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EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS TEACHING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN



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Special Education Legal Alert

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This month's update identifies recent court decisions illustrating the multi-step analysis and equitable nature of tuition reimbursement. These two cases include the issue of transition respectively as an implicit student-specific placement provision and as an explicit age-specific IDEA requirement. For related information about these issues, see the Publications section of perryzirkel.com

In *Doe v. Newton Public Schools* (2021), the federal district court in Massachusetts addressed the tuition reimbursement claims for grades 11 and 12 of a student with autism who had generally performed well academically but had experienced increasing mental health problems culminating in a four-week hospitalization for suicidal ideation in July before grade 11. In response to the district's proposed IEP in August, which called for continued inclusion with approximately 20% in the high school's separate therapeutic program, the parents unilaterally placed him in a residential therapeutic program. For grade 12, the district's proposed IEP was for a therapeutic full-day program. The parents sought reimbursement for the full costs of the unilateral residential program for the two years.

The court ruled that the district's proposed IEP for grade 11 did not sufficiently take into account the student's therapeutic needs based on his recent mental health crisis.

The court relied on the recommendations of the treating clinicians at the summer hospitalization because the school psychologist's evaluation was a year before his mental health crisis.

The court ruled that the private residential placement reasonably addressed the student's mental health needs and that the least restrictive environment (LRE) preference was not the controlling consideration for unilateral placements.	The underlying conclusion was that the standard for unilateral placements is the substantive side of FAPE. Yet, even more implicit was the judgment that the residential, as compared to a day-school, level of the placement was not sufficiently necessary and, thus, not reimbursable.
The court ruled that the district's proposed placement in a day therapeutic program would have been appropriate except that it did not account the disruptive effect for this student to move from residential to day placement.	The court was careful to narrow its decision to the particular circumstances of this student, who was not ready for an immediate change, and the proposed IEP, which did not have any specific provisions for this transition.
The court awarded reimbursement for the tuition, but not the travel and lodging expenses, of the residential placement.	The basis for the court's limited award appeared to be the conclusion that the student needed a therapeutic day placement for the two years in question.
This decision reveals the equitable nature of tuition reimbursement cases, including (a) the multi-step FAPE analysis, with LRE only a potential major consideration for the district's proposed placement, and (b) the possible reduction in the ultimate award in light of the individual circumstances of the child and the reasonableness of both parties' choice.	

In *Perkiomen Valley School District v. R.B.* (2021), a federal district court in Pennsylvania addressed the tuition reimbursement claims for the final two years of IDEA services for a student with multiple, including intellectual, disabilities and a long history of medical difficulties. In June 2015, concluding that she was not ready to graduate and needed more vocational and independent living skills, the IEP team proposed continued transition services, including vocational experience in childcare. The parent disagreed, instead enrolling her in the Vocational Independence Program (VIP), which is a residential transition placement on the campus of a university in New Jersey. It included noncredit courses, an internship, counseling, and independent living experience. The parent continued this unilateral placement the following

<p>year after rejecting the district’s proposed IEP, which was not sufficiently changed from the one for the previous year. After the parents filed seeking tuition reimbursement, the hearing officer decided that the district’s proposed transition programs were not, and that VIP was, appropriate for the two years at issue. However, based on equitable considerations, the hearing officer did not include 50% of the second year’s tuition and the lodging or travel expenses for both years in the reimbursement order. Both parties appealed.</p>	
<p>The court agreed with the hearing officer that the district’s proposed transition program for 2015–2016 was not appropriate.</p>	<p>The primary problem was that the vocational program was limited to one career that the student did not necessarily prefer, and it lacked transportation and independent living skills.</p>
<p>The court also agreed that the district’s proposed program for 2016–17 was not appropriate.</p>	<p>The student’s preference had shifted from childcare, and this program also lacked critical experience in independent living.</p>
<p>The court also agreed that VIP met the substantive standard for appropriateness.</p>	<p>The court cited VIP’s progress toward independent living and the status of the program as primarily transition, not postsecondary, services.</p>
<p>As a matter of the equities, the court disagreed with the 50% reduction for the second year’s tuition.</p>	<p>The court concluded that the parent’s participation in the IEP process and decision to continue VIP were reasonable under the circumstances.</p>
<p>The court also disagreed with the disallowance of residential expenses.</p>	<p>The court concluded that the residential component was necessary and inextricably intertwined with the student’s non-educational needs.</p>
<p>The court partly disagreed with the hearing officer’s rulings that the travel expenses were not reimbursable, splitting between student- and parent-based trips.</p>	<p>Analogous to transportation as a related service to and from school, the trips at the start and end of—not the parent visits during—each semester were reimbursable.</p>

Again, in these relatively high-stakes reimbursement cases, this decision illustrates the latitude for determining (a) the reasonableness of the district's proposed placement and the parent's unilateral placement and, if that step is reached, (b) the equities for the scope and amount of this remedy.

Post Pandemic “Compensatory Services”

Perry A. Zirkel¹

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In March 2020, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) issued guidance declaring that upon resumption of normal school operations, “a child’s IEP team (or appropriate personnel under Section 504) must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost” (USDE, 2020, p. A-1). As the pandemic finally subsides and the new school year quickly approaches, this seeming obligation for “compensatory services” looms large, with confusion and questions predominating.

Confusion

The confusion centers on the failure to sufficiently differentiate this proactive response to learning loss referred to as “compensatory services” from the adjudicative remedy for denial of FAPE referred to often as “compensatory education” but sometimes synonymously as compensatory services. Examples of this confusion abound.

Illustrating the perspective of legal advocacy, a large law firm representing parents of students with disabilities recently posted this message to their present and potential clients:

[B]oth the United States and Pennsylvania Department of Education
have explicitly recognized that many, if not most, children with

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disabilities are entitled to some level of compensatory education to address the almost-inevitable diminishment of educational opportunities and meaningful programming during the pandemic. Skilled advocacy is more essential than ever in ensuring that appropriate compensatory education is provided to address any inadequate programming both pre-pandemic and during the pandemic (McAndrews & Connolly, 2021).

The understandable confusion extends to neutrals responsible for the IDEA’s decisional dispute resolution processes. For example, a hearing officer recently cited the federal guidance for compensatory services as the initial framework for the ultimate remedy of 80 hours of compensatory education (*Corona Norco Unified School District*, 2021). Similarly, upon determining that the district failed to implement a child’s IEP for a specified period during the pandemic, a state complaint investigator relied on the federal guidance for the ordered remedial corrective action of a delegated determination of compensatory education (*Mounds View Public School District*, 2021).

As final examples, some of the state guidance documents reflect the continuing confusion. Vermont’s (2020) evolving guidance seems to suggest that the IEP team use denial of FAPE as the standard for its determination of compensatory services, thus conflating the USDE’s proactive procedure with the IDEA’s adjudicative remedy. Although using the distinguishable label of “recovery services,” Ohio’s guidance (2020) similarly suggests that IEP teams use denial-of-FAPE indicators for its determination. Arizona’s guidance (2020) goes a step further toward regarding compensatory services as the remedy of compensatory education by allocating the determination of denial of FAPE to the school district without the necessity of an IEP team meeting.

Questions

The following FAQ illustrates key questions and tentative answers for this evolving situation. Interested individuals should consult with specialized local legal counsel in assessing these proposed answers in determining their specific choice of actions.

1. What is the relationship between the guidance provision for compensatory services (CS) and

the traditional remedy of compensatory education (CE)?

The relationship amounts to a partial analogy. Although overlapping for the commonality of being compensatory and individualized, the differences that are explained in a more detailed analysis (Zirkel, 2021) include the following:

	CS	CE
Context	specific to COVID-19	not exclusive to COVID-19
Nature	system-wide proactive procedure	third-party remedial order
Basis	learning loss	denial of FAPE
Majority Approach	regression-recoupment	qualitative or hybrid

2. What are recommendations for CS that may alleviate the current confusion?

First, use a much more clearly distinguishable term for CS, such as “COVID-19 recovery services.” Second, be careful not to over-do the analogy to CE, which can result in not only saddling IEP teams with the role of hearing officers but also over-saturating the student with services beyond the school day.

3. What are related overall considerations?

First, recognize that the latest CARES legislation provides short-term funding for addressing “learning loss” for students generally, including but not limited to those in special education. Second, realize that whatever the district does for CS does not immunize its potential liability for CE but may serve as a deduction from any CE award, depending on the specific facts of the case and the ultimate determination of the complaint investigator or adjudicator.

4. Will further federal guidance be forthcoming?

In a recent FAQ, USDE’s Office for Civil Rights (2021) announced: “The Department is aware of important questions regarding compensatory services for students with disabilities and plans

to address those in a separate guidance document” (p. *7).

5. What specific steps are suggested for districts to consider?

Local school authorities, with their legal counsel, should consider (a) whether the federal guidance and any applicable state guidance may serve as the jurisdictional basis for the IDEA’s investigative or adjudicative procedures, and, if so, whether they are likely to be persuasive?; (b) if the district decides to follow the federal guidance, whether the majority approach for the determination, which primarily relies on regression-recoupment, is most suitable for IEP teams?; and (c) is the better alternative is to have IEP teams meet promptly upon resumption of full-in person services to examine progress data, including any recoupment updates, and revise the IEP to address the child’s individual needs without any separate and supplemental CS? Exemplifying this final alternative, a recent state complaint investigation decision concluded that the federal guidance “may have raised expectations and caused some to believe that ‘compensatory services’ were mandated after COVID-19 school closures, [but] that is not the case.” Instead, distinguishing the remedy of compensatory education, this decision interpreted the federal guidance as “best . . . understood as consistent with the school’s duty to monitor student progress and revise the IEP, as appropriate” (*Student with a Disability*, 2021, p. *15).

Conclusion

The bottom-line is that special education leaders need to rely on their professional skills to avoid the confusing semantics of this unprecedented situation and to focus instead on the substantive solution. Although federal and state guidance continues to evolve, the solution ultimately is a local determination. It is a critical time for addressing the overriding question on a district by district basis—how to best use limited resources to maximize the outcomes of students with disabilities.

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Buzz from the Hub

All articles below can be accessed through the following links:

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-june2021-issue1/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-april2021-issue1/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-april2021-issue2/>

Supporting Students with the Most Intensive Needs | 3 Videos

Here are 3 new videos that highlight key resources available to support families of students with the most intensive needs at home and as they transition to and from in-school services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The videos speak directly to parents and recommend that parents share the videos (and the highlighted resources) with the team of educators and other professionals working with their child. Multiple TA&D Centers worked collaboratively to identify these resources and to create the videos.

Inclusive Social Emotional Learning for Students with Disabilities

Social-emotional learning (SEL) will be an important element in rebuilding classroom relationships when schools reopen. This multi-part package from the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) equips parents, advocates, and state policymakers with relevant resources to use, including:

- an **SEL Parent Advocacy Toolkit** to help parents understand more about the importance of social, emotional, and academic development for students with disabilities. Then parents can advocate at their child's school and district for high-quality practices and policies to support this approach; and

- An **Urgent Imperative for States: Developing Whole Child Policies to Support an Equitable Education for Students With Disabilities**

A Family Guide to Participating in the Child Outcomes Measurement Process

Parents of a young child in an early intervention or early childhood special education program want to be sure these services are helping their child develop and learn. But how can they tell if that is so? One way is to learn about the 3 “child outcomes” measured for every child who participates in such a program. This free handout from the PACER Center explains the 3 outcomes and how parents can participate in the child outcomes measurement process.

Comic Books Series Turned into Videos for Children

Want to share with children information about their disability via a video based on a comic book series? Jumo Health has quite a selection of such videos (typically 8+ minutes long) on different disabilities, including: anxiety, asthma, AD/HD, autism, childhood cancer, growth disorders, heart defects, diabetes, food allergies, OCD, sickle cell anemia, and spinal cord injury.

How to Spot Depression in Young Children

We tend to think of childhood as a time of innocence and joy, but as many as 2 to 3 percent of children from ages 6 to 12 can have serious depression.

Why Inclusion? Video Series

This video series from STEMIE (*STEM Innovation for Inclusion in Early Education*) addresses the importance of inclusion. Video 1 is called *Let's Change Attitudes and Beliefs*. Video 2 looks at *Key Characteristics of High-Quality Inclusive Education*, while Video 3 looks at the *Social Outcomes in Inclusion*.

CDC Updates and Adds to Child Care Provider Guidance on COVID-19

CDC's *Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID-19* and *Toolkit for Child Care Programs* now provide updated and additional information on vaccinations, signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children, and support for children with disabilities and special health care needs. The resources are intended for all types of child care programs, including child care

centers, family child care homes, and other child care programs. Multi-language versions can be downloaded from the “Language” tab.

ED Covid-19 Handbook: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students’ Needs

(Volume 2)

Mentioned in the first paragraph of this *Buzz*, the Department of Education’s *Roadmap* is a treasure trove of guidance for schools and communities. Examples abound of approaches used to tackle challenges such as providing schools meals, providing technological access to families who don’t have it, transporting students, or locating and reengaging students who are chronically absent. Check out the clever ways that others have gathered data from community members about their range of needs, and how they’ve engaged families in providing continuous input.

Relationship Building: A Strategy Guide for Educators

Here’s an easy-to-read 24-page guide full of strategies and considerations to help educators build strong, authentic, and trusting relationships with students and families, right from the start of the school year.

Webinar and Podcast | **Developing Data-Driven Equity Practices and Partnerships**

Using data to determine the needs of economically disadvantaged students and make good decisions about them can help provide more equitable outcomes, meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and increase opportunities for high school graduates to succeed in college and their careers. Find out how one school district put its data to use to determine what interventions were needed and by whom, the structure of the corresponding multi-level system of support, and clear levels of support for academic, attendance, and discipline issues.

Webinar | **Guidance for State and Local Leaders on Flexible Options to Increase and Support the Special Education Pipeline**

The new American Rescue Plan Act funding comes with tremendous flexibility, and thus, tremendous potential for local education leaders. This archived webinar, held May 4, 2021 and hosted by the Council for Exceptional Children, is 1 hour-plus long, and features “thought leaders” discussing how the ARP can be used to increase and support special education.

People with Diverse Abilities: Perception is Reality

Dr. Gregory S. Koons

The following article summarizes the importance of people first language and suggests a new approach to this movement with the term “people with diverse abilities”. References are included that focus on the implementation of school leadership teams to address equity.

People with Diverse Abilities: Perception is Reality

The recent pandemic has posed numerous challenges within the world of education, and the future implications on the students we serve, although unknown, will be insurmountable. Consequently, as educators, we are up for the challenge and have circled around creative technological solutions to provide opportunities to foster student success. When students return to our schools within this “new normal,” we will be better equipped to provide differentiated instruction while being sensitive to individualized student needs. The following article focuses on equity and the diverse abilities that each student brings to the table for the betterment of our society as a whole.

In a highly recognized article by Kathie Snow, entitled “People First Language,” the author stresses that “people with disabilities are people, first” (Snow, 2009). The People First movement has changed the lens in which we view the term disability. After reflecting on this concept, let’s propose the following modification, “people with *diverse* abilities.” In the United States, we are thankful for our countless freedoms and value the unique abilities that each individual contributes to our nation. We continue to strive for equity amongst societal and political pressures. Snow makes a critical statement regarding “a new paradigm” shift and the lens through which we view the term disability (Snow, 2009, p. 3). Evolving through this pandemic

will continue to be a challenge, and a humanitarian obligation exists to further refine the paradigm lens with a clear focus on the diverse abilities that make each person unique.

In order to implement this new paradigm that centers on diverse abilities, the school culture needs to also shift into a mindset around equity. In a book, entitled *Leading for Equity*, Childress et al. (2016) address the concept of creating an equity-focused culture. The text includes a call to action that was launched by school-based teams for the implementation of systemic equity plans. “We have to develop groups that can lead for equity in an informal way in schools and workplaces. We have to build the critical mass of awareness and leadership in each building.” (Childress et al., 2016, p. 129).

As school leadership teams focus on awareness, it is imperative that they first identify the existing perceptions that exist within their schools. Johnson (2005) focused on community perceptions in a book, entitled *Sustaining Change in Schools*. In this text, the author stresses that “...quality is a shifting target defined by people’s perceptions.” (Johnson, 2005, p. 5). The author offers that there is an emotional side of change and people are often uncomfortable with change. Perception is reality, and in order to change the reality, we must first focus on the perception. Words are important and can make or break a student at any moment in time. Using people first language can transform school and community cultures and help to remove the negative perceptions of students with diverse abilities.

The use of people first language is imperative as we move forward as an educational community for the betterment of society. Every person is unique and deserving of a high quality of life. Similar to the ripples that are created by a casted stone in the water, our words can have the same impact as they resonate through our educational communities. Consider this a challenge for the creation of leadership teams with a call to action for the advancement of people with diverse abilities. As stated by Abraham Lincoln, “The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew” (Lincoln, 2011).

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Dr. Gregory S. Koons

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Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Family Challenges

Adriana Insignares

Abstract

In the regular scheme of things, parents are to raise their children, teach them well, provide guidance for the future, and allow them to live independent lives. For families with autistic children, this mind frame shifts. The life they thought their child would have no longer exists with the learning of a diagnosis. Families are the primary caregiver to a child with autism. This comes with heightened responsibility, worry, anxiety, and stress. Caregivers must learn new forms of communication, new techniques for social engagement, and begin researching therapy options. These children with autism grow up to be adults and now the caregivers must prepare for the day the now adult must graduate high school and begin an independent lifestyle. In addition with tackling aggressive behaviors, families also face public judgement. This literature review goes deeper into these challenges.

Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Family Challenges

As People on the Autism Spectrum approach adulthood, external support often diminishes and family members become the main source of support (Happé and Charlton, 2012; Howlin and Moss, 2012). This article shows how the increased responsibility can lead to stress within the family. These families must be restricted from normal everyday activities such as family days out and holidays (Hutton 2005). In addition, autistic adults are experiencing mental health problems common with their family members. These researchers interviewed 26 families of autistic adults and found parental emotional distress was noticeable and was associated with lack needs being met (Krauss 2005). Many of these individuals expressed there was lack of planning for their relatives' future and little to no services provided for this. Many parents compared those who lived in family homes versus those who lives in residential care with those whose relatives lived with them experiencing daily stress. On the other hand, those who had family members in

resident care felt guilty for not caring for them, and wondered daily if their needs were being met. Bitsika and Sharpley (2004) reported that 85% of the parents of autistic children in their sample were clinically depressed, further reinforcing how important mental health needs of family members for autistic adults are.

There is a gap in services and little to no assistance or guidance in future planning for autistic adults. In many instances, caregivers can often be unprepared to find services until the day they are unable to continue providing care (Farley 2014). When this occurs, siblings or other family members must become the primary caregiver. This means the stress and anxiety gets passed on to another individual. Many siblings of autistic individuals reported they find themselves isolated with stressful life conditions and limit their own social lives which is due to their caring role (Benderix and Sivberg 2007). The research found how the lack of preparedness of the autistic individual and their families led to even a high suicide rate for ASD adults.

In another article from 2015, it stated that autistic adults had the lowest rate of independent living (19%) compared to their peers with disabilities. Bricklin 2016 states that too many adults with ASD and their parents are resource poor. This means they are competing with single moms on welfare, people with mental illness, people with developmental disabilities, people with physical limitations and the elderly for affordable house. Also, residential funding is on the decline while the number of ASD adults are rising.

Unfortunately, the quality of life for autistic children hangs on the ability to continue living with them. In the cycle of life, parents are not meant to outlast their children, so what do they do to plan for once they're gone? Parents find that not only is it emotionally overwhelming, but they state there is not enough support (Roux 2015). Therapy, time, patience are all needed for providing the best support for a child with ASD. Parents are feeling burnt out and financially unstable to continue providing the adequate support. Statistically, 4 out of 10 adults with autism are disconnected from both work and secondary education which means they are home with nothing to do and nowhere to go (2015). Sadly, parents have to adjust their mindset at this point with what they thought their son or daughter's life was going to look like. Will they go to college? Get married? Have children of their own? What will they do when the parent is gone? This is difficult for a parent to have to think about and process. These concerns are some they

never thought they would have. In addition, the stressors are elevated when the adults are aggressive.

Aggression within family can be devastating for all family members. Whether this is a “normal” family, or a family who has an adult child with ASD (Mount and Dillon 2014). The adult kids are often the aggressors towards parents. This is a cause for distress’s resulting in property damage as well as injury to self and others (Lecavalier et al. 2006). These adults also react this way towards teachers and/or therapists who are trying to help. Unfortunately, the impact and aftermath of these occurrences towards parents has been largely neglected. As theory of mind, empathy towards others, reduced social cognition, and seeing others as inconsistent and unpredictable, the result is aggressive and destructive behaviors (Pouw 2013). As previously mentioned, the parents face daily challenges and feel as if though they are in a state of perpetual crisis (DeGrace 2004). The parents are known to adjust their life to accommodate their child’s behavior. These families often experience stigma, criticism, and lack of validating support therefore removing themselves from services and support groups.

Overall, these parents often only ask for a societal shift from a position of judgment to one of acceptance (Joseph 2013). The families describe many misconceptions with schools and society. They explained how children with ASD do not function well in mainstream schools because of their aggression, and not because of having ASD. They also described how ASD kids have a unique way of understanding the world therefore they must be in a setting that requires those unique responses. Families ask for support in the sense of understanding, holding judgement, inclusivity, and more (Herrema 2017). Parents have enough to worry about inside their home, they do not need the public adding stress to that. Outside support such as affordable therapy, support groups, mental health therapy for the families, would benefit these already struggling families. In addition, having more life skills coaching and independent living teaching for the already adults with autism would relieve the parents of worry for their children. Most parents want to know their child will be safe the day that they are gone, and with these supports in place many parents would feel a sense of relief.

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Video Modeling and Social Skills Acquisition: A Review of the Literature

Natalia M. Hayter

Video Modeling and Social Skills Acquisition: A Review of the Literature

Many children with autism spectrum disorder have difficulties following social expectations, or engaging in appropriate social skills as it relates to their environment. Taking the perspective of others, conversational turn taking, showing compassion or empathy, and showing interest in others are skills that often require explicit instruction to students with asd. Evidence-based strategies or interventions that target these specific social skills can help a student with autism learn how to be more independent, increase social initiations, increase academic engagement, and increase completion of vocational or daily living tasks. Collaboration with families of children with ASD to explore strategies that support the development of these skills is a critical component of student success. Video modeling (VM) is a strategy that employs the evidence-based practice of modeling to teach students expected social behaviors. This technique involves a student watching a video of an individual or peer engaging in a specific behavior or skill, and then expected to replicate the behavior in the natural environment (Wynkoop, 2016). Research indicates that video modeling has positive implications for teaching social skills to students with disabilities, and can be implemented in the classroom, clinical, or home settings.

Video Modeling and Evidence-based Practices

Video Modeling (VM) is an intervention that uses video recording and other technology to present a visual model of a targeted behavior. It is considered to be an assistive technology method, and may be implemented in conjunction with evidence-based practices such as prompting and reinforcement to increase the acquisition of the targeted skill. Video modeling can also be presented as part of social skills instruction, or with social narratives to increase the student's ability to apply what they have observed (Cox & AFIRM Team, 2018). Literature

supports the implementation of VM as a strategy to increase social skills, and will be further explored.

Video Modeling and Acquisition of Social Skills with Transition-Aged Students with Developmental Disabilities

A study by Fligger (2018) examined the effects of video modeling to provide social skills training to high school aged students with developmental disabilities. Research finds that students with developmental disabilities at the high school level are at a higher risk of not developing the appropriate social behaviors needed to transition into post-secondary living and the workforce. This may then lead to increased mental health issues, and overall decrease in quality of living for these young adults. The potential emotional strain this may cause families of young adults with developmental disabilities can also increase, therefore it is reasonable to examine the effects of video modeling as an effective strategy to improve social skills that may lead to vocational success.

Video modeling has been used to teach young adults with developmental disabilities daily living skills, such as organizing their living space, making their beds, and preparing meals (Fligger, 2018). When a student begins the transition from high school, social skills that have not been explicitly taught will create barriers as they enter adulthood which can lead to an increase in anxiety or maladaptive behaviors. A benefit of video modeling is that it allows for continual repetition with limited verbal prompting, so that students can observe, repeat, and practice until the targeted skill is acquired. Teachers can also provide modeling easily in the classroom setting, and this technique can then be transferred into the home setting to support families of children with autism. Effective adult-led or teacher-led modeling is presented systematically, and includes identifying the target behavior, modeling provided by the adult, opportunities for guided practice or role playing, and independent presentation with positive feedback or reinforcement (Fligger, 2018).

Video Modeling Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities

Many families may feel they lack support to adequately help their child with disabilities improve with academics. Students with autism require explicit, evidence-based strategies to learn skills

that may easily be acquired by non disabled peers. Video Modeling can be used as an intervention for students with learning disabilities in the classroom setting to increase academic performance. One study conducted by Boon et al. (2020) examined video-based instruction to provide differentiated support for students with learning disabilities. The researchers suggested that watching an individual perform a targeted task or skill, and successfully completing the task, will have a positive impact on the learner's self-efficacy, and lead to a high likelihood that the behavior will be replicated by the learner. (Boon et al., 2020). Overall findings from this study suggested that video modeling improved academic performance and social behaviors for the participants, which is a promising implication for future studies that examine video modeling. Families of children with disabilities often experience stress related to the difficulties their child has in the academic setting. Video modeling as an effective instructional strategy may be beneficial information for families as they work with educators to provide at home academic support for their child with autism.

Using Video Modeling to Teach Social Skills for Employment to Youth with Intellectual Disability

According to Autism Speaks (<https://www.autismspeaks.org/postsecondary-education>), about one-third of youth with autism are now attending post-secondary educational programs, which has increased over the years. However, the transition from school to the workplace comes with challenges for individuals with autism, and there is often a shift of support to increase independence. Video modeling is an effective strategy to teach students with disabilities various skills, however limited research exists to explore video modeling to teach social skills for employment (Park et al., 2020). Social skills that may be specific to the workplace may include offering assistance, responding appropriately to feedback,

and asking clarification for unclear instruction. A study conducted by Park et al. (2020) examined the use of video modeling in conjunction with a least prompt method to perform social skills related to employment. The results from the study indicated that all participants were able to show improvements in social skills with the video modeling intervention, however all participants had difficulty generalizing the skills when presented with new social situations. Educators that are supporting students that are transitioning out of high school can use video

modeling as an intervention to teach social skills, and families can be instructed on how to implement the strategies at home to provide additional repetition and practice, to increase the likelihood of generalization into real-world situations. When educators and families work together to provide support using modeling strategies to young adults with autism as they enter the workplace, the likelihood of positive outcomes for the individual increases as well.

Comparison of TAGteach and Video Modeling to Teach Daily Living Skills to Adolescents with Autism

Families of children with autism often find that there are challenges with independence as it relates to daily living skills in the home setting. Parents may overcompensate for their child's disabilities, or provide maximum support without gradually fading, which may inhibit independence and lead to prompt dependency. A study conducted by Wertalik & Kubina (2018) examined two instructional methods to increase daily living skills for adolescents with ASD. The two approaches used for this study were TAGteach and video modeling. TAGteach is an approach based on Applied Behavior Analysis that uses specifically timed, positive reinforcement of a behavior by means of an acoustical signal to let the individual know they have done something correctly. The three daily living skills that were observed in this study by Wertalik & Kubina (2018) include brushing teeth, washing face, and applying deodorant. Results of the study indicate that when both of the instructional strategies are implemented, there was an increase in completion of the targeted behaviors for all of the participants. Being able to teach daily living skills to young adults with autism, and observe their independence as they acquire the skills, is a significant milestone for many families of children with autism. Effective collaboration among educators and professionals to provide training to parents of children with autism is a critical component for success. When parents are able to effectively implement research-based strategies with guidance and support from professionals to promote independence for their child, the home environment will be conducive to positive outcomes such as improved daily living behaviors.

Effectiveness of Video Modeling and Social Narratives Provided by Mothers in Teaching Social Skills to Children with Autism

Video modeling can be used to provide explicit instruction that teaches social skills, self-help skills, and academic skills as examined in previous studies. Video modeling is often introduced and implemented by educators, clinicians, and professionals who work directly with children with autism. However, limited research explores the effectiveness of video modeling when parents are implementing the interventions. One study that does examine this, observed mothers of children with autism as they implemented video modeling to teach their child play skills. The study conducted by Besler & Kurt (2016) observed mothers of children with autism as they used VM to teach their child to build a model train using Lego bricks. The results from the study by Besler & Kurt (2016) reported that all participants were able to successfully implement video modeling as a strategy to teach play skills, with high integrity. All of the children involved were able to learn the behavior, maintain the skill, and even generalize in a natural play setting. This research provides promising evidence that video modeling is an easy and effective strategy to use for both professionals and families of children with autism to teach appropriate social and play skills in the school and home setting. Many families of children with autism often feel they lack the knowledge to assist their child and meet their unique needs, and video modeling can easily be taught and implemented in the home setting to give families a research-based method to support their child.

A similar study by Acar et al. (2017) explored the effects of mothers of children with autism using video modeling and social narratives to teach social skills. In this study by Acar et al. (2017), the parent participants were able to design and create their own social narratives specific to their child's needs, and create video images to teach social skills to their own child. The results from the study by Acar et al. (2017) reported that both video modeling and social narratives had a positive impact on teaching social skills to children with ASD, and the children were able to maintain and generalize the skills across natural settings. It was noted that video modeling was slightly more effective for the majority of the children, possibly due to the technology being of high interest to the children. Literature that explores the effectiveness of interventions being given by parents is a powerful tool to educate and involve parents about how to support their child's disability.

Based on conclusions from the literature reviewed, video modeling is an effective evidence-based strategy to teach social skills and daily living skills to students with autism spectrum disorder. Video modeling strategies can be implemented by educators, clinicians, professionals, and families of children with autism with high treatment fidelity. Furthermore, the literature supports that video modeling to improve social skills in children with ASD is enhanced when implemented in conjunction with additional evidence-based practices such as prompting, social narratives, and reinforcement.

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Family Involvement and Transition Planning for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Samantha Seymour

Transition planning for individuals with Autism is a crucial for success after high school. Adolescents with disabilities experience unique challenges when it comes to post-secondary education, and employment. To work with these individuals and set them up for success in post-secondary education, and to be functioning members of society, transition planning needs to take place. Transition planning requires coordinated set of activities that support the students as they transition out of high school. Transition planning involves the student's interests, strengths, and needs, and needs to be thought of as a collaborative approach to ensure the students transition plan is successful. A federal mandate states that transition planning for students with disabilities starts at the age of 16, with an individualized education plan. Transition planning is a difficult event in these individuals' life and takes a team approach to make sure the process goes smoothly, and an adequate plan is made to support their needs.

Historically, the involvement of families in the transition process is limited. From what we know about the transition out of high school for individuals, it needs to be a collaborative approach to be successful. Families know their child best, and having the input from them, and the expertise from the student's educators can create a plan for success. Over the years researchers have found that adult employment, and presence in post-secondary education for individuals with autism is quite low. With collaboration from the family, and the educators, it could potentially make an impact on transition planning for those individuals on the autism spectrum.

Transition Planning for Adolescents with Autism

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEIA], (2003) raised the age of transition planning from 14 years to 16 years. It also added a piece about requiring "appropriate

measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills”(IDEIA, 2013). Through federal mandates, it has increased contact between school and home. Although the new federal mandates have increased this, a significant disparity continues to exist between the federal idea regulation, and the actual application of school systems (Hetherington et al., 2010). The goal of transition planning is to support this student as they transition out of high school, so they are able to achieve measurable postsecondary outcomes, and include services they need to help reach their goals. Many IEP goals are linked to support secondary outcomes and should be based on personal strengths and interests of the student. Specifically, for students with autism spectrum disorder research has shown that the promise of transition planning services is less than sufficient (Ruble et al., 2019). In the IEP itself you should have transition goals that relate to transition planning, most of the time, it fails to integrate critical transition skills, and are often less likely to have goals that have to do with postsecondary outcomes of employment, college, living independently, or gaining skills to promote independence (Ruble et al., 2019).

Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between the student’s family involvement in the IEP team coming in transition planning. It has been found that with family involvement contributing to decisions regarding IEP goals, services, and support a student receives to prepare for the transition to adulthood is integral (Hirano et al., 2018). Although positive correlations between family and school transition planning, and how they improve post school outcomes for students with autism, we’re still seeing a lack of family involvement when it comes to the transition process. This is particularly true for non-white families, and families that come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Families and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds have reported low satisfactory when it comes to their involvement in the transition process (Hirano et al., 2018). School professionals and families both acknowledge that there is a gap in transition planning. The passive form of involvement has been documented during the IEP process for parents meeting attendance is low, but parents do wish they were more involved more than passive manner (Hirano et al., 2018). Consulting them on decisions, services, and outcomes for post-secondary schooling could possibly be the key to success.

Family Collaboration and participation in Transition Planning

Transition planning is most effective when all members of the student's team work together cooperatively. Members of the transition team should include the following factors to guide their planning. Questions should be asked during this process to support collaboration, and preparedness would include, who are the people most involved in the student's life, what agencies may benefit the individuals now, and during postsecondary education, who are all the people that will be supporting the individual, and what specific supports are needed. The answer to those questions should be the driving factor for the planning process (Roberts, 2010). In a research study done by Ruble et al. (2019) they used the collaborative model for promoting competence and success (COMPASS) which is a student-centered consultation intervention that helps promote home to school collaboration and improving IEP goal attainment for individuals with autism. The purpose of the proposed study was to increase the understanding of the impact on transition outcomes from student parent in school characteristics and involvement. Participants involved in this study were 20 special education teachers, and 20 students with ASD. The study found that parents of individuals with ASD I most likely, most frequently the ones identified responsible for implementing the transition plans that are related to post-secondary outcomes for these individuals. This finding is extremely important because the research of the above study indicates that youth with autism are less likely to participate in their own transition planning, and further report lower self-determination, including ability to feel confident in making their own decisions. In addition, parents are less likely to be involved in the transition planning and implementation plan (Ruble et al., 2019).

Hetherington et al. (2010) Stated that parent engagement, and involvement in the transition process is just as important as adolescents involvement. They identified the following issues as particularly important, those being a need for schools to encourage participation in collaboration with parents, appreciation for family context with acknowledgement of parental knowledge of their children, and parent advocacy training in order to maximize parent's knowledge of both system and rights. Schools need to work extremely closely with the families to understand the family as a whole, and work with them on the transition plan. Parents most of the time are going

to be the ones implementing the plan itself after high school and it's important for them to understand all of the steps and procedures when it comes to community services in other parts of the transition plan, or else there will be little to no follow through. Individuals with autism and their families need factual information about the complex systems of supports and funding streams that will help them in appropriately designing their individualized supports (Hagner et al., 2012). Service systems all over the country are often overlapping, fragmented, uncoordinated, and difficult for people to navigate. According to Hanger et al., (2012) many families enter the transition process not understanding the complex state and federal programs that may be necessary in supporting the transition of their son or daughter into the adult life. The study by Hagner et al., (2012) aim to assess the effectiveness of transition planning approach that empowers students with autism and their families that educates them about the transition process and helps them connect with community resources on transition readiness of youth with autism. In the research study they used a three-component intervention that consisted of structured training, individualized planning sessions, and follow up support for implementation and exploration of transition services for individuals. Not only did this study see significant increases in student and family expectations for the future but also saw significant increases in student self-determination and career decision making abilities. to study found families were more educated, and more able to follow through with the transition plan with the great depth of background knowledge they were people ticket from all of the training (Hagner et al., 2012).

Barriers to involvement in Transition Planning

In a study done by Hirano et al. (2018) they identified three barriers when it comes to transition planning for individuals with ASD. The three major categories they found were family, school, and adult services. The first category identified had to do with family in the barriers that can be created there. Some of the main themes were racism towards the student and their parents that inhibits collaboration, lack of information or accessible materials, parents proceeding professionals feel threatened when they're knowledgeable, and that services are teacher directed and based on existing programs not individualized based on student strengths, this was just naming a few. The second category has to do with the school systems, which means educators or

schools disempowering parents from being active participants in transition planning, and clear racism or discrimination, lack of accessible information, and the schools transition programming results in either late planning or values that were not aligned with the family values. The third and final barrier identified in this study was adult services disregarding students and families and their characteristics and values, and the lack of accessible information on the programs and how the systems work (Hirano et al. 2018).

When transition planning, individuals need to take into account different topic areas as they are developing their plans such as career exploration, assessing and identifying learning styles, self-advocacy, skills reasonable accommodations, and different academic supports if needed (Hirano et al., 2018). All of the key aspects that are needed to take into account to create transition plans, are skills that students with autism and their families struggle with. Being able to identify academic supports, career goals, and developing self-advocacy skills are all things that need to be worked on during the transition plan to ensure it is successful in practice after high school. Individualized, and attainable action steps should be set in place during the transition plan in the early stages so individual families can meet the student's needs. According to Roberts (2010) where many families, and schools hit barriers when creating the transition plans is by not creating adequate transition action steps to get individual to where they need to be. In the study, they identified multiple areas of need that will need to be covered in the transition plan. To get to the level the students need to be at when they are transitioning out of high school, will require action steps for them to reach their goals, so they are prepared at the end of school.

Promoting Family involvement in Transition Planning

In a study done by Field and Hoffman (1999) they found that self-determination is a huge key aspect ensuring students with disabilities live successful lives. The self-determination model they researched was a model that had five major components. The components of this plan being know yourself, value yourself, plan, act, and experience outcome in learning. Some of these are internal processing procedures that provide a foundation for acting in a self-determined manner. The others can be taught from role models within their life, whether that be teachers or family members (Field & Hoffman, 1999). Family involvement is highly important for the development

and expression of self-determination in students with disabilities. Parents can be models and model self-determined behavior for their child, and by interacting with their child and ways to promote self-determination will provide them key skills needed to transition.

In the study done by Ruble et al. (2019) they outlined the difficulty students with disabilities have with functioning skills, and to expect them to implement plans for post-secondary goals without adequate supports highlights underlying issues with the planning process. Parent's and educators need to have a strong alliance to build on the transition plans, and create a plan that the families feel comfortable in executing. Ruble et al., (2019) found that successful implementation of the transition plan, and family involvement, was based on the families need ongoing support, coaching, and parent training in order to carry out the plan. Another significant factor that can promote family involvement in the transition planning process is family centered transition planning. This is where families were able to identify post school goals, and steps needed to achieve these goals. They had input on the action steps needed, and the goals they would want to see for their child for a collaborative approach (Hagner et al., 2012). With a family centered transition planning approach, families are able to identify resources that will be required in the home, and in the community that will support not only the individual, but the parents who will be implementing the plan once the educators are out of the picture. In this study done by Hanger et al., (2019) one of them participant identified a goal of working in the film industry. His planning team, and family helped research occupations and job requirements that he might need, and they helped develop an internship opportunity in his community. The family was provided training on how to support him within the goal, and with a community educator, and with person centered approach they were able to identify skills he needed, and skills he still needed to be successful. In that situation parents reported they felt in control of his transition plan and were able to successfully implement it. Family centered transition planning is a straightforward readily implementable intervention that could have significant positive effects on family involvement with transition planning for individuals with autism (Hanger et al., 2019). Promoting family involvement is not one simple fix, it takes multiple approaches, coaching, and support to be able to involve families, and see positive outcomes.

Overall Trends in Transition Planning and Family Involvement

Transition Planning has been a long-standing challenge for those with disabilities, and specifically autism. One of the main challenges students who are in the transitioning process, is a collaborative approach involving students, parents, teachers, and community vocational rehab providers. For students with autism to successively obtain employment or postsecondary education three broad areas have been associated with successful transition planning and those things are a school, student, and parent collaboration (Ruble et al., 2019). Alliances between teachers and parents need to exist so they can work together towards the same end goal. The studies have shown that there's a lack of parent training and coaching as well as support when it comes to transition planning. For many individuals with autism and other disabilities, the parents are going to be the ones implementing the plans once they age out of school. There is a necessity for personalized relationships between both the educator's, students, and their families that is noted throughout all of the studies. Both parents and students all indicated desire for individualized and contextualized relationships rather than business like and formal (Hetherington et al., 2010).

One of the major overall trends is passive planning. In a study done by Hetherington et al., (2010) 12 out of the 13 participants or not aware of having been involved in their transition planning throughout their schooling process. In general, most students and parents have a superficial understanding of the transition plans contained within their IEP or 504 plans, and articulated specific education or career aspirations but were unable to describe how they were able to attain them (Hetherington et al., 2010). A common theme across the studies were the families not feeling adequate support, coaching, and knowledge when it came to actually executing the plan. Major barriers that were identified (school, family, adult) all contribute to family involvement when it comes to the planning process. These issues can stem from lack of information about services, disregard for student and families' unique characteristics, schools disempower parents from being active participants through discrimination, and racism, amongst many other barriers, and misconceptions (Hirano et al., 2018). Cultural sensitivity when it comes to working with families is the key to successful partnerships. Partnerships is needed, to become

allies with the educational professionals, families, and students to work together to create a transition plan that benefits not only the student, but works for the family members who will be executing the plan.

The success for students with autism when it comes to post-secondary education, and post-secondary employment options is not strong, and a major part of their potential success stems from their transition plan created from the school system. Studies have shown the success of these plans stem from the collaboration, and involvement with the family in terms of creating supports, and a cohesive plan. The family will be the ones working with the individuals after school is over and need to understand the supports and services available to them. Family collaboration with transition planning is the key to individuals with autism success for post-secondary options.

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4

Book Review: The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality

Melyssa Hogan

Abstract

Educational Leaders are aware that to be successful and effective they need to find ways to develop their professional growth. Through this book review it provides an analysis on the book written by Kristine Servais and Kellie Sanders, *The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality*. An explanation of how they designed their book that is meant for educational leaders has been provided to better assist leaders on their journey of continued growth. Through the readings and activities found in the book the leader is capable to reflect and make goals.

Keywords: intention, growth, educational leaders, training

About the Authors

Kristine Servais, together with Kellie Sanders are currently owners of Lifeline for Courageous Leadership. Together they provide leadership coaching for existing and aspiring principals and assistant principals. Prior to their work together with their online coaching they wrote *The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality*. Servais' experience prior to the book was as an associate professor of educational leadership. She also has experience as an elementary and middle school teacher, middle school assistant principal and principal, and director of field experiences for pre-service teachers. As for Sanders, she has experience as a middle school teacher, a middle school assistant principal, and an elementary school principal.

Purpose and Thesis

The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality shares with educational leaders how to design and implement a personal professional development learning plan. Therefore, its purpose is to

guide and allow leaders to create their own learning to measure knowledge, assess growth, and improve performance. It is intended for the teacher leader, beginning or practicing principal, assistant principal, district office administrator etc.

The thesis of this book is “based on the premise that our greatest learning occurs through a commitment to action” (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p. 2). Therefore, those wanting to be or those that already are in leadership positions need to really want to be in that position to fully be successful, being aware of the expectations and the skills needed.

Within the introduction of *The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality* it stated that the reader “will not grow without taking a degree of intentional risk and action” (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p.5). Then the authors went on to compare the growth and development of a leader to that of a lobster.

“We use a lobster as a metaphor for risk taking because lobsters can only grow physically if they take risks within their environment. Lobsters can only grow to the size of their outer shells. In order to grow larger, they must crack their shells and become vulnerable to their surroundings-only then will they re-grow new shells. Lobsters will go through many risk-taking cycles throughout their lives as they continue to crack open their shells, grow larger, re-grow their shells, and so on” (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p.5).

This metaphor put a new perspective to leadership, risk taking, and growth. Providing more evidence that to be a successful and effective leader one needs to be flexible and willing to change. As Fullan (2001) also mentioned when giving an analogy with the Hare and the Tortoise “people, like tortoises, have to stick their necks out to get somewhere” (p. 121).

Main Themes

The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality is designed to encourage leaders to create personal action plans and learn strategies for increasing their performance with intentionality and self-assessment. The main themes of this book are measure, assess, and improvement on

leadership. Therefore, each chapter begins with a *Learning with Intentionality* section. Here the leader is to gain knowledge of the topic of the chapter. Depending on the topic being discussed there are examples that are provided in this section. This section also utilizes the Educational Leadership Policy Standards. By doing so it provides a framework for what leaders should know and what they are be able to do.

The next section is *Caring with Intentionality*, here leadership dispositions are provided. These “Dispositions have been influential in emphasizing the underlying assumption, values, and beliefs appropriate to an education system that is dedicated to high expectations for each and every student” (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p.4). Dispositions are used to learn how to strengthen leadership attitudes and beliefs. In comparison to a reassessment for the remaining sections.

Assessing with Intentionality is the next section within the chapters. It provides a self-assessment within the current position and the experience the leader has. This section allows the leader to reflect on their strength and challenges. In which they can retake the self-assessment once the activity has been completed to measure leadership growth.

The following section in the chapter is *Growing with Intentionality*, which is designed to provide specific information and activities based on specific leadership roles. For example, District and school level administrator, Educational Leadership Professors, Leadership Candidates and Teacher Leaders. Individually selecting the role and activities that pertains to the leader. After the section on *Growing with Intentionality* there is an *Individual Leadership Action Plan* section that is based on the knowledge and activities learned throughout the chapter. Here the leader needs to review their results from the self- assessment and from the *Growing with Intentionality* section and establish goals for themselves, “Effective Leadership does not happen randomly or by accident. It is conducted with a high level of intention that what is desired can be accomplished” (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p. 2). Toward the end of each chapter, it includes leadership tools and resources for growth such as websites, resources, and additional activities.

Weak and Strong Points

One strong point that makes this book effective on leadership is the way the authors have outlined the book. For each chapter it is detailed with the same concept throughout the book, Learning with Intentionality, Caring with Intentionality, Assessing with Intentionality and concludes with Growing with Intentionality and Individual Leadership Action Plan. This consistency throughout the book allows the leader the opportunity to really learn, reflect, and grow from the process. Another strong point that this book has are the multiple hands-on activities that it offers throughout each chapter pertaining to that chapter's topic. These activities "require a high element of risk taking" (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p. 5) creating a mindset to challenge and further the leader.

One weak point to take into consideration, although this guide was intended to be completed with peers not sure if the influence of another will hinder the results. Therefore, taking into consideration the implementation of conducting the activities with peers. As Fullan (2001) mentions in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change*, "Leaders can be powerful, and so can groups, which means they can be powerfully wrong" (Fullan, 2001, p. 8). However, *The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality* does offer an emphasis on collaboration where, "successful leaders are able to engage and collaborate with others" (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p. 5). Which is another strong point as well as a key factor to leadership. But again, depending in what capacity.

Compare and Contrast

Leading in a Culture of Change and *The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality* can be compared in a few ways. Fullan (2001) speaks of moral purpose which "Moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole" (p.3). In comparison to Servais and Sanders (2012) they too emphasize on intention "intentionality" is defined as an intense energy or desire to grow exponentially from our current reality" (p.1). Therefore, being able to relate to one another and the importance of a leaders' intention.

Both books have the same perspective on relationships and partnerships. As Servais and Sanders (2012) mention, “Collaboration, relationship building, and partnership are key words in the vocabulary of every effective leader” (p. 84). Fullan (2001) states, “leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups—especially with people different than themselves. Effective leaders constantly foster purposeful interaction and problem solving, and are wary of easy consensus” (Fullan, 2001, p. 5). Both stating the importance of developing and nurturing relationships within the school and community.

One contrast that the books have is the message they are trying to convey to their readers. Fullan (2001) states that “Leaders will increase their effectiveness if they continually work on the five components of leadership—if they pursue moral purpose, understand the change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge building, and strive for coherence—with energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness” (p.11). As for Servais and Sanders they mention that leaders cannot be effective and grow if they do not take a risk. Another contrast found between both books is that Fullan provides explanations in both a business and in an educational setting. Creating a visual that schools and businesses can be compared on how they are managed or should be managed. Servais and Sanders designed their book to be a training guide as Fullan provided many case examples for explanation on certain topics.

Conclusion

When reading both books it is evident that there are many factors that lead to a successful and effective leader. Ranging from the type of leader that you are to the goals and relationships you have with your faculty and community. What has been most common factor has been the risk-taking factor. This applies to all areas of education in and out of the classroom. As William Cobbett stated, “You never know what you can do till you try”. Therefore, being aware of yourself, and seeking growth to improve your practices you are already on your way to being individually and professionally effective and with that growth an impact will be made.

Through *The Courage to Grow: Leading with Intentionality* providing guidance and training in multiple areas of leadership possess a positive impact on the educational community. The interactive activities that are suggested to be completed with a colleague or with a group provides a hands-on approach to growth. In which gratification can be observed promptly after each chapter, “Successful leaders take action that is congruent with knowledge in the best interest of students and the organization while continuously striving to self-assess, grow, and improve” (Servais & Sanders, 2012, p. 2).

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Book Review: Hacking Leadership: 10 Ways Great Leaders Create Schools That Teachers, Students, and Parents Love

Caroline Ibanez

Abstract

Hacking Leadership is a comprehensive guide for educational and administrative professionals to properly lead academic directives while preparing for potential contingencies and oppositions in educational settings. Throughout the text, readers are given proactive suggestions and recommendations, along with itemized action plans on how to best conduct the act of approach, or hacks, the authors have devised from their extensive experience in leadership settings. The authors make an observable effort to provide evidenced backed methods to aid readers in leadership endeavors. Taking the appropriate approach to ownership and leadership, leaders and administrators can foster positive, collaborative efforts between students, families, educators, and communities.

Keywords: Transparency, leadership, educators, hacks, lead learner, administrator

“Water always finds its way. It can replenish our system, power equipment, or wipe out cities. Leaders have similar properties. One may conform to the environment as water would with a cup.” With this fundamental statement, authors Joe Sanfelippo and Tony Sinanis colorfully illustrate the fluidity and duality of leadership. Leadership, alike water, can be beneficial, supportive, keystone to fostering success and achievement. But, alike water, leadership can also lead to adversity, struggle...disaster. In Hacking Leadership, Joe Sanfelippo and Tony Sinanis argue the importance of being a leader by shaping the culture, tone, and climate of the school’s community to better lead educators. This effort resonates their central premise that “A school’s leader’s objective must be to remove barriers and help transform perceived problems into opportunities and possibilities” (p.13).

The authors categorized their book into leadership sections they, contemporarily, name “hacks”. These include: Be Present and Engaged, Create C.U.L.T.U.R.E., Build Relationships, Flatten the Walls of Your School, Broadcast Student Voices, Center School Around the Children, Hire Superstars, Passion Projects for Adults, Collaborate and Learn, and Change the Mindset. The authors show great effort to fully elaborate their anecdotal definition of each “hack”, how to employ it, and how to master it. Throughout reading the ten hacks, readers can readily observe recurring themes of transparency, interconnected and cohesive learning, and the use of technology. The authors emphasize leaders need to be as transparent as possible with their administrative, educational, and facility staff. The text asserts that school leaders who are transparent with their staff are more likely to develop feelings of trust amongst collaborators. This, in turn, fosters better adherence to directives, because communities respond well to a consistent message that is clear and visible to everyone.

Referencing the contemporary works of Fullan and Marzano, Sanfelippo and Sinanis reemphasize the importance of being a “lead learner”, an administrator and an instructional leader who prioritizes on the learning of students, staff, and the community. These lead leaders should devote their time, energy, and focus on supporting and facilitating the learning of all those who surround them. As an administrator takes a lead leader role, one takes a proactive approach to ensuring each collaborator, contributor, and facet of the effort is as properly prepared as can be to appropriately follow and carry out directives. Lastly, *Hacking Leadership* perpetuates the essential utility of technology to facilitate using hacks. Peppered throughout the writing, technology is mentioned and referenced as a keystone means of support to facilitate leaders’ use of hacks. In an ever-modernizing society and culture, technological advances, mediums, and outlets remain a critical in any administrator’s need to provide, exchange, and obtain information, directives, and feedback. Given that most of the authors’ hacks are easily applied via digital mediums, they should also be noted as adaptive and essential in this time of distance learning.

Hacking Leadership provides readers with strong examples of evidence backed methods to properly overcome varying degrees and types of opposition potentially from facilities or

communities. The authors provide a detailed itinerary to how to traverse a list of possible objections one may encounter while attempting to implement each hack. Sanfelippo and Sinanis superbly illustrate the success in these scenarios by providing clear, firsthand experiences they shared throughout their tenure as leaders. In one example, the Flatten the Walls of Your School hack, a hack that entails transparency in within and without the classroom, is illustrated by Fall Creek School District. The district unveiled its Facebook page and Twitter account to the public but did so prior to launching a survey to see which platform the community utilized more frequently. To properly employ the Flatten the Walls of Your School hack, a leader or administrator must create culture that incorporates all members of the community including students, families, and educators. If one is to establish transparency by sharing the day to day operations in classrooms, Fall Creek School District needed to ensure the benefit of access would be readily and seamlessly accessible to its target users in their preferred social media outlets.

Sanfelippo and Sinanis systematically and even, analytically, structure their text. Beyond the itemized list of hacks, each hack follows a detailed action plan for administrators to employ given potential contingencies. The action plan is employed throughout the entirety of the book and is itemized as The Problem, The Hack, What You Can Do Tomorrow, Blueprint for Full Implementation, Overcoming Pushback, and The Hack in Action. As intuitively named, each item on the action plan details the authors' evidenced back way to properly implement their ten systematic approaches. Although this hack action plan is one of the authors' strong points from their book, it also shows one of the limitations in the text where legal policy and concerns should also be included.

The authors essentially list the obstacle to overcome, which hack would be best employed and why, which ways to best employ aforementioned hack and why, systems to establish and ensure its long term application by providing a long-term sustainable model, a list of potential oppositions a leader may face when employing each hack and how to adapt and overcome, and personal anecdotes or references of how this action plan previously succeeded across settings. However, one key limitation the authors should consider for future works is to entail possible legal concerns, contingencies, and repercussions an administrator may encounter or face when

employing each hack or each item in its action plan. For example, employing the Flatten the Walls of Your School hack entails transparency with the community. One way a leader may approach increasing transparency is using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, amongst others, such as the Fall Creek School District's slightly less than successful attempt. These technological advances or mediums, however, do carry a significant amount of legal consideration that must be covered and addressed before proceeding. Specifically, before a leader may post media content within intra or inter school networks, students' parents must be advised, notified, and grant consent before any such content may be posted for publication by the administrator. This can be considered a slight but significant oversight in *Hacking Leadership*. As aforementioned, the text does a super job providing a systematic approach to its solutions and potential contingencies and oppositions, but it does fail in informing an administrator of otherwise, costly, significant consequences.

Relating *Hacking Leadership* to other texts of its corresponding literature, one can venture it is a strong complement to other educational leadership books. Like *Leading in A Culture of Change* by Michael Fullan, *Hacking Leadership* educates future leaders on the evidenced backed framework on how to properly assess directives in an educational setting. Both these texts provide readers detailed guidance to work, lead, and educate students, families, educators, and the community into a unified, cohesive effort for greater learning. *Leading in A Culture of Change* focuses on the traditional, structured framework of leadership whereas *Hacking Leadership* can serve as a strong complement to engage leadership, its obstacles, and potential oppositions. In conclusion, Michael Fullan, Joe Sanfelippo, and Tony Sinanis all provide equivalently important insights into education, leadership, and their corresponding frameworks. *Hacking Leadership* is yet another great contribution to education's current literature and a worthwhile resource for current and future educators and administrators.

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Book Review: Dare to Lead

Justin Tarradell

Abstract

Brené Brown has over two decades of research experience in topics including courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. She has Bachelor's and master's degree in social work as well as a PhD in Philosophy in social work. Her book *Dare to Lead* has inspired and challenged millions of people to embrace and rumble with vulnerability in order to achieve their maximum potential and become truly courageous leaders. Her easygoing storyteller writing style allows for a read rich in contextual knowledge and real world application of expressed concepts.

Introduction, Purpose, and Thesis

Dare to Lead: Brave Work, Tough Conversations, and Whole Hearts (Brown, 2018) is a renowned book with an overall goal of increasing the number of courageous leaders in the world. The author of this text, Brené Brown, has over two decades of research experience in topics including courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. She has Bachelors and master's degree in social work as well as a PhD in Philosophy in social work. Brown clearly defines the goals for the work during the introduction portion of the book, which include her desire to share her decades of research and experience in order to produce braver and bolder leaders. Later in the introduction section, Brown details ten behaviors and cultural issues that get in the way of achieving these goals. Some examples of these issues include the avoidance of tough and honest conversations, the decreasing lack of connections and empathy in the workforce, the likelihood of humans to obsess over their faults, a lack of accountability and learning from mistakes, and an increasing desire for perfectionism (Brown, 2018). These issues are very real, very limiting, and extremely detrimental to the self-discovery process (which will be discussed later in this book review, as it is one of Brown's cornerstone ideas).

After Brown outlines the issues she has viewed through her years of experience, she goes on to outline what needs to be done about them. Brown outlines the four major skill sets that all effective leaders need to adopt; rumbling with vulnerability, living into our values, braving trust, and learning to rise (Brown, 2018). Conveniently, each of these skillsets each have a part of the book dedicated to them, with the first skill set (rumbling with vulnerability) being exponentially longer than the rest. Brown places a large emphasis on the importance of embracing vulnerability, which will be further discussed later in this review.

The purpose of this book, in simple terms, is to strengthen leadership skills and to produce more effective and self-aware leaders. Brown preaches the importance of self-discovery, self-reflection, and beginning the change process from within prior to focusing on environment, other people, or other circumstances. Specifically, effective leaders need to become intimately aware and familiar with their inner mechanisms, their vulnerabilities, their strengths, and their opportunities for growth. Throughout the book, Brown emphasizes the importance of being kind to oneself and embracing the uncomfortable nature of change and leadership. Brown firmly believes that is impossible to be an effective leader and kind to other people if the leader cannot be kind to themselves.

Main Themes

Brown outlines four major themes throughout the book: (a) Rumbling with Vulnerability, (b) Living into our Values, (c) Braving Trust, and (d) Learning to Rise (Brown, 2018).

Rumbling with Vulnerability

The first part of the book details exactly what vulnerability entails as well as some of the myths surrounding it that impacts the leadership process. The first part is the foundational cornerstone for the rest of the book; some of the most important ideas and principles are shared in this section. The first part is divided into five sections: (a) The Moment and the Myths, (b) The call to Courage, (c) The Armory, (d) Shame and Empathy, and (e) Curiosity and Grounded Confidence (Brown, 2018).

The Moment and the Myths

The first section of this chapter begins with outlining six myths that are continuously perpetuated in today's culture that impact the efficacy of leadership and minimizes the number of courageous and brave leaders in the world.

Vulnerability is Weakness – The first perpetuated myth is that being vulnerable is equal to weakness. Brown explains in the first myth that being vulnerable is courageous, brave, and necessary in order to produce an effective leader. Brown details conversations she has had throughout her years with United States military soldiers, fighter pilots, software engineers, teachers, accountants, CIA agents, CEOs, etc. about their examples of courage. None of them exist without vulnerability. (Brown, 2018)

I don't do Vulnerability – The second myth is in thinking that vulnerable situations are somehow avoidable and that humans have the choice to be put in vulnerable situations. Vulnerability occurs every day and effective leaders can *rumble* with these emotions, understand why they exist, analyze the way these emotions make them feel, analyze the behavior patterns that come after the feelings of vulnerability, and reflect upon them to make better informed decisions in the future. Pretending that vulnerability does not exist or that humans can opt to face it or not simply perpetuates letting fear dictate and drive behavior without having the ability to understand, analyze, and change the behavior process.

I can go it Alone – The third myth is in believing that external support, guidance, and help is never required when facing vulnerability. Humans are, neurobiologically, social creatures that are hardwired for connection (Brown, 2018). Leaders who take everything on themselves and face vulnerable situations alone 100% of the time are destined for failure.

You can Engineer the Uncertainty and Discomfort out of Vulnerability – The fourth myth details the efforts of some humans to engineer the discomfort out of vulnerability and the change process. Vulnerability and change are both inherently uncomfortable. Attempting to ignore these feelings or strip the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure

from these experiences will simply devalue the definition and meaning of the word courage (Brown, 2018).

Trust comes before Vulnerability – The reality is, these two concepts are interconnected and there is no direct order they should follow. Trust is needed to be vulnerable; vulnerability is needed to trust others (Brown, 2018). It is a reciprocal relationship. Trust is built over small moments of vulnerability over time. To not be vulnerable when building trust with someone is hampering the trust itself, as one must be vulnerable with someone for trust to exist in the first place.

Vulnerability is Disclosure – Brown insists that many people believe being vulnerable is equal to disclosing personal information and emotions in all cases. The reality is, being vulnerable can mean disclosing personal information, but leaders need to be aware of when these situations are appropriate.

The identification and explanation of these myths are important, as they detail why Brown believes there is a lack of brave, courageous, and vulnerable leaders in today's workforce. Identifying preexisting myths and misconceptions provided a stark contrast to the purpose and thesis of the work, which allows for supporting details to stand out, minimizing ambiguity on purpose and meaning. Brown does a thorough job at explaining why each myth is dangerous and harmful in perpetuating misconceptions about vulnerability; since the main premise of this book is accepting vulnerability, this is extremely important.

The Call to Courage

In this section, Brown details the meaning of courage and its implications on being an effective, courageous, and brave leader. Brown speaks to the need of *daring greatly* in order to be an effective and courageous leader. She later defines and compares *daring greatly* to having great resilience in the adversity of vulnerability and failure. Brown insists that bravery and courage is not the absence of fear in situations, but acknowledging these feelings of fear, doubt, and emotional insecurity and deciding to take action that is more important (Brown, 2018). Going back to the fourth myth in the previous section, it is impossible to engineer the discomfort out of adversity and vulnerability. Given that information, building courage is in facing fear and

adversity and taking the appropriate action to ensure that the leader drives the vulnerability. A poor leader allows adversity, vulnerability, and external situations dictate their own behavior. An effective leader acknowledges feelings of discomfort and controls the situations themselves. This is the major distinction made by Brown throughout this section of the work.

The Armory

The Armory, as Brown describes it, is the place where humans go to get pieces of figurative armor in moments of adversity. Brown advocates that in order for courageous leaders to embrace and rumble with vulnerability, they need to minimize the number of armor pieces they put on in moments of vulnerability. These armor pieces are being put on in the first place for self-protection; self-protection from vulnerability and uncomfortable feelings. Brown gives the example of humans being so worried about machines taking jobs from the workforce that the foundational values of empathy, vulnerability, and emotional literacy are lost in the process (Brown, 2018). Brown goes on to compare different examples of armored leadership and daring leadership (leading with courage), such as driving perfectionism instead of modeling and encouraging healthy striving, empathy, and self-compassion (Brown, 2018). Humans that lead daringly and put down the armor are truly able to analyze their feelings about a certain situation in order to change negative patterns of behavior, which supports her priorities in becoming an effective leader.

Shame and Empathy

Shame is one of the most powerful human emotions. It is an intensely painful feeling where a human may not feel like they are ever enough or like they are a failure, as Brown describes it (Brown, 2018). Brown urges us to start and continue the uncomfortable conversation around shame, as the less humans talk about it, the more control it has over everyone's lives (Brown, 2018). Brown goes on to discuss the importance of empathy, that is, understanding the underlying emotions behind a certain situation. Empathy isn't necessarily connecting to another person's experience; it's connecting to the underlying emotions surrounding that experience. Displaying empathy involves many skills that make an effective leader great, such as the ability to view different perspectives, the ability to understand feelings, the ability to not judge another,

and effective communication skills. Brown urges that all of these skills come with the prerequisite ability to understand oneself, to not judge oneself, to understand their own perspectives and emotions, which further develops her thesis of rumbling with vulnerability.

Curiosity and Grounded Confidence

In this section, Brown details the importance of enhancing grounded confidence, rather than blind, unadulterated confidence. Grounded confidence is the opposite of arrogance, which is often not built upon self-awareness and practice. Grounded confidence requires self-reflection, self-awareness, and involves the process of trial and error and failure; lots of it (Brown, 2018). A person with grounded confidence often also typically has effective curiosity skills. That is, some leaders are afraid to rumble with vulnerability or make difficult decisions because they are afraid of the lack of control from the outcomes. Brown insists that courageous leaders build up their curiosity skills so that they are comfortable with the unknown outcomes and are able to face dangerous outcomes (Brown, 2018). This section furthers Brown's main theme of rumbling with vulnerability and becoming comfortable while in uncomfortable situations.

Living into Our Values

The second part of the book demonstrates the importance of leaders sticking to their values, even in the face of adversity. Adversity, vulnerability, and failure can all make someone question their values and whether they want to stick to them during the tough times. Brown insists that all effective and courageous leaders need to outline their values and stay true to them even in the face of adversity. Brown emphasizes the importance of maintaining one's values because without these values, leaders can forget why they are in the position they are in to begin with (Brown, 2018). A leader who leads with a predetermined set of values will demonstrate consistency with facing adversity and rumbling with vulnerability. These values shouldn't contradict each other and should build off of each other to form one cohesive set of values to lead by. This part of the book further supports Brown's thesis of leading a culture of change from within through the usage of introspection to identify important key values as well as with embracing the discomfort in vulnerability while sticking true to one's core values.

Braving Trust

Trust is an extremely difficult thing to earn from another human being and as previously mentioned, it requires that both parties be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Trusting another person, by definition, requires a level of vulnerability, as a person no longer has complete control over a situation if they are involving and trusting another individual. Brown later shares an acronym that her and her team utilize to build trust: the *BRAVING Inventory*. The acronym stands for boundaries, reliability, accountability, vault, integrity, nonjudgement, and generosity (Brown, 2018). Brown insists that this inventory is an effective tool for self-reflection as a leader as well as in practice with other individuals. Brown continues to detail the importance of self-trust and self-reflection throughout the third part of the book which remains consistent with her thesis and the ultimate purpose of the book, which is in creating courageous leaders who are comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Learning to Rise

Learning to Rise is all about accepting failure as a part of the learning process and literally/figuratively rise above it. Brown describes two types of leaders, those who own their stories and failures and write their own ending, and those who allow their failures and setbacks to own and dictate them (Brown, 2018). Brown later details some faulty mechanisms that ineffective leaders when confronted with failure, those include internalizing and compiling the hurt, bouncing the hurt onto others, and numbing the hurt (Brown, 2018). Brown continues her theme of embracing the uncomfortable nature of growth by being adamant about accepting failure as a part of the growth process. It is easy to bounce or internalize the feelings that come from failure, this does not lead to an effective leader. It is difficult for a leader to allow themselves to feel failure, accept failure, reflect upon it, then develop a plan on how to learn from it and overcome it.

Key Quotes

- *“The definition of vulnerability as the emotion that we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure first emerged in my work two decades ago and*

has been validated by every study I've done since, including this research on leadership.” (Brown, 2018, p. 19)

This is one of Brown's strongest sentiments; it is a foundational quote that explicitly defines vulnerability to the audience. Being comfortable with vulnerability is the entire premise of this work and it is necessary to start the first section of the book with her definition of vulnerability.

- *“Leaders must either invest a reasonable amount of time attending to fears and feelings, or squander an unreasonable amount of time trying to manage ineffective and unproductive behaviors.” (Brown, 2018, p. 67)*

A strong quote by Brown that encapsulates the essence of embracing uncomfortable emotions and rumbling with vulnerability. An effective and courageous leader is one who is comfortable with putting in the time to feel and understand uncomfortable emotions and the impact they have on behaviors. An armored leader is one who realizes their response to feelings is ineffective and unproductive yet does nothing to address it.

- *“Empathy is not connecting to an experience, it's connecting to the emotions that underpin an experience” (Brown, 2018, p. 140)*

Empathy is necessary to becoming an effective leader. The definition of empathy is often misunderstood, as people sometimes are unable to show empathy if they have never gone through a similar situation as the other person. Brown clarifies this point and explains that empathy is in connecting with the underlying emotion, not the experience themselves. This requires courageous leaders to be willing to self-reflect and acknowledge their own emotions to better understand others, furthering her theme of embracing uncomfortable situations and increasing awareness of one's feelings.

- *“Regardless of the values you pick, daring leaders who live into their values are never silent about hard things.”* (Brown, 2018, p. 194)

Daring leaders are those who are willing to be loud and make difficult decisions when situations get tough. Brown continues to build upon her main thesis of building more courageous leaders by emphasizing the importance of living into one’s values, even in times of adversity. An effective, daring, and courageous leader is one who is willing to accept the feelings of vulnerability and stick to their values, even though being silent and acting through inaction is usually an easier choice

- *“Integrity is choosing courage over comfort; it’s choosing what’s right over what’s fun, fast, or easy; and it’s practicing your values, not just professing them.”* (Brown, 2018, p. 227)

A perfect sentiment by Brown that enforces her goals for this work, which is producing more courageous leaders. Integrity is a deeply personal quality that measures the limit to how much a human is willing to stick to their values, no matter the kind of adversity they are facing. Brown outlines the importance of sticking to one’s values in the second section of the book *Living into our Values*. A courageous leader is one who makes the difficult decisions in difficult moments, even if the alternative is easier.

- *“When we have the courage to walk into our story and own it, we get to write the ending. And when we don’t own our stories of failure, setbacks, and hurt – they own us.”* (Brown, 2018, p. 249)

This quote works well with the previous outlined quote on page 67 about leaders spending a lot of time with understanding and facing emotions. Failures and setbacks are part of life, it is truly up to the individual to determine how they take use these experiences. Brown insists that a courageous leader is one who would be willing to face failure, completely feel the emotions associated with it, and determine how the experience will be used for self-improvement.

Weak and Strong Points

Strengths

A major strength of this work comes from the compounding knowledge and experiences that all build on one another to support her main goal and thesis of the work. Brown begins with defining the basics of vulnerability as well as some myths associated with the term in the first section. Each section after that builds upon these principles of being comfortable with vulnerability; it is almost akin to a teacher using scaffolding techniques to first activate prior/background knowledge and then progressively delve into more information.

Brown's ultimate goal for this book is to introduce and reinforce values to leaders to produce generations of more courageous leaders that are capable of being connected with their inner self. Each value or topic covered, such as shame, love, failure, communication, and integrity, to name a few, are all related back to what the individual could do to improve a certain aspect of themselves and to become comfortable in uncomfortable situations. In doing so, Brown achieves her goals of increasing awareness and getting courageous leaders to shift the responsibility onto themselves, rather than deflection of blame, the wearing of the metaphorical armor, and the lack of accountability that some ineffective leaders possess.

As evidenced by the few selected quotes, Brown always ties back the particular subject to the ideas of self-reflection, awareness of emotions, and the ability to rumble with vulnerability. In this way, her sentiments are purposeful and calculated and are specifically selected to continue compounding knowledge as the book progresses.

Brown also makes substantial efforts to contextualize the values she is trying to express by providing personal life stories and situations that relate to the topics or values being discussed. Brown has described herself as an American researcher and storyteller in some of her speeches, such as her TEDxHouston talk simply titled, "*The Power of Vulnerability*." and this is evident in her style of writing. Brown repeatedly opens up about her own struggles throughout the work, which humanizes her and the work. Readers may feel more comfortable knowing that the person that has researched shame and vulnerability for over two decades experiences difficulties with these same emotions as well. For some readers, this is an excellent method of delivery, as it

allows them to gain contextual, applicable, real-world knowledge of situations to use the information in. For other readers, this style of writing could present challenges; this will be further discussed in the weak points in the next part of the review.

This is an excellent piece of work to gain different perspectives on what makes an effective leader. Many other leadership books focus on the externals of the job, such as how a leader should portray themselves, how to communicate effectively, how to prioritize tasks, how to manage time, etc. While this is all extremely useful information, Brown takes a different approach and shifts the focus of the book to what leaders can do themselves to become courageous people who are comfortable with the uncomfortable and who are willing to rumble with vulnerability. Brown believes that change and strong leadership skills come from within, and she does an excellent job at supporting her claims through scaffolding, activating prior knowledge, compounding information, and providing contextual support to apply the expressed sentiments.

Weaknesses

There are little weaknesses regarding the strength of Brown's argument, lack of supporting details, or inconsistent message throughout the entire work. As discussed in the strengths section, the work was carefully composed to build upon itself as the work progressed. The method of delivery may be difficult for some readers. Brown utilizes long-winded personal stories and situations to help contextualize information. While this is effective for some readers, it can be distracting for others. Some readers may want more of an outlined and structured approach that has clear definitions with a clear structure and chain of ideas.

Brown does an exceptional job at always relating information back to her original thesis and purpose, which is that of creating and inspiring effective and courageous leaders. To some readers, however, it may seem a bit repetitive hearing the same ideas again and again spread throughout the work. The good thing about the work is that similar ideas are expressed across different contexts and emotions, so at least the ideas are not being expressed within the same contexts again and again. Still, this repetition may not work well for all readers.

The density of the book can be intimidating for readers new to the leadership or self-improvement book genre. There is a lot of information packed in each page, all told alongside long-winded personal stories and situations from Brown's life. This isn't a work that is easily digested or an, "easy read," to say the least. This is a work that requires a length of time and energy to connect the key ideas to the contextualization provided. This isn't the type of book someone could easily pick up and read in a few days.

Compare and Contrast to other Books on Leadership

Dare to Lead (Brown, 2018) may not be written specifically for educators, but it has plenty of applications within the education field and can be compared with other books on educational leadership. Education is more so an art than it is a science. Children are incredibly diverse, can come from different backgrounds, can have different learning styles, and can all have different strengths and areas for growth. Previous research on the impacts of classroom interactions on students demonstrates an association between high-quality classroom interactions (emotional support, instructional support, and classroom organization) and student learning, effort, achievement, behavior, motivation, and engagement (Allen et al., 2013).

Where *Dare to Lead* lacks in specific classroom tips and advice, it makes up for in introspection, self-reflection, and self-realization. Once a teacher actualizes these qualities and makes them a consistent part of their practice, their day-to-day instruction may benefit as a byproduct. As Brown insisted throughout this work, it is necessary to get intimately familiar with oneself, including awareness of responses to emotions (fear, failure, shame, guilt, etc.). It is only after this process does a courageous leader gain the emotional intelligence and skills of empathy to be able to apply to other contexts.

An example of a comparable text on educational leadership is *Leading in a Culture of Change*, by Michael Fullan (2007). Fullan is an educational researcher and is known for his expertise on educational and cultural reform. Fullan's text is a comprehensive overview on his framework to become an effective leader. Fullan outlines five primary leadership components, those being moral leadership/moral purpose, understanding change, building relationships, creating and sharing knowledge, and coherence making (Fullan, 2007).

While Fullan does cover aspects of introspection and self-reflection throughout the book (namely in the first three chapters of the text), it is not nearly to the extent that Brown (2018) does in her work. Brown's entire purpose and thesis is to lead from within, to be comfortable with vulnerability, and to understand and analyze the patterns of behavior that follow uncomfortable emotions to create more emotionally intelligent and courageous leaders. Fullan (2007) does highlight moral purpose as one of his five main tenets and speaks about self-reflection and emotional intelligence, but it is part of a more holistic approach to being an effective educational leader.

Fullan's text is more of the standard educational leadership book that discusses and goes over how an administrator or other people in leadership positions can perfect their craft and become a better educational leader. Fullan's text is richer in practical knowledge that is specifically tailored to educational leadership. Brown's text, on the other hand, is broader and can be applied in different contexts. Brown's text is a bit more abstract, with much of the knowledge and applications being in the form of theoretical knowledge about oneself.

Both texts have applications in the field of educational leadership, but both texts are radically different in method of delivery, substance, and the type of knowledge shared. Both texts aren't very easily picked up and read in a day; they are both rich in information and are dense reads. However, their density is different with Brown's text being rich in contextual knowledge through the use of her storytelling and Fullan's text is rich in practical knowledge with plenty of cited educational studies that provide a wealth of information. That's not to say that Brown's text is necessarily lacking practical knowledge or that Fullan's text is lacking contextual knowledge, it's just the way both authors wrote each book to reach their audience.

These texts both have their place in regard to forming more effective educational leaders. Fullan's text is targeted more towards people who are already in positions of educational leadership, such as administrators. Since Brown's text focuses so much on each individual, it can be applied to many different contexts. People who are not already in positions of leadership can pick up Brown's text and begin practicing those individual skills that she preaches whereas it is a bit more difficult to pick up Fullan's text and immediately begin putting those skills into practice.

Conclusion

Overall, *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown is an excellent read for people looking to bolster their leadership skills. This text takes a unique approach to placing the focus on the individual rather than on attempting to control or mitigate the surroundings. Brown preaches becoming comfortable with vulnerable situations and allowing oneself to feel emotions in order to analyze the patterns of behavior that follow. This book is a good read for those who prefer contextual knowledge and personal experiences alongside bits of practical knowledge.

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Book Review: School Culture Rewired

Olivia Perez

Abstract

A review of the book *School Culture Rewired* by Steven Gruenert and Todd Whitaker provides insight from both authors who are part of the educational leadership department at Indiana University. The book was easy to read and interpret, with short chapters that discuss very specific topics on how administrators and teachers can understand and transform a school's culture. They make a clear distinction between school culture and school climate. They indicate that teachers have the power to change the direction of our school climate, and it may result in a refining of the school's culture. For example, we can shift our school climate instantly by having fun at faculty meetings that aren't supposed to be fun. The book provides surveys and questionnaires that are useful to new and experienced administrators. These activities can assess the present culture and provide an avenue to start team discussions about what changes are necessary.

Gruenert, S. & Whitaker, T. *School Culture Rewired*. Virginia: ASCD, 2015. 177pp. \$26.95.

In their book, *School Culture Rewired*, Gruenert, and Whitaker provide a guide for administrators to use when altering, modifying, or improving their school's present culture. Both authors reflect on their leadership experience at Indiana University and their participation in research. Their expertise helps the reader understand how to define, assess, and transform the school culture through practical approaches. The author's overall thesis and reason for this book are to provide a handbook that will help administrators, teachers, and staff carefully change a school's culture while being guided by what is best for the student. If you are looking for a book that offers a blueprint, framework, or methodology to change your school culture, this is not the

book for you. Unlike *Leading in a Culture of Change* by Michael Fullan (2007), who focuses on the more complex dynamics of how leadership can mold a culture through theories and frameworks. This book provides the reader with strategies to start and support the process of changing a culture.

Throughout the book's 14 chapters, the authors provide the reader with constructive questions that administrators should ask themselves before revamping a school culture. Various definitions are given that define culture itself and help decipher the difference between culture and climate. These distinctions helped me understand the significant role staff members play in the school's overall climate. A detailed breakdown is given of subcultures within the school and how they can affect staff members' interaction. These interactions will have an eventual effect on the culture of the school.

The authors discuss the importance of establishing an understanding of the present school culture. "The effectiveness of a new culture depends on the strength of the people behind the change and the strength of the pre-existing culture" (p. 5). Administrators should first assess the staff and identify what the foundation is. Data can be gathered by completing the School Culture Typology Activity in Chapter 5. The results can be used to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's culture. Chapter 6 also provides the School Culture Survey, which includes feedback on the teachers' collaboration efforts. Both surveys are helpful to foster a discussion about the plan for the improved school culture, but not necessary.

In Chapter 11, some interesting leverage points are presented that can be used throughout the year, such as ceremonies, the first day of school activities, holiday parties, or awards and recognitions. All the ideas discussed are brilliant and probably events most administrators would like to include in their daily school culture. Unfortunately, these events and celebrations are not always possible due to rigor, bell to bell instruction, and testing. Great ideas but not easily implemented!

In later chapters, detailed descriptions take us through the various subcultures commonly found in schools and how to tap into these subcultures to yield the desired results. A key suggestion the authors make is to create a school improvement team. I found the creation of the team to be

the most valuable takeaway from the book. The school culture rewiring team is an innovative idea that offers the team common ownership and commitment to work together. The members of this team should be carefully selected, and they should all have an understanding or consensus of the mission and vision of the administrative team. This group will join forces and work with other teachers and staff in building the renewed school culture.

The book was easy to read and interpret. Each short chapter discussed very specific topics on how administrators and teachers can understand and transform a school's culture. I appreciated how they differentiated between school culture and school climate. While the book may appeal mostly to administrators, it can help teachers understand why their school culture is currently in the state it is. Are you part of the problem or part of the solution? Teachers also have the power to change the direction of a school climate, and it may result in a surprising refinement of the school's culture.

Changing school culture is neither easy nor a quick fix. It takes dedication and hard work. The authors also agree and warn that changing school culture is not easily done "Rewiring a culture is like turning around an ocean liner – it takes a long time." (p. 141).

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