NASET

Special Educator e-Journal September 2020

Exceptional Teachers Teaching Exceptional Children

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Special Education Legal Alert

By Perry A. Zirkel

This month's update concerns issues that were subject to recent court decisions of general significance: (a) transportation under a state open enrollment law, and (b) compensatory education and other relief from stay-put violation.

In an officially published decision in *Osseo Area Schools Independent School District No. 279 v. M.N.B.* (2020), the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals addressed the issue of whether the IDEA requires a school district, upon accepting the application of a nonresident student with disabilities under a state open enrollment law, to provide transportation, as specified in the student's IEP, to and from school. Based on the parent driving the child and the open enrollment statute's provision for transportation within district boundaries, the district only reimbursed the parent for the segment of the round trip between the school and the intersection of the district border. Both the hearing officer and the federal district court ruled that under the IDEA the district was responsible for the cost of the full round trip between the home and the school. The district filed an appeal with the Eighth Circuit to challenge their interpretation of the IDEA.	
One argument for the parent was the lower court's conclusion that once the district accepted the student's application, it was responsible for FAPE as documented in the IEP, which included transportation to and from school.	The Eighth Circuit relied on the Constitution's spending clause, which the Supreme Court interpreted as requiring Congress, if it intends to impose a condition on the grant of federal moneys, to do so unambiguously. The IDEA lacks such clear notice.
A second argument for the parent that the lower court had accepted was that the parents had filed a state complaint that resulted in a finding against the district's blanket policy.	The Eighth Circuit observed that the state complaint decision may have been a mistaken interpretation of state law but in any event lacked any preclusive effect on the court's IDEA interpretation.
The third argument for the parent is that in Letter to Lutjeharms (1990), OSEP supported	Pointing out that the OSEP interpretation neither addressed this state law nor the

her interpretation of the IDEA in relation to a state open enrollment law.	Spending Clause, the Eighth Circuit concluded that this guidance lacked not only a binding but also a persuasive effect.
Finally, the parent cited a Fifth Circuit decision that provided for transportation beyond a district's borders under certain specified circumstances.	The Eighth Circuit made short shrift of this argument based on rather distinct factual differences between those circumstances and the open enrollment situation at issue here.
As an officially published federal appellate ruling, this decision carries considerable weight. Nevertheless, it is not binding outside the states of the Eight Circuit and is limited to the specific provisions of the open enrollment law and IEP at issue in the case.	

In *Doe v. East Lyme Board of Education III* (2020), the Second Circuit Court of Appeals issued its third decision in litigation that dated back to the 2008-09 school year, when under the IEP the parents agreed to pay the tuition at their unilateral placement of their child with autism at a private religious school and the district agreed to pay for specified additional services, including Orton-Gillingham reading instruction, speech therapy, and PT/OT. In *Doe I* (2015), the Second Circuit ruled that (a) the district's IEP for 2009-10 was appropriate; (b) despite the district's failure to propose an IEP in 2010–11, the parent was not entitled to reimbursement because the religious school was not appropriate; (c) the district violated stay-put by not continuing to pay for the additional services in the 2008-09 IEP, and (d) the district had to not only reimburse the parent for the out-of-pocket costs ($97K) but also, via a compensatory education award, the remainder of services that the parent was not able to arrange. In *Doe II*, the Second Circuit dismissed the parents' appeal because the district court had not yet finalized its calculations of the reimbursement and compensatory education. After the lower court ordered the district to pay $48K plus interest in additional reimbursement and put an additional $192K in an escrow account for compensatory education, the parent challenged various aspects of this stay-put remedy.	
Her first challenge was these aspects of the compensatory education award: the escrow account, the escrow agent, and the six-year time limit.	The Second Circuit summarily rejected these claims, pointing out that the parent had requested an escrow arrangement, this specific escrow agent, and the specified six-year time limit.

Second, she challenged the district court empowering the escrow agent to not only review her claims from the account but also reduce the amount if the student no longer needed the services.	The Second Circuit upheld this challenge based on the principle that compensatory education is not subject to delegation beyond the final authority of impartial adjudication.
She also challenged the district court's order that she pay half of the escrow agent's administrative fee.	The Second Circuit agreed, reasoning that the district was responsible for FAPE, which must be "free" to the parent.
Next, she challenged the district court's interest calculation.	The Second Circuit roundly rejected this challenge.
Undeterred, she also challenged the original appropriateness rulings for 2009-10 and 2010-11.	The Second Circuit easily denied these challenges as decided by *Doe I* and unaffected by *Endrew F.*
Finally, she sought (a) further reimbursement, (b) expert witness fees, and (c) attorneys' fees.	The Second Circuit respectively ruled (a) no abuse of discretion, (b) no entitlement, and (c) improper appeal.
One cannot help but wonder at the transaction costs of litigation, including 12 years of time (with the "child" now in college) and hundreds of thousands of dollars for a stay-put violation (after a complete rejection of the original FAPE reimbursement claim), and the corresponding loss of perspective of this parent (who after *Doe I* proceeded without legal counsel).	

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Buzz from the Hub

All articles below can be accessed through the following links:

https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-august2020-issue1/

https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-july2020-issue1/

https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-june2020-issue2/

Planning for Equity and Inclusion: A Guide to Reopening Schools

COVID-19 has changed public education in dramatic ways, and the 2020–2021 school year is posing even more challenges. This short guide shares specific ways school and district leaders can prioritize equity and inclusion as they rethink their approach to public education in the COVID-19 world.

Building Engagement with Distance Learning

This resource is part of an ongoing series produced by the OSEP-funded **TIES Center**. It provides a framework for supporting all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities. The series explores important considerations in providing distance learning, such as daily meetings, behavioral supports, individualizing supports for students, data collection, and embedding instruction at home.

A Guide to Equity in Remote Learning

This guide emerges from the ongoing webinar series *Advancing Equity in an Era of Crisis*, a collaborative effort of several professional organizations in California (e.g., California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators). The 63-page guide examines how California can equitably meet the needs of all students when it resumes instruction in the 2020-21 school year, whether in classrooms, remotely, or a hybrid of both. Much food for thought here, even if California isn't where you live.

Testing for COVID-19: What's Your State's Plan?

The Department of Health and Human Services has posted the COVID testing plans (July through December) from all states, territories, and localities. The plans include details on responding to surges in cases and reaching vulnerable populations.

Talking to Very Young Children about Race

This 4-page resource is subtitled *"It's necessary now, more than ever."* Why? Because children see injustices on the news, at the store, on the playground, and in their classrooms. It is important for adults to explain to them what is going on in a way that makes sense based on their developmental level. These conversations need to become a pattern during the early childhood years and not a single

event. Excellent, subtle suggestions are given. From the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations.

Anti-Racism Resource Directory for Families: Resources for Multiple Grade Levels

Parents may not know where to start with discussions of race, racial justice, and anti-racism with their children. Or perhaps they've already had family conversations and are looking to continue the discussion or explore action. This *Learning Heroes* directory assists families as they navigate the many free resources that are available.

The Ultimate Parents' Guide to Summer Activity Resources

To give parents a sense of the summertime fun can be had, the *Washington Post* compiled resources in 10 categories: reading, education, travel, mental wellness, music, art, physical activity, theater and dance, languages, and entertainment.

Parent Advocacy Toolkit for Equity in Use of COVID-19 Funds

NCLD and 13 partner organizations released *recommendations* to guide how the use of funding can prioritize equity and ensure our most vulnerable students receive the greatest support. Based on these recommendations, NCLD also created a 12-page toolkit to help parents advocate for equity as school districts develop reopening plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry

This guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics supports education, public health, local leadership, and pediatricians collaborating with schools in creating policies for school re-entry that foster the overall health of children, adolescents, staff, and communities and are based on available evidence.

Special Report | How We Go Back to School

To reopen schools in the fall, K-12 leaders must balance three critical, often competing responsibilities: the health and safety of their people, the role their schools play in the larger community, and the effective teaching of their students. To help district and school leaders navigate these monumental decisions, *Education Week* lays out the big challenges ahead and some solutions in an 8-part series.

Spanish-Language Webinar on the Transition to Kindergarten Amid COVID-19

The transition into kindergarten marks a major milestone in a child's life. The ED-funded *Early Learning Network* presents this 33-minute webinar specifically designed for Spanish speaking families to help families prepare their child for a successful transition into kindergarten during the pandemic.

The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Funded by HHS, this clearinghouse disseminates current research and innovative strategies to encourage and strengthen fathers and families. Many resources are also available in ***Spanish***.

What's Important to Native Youth?

Do you know? Find out in the infographic and brief developed to summarize the findings of a survey of Native youth and what they had to say. It will certainly inform your outreach to and work with youth.

Reinforcing Resilience: How Parent Centers Can Support American Indian and Alaska Native Parents

Considering the traumas that indigenous peoples have survived all these years and the current challenges they face, resilience is an essential quality to have. Here's how Parent Centers can add value and vigor to an essence that has historically been integral in Native life.

Bouncing Back from Setbacks: A Message for American Indian and Alaska Native Youth

This brief is written *directly* to Native youth, as if it were a letter coming from the local Parent Center. It highlights 10 skills known to be builders of resilience in youth. Also available *online in HTML*.

We hope you enjoy the multicultural journey that all of the resources in ***Working with Native Children and Youth*** will take you on!

Will Your Schools Re-Open? What's the Plan, Stan?

Johns Hopkins University has launched a new tracker that analyzes school reopening plans across the country. The tool examines whether or not each state reopening plan addresses a dozen different issues. You can also download state plans directly from the tracker. How timely, eh?

2020 Determination Letters on State Implementation of IDEA

How well are the states and territories implementing IDEA? The 2020 determination letters will tell you. (Can you guess who received the "needs intervention" determination *for the **ninth** year in a row?!*)

Comparison Guide: Video Conferencing Tools for Your Nonprofit

As nonprofits continue to do their work remotely, the need for a solid video conferencing tool has never been greater. TechSoup created this at-a-glance guide to help nonprofits make informed decisions about choosing what's right for their organization.

Tech Soup Courses for Free!

TechSoup has also created a free track of courses to provide information and tools as nonprofits scale

up the work they do remotely, including having necessary tech tools, how to boost collaboration, and how to ensure information security.

Camp Kinda

(In English and Spanish) | Here's a free, virtual summer camp experience designed to keep kids engaged, asking questions, and having fun even while they're stuck at home. "Open" each weekday starting June 1 to September 1. On any given day, kids may be exploring the art of graphic novels, unlocking the mysteries of history, or jumping into the world's craziest sports. ***Also available in Spanish***.

How to Support Your Unique, Quirky Child

(In English and Spanish) | When your child behaves differently from others, it's endearing—but is it OK? Read this Great Schools article to find ways to celebrate your child's unique nature. A version in Spanish is also available: ***Cómo apoyar las características únicas de tu hijo***.

Video | The CDC Guidance on Reopening Schools, Explained

CDC recently released *guidance on reopening schools*. Its recommendations, which are voluntary, give parents and teachers their first detailed glimpse of how schools might change their operations to contain COVID-19. How much these recommendations will influence schools' operations depends on the decisions of state and local leaders. Watch Education Week's 4-minute video for an explanation of several key points.

SAVE the DATE | Webinar on Monday, June 8th @ 3 pm EDT

Safeguarding Back to School: Principles to Guide a Healthy Opening to Classrooms During COVID-19

The transition back to school this year will be unlike any in history. How do we safely reopen? In this edWebinar, leaders of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Brooklyn Laboratory Charter Schools will discuss key questions we must all consider as we begin the journey back to school–from the school bus ride to the dismissal bell. ***Register here***. If you'd like to receive an email with a link to the recording afterwards, add your name to the list at: https://forms.gle/V6mgSp8n8fqxjv318

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Use of Visual Performance Feedback to Increase Teacher Use of Behavior-Specific Praise among High School Students with Severe Disabilities

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Abstract

Behavior-specific praise has been deemed an effective, evidence-based positive behavioral intervention and support practice for use among high school students with severe intellectual disabilities. However, teachers are not adequately trained to use such practices with fidelity. One way to address this shortcoming is by implementing a performance feedback approach characterized with observations and consultations that provide visual performance feedback. Using a changing criterion research design, the present study evaluated the effect of a performance feedback approach to increase a high school teacher's use of behavior-specific praise among students with severe disabilities. Results showed significant increases with the teacher-participant's use of behavior-specific praise and mixed trends with the student-participants' exhibition of challenging and replacement behaviors. A discussion of reported results was provided, along with implications for stakeholders in teacher preparation programs and high school contexts. Limitations and areas for future research were also addressed.

Keywords: behavior-specific praise, severe intellectual disabilities, high school students, challenging behaviors, replacement behaviors

Introduction

Students with severe intellectual disabilities have chronic and severe deficits in both adaptive behavior and cognitive functioning that manifest during early childhood and are likely to continue for life (Handleman, 1986). These deficits often lead to a range of challenging behaviors that significantly impede a student's ability to exhibit appropriate social functioning in school-based settings (Lane & Wehby, 2002; Medeiros, 2015). Challenging behaviors include noncompliance, stereotypy (e.g., intense fixations on objects or parts of objects, impulsivity, repetitive behavior patterns), and self-injury. Without appropriate interventions, challenging behaviors can interfere with how students with severe intellectual disabilities interact with others (Carter, Sisco, Chung, & Stanton-Chapman, 2010; Matsushima & Kato, 2015; Nijs & Maes, 2014) and have an impact on the academic learning environment (Räty, Kontu, & Pirttimaa, 2016). Thus, teachers who work among

students with severe intellectual disabilities must use teaching strategies that emphasize curricular content and self-help skills, while also reducing any challenging behaviors that impede the acquisition of critical academic and functional skills (Handleman, 1986).

Beginning in the 1960s, researchers have utilized applied behavior analysis as a systematic way to study individual functions of human behavior in an attempt to "reduce the frequency and severity of challenging behaviors and facilitate the acquisition of adaptive skills" (Dixon, Vogel, & Tarbox, 2012, p. 7). Initial theories posited that challenging behaviors could be managed by automatic reinforcement (Vaughan & Michael, 1982; Vollmer, 1994), positive reinforcement (Carr, 1977), and negative reinforcement (Carr, Newsom, & Binkoff, 1976; Iwata, 1987). Almost 20 years later, these theories became the foundation for functional analysis (Dixon et al., 2012), which provided a methodology to assess multiple behaviors and functions during a single experimental investigation in order to develop effective interventions for individuals who exhibit challenging behaviors (Hanley, Iwata, & McCord, 2003; Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1982; Iwata et al., 2000). To date, federal legislation has mandated that schools use functional analysis in the form of functional behavioral assessments (FBA) when a student's behavior impedes the learning process (Drasgow, Yell, Bradley, & Shriner, 1999; Zirkel, 2017). One of the goals of FBA is to determine the purpose of a student's challenging behavior, identify environmental factors surrounding challenging behaviors and implement positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to promote alternate, replacement behaviors (Farmer, Lane, Lee, Hamm, & Lambert, 2012).

Behavior-specific praise has been deemed an effective, evidence-based PBIS practice for use among high school students (Duchaine, Jolivette, & Fredrick, 2011; Kennedy, Hirsch, Rodgers, Bruce, & Lloyd, 2017). Teachers should deliver behavior-specific praise to immediately reinforce a student's desired behavior with a descriptive verbal statement. Unfortunately, teachers are not adequately prepared or trained to use PBIS practices with fidelity (Kennedy et al., 2017), particularly among high school students with severe intellectual disabilities (Bruhn et al., 2016). Stormont and Reinke (2014) recommended using a data-based performance feedback approach to address this need. Through this approach, a trained behaviorist serves as an instructional coach to the classroom teacher and conducts systematic, direct observations of the teacher in the classroom setting where the challenging behaviors occur. The instructional coach collects observational data and facilitates subsequent consultations with the teacher to share visual performance feedback by reviewing a graph that depicts the classroom teacher's use of PBIS practices.

Available studies that examined the use of visual performance feedback to enhance teacher performance with PBIS practices primarily focused upon young children and adolescents in the elementary and middle school grade levels (Allday et al., 2012; Fabiano, Reddy, & Dudek, 2018; Gage, Grasley-Boy, & MacSuga-Gage, 2018; Gage, MacSuga-Gage, & Crews, 2017; Mesa, Lewis-Palmer, & Reinke, 2005; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008; Sweigart, Landrum, & Pennington, 2015). There were a limited number of studies that specifically focused on teacher performance with

PBIS practices among older adolescents in the high school grade levels (Bruhn et al., 2016; Hawkins & Heflin, 2011; Kalis, Vannest, & Parker, 2007). The purpose of the present study was to address this research gap and evaluate the effect of visual performance feedback on the frequency of (a) behavior-specific praise statements given by a high school special education teacher and (b) challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by high school students with severe intellectual disabilities.

Methods

Participants

Information provided about participants relates to the time that the present study was conducted. There was one teacher-participant, Ms. George (all names are pseudonyms). Ms. George was a high school special education math and science life skills teacher with more than 10 years of teaching experiences in special education settings. There were also three student-participants who were high school students that met IDEA eligibility criteria for a severe intellectual disability. Kara was a Caucasian female classified as a sophomore-level student, Chris was a Caucasian male classified as a junior-level student, and Cody was a Caucasian male classified as a senior-level student. The identified adaptive behavior deficits for Kara, Chris, and Cody were of such significance that their access to the general education instructional environment and daily functioning were severely limited. Therefore, Kara, Chris, and Cody received instruction for more than 80% of the school day in a self-contained life skills classroom, as well as frequent monitoring and supervision during meal times, transition periods, and toileting.

Role of Researchers

Two individuals collected data for the present study. Both of these individuals had previously received specialized training in behavior management techniques. The first individual was the primary researcher for the present study (i.e., the first author) and was a direct observer who completed study session observations, recorded data measurements, facilitated consultations with the teacher-participant, and performed all data analyses. The second individual was a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) employed by the school district and assigned to the high school campus where the present study was conducted. The second individual served as an inter-observer who completed observations and recorded data measurements with the primary researcher during the intervention phase. Other members of the research team (i.e., the second, third, and fourth authors) contributed expertise once data analyses were completed.

Setting

The present study was conducted in a public high school located in a rural area of the South Central United States that served students in grades 9-12. The high school had a student enrollment of approximately 1,500 students who resided in several surrounding rural communities. The high

school used a self-contained model for the life skills classroom, which was led by a state-certified special education teacher. One teaching assistant was also assigned to the life skills classroom and provided the teacher and students with additional support during the school day.

At any given time throughout the school day, there were typically six to eight students in the life skills classroom. The life skills classroom used a paired classroom seating arrangement with two individual student desks facing one another. A large electronic display was affixed to a wall at the front of the classroom. For the majority of observed instructional delivery, Ms. George used the electronic display, along with an iPad. Additionally, Ms. George was unaware of who the student-participants were and knew them as Student 1 (i.e., Kara), Student 2 (i.e., Chris), and Student 3 (i.e., Cody).

Research Design

The present study employed a changing criterion research design. This research design is a variant of the multiple-baseline research design and characterized by two major phases (Hartmann & Hall, 1976). The first phase, the baseline phase, includes initial observations for a single target behavior. The second phase, the intervention phase, implements a treatment for the target behavior in a series of sub-phases. During the first intervention sub-phase, an interim criterion for desired level of performance is established (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Once the interim criterion is achieved, it is gradually increased to establish a functional relationship between behaviors and the treatment continues. Successive intervention sub-phases continue incremental criterion progression and intervention delivery throughout the duration of the study.

The goal of the present study was to increase Ms. George's use of behavior-specific praise (i.e., the independent variable) with challenging and replacement behaviors (i.e., the dependent variables) exhibited among Kara, Chris, and Cody. To achieve this goal, the treatment delivery included weekly visual performance feedback consultations between the teacher-participant and primary researcher after each intervention sub-phase. Following baseline phase observations, interim criterion calculations for intervention sub-phases were made using frequency counts of the independent variable. It was determined that the mean rate of behavior-specific praise for each intervention sub-phase must be greater than or equal to the mean of the baseline phase plus the mean of the preceding intervention sub-phase.

Materials

An event recording data collection sheet was used to record the frequency of independent and dependent variables during intervention sub-phases for Kara, Chris, and Cody (Alberto & Troutman, 2009). The event recording data collection sheet was a table consisting of four blank rows and five columns with the following labels: Date of Observation, Time Start, Time Stop, Notation of Occurrence, and Total Frequency of Occurrence. From this data, graphic displays were created to

visually depict trends in Ms. George's levels of delivery of behavior-specific praise during baseline and intervention sub-phase observations for Kara, Chris, and Cody (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Procedure

The present study was conducted during a six-week time frame that implemented procedures for five different conditions that occurred during the baseline and intervention phases. These conditions were: (1) baseline phase observations, (2) teacher consultations, (3) intervention sub-phase observations, (4) inter-observer agreement checks, and (5) social validity questionnaires. Following is a detailed description of the specific procedures and conditions for each phase.

Baseline phase. Baseline phase observations were conducted during the first week to determine the frequency of behavior-specific praise offered by Ms. George, as well as the frequency of challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by Kara, Chris, and Cody. For each student-participant, the primary researcher completed three separate 20-minute observation sessions and used event recording data sheets to notate the frequency of occurrence of independent and dependent variables. An audio recording of each baseline observation session was made, and the primary researcher kept anecdotal notes in a journal. During baseline phase observation sessions, no changes were made to the environment and no treatment was applied.

Intervention phase. On the Monday of the second week, the primary researcher conducted a 20-minute initial teacher consultation with Ms. George to provide visual performance feedback. Visual performance feedback consisted of the following instructional coaching strategies. The primary researcher noted and reinforced specific examples of Ms. George's behavior specific praise delivery using graphic displays. The primary researcher also identified and discussed occurrences when Ms. George used non-specific praise, reprimands, or other non-PBIS responses toward student behaviors. During these occurrences, the primary researcher encouraged Ms. George to provide examples of PBIS strategies that could have been used with students instead of the aforelisted behavioral approaches. In addition, the primary researcher delivered a brief training on behavior-specific praise to Ms. George. This training included an overview of evidence-based practices, examples of behavior-specific statements (see Table 1), and opportunities for Ms. George to practice using behavior-specific praise. At the conclusion of the initial teacher consultation, the primary researcher communicated the mean rate of behavior-specific praise from baseline observation sessions for Kara, Chris, and Cody to Ms. George.

Table 1

Examples of Behavior-specific Praise Statements

Observed Behavior	Behavior-specific Praise Statements
Kara verbally responds to a question posed during class.	"Way to go, Kara! Thank you for giving an answer to that question."
Cody gets his blue binder out to begin an assignment.	"Good job! Thank you for getting your binder out, Cody!"
Chris remains in his seat and raises his hand to get the teacher's attention.	"I like that you raised your hand to get my attention, Chris."
Chris sits quietly while the teacher gives instructions.	"Chris, I noticed you listened while I was giving instructions for that assignment. Well done!"
Cody refrains from hand movements or gestures that create inappropriate noise.	"Wow, thank you for keeping your hands quiet, Cody! You made it easy for your classmates and me to hear!"
Kara states, "Ms. George" to request help from the teacher.	"Thank you, Kara, for using my name to get my attention. That was helpful!"

Following the initial teacher consultation, the primary researcher and inter-observer conducted joint intervention sub-phase observations of Kara for three weeks and Chris and Cody for five weeks. Each week, the primary researcher and inter-observer conducted three 20-minute observation sessions of each student-participant simultaneously, yet independently of one another. The primary researcher and inter-observer used event recording data sheets to record data, kept anecdotal notes in a journal, and made audio recordings of each observation session. After each observation session, inter-observer agreement checks were made by calculating a Cohen's Kappa statistic (Bryington, Palmer, & Watkins, 2002). For each variable, the number of agreements was divided by the number of agreements plus disagreements. Resulting Kappa values were interpreted as poor (below 0.40), fair (between 0.40 and 0.59), good (between 0.60 and 0.74), and excellent (between 0.75 and 1.00). As shown in Table 2, the majority of Kappa values reflected good inter-observer agreement with independent and dependent variables (K = 0.67), although there were two instances that showed poor inter-observer agreement (K = 0.33).

Table 2

Kappa Values for Inter-Observer Agreement Checks

	Behavior-specific Praise	Challenging Behaviors	Replacement Behaviors
Kara	.67	.33	.67
Chris	.67	.67	.67
Cody	.67	.67	.33

Every Monday, the primary researcher held a 20-minute teacher consultation with Ms. George regarding the previous week of intervention sub-phase observations. During teacher consultations, the primary researcher provided visual performance feedback and facilitated dialogue concerning Ms. George's use of behavior-specific praise with Kara, Chris, and Cody. The primary researcher concluded each teacher consultation by sharing information related to expected levels of behavior-specific praise for the forthcoming week. Once intervention sub-phase observations concluded, Ms. George completed separate social validity questionnaires for Kara, Cody, and Chris. The social validity questionnaire consisted of 13 Likert-type statements for which Ms. George used a five-point scale (i.e., 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) to rate her personal viewpoints toward behavior-specific praise (see Figure 1).

Although Ms. George completed a social validity questionnaire for Kara, Chris, and Cody separately, her ratings for each statement were identical. Ms. George gave the highest rating (i.e., Strongly Agree) to every questionnaire statement except Statement 4 and Statement 8 (see Figure 1). For these two questionnaire statements, Ms. George gave the second-highest rating (i.e., Agree).

1. I understand the term "behavior-specific praise."
2. I can identify behavior-specific praise statements.
3. I can develop behavior-specific praise statements.
4. Behavior-specific praise statements are easy to delivery during my typical classroom instruction.
5. Behavior-specific praises is an effective behavior intervention strategy for this student.
6. The use of behavior-specific praise has improved my delivery of educational services to this student.
7. The use of behavior-specific praise has increased this student's access to instructional opportunities.
8. The use of behavior-specific praise is time-sensitive.
9. The use of behavior-specific praise is cost free.
10. I will continue to use behavior-specific praise as a behavior intervention strategy for this student.
11. Behavior-specific praise is an age-appropriate behavior strategy for this student.
12. I feel comfortable using behavior-specific praise in a classroom setting.
13. I believe behavior-specific praise addressed the attention-seeking behavior needs presented by this student.

Figure 1. Likert-type statements included on social validity questionnaire.

Results

Analyses of baseline phase observations revealed a variety of challenging behaviors exhibited by Kara, Chris, and Cody. Kara frequently uttered inappropriate words or sounds and used gestures to

gain the attention of the teacher or a peer. Inappropriate utterances included giggling, making kissing noises, excessive audible yawning, and yelling off-topic words. Kara would also touch Ms. George's arm, wave a piece of paper in the air, or stand up while Ms. George was talking. Chris often yelled inappropriately, repeated or mimicked Ms. George's words, or shouted off-topic words or phrases. Chris would also create loud sounds using random objects and by slamming his hands on surfaces, such as desktops and the floor. Cody regularly uttered inappropriate words or sounds, snorted, yelled off-topic responses out of turn, or used random objects to create drumming sounds. Cody would also continually enter Ms. George's personal space, lay his head on her shoulders or arms, or wave objects in her face.

Analyses of baseline observations for Ms. George revealed that she typically responded to challenging behaviors by avoiding eye contact with the student, ignoring the behavior, issuing a verbal correction or reprimand, stating the student's name, or taking away sound-making objects. There were two occurrences where Ms. George provided verbal praise for replacement behaviors. However, the praise she provided was generic and not specific to the desired behavior (i.e., "good job," "thank you").

Independent Variable Data

The number of behavior-specific praise statements given by Ms. George to Kara, Chris, and Cody are shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4, respectively. With Kara, the mean rate of behavior-specific praise during the baseline phase was 0.3 and had increased to 1.6 after the first intervention sub-phase (see Figure 2). This increasing trend continued through the second (2.0) and third (3.0) intervention sub-phases and exceeded the established interim criterion for both sub-phases (1.9 and 2.3, respectively).

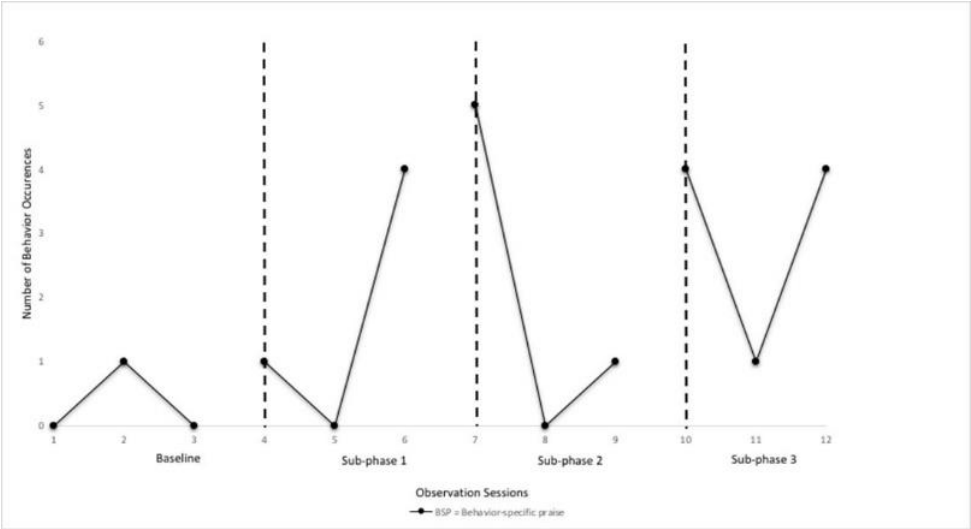

Figure 2. Number of behavior-specific praise statements given by Ms. George to Kara

With Chris, the mean rate of behavior-specific praise during the baseline phase was zero and increased to 3.6 after the first intervention sub-phase (see Figure 3). During the second intervention sub-phase, the mean rate of behavior-specific praise decreased to 1.9 and failed to meet the established interim criterion of 3.6. The mean of behavior-specific praise continued to be calculated for subsequent sub-phase observations during the next three weeks and reflected the same trend.

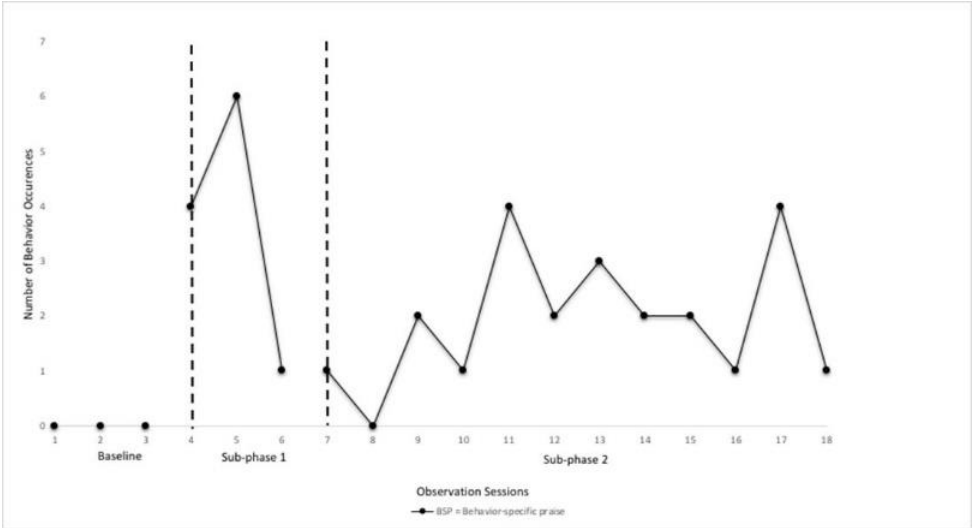

Figure 3. Number of behavior-specific praise statements given by Ms. George to Chris

With Cody, the mean rate of behavior-specific praise during the baseline phase was 0.3 and increased to 2.6 after the first intervention sub-phase (see Figure 4). During the second intervention sub-phase, the mean rate of behavior-specific praise decreased to 2.5 and failed to meet the established interim criterion of 2.9. Similar to Chris, the mean rate of behavior-specific praise given to Cody continued to be calculated for subsequent sub-phase observations during the next three weeks and reflected the same trend.

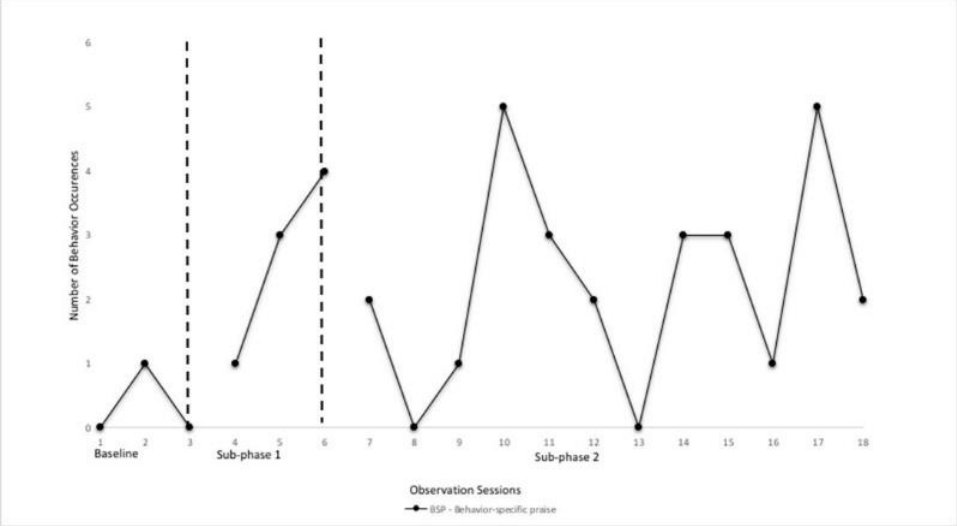

Figure 4. Number of behavior-specific praise statements given by Ms. George to Cody

Dependent Variable Data

The number of challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by Kara, Chris, and Cody are shown in Figures 5, 6, and 7, respectively. With Kara, the mean rates for challenging behaviors was 2.0 and zero for replacement behaviors during the baseline phase (see Figure 5). During the first intervention sub-phase, there were increases in the mean rates of Kara's challenging (4.7) and replacement (3.0) behaviors. However, this trend was reversed during the second intervention sub-phase (challenging behaviors = 2.6, replacement behaviors = 1.3). During the third intervention sub-phase, the mean rate of Kara's challenging behaviors remained the same, yet increased dramatically for her replacement behaviors (5.3).

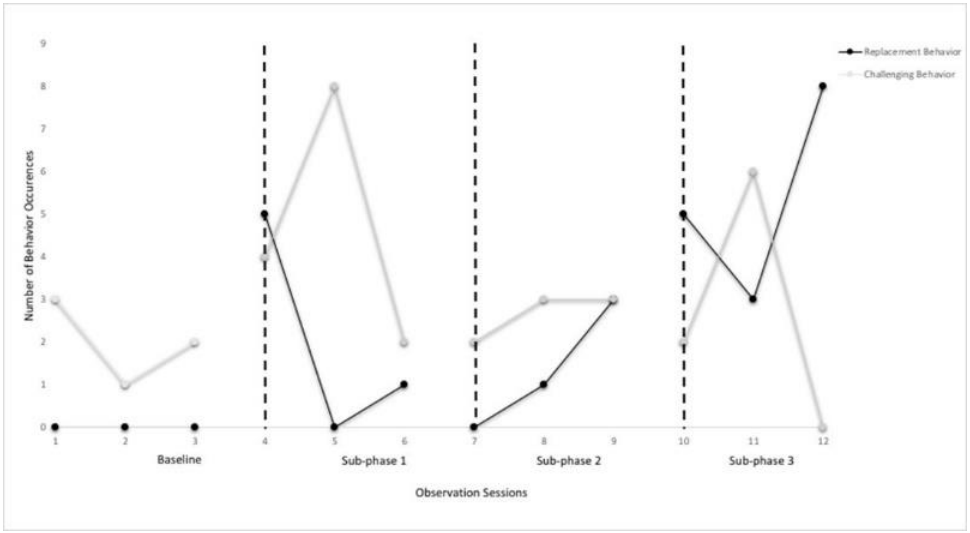

Figure 5. Number of challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by Kara

With Chris, the mean rates for challenging behaviors was 4.6 and zero for replacement behaviors during the baseline phase (see Figure 6). The mean rates for Chris's challenging behaviors decreased to 3.3 during the first intervention sub-phase and then increased back to 4.6 during the second intervention sub-phase. Data also revealed that Chris's replacement behaviors increased to 2.3 during the first intervention sub-phase with no change during the second intervention sub-phase.

With Cody, the mean rates for challenging behaviors was 4.6 and 0.3 for replacement behaviors during the baseline phase (see Figure 7). The mean rates for Cody's challenging behaviors decreased to 3.6 during the first intervention sub-phase and then increased back to 4.2 during the second intervention sub-phase. Data also revealed that Cody's replacement behaviors increased to 1.6 during the first intervention sub-phase and then decreased slightly to 1.3 during the second intervention sub-phase.

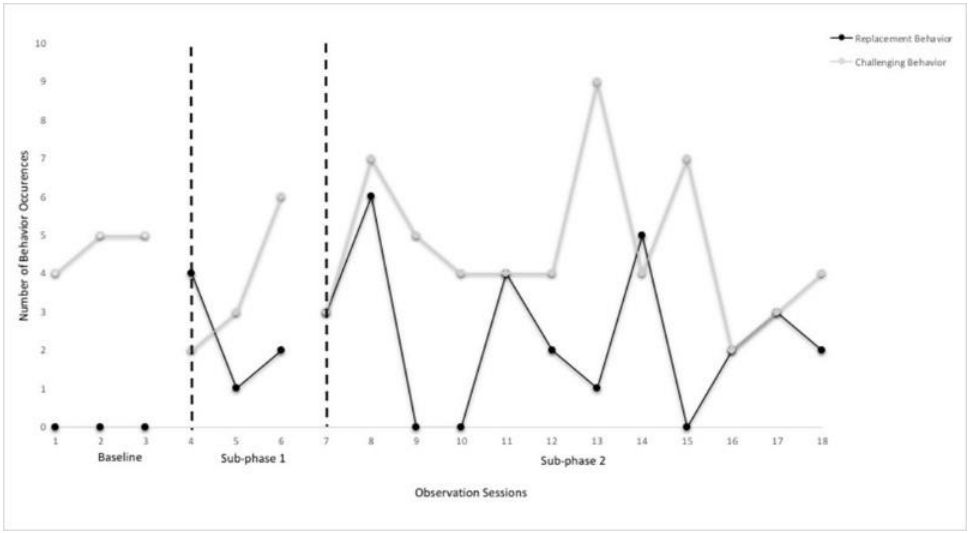

Figure 6. Number of challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by Chris

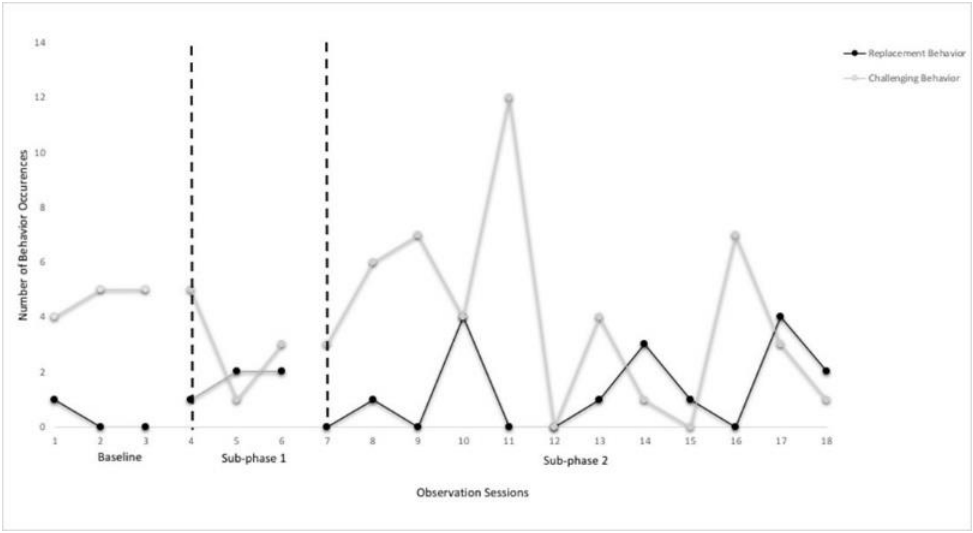

Figure 7. Number of challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by Cody

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

There were three major limitations in the present study that impact generalizability of reported results. First, extraneous variables occurred during observation sessions that were beyond the control of the primary researcher. All observation sessions were conducted in a high school life skills classroom where other students and school personnel were present. As a result, there may have been distractions that impacted the teacher's use of behavior-specific praise or factors that provoked

challenging behaviors among students. Future studies should attempt to create a more controlled classroom setting to reduce distractions and instigating factors as much as possible.

Second, the teacher-participant had several years of professional teaching experiences among students with disabilities. Additionally, the three student-participants were individuals with severe intellectual disabilities who each exhibited individualized challenging behaviors. Future studies should include teacher-participants with varying professional teaching experiences so that teachers in different teaching assignments (e.g., special education classrooms, content area classrooms) and at various stages of their teaching career may be evaluated. Future studies should also involve a greater number of student-participants with other types of disabilities who exhibit different forms, frequencies, and intensities of challenging behaviors.

Lastly, the present study used inter-observer agreement checks to establish reliability with intervention sub-phase observations. For each observation session, Kappa values were calculated and demonstrated good inter-observer agreement with all but two observation sessions. Future studies should incorporate ways to improve the degree to which multiple observers conduct consistent interpretations of events during the same observation session.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Among students with severe intellectual disabilities teachers can use PBIS practices, such as behavior-specific praise, to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviors and promote alternate, replacement behaviors (Farmer et al., 2012). Since teachers are not adequately prepared or trained to use PBIS practices with fidelity (Kennedy et al., 2017), Stormont and Reinke (2014) recommended using a data-based performance feedback approach characterized with observations and consultations to provide teachers with visual performance feedback. The goal of the present study was to address an under-researched area and evaluate the effect of visual performance feedback on the frequency of (a) behavior-specific praise statements given by a high school special education teacher and (b) challenging and replacement behaviors exhibited by high school students with severe intellectual disabilities.

Results in the present study have shown that use of a data-based performance feedback approach enabled Ms. George to significantly increase the frequency of behavior-specific praise given to Kara, Chris, and Cody. By providing Ms. George with initial training and weekly consultations that included visual performance feedback, she was empowered to implement behavior-specific praise with fidelity. Results also revealed decreases in challenging behaviors and increases in replacement behaviors exhibited by student participants, especially with Kara. Reducing challenging behaviors in high school students with severe intellectual disabilities can be problematic because their behaviors have become deeply ingrained over time (Bruhn et al., 2016). This was evident in findings reported for Chris and Cody after the first intervention sub-phase. Despite this phenomenon, findings from the social validity questionnaire showed that Ms. George viewed behavior-specific praise as an

effective PBIS practice that increased access to instructional opportunities for Kara, Cody, and Chris. Furthermore, Ms. George indicated that she planned to continue using behavior-specific praise with high school students who have severe intellectual disabilities.

Results from the present study have implications for stakeholders in teacher preparation programs and high school contexts. High school teachers who work among students with severe intellectual disabilities must know how to address challenging behaviors appropriately. Therefore, preservice and practicing teachers must learn how to conduct FBAs to determine the function of challenging behaviors and create function-based behavior improvement plans that implement PBIS practices as interventions (Erbas, Tekin-Iftar, & Yucesoy, 2006; Westing, 2015). Trainings should include frequent opportunities to observe experienced teachers and practice related skills in authentic high school settings (Mastropieri, 2001) using a visual performance feedback approach (Jenkins, Floress, & Reinke, 2015; Reddy, Dudek, & Lekwa, 2017; Stormont & Reinke, 2014). While implementing a data-based performance feedback approach, stakeholders in teacher preparation programs and high school contexts may also consider different variations with procedures. For example, video self-modeling enables teachers to view themselves performing PBIS practices successfully (Hawkins & Heflin, 2011). Additionally, teachers may be provided with performance feedback through email (Allday et al., 2012; Gage et al., 2018) or via real-time means using wireless technology devices (Sweigart et al., 2015).

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To top

The Changing Role of the Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf: A Snapshot of Current Teacher Perceptions

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Minot State University

Karen L. Anderson

Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss

Abstract

The past two decades have seen unprecedented changes to the field of deaf education. Several factors including technological advances and educational policy have resulted in the inclusion of the majority of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the general education classroom with various levels of support services. Consequently, the role of the professional educator of the deaf has changed to the itinerant teaching model as the primary service delivery system in deaf education in the nation today. Because this role for teachers of the deaf is evolving, ongoing research is necessary to identify emerging trends, successes, and potential barriers to ensure effective service provision to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. This study sought to obtain a current picture of the roles and responsibilities of the itinerant teacher of the deaf (ITOD) via an electronic survey conducted through postings on a well-known professional website. Participants were 267 itinerant teachers of the deaf. Survey results support previous findings that lack of awareness of the needs of this population of students and lack of time due to increasing caseloads are barriers to service provision. Teachers reported being better prepared for the itinerant role in their preservice program than in past studies, and the use of mentorship appears to be an emerging teacher support strategy. Results supported the adequacy of the itinerant model in supporting students who are above, at, or within 6 months of grade level expectations, with increasing concerns about the ability to provide adequate levels of support to students in inclusive settings with greater educational delays via the itinerant model. Implications for these findings for the field as well as potential questions for future research on this topic are discussed.

Keywords: itinerant, deaf education, survey, service delivery model

Introduction

Before 1975, more than 85% of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students attended specialized schools; today more than 85% of students are in general education settings (Shaver, Marschark, Newman, & Marder, 2014). Reasons for this statistical flip include the inclusion movement, early hearing detection and intervention (EHDI) programs, and technological advances. The trend of DHH

students attending their local school and receiving instruction in the general education classroom is expected to continue. Consequently, the primary model of service delivery for DHH students currently in the United States is itinerant services from a teacher of the deaf (ITOD) (Antia, 2013; Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). An ITOD is defined as a "professional who provides instruction and consultation for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and most generally travel from school to school" (Luckner, 2006, p. 94).

Previous studies have sought to investigate ITOD roles, challenges, and perceptions. Early research identified itinerant practices in deaf education as differing significantly from traditional deaf education models particularly in the amount of time spent by the ITOD in non-teaching activities such as travel, in supporting the general education teacher, and in serving a wide range of students across grades and need intensities (Luckner & Miller, 1994; Yarger & Luckner, 1999). In the 2000s, research continued to confirm early findings and expand our understanding of this professional role. The importance of the ITOD being able to effectively communicate with a variety of other professionals as well as the potential isolation an ITOD may experience were highlighted in studies by Luckner and Howell (2002) and Kluwin, Morris and Clifford (2004). Foster and Cue (2009) surveyed 210 ITODs and found that services to DHH students comprised the primary duties of the ITOD, and consultation to other professionals the second; although, a shift towards increasing amounts of consultation or indirect services was noted. A second study surveying 356 ITODs (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013) confirmed Foster and Cue's findings that ITODs ranked services to DHH students as their most important duty and consultation to other professionals and parents and the second.

Common challenges experienced by ITODs repeatedly appear in the research. Overwhelmingly, ITODs report lack of time as a significant barrier (Luckner & Dorn, 2017; Antia & Rivera, 2016; Compton, Appenzeller, Kemmery, & Gardiner-Walsh, 2015; Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013; Foster & Cue, 2009); specifically, increasing caseloads of students spread out amongst many school buildings and insufficient time for collaboration with other team members. Additional barriers faced by ITODs include difficulty scheduling services, navigating state and district policies, lack of follow-through by other team members, lack of administrative support, professional isolation, and stress and burnout (Antia & Rivera, 2016; Kennon, & Patterson, 2016). Finally, the issue of pre-service and in-service preparation has been discussed in the literature. Foster and Cue (2009) found that the majority of ITODs they surveyed learned their skills on the job and felt ill-prepared for this role by their pre-service programs. Additionally, ITODs from this study wanted professional development that focused specifically on the needs of ITODs. Later research confirmed that university programs were still not effectively preparing teachers of the deaf for itinerant roles, but that satisfaction with professional development on this topic was increasing (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013).

In recognition of the evolving roles and responsibilities of the ITOD, the purpose of this study was to update current understandings by providing a snapshot of current ITOD practices and perceptions.

Specific research questions posed were, 1) What do the caseloads of ITODs look like? 2) What is the nature of services ITODs provide and how do they view the adequacy of these services? 3) Do ITODs perceive their preparation programs equipped them for this role?, and 4) How do ITODs perceive professional administrative support?

Method

The current study utilized a quantitative survey design with the data source being responses to 10 questions (each with subquestions) on an electronic survey. The survey was developed using Survey Monkey and was distributed to over 11,800 subscribers of Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss (SSCHL) in their bi-monthly update and was available for a period of one month. SSCHL, is a 'go-to' site for professionals and family members seeking more information about hearing loss and what can be done to better support the future learning and social success of children with hearing loss. It receives approximately 20,000 unique hits per month. Professionals, identifying as teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing who provide itinerant services, were invited to complete the survey. Survey items were developed with the desire to investigate the perceptions of ITOD on their roles and responsibilities, especially regarding caseload variations, inclusion practices, experience in the field, and perceived level of supervisor support. In total, 267 ITODs completed the survey. Descriptive analysis of frequency counts, means, and medians of the data were calculated using Excel. Results of this analysis are displayed below in narrative and graphic representations.

Results

Participants. The 267 ITODs who responded to the survey were balanced between novice and veteran teachers: 32% have been an ITOD for 1-5 years, 21% for 6-10 years, 19% for 11-15 years, 9% for 16-20 years, and 16% for 21 or more years. Of the total number, 40% indicated they are planning on leaving the field within five years. Part-time teachers comprised 11% of respondents. About 60% of the respondents have served in the role of ITOD in a center-based or resource room program, but are currently working in an ITOD role or providing services in both center-based and itinerant service models.

Caseload. The majority of ITODs in the study had caseloads ranging 10 to more than 55 students. Caseload size by percentage of participant were as follows: 10-15 students: 36%, 16-25 students: 30%, 26-35 students: 16%, 36-45 students: 10%, 46-55 students: 5%, and more than 55 students: 3%. Of the total student caseload, DHH students with additional needs (DHH+) comprised approximately 30% of participant caseloads. ITODs served an average of 10.6 buildings per month, with the range being 1-60 buildings and a median of 9 buildings. Figure 1 displays reported caseload size.

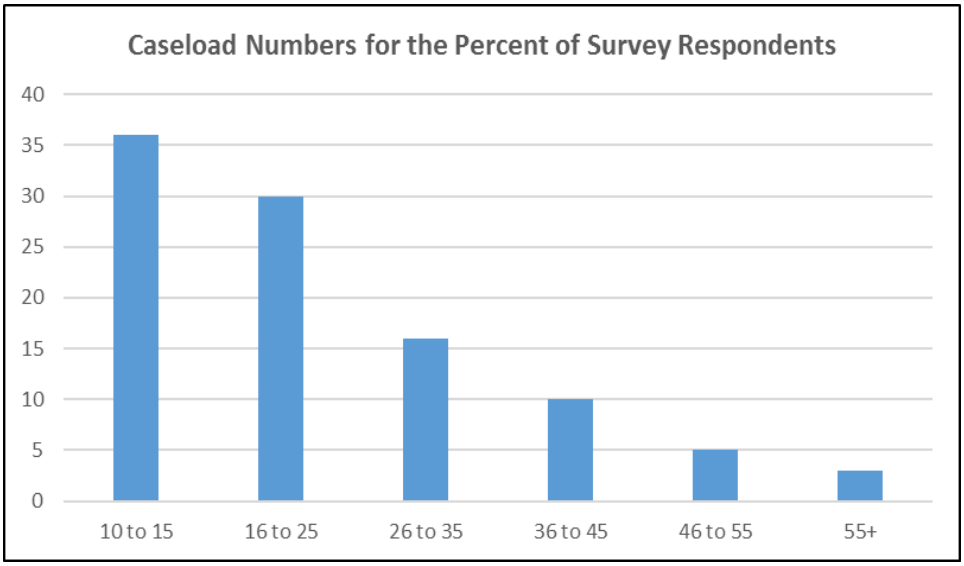


Figure 1. Caseload Size

Participants were asked about the grade level performance of DHH students on their caseload *with no additional disabilities*. Respondents considered their caseloads and identified the percent of their caseloads that were performing at each of the identified grade level performance descriptions. The median, or the center point at which 50% of the responses are below, and 50% of responses are above, are reported as being most representative for this body of data. Figure 2 shows the median values for percentage of caseload performance relative to grade level.

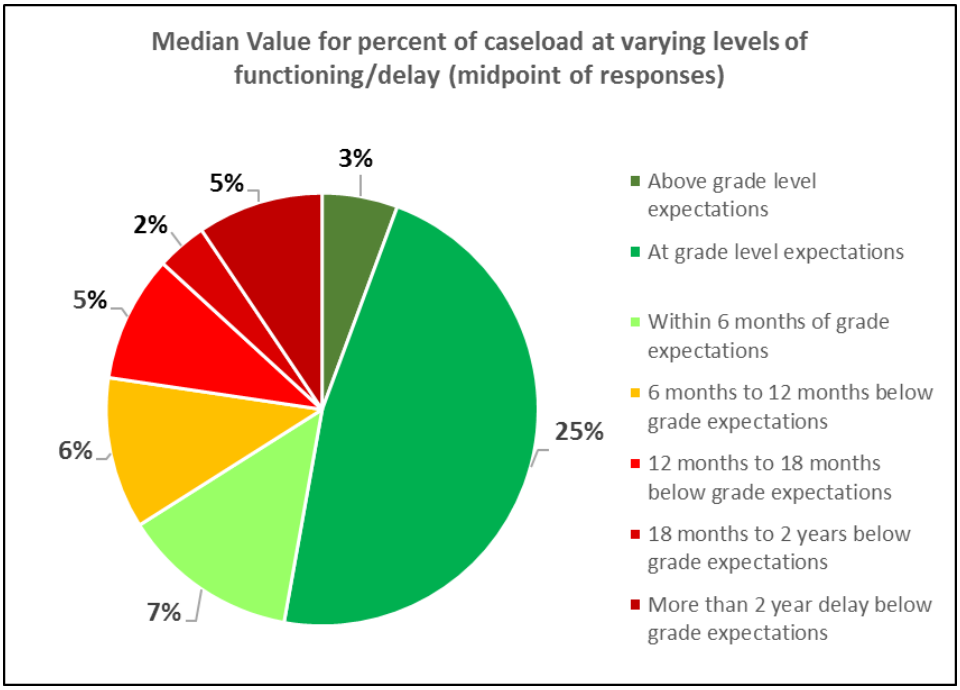


Figure 2. Caseload Performance Relative to Grade Level Expectations.

The median value for the percentage of caseload functioning at grade level was 25%. There were relatively few students served who were felt to be exceeding grade level expectations. Median values were similar at 6-7% of caseload functioning within one year of grade level and the same at 5% of caseload behind grade level by more than one or two plus years. The median percentage of caseload that was functioning above grade level was 3%.

Nature of Service Delivery. To develop a picture of the various aspects of service provision to DHH students from ITODs, several survey questions addressed this topic. Questions were related to service models, frequency, intensity, perceived adequacy of services as well as perceptions of Individualized Education Planning and the impact of full-inclusion models.

Direct vs. Indirect. Participants were asked what percentage of DHH students on their caseload received services categorized by one of four types 1) direct one on one or small group, 2) consultation only to special educators, 3) consultation only to general educators, and 4) team teaching. As shown in Figure 3, participants indicated the majority of services they provided to DHH students on their caseloads were one on one or small group direct services at 88%. Consultative only services to regular education teachers were provided second most frequently at a median of 9% of caseloads and consultation only services to special education teachers occurred for a median of 7% of caseloads. Team teaching only occurred for a median of 8% of caseloads of the services ITODs in this study were providing.

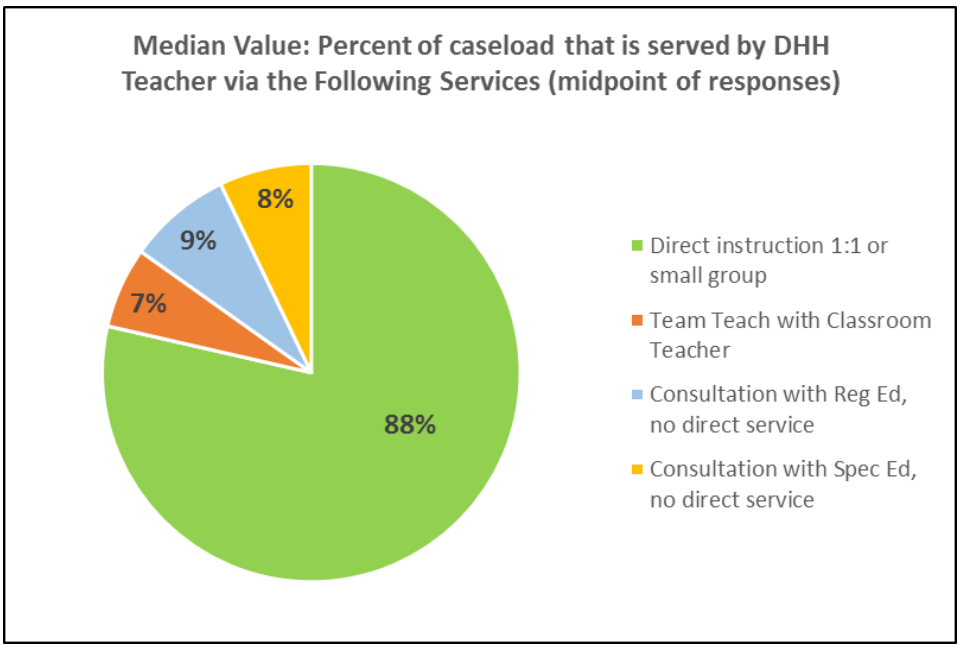


Figure 3. Median Percentages of ITOD Services Provided by Type

Relative to students who are DHH+, the median response for participants indicated that 31% of caseloads were comprised of students with hearing loss plus other disability conditions. When asked

what percentage of their caseload received direct ITOD services versus consultation only, the median responses indicated 75% of DHH+ students receive direct ITOD services, and 20% receive consultation only. Respondents further indicated that they felt that 90% of students who are DHH+ receive an appropriate amount of service.

Intensity of Services. For DHH students on their caseloads *whose only disability is hearing loss*, participants were asked to indicate what percentage of these students were receiving direct ITOD service minutes in each of nine possible time options. In rank order from the most common service minutes amount provided, to the least common amount of minutes provided, frequency counts indicate the following:

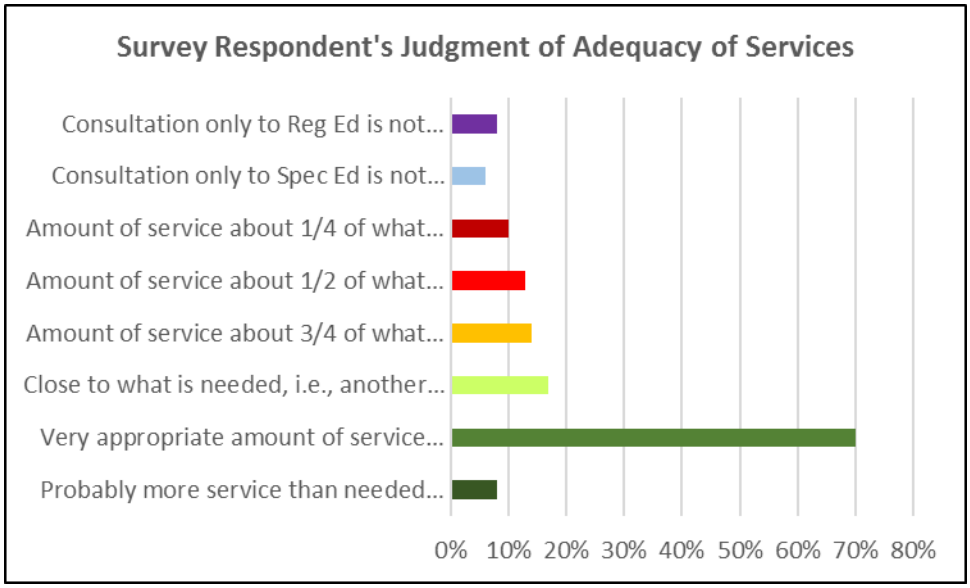
1. 45 minutes per week (median 30%).
2. 4-5 hours per week (median 11%).
3. 3-4 hours per week (median 10%)
4. 90 minutes per week and 30 minutes per week (tied at a median of 8%)
5. 2-3 hours per week and 1 hour per month (tied at a median of 1%)
6. 60 minutes per week and 30 minutes per month were negligible

Adequacy of Services. Participants were asked to judge whether or not the amount and type of services they were providing were adequate for DHH students on their caseloads who had no additional disabilities and for those students who are DHH+. When asked what percentage of their caseload of DHH-only students fell into certain levels of adequate services, median values for percent of caseloads are as follows: 1) very appropriate level of services to meet the needs = 70%, 2) close to what is needed to meet the needs = 17%, 2) about ¾ of what is needed to meet the needs = 14%, 3) about half of what is needed to meet the needs = 13%, 4) about ¼ of what is needed to meet the needs = 10%, and 5) probably more service than needed = 8%.

Participants were also asked the percentage of their DHH only students whose needs were not being met through consultation only to either the general education teacher or the special education teachers. The median value for consultation only to the general education teacher was 8% and 6% to the special education teacher.

Thus, as summarized in figure 4, the responding teachers felt that the majority of their caseloads were receiving very appropriate (70%), close to what is needed (17%), or service that exceeds needs (8%). The results of a prior survey question indicated that of caseloads, the median number of students who were one year delayed in grade level expectations was 5%, 1.5 years delayed was 2% and greater than two years delated was 5%. The model of ITOD service provision is likely insufficient to provide for the needs of students with these more extreme levels of need, thus creating a situation in which teachers perceive that a substantial proportion of ITOD caseloads are felt to be underserved by ¼ (14%), ½ (13%), or ¾ (10%) of the service time actually needed. Part of this dissatisfaction may additionally be explained by the concerns that consultation only services are not sufficient to meet student needs.

Figure 4. Median



Percentages of Perceived Adequacy of Services.

Individual Education Plans and Inclusion. Two survey questions were designed to gather data regarding ITOD perceptions of the IEP process and the perceived impact of the full-inclusion models on their practices. Tables 1 and 2 display the survey statements and the corresponding percentage of ITODs that answered true for each statement. The result indicated more than half of the respondents perceived limited time and lack of understanding of DHH needs by other IEP team members as the greatest barriers to service provision. While nearly half of the responding ITODs are working in districts that have not embraced a full inclusion model, participants did indicate experiencing pressure to move to more indirect delivery (consultation) in lieu of direct services. Furthermore, less than 10% of participants indicated their districts had provided professional development for inclusive service delivery.

Table 1

ITOD Perceptions of the IEP Process

Survey Statement	Percentage of Participants Answering True
I have a lot of schools and only so much time available. When a new student is identified, I can only serve him/her the amount of time I can free up on my schedule, even if there is a clear need for more direct DHH service time. (My administration knows this and is not interested in hiring more DHH staff).	51.46%
The IEP teams usually underestimate the level of student needs, thereby specifying DHH services that are not as	50.49%

intense/frequent as are needed by most/many of my students.	
My district uses a service matrix or some other standard process when considering the amount of service time that each student needs.	25.24%
We are an 'inclusion school district,' and all pull-out services are highly discouraged, even if a student has one year or greater learning delays.	21.84%
My administration has told me that I can only spend a certain amount of direct service time (or maximum amount) with any one DHH student.	19.90%
My administration has told me that I can only provide consultation to the teachers that serve the identified students who are DHH (or there are clear guidelines on when DHH direct services will be allowed).	12.14%
My district uses a service matrix or some other standard process when considering the amount of service time that each student needs.	25.24%

Table 2

ITOD Perceptions of Full-Inclusion Impact

Survey Statement	Percentage of Participants Answering True
Does not apply. My district has not embraced 'full inclusion practices,' or these practices have been deemed to not apply to (most) students with hearing loss.	45.78%
My district has provided little or no training in team-teaching and/or consultation when supporting the DHH student in the inclusive model. I do not feel comfortable in this role.	30.12%
Fewer pull-out direct services are being allowed.	27.71%
All or almost all special ed services are provided by a small special education teaching staff and aides. Inclusion in this case, means I consult with the special education staff so they will address the DHH specific needs within the class or during 'study session' pull out.	24.50%

Consultation is being recommended instead of direct service.	20.88%
Team-teaching is being encouraged instead of direct service. Classroom teachers are generally welcoming when I come in to teach lessons to the class or a small group.	9.64%
My district has provided training in team teaching and/or consultation when supporting the DHH student in the inclusive model. I feel comfortable in this role. Administration has helped to make classroom teachers understand these changes and the purpose of my DHH services.	7.63%
Team teaching is being encouraged instead of direct service. Classroom teachers are often resistant to collaborative planning and when I come in to teach lessons to the class or a small group.	7.23%
Consultation is being recommended instead of direct service.	20.88%
My district has provided training in team teaching and/or consultation when supporting the DHH student in the inclusive model. I feel comfortable in this role. Administration has helped to make classroom teachers understand these changes and the purpose of my DHH services.	7.63%
My district has provided training in team teaching and/or consultation when supporting the DHH student in the inclusive model. I need more training and support from administration to feel comfortable in this role.	5.22%

Preparation. The survey included questions about the level of preparation the respondents felt they received from their preservice university training program to fulfil the various roles a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing could assume, including that of itinerant teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Table 3

ITOD Perceptions of University Preparation

Survey Statement	Percentage of Participants Answering True

My university training program prepared me to teach and support academics to a small group of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. I was not prepared (adequately) to fulfill the role of an itinerant teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.	38.93
My university training program prepared me for any role as a DHH teacher - school for the deaf, center-based program, resource room, itinerant, team-teacher, consultant.	26.32
My university training program did a good job of preparing me to work as an itinerant teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing.	20.61

For preservice preparation, results were mixed with slightly more teachers indicating their university program did prepare them for itinerant work than not. Participants were also asked to comment on how well prepared they felt to meet the needs of DHH+ students on their caseloads. Figure 5 indicates that 63% of ITODs felt mostly or fully prepared to serve DHH+ students while 26% said they felt fairly prepared, and 11% said they felt only a little prepared or not at all prepared.

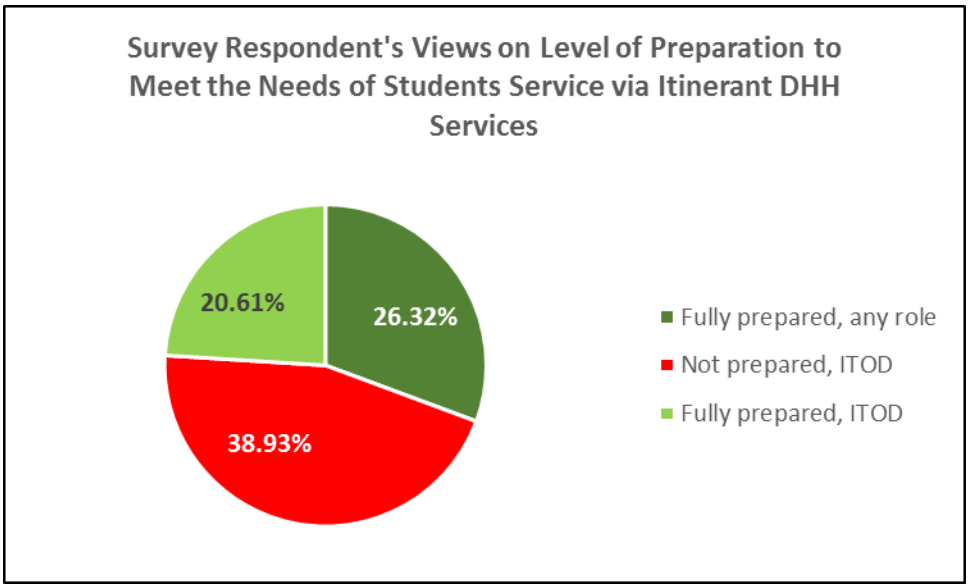


Figure 5. Perceived Preparedness to Serve DHH+ Students

Support. Two survey questions gathered data relative to ITOD perceptions of how well they were supported as professionals regarding collegial support, mentorship, administrative support, and professional development. Table 4 and Figure 6 illustrate ITOD "true" responses to statements of in-service support. Table 5 provides ITOD "true" responses to statements of supervisor support.

Table 4

ITOD Perceptions of In-service Support

Survey Statement	Percentage of Participants Answering True
I felt lost when I first started in the role of an itinerant DHH teacher. I learned through trial and error as I applied my university teacher training to the role of itinerant support.	43.51
Our DHH Team has regular meetings to discuss issues, for professional development, and/or participation in professional learning collaboratives. We continually work together to learn more about our roles and how to improve our services.	38.93
When I was hired into the itinerant DHH teacher role, I was paired with one or more mentors (officially or unofficially) who really helped to get me up to speed with what I should be doing in my role.	33.97
I've learned much of what I know about being an itinerant mainly from books like Steps to Success, Building Skills for Success in the Fast-Paced Classroom, Advocacy in Action, etc.	22.14
My school district/region/state has provided substantial inservice training to teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing. We are really supported in our professional development.	16.03
My district does not support me in receiving professional development specific to improving my services to DHH students.	9.54

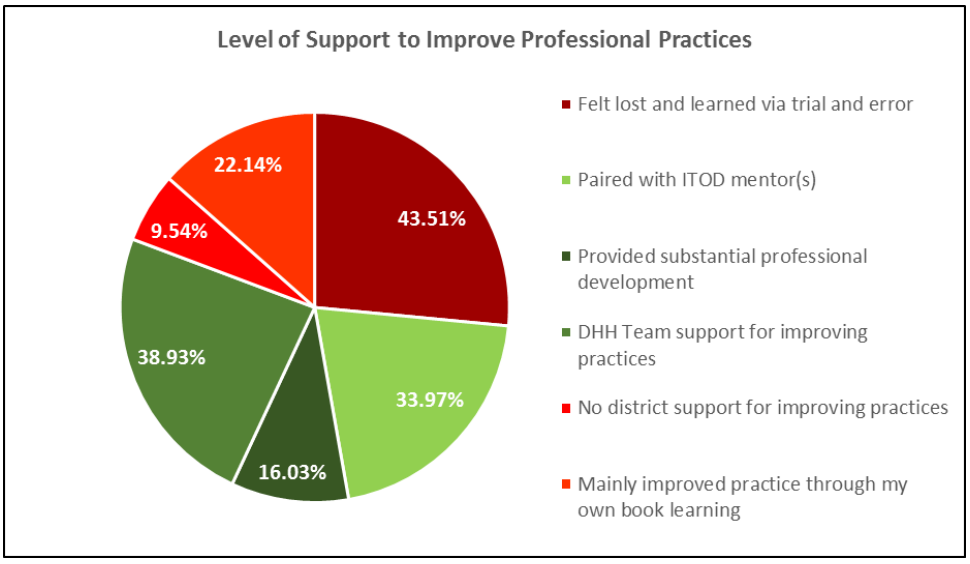


Figure 6. Perceived Levels of Support

Table 5

ITOD Perceptions of Supervision

Survey Statement	Percentage of Participants Answering True (n=259)
My supervisor is terrific! S/he really understands students and will 'go to bat' for our students and me when needed.	35.91
I find that I am continuously advocating for the needs of students with hearing loss because my supervisor does not understand, although he/she is willing to hear my point of view and is improving in DHH knowledge.	33.98
My supervisor has intervened before when a school building principal has been unsupportive of my providing appropriate services, the student's accommodation needs, classroom teacher resistance, etc.	28.57
My supervisor is over all of the speech pathologists and DHH (maybe other groups too). This person has very basic knowledge of meeting the needs of children with hearing loss.	24.71
I'm in a small district and work directly for the Special Education Director. This person does not have specialized DHH knowledge.	22.39
My supervisor is a long-time educator of students with hearing loss (or Interpreter background or speech AVT/LSLS) and really understands the unique needs of these students.	20.46
My supervisor is over DHH and blind/visually impaired. This person does not have specialized DHH knowledge.	11.58
We used to have a terrific supervisor with a background in DHH who really 'got it.' She left, and the district hired someone without (sufficient) knowledge, and now our students are no longer receiving the level of appropriateness of services they used to receive.	10.42
My supervisor rarely or never intervenes when a school building principal has been unsupportive. I am generally	8.88

told to 'go with the flow' of the building and not 'make waves.'	
I have been warned to not advocate so much for the needs of my students (i.e., an act of insubordination, mentioned in my evaluations, 'stern talks,' etc.)	6.95

Discussion

In response to research question one, *What do the caseloads of ITODs look like?,* the majority of ITODs in this study (36%) had 10-15 students on their caseload, and another 30% had between 16 and 25 students. Consistent with national estimates (GRI, 2011), approximately 30% of caseloads were comprised of students who are DHH+. ITODs served an average of 10.6 separate school buildings. ITODs reported a median of 25% of their students were performing at grade level or above (3%). In comparison to data reported by in 2013 by Luckner and Ayantoye, average caseload size and number of buildings served by ITODs has increased. Grade level performance was not measured similarly in both studies to allow for direct comparison.

Research question two asked, *What is the nature of services ITODs provide and how do they view the adequacy of these services?* Consistent with previous studies, ITODs most commonly provide direct pull out services to the DHH students on their caseload. They also provide a substantial amount of consultative services, but very few ITODs reported using team teaching models for service delivery. The most common frequency for these direct services was 60 minutes per week; however, many students were receiving 120-180 minutes per week. The current study collected these data relative to students whose only disability was hearing loss. Luckner and Ayantoye reported the average frequency of direct services to be 155 minutes per week but did not differentiate by subgroups of students.

The responses to two of the survey questions, considered together, provide insight into perceived inadequacies of service level. The perceived adequacy of the level of services provided and the perceived performance of students to grade level expectations for students who are DHH-only, appear in Table 6 below. The medians reported for the adequacy of services were in proportion, and roughly 2.5 times the medians reported for the grade level expectations. The largest group identified were those students receiving ITOD services who were performing at the expected grade level and the majority of respondents reported that the level of service received was appropriate. Respondents reported that the median of 7% of their caseloads had a delay in expected performance within 6 months, for which 17% identified a need for an additional 15 minutes per week. While greater delays in expected performance are a minority of caseloads, there continues to be a perception than 10% or more of these students receive inadequate levels of service to meet their needs. This suggests that the ITOD model of services is most adequate for students above, at or within six months of grade

level expectations. The realistic ability for an ITOD to adequately meet the level of student needs appears to decrease as greater delay in student performance is observed.

The majority of students appear to be performing above, at, or within 6 months of expected performance levels and for these students ITOD services appear to be provided at an adequate level. The itinerant model for supporting students with hearing loss cannot be assumed to adequately meet the needs of students with greater delays in expected school performance. A continuum of alternative placements, including intensive resource room and center-based options are necessary to meet the unique needs of all students with hearing loss.

Table 6

Comparison of Perceived Student Performance to Expectations and Level of Adequacy of Services

Perceived Performance to Grade Level Expectations		Perceived Adequacy of Level of Services Provided	
Above grade level expectations	3%	8%	Probably more service than needed
At grade level expectations	25%	70%	Appropriate amount of service
Within 6 months of expectations	7%	17%	Close to what is needed (another 15 minutes desired)
6 months to 12 months delay	6%	14%	About ¾ of what is needed
12 months to 18 months delay	5%	13%	About ½ of what is needed
18 months to 24 months delay	2%	10%	About ¼ of what is needed
More than 2 years delay	3%		

Relative to how ITODs perceive the adequacy of the services they were providing, results of the current study differ significantly from the 2013 data. Luckner and Ayantoye reported 86% of ITODs felt their services were appropriate for the needs of their students. The construction of the current study prevents a similar percentage to be derived. However, it appeared as though the majority of ITODs said that DHH students on their caseload whose only disability was hearing loss, were receiving adequate services to meet their needs, whereas medians in the 10% to 14% range represented inadequate levels of service to students who were DHH-only. It appears that ITODs are perceiving that the pressure to serve more students through insufficient service time and indirect models is impacting student outcomes. When it comes to students who are DHH+ however, the results are more encouraging. This population is more likely to receive direct versus indirect services (median of 75%) and ITODs in this study reported that a median of 90% of DHH+ students on their caseloads was receiving adequate levels of services.

The IEP is an integral component of special education. ITOD perceptions of the IEP process in this study indicate previously identified barriers to effective service provision are still present. More than

half of the participants agreed that the rest of the IEP team often underestimated the needs of the DHH student. The majority of ITODs also felt pressure to determine services based on their availability rather than student need. It is apparent that time, scheduling and lack of administrator support for appropriate services remain concerns for ITODs. Interestingly, 25% of ITODs reported the use of a service intensity scale or matrix to guide the IEP team in determining services. The development of such tools was recommended by Antia and Rivera (2016) as a potential solution for standardizing a rationale for service delivery frequency, and intensity based on student need rather than service provider availability. The finding that 25% of respondents use some kind of standardized guide to determine the level of service intensity does not appear to be reflected in their perceptions of the level of adequacy of service levels being provided. If one quarter or 25% of the respondents actually used such a guide, and their levels of service were indeed adequate, then the remaining 75% of the respondent perceptions are actually more skewed toward inadequacy than the data set as a whole reflects.

While the term inclusion does not appear in IDEA, this term is often used interchangeably with the least restrictive environment (LRE), a main component of special education law. Inclusion can be applied in different ways across school districts and states, the impact of which is unclear. Currently, 46% of ITODs reported that they served in districts that had not adopted a full inclusion approach. However, a substantial number (28%) indicated fewer direct services were allowed and they were encouraged to replace direct services with consultation. Twenty-five percent of ITODs indicated this consultation took the form of meeting with a small special education team who carried out direct services with the DHH students. Debates regarding placement (Moores, 2010) and personnel (Marlatt, 2014) in deaf education have been noted in the literature. What is particularly concerning is that while indirect services are increasing, more than 30% of ITODs in the current study reported they have had insufficient professional development in collaborative practices and do not feel comfortable using this approach to service delivery.

As noted in previous research, pre-service preparation programs have been slow to move from preparing teachers of the deaf for self-contained classrooms to itinerant and inclusionary service delivery roles. The answer to research question three, *Do ITODs perceive their preparation programs equipped them for this role?*, the results are encouraging. Twenty-six percent of ITODs said their university programs prepared them for a variety of service delivery models, including itinerant, and 20% said their programs did a good job of preparing them to be an ITOD. Further examination of the data indicated that ITODs who were newer to the field were more likely to indicate that they were better prepared in university for this role. It, therefore, suggests that teacher preparation programs are recognizing the need for ITOD training and are modifying their curricula accordingly.

The final research question posed was, *What are ITOD perceptions of professional support?* ITODs in this study report their deaf education colleagues are sources of support. Thirty-nine percent

identify their local DHH team members as mutual support. Surprisingly, 34% reported they were provided with a mentor who helped them learn their role. A recent call to action highlighted the need for addressing the acute stress and burnout rates amongst ITODs (Kennon & Patterson, 2016). Mentorship has been well-researched in teacher education and in special education, but its specific application to the field of deaf education is lacking (Rynda, 2016). Finally, ITODs generally did not report dissatisfaction with their supervisor or administrator; however, they did indicate the ongoing need to educate and advocate for the necessity of their services. As a low-incidence disability, administrators (and other school professionals) are often unaware of the unique needs of this population (Miller, 2015). Kennon and Patterson (2016) found that this professional isolation and the regular need to justify or "prove" why their services were required contributed to stress and burnout amongst ITODs.

Conclusion

The current study revealed some consistencies as well as changes in the ITOD's role when compared to previous work on the topic. The challenge of educating others of the unique needs of DHH students and the subsequent need to advocate for ITOD services remains at the forefront. Investigation of effective avenues for accomplishing this task which includes the development of a scope of practice for ITODs is recommended. Increasing amounts of consultative and collaborative service delivery models call for systematic professional development for teams serving DHH students on how needs can be addressed within the general education classroom and responsibility shared by team members through true collaborative service provision. Limited research is available regarding this topic; however, evidence does indicate collaborative consultation models in deaf education can be successful when implemented systematically (Pedersen, 2013).

The majority of students appeared to be performing above, at, or within 6 months of expected performance levels and for these students ITOD services were judged to be provided at an adequate level. While greater delays in expected performance are a minority of caseloads, there continues to be a perception than 10% or more of these students receive inadequate levels of service to meet their needs. This suggests that the ITOD model of services is most adequate for students above, at or within six months of grade level expectations. The realistic ability for an ITOD to adequately meet the level of student needs appears to decrease as greater delay in student performance is observed. The itinerant model for supporting students with hearing loss cannot be assumed to adequately meet the needs of students with greater delays in expected school performance. With due respect to education agencies who direct that all special education students be educated in inclusive mainstream classrooms, a continuum of alternative placements, including intensive resource room and center-based options continue to be necessary to meet the unique needs of all students with hearing loss. Moving forward, the need for continued efforts to assess the actual adequacy of services, in addition to ITOD perception of adequacy, are necessary (Antia & Rivera, 2016).

In the preservice arena, ITODs in the current study are reporting better preparedness for this role than in previous research. Continued emphasis amongst professional organizations in the field such as the Association for College Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing must be made on how to effectively prepare teacher candidates for the complex aspects of the ITOD. Attention to preservice ITOD issues must extend into the transition to in-service. This study revealed the use of mentoring to support ITODs is gaining ground. This study found that caseload size and number of buildings served by ITODs is increasing. Efforts to provide multiple means of support, including mentorship, will be vital to reduce attrition and maintain a workforce of effective ITODs.

Study Limitations

It is unknown if the ITODs in this study served in rural or urban areas, which may have provided insight into whether or not the identified barriers of time and availability were more acute in rural areas. The survey asked respondents to consider their caseload and to report on the approximate percentage of their caseload as it applied to the various survey questions. While this is a logical way for teachers to consider the differences and similarities among their caseloads of students, the analysis required that median results be used and not an average score for each survey item which would have been easier for readers to understand. The survey choices for reporting percentages of caseload which translated into median scores also did not allow for comparisons to previous research data.

The Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss website that sent out the bimonthly update information that included this survey was sent to subscribers who were both parents and professionals. While it was stated that this survey was to be completed specifically by itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing from the United States, it is possible that there may be a minority of responses that do not represent this group. Finally, while this was an anonymous survey with no location identified by the respondents, as the ITODs were asked to evaluate their own services, it is possible that some respondents may have wanted to paint a view of their services that was skewed more positively or negatively, and not present the actual situation.

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Book Review: Leading With Intention: 8 Areas for Reflection and Planning in Your PLC at Work

By Dawn M. Denton

"Our great desire is to support, coach, and encourage others and share what we have learned" (Spiller & Power, 2019, p. v). The authors of, *Leading With Intention: 8 Areas for Reflection and Planning in Your PLC at Work,* do exactly that in this work about implementing Professional Learning Communities in schools.

Jeanne Spiller and Karen Power have been employed as teachers, administrators and superintendents, and share their knowledge and experience with leaders who wish to improve their schools. Their passion for effective leadership is evident throughout the book. Their belief in the use of PLC as the best means for improving schools is supported by examples, applicable ideas and reproducible tools to assist readers in creating personalized goals and plans for implementation.

Main Themes

As the subtitle suggests, the authors present eight areas of reflection and planning that leaders should focus on when implementing PLC in their schools. The areas include:

- Achieving focus and staying intentional- This is sometimes difficult, but these are key features of effective leadership. Avoiding distractions and the implementation of too many initiatives are pitfalls one must avoid.
- Establishing and maintaining organization- This is a must if learning is to be the focus. Without it, confusion, fear and anger will derail the efforts of a well-intentioned leader. Organization begins with clear expectations of staff and students.
- Building shared leadership- Principals who implement the PLC model ensure shared ownership of school improvement.
- Using evidence for decision making and action- Many leaders analyze data but fail to use it when planning next steps. Leaders should use data to create SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented and time bound).

- Prioritizing the student- This is achieved by maintaining high expectations of all students and staff. Student-centered decision making is expected, as opposed to appeasement and wavering positions. This leads to an equitable learning environment.
- Leading instruction- This tenant of PLC involves promoting collaboration for the purpose of improving instruction. Improved instruction is directly related to improved student learning.
- Fostering communication- School leaders develop their own communication skills in addition to building the capacity of their staff to communicate effectively. Understanding that communication is not a one-way street, leaders must develop their ability to listen as well as to respond. Work in this area includes increasing focus, understanding and clarity.
- Developing community and relationships with parents- These are crucial components of leadership success. When people understand *why* they are being asked to do something (e.g. a shared vision), they are more likely to buy into *what* they are being asked to do (e.g. policies, initiatives, etc.).

Key Quotes

The following quotations from, *Leading With Intention: 8 Areas for Reflection and Planning in Your PLC at Work* (Spiller & Power, 2019) reflect the authors' views about the importance of implementing the PLC model within schools.

"Yes, the demands on school leaders are extraordinarily challenging, but like Peter Parker, when you use your power and responsibility for the greater good, great things can happen for students." (p. 8). This quote exemplifies the authors' beliefs that students should be the first priority of every school, one of the key tenants of PLC implementation.

"We seek to build common understanding of the importance of your ability to stay focused and intentional with daily practices in creating the school you want to lead." (p. 10) This statement refers to the first area of reflection. It challenges leaders to connect ideas with action for school improvement.

"Aspects of teaching and learning in which educators are empowered to make important decisions are said to be *loose*. Elements of the PLC process that are *tight* are non-negotiables; everyone in the school is required to adhere to those elements." (p. 18). This quote speaks to the coherent nature of PLCs.

"In our experience, when leaders create a culture with very clear expectations and students and staff understand and take ownership of their learning and actions, there are higher levels of engagement and motivation." (p. 37) Here, the authors strengthen their case for using the PLC model to improve schools.

"The growing demands on school leaders that require them to respond to multiple complex issues at any given moment require a shift from a singular-leader model to a shared- or distributed-leadership model." (p. 59) This statement provides a rationale for the use of the PLC model.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Spiller and Power not only promote ideas that sound good on paper, but they support those ideas by sharing real-world experiences from their own careers. Additionally, their illustrative, hypothetical scenarios are relatable and relevant to today's principals.

The authors also provide actionable steps in each section to support leaders in developing their PLCs. This leaves little room for misinterpretation and the need to reinvent the wheel. They also provide graphic organizers and charts to assist principals in creating personalized goals and plans for implementation.

Frequent reflection points throughout the work encourage administrators to stop and consider their own practices and how the tenants of PLC could be implemented to improve conditions on their own campuses.

While the work of Spiller and Power includes many important themes, one topic noticeably absent is that of school safety. A seasoned administrator would read this with the understanding that the tenants of PLC would lead to safe school environments in general, but a mention of school safety would make for a more comprehensive work. With the rise in school violence and bullying, it would be helpful to inexperienced leaders to have more examples of how PLC implementation could decrease and prevent such occurrences.

Comparison to Fullan's Theories on Leadership

Throughout the guide, Spiller and Power refer to the importance of simultaneously providing loose and tight leadership. This idea of leaving room for creativity while enforcing non-negotiable rules and requirements is similar to Fullan's suggestion to let go of some controls while reigning in others to produce coherence (Fullan, 2001).

The authors' ideas further align with Fullan's, as evidenced by citations of his work that mention the importance of maintaining a focus on a few goals and for having high expectations of all stakeholders.

One last comparison to Fullan's theory reflects his and the authors' belief that a principal's role is to model learning while shaping conditions for others to learn for continuous improvement.

Leading With Intention: 8 Areas for Reflection and Planning in Your PLC at Work is recommended for both new and seasoned administrators who wish to develop their leadership skills by implementing the PLC model for school improvement with fidelity.

References

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. Jossey-Bass.

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Book Review: If You Don't Feed the Teachers, They Eat the Students!

By Jovana Maximilien Berrouet

This book is for anyone who believes that teaching is an essential profession and is filled with tools, recipes, and advice for any leader. It reminds leaders to self-reflect and forces them to understand what it means to be a great leader. Significant points in the book include having a compelling vision and mission, possessing excellent communication skills, employing patience, kindness, and passion daily, taking care of yourself, never stop dreaming and imagining and putting the staff and students at the heart of all you do.

Connors uses a plethora of acronyms during the dining experience which include:

C.H.E.F.S.- Chief Heads Envisioning Future Successes

D.E.S.S.E.R.T.S.- Defining Experiences Structured to Support, Encourage, and Reward Teacher's Spirit

D.U.C.K.S.- Dependent Upon Criticizing and Killing Success

F.E.D.- Fueled Every Day

M.E.A.L.S.- Meaningful Experiences Affecting Long Term Success

M.I.N.T.S.- Masterful Ideas Needed to Survive

S.A.N.E. - Self-disciplined And Nurturing Enthusiasts

R.E.C.I.P.E.S.- Recognizing Everyone Contributes in Providing Educational Successes

Purpose and Thesis of Book

Neila A. Connors' philosophy is based upon Napoleon Hill's quote, "if you can conceive it and believe it-You can ACHIEVE IT." Her enthusiasm and passion for life and education are evident in her book, where she shares her personal experiences and relationships with administrators and teachers in a real, straightforward language.

Neila A. Connors was born and raised in Lenox Dale, Massachusetts, where she spent her childhood. Connors later moved to Florida to complete her undergraduate studies at St. Leo College, then attended Florida State University, where she obtained her Master's and Doctorate degrees. She is a die-hard Seminole fan and proclaims to be a lover of life, people, and learning.

During her career, Dr. Connors worked in various fields of education. She was an elementary school teacher, middle school teacher, and an administrator, working with students from Kindergarten to twelfth grade. Her love for learning, education, and children landed her a prominent position at the Florida Department of Education. She worked tirelessly coordinating the development of middle and high school curriculum frameworks; and worked with both teachers and administrators throughout the state. During her tenure as director in the Department of Education, Dr. Connors also developed and enhanced the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Programs. She also served as a professor at the Department of Middle and Secondary Education at Valdosta State University in Georgia.

Dr. Connors is a well-known published author who has contributed numerous articles and published books to support teachers and administrators in the areas of teacher advisory programs, successful counselors, positive teachers, and their characteristics and homework. Some of her popular books are S.O.S. (Success Oriented Strategies); If you don't F.E.E.D. (Fuel, Empower, Engage Daily) the students, They S.T.A.R.V.E. (Stop Trying And Reject Valuable Education); and the chosen book for this review: If you don't feed the teachers, they eat the students!

Her book uses a fine dining experience as symbolism for effective and productive leadership in schools. Although her book is not theoretically driven or uses research-based approaches to support the knowledge presented, it is heartfelt, reliable, utterly relatable. It shows passion, enthusiasm, and faith in leadership and our education system.

From the Menu, the Appetizers, the M.E.A.L.S., Fat-Free D.E.S.S.E.R.T.S., to the Check, Connors provides inspiration, support, and direction to educational leaders at all levels. She emphasizes the fact that administration is not an easy business and that they are special people and H.E.R.O.E.S. (Humans Effortlessly Revealing Opportunities for Endless Success). This book takes you a journey guaranteed to satisfy your appetite for great leadership strategies!

Main themes

The book "If you don't feed the teachers, they eat the students!" is for any person who agrees that teaching is the most important profession. It provides leaders with suggestions, advice, and ideas to

implement by using the analogy of a restaurant dining experience where each chapter has a specific theme and purpose.

Connors begins the book with "Whetting Your Appetite-The Menu, Please," by asking administrators to reflect and analyze the type of leader they are. She provides a list of qualities that well-adjusted leaders who are C.H.E.F.S. (Chief Heads Envisioning Future Successes), must have, such as 1- cares and is concerned for others; 2- desires to be successful; 3- is able to handle stress; has a general feeling of good health; thinks logically; and has fun.

In the next part of the dining experience, "The Need to Feed," Connors emphasizes that great leaders treat their teachers with respect, recognize that teachers make invaluable contributions to the school and gather teachers as their allies to make magic happen. They also understand the need to feed their teachers by providing them with the opportunity to become more knowledgeable in their profession through professional development and feeding them actual snacks and meals during meetings, monthly birthdays, and more. Leaders use teachers as resources to 1- serve as solution finders; 2- provide feedback; 3- spread the good word; 4- share their talents; 5 provide students. Feeding teachers makes them feel valued and appreciated!

Connors also suggests that teachers take the time to appreciate, applaud, and support great leaders. Support systems for all stakeholders are crucial in building a strong community at a school.

The next section in the dining experience focuses on "Creating the Ambience- Preparing to Dine," Connors reminds us that having a positive school environment where the leaders work diligently to create an ambiance where the staff wants to be is imperative. She explains that teachers must be F.E.D. (Fueled Every Day) to want to come to school, participate in different collaboration teams, and utilize their skills to make the learning experience one to remember. Great leaders focus on school climate and staff morale; they ensure that their school is physically, intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically safe for all; they believe in the power of change, open communication; and that using a positive attitude creates a climate that is enjoyed by all.

The hearty party of a dining experience is having the actual meal, the main course, and leadership that is not possible without "The Administrator as a Master Chef." According to Connors, a great leader is like a master chef who spends time preparing, planning, and visioning before implementing or cooking anything. They have a vision and mission and carry them throughout their career. Connors suggests that great C.H.E.F.S. exhibit the following P's: positive attitudes, patience, purpose, passion, present, prepared, persistence, proactive, and productive.

What's an exceptional dining experience without the M.E.A.L.S. (Meaningful Experiences Affecting Long Term Success) of a Great School? Connors reminds leaders that they should feed their teachers consistently using humor, celebrations, great feedback, communication, by giving them support, encouraging them to be risk-takers, empowering them, and using the 95%-5% philosophy where they

spend little time on problems but focus on finding solutions. Connors states, "In a well-fed school. High attendance is predominant, positive attitudes flourish, communication is effortless and ongoing, a sense of ownership is widespread, and community pride is evident. A well-fed school is a respectful school where everybody I.S. somebody." (p. 91)

Being a school leader is a demanding, high stress, sometimes unforgiving profession. Connors uses the analogy "If You can't Stand the Heat, Get out of the kitchen!" to remind administrators that they set the tone for dealing with stress and stressful situations. An administrator who conveys tension will create a stressed-out staff, which causes stressed-out students and parents. A caring leader takes the time to communicate with their staff, come up with solutions as a team, and provides opportunities to reduce the stress level at the school. Connors explains that there are two categories of people a leader deals with: S.A.N.E. (Self-disciplined and Nurturing Enthusiasts) who utilize strategies to deal with stress and D.U.C.K.S. (Dependent Upon Criticizing and Killing Success) who complain about things in loud and unproductive ways. Connors suggests that leaders should use their turbo buttons and become stress busters utilizing a sense of humor, fun activities, and compassion towards both S.A.N.E. and D.U.C.K.S. and help their school become a happy place.

What's an excellent dining experience without some Fat-Free D.E.S.S.E.R.T.S. (Defining Experiences Structures to Support, Encourage, and Reward Teacher's Spirit), Connors reminds leaders that employees want to feel appreciated, valued, respected and empowered. When a leader takes the time to purposefully F.E.E.D. their staff, amazing things happen at the school. For the team to consistently feel appreciated, a great administrator must make an effort and provide some fat-free DESSERTS that require little cost and time but are oh, so worth the effort. Connors delivers a list of 150 different D.E.S.S.E.R.T.S. that can be implemented at any school, some of the ideas suggested include Faculty birthday party invitations, Monthly wellness sessions, and updates, Swap classrooms/assignment for a day or week, Principal for a day, Design a faculty cookbook, Post-it-note therapy, Place a little something in each staff's mailbox, Secret Pal for year/holidays, Teachers of the month, and so much more.

Every fine dining experience must come to an end when the check comes around. In "The Check, Please," Connors acknowledges that when the check arrives, every eater must reflect whether the check reflects an exceptional dining experience or a fast food experience. She reminds leaders that they must take time to reflect on their craft and implement these strategies that will be essential to their personal and professional well-being: take care of yourself, be kind, regard change as an adventure, focus on what is best for the students, believe and depend on teams, have a compelling mission and vision, and never stop dreaming, and imagining.

Key Quotes

Connors begins each chapter of the book by using quotes from famous thinkers, singers, philosophers, and writers like Frank Sinatra, Mohandas Gandhi, Wayne Dyer, Mary Kay Ash, Helen

Keller, and her own wise words. Some of her most impactful words of wisdom noted throughout the book will challenge any reader to engage in deep thinking and reflect on their leadership skills.

"*The best teacher is the one who NEVER forgets what it's like to be a student. The best administrator is the one who NEVER forgets what it's like to be a teacher.*" (p.11). Having been both a teacher and an administrator, Connors reminds us of the importance of remembering where you came from and how you got there. Leaders need to have empathy for teachers, recognize and respect the effort they make, provide a safe, honest, flexible, and engaging work environment where they can thrive.

"*Great administrators are like great chefs. They both spend an inordinate amount of time preparing, planning, and visioning before they even begin to COOK or implement. During this time, they keep their focus on the outcomes and the clients. They continuously re-adjust, refocus, and re-evaluate their plans and efforts.*" (p.59) Dr. Connors uses this analogy to remind us that great leadership isn't a "wing it" type of job but rather a thought-provoking visionary profession. She tells us that great leaders must have a positive attitude, a pleasing personality, purpose, patience, passion, persistence, and commitment that make them the best chefs in the business.

"*Passion is like a fine dining experience, it is difficult to define, but you know when you have had one.*" (p.64) A leader with passion has a clear vision, sets examples, and lights a fire in their staff by motivating them to carry out their mission and vision. Passionate leaders fuel their teachers by helping them realize their potential and tap into their strengths and talents. By putting their heart into their careers, great leaders transfer their burning passion to the staff they are privileged to work with and inspire them.

"*The best administrators spend 5% of their time on problems and 95% on solutions. They believe that failure is not fatal, and they learn from all of life's lessons and experiences.*" (p.71). When leaders have a positive approach to challenges, they do not dwell on problems but look for solutions and use the best support system they have, their teachers. Effective leaders know that "failure is not fatal" but are part of life's lessons and experiences and a cornerstone to growth and future success.

"*In a school where the leader vigilantly serves the M.E.A.L.S.(Meaningful Experiences Affecting Long-Term Success), great occurrences happen for all involved. In a well-fed school, a high attendance is predominant, positive attitudes flourish, communication is effortless and ongoing, a sense of ownership is widespread, and community pride is evident. A well-fed school is a respectful school where everybody is somebody.*" (p.91) Great leaders remember to continuously feed their teachers with great experiences, opportunities, and ideas to motivate them and empower them to take charge. In a school where the leader feeds the teachers these fulfilling M.E.A.L.S., there is a low teacher absentee rate, more teacher buy-in, and a strong sense of school community is evident.

Strengths and weaknesses

This book is an easy read for the busiest administrator. The abundant amount of advice and strategies proposed are easily applicable in any school environment, even by the most authoritative leader. Connor uses a variety of acronyms related to a shared experience completed by all: dining at a fine establishment. Her powerful quotes by famous leaders and thinkers support her ideas and grab the reader's attention from beginning to end.

Connors carries her theme of a dining experience throughout the book and uses very colorful analogies to grab the reader's attention and allows them to create a vivid image of each step of the meal from the Menu to the after dinner M.I.N.T.S. (Masterful Ideas Needed to Survive). She provides the reader with ample opportunities to reflect on their own practice and makes this excellent dining experience an opportunity not to be missed. Her enthusiasm, expertise, and passion for leadership, teachers, and education is evident in the text she uses to convey her advice. Dr. Connors wants to engage every type of leader on embarking on her fine dining experience, leaving you longing for more.

While the book presents many strengths, it also lacks theoretical support and research-based evidence. Connors uses her own past experiences with the education world to provide these logical and utterly impactful contributions to school administration. Connors does not discuss any research-based evidence to support her ideas but rather applies quotes from famous thinkers when deemed necessary. The book is simply a guide based on her personal experiences filled with advice and easy to adopt and implement strategies.

Additionally, the book is sprinkled with a variety of acronyms. It references the stages of a pleasant dining experience often, which one can find difficult to follow and may seem very repetitive and juvenile in some cases. It would have been beneficial for Connors to introduce her numerous acronyms along with the book's setting and main themes from the beginning.

Comparison to Leading in a Culture of Change by Michael Fullan

While "If you don't feed the teachers, they eat the students!, is a long list of advice, shared knowledge and best practices provided by Connors personal experience with the education world, "Leading in a Culture of Change" by Michael Fullan is a research-based theoretical approach to leadership based on five core competencies: moral purpose, understanding change, cultivating relationships, sharing knowledge, and coherence making through the application of energy, enthusiasm, and hope to make more good things happen.

Connors's literary approach is fun, easy to read, and simplistic, while Fullan uses a more technical composition, which mandates more concentration and attention from the reader. While Connors uses many quotes from famous philosophers to support her main points, Fullan compares leadership in the business world using data and case studies from successful companies and the leadership in

schools. He emphasizes that great leaders adapt to change, and cultivate potential leaders taking pride in their jobs.

Although the two books are entirely different, they both rely on the fact that customer satisfaction is primordial. Connors uses the analogy of an excellent dining experience to establish that you must create an experience that will satisfy the palette of all your customers. Fullan uses data supported by case studies in school districts and corporations to note that at the heart of any business entity, school or cooperation is a valued customer (parents, teachers, students, and the community).

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Book Review: Smart Leaders Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results

By Sarojanie Samlal

Abstract

The mindset of the leader is key to the success of the team; this is the jist of what Roger Schwarz explains in his book, *Smart Leaders Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results*. Schwarz is a recognized thought leader in team leadership and improving team effectiveness. He achieves this by helping leaders change from a unilateral control mindset to a mutual learning mindset. This approach results in higher quality decisions, shorter implementation time, and a greater commitment and trust from team members. Schwarz has found that while 98% of leaders "espouse openness, cooperation and the sharing of accountability between peer members of a team" their actions "seem to be guided by the opposite mindset" (Schwarz, 2016, p. 6).

Since team members should all be viewed as leaders, the mutual learning mindset can be applied to a singular leader as well as a team. Schwarz dedicates an entire chapter to dealing with common team challenges by using the mutual learning approach and drives home his message that all leaders must change from a unilateral control mindset to a mutual learning mindset in order to improve results.

Main Themes

The Unilateral Control Mindset

Mindset is a set of core values and assumptions from which individuals and groups operate. Traditionally, when people think of a leader they picture the person who has the greatest authority. Without consciously being aware of it, they equate leadership with the right to make all decisions for the group. Schwarz (2013) refers to this perception as the "one leader in the room" (p.3). Leaders in this situation are omnipotent and omnipresent, but are not as effective as they want to be. These leaders believe that it is their job to hold each team member accountable. They attempt to prevent friction between team members by acting as the go-between and cutting off a necessary communication link. Unilateral leaders believe that their actions are for the good of the team. However, this behavior actually undermines the power of the team since members are not accountable to each other. The decision making process involves these leaders convincing their teams of the best approach to issues, since they unconsciously believe that it is the most efficient option and they know what is best for the group. Team members go along with what the leader says because they have been conditioned to assume that is the formal leader's job; it is what he gets paid to do.

The Mutual Learning Mindset

With the mutual learning mindset, it is still the leader's ultimate responsibility for how decisions are made, but the control is spread around the room. Team leadership becomes the ability to share responsibility for the team's functioning. Any member of the team has the ability to move the team forward at any time and everyone's opinion and insight is valued, since the leadership role is not rigid as with unilateral control. Since all team members have a voice, they must also be accountable to each other. When a team operates from a mutual learning mindset the whole team works from the same guiding ideas. The team shares a common purpose and the same values. Each member's input and actions contribute to the success of the whole team.

Core Values and Assumptions Generate Mutual Learning Behaviors

The first two core values of the mutual learning mindset are *transparency,* or the sharing of all relevant information, which when paired with *curiosity*, or learning what others know, think, and feel, help create a pool of understanding between the leader and the team. These in turn, lead to the third core value of the ability of each team member to make *informed choices*. Although the formal leader still maintains the responsibility of the final decision, there is greater consensus and commitment to these choices. When people make an informed choice they are also *accountable* for the choices made. This is the fourth core value. Accountability directly affects team member relationships. This is the fifth core value of *compassion*: the glue that holds all five core values together. Without a leader's compassion for their team or members compassion for each other, none of the previously mentioned attributes could apply.

The core values of the mutual learning mindset help leaders operate from five basic assumptions. The mutual learning assumptions are:

- I have information and so do others
- Each of us sees things others don't
- Differences are opportunities for learning
- People may disagree with me and still have pure motives
- I may be contributing to the problem.

These open-minded views generate mutual learning behaviors.

Mutual Learning Behaviors

Successfully changing one's mindset leads to the behaviors that promote productivity. Having a mutual learning mindset means that leaders share relevant information about a situation and find out what others are thinking. Greater trust allows members to test assumptions that are being made in order to develop solutions. Since members view the situation with the goal in mind, interests, not positions are addressed and what might have been undiscussable issues can be openly raised. The

team is therefore able to jointly design their course of action; which in turn leads to better overall performance, working relationships, and individual well-being.

Dealing with Common Challenges

Misunderstandings and miscommunication are key factors that can weaken team relationships; using the mutual learning mindset can prevent these circumstances. Team meetings are not a battleground where the leader presents the problem and the solution. When leaders approach meetings by being transparent, genuine, and compassionate, everyone is fully informed. Each member has a chance to talk and be heard. Each member's opinion is validated because the team goal is the same. This absolutely cannot be achieved if key information is withheld. A lack of transparency leads to breakdowns in communication and relationships within the team: the team ends up stuck.

Although it may seem daunting, negative body language must be confronted with curiosity and not simply ignored. Rolling eyes and knowing looks by team members may lead to incorrect assumptions and weaken the team relationship. Instead, leaders should test their inference by naming the behavior and the person who is doing it. They should calmly share what they are inferring from the behavior and ask the people involved if they are willing to share their thinking. Many leaders hesitate to take this approach for fear of creating conflict or embarrassing and further alienating team members. However, this approach, when done respectfully and with a mindset of curiosity, allows for team members to express their frustrations. Team members practice transparency and goals are more easily accomplished.

Another challenge faced by leaders involves giving feedback. Schwarz advises that when using the mutual learning mindset, feedback should be a joint venture; it is not criticism sandwiched between two compliments. Leaders need to approach feedback being open to the idea that the recipient can explain their reasoning, and the leader's mind can be changed by this reasoning. It is human nature to become defensive if criticized, however this does not lead to a positive outcome. As the leader, curiosity should rule. Specific examples should be used and names should not be avoided and leaders should always get feedback on how they are giving feedback.

A huge breakdown in trust can occur when team members talk behind each other's backs. This can be in the form of team members complaining to each other, or going to the team leader to complain about an absent individual. It is however a circumstance that cannot be avoided. The trick is using the mutual learning mindset: do not attack or allow the absent person to be attacked. If the source of the disagreement is identified and everyone's views are presented, team members will be able to differentiate between their opinions and their positions. Building strong team relationships means that even if one member is not present, their views are represented fairly.

Key Quotes

"It's as if the team is a boat with one person serving as designer, captain, navigator, and engineer at the same time and the crew merely show up and row." (Pg. 3) – This is Schwarz's description of how the unilateral control mindset works.

"Mindset is the key to changing how you lead. If you want to change the results you have to change the mindset that causes you to behave the way you do." (Pg. 17) - How a person leads is determined not by what is said, but by the core values and assumptions, both of which then affect their behavior. In order to change leadership styles, leaders must first change how they think: their mindset.

"Leadership is power with others not over others…power is not zero-sum. If you share power with others you don't lose any yourself." (Pg. 22) – Using the mutual learning mindset, goals are achieved by learning from others; each member of the team has a piece of the puzzle which can only be solved by working together.

"When you operate from this assumption, something wonderful happens- the organization contains fewer jerks." (Pg. 69) – Assumption number four (accountability) states that members may disagree with the leader and still have pure motives. This leads to healthy, productive conversations instead of a turf war and unproductive gossip.

"When your team operates from a mutual learning mindset, it can discuss difficult issues in the team without becoming defensive."(Pg. 76) – The interest of the team, not personal positions become important. Friction is not avoided by team members complaining about each other to the team leader. Everything is openly discussed without malice and solutions and misconceptions are cleared up.

"The good news is that once you address the cause of what's keep your team from engaging in full discussion with you, you won't have to worry about whether you speak first, last, or at any time." (Pg.182) – Transparency creates an atmosphere of sharing which allows all team members the opportunity to be heard.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Teamwork is a catch phrase that has been one of the greatest aspirations in industry and education. Teachers, as classroom leaders, have been provided with many strategies to instill the practice of teamwork in student groups. Administrators can use similar strategies to get grade-level teams, subject-area teams, and administrative teams to become more productive. Schwarz's book describes a great step-by-step process through which productive teamwork can be achieved. He makes a valid claim that it is necessary for leaders to break away from the one-leader-in-the-room mentality. He also points out how easy it is to slip back into that mentality when faced with challenging situations. Schwarz goes into depth explaining how to handle difficult situations in order to build trusting relationships. His solutions sound reasonable; but he admits that many leaders will prefer to avoid these situations in order to keep the peace.

Throughout history societies have been patriarchal, matriarchal, and monarchical. Humankind has witnessed the struggle for shared leadership and the fight to be respectfully heard by the rank and file. Achieving Schwarz's mutual learning mindset, although not impossible, takes constant awareness and consistent effort. Even he admits that research shows that although 98% of leaders, while speaking the language of teamwork, they act as if their word is law. *Smart Leaders Smarter Teams,* paints a beautiful picture of what can be achieved in a perfect world; reality is very different. In order for this theory to work as described, every team member needs to have a mutual learning mindset. Every team member needs to be respectfully curious when challenged. They need not become defensive when they are specifically held accountable. Each member must be fully transparent and divulge every aspect of information. Schwarz's perfect picture does not consider the variations in human personalities and other factors that constantly affect human behavior.

Comparison to Fullan

Michael Fullan's book, *Leading in a Culture of Change* is very similar to Roger Schwarz's book *Smart Leaders Smarter Teams*. Both authors provide solutions for effective leadership. They both articulate that leaders must establish core values and practices at all levels of the organization.

Fullan's framework for leadership starts with the moral purpose of the leader. While very similar to Schwarz's core values, Fullan's moral purpose is grouped with understanding change, coherence making, and knowledge creation and sharing. According to Schwatz, leaders must be transparent and share all knowledge so that team members can make informed decisions. Both authors expound the importance of trust and relationship building. Without these elements there would be breakdowns in communication within teams and the commitment that the authors aspire to, will not be achieved.

Fullan ties together his core values with the leader's energy, enthusiasm and hope which spreads to every member of the team. Schwarz, on the other hand, describes how his core values lead to certain types of behaviors. These are not behaviors of the formal team leader only, but flows from every team member, since each member is a leader in his own right. While Fullan does a better job of addressing reculturing by putting knowledge into practice, Schwarz addresses ways to handle challenging situations within the team head-on, because avoiding these challenges will weaken the team in the long run.

Both authors use examples from industry, but Fullan also includes many examples in the school environment. They do a great job of describing how to achieve their ultimate goal of increasing the commitment of team members in order to increase productivity, or according to Fullan (2001), "make more good things happen" (p. 4).

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Schwarz, R (2013). *Smart Leaders Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass

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*** Early Childhood Specialist** - Willamette Education Service District is accepting applications for multiple full-time (1.0 FTE) EI/ECSE Specialist positions with the Special Education Department's Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) program. The positions are for the 2020-2021 school year and may be based in Marion, Polk and/or Yamhill County. Successful candidates will will follow a 190-day calendar and will begin on August 21, 2020. To learn more - Click here

*** Special Ed Teacher** - The Home at Walpole seeks a Special Education Teacher for their Massachusetts Chapter 766 Special Education School, Clifford Academy. Clifford Academy provides a year-round engaging and comprehensive program focused on education, career development, recreation/fitness, and an individualized therapeutic approach.Under direction of a Principal, participate in the implementation of individualized educational programs for special needs children at varying academic levels. To learn more - Click here

*** Executive Director of Special Education** - Garland ISD seeks an Executive Director of Special Education with the following qualifications, Master's Degree, Special Education Certification, Principal/Mid-Management Certification, three (3) years' teaching experience; special education preferred, experience in successful leadership role at the District or State level, earned or in progress doctorate. To learn more - Click here

*** Special Education Teacher** - Is sought who demonstrates a commitment to the success of all SLA students and specifically to raising the academic achievement of children in high-poverty communities and/ or children with special needs. Has a desire to grow professionally and seek out new opportunities to learn; and integrity and clarity in all communications and interactions. To learn more - Click here

*** Special Education Teacher** - We are looking for highly motivated and skilled Special Education teachers to join our team at District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). DCPS serves more than 51,000 students through the e?orts of approximately 4,000 educators in 117 schools. DCPS intends to have the highest-performing, best paid, most satis?ed, and most honored educator force in the nation and a distinctive central o?ce sta? whose work supports and drives instructional excellence and significant achievement gains for DCPS students. To learn more- Click here

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