

NASET Special Educator e-Journal

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Special Education Legal Alert

Perry A. Zirkel

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This month's update identifies two recent court decisions that respectively illustrate the nuances of, and high stakes of, tuition reimbursement cases for increasingly severe behavioral issues. For previous monthly updates and related publications, see perryzirkel.com

On July 29, 2024, the federal district court in Maryland issued an unofficially published decision in *A.P. v. McKnight*, addressing tuition reimbursement for a residential placement. The child was a seventh grader with autism. The IEP, like those during the previous two years, provided for placement in general education at the neighborhood middle school along with separate resource-room services for 50 minutes per day. During seventh grade, his aggressive behaviors escalated, leading to increased monitoring during unstructured time and three short-term suspensions between November and March. His grades, which were for mostly advanced classes, were As and Bs. His grades dropped temporarily in the third quarter due to the assignments missed during the suspensions, but they returned to A-B level by the end of the school year due to make-up work. At the March IEP meeting for the upcoming year, the parents requested placement at the district's autism program, which was at another middle school. However, due to his progress problems being behavioral rather than academic, the rest of the team recommended the home middle school's program that focused more on social-emotional skills. During the attempts in the next few days to schedule a follow-up meeting to finalize the placement decision, the student had a serious behavioral incident at home, causing the parents to place him in an out-of-state wilderness therapy program "to avoid physical harm." Upon his discharge in late May, the wilderness program therapist recommended placement in a residential treatment program. Next, due to his escalating behavior, his parents placed him in a local hospital short-term program, which rendered a diagnosis of disruptive mood regulation disorder. Then, they placed him at a residential treatment center in Utah, which included a specialized school. The parents requested reimbursement for this unilateral placement for grade 8. After determining his primary classification was "emotional disability," the IEP team ultimately proposed a self-contained program at a regional public day school, with an interim placement during the long mutual delays at the home middle school. He was not admitted to the proposed day school program because he did not participate in an admissions interview. However, the school did not communicate the reason to the parents, who would have explained that his residential program therapist had advised against his participation due to concerns with his emotional wellbeing. The parents filed

for a due process hearing, and the administrative law judge (ALJ) decided in favor of the district. The parents appealed to federal court.

The parents argued that the district’s proposed placement was not appropriate based on *Endrew F.* in combination with Fourth Circuit case law concerning definitive proposed placements.

The court agreed with the parents, finding that (1) the proposed interim placement contradicted the district’s determination that its own programs were not reasonably calculated to address the child’s severe behavioral issues, and (2) the parents had engaged in the day school’s admissions process in good faith.

The district counter-argued that the unilateral placement lacked sufficient academic rigor & supports.

The court disagreed, concluding that the school portion of the residential program met the “reasonably calculated” standard even though it was not optimal.

This Solomon-like decision illustrates the complexities of high-stakes of residential placements in this era of inflationary behavioral and fiscal issues, with the applicable standard and its interpretation varying among jurisdictions and adjudicators.

On August 20, 2024, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an officially published decision, *J.B. v. Kyrene Elementary School District No. 28*, addressing various FAPE issues in another tuition reimbursement case. During school year 2013–14, a 13-year old with an IEP for a complex combination of diagnoses, including intellectual disability, reactive attachment disorder, fetal alcohol syndrome, dyslexia, and ADHD, exhibited various behavioral and academic problems. During the first month of school, the staff restrained him several times per the behavior intervention plan in his IEP. The IEP team met in mid-September to address these issues, and the parent announced her unilateral placement of the child in a private school. At an IEP meeting in early October the district agreed to pay for the tuition and transportation for the rest of the first quarter of the school year. At subsequent meetings, the IEP team discussed ways to transition him back to the district and agreed to extend the private placement for a month, pending reevaluation. At a meeting on December 19 to discuss the proposal reevaluation, the parent insisted on video and audio recordings rather than in-person observations of the child at the private school and refused to agree to any of the proposed testing and other evaluation procedures. Moreover, when the district presented the parent with enrollment forms, she made clear that she would not sign them until the district met her demands for the reevaluation, transition, and IEP. On the next day, she requested an independent educational evaluation at public expense. In successive prior written notices (PWNs), the district promptly denied the request and informed the parent that there would not be any further IEP meetings because the child was not currently enrolled in a district school. The parent filed for a due process hearing 6 months later. After 9 hearing sessions, the administrative law judge (ALJ) issued a 120-page decision denying all the parent’s claims. The parent appealed to the federal district court in Arizona, which affirmed the hearing officer’s decision. The parent filed an appeal with the Ninth Circuit.

First, the parent challenged the ALJ’s and the lower court’s ruling that she had refused consent for the evaluation based on her one-sided severe restrictions.	The Ninth Circuit rejected this claim, concluding that the district made reasonable efforts to obtain consent, including various concessions, and that the parent effectively refused consent by not agreeing to the proposed assessments.
Second, the parent challenged the ruling that she intended to keep the child in the private placement and litigate rather than re-enroll him in the district.	Rejecting this claim, the Ninth Circuit concluded “[the parent] refused to allow the District to conduct the very observations she demanded, which ensured that her demands could not be met and thus that she could keep [him at the private school].”
Next, the parent claimed that the district denied FAPE by refusing to prepare a new IEP for her child during his placement at the private school.	The Ninth Circuit again disagreed, ruling that the district did not violate its obligations to prepare a new IEP because the parent refused consent for the necessary reevaluation and made clear her intent to not re-enroll him in the district.
On an overlapping basis, the parent argued that the second PWN’s reason for no longer offering FAPE was the child’s enrollment status.	With a 2-to-1 vote, the Ninth Circuit panel concluded that the PWN’s reason was a procedural violation, but it amounted to harmless error because the district had the aforementioned two lawful reasons for discontinuing the IEP process.

This court decision is another illustration of the ponderous adjudication process, which in this case concerns an IEP for a school year now a decade old. The costs of this untimely decision, including attorneys' fees for each party, are tragic when compared to the alternative of maintaining a reasonable relationship via effective communication, compromise, and respect. Moreover, the issue of the obligations to students with disabilities in private schools is a thorny one, and, as the dissenting judge showed, the district's procedural violation may be impartially perceived as significantly impeding the parent's right to meaningful participation regardless of whether it harmed the child.

Buzz from the Hub

A Practical Guide for State Teams to Increase Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs

This comprehensive resource, A Practical Guide for State Teams to Increase Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs, is designed to help state leaders and advocates use data to promote more inclusive policies for young children in early care and education settings. The guide emphasizes the importance of inclusion from both human rights and equity perspectives, advocating for all children, especially those with disabilities, to have access to high-quality, inclusive early education.

https://nieer.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/nieer_research_report_template_inclusionguide_august2024_ad_1_1.pdf

StopBullying.gov

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time. StopBullying.gov provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying. Check out their tip sheet, Bullying and Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Needs, specifically for how to support youth with disabilities and special health needs.

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/sites/default/files/2017-09/bullyingtipsheet.pdf>

Want to Learn More About Technology & Youth Mental Health?

The Child Mind Institute's Technology and Youth Mental Health webinar series brings together researchers, advocates, and tech thinkers to explore crucial questions, such as: What is the relationship between social media and mental health? How can we advance research on this relationship using real world data? Click here to watch the webinars and interviews in the series <https://childmind.org/science/public-health-epidemiology/technology-youth-mental-health-series/>

My Life is Worth Living

My Life is Worth Living includes five powerful stories told over 20 episodes. In each episode, relatable teen characters wrestle with challenges that are all too familiar for many viewers and discover strategies to cope when it feels like their own thoughts are against them. Over the course of each character's journey, they realize that life is worth living. Watch the videos here. <https://mylifeisworthliving.org/>

MCH (Maternal and Child Health) Bridges: The official podcast of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP)

Episode #15: Youth Perspectives on Mental Health: Supporting the Next Generation

Three members of The Adolescent Champion Teen Advisory Council (TAC TAC), Melanie Avila, Fanta Guindo, and Yeina Han, share what adolescent and young adult mental health looks like in their communities, what they have experienced, and what needs to change. This episode talks about important concepts like positive youth development, youth-friendly services, and culturally competent care. It also identifies strategies for addressing barriers to youth seeking and accessing mental health services. Listen to this podcast episode here.

<https://mchbridges.buzzsprout.com/1837581/episodes/12824655-episode-15-youth-perspectives-on-mental-health-supporting-the-next-generation>

Parents Under Pressure: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Mental Health & Well-Being of Parents

The Surgeon General released an Advisory regarding the mental health of parents/caregivers. This Advisory recognizes the critical role of parents and caregivers in our society and the importance of both reducing their stress and protecting their mental health and well-being. It explores the unique stressors that parents and caregivers face; the impact of these stressors on the mental health and well-being of parents, caregivers, and children; and the policies, programs, and cultural shifts we need to make to allow parents and caregivers to flourish and thrive. Read the Advisory here.

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-mental-health-and-bullying-resources/>

Help Wanted: Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Workforce Needs Findings from a National Survey

The ED-funded Early Childhood Personnel Center collaborated with the National Institute for Early Education Research and recently released report findings from a national survey of the early intervention and early childhood special education workforce. The goal was to obtain a national picture of the EI/ECSE workforce's education, credentials, pre- and in-service training, and knowledge about EI and ECSE. This report summarizes the main findings from the survey. Read More

https://nieer.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/may_2024_early_intervention_and_early_childhood_special_education_workforce_needs_findings_from_a_national_survey.pdf

IEPs vs Service Plans: Everything You Need to Know!

Are you considering sending your child with special needs to a private school? More and more families are considering this as an option. However, many differences exist when it comes to sending your child with special needs to private schools. While public schools are required to offer special education services, private schools aren't. Public schools can provide learners with special needs supports and services to best meet the students' educational needs in their IEPs,

whereas private schools may offer learners Service Plans. But what is the difference between the two? Read More

<https://www.thetechadvocate.org/ieps-vs-service-plans-everything-you-need-to-know/>

Youth Employment: A Foundation for Mental Health and Well-Being

In May, the department launched a new webpage (www.dol.gov/youthmentalhealth) devoted to young people's mental health needs. Whether you're a young person, part of the workforce system, an employer, or a policymaker, everyone has a role supporting young people's well-being by helping more young people access the mental health resources they need and get into good jobs that they can build a healthy life around and thrive. The Department of Labor encourages everyone to explore the content and share with the department what they are doing in their community on this important topic by submitting their stories through their new webpage. Compiling these stories and sharing them helps spread the word about youth mental health. Contribute today (<https://www.dol.gov/general/mental-health-at-work/youth#wufoo-mc4aghb05xz2v0>), and your story may be shared on a department platform.

Involving Teens and Young Adults in Selecting Assistive Technology

This 4-page resource helps families involve teens and young adults in learning about and selecting assistive technology (AT). An important goal for older students is to understand the areas in which technology can support them in their educational and employment goals. The tip sheet encourages students to advocate for themselves, and to take an active role in selecting assistive technology to address their needs. Read More

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/involving-youth-in-selecting-assistive-tech/>

Six Global Lessons on How Family, School, and Community Engagement Can Transform Education

Stronger family, school, and community partnerships help ensure that relational trust is at the foundation of schools, and that all the actors can work together toward a shared vision of education in their communities. This shared vision of education is critical to education systems transformation. This report is the result of the participation of hundreds of students, families, school educators, and researchers who dedicated their time and energy to investigating the critical role that families and communities play in ensuring students and schools can flourish. Read More

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Final-Six-Global-Lessons_EN_24June2024_web.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions: Social Security Administration, Supplemental Security Income, and Social Security Disability Insurance – Can I work if I receive social security benefits?

This FAQ provides people with disabilities and their families an overview on social security benefits and answers common questions about these benefits and employment.

<https://leadcenter.org/resources/financial-toolkit-frequently-asked-questions/>

Summer Learning Tips to Go! Text Messaging Service

The Summer Slide is real! While we are all looking forward to the long days relaxing and making the best memories with our children, we must remember to sprinkle in some fun learning throughout our summer adventures. We found the perfect resource for families to do just that and avoid the summer learning loss! Sign up for summer learning tips sent right to your phone, in English or Spanish, from Start with a Book.

<https://www.startwithabook.org/reading-tips-text-messages>

Cartoons Available with American Sign Language

The ED-funded Bridge Multimedia now has some of children's favorite Public Broadcasting Service cartoons available in American Sign Language, thanks to ED's Office of Special Education Programs funding. Check out full episodes of "Alma's Way," "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood," and more.

<https://pbskids.org/videos/american-sign-language-full-episodes>

Unstuck: The Special Education Podcast

Discussions between two professionals related to current trends and topics affecting the world of special education. They pull from a combined 40 years in the field to share stories, insight and potential solutions.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/unstuck-the-special-education-podcast/id1604000975>

Special Education Inner Circle

The Special Education Inner Circle podcast is hosted by Catherine Whitcher, M.Ed., founder of the Master IEP Coach® Mentorship + Network. Get your notebook ready as Catherine brings you real-world strategies for everyone at the IEP table. With her family's experience in the disability community and her journey from Special Education classroom teacher to IEP expert, Catherine knows what it takes to prepare students and families for the future. Get ready to be inspired and learn actionable steps you can take immediately to change your special education experience.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/special-education-inner-circle/id1484686234>

Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Olmstead

ICYMI: On June 20th The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living and Office for Civil Rights celebrated the 25th anniversary of the landmark Olmstead v. L.C. Supreme Court decision, which ruled that unjustified segregation of people with disabilities is a form of unlawful discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

<https://www.youtube.com/live/EYsDx5ogzLc?feature=shared>

Developing Literacy Skills: Exploring Teachers' Experiences in Implementing Intervention Strategies for Public Elementary School Learners

By Erwina Pitac

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Abstract

This qualitative exploratory case study examined the experiences of public elementary school teachers in the district learning center (DLC) VI, Tacloban City Division, in implementing intervention techniques to improve reading proficiency. The study involved twenty (20) teachers from three public elementary schools in District Learning Center VI. The study utilized semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations, utilizing interview guides and observation protocols to collect the data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcripts, while interpretive and descriptive analysis were applied to observational data. The study aimed to determine effective intervention methods, common challenges, and the overall impact of the interventions on literacy advancement. The findings revealed that educators use a variety of intervention techniques, including phonics teaching, literacy centers, reading aloud, and differentiated instruction. Implementation effectiveness is hampered by issues including absenteeism, resource shortages, and time constraints. Despite the challenges, the intervention strategies helped in improving reading comprehension, motivation, engagement, and core competencies, all of which have a favorable impact on students' literacy development. Recommendations include providing support, tools, professional development, managing time constraints and absenteeism, and fostering collaborative learning communities. The study emphasizes the significance of effective intervention strategies in public elementary schools for enhancing literacy education, fostering student motivation, and promoting lifelong learning.

Key Words: *literacy development, intervention strategies, experiences of teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION

Early literacy development is essential for the learners' academic achievement and growth throughout their lives. Based on research, strong literacy skills in the early years of children have been linked to a higher likelihood of academic, social and emotional success in later years and to the learners' high level of self-confidence, and consistent engagement in learning experiences. Also, in this digital age, literacy skills are increasingly crucial for accessing and understanding online information, as well as engaging with the global community (National Institute of Literacy, 2008.) Literacy skills enable the development of knowledge, potential, and full participation in local and global society (Greenhill, 2010). Preschools with strong literacy programs are linked to less special education placements and retention among children in their later elementary years, which is positively impacting children who belong to the economically-challenged families (Yoshikawa et al., 2013).

Literacy encompasses communication skills like reading, writing, speaking, and listening, that essentially enable us to make sense of the world. This also includes skills in viewing, and symbolizing, as well as supplemental texts like print, digital, video, images, and conversations (Kennedy et al., 2012). Basic literacy involves recognition, comprehension, interpretation, production, and communication where learners can use textual and printed resources to complete this skill (Pretorius et al., 2016). However, being literate is not limited to these skills, but it largely entails the application of a broad range of flexible literacy practices, techniques, and knowledge to effectively use texts for a variety of goals within social and cultural contexts (Anstey and Bull, 2010).

The development of literacy among learners in their early years is indeed challenging to the teachers and to the Department of Education as well. The weight of its significance in shaping the learners' future academic success, their love for reading, their lifelong learning, and their readiness to face the demands of the modern life is the impetus for the educators to innovate and adopt approaches in support to the DepEd thrust that prioritizes the development and enhancement of the learners' reading proficiency or literacy as emphasized in Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) initiative. This aspires that every Filipino child should be able to read and write at their grade level (Department of Education, 2002).

The implementation of the interventions under the umbrella of ECARP is seen to have positively impacted the literacy level of the Filipino learners. Reports indicated that, 96.6 percent of Filipinos are literate (Department of Education, 2000). The United Nations Development Report (2009) as quoted in Imam (2016), highlighted that the Philippines has a high percentage of 93.4% literacy. In 2015, the rate for the youngsters was 98.2 percent as cited by Balinas, Rodriguez, Santillan & Villena (2017).

Nevertheless, these findings contradict to the studies which had shown the decline in Filipino learners' reading proficiency over the previous few years (Imam, 2016; Luz, 2007; Orencia, 2006; Selangan, 2015). Also, the study of Adriano (2015) revealed that some of the public elementary schools were not successful in the implementation of ECARP and this did not

effectively enhance the reading skills of the learners. In addition, Cristobal (2015) reported that 1.2 million Filipinos between the ages of five and fifteen do not attend school and have low literacy skills. These findings that reveal the dwindling literacy status of the Filipino learners pushed the teachers, through the mandate of the Department of Education, to implement approaches that will address the issue.

The teachers play an important role in fostering the literacy development and their behavior and communication approach significantly impacts the literacy achievement of the students (Mielonen & Paterson, 2009). Teachers are ought to actively encourage students to practice their literacy skills and ensure growth using a variety of tools, including games, audiobooks, classroom activities, and literacy programs (Pretorius et al., 2016). The role of teachers in developing literacy, which include ensuring a learner-centered environment up to the understanding and application of appropriate strategies in the classroom, is complex and challenging (Dennis & Horn, 2011). In the Philippine educational setting, teachers are observed to have ceaselessly adopted strategies that are instrumental to the development of the learners' literacy skills. However, it is undeniable that the issue on poor literacy remains (Luz, 2007). The unsuccessful implementation of the different programs aimed at literacy enhancement is attributed to different factors such as learners' background and capacity level, teaching methodologies, access to resources, and support from the students' environment (Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2012).

The mentioned challenges need to be addressed. Several studies have delved into the challenges faced by learners in developing their literacy skills. Also, there are already investigations on the problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading or in enhancing the literacy skills of the learners. However, with the continued pressing issue on poor literacy among Filipino learners, there is a need to investigate further on the experiences of the teachers in teaching reading relative to the implementation of intervention strategies and how do these impact the learners' literacy development journey. Also, since the effectiveness of literacy teaching strategies in public schools is often underexplored, there is a need to look into this matter in the lens of the teachers' experience in public elementary school setting. Understanding these challenges and experiences through the practical applications of teachers can lead to the development of better practices, interventions, and policies to support student development (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the experiences of public elementary school teachers in using intervention strategies to improve students' literacy skills in public schools. Through an exploration of these experiences, the research sought to identify effective methods, prevalent challenges, and the overall influence of these approaches on the advancement of literacy among students.

1.2. Research Questions

This study primarily aimed to explore the experiences of public elementary school teachers in implementing intervention strategies to develop the literacy skills of the learners. Specifically, this sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the intervention strategies that are usually applied by the public elementary school teachers in developing learners' literacy?
2. What are the experiences and challenges faced of teachers in implementing the intervention strategies to develop literacy skills of the learners?
3. How do the intervention strategies influence the students' literacy development?

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study holds importance for various education stakeholders, particularly in public primary schools, including policy makers, teachers, administrators, and students.

Identifying and understanding the usual intervention strategies used by teachers is essential for creating evidence-based literacy programs for public primary schools, thereby determine the best practices and areas for improvement. The direct interactions of teachers and students can reveal practical challenges and achievements that build opportunities to obtain specialized assistance and professional growth. Determining the effective strategies is instrumental in planning and implementing for literacy programs and for resource allocation. Documenting the issues faced in the implementation of intervention strategies is important in addressing the obstacles and create a supportive environment for teachers. Analyzing how the intervention strategies affect children's literacy development provides evidence of their benefits, thereby allocate more funding for effective initiatives and boost the foundation of the students' lifelong learning and academic achievements.

1.4. Scope and Limitation

This study focused on the experiences of teachers in the district learning VI of Tacloban City division in implementing intervention strategies to develop the literacy skills of the primary school learners. This included the identification of common strategies applied in literacy development, determining the common challenges that the teacher faced in the implementation, and analyzing the influence of the intervention strategies on the learners' literacy development and academic success.

The study on literacy development in elementary schools has limitations, including a focus on self-reported experiences and perceptions of teachers, geographical limitations within District Learning VI of Tacloban City Division, and a sample size of 20. The results may not accurately represent diverse experiences and practices in other districts or regions. Additionally, the data collected is primarily from teachers' perspectives, neglecting the perspectives of administrators, parents, students, and other stakeholders. The study also acknowledges variations in resources and support across public schools, which may misalign the results with other experiences. Despite these limitations, the significance of the study is not negatively impacted as it contributes to the body of knowledge on literacy development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the viewpoints of other authors and findings of the previous studies that have a significant bearing on the context of this recent investigation.

2.1. Importance of Early Literacy Education

Literacy is a vital survival skill in the 21st century, wherein its significance has been acknowledged even in previous eras when it was possible to land on a job and be involved in public discourse with scarce reading skills. Early experiences and opportunities can significantly enhance the chances of some children to learn how to read (Snow, 2017). As literacy covers reading comprehension, teachers in both private and public schools put much emphasis on the development of reading comprehension skills among learners.

Cooper et al. (2014) suggest that a child's academic success can be directly linked to pre-determining factors, including pre-reading and early reading abilities. Pre-reading skills, such as oral language, listening comprehension, phonological awareness, print skills, and alphabet knowledge, play a crucial role in providing foundational literacy competence and contributing to future academic success. Numerous studies have found that early prereading skills are predictive of later reading achievement and important targets of intervention. A 2000 analysis of 70 longitudinal studies showed a direct correlation between children's reading abilities from pre-school to second grade. Children with lower pre-reading and reading competencies in pre-school are likely to progress at a slower rate in their childhood.

Compromised reading comprehension can lead to significant negative life outcomes, such as health issues, school dropout rates, and unemployment, as evidenced by extensive research linking low reading proficiency to various negative outcomes (Batterham, et al., 2016). This is why parents and educators should understand that reading skills are the cornerstone of academic success and the development of literacy during the early years is essential (Baker, S.K., Turtura, J., & Gearin, B., 2017).

Poor performance in struggling readers, including students with learning disabilities, English language learners, and diverse reading needs, is largely due to a lack of strong foundation skills. Children entering middle school without these skills face difficulties in reading-intensive content areas like English language arts, social studies, science, and math (Zorfass & Urbano, 2008).

A high-quality early education is crucial for students' long-term academic success. It helps them understand the importance of reading and writing, motivating them to excel in their literacy development. Active engagement in the reading process allows children to use their growing knowledge and skills flexibly. A strong foundation for literacy and reading development can be developed through purposeful language and early print activities (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2003).

Reading is an ongoing process that builds upon various skills and progresses at a child's own pace. The foundations of good reading are the same for all children, regardless of gender, background, or special learning needs. Most children use the same processes, but some may need more support or instruction in specific reading skills. Children who develop basic foundational skills in language and literacy in preschool enter kindergarten ready to learn to read and write, allowing them to develop and flourish as readers on the K-12 pathway (e (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008).

The above views highlight the significance of early literacy education. The literature review emphasizes the importance of literacy in elementary education. As this study aims to identify and analyze effective intervention strategies, this is essential in drawing connections between theoretical understanding and practical approaches. Evidence-based recommendations for improving literacy outcomes, are arrived at, grounded in established research and contributing new insights to the field of literacy education.

2.2. Intervention Strategies in Literacy Development

Reading intervention strategies are interventions designed to assist students struggling with reading, addressing various reasons such as difficulty decoding words, poor comprehension skills, and low reading fluency. These strategies aim to improve students' reading skills and enhance their overall reading abilities (Lego, 2014).

2.2.1. Reading Aloud

One of the most effective strategies for literacy development is reading aloud. Reading aloud is a powerful strategy for fostering young children's literacy development. It aids in language acquisition, vocabulary growth, and fosters a love for reading. Reading exposes children to new vocabulary, sentence structures, and storylines, enhancing their language skills and enabling them to develop larger vocabularies and stronger comprehension abilities (Coyne, Zipoli, & Ruby, 2006). Reading aloud enhances a student's comprehension, memory, fluency, and pronunciation of a text, making it easier for them to retain and retain information. Reading aloud can be utilized in both classrooms and homes. Students can engage in reading together, enhancing oral communication skills. Parents can read aloud to their children before bedtime and help in fostering a love for reading and enhancing vocabulary development (Lego, 2014).

2.2.2. Phonics

Lego (2014) explained that phonics is a reading strategy that helps students understand the connection between letters and sounds. It can be taught in schools or at home to help students struggling with reading. Parents or teachers should choose a phonics program that suits their child's reading level. After choosing a curriculum, it is imperative to provide ample support to help the learner understand and become proficient. Parents can identify the letters and sounds used in the story, while guardians can encourage mistakes and practice sounding out words. Instructors can help students understand the different sounds produced by letters in the classroom through phonics lessons and practice problems.

Phonics instruction is crucial as it helps children decode unfamiliar words and build a strong foundation for reading and writing. Effective phonics instruction could improve these results by ensuring children have the necessary foundational skills for reading comprehension (Adetunji, 2017).

2.2.3. Individualized Reading Instruction

Individualized reading instruction (IRI) is a popular intervention strategy that provides targeted, tailored instruction to students struggling with reading. It is a unique approach that requires collaboration between teachers and parents to find the best strategy for each student. IRI can be highly effective in helping students improve their reading skills quickly.

In addition, in individualized teaching, a teacher focuses on a student's individual learning needs, providing personalized attention, self-paced learning, and customized teaching strategies. This approach accelerates student achievement through high-quality interactions, confidence, and reduced distractions. It also fosters a more effective and interesting learning environment, leading to improved academic performance and helping students reach their full potential by addressing their strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences. Overall, individualized teaching is a valuable approach for students (Connor, & Morrison, 2016).

2.2.4. Guided Reading

Guided reading method is a small-group teaching approach where teachers help students develop efficient techniques for understanding unfamiliar and difficult literature. This approach helps children improve fluency and understanding while meeting their individual needs. It solves the limited one-on-one time of traditional school days by offering individualized learning opportunities. The best methods involve reading texts above students' comfort levels, working with adaptable groups, and providing new tools for improving reading comprehension and abilities (Mulvahl, 2018).

Guided reading allows teachers assist a small group of students in independently reading a text, thereby foster greater control over the reading process through the development of reading strategies and aid in decoding and constructing meaning, and scaffolding their understanding (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011).

2.2.5. Partner Reading

Partner reading is a popular intervention strategy for struggling students, where a student reads aloud to a partner who helps sound out words and provides encouragement, thereby improving reading skills and fostering relationships with supportive peers (Lego, 2014).

Partner reading is a cooperative learning strategy where two students read an assigned text together, taking turns and providing feedback to monitor comprehension. It ensures accurate reading practice, promotes fluency and expression, and helps students practice reading with expression. It also provides direct opportunities for teachers to circulate in the class, listen to students read, and offer individualized instruction (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

2.2.6. Tutoring

Tutoring rooted in historical traditions that focuses on a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to skill acquisition, emphasizing one-to-one work as the ideal setting. The shift in literacy focus has shifted from skills to the social and cultural aspects of literacy activity, emphasizing the significance of contextual and community-related forces in achieving literacy. The shift in understanding literacy from a skill to a process and to a practice emphasizes the need for future directions through tutoring in enhancing literacy (Schutz & Hoffman, 2017).

Lego (2014) explained that tutoring is a valuable tool for students who require extra assistance with reading, homework, and test preparation. It aids in improving reading skills, assisting with homework and providing motivation, making it essential for struggling students.

2.2.7. Literacy Centers

Literacy centers are classroom areas where students can improve their reading skills. Common activities include word work, reading, writing, and spelling. Word work focuses on sorting words by syllables, identifying vowel sounds, and building words using magnetic letters. Reading allows students to read books at their level and work on comprehension questions. Writing helps students practice writing skills by providing prompts, story starters, and activities. Spelling centers provide activities to learn and practice new spellings (Lego, 2014).

Reading or literacy centers are ideal for classrooms as they allow children to work individually or in small groups, allowing students at different levels to complete activities based on their abilities and preferences (Tuffelmire, 2017).

2.2.8. Differentiated Instruction

Every student possesses a unique learning style, varying in comprehension and ability levels, akin to the unique fingerprint of each individual. Hence there is a need to vary instruction in order to address the learners' diverse needs. Differentiated instruction involves considering students' individual learning styles and readiness levels before designing lesson plans, benefiting a wide range of students, from those with learning disabilities to those with high ability, according to research (Weselby, 2014).

Differentiated instruction is a method where teachers customize instruction and assessment to match student characteristics, allowing all students to access the same curriculum through customized entry points, tasks, and outcomes. This approach involves strategies to differentiate content, process, and product based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, creating a more inclusive and effective learning environment by considering each student's skill level, interests, and learning preferences (Hall, Vue, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003).

Weselby (2014) further explained that differentiated instruction is proven effective for high-ability and mild to severe disabled students. It offers students more options for

learning, encourages responsibility, and increases engagement. Classrooms with differentiated lessons also report fewer discipline problems and fewer students with disabilities.

Intervention strategies in literacy development include reading aloud, phonics, individualized instruction, guided reading, partner reading, tutoring, literacy centers, and differentiated instruction. These methods address specific reading challenges like decoding difficulties, poor comprehension, and low fluency. They provide tailored support to meet individual needs and foster reading proficiency. Reading aloud improves comprehension and vocabulary, phonics builds decoding skills, and individualized instruction boosts achievement. These strategies align with research questions, exploring commonly applied techniques, teachers' experiences, and their impact on students' literacy development in public elementary schools.

2.3. Importance of Intervention Strategies in Literacy Development

Early literacy development significantly influences a child's academic success and lifelong learning, with children who develop strong literacy skills being more likely to achieve academic success. Research indicates that children with a strong literacy foundation are better prepared for formal education, performing better in reading and writing tasks, achieving higher grades, and completing more years of schooling (National Institute for Literacy, 2008).

To help struggling readers, interventions should focus on foundational skills like phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency. Multicomponent interventions should include instruction in both domains. Effective phonics instruction should extend beyond single syllable word decoding to multisyllabic decoding, using syllabication and word parts to break apart and decode longer words. This approach helps address the diverse reading needs of older struggling readers (Boarman et al., 2008).

Research suggests that individualized interventions tailored to individual student needs can be effective for elementary and secondary students who have not responded adequately to previous interventions (Denton et al., 2013).

Fundamental literacy development begins before a child enters the classroom. When inadequate support is not provided, educators can implement strategic literacy interventions in early learning classrooms to bridge educational gaps and give every child a chance to progress and achieve literacy competence. Consistent application of the intervention strategies ensures sound pedagogical practice and comprehensive opportunities for each early childhood student to thrive (Weiss, 2013).

This study emphasizes the importance of early literacy development for academic success and lifelong learning. It emphasizes foundational skills like phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency and the effectiveness of individualized interventions tailored to students' diverse reading needs. The study aimed to provide insights for practical application in public elementary schools so as to develop targeted interventions for young learners.

2.4. Experiences and Challenges Faced by Teachers in Literacy Development

Reading proficiency is a crucial skill that significantly influences an individual's academic, personal, and professional success. Reading skills are primary goals in early education, and challenges can lead to negative outcomes (Wigfield et al., 2016). In addressing the challenges, educators also implement initiatives and adopt interventions to help the learners develop their literacy skills.

Reading intervention approaches aim to improve fluency and comprehension skills in students with reading difficulties, aiming to help them achieve proficiency in fundamental academic abilities like literacy and numeracy (Hulme & Snowling, 2013). While the teachers continuously attempt to design and implement appropriate interventions for literacy development, they also encounter challenges along with the process. Recognizing these challenges is necessary for adjustments and building support.

The common challenges that teachers face in teaching reading and in literacy development are connected to learners' difficulty with alphabetic letters, pronunciation, reading complex sentences, and comprehension. They often spell per-syllables and couldn't pronounce words correctly. Also, they encountered pronunciation issues, difficulty reading complex words, long words, and reduced letters in sentences. The learners' speed in reading also affect the process. Students read slowly and repeatedly, struggling with comprehension and reading words with consonants ((Ahmad, Awang & Yunus, 2015).

Other common issues that the teacher face in literacy development are the lack of support, learners' cognitive disabilities, limited resources, workloads and increased duties. All of these affect the delivery of reading instructions (Bunce, 2010).

The literature on teachers' experiences and challenges in literacy development is crucial for understanding the challenges they face in implementing literacy interventions. Key issues include students' difficulties with alphabetic letters, pronunciation, comprehension, and reading speed, which directly impact the effectiveness of literacy strategies. Insufficient support, cognitive disabilities, limited resources, and increased workloads also underscore the need for better systemic support and resources for teachers, highlighting the need for better support and resources for teachers.

This study therefore aimed to provide context-specific insights into the practical experiences of teachers in public elementary schools and the challenges they face in implementing literacy interventions. It focuses on these experiences and challenges to provide actionable recommendations for improving literacy instruction, enhancing students' reading proficiency, and overall academic success.

2.5. Influence of Intervention Strategies on the Literacy Development

Poor foundation skills in struggling readers, including students with learning disabilities, English language learners, and diverse reading needs, contribute to poor performance. High-quality early education is crucial for students' long-term academic success. Understanding literacy development motivates learners to excel. Active engagement in reading helps children use knowledge and skills flexibly and in combination with all development domains. Children develop a strong literacy and reading foundation through purposeful language and early print activities. With appropriate instruction and strategies children, can develop essential foundational skills for reading with proper instruction. This is why implementing intervention strategies is essential (Zorfass & Urbano, 2008).

Research indicates that intensive, early, and remedial instruction is crucial for beginning and at-risk readers to improve their reading skills. Poor readers in elementary school often persist throughout their school years, which suggest the the need for early interventions in reading (Schatschneider, Carlson, Francis, Foorman, & Fletcher, 2002).

Literacy interventions are crucial for children's academic and social success, ensuring reading proficiency and bridging learning gaps by tailoring strategies to individual needs (Austin, Vaughn, & McClelland, 2017).

The literature emphasizes the importance of early and targeted interventions for struggling readers. It highlights the need for high-quality early education and tailored literacy interventions. The research aims to explore effective strategies implemented by public elementary school teachers to enhance literacy development. It addresses the gap in understanding how these strategies can be systematically applied to meet diverse student needs and improve reading outcomes, fostering academic success and bridging learning gaps.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section presents the elements of the research process in the study. This includes research design, participants of the study, research instrument, ethical considerations, data gathering procedure, and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature that specifically employed the exploratory case study design. This sought to explore the experiences of the teachers in implementing the intervention strategies to understand their perceptions, feelings and insights. Along with the purpose of exploring the experiences of the teachers in the utilization of the strategies is the identification of the challenges faced by the teachers, the common interventions used in literacy development, and the impact of these strategies on the development of literacy among the learners. According to Yin (2003), the exploratory case study design aims to investigate situations in which the intervention being explored has no clear single set of outcomes. Also, a case study uses a range of data sources to investigate or explain a phenomenon to gain detailed understanding in their real-life context. It enables the

researcher to investigate people or groups, from straightforward to intricate interventions, connections, communities, or initiatives. (Yin, 2003) In this study, the researcher utilized two data sources, which are from interview and non-participant classroom observation. In addition, the investigation covered a topic on teachers' experiences in literacy interventions, which may not fully be understood in other districts, thus there is no specific standard outcome. Then, this has also delved into literacy intervention strategies used by teachers, their experiences, perceived effectiveness, challenges, and the impact on students' literacy development to gain in-depth understanding and exploration.

3.2. Participants of the Study

This study involved the 20 teachers from the three public elementary schools in the district learning center (DLC) VI in Tacloban City Division. This is conducted within school year 2018-2019. These participants, from BLISS Elementary School, Panalaron Central School, and Sto. Niño SPED Center, were chosen through purposive sampling. Creswell (2007) explained that purposive sampling determines the necessary criteria, bases, or standards needed to conduct the study and then search for participants with similar attributes. In this study, the method was used to select participants with relevant literacy intervention expertise, involving the teachers from the three schools and from varied grade levels to ensure diverse range of viewpoints and experiences and who could provide the data needed.

3.3. Research Instrument

This study primarily used an interview guide or interview protocol that elicited data on the teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing the intervention strategies for literacy development, their perceptions, and challenges encountered during the implementation. This contains two parts, Part 1 for the demographic profile and Part 2 are the set of predefined open-ended questions, which allowed the exploration of the themes and provided an opportunity for follow-up on the participants' point of interest.

Another instrument utilized in this study is the classroom observation protocol. This instrument is designed in order to obtain detailed data on the applied intervention strategies, the instructional practices, and student interactions, classroom atmosphere and the impact of the strategies on the learners' literacy development. The observation protocol includes the basic information such as the name of the teacher observed, date and time of observation, the grade level, and the number of students in class. The second part indicates the learning resources available and classroom environment. The third part include the intervention strategies used in instruction, the content of the lesson, the teacher's behavior and instructional techniques, and the learners' behavior. The last part is for the observed challenges and feedback.

3.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher primarily sought consent from the concerned offices to be able to conduct the study in the public elementary schools within DLC VI, Tacloban Division. Upon approval, the participants were oriented with the purpose and procedure of the study. Consent Form to indicate the participants' willingness to be involved in the study were filled out. Then, the interview schedule is set and disseminated.

In the actual interview, the participants were briefed again as to the purpose of the investigation as well as the time limit. The researcher made sure that the place of the interview is free from distractions. During the interview, audio recording was done with the respondents' permission. After the interview, identity was done to avoid misquotations. The participants were also informed that the data they shared will be kept confidential and their identity will not be disclosed.

In terms of classroom observation, the researcher conferred with the participants as to the time frame of observations, which were carried out thrice in a week for a month. The same teacher participants in the interview were observed. The aim was to document the real implementation of the intervention strategies and how these influence the learners' literacy development. This also enabled the comparison of the observation results with the responses in the interview. Aside from the classroom observation protocol, the researcher also used filed notes to record classroom significant learning episodes.

3.5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data from the semi-structured. The information gathered through audio recording were transcribed and categorized through coding so as to identify themes. A thorough review of interview transcripts was also conducted. The general themes represent educators' perspectives, experiences, and difficulties in implementing literacy intervention techniques.

To analyze the data from classroom observation, the interpretive and descriptive analysis were applied. The descriptive approach constitutes the summarizing the observation notes based on the predetermined categories in the observation protocol—such as the intervention strategy applied, the behavior of the teachers, and the degree of student engagement. This provides a thorough description of the interactions and activities that were seen in the classroom. The descriptive summaries were examined using interpretive analysis to find insights about the use and efficacy of literacy programs. The observational data were analyzed to determine the key themes that center on the practical applications of various techniques and their effects on the literacy development of students. The results from the observations and interviews will be compared and contrasted using triangulation to provide thorough insights.

In addition, to clearly present the common and specific intervention strategies applied, the usual challenges met by the teachers, the perceived effectiveness of the intervention strategies and the observed impact of the techniques on the literacy development of the learners, data are shown in tabular forms, where the frequency of responses and the percentage of respondents are also indicated.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part highlights the information gathered from the interview and observation, which are presented according to the sequence of the research questions. This also

includes the discussion of the results with quoted transcriptions and the analysis or interpretation of the data.

The data gathered addressed five questions that are significant in understanding the experiences of the public elementary school teachers in implementing the intervention strategies for literacy development, the challenges they encountered as well as the impact of the strategies on the enhancement of the learners' literacy skills.

4.1. What are the intervention strategies that are usually applied by the public elementary school teachers in developing learners' literacy?

Through the semi-structured interview, the diverse intervention strategies in literacy development utilized by the public elementary school teachers were identified. The table that follows summarizes the description, frequency and percentage of respondents using each strategy.

Table 1

Common Intervention Strategies Used in Literacy Development

Strategy	Description	Frequency (No. of Respondents who use the strategy)	Percentage of Respondents
Differentiated Instruction	Varied teaching methods and materials are used to address the diverse needs of the learners.	20	100%
Individualized Reading Instruction (IRI)	Reading materials are chosen and designed to fit to the learners' level of capacity and allow students to learn at their own pace.	17	85%
Guided Reading	Small group instructions are given to the learners, catering to their unique needs.	14	70%
Reading Aloud	Learners are involved in interactive reading experiences such as reading aloud with peers, discussions of the text, making predictions, and doing reading comprehension tasks.	20	100%
Tutoring	One-on-one or small group tutoring is carried	12	60%

	out to aid the most struggling learners in developing their literacy.		
Multi-media Integration	Online resources and interactive tools are used in literacy development instruction.	18	90%
Literacy Centers	Reading corner provided with materials appropriate to the learners' level is set up in the classroom.	20	100%
Partner Reading	Learners are assigned with partner in doing reading tasks.	17	75%
Phonics Instruction	Instructions on phonics to help learners learn to read and write (hear, identify and use sounds to distinguish one word from another) were conducted.	20	100%

These responses from the interview were categorized into the following themes to arrive at analysis and interpretation. The responses with common context are grouped and quoted.

Theme 1. Inclusive Approaches

The participants commonly utilized the differentiated instructions and literacy centers to address the varying needs of the learners relative to their literacy development. The teachers employ these strategies to cater to the differing learning styles of the students at different levels. The literacy centers also serve as reading hub that allows the readings to explore reading materials that are of their interest and reading level.

As shown in the table, 100 percent of the teacher-respondents apply the strategies in developing literacy among learners. This suggests that the teachers believe in the effectiveness of these inclusive approaches.

The similar responses for problem 1 are capsulized through these comments of specific respondents:

T3 stated,

"I use differentiated instructions to help other students, especially the struggling readers".

T12 reported,

"Through differentiated instructions, I am able to help develop the reading skills of the learners by meeting their unique needs and learning styles".

T16 said,

“The literacy centers allow the learners to be engaged in reading, especially during their free time or in our reading time. I usually let them visit the reading corner and pick some books that are of their interest. Then, whoever needs assistance, I also help them. This intervention is really helpful because I get to know the interests of the learners and that their engagement in reading is increased”.

T20 explained,

“The literacy center is set up because aside from the fact that it is a requirement as part of the reading intervention program, I consider it important in giving the learners a chance to read in school instead of playing outside during their free time. They get to choose the books or material that they like. Although some of them just enjoy browsing through the illustrations with their friends, I still notice that their attention is caught by some sections that they really have to read. Also, when I let them do group work in reading, it is easier for them to access varied materials”.

Differentiated instruction and literacy centers are widely used by teachers, aligning with the concept of inclusive approaches. This is in consonance to the viewpoint of Lego (2014) emphasizes the importance of using varied teaching methods and materials to cater to diverse learning needs. Interview responses show that teachers recognize the effectiveness of these inclusive approaches in supporting literacy development among students with varying needs and preferences.

Theme 2. Individualized Learning Experiences

The individualized reading instruction (IRI) and tutoring are considered necessary in providing utmost assistance and support to struggling learners. These strategies allow the teachers to provide personalized instructions to meet the unique learning needs of the students. Likewise, the learners in these approaches acquire the learning experiences that are specifically tailored according to their abilities (Lego, 2014).

Although not all of the teacher-respondents are utilizing the approach, there is still more than a half of them that employ the strategies as indicated by the high percentages of the participants who adopted IRI (85%) and tutoring (60%).

The common responses that surfaced are:

T2 explained,

“Sometimes, tutoring is the best approach that I applied especially when giving remedial instruction to the learners who are classified as “emergent” or “frustration” readers”. It makes me easier to help them develop their reading skills”.

T8 reported,

“I am able to provide specialized instruction for specific learners. With IRI, 3 struggling readers in my class have shown progress after a month of giving them individualized learning materials with my guidance and assistance”.

T19 said,

I used IRI when I observed that some of my students cannot go at par with their classmates. This is to make sure that they are not left behind”.

The information collected shows that a significant number of teacher-respondents use individualized reading instruction (IRI) and tutoring to aid in literacy development, with 85% adopting IRI and 60% using tutoring. This recognizes the belief of Baker, Turtura, & Gearin (2017) that reading skills are crucial for academic success. Teacher-respondents also highlight the benefits of tutoring in providing remedial instruction to emergent or frustrated readers, and the positive impact of IRI in addressing the specific learning needs of struggling readers. The data are suggestive of the importance of personalized approaches in supporting struggling readers and improving their literacy skills.

Theme 3. Collaborative Learning

Guided reading, partner reading, and reading aloud are strategies that foster interaction among learners. The learners are usually split into pairs or small groups and are given the chance to work with their reading tasks interactively. In guided reading, the learners are led by the teacher in dealing with texts at increasingly challenging level (Mulvahil, 2018). Partner reading and reading allowed also maximize the potential of other learners to motivate their peers so they will be engaged in reading.

The frequency and percentage of teachers using the guided reading, reading aloud and partner reading strategies are high at 70%, 100%, and 75%, respectively. This suggest that teachers also found these techniques applicable and effective.

T7 mentioned,

“Guided reading is effective because this allows me to focus on small groups of learners at a time”.

T16 agreed and stated,

“Reading aloud motivates learners to be engaged in reading, for they found this as shared and fun activity. Hence, this improves their comprehension level”.

T15 also commented,

“Partner reading allows the learners to work collaboratively. This also building mutual support among the learners/ “

The data attest that guided reading, reading aloud, and partner reading are widely used strategies in literacy development, with high adoption rates (70% for guided reading, 100% for reading aloud, and 75% for partner reading). These strategies are emphasized by Duke,

Pearson, Strachan, & Billman (2011), underscoring the importance of interactive strategies in literacy instruction. The responses of the teacher-respondents support the connection, highlighting the effectiveness of guided reading in focusing on small groups of learners, the motivation of reading aloud in motivating learners, and the foster of collaborative work and mutual support in partner reading.

Theme 4. Technology Integration

The advent of technology has marked a change in literary style, culture and mindset and became a part of the collaborative learning process. The use of technology in teaching reading facilitates learning (Sarangi, 2015). In the primary school setting, the use of multimedia played a crucial part in encouraging the learners to learn. The exposure of the learners to an instruction that utilizes technology aid them in understanding the scenario in virtual world. Hence, teachers are expected to use this strategy.

The table shows that 90% of the respondents use technology in classroom instruction, which reflects that the participants are technologically-updated. This also suggests that the effectiveness of multi-media integration is seen by most of the respondents.

T13 stated,

“Integrating multi-media in instruction makes learning interactive and keep the learners engaged in the discussion or learning tasks”.

T15 also explained,

“The use of technology in the classroom instruction makes the learning flow smooth. Multi-media medium such as digital flashcards, videos, online reading games catch and hold the attention of the learners, keeping them engaged all throughout the instruction. Also, the use of infographics facilitate understanding”.

T1 commented,

“I observe that the learners enjoy reading with the use of videos, PPT and digital flash cards. Although these are not used within the whole period, these already stirred the learners’ interest to be involved in the tasks, which also encourage them to interact with their peers, especially when they talk about the topics shown to them using video clips”.

The results reveal that 90% of teachers use multimedia integration in their classrooms for teaching reading. This is supported by the emphasis that Weiss (2013) placed on the role of technology in enhancing learning experiences. Teachers-respondents accentuated the value of interactive nature of multimedia in learning that keep the learners engaged. Digital flashcards and online reading games, for example, help maintain learners' attention throughout lessons. The overall data highlight the importance of multimedia integration in literacy instruction, as teachers believe technology enhances the learning process and fosters engagement.

Theme 5. Fundamental Skills

Phonics instruction is used to develop the learners' foundational skills in reading. In their early education, they are expected to understand the interconnection between letters and the sounds they make to form words. This is often used with children classified under the "early" or "emergent" level of reading proficiency (Lego, 2014).

It is revealed in this study that the 100% of the teacher-respondents utilize the strategy in developing this skill among learners, which is instrumental to their literacy success.

T16 mentioned,

"Learners have to acquire the basic skills in reading before they can confidently handle reading comprehension activities. Phonics instruction is essential in developing the learners' basic reading skills. Thus, I often use this with struggling readers and non-readers".

In addition, Teacher 4 stated,

"With phonics instruction, the decoding and word recognition skills of the learners are developed. This serves as a foundation that enables to read with comprehension along with vocabulary development".

The data reveal that public elementary school teachers are dedicated to inclusive education, using differentiated instruction, literacy centers, reading aloud, and phonics training. They provide personalized reading instruction and tutoring that foster cooperation and involvement. Interactive and collaborative strategies promote cooperation, while technology integration enhances learning effectiveness and engagement. This comprehensive approach to education demonstrates a commitment to inclusive and fundamental education.

Teachers employ diverse strategies to address the complexity of literacy development, emphasizing the need for diverse approaches to cater to all students' needs. The study underscores the importance of providing educators with the necessary tools and training to effectively implement these strategies to ensure that every student receives the necessary support for reading improvement.

The responses depict that all teacher-respondents use phonics instruction to develop fundamental reading skills among learners. This is linked to the perspective of Adetunji (2017). Teachers are aware of the importance of phonics in developing basic reading skills, particularly for struggling readers and non-readers. Generally, the data supports the significance of phonics instruction in literacy development, putting much value on its role in developing foundational reading skills.

4.2. What are the experiences and challenges faced by teachers in implementing the intervention strategies to develop literacy skills of the learners?

Through the semi-structured interview, the data on the teachers' experiences in implementing the intervention strategies for literacy development were derived. The data were categorized under themes such as positive outcomes, challenges in the implementation, support and development needs, and innovation and adaptation.

Theme 1. Positive Outcomes

During the interview, the teacher respondents frequently emphasized the positive impact of the intervention strategies on the learners' progress and reading engagement.

T4 explained,

"The intervention strategies caused notable progress in the learners reading and writing skills. For example, since I started using partner reading and individualized reading instruction strategies, I have noticed improvement in the learners' reading performance. This is because I was able to assist them while they learn at their own pace".

T9 reported,

"With the use of literacy centers, I have observed that the learners get more engaged in reading and they enjoy doing the interactive activities".

T17 added,

"Reading aloud motivated the learners to participate in literacy development activities. Some of the learners love it when they read aloud the reading passages and they are also eager to discuss using questions given in the material. However, I always make sure that the reading materials are appropriate to their reading abilities".

T5 also articulated his viewpoint,

"I found partner reading motivating. When students are paired with a classmate in doing a reading task, they gain confidence, thinking that they will not be alone. Hence, I am able to really let them read in class".

T20 remarked,

"I am confident that my struggling learners learn when I do tutoring. In this manner, their specific learning needs are duly addressed".

T8 pointed out,

"The use of differentiated instructions is effective. The learners with specific needs and reading problems are aided. They had the chance to learn at their own level and pace".

The results demonstrate the positive impact of intervention strategies on the learners' progress and engagement, which is in accord to the perspective of Connor, & Morrison (2016). The study reveals that individualized instruction strategies, such as partner reading and tutoring, significantly enhance reading performance and engagement in

literacy centers. It also highlights the effectiveness of tutoring in addressing students' specific needs, emphasizing the importance of individualized attention for enhancing academic success.

Theme 2. Challenges During Implementation

Despite the remarkable positive outcomes that the teacher respondents shared relative to their experiences in implementing the intervention strategies, they also shared some drawbacks. The common issues that emerged were time constraints, limited resources, and learners' absenteeism.

Most of the teacher-participants found it challenging to accomplish the tasks for individualized interventions. Some learners need ample time to really grasp the lesson, which means the teachers have to allocate much time for these learners.

T5 reported,

"I cannot usually accommodate the learners who need assistance in working on their tasks in an individualized reading instruction. I have a student who needs 30 minutes or more to be able to finish the task given with my assistance".

In terms of one-on-one sessions under the tutoring strategy, teachers find it difficult to provide personalized attention to each student.

T11 complained,

"I find it difficult to fit everything in. The learners have to learn varied subjects and I can't set aside the fact that they also need to study other lessons. Doing the one-on-one tutoring requires ample time and sometimes I cannot end the session well with the learners. I mean, we fail to meet the objective of the session".

Another challenge that was faced by the teachers was on the scarcity of resources. The limited access to books, technology, and instructional materials are the common issues.

T13 pointed out,

"Varied reading and instructional materials are necessary in giving differentiated instructions. Even the use of multi-media is very significant. However, there are times that I am stressed because I need to grapple in providing the needed materials. It usually ends having me spend from my own pocket to produce the materials needed".

Also, the teachers shared that the absenteeism among some children impedes them to administer guided reading with everyone. Also, learners who need tutoring and are oftentimes absent miss the opportunity to be taught.

T10 stated,

“I am quite upset for sometimes that I cannot consistently provide tutoring to my struggling readers because of their absence in class. There is really a need to connect to their parents so they will be pushed to be in school”.

T6 added,

“During guided reading sessions, the learners who are absent from class tend to be left behind the topics that we tackle. When they come back to school, I need to prepare other similar materials for them. Well, it’s fine but really it will also consume my time”.

The results above support the perspective of Mulvahil (2018). This study reveals that guided reading, partner reading, and reading aloud are effective strategies for boosting reading engagement among learners. These methods, which focus on small groups, provide targeted instruction and encourage active participation, thereby enhancing motivation and comprehension. The high percentage of teacher respondents using these strategies is an evidence to their widespread recognition and value in promoting literacy development, making them practical and effective in classroom settings.

Theme 3. Support and Development Needs

Based on the experiences shared by the participants, they emphasized the need for support and professional and personal development opportunities, which are essential for a successful implementation of intervention strategies.

Relative to the need for professional development, T9 commented,

“Continuous learning is very instrumental to help ourselves be in pace of the trends. Hence, I desire for opportunities for professional growth like trainings on the implementation of intervention strategies”.

In connection to the support needed, T18 suggested,

“There must be utmost support from the administration, parents and other stakeholders in order to make the implementation of intervention strategies for literacy development successful. We need enough resources to provide sufficient materials for all the learners. We also need to procure the equipment and other technological resources so that learners will experience an engaging learning task through the use of technology”.

T17 added,

“There is really a need for strong support, especially from the administration so that conducive learning environment even in the classroom will be established”. This will also affect the motivation on the part of the learners”.

The respondents' focus on support and professional development is in consonance to the argument of Sarangi (2015) that continuous learning is crucial for educators to

stay updated with changing trends. They also emphasize the importance of strong administrative support for successful implementation of intervention strategies, as emphasized by T18 and T17.

Theme 4. Innovation and Adaptation

Recognizing and dealing with the challenges met by the participants, they need to adapt and innovate in order to implement literacy interventions, effectively.

Hence, the participants opted to come up with creative solutions to address time constraints and limited resources. The respondents integrated literacy development lessons in other subjects. Then the available local materials are maximized during reading or literacy sessions. Other respondents believed the significance of flexibility. They needed to adjust their time and adapt teaching methods that appropriately address the problem, especially in terms of the issue on absenteeism. The teachers have to do rescheduling of sessions with the learners and apply a teaching practice that will keep all the learners abreast with the lessons like adjusting the lesson plans and learning activities.

T1 mentioned,

“I usually adjust my lesson plans for the next day in order to give those who are absent a chance to grasp the lesson they missed. I also reschedule reading session with struggling learners who is unable to come to school in certain days”.

T4 added,

“I usually adjust the content of the learning activities when I need to integrate the lessons in other subjects due to the lack of time set for the reading subject”.

The strategies of the participants in overcoming time and resource limitations highlight the perspective of Mulvahil (2018), emphasizing flexibility in teaching methods. The adaptation of lesson plans and rescheduling sessions of T1 concurs with the idea of Mulhavil (2018), while T4's adjustment of learning activities reflects the author's advocacy for integrating lessons across subjects for optimal learning opportunities.

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by public elementary school teachers in implementing literacy intervention strategies. Despite significant progress in student literacy development, teachers face challenges such as time management, resource scarcity, and truancy. Therefore, they require administrative support and professional development to effectively implement literacy techniques in their classrooms.

In addition, the flexibility of teachers and their creative methods demonstrate their dedication to overcoming challenges and providing the best literacy teaching. It is crucial to provide teachers with adequate resources, training, and administrative support to ensure effective implementation of literacy interventions and improve students' reading outcomes.

Educational policymakers and leaders can help enhance literacy instruction in public primary schools by addressing identified problems and improving support networks, which will strengthen lifetime learning, improve educational outcomes, and help learners become proficient readers.

The interpretive analysis of data reveals the complexities of literacy instruction in public primary schools, highlighting both successes and challenges faced by educators. Teachers must balance time constraints and limited resources to maximize student achievement. Encouraging results inspire them to continue and access to resources and training improves their capacity to carry out successful interventions. Also, strong administrative support and continuous professional development are crucial for effective implementation. Teachers with innovation and adaptability demonstrate commitment and resiliency by devising innovative solutions and modifying strategies to suit student needs.

4.3. How do the intervention strategies influence the students' literacy development?

The literacy development of pupils is greatly impacted by the intervention techniques employed by public elementary school teachers. Based on how these strategies affect students' reading skills, their influence can be categorized into major impact themes.

Theme 1. Improved Reading Skills

Intervention techniques like tutoring, phonics instruction, and individualized reading instruction significantly enhance students' reading skills by providing focused assistance, thereby enhancing their critical reading abilities and general literacy.

T8 reported,

"Phonics instruction is instrumental in the improvement of learners' reading fluency and aided them decode words".

T13 added,

"The use of personalized reading materials has significantly improved the academic performance of students who were previously struggling".

The experiences of T8 and T13' support the view of Sarangi (2015) that phonics instruction and personalized reading materials significantly improve students' reading skills. T8's observation emphasizes phonics for enhancing reading fluency and decoding skills, while T13's testimony supports tailored instructional approaches for struggling readers.

Theme 2. Increased Motivation and Engagement

Strategies like guided reading, reading aloud, and multimedia integration enhance student engagement and motivation by making reading enjoyable and encouraging active participation in literacy activities. Students are more likely to engage in

reading activities when they find them enjoyable and interactive, and sustained interest is heightened by multimedia tools and reading aloud sessions.

The selected responses below attest the positive impact that intervention strategies have on the learners' literacy development.

T12 pointed out,

“Reading aloud sessions have become a popular activity, with students eagerly participating and discussing the stories”.

T3 said,

“The use of digital flashcards and videos in reading lessons has significantly enhanced the engagement and interest of students”.

The observation of T12 and T3 captured the viewpoint of Mulvahil (2018), highlighting the positive impact of intervention strategies like reading aloud and multimedia integration on student engagement and motivation. These strategies foster interaction and enjoyment, leading to increased engagement in literacy activities. Digital tools like flashcards and videos also enhance student interest and participation in reading lessons.

Theme 3. Enhancement of Social and Collaborative Skills

Strategies that promote collaboration like partner reading and guided reading enhance social interaction and teamwork among students, helping them develop collaborative skills, support each other in their literacy journey, and create a supportive learning environment.

The interactive activities develop students' collective reading experience by fostering peer support and improving communication skills through discussions and sharing ideas about reading materials.

T4 attested,

“Partner reading has fostered a sense of cooperation among students that enhances their reading experience and promote a shared and enjoyable learning environment”.

T14 reported,

“The use of guided reading allows me to establish a collaborative learning environment among small groups of learners”.

The responses illustrate the assertion of Snow (2019), accentuating the importance of interactive literacy exercises in enhancing students' teamwork abilities. These exercises, including guided reading and companion reading, promote social

interaction and teamwork, thereby creating a positive and stimulating learning environment.

Theme 4. Developing Core Literacy Competencies

Phonics and differentiated instruction are key strategies for developing basic literacy skills, which ensure that students develop a strong foundation in reading and writing that is crucial for their academic success.

Also, phonics and differentiated instructions provide a strong foundation for students, preparing them for advanced reading tasks and addressing various aspects of literacy, ensuring comprehensive skill development.

Relative to these analyses, the teachers' respondents shared their views regarding the impact of the strategies on the literacy development of the learners.

T16 explained,

"Phonics instruction is crucial for enhancing learners' fundamental reading abilities. This is the approach that allow the learners to start learning how to read".

T19 also said,

"The application of differentiated instruction aided me in meeting the students at their recent reading proficiency level, thereby help them improve effectively."

Teachers emphasize the importance of phonics instruction and differentiated instruction in literacy development. Phonics is recognized as a key strategy for developing fundamental reading abilities, as highlighted by Adetunji (2017). Differentiated instruction is recognized for its effectiveness in meeting students' diverse needs and ensuring comprehensive skill development. These viewpoints reinforce the importance of these intervention strategies in fostering students' literacy development, as discussed in the literature.

The intervention strategies used by elementary school teachers have a significant impact on the literacy development of the students. Teachers may greatly improve their students' reading abilities by carefully using strategies like differentiated education, phonics training, and individualized reading instruction. These methods build a love of reading, encourage social engagement, and provide a solid basis for academic achievement in addition to enhancing critical reading skills.

Moreover, the effects of intervention strategies go beyond the acquisition of new skills. They also include improved student motivation, engagement, and collaborative skills. Students actively participate in literacy activities in a dynamic learning environment that teachers construct by using engaging approaches like guided reading, reading aloud

sessions, and multimedia integration. In addition to improving social connection and collaboration, interactive exercises like in partner reading ensure that students' literacy skills are fully developed and prepare them for future social and academic challenges.

The analysis of the participants' responses reveals the significant impact of intervention strategies on primary school learners' reading advancement. These strategies not only enhance reading proficiency but also boost motivation, engagement, social cooperation, and basic literacy competences. The success of these treatments underscores the importance of using diverse teaching strategies to create a supportive literacy environment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, results and discussions, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The public elementary school teachers are committed to inclusive education, utilizing strategies like differentiated instruction, literacy centers, reading aloud, and phonics instruction to cater to diverse learners' needs, fostering cooperation and personalized instruction for reading improvement.
2. Despite progress in students' reading skills and the positive outcomes that the teachers have observed while implementing the intervention strategies, there are still challenges that affect the implementation such as time constraints, resource scarcity, and absenteeism.
3. To ensure effectiveness of the implementation of the strategies, teachers need support, resources, and professional development opportunities. Addressing these needs can enhance literacy instruction in public primary schools and foster lifelong learning.
4. Strategies like differentiated instruction, phonics training, individualized reading instruction, guided reading, reading aloud sessions, multimedia integration, and partner reading improve reading skills, motivation, engagement, and core literacy competencies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are formulated:

1. Educational policymakers and administrators should prioritize providing public elementary school teachers with adequate support, resources, and materials to effectively implement intervention strategies, including diverse teaching materials, technology integration tools, and literacy resources.
2. School districts should invest in ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers, including workshops, training sessions, and courses on literacy instruction, differentiated instruction, and phonics training, to enhance their skills and knowledge in supporting student literacy development.
3. School administrators and teachers should collaborate to address time constraints and absenteeism issues. Flexible scheduling, targeted interventions, and proactive communication with parents can help mitigate these challenges and ensure all students receive necessary support for reading improvement.

4. Establish professional learning communities (PLCs) for literacy instruction to foster collaboration among teachers. These communities enable sharing best practices, lesson planning, and problem-solving, thereby improving the effectiveness of literacy instruction.
5. Regular assessment and adaptation of intervention strategies are crucial for determining effectiveness and identifying improvement areas. School administrators should encourage teachers to collect student progress data, solicit feedback, and adjust strategies accordingly.

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Evaluating the Processes and Effectiveness of Transition Programs for High School Students with Disabilities: A Literature Review

By Dana Braschowitz

Key Terms:

Individual Education Plan (IEP)- legal document supporting students with disabilities.

Postsecondary- life after high school

Transition Planning- the process of preparing students to access education, work experiences and life skills upon graduating high school

Literature Review

A literature review is a summary and analysis of research studies and scholarly articles on a particular and narrow topic. The purpose of a literature review is to present information and data gathered through research on a specific topic, therefore highlighting the results of a literature review question. A literature review is not a paper or essay and is not intended to go into detail of a topic, but instead review and discuss the already published research and summarize that information. In addition, a literature review may discuss the contradictions or disagreements between various articles being reviewed. In summary, the goal of a literature review is to improve the reader's understanding of a topic and synthesize the topic based on a series of scholarly articles and literature on a subject.

Abstract

This Literature Review evaluates the effectiveness of transition programs for high school students with disabilities, focusing on post-secondary planning and preparation for independent adult life. The review synthesizes results from four studies: pioneer researcher Kohler's (1996) Taxonomy for Transition Programming, Bales' (2022) research on special education teachers' perceived preparedness, Hartzler et al.'s (2024) examination of college students' perspectives, and Mazzotti et al.'s (2021) evaluating the sixteen predictors for postsecondary success. Each study highlights several components of the postsecondary processes; ranging from the teacher's knowledge and preparedness, student experiences and perceptions, and the actual planning processes. The results reflect the importance of structured and successful postsecondary planning methods and effective practices to ensure successful transition, postsecondary experiences for students with disabilities.

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is *evaluating the processes and effectiveness of transition programs for high school students with disabilities*. This is an important topic that will evaluate the processes that go into post-secondary planning and preparing students with disabilities for the "real world". Post-secondary planning, or transition planning, is the process in which students

with disabilities, along with relevant team members, evaluate a student's strengths, weaknesses, goals and potential opportunities for employment. This is a comprehensive process with the goal of getting individuals prepared to hold work positions, and simply be more independent in all areas of life. This literature review will go over 4 research studies that highlight the framework for a successful postsecondary program and student experiences with postsecondary transition planning processes.

1) Taxonomy for Transition Programming: Linking Research and Practice.

Introduction

In 1996, Paula Kohler developed a framework that would remain a foundational component of the transition process for students with disabilities. Her critical work became known as *Kohler's Taxonomy*. Kohler (1996) developed a framework that would provide an outline and structure to support students, educators and their families in the postsecondary planning processes.

Components of the Taxonomy

Through extensive research Kohler (1996) outlines five key components to an effective transition program. These include student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family involvement, and program structure. The goal of developing this framework was to better understand the relationships within transition planning and how to ensure it is most effective. It is important to recognize that all five components are imperative for the ultimate success of transition planning.

1. **Student-Focused Planning**, focuses on the actual student including identifying his/her areas of strength, weaknesses, abilities, preferences and interests. This can be considered the preliminary work, since it is the first step that goes into planning an effective transition plan. This includes IEP development, student participation, and accommodations/planning strategies (Kohler, 1996). The importance of ensuring students understand the transition process and provide personal feedback is highlighted in the article.
2. **Student Development** focuses on the actual skills required for adult life scenarios and providing instruction on those skills. This can include but is not limited to vocational and career experiences, instruction using a specialized curriculum, vocational assessments and life skills instruction. One of her major components is incorporating evidence-based instructional practice to support skill acquisition. This development not only includes work experiences, but also instruction on real-world concepts such as transportation, navigating the community, building relationships, and more. The goal of this domain is to prepare students with disabilities for a world outside of high school where they can be successful.
3. **Family Involvement** is her third domain which focuses on instruction and supporting of relevant family members. Family Involvement may include training the family in how they can support their child with advocacy, providing natural supports, knowledge of agencies and services and teaching about legal issues. Families are encouraged to be involved in the IEP process, community-level transition planning, decision making, facilitating relationships with agencies and generally using family feedback to make informed, meaningful decisions. Family members are vital in the transitional planning

process to ensure the student is prepared for postsecondary, adult world experiences, so families must be empowered and informed throughout the student's educational career.

4. **Interagency Collaboration** is perhaps one of the most important components of transitional planning that falls on the schools and community to develop relationships. Relationships include those between schools and families, and community organizations and vocational services. Interagency collaboration highlights the importance of the whole collaboration process and fostering relationships where organizations feel supported enough to welcome students with disabilities in their organization.
5. **Program Structure** focuses on the program's philosophies, policies, planning and development in order to ensure that the students, families and outside agencies are prepared to support students with disabilities upon graduation from the public school system. Kohler's (1996) articles include research that indicates schools with well-organized, consistent, and well-defined transition programs are highly more successful with preparing students for real world experiences. Similarly, the students are more successful in the long term.

Results and Implications

Kohler's research and results thereafter resulting in the development of the Taxonomy for Transition Programming, have had such a tremendous impact on the postsecondary programs. Her work has resulted in a deeper knowledge and better experiences for individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as the schools and communities planning processes. She developed a framework that has been used for decades to better support the transition planning process and transition programs. Her taxonomy not only focuses on the student, but the whole picture, making it a very impactful and critical role for a student with a disability.

2) Special Education Teacher Preparedness for Transition Planning Among Individuals with Disabilities

Introduction

Bales (2022) prepared a comprehensive dissertation primarily evaluating special education teachers' preparedness for transition planning. She began her study by identifying a problem, which stated that students with disabilities struggle with postsecondary concepts such as employment, independent living and education. Through preliminary research, she hypothesized that special education teachers do not necessarily feel prepared to support with transition competencies (Bales, 2002) which led to an additional hypothesis that if special educators did feel prepared and knowledgeable about the transition planning process, they would be able to better support the students.

Data collection and Results

Her lengthy research included qualitative and quantitative approaches to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the transition planning process in the perspective of the special educator. Through more qualitative approaches such as interviews and surveys, she was able to gather information from special educators. She used a scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree for the survey questions. She also asked several open-ended questions to gauge teacher's perspectives on transition planning. When asking the survey questions based on Kohler's (1996) developed 5-pillars of taxonomy for transition planning, approximately 20-23% of teachers felt across all five domains that they strongly agreed they

were prepared to tackle transition planning. On the other end of the spectrum, 1-5% primarily strongly disagreed, or felt struggles or unprepared, with majority of the questions. The one outlier in this data is when across all survey questions, many teachers reported they did not take their students out into the community for work experiences. Although teachers indicated they prepare programs and conduct instruction, a total of 34% reported they do not facilitate hands-on work experiences at least monthly and 43% reported they do not take students into community. Despite the lack of real-world experiences students face, teachers did generally report the feel prepared to support transition planning due to professional development opportunities, collaboration with team members and their experiences.

Summary of Study

As a result of her study, Bales, (2022) results suggest slightly differences from original theory. Although most teachers did report feeling prepared, they also reported that students did not have hands-on work experiences. There are several transition competencies, and there is a gap between the school-based experiences and the outside agencies. It is imperative that teachers not only feel prepared through professional development and training opportunities, but also through real life experiences, collaboration with families and collaboration with outside agencies. Bales concludes that without a strong link utilizing Kohlers (1996) framework, special educators cannot comprehensively address the true purpose of transition planning and therefore, cannot be most effective in supporting their students.

3) Perspectives of College Students with Disabilities Regarding Their High School Transition Experiences: Notes for High School Transition Planning

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a series of federal laws developed that protect and support individuals with disabilities. (U.S Department of Ed). This article focuses on the transition services laws within the IDEA that support students with mild disabilities prepare for postsecondary life, specifically in college. The IDEA states that students must be part of their transitional planning process. As supported by Bales (2022) and Kohler (1996), the student's participation is an integral role of the postsecondary planning. This article focuses on qualitative measures such as in depth and personalized interviews conducted on eleven participants (college students with disabilities) to provide insight about their high school transition planning experiences and their perception of the process.

Students High School Experiences

Hartzler, et.al (2024) used previous works of literature and research to discover that students with disabilities often times felt unprepared to navigate the postsecondary world after graduating from a K-12 school system. The researchers conducted thorough interviews on eleven participants where they learned that the participants felt they "were passive participants" in their IEP process and the transition planning process (Hartzler, et.al, 2024, pg. 3). Students also stated they relied heavily on family when transitioning to postsecondary education. They stated they did not feel prepared for the academic rigor of college due to the heavy modifications and support provided in high school and difficulties with time management. Additionally, participants reported they did not feel they knew about supports offered and available for students with disabilities and wished they had more information. In summary, students felt the

transition programs provided in High School were not sufficient to get them prepared for college experiences. Despite the IDEA providing legal requirements, guidelines and resources for transition planning processes, according to the experiences of the eleven participants, they did not feel their high school did a sufficient job in transition planning and implementation.

Student-Focused Planning

As mentioned in Kohler's (1996) Taxonomy for Transition Planning, student focused planning relies on the processes of getting students ready for postsecondary experiences. This focuses on the student being part of the IEP development, participating in their learning experiences, accommodations and modifications, and participate in transition planning process through self-advocacy. Hartzler, et.al (2024) dives deeper into this notion by highlighting additional components of the student-focused planning process, such as the student developing the skills needed to transition to adulthood. Since each student is different, the planning process looks different from person to person. However, if students are not an equal or heard members of their team, they will be unable to effectively plan for their transition. If a student does not actively participate or have a voice in his or her goals, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and passions, the result can be determinantal to their postsecondary experiences.

Conclusion

It is highly unfortunate that this recently published study provides conclusive evidence that transition planning process is ineffective. This study, being qualitative, gave each participant a loud voice and an opportunity to share their honest experiences. Participants reported as a result of their high school experiences, they felt unprepared academically, lacked foundational skills and instruction due to modified curriculum despite (this is regardless if they were in general education or special education classes), lenient grading practices that did not coincide with college expectations, not skilled with time-management and overall lack of adult support.

4) Secondary Transition Predictors of Postschool Success: An Update to the Research Base

Introduction

Historically, there has been sufficient evidence collected to suggest that students with disabilities do not experience positive outcomes when compared to their nondisabled peers when considering postsecondary success (Mazzotti, et.al 2020). This research study evaluates different in-school components that are typically predictors of successful postsecondary transition programs. The three outcome areas include postschool employment, education and independent living success. The results can be used to generate ideas how to best support in-school personnel with the transition process.

Key Predictors of Postschool Success

Mazzotti (2020) identifies twenty predictors of the three outcome areas: postschool employment, postschool education and independent living success.

Four of these predictors included inclusion in general education, paid employment and/or work experiences, self-care and/or independent living skills, and student support. These are considered valid predictors for all three outcome areas. As these four predictors are important for all three

components, it is imperative to ensure all are developed during the student's high school experience to best prepare them for the postsecondary world.

Another seven predictors that positively correlate to *postschool education* and employment include career awareness, interagency collaboration, occupational courses, self-advocacy/self-determination, social skills, transition program and vocational education.

The final five predictors are positively correlated to *postschool employment* (i.e., community experiences, exit exam requirements/high-school diploma status, parental involvement, program of study and work study).

In Mazzotti's et.al (2020) study, he cites Haber et al. (2016) who conducted a similar study where he identified four new predictor categories including goal setting, parental expectations, travel skills and youth autonomy/decision-making skills.

Application of Key Findings

When schools and staff members have knowledge of the twenty predictors that determine the effectiveness of post-secondary planning programs and transitional success, they can adjust their curriculum and approaches to support their students. This study highlights the key predictors being work experiences, inclusive practices, self-care instruction and student support. With this knowledge, teachers, administration, district personnel and families can incorporate these methodologies when planning a student's high school program. This may include more volunteer experiences to enhance accountability, more inclusion opportunities to socialize with peers, and opportunities to practice self-care like independent living skills such as cooking light meals and cleaning up after one's self.

Conclusion

Mazzotti et.al. (2020) was able to analyze the results of the study and previous research studies to conclude that there are actually twenty predicting factors that can be considered when determining the effectiveness of a postsecondary program. With these twenty predictors, staff and families can focus on developing an effective and meaningful transition program and experiences for students with disabilities.

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Book Review: Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement

By Rosna Jean

Chenoweth, K. (2021). *Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement*. Harvard Education Press, Pp 192. \$32.00

Karin Chenoweth's book, "Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement," examines six succeeding and improving public-school districts that serve mostly students from minority demographics and poverty status. Chicago, Illinois Chicago Public Schools (CPS); Steubenville, Ohio; Cottonwood and Lane, Oklahoma; Seaford, Delaware; and Valley Stream 30, New York. She examines and highlights the strategies employed by these six school districts to address the challenge of students' achievement, race and poverty status in public school education, a longstanding issue in the United States. Chenoweth's book presents a compelling argument against the prevailing belief that children of color from low social economic status (SES) are determinants of low academic performance. The book emphasizes the need to change the perspective on children of color with low SES by moving away from a deficit-based approach. She urges leaders to concentrate on investigating and duplicating successful methods from districts that are achieving positive results or making improvements. The author's objective in authoring this book is to challenge negative attitudes towards education by shining a light on these districts.

In the Introduction, Chenoweth provides a comprehensive overview of the history of US public education, shedding light on the issue of systemic racism in the education of children from underrepresented and low-income backgrounds. She discusses the resurgence of the "belief gap," which Chenoweth stated has been historically used to justify oppression, and the effect it has on marginalized communities. To further this claim, one can look at an op-ed written by Chris Barbic, who stated that the "Belief Gap" which is used to describe the discrepancy between what parents envision for their children's success and the views held by elected leaders. Essentially, while parents have high hopes for their children, some public policy narratives, such as attributing academic challenges solely to poverty, impede progress (Barbic, 2014). This dynamic is particularly impactful for marginalized communities, perpetuating barriers to achievement. Chenoweth raises concerns about the current state of education reforms, highlighting their contribution to the belief gap and emphasizing the importance of districts' strategies that has led to a disruption in the belief gap. She supports her argument by referencing Ronald Edmond's research on the significant role of school principals. She highlights the importance of a practical approach to learning, drawing on successful districts in hopes of refuting the "belief gap" that came out of the research of sociologist James S. Coleman which led to the Coleman Report.

Chenoweth investigates the crucial role that school districts play in addressing the diverse needs of children. She emphasizes the importance of the organizational structure and functionality of

schools in effectively meeting these needs. Chenoweth offers a thorough examination of the organizational and operational aspects of school districts in fulfilling their educational responsibilities. In addition, she references research conducted by Sean Reardon, a Professor of Poverty and Inequality in Education at Stanford University, and his team of scholars. Their research, which centers on students in third to eighth grade across the country, allows for comparisons between different school districts and forms the foundational research for Chenoweth's book.

Chenoweth explores the six chosen districts' educational paths that bring about significant changes in Chapters 2 through 6. Chapter 2 details CPS's data-driven transformation into an educational model. Chapter 3 highlights Steubenville, Ohio's outstanding performance, notably influenced by early Head Start. Chapter 4 examines Cottonwood and Lane districts in Oklahoma, navigating socioeconomic challenges with resourceful interventions. Chapter 5 explores Seaford, Delaware's success despite obstacles, emphasizing equity and community engagement. In Chapter 6, Valley Stream 30, New York's exceptional performance is attributed to high standards and diversity awareness. Chenoweth's analysis underscores the importance of evidence-based approaches and community involvement in fostering educational excellence.

Chenoweth also delved into the impact that Covid-19 had on these districts. Which makes this book timely.

In the Conclusion chapter, Chenoweth contends that the districts she investigated, she found that the correlation between children of color from low SES and low achievement attainment has been disrupted in these districts, and she believes it is possible to break it elsewhere. She also noted that there is a lack of visible similarities among the profiled districts. Nearly everything about the districts differs, except for one crucial aspect: they have successfully severed the correlation between students' backgrounds and academic achievement.

Chenoweth determined that all the featured districts had a shared dedication among professionals to promote excellent teaching for all kids via strong leadership, scientific methods, and supporting structures. She emphasized the need of ongoing adult education (for district and school personnel), effective time management, data analysis, fostering a reliable atmosphere, and using current research on child learning.

"Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement" is an invaluable resource for school district leaders who are committed to making a difference and challenging the misconception that children of color from disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to learn. This resource provides easily replicable practical insights and strategies. Its emphasis on problem-solving through scientific methods makes it a valuable contribution to education leadership, particularly given the current political climate. The authors demonstrate how district leaders can effectively examine and study the strategies employed by successful districts. This enables them to implement desired outcomes within their own districts.

This book is specifically designed for district-level leaders, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, and curriculum directors. It provides valuable insights for policymakers and graduate students studying educational leadership. It is also beneficial for school principals,

teacher leaders, and anyone committed to enhancing educational equity and excellence. Written in a clear and informative style, this resource is valuable for individuals who are passionate about education.

Chenoweth conducted personal interviews with districts and drew upon Sean Reardon's research to author the book and identify the six featured districts. Reardon utilizes extensive datasets to explore educational inquiries, utilizing sources such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the US Census Community Survey.

While the book is informative, it is important to acknowledge its limits as an educational guide on its own. Critics may contend that it placed excessive emphasis on outlier districts, since this was its original focal point. With only six schools cited from Reardon's dataset out of twelve thousand, some may find the scope narrow. Critics may find that these success stories may not fully reflect the experiences of all students and districts facing similar challenges, and their findings may not be universally replicable.

Despite any criticism, overall, "Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement" provides valuable insights into succeeding districts that serve children of color from low SES. It also prompts future researchers and advocates of education to consider the broader systemic issues that still contribute to educational disparities.

When comparing Karin Chenoweth's "Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement" with Michael Fullan's "Leading in a Culture of Change," one may analyze different methods to enhance education, despite their contrasting approaches.

Focus and Perspective

Chenoweth's book identifies outstanding school districts that have tackled racism, poverty, and achievement. She highlights districts that improved student results despite socioeconomic challenges. However, Fullan's book broadens educational leadership and change management. He examines outstanding leaders and how they promote continual development in educational institutions.

Case Studies vs. Theory

Chenoweth uses successful school district case studies to support her claims. She examines these districts' methods and emphasizes their accomplishments. Fullan's book provides a theoretical foundation for educational organizational reform. He uses research and theory to identify change leadership concepts and methods.

Equity Focus

Chenoweth's book highlights the need to address racial and socioeconomic gaps in education. She emphasizes successful districts' efforts to promote equality and provide high-quality education to all students. Fullan recognizes fairness in education, but his book concentrates on organizational reform and leadership.

Chenoweth's book targets educators, legislators, and stakeholders who want to learn from successful school districts and use comparable strategies in their own circumstances. Educational

leaders, administrators, and change makers may learn about successful leadership and organizational transformation from Fullan's book.

Both publications focus on increasing educational results, although from distinct angles. Chenoweth's "Districts that Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement" uses successful case studies to address equity in education, while Fullan's "Leading in a Culture of Change" provides a theoretical framework for educational organizational change.

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Book Review: True Leadership: The 10 Universal Laws

By Sarah Tiilikka

“In any enterprise, leadership boils down to how well people coexist with one another. Fundamentally, effective leadership is creating, sustaining, and nurturing relationships.” (pg3) In Dr. David Samore’s new leadership book, published January 2024, *True Leadership: The 10 Universal Truths* provides readers with actionable strategies to enhance their leadership abilities and build relationships. Dr. David Samore is an experienced leader who has over 40 years of experience in both public and private sectors as well as a teacher, principal, and professor. *True Leadership* is applicable to educators in leadership and rising educational leaders and anyone who aims to lead others in any profession.

David Samore grew up in Sioux City, Iowa to immigrant parents, as a teenager Samore won a scholarship to a boarding school in Wales called United World College of the Atlantic. This experience helped shape his love of education. Dr. Samore earned his B.A. and M.A. in Spanish from the University of Iowa and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Samore was recognized as the Florida Principal of the Year in 2008 and 2015. These educational accomplishments give significant credibility to Dr. Samore’s leadership guidance offered in *True Leadership: The 10 Universal Truths*.

Main Themes

Dr. David Samore offers what he believes to be The 10 Universal Laws of True Leadership. A brief summary of these laws are as follows:

Dr. Samore begins his book describing what True Leadership is and what he calls The Five Levels of Leadership. This is a scale where Level 1 represents Bad Leadership and Level 5 represents exceptional leadership. He provides guidance on what each level looks like and ways that a leader can strive for each level. (Samore, 2024)

In the 1st Universal Law: Job #1 Never Changes, Dr. Samore describes that “Job #1 is building and nurturing relationships between and among stakeholders” (pg18). Samore describes communication as the basis of building relationships among stakeholders. When systems of communication are in place organizations can help build a culture of trust. He also recommends that leaders are up and out of their offices and communicating with stakeholders. (Samore, 2024)

2nd Universal Law: Culture Always Matters, in this section Dr. Samore describes creating a culture that has shared values. He introduces his Three Share Values, which he used in his tenure as a school principal to unify the culture. These values helped shape his school's culture, and he suggests that all organizations create shared values. (Samore, 2024)

3rd Universal Law: Leaders Require Followers, this section is dedicated to the idea that leaders must have followers. He suggests that leaders must offer trust, compassion, stability, and hope to

followers or they will look elsewhere. He also suggests that communication is a strong need for followers. Samore also provides actionable steps to manage “blockers,” people who stand in the way of leaders. (Samore, 2024)

4th Universal Law: Adversity is Opportunity, this section is dedicated to the emotions related to leadership. Dr. Samore describes ways to build an “open arms” culture and how crisis can bring stakeholders together under the right leadership. Samore describes communication as the basis for building this emotionally supportive community. (Samore, 2024)

5th Universal Law: Risk Must Be Pursued, this law suggests that risks must be taken for growth to occur. Samore again suggests communication with stakeholders as a key element. A culture of forgiveness must also be embedded for risks to be taken. Clear expectations for all stakeholders, including the leadership, are key factors to growth and risk management. (Samore, 2024)

6th Universal Law: A Saga is Mandatory; this section suggests that True Leadership needs a saga. Leadership sagas take time to build and must have a keen sense of purpose and belonging. Samore suggests leaders need thinkers to help carry innovative ideas and help win over the naysayers. (Samore, 2024)

7th Universal Law: Reject Charlatans; This section is a warning to leaders and future leaders to be mindful of leaders who want to obtain power at any cost. Samore describes a Charlatan leader as deceitful and sowing seeds of mistrust. Samore suggests that the only method to lead is to lead with full transparency. Organizations that offer transparency create a culture of trust and trust leads to success. (Samore, 2024)

8th Universal Law: Stay Ahead of the Curve or Pariah, this section suggests guidance on monitoring significant changes and prepare for changes that will impact the leader. Samore suggests that leaders need to be mindful of communication they participate in and overhear, then reflect on these conversations. The leader should be able to tell the story before someone else does. (Samore, 2024)

9th Universal Law: Protecting Power Fails, in this section Dr. Samore cautions against leaders that have politician tendencies, because they do not make good leaders. Leaders must be vigilant about not participating in rumors and divisive behavior. Leaders must always consider the thoughts and opinions of organization members. (Samore, 2024)

10th Universal Law: Don’t Rely On Sugar, in this section Dr. Samore implores leaders not to sugar coat the truth. He believes that clear and honest communication is the most effective way to lead. (Samore, 2024)

Key Quotes

“It is imperative that anyone seeking a leadership position in anything take the time and so the work to self-reflect and analyze their motivation for wanting to be leader.” (Pg 16) Samore, 2024 Dr. Samore goes on to explain that True Leaders lead because they feel they can help others. He later explains that leaders who want to “lead” to feel powerful, will often be unsuccessful if the core motivation is not good.

“True Leadership is not possible unless strong, honest, and trusting relationships are at the center of every decision, vision, and mindset of those who comprise the organization.” (pg 18) Samore, 2024 In this quote Dr. Samore explains that relationships and honest communication are the elements that help leaders succeed. He also explains that these relationships blossom when a sense of teamwork is cultivated by doing the challenging work together. When stakeholders see leadership practicing and modeling the expectations, then the trust beings to build.

“How well an organization responds to a crisis is a reliable measure of leadership. When the unexpected calamity occurs, leaderships response is its next-step actions is a strong indicator of the organizations ability to not only avoid disaster, but recover strongly while finding opportunity in the process.”(pg79) Samore, 2024 In this quote, Dr. Samore explains that when adversity happens, it is important to have strong and compassionate leaders. He suggests that leaders learn to lead with emotional intelligence and open arms. This can be done with effective communication skills and a willingness to hear stakeholders' concerns.

Strengths and Weaknesses

True Leadership provides excellent insight and guidance for current and rising leaders. Dr. Samore consistently highlighted that communication is the core of successful leadership opportunities and provides actionable steps for leaders. His book is full of excellent actionable examples of leadership qualities and anecdotal stories that provide context for ideas. These anecdotal stories are also a weakness in some sections. At times, a few of these anecdotal stories were long winded and were a bit challenging to connect back to the section topic.

A strength of *True Leadership* is that it applies to leaders in any organization and not solely to educational professionals. Educational professionals will find so much value in the actionable steps outlined, but any other professional can apply these leadership practices to their profession. Dr. Samore demonstrates his clear and deep understanding of the educational system as well as the private sector, which provides a unique perspective as many educational leadership books are written by professionals who have spent their entire lives in education.

Comparison to Fullan

True Leadership can be compared to Michael Fullan’s *Leading in a Culture Change*. Both these leadership books are incredibly relevant in today’s culture, and both highlight ways that leaders can become more effective. Both Dr. David Samore and Michael Fullan discuss having clear channels and procedures for communication.

Fullan suggests five components of leadership while Samore offers ten Universal Laws. Both authors make intersecting points and remarkably similar ideas supporting good leadership practices. Fullan and Samore both highlight the importance of relationship building and bringing people together in organization to support a common cause or moral purpose.

While Fullan’s text focuses on mostly on school examples and would be most supportive to administrators in a school setting, Samore’s text could be more relevant to other professionals outside of education based on the context he provides through his examples. Overall, both Fullan and Samore’s texts are complimentary to one another. Both texts would be wonderful for any school professionals.

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