	The Fifth Circuit concluded that the trial judge’s jury instructions were not an abuse of discretion. Per precedent in the Fifth Circuit, the SEA’s hearing examiner’s findings were entitled to a preclusive effect where, as in this case, the parties had a fair opportunity to litigate the matter at the hearing examiner level.
For the First Amendment retaliation claim against the superintendent, they challenged the lower court’s pretrial ruling that the superintendent was entitled to qualified immunity, which protects the individual defendant unless the federal violation is clearly established at the time of the incident.	The Fifth Circuit also rejected this challenge, concluding that at the time its case law was unsettled as to whether an individual who recommends an adverse employment action but is not the final decision maker can be liable for alleged retaliation.
For the First Amendment claim against the district, they challenged the lower court’s pretrial ruling that, as public employees, they did not meet the threshold requirement of expressing themselves in their capacity as private citizens on an issue of public concern.	The Fifth Circuit again affirmed the lower court, concluding that their expression was pursuant to their official duties and, thus, was not entitled to First Amendment protection.
The bottom line is that over-identification of students under Section 504, which may be attributable to high stakes testing for not only college admissions but also—as here—school accountability, has potentially adverse consequences, just like under- identification. The eligibility question should be whether the student has (1) an impairment that limits (2) a major life activity (3) substantially in comparison to the general population (usually with particular emphasis on #3 and #2).	

## Buzz from the Hub

All articles below can be accessed through the following links:

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-april2020-issue1/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/coronavirus-resources/>

### Keeping the Balance

#### Helping Children Cope

Adjusting to our new normal gives adults a tremendous opportunity to model for children problem-solving, flexibility, and compassion as we work through adjusting daily schedules, balancing work and other activities, getting creative about how we spend time, processing new information from authorities, and connecting and supporting friends and family members in new ways. From the National Association of School Psychologists.

#### Online Peer Support Groups

Peer support groups are more important than ever during coronavirus, but how do you run one when everyone is isolated at home?

#### The 7 Best Online Anxiety Support Groups of 2020

Many online resources and apps are devoted to providing remote mental health services. Online communities are good places to exchange support, while some apps offer online therapy sessions with a licensed therapist. This article lists 7 places to explore and connect. Several offer services in Spanish.

#### The Best Support of All: 100 Ways to Tell Your Kids You Love Them

When you're ready to tear your hair out and scream at your children, stop and take a deep breath. Think about the hearts in those little bodies. And reset the conversation (and atmosphere) in these simple authentic ways.

#### Take a Virtual Tour of the World's Most Beautiful Tulip Garden

The Keukenhof garden of tulips is in full bloom in a breathtaking display of color and variety. The famous garden in Holland may be closed because of coronavirus, but we can take a virtual tour of its splendors.

### Coronavirus Resources

**Coronavirus.** COVID-19! What to do, where to turn?

The amount of information that's constantly emerging is so staggering, it seems nearly impossible to keep up. At CPIR we thought you might find it helpful to have a **brief** list of resources to address key issues such as multilanguage materials to share, places parents can turn to as so many schools are closed for now, and telecommuting tips to help with maintaining social distancing practices. The list is

nowhere near exhaustive, nor is it intended to be. We'll be continually updating what's here, and posting selective new info via our Facebook and Twitter feeds.

May these resources inform you without overwhelming and may you find them useful and timely to share with the families and the professionals you serve.

### **Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (and Others)**

#### **From the Federal Government and Congress | Coronavirus Relief Package**

Just passed by Congress and signed by the President, here's an early summary of what the legislation contains. This will no doubt be an unfolding story, so stay tuned as the legislation is enacted.

#### **From DOE | Q & A on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outreach**

(Also see other-language infographics created by Family Network on Disabilities in Florida that explain this guidance from DOE.)

#### **From OCR at DOE | Supplemental Fact Sheet: Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities**

(March 21, 2020) This fact sheet explains that as a school district takes necessary steps to address the health, safety, and well-being of all its students and staff, educators can use distance learning opportunities to serve all students.

#### **From DOE | Broad Flexibilities for States to Cancel Testing During National Emergency**

(March 20) DOE announces that students impacted by school closures due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic can bypass standardized testing for the 2019-2020 school year. Upon a proper request, the Department will grant a waiver to any state that is unable to assess its students due to the ongoing national emergency, providing relief from federally mandated testing requirements for this school year.

#### **From DOE | COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel**

Resource list that includes links to the CDC, guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the Office of Postsecondary Education, and more.

#### **From DOE | Webinar on Online Education and Website Accessibility**

7-minute video.

#### **From OCR at DOE | Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Schools While Protecting the Civil Rights of Students**

4-page fact sheet, primarily aimed at education leaders.

#### **Legal FAQs on Coronavirus, School Closings, and Special Education**

Some basics on what most of us are worried and wondering about.

#### **COVID-19 and Students with Disabilities**

From the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools.

### **Map: Coronavirus and School Closures**

From EDWeek, this US map tracking school closures is updated twice daily.

### **State-by-State Coronavirus News**

Want to see the latest goings-on in your state or another? What's closed? What's open? What orders have been put in place at the state or local level?

### **COVID-19 Info in Other Languages or Formats**

#### **The CDC, of course!**

*(Available in English, simplified Chinese, and Spanish)*

Among the many dozen of resources on the coronavirus from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are two that Parent Centers may wish to share with families: (1) What you need to know; and (2) What to do if you are sick.

#### **Talking to Children About COVID-19 | A Parent Resource**

*(Available in English, Spanish, Amharic, Chinese, and Korean)*

Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events such as COVID-19. They need calmly delivered, factual information that's age appropriate, with concrete instruction about positive preventive measures. This guidance comes from the National Association of School Nurses and the National Association of School Psychologists.

#### **Explaining in graphic form DOE's guidance on providing services to children with disabilities during the coronavirus outbreak**

*(Available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Haitian-Creole)* | Thank you, Family Network on Disabilities, for this fine work!

#### **4 from Understood.org**

*(Available in English and Spanish)* | Check out these 4 resources available at understood.org: (1) How to talk about coronavirus with kids; (2) School closings and special education; (3) Activities to keep kids busy at home; and (4) Disability issues at work. The same tips and updates are available in Spanish.

#### **From Washington State, fact sheets on the virus**

*(Available in English, Amharic, Arabic, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese)*  
Wow!

#### **Plain language info about COVID-19, by and for people with disabilities**

Simple wording, lots of graphics illustrating key points and important protective things to know.

#### **COVID-19 Information in Different Languages, with Videos**

*(Available in Spanish, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, and Arabic)*

Brief info about the coronavirus, how it spreads, and how to protect yourself and find help. Includes videos!

## Telecommuting Technology and Tips

### Need to hold meetings virtually?

Here are some ways to do it.

**Free Zoom Personal** | Host up to 100 participants, Unlimited 1 to 1 meetings, 40 minute limit on group meetings, Unlimited number of meetings, online support, video conferencing, web conferencing

**Free Microsoft Team** | Microsoft Teams is a hub for teamwork in Office 365. Keep all your team's chats, meetings, files, and apps together in one place.

**Free G Suites and Google Hangouts** | advanced Hangouts Meet video-conferencing capabilities with up to 250 participants per call, Live streaming for up to 100,000 viewers within a domain, ability to record meetings and save them to Google Drive.

**Free Slack for small businesses** | Access to 10,000 of your team's most recent messages, 10 integrations with other apps like Google Drive, Office 365, 1:1 voice and video calls between teammates.

**Comcast offering 'Internet Essentials' package free for low-income customers for 60 days**

## Tips for Working Remotely

### How to work from home

Some good tips and practical advice here.

### Remote work starter guide for employees: how to adjust to work-from-home

Thoughtful suggestions, especially for people who are working remotely for the first time.

## Schooling at Home

### School closure learning guide during Coronavirus (COVID-19)

If school has closed, these resources will help your child learn from home. Find out how to set up at-home learning and use Great Schools' grade-based resources to fill in the gaps.

### Great Schools free worksheets in English and Spanish for different ages and grades

These actually look like fun for kids while emphasizing certain skills and addressing grade-appropriate information.

### Free online learning resources during COVID-19 closures

From National Center for Families Learning: [Wonderopolis.org](https://www.wonderopolis.org) is a free online learning resource visited by 13 million students, teachers, and parents annually. Also explore NCFL's [Out-of-School Time](#) free resources page.

### Resources for Learning at Home When Schools Close

Links to resources for teaching reading/English language arts, math, writing, science, and social studies.



### **11 Tips for Parents Starting to Homeschool in a Hurry**

A lot of us are in the same boat!

#### **Handpicked recommendations for learning apps, games, and websites for kids**

Common Sense Media offers this list of “best for learning.” Topics range from skills essential to life and work in the 21st century, to traditional academic subjects, to recommendations for particular settings or types of kids. Organized by age of child.

#### **Virtual Early Intervention Home Preparation Checklist for Families**

A 1-page checklist of how to prepare for a virtual early intervention home visit.

### **Coping Tips and Other Useful Info**

#### **Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak**

From SAMHSA.

#### **Daily tips (in video form) for parents**

Every day, the Child Mind Institute publishes a video and social tile with a tip for supporting families through the coronavirus crisis. Sign up to get these tips, and tell the families you serve to do so, too.

#### **How You and Your Kids Can De-Stress During Coronavirus**

From PBS for Parents.

#### **What To Do With Kids At Home On Coronavirus Break For Who Knows How Long (Without Losing It)**

Interesting resources and good advice here.

### **12 World-Class Museums You Can Visit Online**

The digital age has made it possible—easy, even—to visit some of the world’s most famous museums from the comfort of your own home, including the Louvre, the National Gallery of Art, the British Museum, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and NASA.

# Characteristics of Effective Parent-Teacher Communication: A Literature Review

By Sarah M. Lane

## Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss key characteristics of and issues in effective communication between teachers and parents of students with disabilities. A review of the literature showed that there are many considerations that go into parent-teacher communication that can determine its effectiveness. Some of the common factors found in the reviewed research that affected the quality of communication, positively or negatively, were possession of information, extent of understanding, and ideas held about the topic or person. These factors were common with both parents and teachers. For the purpose of this literature review, the characteristics and issues found in the research have been categorized as comprehension, openness and purposefulness, and preconceptions and misconceptions.

## Characteristics of Effective Parent-Teacher Communication

In the area of special education, teachers and parents constantly work and adjust to provide an appropriate, quality education that addresses the child's needs. In order to do this, educators and parents of students with disabilities must be able to effectively communicate about a variety of topics ranging from rules and expectations to background information to regular feedback to special education processes and policies. Each topic can be accompanied by its own complications such as differences in expectations and difficulties understanding complex policies. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review was to explore research focusing on relationships between teachers and parents of students with disabilities and examine characteristics of communication that influenced its effectiveness. The articles reviewed provided findings on factors of parent and teacher satisfaction, issues of comprehension, and perceptions.

Effective communication is an important part of education because it conveys and seeks messages, information, and thoughts. For example, a teacher cannot instruct while considering information they do not have, and a parent cannot support classroom practices they do not know about or understand. Isolating characteristics and issues related to the effectiveness of communication regarding students with disabilities can be useful to parents and teachers in efforts to improve relationships and collaboration. This can in turn help improve the quality and appropriateness of a student's education. Furthermore, identifying these characteristics can provide guidance on skills and qualities to instruct educators on when preparing them to work with families of students with disabilities.

### Comprehension

One common characteristic found in the results of the reviewed research is the importance of ensuring comprehension. More specifically, the research findings referred to both comprehension of the meaning of conveyed messages and comprehension of relevant concepts, such as education terminology and policy. When communicating, participants must be clear about what they want to

convey and what has been conveyed to them. In order to ensure parents comprehension, communication should be clear and consistent. A study of parent and teacher perspectives on communication found that there were three common traits attributed to good communication: openness, good listening skills, and seeking clarification (Chu, 2014). Both listening skills and seeking to clarify are key to understanding each other in parent-teacher communications. The participant must be able to consider what is being said and follow up with statements and questions, as necessary. In special education, meetings are held frequently and can be rushed due to schedule constraints. A parent must be allowed and encouraged to process what is being said and seek clarification in order to obtain true comprehension. Chu's study also found that diverse families and teachers attributed language barriers as an issue in effective communication (2014). It is an educator's responsibility to adapt communication to ensure that it is appropriate and accessible to families from diverse cultures

Another aspect of comprehension is the comprehension of concepts. Families of students with disabilities will encounter many specific special education concepts such as terminologies, acronyms, and policies. One example is procedural safeguard documents that protect parental rights. A study on the readability of procedural safeguard documents in the United States found that these documents are often written at "excessively high levels" when compared to the average reading level of adults (Mandic, Rudd, Hehir, & Acevedo-Garcia, 2012). Results showed that 94% of these documents were at a college or graduate/professional reading level. In comparison, data showed that 43% adults between ages 25-49 attained a high school degree or less. Furthermore, of these adults, 86% of them were found to have limited literacy (Mandic, et al., 2012). These findings are a striking picture of the amount of difficulty parents are likely to face when dealing with special education materials and should be considered when teachers are providing information.

### **Openness and Purposefulness**

Other results of reviewed literature showed that openness and purposefulness of communication were attributed to higher effectiveness. In the previously mentioned study by Chu, one of the three traits attributed to good communication was openness. A theme among the parents and teachers in the study was that teachers should regard communication and information from parents with an open attitude (Chu, 2014). Parents can be a valuable resource of information on their children but only if that information can be properly communicated. This is further supported by the results of Wischnowski and Cianca's 2012 study done on a pre-service course for parent-teacher collaboration. The study surveyed participants after parents and teachers collaborated over the duration of the pre-service course. It found that parents appreciated helping teachers understand they were useful resources for information. It also found that teachers appreciated learning to empathize with and value parents (Wischnowski & Cianca, 2012).

Results from the literature also support the idea that effective communication should be purposeful. Parents require regular communications about student progress and any ongoing issues. The research showed that parent-teacher communication that sought to problem solve, collaborate, and learn was more likely to be positively perceived and lead to further participation. Wischnowski and Cianca's research used a problem-based learning design through parent-teacher interviews and follow up communications to collaborate on a chosen issue regarding their student (2012). The study reported that many families chose to participate in the course again due to the value of information provided and mutual understanding gained. The results of this study show that when teacher-parent communication is conducted with purpose both the parent and teacher can benefit.

### **Preconceptions and Misconceptions**

Teachers and parents alike possess preconceptions and misconceptions when approaching educational relationships. A preconception may be an idea a parent or teacher holds based on previous knowledge or experience. They might have had a disagreement or been told outdated information and enter communications under a misconception. The reviewed literature shows that these preconceptions and misconceptions can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of parent-teacher communication. Parents and teachers were reported in some of the findings as having difficulties over attitudes about teachers or parents and their roles and expectations. Chu's study found that some parents reported issues from assumptions about expectations for communication that were not clearly stated. This led to negative perceptions towards their relationship that could have been avoided (Chu, 2014). The structure and expectations of communication between a child's school and the family should be clearly stated and reviewed throughout the school year to ensure that all parties understand and are satisfied. The parents in this study also reported difficulties due to misconceptions about classroom expectations. The parent and teacher each would expect a situation to be handled a different way, without having stated it (Chu, 2014).

When looking at results in the literature related to preconceptions, many issues were due to cultural differences. Two studies showed that this is especially the case with African American students, who are overrepresented in populations of students with disabilities but underrepresented among school staff (Griner & Stewart, 2013; Irvine, 2012). Irvine's research stated five aspects of ethnicity for understanding the influence of cultural differences on education: verbal communication, nonverbal communication, orientation modes, social values, and intellectual modes. These cultural differences, when not acknowledged, can lead to misconceptions resulting in tension between the home and school (Irvine, 2012). Teachers can improve their communication with diverse families by learning from the school, families and community. Parents should also consider how diverse families might have different needs such as in forms of communication and collaboration. Griner and Stewart found three themes from parental and community perspectives on culturally responsive teaching: outreach, representation, and classroom management. Parents in the study reported hesitation and discomfort due to perceptions of inferior education, lack of cultural representation among school staff, and conflicting expectations (Griner & Stewart, 2013). These factors are of vital consideration to teachers of diverse populations, and even more so when combined with factors related to students with disabilities. Using recommended strategies to encourage these families can improve relationships and the effectiveness of communication. Potential strategies that could increase the effectiveness of parent-teacher communications include holding meetings with families to obtain information and their perspective, holding school events that promote relationship building, and including parents in discussions to problem-solve student issues (Griner & Stewart, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

A review of the literature showed that there are many considerations that go into parent-teacher communication that can determine its effectiveness, positively or negatively. Some of the characteristics found commonly in the research that affected the quality of communication were comprehension, openness and purposefulness, and preconceptions and misconceptions. While there are certainly many other factors that go into the effectiveness of communication between the school and home, the research showed that these three categories were most commonly identified in issues among both parents and teachers. The findings of the reviewed literature support that parent-teacher communication could be improved through the consideration of these characteristics and implementing related strategies.

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# **Challenges Parents/ Guardians Encounter when Advocating for a Child in Special Education**

**By Julianne Ramos**

## **Abstract**

The challenge's parents and/or guardians face when trying to advocate for their child in special education are countless. Time after time parents come into Individualized Education Plan meetings; also known as IEP meetings, with choices already made for them and left with little to no time to clarify any misconceptions. Parents are looked on as onlookers sitting in to be informed rather than active participants in making choices for their child. This journal article goes into some challenge's parents face as advocates of students in special education: lack of resources, no reliable support, and little to no parental input. Studies have been done to show that parental involvement is imperative in a child's education, especially those in special education which is why changes need to be made as to how these parents are involved and supported.

## **Challenges Parents/ Guardians Encounter when Advocating for a Child in Special Education**

### **Introduction**

When working with children especially in the field of education, there is something that is very important to understand. You are not only working with that child while they are sitting in your classroom, but everyone involved in that child's life. Those people involved could be their guardians, aunts, uncles, or grandparents, but like many people that work or have children know it takes a village to raise a child. As a child enters the school system, no parent presents the mentality of wanting their child to have a disability that requires them to receive special education. Usually, it's a teacher that notices something off and as a school we come together to talk to those parents and service that child. Now it may be difficult for parents at first and they may go through denial or anger, but what is of importance is that they know their child is going to be receiving what they need to succeed both in and out of the classroom with the help of special education.

With that being said, as children first go into the special education program it is normal that this is something foreign to parents. They may not know what being in a special education program really means, what that means for their child's future, how they are going to be able to best help their child, and much more. It is the job of administration, counselors, teachers and anyone else that plays part in that child's education to help and inform those parents. Now truth be told that doesn't always happen.

Parents face challenges in advocating for their child when trying to get them the accommodations or modifications they are required. There are plenty factors that play into the challenges and frustrations of these parents which is what I plan to review in this journal article. This review will include some research that has been done on challenges parents face when advocating for

their child along with steps that can be taken to empower parents to be advocates for their child's education.

### **A Lack of Resources**

When a parent is first informed that their child has entered the special education program there are two ways in which it can go. Either the parent is bombarded with information or resources or they don't get any resources and they don't even know where to begin. Both of those are not the best approaches when trying to assist a parent in getting what they need for their child. When a parent is bombarded with information, they act as those parents that have no information at all in the sense that they have no idea where to even start to get their child the help they need. According to Chen and Gregory (2010), parental advocacy, the involvement of parents in the education of children with disabilities, has been integral to the development of special education services since the 1970s and the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). Parents play a hefty part in their child's education and they should be guided as to what services best suit their child's needs.

The lack of resources is one of the largest challenge's parents face when trying to advocate for their child in special education. Burke (2013) states that the special education advocacy field remains unsupervised and unclear as to who should train advocates and be responsible for their conduct (p.225). In other words, those individuals that are supposed to be assisting the parents in advocating for their child have no one to report to ensuring that they are not only doing their job but doing it to the best of their ability. This "advocacy resource" that is being given to parents is one that could potentially assist them in getting everything their child needs but there is no guarantee that that is what the parents are receiving.

Higher power needs to hold the special education advocacy field accountable considering there is a way for parents to learn about advocating for their child but the source it is coming from is unreliable. By holding this field and each individual accountable we create a reliable source for parents to depend on. These parents know they have someone who is looking out for the best interest of their child and not cheating them out of getting a service they are entitled to. Just by providing that one service would open doors for resources parents can take advantage of.

### **No Support Leading to Isolation**

Brown et. al. (2010) mentioned how challenging behaviours and deficits in adaptive skills among children with ASD have a significant impact on parental mental health. Similarly, it is likely that these behaviours will influence parents' perceptions of unmet need[s], such that families whose children are on the extremes of the functional independence spectrum will have the greatest levels of unmet needs (p. 1292). Parents may go into a state of shock or denial where they may not be able to physically and mentally tend to their child. Not all families experience disability in the same way and the impact varies from family to family. Parents may begin to isolate their child and themselves because of the disability since they feel that they can no longer go out into public facilities now that their child has been diagnosed.

Parents having no support; it could be from the school to family members, causes them to abandon their child's needs and a lot of the times it is not done intentionally. They just do not know how to adapt to their child and give them the care they need along with handling situations that may occur out in public. It may get to a point that the anxiety and fear of handling situations with their child in public overwhelms them and leads them into the state of isolation. Professionals know that isolating a child at home and not exposing them to different surroundings doesn't help them in any way. The



parent is faced with the challenge of taking them out or leaving them at home. Teachers and professionals put themselves in that parent's shoes to understand their reasoning, but they also have to put themselves in the spot of the child. They know that the child is not benefiting from those circumstances.

Now this is when someone needs to jump in and give that parent and family support. As educators we need to think about what could possibly help that parent transition into going out into unpredictable settings. Also, what strategies can be taught to the child and parent to better manage situations that can occur out in public. Teachers and therapists can help immensely in this aspect of the challenge's parents face; but if the child does not have a therapist then it is solely the teacher. The teacher is with the child most of the day and has learned what works and doesn't work for them. They have observed the child and have learned their triggers and what motivates them. Communication with the parent about the techniques and strategies that work in the classroom could be just what the parent needs to begin the overcoming of isolation.

### **Parent Input**

For anyone that has sat in an Individualized Education Plan meeting; also known as an IEP meeting, it is known that those meetings can be overwhelming with not only assessments that have been done or will be done to the child, but terminology that might be unclear to some. Jan W. Valle (2011) stated that, "Observations of parent- professional conferences confirmed unclear explanations of psychological testing, a lack of opportunity for parents to ask questions, and the presentation of pre-prepared Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for parents to sign (Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull, & Curry, 1980)" (p. 186). How is any of that allowing a parent to understand their child's needs? Aren't those meetings set to inform parents about their child and what they are being provided? Aren't those meetings planned to address any concerns or questions a parent may have? It is understandable that a parent may freeze and not know exactly what to say at that moment, but they should be able to decide for their child.

Parents and/or guardians go into these meetings where an IEP has already been created. When they are presented with this pre-made IEP, they are not being informed of the choices that they could have made for their child rather the choices that have already been made for them. As a teacher, I feel that every parent should be able to decide what will be most beneficial for the child. Sometimes it may not be the best decision, but there is always time to reconvene and reflect on what has happened and what could be done to better assist the child.

Terminology that isn't used day to day by individuals should be broken down and explained to parents. Parents are not there to supervise this meeting as an onlooker, but to give their input and opinion. They should feel free to ask any questions they may have and not feel belittled when asking about something they didn't quite understand.

It is hard to think that parent's input is not being taken seriously when it comes to IEP meetings and the decisions being made for a child's education. No parent wants to feel as if their opinion did not matter, rather they may be more open to trying new things for their child if they know their voice is being heard. As administration, teachers, therapists, psychologists, and everyone else sitting in IEP meetings we all need to come together and work on changing this. Nothing should be pre-planned before the parent is educated on the choices they can. make for their child. A parent should not leave not understanding what their child has, what they are receiving, and how this will all benefit them in the long run. As a team we need to come together for these children and their families.



### Conclusion

Thus, it is of utmost importance for educators to understand and appropriately provide for the needs of these students. Because parents know their own children best and are increasingly asked to work collaboratively with school personnel, it is important to investigate their perspectives regarding their child's education (Starr and Joy, 2012, p.208). Everyone that works with a special need's child should ensure the parent is being involved and active in the decisions being made. These parents shouldn't be facing these challenges when they have already been given the biggest challenge of them all: raising a child with special needs to the best of their ability. School personnel including teachers, administration, and therapists should be a crutch for parents to lean on when bringing up a child with special needs. Changes need to be made to get these parents to face less challenges when all they are trying to do is advocate for the well-being of their child. We all have the same goal and that is for the child to succeed, but we need to make sure no one is left behind when trying to get the child there.

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# **The Impact of Parent Involvement in Meeting the Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Disabilities**

**By Mirel Saban**

## **Abstract**

To families who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD), meeting the needs of their children with disabilities can be difficult due to the challenges they encounter every day. This can result in the lack of parental involvement and have detrimental to the developmental and educational growth of children with disabilities. Without the guidance of their parents, student advocacy, academic progress, and parent and teacher collaboration, CLD students may not have their needs appropriately met and are likely to be left to have no one to defend them.

## **The Impact of Parent Involvement in Meeting the Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Disabilities**

Over the years, the representation in special education of students with disabilities has been increasingly growing. The amount of assistance and services provided to students with disabilities often depends on the severity of the disorder. However, it is more often than not that parents feel as if they are too over-whelmed by the range of needs their children have (from medical to educational) and the lack of help they receive in order to meet those needs. Parents of children with disabilities (especially those of different cultures) are constantly faced with hurdles that can immensely impact the way they participate in their child's educational development. Consequently, the absence of parent involvement and collaboration can have great implications on student's advocacy, influence student's overall academic progress, and affect the relationship among both parents and educators.

## **The Causes of Decreased Parent Involvement**

Recently, the growing number of students receiving special education services has greatly increased requiring more and more parents to become a part of their children's education. However, in order to understand the impact parent involvement has on children with disabilities, it is necessary to mention that there are several obstacles that might prevent parents from being involved and therefore, reduce the amount of parent collaboration. The first obstacle that parents might encounter is language barriers. For most parents, the overall Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process can be extremely intimidating, including documentations and verbiage they are simply unfamiliar with. This, along with language barriers can hinder parents of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) backgrounds from being active participants and performing their expected roles in the IEP process (Lo, 2012, p.15). Another obstacle that parents encounter that might decrease parent involvement is cultural differences. In some culture, the views and beliefs of its people on disabilities and various disorders can greatly differ from how it is viewed in westernized culture. For instance, according to Ryan and Smith (1989), "in a

study of Chinese American parents, found that although most parents agreed with the diagnosis from their doctors, they attributed causes to supernatural influences and immoral deeds, and even viewed their children's disability as a temporary problem" ( as cited in Nguyen and Hughes, 2013, p.2). Consequently, these cultural ideologies can influence the extent of parent involvement when it comes to children with disabilities.

### **The Impact on Student Advocacy**

For most students with disabilities, parents or legal guardians are the main source of support and reliance. Parents that are involved in their child's education serve as representatives for their children's academic needs (such as attending IEP meetings), during transitioning to adulthood, and most importantly, ensuring that their children are receiving appropriate services. Furthermore, the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legally promotes parent involvement in its procedural safeguards. More specifically, the IDEA states that, "these procedural safeguards guarantee parents' rights to share in decision making with the school regarding identification and diagnosis, evaluation, placement, services, individualized educational planning, and transition to adulthood" (as cited in Mandic et al., 2012, p.195). If CLD parents are unaware of their rights as advocates for their children, the question arises, who will advocate for children with disabilities if their parents are unable to? According to Bailey et al. (1998), "the expectation for parents to serve as advocates has become so strong that early intervention researchers have identified one of the family outcomes of early intervention as enhancing the family's perceived ability to work with professionals and advocate for services" ( as cited in Wang et al., 2004, p.144). However, parent advocacy and even self-advocacy can become a concern to CLD families when it compares to a system that views individualism and social independence as the main goal for students with disabilities. In a Park and Turnbull's (2001) study of Korean American parents of children in special education,

"they found that these parents rarely asked questions of the professionals working with their children, as a sign of respect for authority. If a parent were to disagree or question a person in public that would cause a loss of face to the other party, which is highly discouraged in Asian culture as it breaks the degree of connectedness" (as cited in Nguyen & Hughes, 2013, p.3).

### **The Impact on Students' Academic Progress**

The lack of parent involvement can also take a toll on children's academic progress, especially those with disabilities. Schools often encourage parents to participate in progress monitoring of their children's academic growth at home using several online educational programs, as well as promoting parent involvement by inviting parents to school events such as family nights, open-houses, and parent-teacher conferences. Lynch (2016) claims that when parents are progressively involved in their children's education,

"student learning and outcomes, children's attitudes toward school, social skills and behavior all improve with the likelihood that they will take classes that are more challenging and pass them. This holds true across families of all economic, ethnic, racial, and educational backgrounds and for students of all ages" (as cited in Avnet et al., 2019, p.477).

However, for CLD families, this type of parental involvement can be extremely intimidating considering all the factors involved in initiating and maintaining constant communication with their children's school. This can become even more problematic to CLD parents of children with disabilities who require

a more consistent line of communication with their children's teachers. According to Aber et al. (2000) and Gershoff et al.(2007), when it comes to children of immigrants, whose lack of English proficiency can impact the family's socioeconomic status; which means that their access to different resources and materials that can aid their children, may not be so easily attained (as cited in Johnson et al., 2016, p. 446). Along with language and cultural barriers, this factor of coming from lower socioeconomic status makes it even more challenging for CLD families to be involved in their children's academics.

### **The Impact on Teacher- Parent Communication and Collaboration**

Another area that is greatly affected by lack of parental involvement is the relationship among teachers and parents. Needless to say, the impact of a constant and cooperative relationship between teachers and parents can have great significance on the educational development of a child. This is especially emphasized regarding children with disabilities who rely on both their parents and teachers to provide them with appropriate interventions and services. As stated by Cox (2005), McNamara, Telzrow, & DeLamatre (1999), there have been several studies that propose that, "interventions that most effectively aid students are those that are implemented by parents and school staff working together" (as cited in Chen & Gregory, 2011, p.448). Furthermore, this means that the smaller number of parents that are involved in their children's education, the less room available for teacher-parent communication. Fluid communication between the two is decreased even more when different barriers are present such as differences in language and culture. The effects of this can have a drastic impact on parents understanding the kinds of interventions that are being implemented in the classroom to help their children and how can they reinforce some of those interventions in their children's home life.

### **Conclusion**

After examining the different components that influence the impact parental involvement has on meeting the needs of CLD students with disabilities, it is safe to say that parents being concerned with their children's education is extremely essential to developmental growth and ensuring that the appropriate services are provided to them. For students with disabilities, their families are often their main support system, without their support, students are sometimes left with no one to speak for them or defend their rights. Thus, resulting in students struggling academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. Although CLD parents have many challenges to get through, their hopes and dreams for their children are just as valid as any other parent. Therefore, by providing services, language translators, and opportunities of collaborations, schools are likely to increase the numbers of CLD parental engagement.

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# Parental Involvement of Students with Disabilities and Participation in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Process

By Altrese T Mays

## Abstract

All around the county, you are bound to be in proximity of different people, backgrounds and abilities. One can hope that the interaction is smooth, effortless, and pleasant. With that in mind, have you ever been in a situation with a teacher or staff member that left you feeling frustrated and stressed? Not all interactions are positive and unfortunately it has caused parents to 'proceed without' when annual IEPs are due. For those that do attend, they either yell to get their point across or are quick to sign off on documents to end the tragedy. Due to barriers such as scheduling, cultural differences, terminology, just to state a few, are common reasons why parents are uncomfortable during the IEP process. Thanks to new research and studies, we can figure out triggers that stimulate uncomfortable meetings and ways to facilitate appropriate interactions that will encourage more parental involvement.

## Parental Involvement of Students with Disabilities and Participation in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Process

The Individualized Plan (IEP) is a legal document that states the goals the child will be working towards, the services that the child will be receiving, personal information such as the disability that effects the child's learning, previous tests along with scores, and feedback from the child's teacher(s). Ideally, all participates such as the teacher(s), therapists, Assistant principal, both parents, and a counselor are requested to be present at these meetings to effectively collaborate for the benefit of the child. IEP meetings can be very tense, sensitive and hurtful if not handled delicately. This brings my first point to why parents may feel that they aren't able to attend the meeting due to scheduling.

### Month Prior to Meeting. 10 Day Notice sent home.

Before the IEP meeting takes place and mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), there is some form of communication that transpires to conclude what date and time works best for parent(s) to participate in the IEP meeting. Once that is established thirty days before the meeting, there is a notice sent home ten days before that requires a signature, in blue ink, to serve as a reminder to notify the parent(s) this meeting will take occur at this time, this place, this way; via conference call, in person, if both parents will attend, or no one is available to attend. There are instances where a parent can not attend due to an emergency or a mishap with their work schedule. This is now a barrier that affects the scheduling process and can serve as a risk of being incompilant. When this happens, the teacher and the parent(s) try to communicate back and forth about dates and times that are accommodating for both parties. On the teacher's end, she is keeping in

mind that the meeting must be 'locked' before the compliance date. By staying aware of the expiration date, it's best practices to conduct a meeting up to thirty days in advance to alleviate uncompromising moments.

Although communication has taken place, some parents are still not able to attend the meeting in person. In that case, we can only rely on a phone conference or other means of technology to proceed with the meeting. According to Stathene, Jude & Jane (2017), "Technology has developed several programs that provide flexibility for identifying convenient dates and times for scheduling the meeting when the parent has access to a connected device. By providing such an opportunity, parents are given the respect to participate based on a time and place that welcomes their diverse schedules to optimize their active participation." (pg. 86). With a click and a download on a phone or device, applications such as Zoom and Whatsapp are now used to communicate and participate in meetings from wherever they are.

### **Emotional Encounters**

After the IEP meeting has been successfully scheduled, we are now on our way to arrive and be in attendance with the other members. While all the members are stating their role and the services they provide, typically if this is a reevaluation or an initial meeting, the school psychologist and therapist(s) will present their data to the parents along with the scores their child received. Referring to my own personal experiences, I have witnessed a parent cry after assessment results were given. All I could do was reassure them that their child will become adjusted to the program and we'll continue to monitor their progress. I do understand that some teachers are not as empathetic and that some staff members are not so eager to console emotional parents. Based upon a study that was organized, the mothers agreed that they felt "fragile" and "vulnerable" when their child's disability was mentioned. They went on to further describe the IEP meetings brought on feelings of guilt, shame, fear, and dread. (David & Wendy, 2017).

Meanwhile other parents were not anticipating the jargon barrier they have succumbed to. As said by (Fish 2008) "Parents who are unable to understand special education jargon and terminology are likely to perceive themselves as unprepared to address their children's educational needs." (pg. 9). Terminology is used as a mean to identify behaviors, protocol, instruments, abbreviations, and observations. However, by providing meanings and full text associating with information presented, will decrease the misunderstanding with parents. No professional, at least we can hope, wants their parent(s) to feel this way. Interactions such as the one previously mentioned only creates a gap between parents and it's our responsibility to adhere to their needs and close the gap.

It is also very important to keep in mind that parents can be receptive, open-minded, and ready to collaborate during the IEP process. On the other hand, some parents are on the defense, concerned, and ready to battle which presumes another barrier in parental involvement. Due to past experiences they may feel and agreed that "screaming loudly" can help get their point across. (Christian & Elizabeth, 2017). When this happens, it's not beneficial for anyone and staff members must remain professional even when being confronted. The goal is to effectively work in partnership with all participants attending the meeting. When parents can sit alongside their child's teacher and discuss what their concerns are and work together to figure out a feasible solution, that is when the true collaboration starts. There shouldn't be a triggered moment that offsets the aggressive behavior and silent treatment between faculty and family. As soon as that's settled, we can face the goals and perspective gains we anticipate for the child to meet.



## Cultural Difference

Given the barriers such as scheduling and heavy emotions, there tends to be another that will affect a parent's involvement in the IEP process; that of which is the cultural difference. Cultural differences are not that easy to bridge the gap upon but with the right team, support, and strong efforts, it can be established. For example, a study was performed and corresponding to Salas (2004) "concluded from studying Mexican American parents of children with special needs that their input was frequently not respected during IEP meetings." (pg. 8). Respectfully so, the student body and its counterparts are filled with an array of ethnicities and races. Considering we're aware of this, why aren't school taking swift action to prepare and execute the differences that are witnessed prior to these IEP meetings?

Let's say that we are prepared. We accommodate the English Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) learners and their parents by requesting a translator to attend the meeting. Even though that is a great and helpful idea, however, the wording does not always hold its true value if the translator does not precisely translate each word and phrase the way it is intended. Aside from the language comes the body gestures, the body language, and the silent remarks that are displayed during the meeting. When the parents are provided with a translated statement from the therapist to the parent, they may or may not be 100 percent able to understand due to the complexity of the terminology and its associated data. To the parent it may come off as rude or insensitive and that's not what are intentions are. As educators we are also advocating for the betterment of the student and are readily available to provide any support when needed and we simply want to keep that momentum going.

## Improving the IEP Process for Parents.

Due to scheduling, emotional encounters, and cultural differences, it is conveyed that these are barriers regarding parental involvement and a solution is expected. One way to ensure the unity of parents and to promote their involvement is by creating an environment that is welcoming from the beginning This can be done by creating a positive experience for the child, the parent(s) and service providers. (Fish, 2017). Along with the supply list and downloaded information to either Classdojo or Remind, there should be a questionnaire for the parents to complete to provide information such as their child's likes and dislikes, their interests, allergies if any are present, and things of that nature. I recommend a questionnaire because some children with disabilities are not able to vocalize for themselves the things they like or are allergic to. Also, having the service providers send home information about their services and mode of communication is a great way for everyone to know more about the people their child will be in contact with.

Another way to promote parental involvement is by having a conference with the Special Education (SPED) teacher and the paraprofessional so everyone recognizes who teaches the lessons, who will be assisting in the classroom, and simply put a face to the name. By having a conference, it allows an opportunity to engage in conversation versus the mundane talk such as classroom expectations, the curriculum that we follow etc. The child's parents are their own people, not just XYZ's caregivers. They too have their own personality, concerns, and sometimes they just want to be able to have an uninterrupted, safe place to talk with teacher. Perhaps they want to convey what their needs are from a parents' point-of-view because they probably couldn't do so at the previous school, and they would like to prevent it from happening again.

Ending with the last way to stimulate parental involvement is by adhering to the IDEA to initiate and conduct an IEP meeting. According to Stathene, Jude & Jane (2017) "There are many ways to make an IEP meeting more intentionally inviting. Many of these best practices are rooted in the IDEA mandates



to increase active parental involvement in the IEP process.” (pg. 88). Some of these ways are previously mentioned such as the written notice that is sent home prior to the meeting, having all the required members present at the meeting and being mindful of the jargon used. By educators and administration fully adhering to the IDEA, they will be providing the opportunity and space for consistent parental involvement. In my opinion, I feel if educators and administration are professional, honest, open for communication, and supportive, the likelihood for parental collaboration would be higher. Discovering that a child has a special need or disability is already hard to fathom. Why not make it easier for the parents to undergo the IEP process the best way we can by getting involved and working together.

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# Book Review: Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process

By Yolanda S. Stevens

## Abstract

Mentoring is an effective way to train new teachers and it has been proven to be impactful in reducing teacher attrition. Both teachers and school leaders such as school principals benefit a great deal from the research-based activities that coincide with the mentoring process. This book review will include this writer's brief thesis on the role of mentoring as an effective school leadership strategy, Debra Eckerman Pitton's thesis concerning mentoring novice teachers, background information on the author and book, the main themes addressed in her book, key quotes from the book, strong and weak arguments found in Pitton's book and a comparison and contrast of Pitton's theories to those found in Michael Fullan's book entitled *Leading in a Culture of Change*.

**Keywords:** Coherence-Making, Dialogue, Graphic Organizers, Knowledge Sharing

## Thesis on Mentoring and Leadership

A study conducted between 2007 and 2012 following 1,990 first-year teachers found that five years later, 70% of the teachers remained in their original teaching positions, 10% moved to new schools, 3% returned to the teaching field and 17% left the teaching profession. The study also found that 86% of first-year teachers with mentors remained in the field as opposed to 71% of teachers without mentors. A study with startling results was conducted in Florida by the National Education Association in 2017 and it showed that 40% of first-year teachers without mentors leave the profession within five years (Flannery, 2017). This rate is approximately 15 to 20% higher than the national average. Furthermore, the study estimated that the inability to retain teachers costs the nation's school districts 7.3 billion dollars yearly. Mentoring is crucial in retaining first-year teachers as a federal study conducted in 2015 found that 92% of first-year teachers with mentors return to the profession (Flannery, 2017). Moreover, in the areas of special education, 98% of school districts nationwide report a shortage in teachers (Duffy & Forgan, 2005).

It is very important that some form of evaluation be present in the mentoring process to determine the efficacy of any mentoring program, especially in the self-reflection phase of mentoring. For this reason, mentoring must include communication, trust, role-modeling and evaluation. Therefore, the role of the mentor must evolve from friendly, supportive and non-judgmental to constructive and evaluative and this defines the mentor teacher as a leader. It is impossible to have a successful and professional mentoring relationship built on trust without a standard-based measure to guide the mentorship without ultimately evaluating the mentee's progress from the beginning of the program to its completion. Even Pitton (2006) admits that if done correctly, there is a benefit when mentors take on the role of evaluator using a structured assessment used to guide the mentoring and self-reflection process.

## Purpose and Thesis of Book

Pitton's purpose for writing *Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process* was because of the problem of teacher attrition after their first year of teaching. She stated that mentoring is a "key method" for providing help for novice teachers during a time that is known to be the most overwhelming (Pitton, 2006, p. 3). Pitton makes several arguments that are found in her first chapter, "Defining the Mentoring Relationship". Her first argument to support her thesis is that "the success of new teachers is critically linked to their first teaching experiences and the opportunities they are given to talk through issues they face in the classroom (Pitton, 2006, pg. 3). Another argument she makes is that professional and non-judgmental relationships must be established between the mentor and mentee. She supports these two claims with research from Everston & Smithey (2000) and Storms, Wing, Jinks, Banks, & Cavazos (2000), who state in their work that the success of first-year teachers is based on their connection with other veteran teachers. Pitton also states that teaching is one of the few professions that transfers immediate responsibilities to novice teachers. Furthermore, she states that first year teachers and novice teachers require support because they often struggle to understand their new profession and a large number of novice teachers have been reported to leave the profession after the first year frustrated because of a lack of support. She supports these claims using Garvey and Alred's (2000) research that states that mentors are crucial for new teachers' success. Her biggest and recurring theme in the book is that "supportive, nonjudgmental relationships greatly benefit new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Everston & Smithey, 2000)" [Pitton, 2006]. Pitton states emphatically that the relationship between the mentor and mentee is not evaluative, but she admits, "It is possible to design a program that includes assessment by the mentor, but the assessment needs to be carefully structured and incorporate formative evaluation" (Pitton, 2006, pp.104-105).

## Background Information on Author and Book

Debra Eckerman Pitton started her educational career as a language arts teacher in the high school setting and then she moved on to teach middle-school-aged students in the area of English, speech and theatre. She worked in the Iowa, Illinois and Texas school systems, worked as a local school board elected member and she taught courses on communication at the community college level. She has since earned her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of North Texas and is currently a department chair and professor of education at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. She has written *Stories of Student Teaching*, *Mentoring Novice Teachers*, *Developing Preservice Problem-Solving Skills through Case Studies* and *Supporting Teacher Development*. Her second book, *Mentoring Novice Teachers* was written in 2000 and a second edition was published in 2006. It includes eight chapters, along with three sections devoted toward resources that mentor teachers can use to foster the learning and mentoring process and it currently costs approximately \$36.00 for the paperback version.

## Main Themes

Pitton outlines three recurring themes throughout the book: dialogue, scenarios and graphic organizers. In addition, she also restates her thesis that in order for the mentoring process to be successful, the mentor must present open communication, a non-judgmental approach, lead with guiding questions and if all else fails, use direct language when in the small chance, an "impasse" occurs. Throughout each chapter, Pitton places a dialogue model, scenarios to facilitate mentoring and graphic organizers to be used by the mentor teacher and some designed for the mentee. Pitton advises that a back and forth dialogue helps the mentor teacher understand the mentee's perspective so that the mentoring process can take place (Pitton, 2006, p. 7). She continues to state throughout the book, but

more wholly in chapter two that communication is vital and that it must take place in a non-judgmental fashion. When this takes place, trust is established between the mentor and mentee. She dedicates the whole chapter to teach about the types of communication: open communication, verbal messages, exact language and non-verbal language (Pitton, 2006). She stresses that this builds relationships and if done correctly, it minimizes miscommunication. Chapter three is devoted to the need for using guiding questions which are probing statements that are designed to help the mentor teacher promote “reflective thinking” and “problem solving” on the mentee’s part (Pitton, 2006). Lastly for the time when a disagreement or impasse occurs, Pitton suggests that mentor teachers use direct language, although they should remain supportive. This means that mentors must honestly tell the mentees what areas they need to improve on and create action plans on the area of need. Another theme that is woven throughout the book is the metaphor of the mirror. Pitton states that the mentor teacher is to be a mirror of the mentee’s experiences. For example, the mentor should be so supportive that the mentee should be able to see their current performance and growth when they meet with their mentor because the relationship should be, again, non-judgmental and it should reflect objectively what the mentor teacher observes from the mentee.

### **Key Quotes**

There are several key quotes throughout the book and the most impactful ones describe the supportive relationship between the mentor and mentee because of the non-judgmental communication style that is necessary to build the successful partnership. “Unless mentors and mentees are both very clear on how they view teaching and learning miscommunication and misunderstanding can occur” and “...it is important that all individuals involved in mentoring now and understand their roles. Lack of clarity regarding mentoring roles can lead to confusion and ineffective support for novice teaches (Brooks, 2000; Chapel, 2003)” [Pitton, 2006, p. 17]. As far as differentiated the role of the mentor and the supervising teacher, “the role of the supervisor is primarily that of evaluator, although he or she may also serve as an advocate and a supporter” and “the supervisor’s role often requires a more direct approach than the mentor’s supportive role” (Pitton, 2006, p.11). One of her most illuminating quotes that illustrate the mentor-mentee relationship is, “If mentors mirror classroom observations and ask guiding questions and the novice is still unaware of the area of concern, mentors need to be more directive and use specific, nonjudgmental language. Once mentees are aware of problems, action plans should be developed. If action plans are implemented but the problems continue, mentors should provide mentees with evidence that a change has not occurred and ask questions about what might be impeding their ability to work in this particular area.” (Pitton, 2006, p. 58). Lastly, the quote that outlines what should happen during the conference cycle is, “During the conference, mentees should identify the objective for the lesson, articulate their reasons for choosing these goals, and describe the steps they will follow or the structure they will use to engage the students in learning. They should also identify how they plan to determine whether the students are successful in meeting objectives” (Pitton, 2006, p. 77). All of these quotes relate to the fact that open and honest communication is vital to make the mentoring program successful.

### **Weak and Strong Arguments**

Although the strengths of the book outnumber its weaknesses, the later will be addressed first. One of Pitton’s weaker points is that the book does not address teachers who are new to the profession of teaching. She devotes much time to novice and student teachers but does not address those that are entering the field of education who did not graduate from the college of education. Furthermore, she introduces the term, “paralinguistic” on page 24 but does not fully explain what it means in the context of mentoring until page 28. The same is true for her introduction of the term “guiding questions” on

page 44, but she does not clarify its impact on communication until page 49. Furthermore, the subtitle of the text leads readers to believe that the communication that is being fostered will take place between the mentor and the mentee, however, after careful examination of each dialogue section and their corresponding worksheets, it becomes clear that the dialogue is meant to take place between the mentor and another fellow mentor.

In Pitton's discussion about teacher attrition, she loses an opportunity to provide data that supports her claim that mentoring helps to retain first-year teachers in the field of education. Furthermore, on the point that mentors should not be used as evaluators, she tends to contradict herself on pages 104 and 114 when she describes a way that mentors can serve as evaluators. She states, "However, mentors need to consider that writing a letter of recommendation often veers into the realm of evaluation" (Pitton, 2006, p. 114). Pitton should consider a revised edition that redefines the role of mentor to include some evaluative roles because she makes the case that mentors need to become the mentee's friend and advocate, however, this is a weaker argument because an advocate is more than a friend. In this case, Pitton should describe the mentor's role as a non-judgmental, approachable and quasi-evaluative one. This is a recurring missed opportunity that is found chapter after chapter as Pitton uses clarifying sentences to explain how the mentoring role should be more conversational and friendly, but she then has to discuss exceptions that make the friendly relationship more rigid.

On the other hand, the mere facts that Pitton's book serves as literature for increasing one's knowledge on mentoring and that it can also be used as a manual, make it an extremely useful tool to mentors, school administrators and district staff focused on the area of enriching the teaching experience of first-year and novice teachers. Throughout the text, the author provides samples of how to establish dialogue with other fellow mentors followed by graphic organizers that clearly illustrate the book's main concepts along with scenarios that mentor teachers can conceptualize with their mentees. Furthermore, the last third of the book is filled with practical resources on mentoring projects, role-plays and websites for mentors. The mentoring projects section tells mentors how to put their thoughts into action and the role play section instructs mentors in how to improve their verbal skills by going through real-life scenarios. The most valuable section of the book is the "Resource C" which includes a guide on how to use the text. It clearly explains who the text was written for and how to utilize the resources found throughout. Pitton explains how to set up workshops using the book, how to assign reading assignments based on the contents in the book and she clearly outlines the facilitator's role in all of the processes involved.

Pitton's book is a rich resource on the role that mentors play in enriching the teaching experience of first-year and novice teachers. In the beginning chapter of her book, she advises the mentor teacher to open the initial mentoring session with a metaphor that the mentor can use to describe his or her teaching philosophy. One example she gave was that teaching students is like conducting a symphony. She asked that the mentor have the mentee develop his or her own metaphor that relates to his or her personal teaching philosophy. As stated before, with all of the scenarios provided in her book, Pitton provides illustrations to support them so that mentors can take them into action. Another section that is a highlighted strength is the second chapter which is dedicated toward the heart of mentoring. Pitton, again, outlines the importance of using good communication and maintaining an approachable, open-door style. In that, she also stresses the importance of respecting the mentee's time by starting and ending meetings on time and even having a discussion with the mentee that sets the ground rules.

Furthermore, Pitton provides the mentor with practical solutions to use when addressing issues that the mentee has not become aware of by using direct language and providing examples the mentee can use to improve in specific areas. Pitton backs this up with research that states that having research-based resources at their disposal and encouraging the mentee to implement action plans is a way for mentors to be effective in their roles which she cites Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2000 (Pitton, 2006). She continues on that effective educators set goals for themselves and continue their learning, and that mentors should be role-models for their mentees in that regard. Another strong argument in the book is that mentees should engage daily in self-reflection. Self-reflection is an important activity that all educator should continuously engage in so that they can find ways to fine their instructional strategies.

Pitton's stronger arguments are found in chapters six and eight respectively: ("The Conferencing Cycle," 2005) and ("Data-Gathering Techniques and Tools," 2006) as they are laid in the foundation of research-based best-practices. Pitton describes the conferencing cycle begins with pre-observation, observation and post-observation (Pitton, 2006). Keeping in line with the theme of open communication, the pre-observation phase is a brief meeting where the mentee explains what the mentor will see when he or she observes the mentee in the classroom setting. During the observation phase, the mentor will observe for the agreed-upon amount of time for the agreed-upon skill. Finally, the post-observation phase is when both the mentor and the mentee discuss what was observed. This meeting is structured with guiding questions by the mentor to encourage the mentee to engage in self-reflection and critical thinking about what went well in the lesson and what could be improved. As can be expected, Pitton provides scenarios on how to engage with the mentee, followed up with graphic organizers that can be used during the three phrases of conferencing.

This leads into chapter seven which is not lacking in the area of using qualitative and quantitative data collecting techniques and tools that both mentors and mentee can use to measure student improvement and make conclusions about the efficacy of mentoring. Again, all of the resources Pitton discusses in this chapter are available in the resources section of the text and are accompanied with instructions on how to properly utilize them. One of the most effective tools is a verbal-low diagram chart that allows the mentee to see what direction her verbal comments and directions are made in when compared to students in the classroom.

Finally, Pitton discusses a very difficult subject in her last chapter ("Evaluating the Mentoring Experience," 2006). She gives practical advise on how to write letters of recommendation for the mentee when there are reservations about his or her performance, stating there is an art in omitting information and not elaborating on skills that the mentee has not yet developed. This chapter is focused on self-reflection of the mentor and the mentee and Pitton provides graphic organizers and scenarios that the mentor can use to facilitate this process (2006).

### **Comparison and Contrast to Similar Theories**

The concept of using mentoring as a leadership tool is found in Fullan's *Leading in a Culture of Change* in his chapter that address "Coherence-Making," 2001). Coherence-Making is a phase in the change process where school leaders are responsible for making sure that teachers and other school staff understand why the change is important (Fullan, 2001). Fullan explains that mentoring is not only important for school leaders such as principals, but it is also crucial for teachers (2001). He describes how companies also utilize the model of mentoring to improve in important areas of production and to engage in knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing involves one party engaging in regularly scheduled visits to other locations and learning about best-practices through activities such as focus walks, data chats and instructional strategies that they can then take back to their own school sites (Fullan, 2001).

These concepts are aligned with Pitton as her entire book focuses on how mentoring is essential in coherence-making and knowledge sharing by using researched-based tools to evaluate teaching and instruction.

The two theories contrast in the definition of the role of the mentor as Pitton does not include evaluator in the mentor teacher's role, where as Fullan clearly explains that mentoring is a form of leadership. Pitton describes the role of the mentor as being a mirror to the mentee and serving as a supportive figure that can coach the novice teacher through communication and trust. While Fullan does believe that mentoring and coaching are important roles in education, he does not exclude the fact that evaluation, using best practices, is crucial in making positive changes possible in the change process. Although both authors agree in the power of mentorship, Pitton tries too hard to exclude evaluation and leadership from the role of mentorship and this just makes the definition of a mentor in her book honestly lacking. If Pitton includes that component in her definition, it will make to role of the mentor in her book much clearer.

### Best Uses for Pitton's Book

Pitton's *Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process* is best used for mentor teachers with other mentor teachers, first and foremost. The "dialogue" examples found throughout the book are tailored toward one mentor teacher discussing the scenarios with another mentor teacher. This book should be used as a preparation for mentoring and the individuals using the resources in the book should be well-versed in how to implement the forms and graphic organizers before they engage in mentoring novice teachers. Additionally, district staff members can use this book to conduct training with mentors. It should not be used by a mentee as it is specifically a guide to mentors in how to foster dialogue among fellow mentors before they interact with mentees.

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# Book Review: Lead Like a PIRATE: Make School Amazing for Your Students and Staff

By Kellyn Juarez

## *Lead Like a PIRATE Book Review*

Shelley Burgess began her journey as a principal in 2003 during the early stages of the No Child Left Behind era. Prior to becoming a principal, she had worked in a seventh through twelve grade school where her colleagues knew what she was capable of. In 2003 she made the transition into a Pre-K through six grade school where she didn't know anyone, and no one knew her or what she had to offer. At this new school, the staff members were going through a lot of changes. The Assistant Principal job had been eliminated due to budget cuts and not everyone was delighted that Shelley was the new principal. This was proven when a teacher who was part of the interview committee told Shelley that she didn't agree to her being hired because she believed the school needed a strong Latino man who was going to shape and change the school.

This is when Shelley knew she needed to prove herself to her new staff and strived to create change. She wanted her students to learn, grow and thrive, her staff to be proud of their school and come to work content every day, and the parents to feel like the school was a safe, loving and academically rich for their children. Fast forward, students test score results show a major increase because Shelley focused on supporting her staff in their efforts and was committed to working together to create amazing learning experiences for her students. She made sure to make professional learning and collaboration a top priority.

With Shelley's success in leadership, Beth Houf felt inspired by her; she considers herself as a learning junkie. Beth was a teacher during the No Child Left Behind era as well. During this time, she felt like she lost her joy for this great teaching profession and leading. In the summer of 2014, Beth felt worn out and ready for change. She loved the kids and felt a calling towards the education field, which is why she went from a teacher to a principal. According to Beth, things started to feel lonely because no one else in the building had the same responsibilities as she did anymore. However, she feared that she would fail everyone (family, friends and most importantly the students). She even contemplated the idea of leaving the education field. This is when she participated in a conference that was held in Nashville, The National Association of Elementary School Principals', where she met leaders that were dealing with the same challenges and fears similar to hers.

Thanks to Dave (Shelley's husband) and Shelley as well as the social support she received on Twitter her life began to change. She began following #tlap on Twitter which is a support group of leaders that encouraged her and influenced her to become a PIRATE leader herself.

This book goes on to detail how being in an administrative (Principal) position does not automatically mean that one should give up their passion, rather being a principal, a LEADER, is to show and support their staff members and students to strive for greatness. This book compares leaders to pirates and shares advice/strategies on how to build and lead a crew to succeed. Furthermore, this book focuses on creating a magical and amazing experiences for students.

## Main Themes

In *Lead Like a PIRATE*, Beth and Shelley focus on the importance of being a PIRATE in leadership as well as emphasize that the backbone of any strong school is the people. Therefore, it explained the effective ways to provide feedback and connect using the ANCHOR conversations framework.

Beth expressed that she felt worn out and ready for change and Shelley expressed how she didn't feel welcomed at her new school. They both discussed the ups and down of leadership. Both authors described what it takes to be a pirate leader, Passion, Immersion, Rapport, Ask and Analyze, Transformation, and Enthusiasm. Pirate leaders should be courageous and be able to inspire and influence others to follow them. They should be able to lead a crew on a journey to seek the great riches and rewards. Meaning they should be able to search for ways to make school an amazing place for students, staff members, parents and the community. An important role of a leader is to "raise human potential in our students, staff, parents and in ourselves" (Pg. 23).

In order for one to lead like a pirate, one should show commitment and passion. Beth and Shelley explained how a passionate leader is able to create a high-energy environment where everyone would want to be in, students and educators alike would be excited to grow and learn together. With this being the case, everyone (students and staff members) win when highly effective leaders drive their passion to work. Leaders will use that passion, whether it is content, professional and personal passion, "to inspire, transform, and create classrooms and schools that come alive with electric and engaging learning" (Pg. 29). In order to influence staff members with passion successfully, as a leader one must come to an understanding of their own passion as well as those of the staff. Leaders should come be able to create change and be willing to go the extra mile.

The second theme is immersion, a leader should be credible and walk the walk. Leaders should be able to dive in and create a place where the staff and students feel safe taking risks and knowing that they will not be judged. By showing staff members and students that as a leader one is not to judge but rather there to guide and provide necessary assistance will enable them to seek them as someone who can help them grow. It is important to not only dive in and help but also to prioritize time and make a better use of team meetings with staff members in order to assist those teachers or students that need the assistance. A key component of an immersed leader is someone who is continuously learning by "reading books, articles, blog posts, and other literature in an effort to stay current on effective practices and ideas" (Pg. 48).

Showing compassion and community is a component of building rapport with staff members. In order to build a positive rapport in any job one needs to build trust with their members. Having trust one someone who leads is very important, however, gaining that trust can be very tricky. As a leader Beth and Shelley expressed that it doesn't matter if you are the best of the best because without the trust of their team and community it doesn't matter what the leader does. Trust is a very big factor when becoming a leader. It is gained through conversations with staff members that allows them to get to know leader and for the leader to get to know the staff members. Additionally, the leader should provide its staff with trust and not question them on whether they can handle students to make learning gains. Some strategies emphasized to build rapport include staff retreats and socials. This allows a wonderful opportunity not only for the leader but for the staff as well to get to know each other outside of school grounds.

Clarity and capacity are important when asking and analyzing. It is crucial to ask and analyze questions that can transform and challenge one to think. It is true what Beth and Shelley expressed in

this book, asking traditional boring questions will not give the same result as rewording the question to make one think about their answer. A great example given was “What will we do on the first day of school this year?” this question was transformed to “What can we do on the first day of school that is so wildly engaging and fun that our students are knocking down the doors to get in on day two?” (Pg. 84). By rewording good questions into great questions and challenging staff and students to a new way of thinking by provide thoughtful answers and breaking the routine.

As a leader one should be courageous! This transformation can change the lives of students and staff members. Leaders should have a clear vision of the direction they want the school to go and defining what are the educational opportunities that can be provided to their students. Beth and Shelley mentioned that in order for leaders to make a difference they should do “whatever it takes” (Pg. 94). This can includes letting students lead conferences. One important thing leaders should always keep in mind is that they are the model of the school and as they model, appreciate and showcase experiences they will be replicated by their staff and students. A simple strategy is writing down the transformed task and prepare to implement it!

Captivating enthusiasm is when a leader begins thinking and stepping outside of the comfort zone to engage and have fun. It is the little things that make a huge different in their students and staff members. A simple smile or good morning can go a long way especially if the individual has had a bad morning. Starting on a positive note can always change a bad morning into a good one. A leader should be able to make it a point to demonstrate to their students and staff members that they are excited and honored to see and work with them (Pg. 108). Not only does this change the way their day may be going but it can also be contagious and infuse enthusiasm into their students and teachers. This can make learning fun and engaging for students. They have the responsibility to model excitement, positivity and enthusiasm. Most importantly, they should be able to have fun! It is crucial to take the leadership role job serious, but never to the extreme of expressing seriousness at all times.

ANCHOR conversations is mainly the ability to have a mindset for observing classrooms and being able to engage in conversation with what was seen. These conversations are a judgment free and help leaders see the strengths of their staff members and provide assistance in areas of need. ANCHOR conversations stand for Appreciation, Notice the Impact, Collaborative Conversation, Captain-Directed Conversation, Honor Voice and Choice, Offer Support and Reflection. As a leader if one wants to see change they should really implement the ANCHOR framework and encourage their teachers to be able to trust them and converse with them in order to direct the school environment into an academically rich one!

### Key Quotes

*“A Captain is nothing without a crew.”* (Pg. 29) – This quote is a sum of Beth and Shelley’s whole book. Without a crew/staff a leader will not be able to accomplish anything. It is important to know that in order for anyone to succeed they always need other individuals to assist them with their goals.

*“You’re seen as a paper pushing administrator”* (Pg. 20) – Shelley and Beth really made sure to provide examples of their personal experiences and provide strategies that can assist anyone who is trying to be a leader not think of themselves as someone always doing paperwork. A plethora of strategies were provided in order to feel important and needed by students and staff. The different examples provided by themselves also showed that leaders are more than just paper pushing individuals but influencers.

*"Hope on its own doesn't create change. Action does."* (Pg. 46) – This quote right here is very powerful. It elaborates on the whole concept that leaders shouldn't just talk but should walk the walk as well. If they believe it, they should act upon it.

*"Nothing leaders do matters much without the trust of their team and communities."* (Pg. 64) – Its evident that without trust there isn't anything. Leaders should gain the trust of their students and staff members as well as the trust of the community. Once there is a positive trust built then there is a purpose for change.

*"Good questions inform, great questions transform."* (Pg. 83) – This quote here should be emphasized by every leader. Just like Shelley and Beth explained, leaders and staff members should refrain from asking the same old good questions that inform but rather challenge their students/staff with questions that can transform their thinking.

*"Asking, listening, analyzing, reflecting and learning are all essential to your role as a leader."* (Pg. 88) – This also wraps what Shelley and Beth have been trying to get those who want to be a leader to understand. Leaders are not perfect and are constantly learning. It is okay to ask questions and listen to feedback provided by others. Most importantly, reflecting to see what has worked and what may need some adjustments in order to improve student learning and academic enrichment.

### Strengths and Weaknesses

Shelley and Beth's novel, *Lead Like a PIRATE*, is phenomenal in various levels, serving as one of various novels in leadership that provide real life experiences and strategies in becoming a great leader. Both authors provide ways and examples in how administration as well as educators can rely on one another to create an environment that is seen as safe, fun, and academically rich by parents, teachers and students.

This book really went into depth in explaining each component on how to be a PIRATE leader. Providing personal experiences allows the reader to relate with the authors and acknowledge that if they were able to do it so can anyone else. The idea of being a pirate and guiding a crew to find treasure worked as a great analogy when comparing a pirate to leaders and treasure to school environment and academics. This is seen throughout the book. As educators, parents and students want schools to be known for their greatness, leaders (administration) does as well. The authors provide almost like a guide to be able to achieve this.

While this novel may serve as a wonderful guide for educators and administrators, where it lacks is the idea of keeping diverse students engaged in classroom and school environment. Although it provided examples of different scenarios that can encourage enthusiasm it didn't necessarily go in depth in how enthusiasm can be encouraged in the classroom environment.

Aside from that, this novel is an easy read and a great tool that can be used by administration and educators to be able to learn, practice and implement leadership skills.

### Comparison to Fullan

Both *Lead Like a PIRATE* and Fullan's text elaborate on teambuilding and how administrators should be able to collaborate with their staff in order to create successful leadership teams in schools. Both readings can serve as a guide for any educator or administrator and they are simple to understand on how one can plan and implement such skills.

Fullan's use of picture graphs allows readers to visualize strategies that have been successful, while Shelley and Beth's reading does not require must images that allows the reader to visualize any of the strategies being explained. The only visuals provided are to distinguish the novel chapters only. Serving almost no purpose. Fullan, Shelley, and Beth's reading can be used as a resource for anyone beginning the journey to become educational leaders.

Furthermore, Shelley and Beth's novel may be easier and more enriching with ideas and strategies for beginners to read when compared to Fullan's text. Although Fullan's text is filled with helpful hints, Shelley and Beth's novel provides great leadership qualities/skills that explained in great detail.

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# Book Review: Leadership is an Art

By Kellee Endara

## *Leadership is an Art Book Review*

Born October 28, 1924, Max De Pree was an American businessman and founder of the Herman Miller office furniture company. It is one of the largest American companies worldwide. This company gained its success in the 1960's. His motto was "all voices are heard". In his earlier years, he had inspiration to become a doctor but unfortunately that changed due to World War II. When his military service put some of his plans on hold, he had no choice but to delay his graduation from college. He was able to do this in 1948.

The tone of the book is very calm. He believes that everyone in the organization has their own type of a leading role. He is the author of several books, all on the subject area of leadership. *Leadership is an Art* was his first book published in the year of 1987.

His many collections of books are mostly geared towards his management style and the idea of the inclusive corporation. He believes in a caring organization which will always gain success. One of his proposed ideas was called the silver parachute. This allowed employees that were terminated, but who had been employed for more than two years, to still receive benefits parallel to the years in which they were employed. His book, *Leadership is an Art*, sold over 800,000 copies.

The purpose and thesis of this book was for Max De Pree to share his ideas and views on leadership. He takes a very conventional route in explaining that this book was written not as a book of practices, but more so a book on how to get things done. He always wanted to create a caring atmosphere. He was one of the first leaders of his kind who created the idea that people who had served and worked for their companies for a significant amount of time we are then able to receive benefits based on their tenure. He believed in open communication. He enjoyed listening to the people who worked for him and he always made a point to listen to their ideas. He believes in liberating people to do what is required of them and believes in building relationships. Another one of his many philosophies is that leaders have a responsibility to their employees. They must act somewhat as a servant. By doing this, the leader is establishing values. They are to provide a feeling of stability. Everyone had a say no matter who they were. He also believed that his employees had certain rights. He did not think that one should be called a boss and that it was not fair to have any type of hierarchy. De Pree felt there were certain rights for his employees to be involved in and they would also be held accountable. He felt that leadership was created on a vision. What happened on a daily basis at work was most important aspect to help us look into the future. Having effective communication is the core to keeping strong relationships. One needs to recognize when their entity is falling apart and be able to try to put it back together.

## Main Themes

The main themes of the book are a combination of both instruction and storytelling. He discusses his history in leadership and the vision that he created. De Pree explains what leadership is and discusses his participation in this of leadership. He incorporates his own type of theories such as; the fastball, method of roving leadership, what he believes intermediate intimacy and leadership truly mean, along with the idea of weathering capitalism. He has giant tales of storytelling, which include tribal methods, and he ultimately talks about who owns this place of communication within a company.

He believes in the thoughts of a CEO and talks about making someone a vice president. We should weep even though we are a leader. This shows our vulnerability and that we care. In his last chapter, he most notably ends with his marks of elegance.

One of his most compelling attributes to the book is the one where he speaks of his theory called roving leadership. This means that certain sub areas of any organization might have their own leader. Not just one person is running everything. Decision-making doesn't come from the top, but decision-making comes from an array of input from all leaders involved, including input from everyone else in the company. That speaks of the human way to be a leader. Although he originates from a huge corporation, he follows the guidelines of being a leader from a humble place. He believes in building relationships and that they are the most important aspect of success. Descriptions of intimacy and communication give us key components that allow for better environments. When thinking of any relationship, communication and intimacy are the glue. This holds true, just the same, according to De Pree, because he also agrees that just because someone else's ideas are not the strongest, they should be considered and not brushed off. This builds a strong sense of trust with one another.

Max De Pree recognizes that we all play a role and a significant part in everything that we do on a daily basis. For example, giving people certain tasks that they know how to do best, gives them a sense of ownership and power. We need to recognize that we can't do everything alone and we can't do everything on our own. This will not only help build everyone up from within but will also give people a sense of being needed, which we all crave and want. De Pree believes that the role of intimacy comes before anything else. Policies that are in place are not as important as the intimacy that is created amongst people. He likes to use analogies and stories to have the reader understand what he's trying to say in easy terms. His example of fastball tells us how we need to move at different paces during different times. We also need to know the difference and when to apply each one. Contract versus covenant also holds a very interesting idea that when we go by contract, we are only looking at the paper. The idea of covenant is when we include our heart. Anyone who deals with people and uses their heart first recognizes that we are all human and recognizes that people will be grateful and gracious for this alone.

### Key Quotes

*Leaders are responsible for effectiveness* (pg. 19). Effectiveness is defined in a few ways. When we are efficient, we are doing the right thing, but this also holds true for effectiveness as well. We can be effective so that we understand the best way to teach others their potential. De Pree speaks of cultures in other countries who understand when they need to listen and use their gifts to their fullest potential. This example is used because he feels that through a leader, you will assess your true capability.

*Giants enable others to express their own gifts* (pg. 78). De Pree believed that you are a true leader when you allow others the insight to see their potential and what they have to offer. He believed in allowing his employees to exercise their gifts. From productivity to daily survival. He uses this idea to build the reputations of many of his employees, and therefore he ripped the rewards of having a very successful business with these people working alongside of him.

*Leaders must take a role in developing, expressing and defending civility and values.* (pg.21). He believes that everyone should be respected and understood. He feels that if we appreciate one another



we will then be able to serve each other. He was also able to see what is healthy and what seems to just be alive. He never lost sight of his hope and strategies to have the opportunity to grow.

*We are dedicated to quality, and quality is a matter of truth* (pg.84). He believes in all the qualities of his products and service to be of the upmost importance. But he also believes that the quality of his relationships through communication and promises made to each other were just as important. Another one of his very strong core values was integrity. There is a sense of one's obligation and word of honor. He believes that when people have a true connection and believe in these meaningful thoughts themselves, they would trust their leaders. De Pree allows us to think outside the box and understand that this is what is necessary for true leadership to evolve.

When we break people down, instead of letting them know that we are there, they take all of the burden with them. *Leadership is an art* explains that we need to come together and take a hold of anything that might become a barrier in order to have successful progress. When we infuse our integrity, we are staying valid with each other and making it possible for others too trust us. Above all else, integrity takes the lead. By allowing integrity to become transparent in who we are, others will also want to lead. We open the doors to make it possible for leadership to take over.

We can teach ourselves to see things the way they are. We can feel sorry for ourselves and let the bad times get the best of us, but De Pree shows us how looking at our accomplishments and goals achieved we will become just that. We need to always remember what we have and put one foot in front of the other when it looks as though things are at their worst. This will give us the ultimate feeling of greatness, and we will be able to spread this throughout our community of users from within. It is imperative to have vision and transparency. Looking back on what hasn't happened or what hasn't worked will never help us. We can only accomplish this through taking a step in the right direction to the vision of tomorrow.

### Strengths and Weaknesses

This book talks about what a leader's job is. It defines the steps that a leader must be able to do, talks about what type of person a leader is, and most importantly shares what a good leader should look for in people. Some examples of this are that a leader's job is to understand diversity. Leaders must also be able to step down and let someone else take the lead when the time is right. A leader not only asks for but will serve another person as well. Lastly, a leader will recognize when someone else can bring a skill to the table which could be better than something the leader could do themselves.

*Leadership is an art* has many strengths. It is a very easy read and it tells many stories that we all can relate to. Max De Pree puts every chapter in an art form where a picture can be created in the readers mind and makes it so much easier to relate to. It's weaknesses would only be that someone might not pick up the book unless they felt that it was something worth reading. This book does not come with any fancy bells and whistles and doesn't have any type of huge story behind it. It is a simple tale told by a man who loved people. He found a unique and creative way to build relationship and in turn, he made a successful business. This book would only be advantageous to someone with an open mind who could understand that this would be a key role in creating a successful place of business. If the reader is not in tune to what he is saying and doesn't believe in his philosophies, then they might read it and feel that he is just painting a picture of something that's not real.

### Comparing to Fullan

When Comparing to Fullan, one of the most obvious reasons is the comparison of leadership in a school versus leadership in a business. One of the biggest noticeable differences in these two books is the fact that *leading in a cultural change* brings forth information and advice with the highlights of a



school culture. *Leadership is an art* strictly deals with being a leader in all aspects. Of course, the focus is more on a business sense but most of his ideas and information can be used in any type of situation. In many aspects, a school is run much like a business empire through leadership. The primary focus is like a business with its employees versus teachers, this is still somewhat different. De Pree would argue that his clients are our students. He often discusses how someone else can take the lead and that it is not easy as a leader to allow this. Although it is sometimes what is best for the organization, leadership in schools can't always be that type of tone in its atmosphere.

Fullan believes in building an empire through leadership and focusing on levels of roles within the schools. De Pree looks at leadership in the service industry and tells stories of how he learned the way to weave through relationships and try to listen to every detail of the people around him. He calls roving leadership a key element in the day-to-day (pg. 48) expression of a participative process. He believes that you need to participate in the opportunity so that you may have a say in your job and you may influence and orchestrate all of your resources based on your own competence to accept ownership (pg.88).

### Relative Articles

According to Sosik, Chun, Ete, Arenas, & Scherer (2018), character is one of the biggest factors regarding advancing a positive outcome when it comes to relationships. A study was conducted with U.S. Air Force officers on their superiors and how they rated them in performance as leaders. These officers felt it was important for their leaders to hold their ethical standards and their moral compass to a higher regard in order to build on relationships and become positive influences. Yet, in another article by Lip-Wiersma, Haar, and Wright (2018), being fair and responsible as a leader was almost just as important. This research was conducted from the employer's perspective.

Ethical practices play a very significant role in cultivating relationships. In combination with other overall development of basic relationships, the findings for this research make a very strong case. Employers play a significant role in creating the moral conditions when employees experience meaningful work and positivity in the workplace (Lip-Wiersma, Haar, and Wright 2018). By no means does this take away from studies conducted on character, but this research also helps us understand that we need to be strong in our ethical standards in order to have a good working relationship with each other. In comparison to the implications of having leaders with good character, this study notes that the strong ethical climate is associated with leaders who also maintain good self-control (Sosik, et.al.,2018). Organizations can choose to train their leaders to possess such character qualities and ethical leadership, or they may decide to choose leaders already showing these types of qualities. Any organization can choose to look for what they feel is of the upmost importance in any setting, but the big take away from these articles is that the right types of qualities in a leader brings on the right types of environments for any institution.

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# Book Review: The Human Side of Changing Education

By Leah Abouganem Cedeno

Wilson, J.M. (2018). *The human side of changing education: how to lead change with clarity, conviction and courage*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. ISBN: 978-1506398532

In the *Human Side of Changing Education*, Julie M. Wilson elaborates on how education leaders can make sense of change, embrace the journey and implement it effectively utilizing human-centered tools resources and studies. She focuses on the imperative need to redirect schools from the industrial model of education towards one that serves the real needs of the students. She provides questions for reflection and action, notes, and surveys to evaluate the process throughout the book. Julie M. Wilson is a successful coach and advisor to school leaders, institutions and foundations focused on shaping the K-12 education system. She is the founder and executive director of the Institute for the Future of Learning, a foundation that aims to the transformation of the education system.

Julie Wilson's book the *Human Side of Changing Education* starts with the question "*What's worth learning?*" Where she introduces skills needed to succeed in the constantly changing, versatile, and ambiguous world that we live in. She calls them "worthy skills" (Wilson, 2018, p.9), these are skills needed not only to succeed and thrive in schools but as human beings as well. These skills are: Self-Directed Learning (1), Creativity and Innovation (2), Planning, Adaptability and Agility (3), Strengths, Awareness, and Application (4), Self-Efficacy (5), Global Citizenship (6), Relationship Building (7) and Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (8) (Wilson, 2018). She introduces the need to redefine what's worth learning for our children. To include competencies that will help us thrive as human beings, rather than just to fulfill the requirements set by agencies of education, to steer form the traditional system into a human-centered direction. Furthermore, she emphasizes the need to include the community in answering this question to incorporate their answers and make sure that children will succeed when graduation from high-school.

Wilson elaborates on the whole process of change, how to redesign an existing system, success factors for change, strategies on how to lead organizations effectively through change and most importantly how to lead yourself through change (Wilson, 2018). She promotes asking ourselves "Where the district/school is today and where would you like it to be?" (Wilson, p.34) she offers strategies towards answering this question based on our own "What's worth learning" answer. She complements with real-life examples that support change in the process and the need for teachers to be active and autonomous in multiple content areas (Wilson, 2018).

In the final chapter of the book, Wilson mentions the need of thousands of change agents, working in all positions inside and outside of the system. She emphasizes how all of us affect and complete the system even if we do not hold positions of authority. For her, it is the only way to sustain meaningful change in this ever-changing world. She calls it an "army of changemakers, this is people who are clear on their why, live it and share it" (Wilson, 2018, p.105) with as many people as they can towards achieving an impactful change.

She concludes the book by encouraging the readers to be learners, embrace what they do and to know that their works and contributions matter. That change takes time, it is a long-term and a difficult process but it can be achieved. She emphasizes that if it were easy it would happen every day. She focuses on the need of adults to learn, in order for the children to learn, we as adults must provide learning opportunities and experiences, and the only way to do it is through trial and error.

Comparing the work of *Leading in a Culture of Change*, by Michael Fullan, a book about leading in a world of change. Both books provide realistically approaches, based on evidence studies to address change. Fullan's book mainly addresses educational leadership, collaboration, teamwork and the role of each member of the team responsibilities towards achieving success for the children generally, but missing specifically our children or the population that we serve. However, although both books postulate frameworks and methods to address change, the *Human Side of Changing Education* illustrates the shifts needed towards preparing our children in a flexible learning environment, which will be what they encounter when they graduate high school. Fullan's book focuses and provides examples used on corporations, business studies, and education, while Wilson's book states that we should not judge the process solemnly on results. Rather than it is an interrelated process that requires patience and faith (Wilson, 2018).

To conclude, *Wilson's Human Side of Changing Education* provides effective, and explicit strategies to understand what it takes to create and maintain the innovative and lasting educational transformation. It is interrelated on how by achieving the change our children need would lead them to succeed and how throughout their success we would live in a better society.

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