

**The Journal
of the
International Association
of
Special Education**



**Spring 2008
Vol. 9, No. 1**

**Eleventh Biennial Conference
Alicante, Spain**

July 12 -16, 2009

*Official Journal
of the
International Association of Special Education*

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Printed by: Northern Arizona University Printing Services
P.O. Box 6014, Flagstaff, Arizona 86011-6014
(928) 523-1941 printing.services@nau.edu

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Note from the Editors

Welcome to the 2008 edition of *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education* (JIASE). This is the fourth issue of The JIASE that is being supported in part for publication by the College of Education at Northern Arizona University (NAU) in Flagstaff, Arizona, USA.

We feel it has been a privilege and honor to work with the authors that have contributed to this issue. In addition, we would like to introduce a new Associate Editor, Lynn Aylward. Lynn will be joining Malgorzata (Gosia) Sekulowicz in this position. As always our Consulting Editors have provided contributions to make the publication process possible by providing valuable feedback to the authors. Also, we would like to thank and more formally introduce Beth Bartolini, Ramona Carter, and Kate Haynes, our Assistants to the Editors.

Meet the 2008 Assistants to the Editors

Beth Bartolini received her Bachelor of Science Degree (1983) in Computer & Management Science from Metropolitan State College in Denver. After a 20-year career in strategy and technology consulting, she completed her Master's of Education degree (2004) and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in School Psychology at NAU. Beth speaks Spanish which she uses when assessing Hispanic/Latino students with suspected learning disabilities, and has research agendas in English Language Learner issues and supporting adult learners.

Ramona Carter received her Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara (1998) in Anthropology and her Master's degree in Special Education from NAU in 2008. She has eight years teaching experience; six of those years were in Maputo, Mozambique at the American International School of Mozambique. She plans to use her current educational skills and international background to develop and implement educational programs that reflect the cultural values of the local community to benefit her students.

This is Kate Haynes' second year as an assistant to the editors. Kate received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Wolverhampton (1999) in English and American Studies and received her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from NAU in 2005. She has three years of teaching experience in early childhood in Walsall and Wolverhampton, England. Miss Haynes taught students with a variety of disabilities from ages 3 to 11. She plans to use her current graduate work in special education to enable her to better serve the students in her classroom with special needs.

Bernadeta Szczupal has completed an extended review of the 2007 issue of The JIASE. We would like to acknowledge her efforts in making the information in our journal accessible in the Polish language. The complete reference to her journal review is listed as follows:

Szczupal, B. (2007). *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education*: Spring 2007, volume 8, number 1. *Człowiek -Niepełnosprawność -Społeczeństwo*, 2(6), 148-165.

It is with regret that we have to include a special note regarding our 2006 issue; you will find the authors' note following to explain the situation. In July 2009 we hope to see you at the 11th Biennial conference in Alicante, Spain. We are excited about the planning and collaboration efforts with the University of Alicante.

Sincerely,

Greg Prater, Editor

Jamie Timmerman, Managing Editor

Note from Authors: Yanhui (Angela) Pang and Dean Richey

The manuscript titled “China’s Challenge for the Future: Family Centeredness in Early Childhood Special Education” published in Volume 7 of JIASE (pages 11-21) contains an egregious error the authors would like to address. The first author, Angela Yanhui Pang, reproduced parts of Hsia, S. T. H., McCabe, H., & Li, B.J. (2003). Cultural issues and service provision in rural areas: People’s Republic of China. In S.L. Odom, M. J. Hanson, J. A. Blackman, and S. Kaul (Eds.), *Early intervention practices around the world* (pp. 28-47). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

While the second author was unaware of the misuse of Hsia, et al.’s work, both authors take responsibility for the article and apologize to Drs. Hsia, McCabe, and Li. The authors would also like to extend their regrets to The JIASE for compromising the reputation of the journal, and the JIASE audience for the inappropriate representation of scholarly research.

Special Education Law in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental right for all children which must be guaranteed in every nation. Unfortunately, children with disabilities have been marginalized in many countries preventing them from accessing an appropriate education. Although some countries have legislation that guarantees educational rights to children with disabilities, some of the laws are not comprehensive enough to ensure that these children benefit from their educational experience. Hence, for many children with disabilities the educational experience does not guarantee them positive adult outcomes. However, some industrialized countries, like the United States of America (USA), have made significant progress in this area by establishing comprehensive laws to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities to education are guaranteed through provisions that entitle them to an appropriate education. Because of this, the author uses the special education law in the USA as a benchmark in examining special education law in Zimbabwe, albeit the USA is not being treated as a gold standard but just a model.

Introduction

In June of 1994 at a meeting in Salamanca Spain, the Salamanca Statement was adopted by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations and reaffirmed the right of every child to an acceptable education regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic characteristics (UNESCO, 1994). Two years after the Salamanca conference, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1996) published results of a global survey which showed that of the 52 member countries that were surveyed, 48 indicated having legislation pertaining to special education while the remainder reported having proposals in progress. While the presence of special education legislation in many countries is an important development in guaranteeing education for every child, it is equally important for the children with disabilities, their parents, and their service providers to be aware of and also understand these regulations because the regulations shape the way those societies treat people with disabilities (Turnbull, 2005). The field

of special education is long established and well developed in the USA: using the special education legislation in the USA as a benchmark, the author systematically examines the legislation and policy of special education in Zimbabwe and makes specific inferences regarding the nature of Zimbabwean special education. However, this in no way suggests that the Zimbabwean legislation should be a replica of the USA law but instead identifies areas that need attention in Zimbabwe based on what has emerged as best practices in the USA. The author is Zimbabwean and has lived, studied, and worked as an educator in both Zimbabwe and the USA and thus draws from that experience in examining the two systems of special education.

The American Individuals Education Act vs. The Zimbabwean Special Education Legislation and Policies

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation is a landmark piece of legislation that has governed the education of students with disabilities in the USA for over 30 years now.

Since its enactment many children with disabilities have gained access to education and success, many have graduated from high school, many have completed college and many have entered the competitive workforce in droves (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001).

The law has six fundamental principles which guarantee different educational provisions for children with disabilities. The principles are (a) zero reject, (b) non-discriminatory evaluation, (c) Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), (d) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), (e) parental participation, and (f) procedural due process. These principles will be examined and related to the Zimbabwean situation to see how Zimbabwe compares in addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities.

Zero Reject

This principle mandates that every child, regardless of their disabilities, is provided with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (Turnbull, Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2007). The principle prevents the exclusion of any students from public education. Hence, children with disabilities are entitled to an appropriate education at the public expense. In Zimbabwe, there is “no direct legislation pertaining to special education” (Zindi, 1997, p. 83). However, the Education Act of 1987 states that all children have the right to a school education. According to this law, no child, including those with disabilities, should be excluded from the public education system because every child has a right to education; however, Kabzems and Chimedza (2002) caution against misinterpreting the extent of this law. They argue that ‘all’ in most of these legislations did not include children with disabilities because historically these children were stigmatized and not considered to be part of the society. Nevertheless, in Zimbabwe today parents of children with disabilities can use this law as a legal basis for claiming the educational rights of their children, albeit the education is not free.

It should be noted that education is not free in Zimbabwe and parents are expected to contribute to their children’s education by paying school fees

Table 1

Sources of Funding for Special Education and Their Contributions

Source	Percentage Contribution
Public authorities	50%
Volunteer organizations	10%
Parents	30%
Donors	10%

Source: UNESCO (1995)

which are collected by the schools and retained at the schools (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 1996). Part 2 Subsection 6 of the Education Act states that minimum fees for education shall be charged in government schools. Consequently, special education is funded through a number of sources, such as public authorities, voluntary organizations, parents, and donors (UNESCO, 1995). A break down of these contributions is illustrated in Table 1. Although education is supposedly a right for every child, having to make fee payments can actually prevent many children from entering school. Zimbabwe was estimated to have an unemployment rate of about 80% and over 80% of the population were said to live below the poverty line (The World Fact Book, 2007). This situation puts many children, especially those with disabilities, at risk for failing to access school in a country where education is said to be a right for every child.

Non-discriminatory Evaluation

In the USA, this principle says that for a child to be eligible for special education services the child needs to be assessed first, to determine if the child has a disability and second, to identify the special education and related services the child will receive (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer, 2007). Because of

the bias inherent in most assessment instruments, the non-discriminatory evaluation principle requires the use of a battery of tests. In Zimbabwe the law does not address the systematic assessment of children for special education. However, the Ministry of Education (MOE) through its School Psychological Services (SPS) is responsible for assessment and placement of children into appropriate programs (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). The failure of the law to regulate the assessment and identification of children with disabilities results in many children with disabilities not being discovered (Csapo, 1986). Hence many children with disabilities, such as mental retardation for example, end up sitting in the regular class without any specialized services and supports, thereby failing to benefit from the education. As such, although the law makes education a right for every child, some children are denied a chance to benefit from the education because they are not identified since the law is silent on the assessment of these children for specific disabilities.

Individualized Education Program

According to IDEA, in order to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education, an IEP must be developed for every child 3 to 21 that has been diagnosed as having a specific disability (Smith, 2007). An IEP is a roadmap which guides the education of each student with a disability. It is developed by a team which should be comprised of the parents, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a school district representative, an individual who can interpret the results of any evaluations, and the student him-/herself where appropriate (Turnbull, Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2007). The IEP should include a description of the student's current level of performance, measurable annual goals individualized for the student, a description of how the student's progress towards meeting the annual goals will be evaluated, a description of the special education, related services and assistive technology the student should be provided with, and an explanation of the extent to which the student will

participate with non-disabled peers in the regular classroom (Gibb & Dyches, 2007).

The law in Zimbabwe does not guarantee an individualized education program to children with disabilities. Instead, Circular No. 3/89 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1989) makes the regular school curriculum mandatory for every child but does not provide for individualized instruction. According to this policy the regular curriculum should be broad enough to meet the special needs of students with disabilities (Peresuh, & Barcham, 1998). Nevertheless, because of the availability of resource rooms and special classes in a few schools, students with disabilities who qualify for these placements often receive additional support within these placements. Hence, a student with visual impairment, for example, would use a resource room for Braille training or mobility orientation (Peresuh, & Barcham, 1998). However, the concept of individualized instruction in Zimbabwe only goes this far. For students who need assistive technology, the Zimbabwe Policy Statement on Special Education "committed the government to procurement of equipment, funds permitting" (Peresuh & Barcham, p. 79). This statement does not guarantee assistive technology for students with disabilities who need it. Apart from being a mere policy statement, it does not bind the government to ensure that an appropriate education is provided to every child with a disability. In short, one can say in Zimbabwe the law does not entitle children with disabilities to an individualized program of instruction.

The Least Restrictive Environment

After a child's IEP is developed, IDEA requires the school to place the child in the LRE. LRE means that the student with disabilities should be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate and that removal from the regular classroom to other placements like resource rooms, special classes or separate schooling should take place only when necessary (Gibb & Dyches, 2007). IDEA prescribes a continuum of placements starting with the general education classroom, the least

restrictive, and ending with the most restrictive residential placement (Raymond, 2004). A child should only be removed from the regular classroom for as long as necessary and replaced back as quickly as possible. This principle ensures that every child with a disability benefits from their educational program.

In Zimbabwe there is a policy of integration which was introduced in 1987. This policy was designed to ensure that children with disabilities have equal opportunities in the regular schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1987). However, Policy Circular 36/1990 states that “students with severe to profound disabilities may be placed in a special school, whereas those with mild to moderate levels are more likely to be placed in an ordinary school” (Oakland, Mpofu, Glasgow, & Jumel, 2003, p. 71). Policy Circular 36/1990 also states that students can be placed in any of the following placements based on the level of their disability: special classes, resource rooms, and special schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1990). However, the policy is not clear on how placement decisions are made. As such, in most cases the availability of these placement options determines a child’s placement more than the child’s need (Oakland et al, 2003). The result is that many children may not have access to appropriate placements.

Parent Participation

Research and practice have demonstrated that educational effectiveness is enhanced when parents and families of children with disabilities are involved in the education of their children (Heward, 2006; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001). Consequently, IDEA requires collaboration between schools and families of children with disabilities. According to the law, parents have to be notified of meetings before they are held; they must give their consent before evaluations are done; they have to be part of the IEP team; and they should receive reports on their child’s progress just as parents of students without disabilities do (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001). In other words, IDEA makes it mandatory that parents must be central

to all decisions during the evaluation, planning and placement process (Raymond, 2004). This provision ensures that children with disabilities benefit from their educational experience because parental participation will help to align a student’s educational goals with both their current and future needs.

There appears to be no legislation regulating the participation of parents in the education of their children with disabilities in Zimbabwe. However, the Zimbabwe government reports that student assessments are only conducted if parents of the affected children consent to those assessments and that parents and school teachers discuss results of those assessments and collaborate in designing education programs for these children (UNESCO, 1995). The government also reports that “special education teachers are required to pay home visits once a term for each child” (UNESCO, 1995, p.224). Although this may be a requirement by the government, there is no legal basis to guarantee this provision. Not surprisingly, parents are not frequently involved in the assessments of their children (Oakland et al., 2003). Even so, the once-per-term home visits mentioned are far from adequate, especially for special needs children.

Procedural Due Process

This IDEA principle provides procedural safeguards to ensure that parents are equal partners in the education of their children with disabilities (Katsiyannis, Yell & Bradley, 2001). It promotes and protects accountability between parents and schools. If parents disagree with a school on issues pertaining to identification, evaluation, placement or the provision of FAPE, they have a right to request a due process hearing (Katsiyannis, Yell & Bradley, 2001). Due process, therefore, guarantees parents procedural safeguards as they work with schools to make sure that their children get a FAPE.

It has already been noted that there is no law in Zimbabwe regulating the participation of parents of students with disabilities in the special education process. Besides, parents who disagree with any aspect of the special education process

Table 2

Special Education Area Covered and the Specific Laws and Policies

Special Education Area Covered	USA Law	Zimbabwe Law or Policy
Right to Education	IDEA – Zero Reject: All children with disabilities are entitled to a FAPE	The Education Act (1987): All children have the right to a school education
Access to Educational & Employment Facilities	ADA (1990): Guarantees equality in terms of access to transportation, job information, government documents and reports to the socio-economic environment	Disabled Persons Act (1992): Guarantees every child with disabilities access to public premises, services, amenities, and employment
Identification Assessment	IDEA – Non-discriminatory Evaluation: Mandates non-discriminatory evaluation to determine eligibility for special education	No Law: The MOE is responsible for assessment and placement of children into appropriate programs
Placement	IDEA – LRE: Students with disabilities should be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate and removal from the regular classroom to placements should take place only when necessary	Policy of Integration (1987) Policy Circular 36/1990: Students can be placed in any of the following placements based on the level of their disability: special classes, resource rooms, and special schools
Individualized Instruction	IDEA – IEP: An IEP must be developed for every child 3 to 21 to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education	Circular No. 3/89: Makes the regular school curriculum mandatory for every child; does not provide for individualized instruction; regular curriculum should be broad enough to meet the special needs of students with disabilities
Parental Participation	IDEA – Parental Participation: Requires collaboration between schools and families of children with disabilities; parents must be notified of meetings before they are held; they must give their consent before evaluations are done; they have to be part of the IEP team; and they should receive reports on their child's progress	No Law: The government requires: parental consent to precede all student assessments; parents and school teachers to discuss results of those assessments and collaborate in designing education programs; special education teachers to pay home visits once every term for each child
Due Process	IDEA – Due Process: Provides procedural safeguards for stakeholders; If parents disagree with a school on issues pertaining to identification, evaluation, placement or the provision of FAPE they have a right to request a due process hearing	No laws or policies: There is no law regulating and safeguarding the rights of the stakeholders who should participate in ensuring that children with disabilities get an appropriate education

for their child have no formal recourse because the law does not guarantee due process as a way of ensuring appropriate educational goals. As a result, there is no establishment in the system to ensure professional accountability for providing an appropriate education.

The Zimbabwean Disabled Persons Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act

In 1992 Zimbabwe passed the Disabled Persons Act to protect the individual rights of people with disabilities. The law prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in relation to access to public premises, services, amenities and employment (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). It “made provision for the welfare and rehabilitation of disabled persons in all spheres including education” (Peresuh, & Barcham, 1998, p. 76). In short, this law guarantees every child with disabilities in Zimbabwe access to educational facilities among other premises. It is the equivalent of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), a landmark legislation in the USA which guarantees equality in terms of “access to transportation, job information, government documents and reports, and to both the built and socio-economic environment” (Golledge, 2005, p.95). See Table 2 for a brief description of these laws and policies.

Discussion

People with disabilities are still marginalized in many African countries. However, some countries have made significant progress to break away from this tradition. Zimbabwe is one of those countries that have been reputed as “the most disability-accessible countries in Africa” (Devlieger, 1998, p.26). This development may be attributed to the country’s laws and policies aimed at improving the educational outcomes and social and occupational interests of people with disabilities. According to Mpofo (2002), Zimbabwe, for example, “stands alone in sub-Saharan Africa for having disability legislation” (p. 27).

The law in Zimbabwe guarantees education for every child including those with disabilities. However, although the law mandates education for every child, children with disabilities still face challenges in accessing an appropriate education. Unlike general education, special education best works as an individualized program designed to address each child’s unique needs. Unless those unique needs are met, children with disabilities may not benefit from their educational experience because they will not be accessing an appropriate education.

Zimbabwe needs a formalized process for identifying children with disabilities. As it stands, classification is not mandatory for specific disabilities, which makes it difficult to establish the prevalence rates for different disabilities (Oakland et al., 2003). Besides, it is difficult to design an appropriate education for a child unless the disability and specific characteristics are identified. According to Oakland and colleagues, “most students [in Zimbabwe] who could be considered to be moderately to mildly mentally retarded are likely to be regarded by teachers as slow learners” (p.70). Hence, many children may end up receiving inappropriate services because there is no formally established way of identification.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe may need to establish a legal basis for accountability in the provision of educational services to children with disabilities. In the USA, for example, parents can utilize the due process guarantee to ensure their child’s educational needs are met. In Zimbabwe parents have no fundamental basis for their demands for an appropriate education for their child with disabilities. Besides, parental participation in designing educational programs is not mandatory. Unless all stakeholders (the child, teachers, and parents) are guaranteed equal protection under the law, the quality of special education services provided to the children will be highly compromised.

It has been noted already that Zimbabwe has no direct law on special education. The educational rights of children with disabilities are guaranteed under the Education Act which makes education mandatory for all children and the Disabled Persons Act which guarantees every child with disabilities access to all

public premises including educational facilities. Apart from these laws, there are several policies that guide the special education process. However, policies do not have the legal authority of the law. Zimbabwe, therefore, needs to move “beyond policy statements and to enact a law, or laws, which relate directly to special education” (Peresuh, & Barcham, 1998, p.79). Doing so would help children with disabilities to get an appropriate education which will optimize their educational outcomes and ultimately enhance their quality of life.

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A Cross-Cultural Study of Students' Behaviors and Classroom Management Strategies in the USA and Korea

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Abstract

The purpose of this cross-cultural study is to investigate comparative students' problem behaviors and classroom behavior management strategies for students in urban public schools between teachers in the United States and Korea. This study incorporated data collected from two different teacher self-reported survey questionnaires, the Student Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ) and the Teacher Surveys (TS). The participants were 116 American teachers and 167 Korean teachers who were teaching high school students. Descriptive analysis and content analysis were implemented to analyze data. The analysis revealed that there were differences in severity of student problematic behaviors and in student disciplinary procedures and behavior management strategies implemented by high school teachers between American and Korean school systems. However, owing to the characteristics of the cross-cultural study, one should be cautious to generalize these findings to other settings because of some intrinsic cultural and historical factors.

Introduction

Over the years, the problem of student discipline in public schools has been a cause for concern to both educators and the public. Improving student discipline and classroom management skills has been considered the most imperative task in the minds of educators. Chronically deviant, disruptive, defiant, withdrawn or aggressive young people usually tend to possess minimal social or functional communication skills. Such student maladaptive behaviors often are difficult to manage even in one-on-one situations (Macciomei, 1999). Despite the implementation of numerous student behavior management strategies, many teachers continue to search for more effective and suitable classroom behavior management practices. Furthermore, the educational environment has been changing as our society has become more diverse and complex in our values, standards, and

vision for educational practice. Thus, a conventional discipline approach has its limitations in coping with new types of behavioral problems produced by new generations because most conventional approaches are based on behavioral interventions developed in the 1960s-1970s. According to Bambara and Kern (2005), the conventional behavior management strategies are reactive, consequence-based, and short-term focused. The primary goal of this conventional approach is to stop the future occurrences of a problem behavior, thus, it relies on implementing punishing consequences after the student engages in the problem behavior (Bambara & Kern, 2005).

The primary teacher effectiveness has been measured based on the student's academic achievement. Teachers, however, identify students' classroom behaviors as a high priority for the success of students in educational environments and attribute it often as more crucial factors than academic skills

(Blanton, Blanton, & Cross, 1994; Myatt & Bullara, 1993). Student classroom behaviors impact the classroom climate and the extent to which the good classroom climate will cause all students to actively engage in instruction (Christenson, Ysseldyke, & Thurlow, 1989).

Classroom Behaviors and Students' Learning

A positive classroom climate is characterized by active and cooperative interaction between a teacher and students who are motivated. Otherwise, the learning experience may be jeopardized by the presence of students who are not engaged in the learning process. Also, school climate has been widely perceived as a critical factor in successful schools and a litmus test for student academic achievement. At times the misbehavior of one student or a small group of students tends to negatively influence other students or even other schools (Smith & Rivera, 1995). Furthermore, whenever educators spend excessive time managing student inappropriate behaviors, it is harmful both for students with and without behavioral problems because it forces teachers to devote invaluable instructional time to the misbehaviors and decreases the benefit of learning opportunities for other students. Thus, as the educational environments have become complicated and difficult, the drastic need for classroom behavior management strategies has been widely recognized by many educators, owing to the characteristics of changing students (Macciomei, 1999).

Dilemma with Behavior Management

Most public schools have attempted to educate all students utilizing traditional activities and instructional methods. The conventional classroom management strategy, however, may not work because of differences in student characteristics. Thus, many educators have admitted that the student discipline plan is the most complicated and challenging task for them (Kerr & Nelson, 1998).

Although teachers and administrators have looked for effective methods to help handle classroom

discipline, many educational researchers still search for better disciplinary practices. As a matter of fact, all school systems intrinsically have some degree of behavior problems no matter what kinds of effective and efficient behavior management strategies they have implemented. The most important fact today is that many schools have experienced a higher proportion of students' problematic behaviors such as oppositional, depressive, disruptive, aggressive and even more destructive antisocial behaviors (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Even though many teachers have allocated excessive time to handle inappropriate student behaviors engaging in conflicting situations, frequently they become discouraged and frustrated or even leave the profession (Levin & Nolan, 2000). They attribute their displeasure in teaching to their difficulty in managing students' behaviors. Curwin and Mendler (1992) reported that almost 40% of teachers left their job during the first year because of discipline problems.

Meanwhile, the high success of the students of Asian countries in international competitions has enhanced interest in their educational environments. Comparatively, classroom enrollment is large, but the compensation for this is a relatively light teaching load. Specifically, math and science achievement scores of Asian-American students are higher than those of American students, especially when it comes to the achievement of middle or high school aged students (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Leestma & Walberg, 1992; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Shimahara, 1998; Stevenson & Lee, 1991). If these results were supported with empirical research, from when and where did this accomplishment outcome originate? Does it come from a different instructional methodology, a different student behavior management strategy, or other causes?

The Rationale of This Study

As foreign-born educators, fortunately, the authors have had an opportunity to experience a different educational background between Eastern Asian culture and Western culture. Through this

process, the authors have observed some differences as well as common grounds in both educational systems. As every culture has developed its own unique tradition and values based on its cultural inheritance, the educational field has also been developing its own values, morals and norms to educate youth for a better future community. It would be beneficial for both educational systems to compare and contrast educators' beliefs and practices on classroom management strategies between American and Korean public schools in order to learn new behavior management techniques from different perspectives. In addition, this comparative study will provide an opportunity to make a contribution for both educational environments to reflect and to improve student discipline strategies, speculating its merits as well as demerits. As educators, the biggest challenge we need to encounter is stepping outside our own boundaries of orientation so that we can learn and develop more productive and successful ways of managing students' classroom behaviors from different perspectives.

Therefore, this study investigated comparative students' problem behaviors and classroom behavior management strategies for students in urban public schools between teachers in the United States of America and Korea. Through this process, this study can provide a comprehensive description of teachers' classroom behavior management strategies through the inter-cultural perspectives of both countries. Specifically, the study focused on finding what cross-cultural differences there are in student behavior problems observed and what discipline procedures and strategies are implemented by high school classroom teachers in urban American and Korean school systems.

Methods

Participants

One hundred and sixteen American and 167 Korean public high school teachers who taught students in an urban Mid-South school district in the United States and in a city school district in Korea

in the 2003 – 2004 school year were recruited for this study. Among the American teachers, 30% of participants were male teachers and 70% of participants were female teachers. Among Korean participants, 72% of participants were male and 30% of participants were female teachers.

For American teachers, 22% of participants had 1-5 year(s) teaching experience, 23% of teachers had 6-15 years teaching experience, and 55% teachers had more than 16 years teaching experience. Whereas, 23% of Korean teacher participants had 1-5 year(s) teaching experience, 42% of participants had 6-15 years teaching experience, and 36% of teachers had more than 16 years teaching experience. The average year(s) of teaching experience for American and Korean educators were 18 and 12 years respectively. The average number of students in class in America was 26.1 and that of the Korean class was 34. The consent letters with ethical clearance were obtained from the participants.

Seven American and Korean schools participated in the study. There were 31 high schools in a Mid-South school district in the United States and 284 high schools in a city school district in Korea.

The Mid-South school district in the United States consists of seven board-commissioned districts. The racial composition of students in the school district was 87% African American and 9%

Table 1

Demographic Information

Information		American	Korean
Gender	Male	34 (30.4 %)	120 (72.3%)
	Female	78 (69.6%)	46 (27.7%)
Teaching Experiences	1-6 years	24 (22%)	38 (23%)
	6-15 years	25 (23%)	69 (41.5%)
	16 years +	60 (55%)	59 (35.5%)
# of Students in Class	> 20	19	
	20-25	18	
	25-30	33	30
	30-35	28	70
	35-40	10	66
The Average # of Students in Class		26.1	34

Caucasian American (Memphis City School, 2003). The student population in a Seoul City School District was characterized by a single ethnicity (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in Korea, 2003). Table 1 shows the demographic information.

Measures

This study incorporated data collection from two sources with analysis to address the research questions. The instruments were: (a) Student Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ) partially developed by Ahrens, Barrett, and Holtzman (1997) and (b) Teacher Survey (TS) developed by the authors. The authors altered the SBQ to respond to the unique characteristics of this cross-cultural study.

The SBQ had 11 forced-choice items about aspects of student behavior. It was designed to investigate the degree of differences in various behavioral aspects with students between the two countries. The question numbers 1, 2, and 3 were added to the original questions, and the format of the questionnaire was reorganized by the authors. For each item, 4-point Likert Scale was used: (1) *less than 25%*, (2) *26 – 50%*, (3) *51 – 75%*, and (4) *76 – 100%*.

The TS was comprised of four open-ended questions developed by the authors and reviewed by other researchers at a local university and a university in another state to determine validity. The TS was designed to investigate student behavioral aspects and teacher's discipline procedures and strategies.

All questionnaires were translated into Korean by each author and collaborately reviewed by authors and by two Korean-English bilingual researchers for the purpose of validity and reliability. Also, the English version survey questionnaire was provided to Korean participants for content clarification.

Procedures

The permission letter and the Student Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ) and Teacher Survey (TS) were sent to the administrator in each school to obtain

permission to collect data. After obtaining permission, the survey questionnaires were distributed to each individual teacher at the local school district and then were collected before the end of the school year.

Data Analysis

The responses of the SBQ and demographic responses were analyzed by descriptive analysis. The mean scores and percentages were calculated.

The responses of the TS items were analyzed by using content analysis. The content analysis involved the process of identifying, coding, and categorizing patterns in the data. However, since the TS items of this study were composed of the listing form of subject matters instead of narrative writing, the responses of each question were sorted by the main ideas and themes, grouped by the topic, and calculated by the percentage. The coded and categorized data were reviewed by two other researchers for the purpose of reliability and validity.

Results

The comparison of the trends of answered choices on each item between the two groups of educators follows. More American teachers ($M = 1.82$) had student behavioral problems than did Korean teachers ($M = 1.24$).

The Rates of Student Problem Behaviors

Students with disabilities and academically difficult-to-teach. Most American teachers (69%) and almost all Korean teachers (97%) reported that the rates of mainstreamed students with disabilities in their class were less than 25%. American teachers had more academically difficult-to-teach students (25% to 50%) than did Korean teachers ($> 25%$).

Behaviorally difficult-to-teach. None of the Korean teachers expressed that they had more than 50% of behaviorally difficult-to-teach students. The majority of Korean teachers (91%)

Table 2

Item Percentages of Teachers' Responses on Student Behavior Questionnaire

		1	2	3	4
Student Behavior Questionnaire		P	P	P	P
1. Students with Disabilities	American	69	17	4	10
	Korean	97	1	2	-
2. Academically difficult-to-teach students	American	38	35	15	12
	Korean	60	33	7	-
3. Behaviorally difficult-to-teach students	American	46	32	14	8
	Korean	91	9	-	-
4. No respect for themselves	American	43	29	22	6
	Korean	68	26	6	-
5. Difficulty working in groups	American	40	38	17	5
	Korean	74	21	5	-
6. Verbally abusive to others	American	45	28	17	10
	Korean	81	18	1	-
7. Physically aggressive to others	American	66	19	9	6
	Korean	93	7	-	-
8. No respect for other students	American	52	26	15	7
	Korean	77	23	-	-
9. No respect for adults	American	54	22	18	6
	Korean	66	26	8	-
10. No respect for others' property	American	52	23	18	7
	Korean	94	5	1	-
11. Do not think before they act	American	38	32	20	10
	Korean	73	22	4	1

Note. 1: less than 25%; 2: 25-50%; 3: 51-75%; 4: 76-100%

answered that the rate of these students was less than 25%, whereas 32% of American teachers reported that 25%-50% of their students were behaviorally difficult-to-teach and 46% of them responded that their rate was less than 25%.

Difficulty working in groups. American teachers expressed that they had more students with this problem. Approximately 41% of American teachers responded that they had less than 25% of students who experienced this problem. In contrast, 38% of American teachers had 25% to 50% of students with problems with group work, 74% of Korean teachers had less than 25% of students with this problem. Twenty-one percent of Korean teachers had 25% to 50% of students who had this problem in their classroom.

Verbally abusive and physically aggressive to others. The majority (81%) of Korean teachers had less than 25% of students who were verbally abusive to others stating that they used harsh, insulting language to their peers. In contrast, almost one-half of American teachers (45%) indicated that less than 25% of their students exhibited verbally abusive behavioral problems. Educators in both countries expressed that they did not have a high percentage of physically aggressive students. About 93% of Korean teachers and 66% of American teachers reported that they had less than 25% of this type of violent student.

No respect for themselves, peers, adults, and others' property. American teachers' responses were spread out over the three choices: 43% of the teachers picked less than 25%, 29% of them chose 25% to 50%, and 22% marked 51% to 75%. In comparison, 68% of Korean teachers had less than 25% of students who did not have self-respect. When reporting their judgment about the students' respect for others, more than the half of American teachers (53%) responded that less than 25% of students in their classroom show little or no respect for peers and adults, whereas, about 77% of Korean teachers responded that less than 25% of students exhibited this problem. The majority of Korean teachers (94%) reported that less than 25% of students did not respect others' property,

Student Problem Behaviors

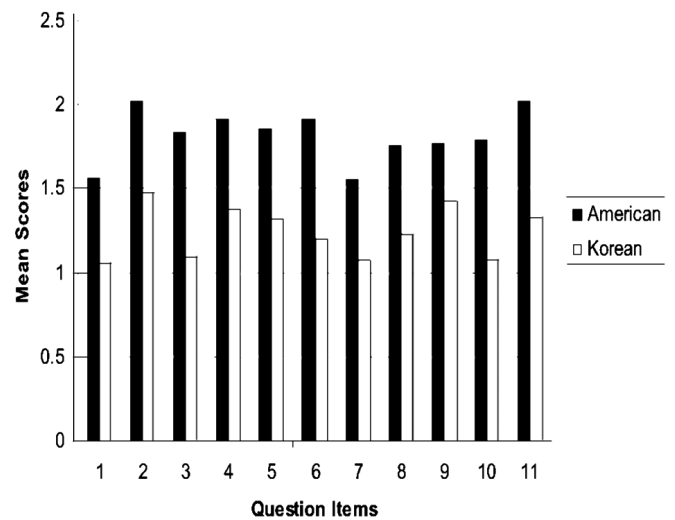


Figure 1. Comparison of student problem behaviors for both countries.

compared to 52% of American teachers who picked the same choice.

Do not think before they act. Regarding students who do not think before they act, American educators' responses were spread out to all four options, compared with most (73%) Korean teachers' responses that were concentrated on the less than 25% option. The mean scores from both groups of educators on the SBQ is given in Figure 1.

Types of Problem Behaviors Students Demonstrated in Class

Approximately 83% of American teachers and 89% of Korean teachers answered four open-ended comments. Various student behavioral aspects confronted by both educators were described with the comparison. The descriptor student infractions American educators had to deal with from most common to least common were: (a) students' truancy (56%), (b) inappropriate talking (48%), (c) disrespectfulness (40%), (d) the use of foul language (33%), (e) unwillingness to do assignment (30%), (f) disruptive behavior (22%), (g) the lack of self-motivation (18%), (h) violent or aggressive behaviors (11%), (i) unpreparedness for class (9%), (j) eating food during class (7%), and (k) cheating

Table 3

The Main Themes and the Frequency of Responses on Student Problem Behaviors

American Teachers	<i>n</i>	%	Korean Teachers	<i>n</i>	%
Truancy	63	56	Lack of Self-Motivation	77	48
Talking Without Permission	54	48	Disrespect & Insolent Behavior	63	39
Rudeness & Disrespect	45	40	Disregarding Rules	55	34
Foul Language	37	33	Negative Attitudes	27	17
Assignment	34	30	Smoking	26	16
Disruptive Behavior	25	22	Aggressive Behaviors	24	15
Lack of Self-Motivation	20	18	Disruptive Behaviors	22	14
Violent or Aggressive Behaviors	12	11	Sleeping in Class	21	13
Readiness for Class	10	9	Lying & Dishonesty	17	11
Eating During the Class	8	7	Boy & Girl Friends	11	7
Cheating & Stealing	8	7	Usage of Cell Phone in Class	7	4

and stealing (7%). Korean educators listed the following behavioral problems from most common to the least common: (a) the lack of self-motivation (48%), (b) disrespectfulness (39%), (c) ignoring rules and directions (34%), (d) negative attitudes (17%), (e) smoking (16%), (f) violent or aggressive behaviors (15%), (g) disruptive behaviors (14%), (h) sleeping in class (13%), (i) dishonesty (11%), (j) socialization issue (7%), and (k) the usages of cell phones in class (4%). Table 3 shows the main themes and the frequency of responses on student problem behaviors.

American Students Classroom Behavior Problems

The most common behavioral problem for American teachers was students' truancy (56%), which included students' tardiness, absence, cutting

class and skipping class. Most of all, excessive tardiness was the most frequent answer among those responses. 'Talking without permission' (48%) was the second most frequent response for student problematic behaviors to American educators. For example, 'talking during instruction,' 'talking out of turn,' 'excessive talking off topic,' 'talking back to the teacher,' and 'talking inappropriately about one another,' were all noted as frequent problem behaviors. Many of both educators pointed out 'rudeness,' 'insubordination,' and simply 'speaking out without thinking' as the most common offensive behaviors for teachers. The students' disrespectfulness was also a critical behavioral problem and placed third among other behavioral aspects to American teachers. Students' foul language such as cursing, verbally abusive language, berating/insulting each other, and profanity were other crucial elements

Table 4

The Main Themes and the Frequency of Responses on Discipline Procedures and Strategies

	American Teachers		Korean Teachers		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Administrative Intervention	72	75	72	75	121
Parent Involvement	70	73	70	73	83
Punitive Behavior Management Practices	53	55	53	55	76
Verbal or Non-Verbal Cues and Warnings	42	44	42	44	70
Conferences with Students	33	34	33	34	34
Behavior Plan and Positive Reinforcement Strategies	33	34	33	34	28
Seating Arrangement (proximity to teacher)	22	23	22	23	24
Establishment of Clear Class Routines	13	14	13	14	17

encountered by American educators. American teachers addressed that ‘assignment not completed on time’, ‘disruptive behaviors in class’, ‘violent or aggressive behaviors’, ‘unprepared for class’ (e.g., not having supplies and materials), ‘eating food in class’, ‘cheating and stealing other’s property’ were also types of student deviant behaviors they had to deal with.

Korean Students Classroom Behavior Problems

For Korean teachers, students’ lack of self-motivation was the most frequent response. For instance, many Korean educators remarked that ‘students are not willing to work,’ and ‘some students are not interested in anything.’ Some other teachers mentioned that ‘students do not want to study, have wandering minds, and judge they are just lazy.’ However, for American teachers, the lack of motivation placed seventh among students’ problem behaviors. Many Korean educators mentioned ‘disrespect’ and ‘insolent behaviors’ as two of the major student problem behaviors.

Disregarding rules and directions was one of the discernible concerns for Korean teachers. A dozen Korean educators indicated that students would habitually break the school rules and ignore teachers’ directions as well as instructions. Korean teachers indicated that ‘negative attitudes’, ‘smoking’ in school campus, ‘violent, aggressive behaviors’ to peers, ‘disruptive behaviors in class’, ‘sleeping in class’, ‘lying/dishonesty’, ‘socialization issues such as boyfriends and girlfriends’, and ‘the usage of cell phones in class’ were common misbehaviors they had to deal with.

Types of Behavior Management Strategies Adopted by Teachers

The most popular disciplinary procedures and strategies implemented by American classroom teachers were administrative interventions (75%), parental involvement (73%), punitive behavior management (55%), verbal or non-verbal cues and warnings (44%), informal conferences with students

(34%), behavior plan and positively reinforced behavior management strategies (34%), seating arrangements (proximity to teacher) (23%), and clearly established class routines (14%). Meanwhile, the most frequently used discipline procedures and strategies by Korean teachers were verbal or non-verbal cues and warnings (84%), informal conferences with students (55%), punitive behavior management strategies (50%), administrative interventions (47%), corporal punishments (23%), positively reinforced behavior management strategies (19%), conferences with parent (16%), and changing teachers' perspectives – keeping an open mind toward students and trying to comprehend students' situations or problems (11%). Table 4 shows the main themes and the frequency of responses on discipline procedures and strategies.

Types of Behavior Management Strategies Adopted by American Teachers

Administrative intervention. Among American participants, a number of educators mentioned administrative interventions as the most frequent behavior management procedure they implemented in the classroom. The administrative interventions included filling out disciplinary referral forms and sending the problematic student to the school office to request administrative decisions such as pupil services, detention, in-school suspension or home or board suspension. In addition, administrative interventions included referrals to the school counselor, guidance for students' school rule infraction for consultation, a conference with a parent and an administrator, or simply having the student stay in school office.

Parental involvement. Seventy American educators remarked parental involvement as the second most often used strategy for managing student behaviors in the classrooms. This included parent-teacher conferences, phone calls to a parent, and letters or e-mails to the parent. The third most often administered strategy was punitive behavior management. For instance, when students

displayed inappropriate behaviors, some remedial reinforcement procedures were implemented, such as time-out, the deduction of point(s) in grades, writing or creating papers to reflect their misbehaviors, removal of students' privileges, and extra/additional assignments.

Verbal and non-verbal warnings. Verbal and non-verbal warnings including the verbal reprimand and admonition were the fourth choice for American educators to manage students' behaviors. The implementation of verbal warnings was a significant strategy often implemented as a disciplinary procedure to prevent serious student misbehaviors. These admonitions were usually related to school rules and classroom rules as a corrective behavior reminder. Additionally, many educators emphasized the classroom rules at the first day of the school year to handle students' behaviors more effectively. Also some teachers indicated that a look of disapproval for certain behaviors made students more aware of the teacher's expectation.

One-on-one conference with students. A one-on-one conference with students was another intervention procedure for student behavior management, which included counseling a student individually at the beginning of school year. Also, positive behavior management strategies were suggested as established procedures. Using follow-up consequences and practical intervention strategies were effective to cope with students' certain misbehaviors and various offensive situations. A positive reinforcement behavior management strategy was also regarded as finding positive traits of the student and rewarding them for the appropriate behaviors. Some American teachers reported that they utilized students' seat arrangement and teacher's proximity to students in the classroom as a part of behavior management technique. A clearly established classroom routine was indicated as a key behavior management technique by some American educators. Only two American educators addressed peer assistance or peer tutoring as one of the student behavior management strategies.

*Types of Behavior Management Strategies
Adopted by Korean Teachers*

Verbal and non-verbal cues. The vast majority of Korean educators (80%) described that verbal or non-verbal cues and warnings were the most frequently implemented disciplinary procedures to manage students' misbehaviors. The verbal and non-verbal warnings included calling on the student to remind them of classroom and school rules whenever infractions occurred. Also, verbal or non-verbal warnings included verbal reprimands and admonitions, verbal corrections, eye contact and eye or verbal cues, and written verbal warnings. When Korean teachers intervened with the verbal warnings, they usually indicated students' problem behaviors and explained school rules to students. Also, Korean teachers usually tended to persuade the student to admit students' mistakes or faults.

Informal conference. The teacher-student informal conference was the second most frequently implemented choice by Korean educators to manage student behaviors. The communications with students, either through face-to-face meetings or written letters including e-mails, were primary intervention strategies for Korean educators. They would utilize these preventive strategies prior to requesting administrative interventions.

Punitive behavior management. Punitive behavior management procedures placed third in Korean education as one of the crucial behavior management strategies. However, the punitive behavior management was somewhat different from American educators'. For instance, point deductions from an attitude grade, writing or creating papers as punishment for misconduct, community services, time-out, physical punishment such as standing out of seat or push-ups, and cleaning up their classroom were used as punishment.

An administrative intervention. An administrative intervention was the fourth strategies that Korean educators implemented. Also, a corporal punishment was one of the unusual behavior management

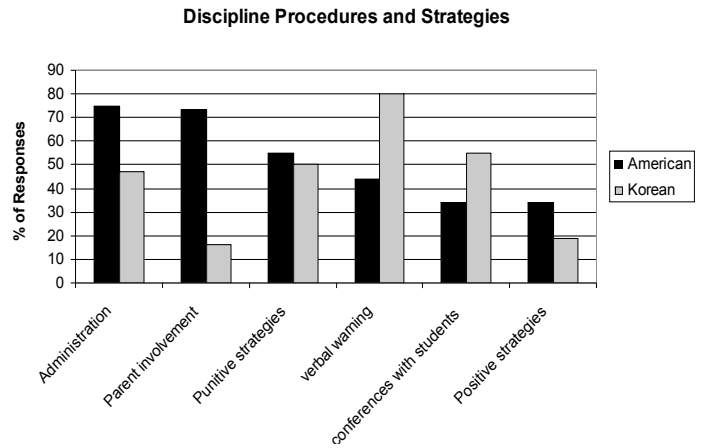


Figure 2. Comparison of teachers' discipline procedures and strategies.

strategies implemented by Korean teachers. Praises and rewards for desirable behaviors were also useful instruments for Korean educators to use as a corrective classroom behavior management strategy. Conferences with parents were also utilized by Korean teachers to manage grave misbehaviors. Parental involvement was the second most often used strategy for managing student behaviors in American classrooms. Meanwhile, in Korean schools, parental involvement was not as frequently implemented as in American classrooms. Only 16% of Korean teachers chose the parental involvement (conference with parent) as their disciplinary procedures and strategies.

Some Korean educators mentioned 'empathy' that teachers acknowledged to change their own perspectives by having an open mind toward students and trying to understand students' situations and problems. Five Korean teachers stated that, from time to time, ignoring misbehaving students was an expedient behavior management strategy. Two Korean educators reported that they trusted their students and treated them as responsible human beings and could gradually build constructive relationships with students. In addition, one teacher mentioned educator's using elaborate thinking skills to scrutinize what the underlying causes of a student's misbehaviors are. The percentages of responses on the main themes are delineated in Figure 2.

Discussion

Student Problem Behaviors

Despite more American teachers strongly believing that teachers should intervene in their instruction and student management (Shin & Koh, 2007), the data analyses showed that American teachers had more behavioral problems in their classroom. Unlike Verlinden, Hersen, and Thomas' (2000) concerns about school violence, neither group of teachers mentioned much about safety issues in student problem behaviors except physically aggressive behaviors such as bullying towards other students.

Truancy and interruptive behaviors (mostly talking during lessons) were the top problem behaviors for American teachers. However, Korean teachers showed more concern about the lack of self-motivation for students' learning as long-term life goals as well as the lack of respectfulness to teachers and peers. Korean teachers were more focused on academics as well as moral concerns about student behaviors (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Leestma & Walberg, 1992; Oh-Hwang, 1993; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Shimahara, 1998; Stevenson & Lee, 1991). Also, one unique comment from Korean teachers was the concern that students sleep in the classroom. Overall, American educators were more concerned about student daily routines, student punctuality for each and every class, the distraction during their lessons, and classroom climate or atmospheres as positive learning environments. Meanwhile, Korean teachers were more concerned about student self-concept, such as student internal motivation and determination, moral values, and student attitudes for their learning as well as behavioral aspects. None of the Korean teachers pointed out that they had truancy problems in their classrooms, surprisingly, resulting in the exact opposite for American teachers whose truancy problems were most severe.

Since Korean society is dominated by Confucianism, Korean schools are also concerned about student socialization issues, particularly 'boy or girl friends in schools.' Many adults have thought that

heterogeneous friends merely interfere with student academic development particularly in adolescent-aged students. This interference was problematic, especially in Korean high schools, because of the pressure of passing the college entrance examination as their short-term goal. Using cell phones in class was another different behavioral problem revealed by teachers in Korean high schools. American teachers reported that eating in the classroom was problematic. Since Korean students could have a snack during the scheduled 10-minute break and they stay in a designated classroom while their individual teachers come to them, this 10-minute break was something solely that Korean students could use for their own convenience.

Korean society is characterized as family-oriented since it is based on Confucianism. Among the additional comments in the open-ended survey, Korean teachers recognized that Korean society has more deteriorating family values than in the past. They indicate that the increase may be caused by parents' divorcing and children being raised by the single parent family. Many educators (Williams, Alley, & Henson, 1999) were concerned that a weakened family structure negatively influenced Korean students' academic motivation and caused their misdemeanors. Many Korean teachers attributed Korean high school students' deteriorated behaviors to change in Korean society. Also, many teachers complained that Korean students and parents did not respect their teachers like they did in the past. It has caused an increased number of authoritarian problems in Korean classrooms.

Behavior Management Aspects for Both Educators

Throughout the analysis of the teachers' reports on the classroom management strategies or procedures, in general, more American teachers adopted a third party's involvement (the administrative intervention and parent involvement) as behavior management strategies than Korean teachers. In American schools, once students were referred to the administrative discipline procedures, they were more likely to end up

with in-school suspension, home suspension, parent conferences, or at least isolation from class for a certain amount of time. Also, the results demonstrated that few American teachers implemented their own specific behavior management consequences in their classroom.

Meanwhile, Korean teachers were more likely to intervene directly in disciplinary procedures, such as student-teacher conferences and verbal or non-verbal warnings. As the power controllers, the Korean teachers appeared to intervene or control student problem behaviors in person without having a third party's assistance.

Ginott (1973) noted that the teacher's way of communicating with students has a great impact on the student's behavior. The findings of this research study support Ginott's study. Most Korean teachers implemented teacher-student informal conferences as their primary behavior management strategy and seemed to have a lower rate of student problem behaviors. In addition, some of the Korean teachers reported that they tried to better understand the student's situation rather than placing blame for the student's misbehavior itself. As Ginott addressed, there were strong linkages between the way teachers speak to students and the way students behave in return.

Korean teachers demonstrated Dreikurs' (1982) approach was effective by using discipline techniques through more democratic classrooms. Korean teachers appeared to implement less controlled strategies during their instruction and student management but used more communication-based discipline, providing verbal warnings before they punished their students. However, when infractions repeatedly occurred, most Korean teachers appeared to prefer punitive consequences rather than the implementation of systematic behavior management techniques. As Charles (1996) previously mentioned, the rules-reward-punishment approach seemed to be established by the Korean educators. Thus, it was not clear if Korean students acquired a sense of belonging in the more flexible classroom circumstances rather than American students.

Both teacher groups frequently implemented the type of discipline, demonstrating body language advocated by Jones' (1979). They adopted almost every body language procedure listed in Jones' study. Verbal and non-verbal warnings were usually utilized with the student's name being called and reminded of classroom and school rules.

In Korean schools, teachers were more directly involved in students' behavior management. An administrative role as a teacher was viewed as Korean teachers' additional professional responsibility in education. Each teacher was assigned as a professional in one of the following departments: student management, the curriculum and instruction, or communications. The teachers in the department of student management had a primary responsibility to handle all disciplinary matters. Since teachers in the department of student management also had their own classes to teach, other classroom teachers could not send their misbehaving students to the teachers of the department of student management during the school day. Usually, the department of student management handled serious student problem behaviors after school. Therefore, managing students' classroom misbehaviors during the class period became primarily the classroom teachers' own responsibility.

The punitive behavior management procedure was somewhat different from American educators'. Korean students usually stayed in one homeroom classroom all day, and teachers moved to each classroom to deliver their lessons. Congruently, keeping their classroom environment clean is one of the major issues in Korean schools because they do not have any janitorial personnel in school and classroom cleanliness is students' responsibilities. Teachers used this as a punishment device for student's misbehaviors or truancy.

One of most distinguished differences in disciplinary procedure between the two countries was corporal punishment in Korean classrooms. By observing Korean high school teachers' office (all teachers gathered in a huge teachers' office while they are not teaching before and after schools and during a 10-minute break and lunch break), many Korean

teachers held a disciplinary rod when they went to the classrooms for subject teaching. Even if the Korean teachers need not physically practice aversive stimuli or corporal punishment, they appeared to warn students to be alert against any inappropriate conducts in the classroom. This technique shows that Korean teachers are using Kounin's (1977) '*ripple effect*' as a behavioral management technique.

One of the unique student management strategies addressed by Korean high school teachers was the use of senior student monitors. Early in the morning these students stood at the school entrance with a teacher who assessed student attitudes, monitored students' uniform dress code and hair styles, and checked tardy students. This peer pressure or monitoring was another behavior management approach in Korean education.

Korean schools were highly test-oriented for college; thus, student behavioral aspects seemed less spotlighted than the other subject matters. Moreover, another aspect in comparing both educational systems is the presence of police officers in schools. None of the Korean high schools had residential police officers in the school building, nor any metal detectors and security systems at the entrance doors. Even though Korean classroom teachers did not have much administrative assistance when disciplinary action was implemented, the teachers tried to settle conflict situations alone, emphasizing inherent student internal motivations and autonomy (Gordon, 1989). According to Gordon's disciplinary theory, effective discipline cannot be achieved with punitive reactions. However, Korean educators contradictorily practiced to encourage students' own inner sense of self-control as well as to implement punitive strategies at the same time.

Conclusions and Implications

An internal and external factors may be considered to explain the results. The internal factor can be addressed as the individual and personal characteristics of both the groups of participants. According to the data analysis, there was a certain pattern or tendency of responses in the two groups

of educators. This tendency could be related to the difficulties of interpretation to capture a true meaning of the survey contents.

One of the most crucial factors to influence this study was that the systems of both societies are definitely different. For instance, the Korean society has been heavily influenced by Confucianism tradition. Confucianism emphasizes its traditional values rather than developing new ideas (Rhee, 1995). The core of Confucianism is characterized by its hierarchical human relationships. Thus, educational thoughts and philosophies have naturally reflected in this hierarchical or patriarchal Korean society. Accordingly, teachers' authority is viewed as an undeniable premise by most Korean students.

Meanwhile, American society was founded on individuality and equality rather than collectivity and hierarchy. Therefore, an individual's right has been perceived as one of the most essential ingredients in democratic society. Obviously, it has had a significant impact on expanding individual civil rights. In essence, the equality of human rights has influenced the education field in the United States. The concept of equal relationships with a teacher and a student would be inevitably applied to behavior management process. This liberal and progressive trend has been reflected in student disciplinary practices in developing more humanistic and democratic behavior management strategies than simply enforcing coercive authoritarian leaderships. Superficially, even though American teachers appeared to be more teacher-centered and interventionist oriented, they are more obsessed with intervention and controlling students in this equalized relationships in the classroom environment because of the cultural and historical factors.

Limitations of This Study

There were several limitations to this study. First of all, an obvious limitation of this study was that it relied on only teachers' self-reported data. It may be more preferable to use a variety of measurement tools, such as direct observation and interviewing participants.

This study may have a language effect since all questionnaires were developed in English and translated into Korean. In addition, there may have been some limitations in that Korean teachers' interpretation of questions was not exactly the same as American teachers. Because the school cultures and classroom settings were different in the two countries, some of the questions in the survey questionnaire might not have exactly made sense to the Korean teachers.

There might be some limitations in teachers' ability to respond to questions. Accordingly, teachers who had limited teaching experience might have more problems with managing student problem behaviors or using behavior management strategies.

This study did not clearly show how students with disabilities exhibited their behaviors in both countries even though both countries' classrooms had less than 25% of students with disabilities. However, American classrooms had more students who were difficult to teach than Korean classrooms. It might affect their instructional environment negatively; thereby it possibly skewed the findings.

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Breaking Barriers: Building Research Partnerships Between Special Education Teachers and Universities in Action Research in Singapore

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Abstract

Teachers have important contributions to make in applied research. Their classroom teaching, management and day to day observations of children with special needs and interaction with parents provides them with a vast pool of experience. Often teachers develop unique strategies for teaching and classroom management to cater to individual needs. Despite their expertise, in general, teachers are reluctant to be involved in research. This research investigated special education teacher's interest to participate in action research. A Likert Scale Survey was administered to Year One (n = 51) and Year Two (n = 52) teachers undergoing pre-service training in Special Education. The survey consisted of 25 questions categorized under (a) Interest to Participate, (b) Support, (c) Skills, (d) Practical Use, (e) Availability of Time, and (f) Opportunity and Networking. The percentage responses were calculated for each category of response. The results showed that the majority of teachers from both Year One and Year Two were interested to participate in research. Teachers were, however, concerned about the level of support they received to participate in research projects. Implications for future collaborations between teachers and University researchers are discussed.

Introduction

The importance of including teachers in the process of developing new school policies (or influencing their change) in the light of improving school curriculum, classroom teaching and environment through action research is well documented. It is through teachers' participation in research that we have learned that teachers can do more than teach, since they have valuable information based on a sound understanding of the needs of the pupils and the changes that are needed in the curriculum and classroom. Teachers have the ground knowledge of the day-to-day encounters in the classrooms that researchers may miss and as such form conclusions that may be masked by real experience. The role of the teacher as the receiver of information and merely a deliverer of lessons has changed. Given the teacher's unique position in the classroom and school

environment makes their involvement in research critical. Bartlett and Burton (2006) suggested that for action research to work, the questions must fit into the conditions in which the research is being investigated. In addition, the methods used should also fit into the working conditions of the researcher or professional (Grundy, Robison & Tomazos, 2001). By providing for localised needs, researchers would then be able to interpret the results based on the specifics of their situation (Greenbank, 2003).

The Power of Teachers' Participation in Action Research

The benefits from teachers' participation in action research has been well researched (Angelides, Evangelou & Leigh, 2005; Bartlett & Burton, 2006; Bello, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Day, 1998; Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2003; Rodgers, 2002,

Salleh, 2006; Stark 2006; Savoie-Zajc & Descamps-Bednarz, 2007). Teachers and schools participating in action research develop meaningful curriculum that translates into lessons for their pupils. In addition, teachers feel empowered when they can effect change in their school and classrooms. Angelides et al. (2005) reported that teachers developed a variety of teaching techniques and became aware of their ability to teach a subject well after participating in action research. The authors reported that teachers' feelings of stress and anxiety changed to interest in collaborations and willingness to pursue further research in the future. The result of such practices has certainly empowered teachers as they began to feel that their voice is heard and valued (Bartlett & Burton, 2006). Bartlett & Burton (2006) reinforced that the teacher's role should no longer be viewed as mere 'receiver of knowledge in school improvement'. The teacher should be considered as someone who is proactive in the school environment and professional practice (Grundy et al., 2001).

Singapore Mainstream Education Teacher's Participation in Research

In 1998, the Teacher's Network was launched with the primary aim to bring teachers together to share and discuss school and classroom practices and issues and hopefully implement change where necessary to meet the changing needs of pupils and schools (Tang, 2000; Tripp, 2004). Specifically, Teacher's Network was aimed at "(a) building a fraternity of reflective teachers dedicated to excellent practice through a network of support, professional exchange and learning, and (b) to serve as a catalyst and support for teacher initiated development through sharing, collaboration and reflection leading to self-mastery, excellent practice and fulfilment" (Salleh, 2006, p. 514).

To translate these aims into mainstream or regular schools, Learning Circles were formed. Teachers worked collaboratively to solve problems specific to their teaching and practice in their classrooms or schools (Salleh, 2006). While this is very encouraging, there is some scepticism in the success of such a

process. Salleh (2006) reports about the structural constraints that teachers in Singapore feel as a result of a culture which may serve as an inhibitor to them in initiating change to school policy and practices. Further, the author highlights that a culture where "...school leaders are usually not used to responding to teachers' initiatives that affect school policies and practices" (Salleh, p. 517) could also be a barrier to teacher's participation in action research.

Learning Circles has certainly made way for possibilities in action research as teachers are given time to work on research projects. The lack of time available for teachers beyond classroom teaching and school commitments has been reported in other studies (Day, 1998). In Singapore, teachers in mainstream education are required to fulfill 100 hours as part of professional development. Schools have creatively used these 100 hours for teachers to participate in action research (Salleh, 2006).

Special Schools and Teachers' Participation in Action Research

In Singapore, teachers in Special Education (SE) spend a great deal of their time with the children under their care. Their responsibilities include reading and making sense of clinical and/or therapist reports, understanding the Diagnostic Summaries of each child and translating this to meaningful teaching for each child in the class. In addition, preparation and delivery of lessons specific to the children's individual needs using Individualised Educational Plans (IEP) takes the bulk of time available to the SE teacher's daily activity. Preparation of materials for group work and learning corners are also part of the teacher's weekly routine. Given the uniqueness of the type of teaching materials required for children with special needs, SE teachers can spend a lot of time outside teaching time to prepare these specific materials. For example, in teaching self-help skills such as toileting, teachers will need to obtain pictures of the school toilet and wash area. These pictures are usually readily available for teachers. However, teachers would also want to help the pupil transfer this skill to the home environment and generalise

Table 1

Percentage Responses of Year 1 and Year 2 Special Education Teachers' Interest to Participate as Teacher-Researcher (N = 103)

Response	Year of Study										Overall	
	Year 1 (n = 52)					Year 2 (n = 51)					Year 1 & 2 (n = 103)	
	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing
I am interested to participate in research.	12(6)	23(12)	63(33)	2(1)	6(3)	25(13)	69(35)	0(0)	9(9)	24(25)	70(68)	1(1)
I am interested because I can link theory to practice.	12(6)	21(11)	67(35)	0(0)	8(4)	17(9)	73(37)	2(1)	10(10)	19(20)	74(72)	1(1)
I will participate if I have permission from my school.	10(5)	17(9)	73(38)	0(0)	10(5)	35(18)	53(27)	2(1)	10(10)	26(27)	67(65)	1(1)
I will participate if other teachers are participating.	26(13)	31(17)	43(22)	0(0)	45(23)	16(8)	25(13)	14(7)	37(36)	24(25)	36(35)	7(7)
I will be interested in participating in the future.	4(2)	16(8)	61(32)	19(10)	10(5)	25(14)	63(31)	2(1)	7(7)	21(22)	65(63)	11(11)
I would participate even if I do not know how to do research.	14(7)	31(17)	51(26)	4(2)	15(8)	31(16)	54(27)	0(0)	15(15)	32(33)	55(53)	2(2)

to public areas. This single task would translate to a teacher making visits to multiple sites to give the pupil a variety of real situations to apply the learned self-help skills. Often, teachers at the same level would share their materials. However, even this becomes impossible at times when all the teachers are teaching the same topic for the day.

A teacher's commitment to the pupils in the class is far from over when they return home. Time is also spent, sometimes, on long telephone conversations with parents concerning their pupil's progress or behaviours in class. A variation to the responsibilities of mainstream teachers, SE teachers are expected to meet up with parents to discuss the progress children have made in their class during case conferencing which occurs, on an average, twice a year. However, anecdotal observations suggest that SE teachers' meetings with parents occur up to 4 times a year (1 per term multiplied by 4 school terms), depending on the level of support required by the pupil. When we multiply the number of visits to a pupil's home by the number of students (averaging 8 per class for lower support needs), 32 visits a year is a large number of visits for any teacher to consider participating in research.

What time does this leave for SE teachers to reflect on their teaching and to commit to their professional development? Time is key factor in the action research process (Day, 1998; Keyes, 1999). Keyes (1999) reported that teachers felt that they did not have enough time to participate in research because of their workload. Day (1998) identified the teacher as the key factor for change or development of any kind. The author stressed that in order that the interest of the teacher in research is harnessed, support in the form of time, money and expertise should be provided to the teachers.

Similar to mainstream teachers, professional development forms an integral part of the SE teacher's career. Teachers in SE are expected to attend courses and workshops related to their school's educational focus. Professional development is encouraged via a compulsory 100 hours per year and some schools fund courses up to a maximum of S\$1100 per teacher per year. Encouragingly, although not the norm,

teachers who like to attend conferences either locally or abroad as part of their professional development are encouraged to apply and applications for special funding can be made through the school.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), Singapore has been very supportive of enhancing the professional development of teachers in SE through the Special Education Branch. One example is the MOE Innovation Grant (MIF) which schools could apply for through the same branch. Each year the MIF sets aside \$1 million for various projects from schools (see www.moe.gov.sg/speeches/2002 for more details on the MIF). However, it appears that the response from Special Schools has been somewhat slow. The reason for this is unknown, although one could speculate that the lack of time could be a factor which warrants investigation. Although both teachers in mainstream and SE have access to the Teachers Network and Learning Circles, the SE teachers' participation is not visible or at least not reported.

This study was designed specifically to study SE teachers' interest to participate in research with University lecturers and the reasons for their keenness or reluctance to participate as researchers. By identifying the reasons, factors that encouraged participation could be nurtured to develop a culture of research amongst teachers in special education.

Method

Participants

A total of 103 [Year ONE ($n = 52$) and Year TWO ($n = 51$)] special education pre-service student teachers participated in the study. Year ONE student teachers were enrolled in the one year full-time Diploma in Special Education while Year TWO were the part-time student teachers of the same course. Teaching experience in special education ranged between 6 months to 10 years.

Development and Administration of the Survey

A Likert Scale Survey (1 to 5; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5

Table 2

Percentage Responses Based on Available Time (N = 103)

Response	Year of Study						Overall																	
	Year 1 (n = 52)		Year 2 (n = 51)		Year 1 & 2 (n = 103)		Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing														
I have no time to participate in research.	Disagree	32(17)	Unsure	29(15)	Agree	37(19)	Missing	2(1)	Disagree	25(13)	Unsure	40(20)	Agree	33(17)	Missing	2(1)	Disagree	31(30)	Unsure	36(35)	Agree	37(36)	Missing	2(2)
I would like to participate if I am given time off work.	Disagree	8(4)	Unsure	26(14)	Agree	64(33)	Missing	2(1)	Disagree	12(6)	Unsure	11(6)	Agree	75(38)	Missing	2(1)	Disagree	10(10)	Unsure	21(20)	Agree	73(71)	Missing	2(2)
I have no time for training.	Disagree	26(13)	Unsure	39(21)	Agree	33(17)	Missing	2(1)	Disagree	25(13)	Unsure	33(17)	Agree	38(19)	Missing	4(2)	Disagree	27(26)	Unsure	39(38)	Agree	37(36)	Missing	3(3)

Table 3

Percentage Responses Based on Support (N=103)

Response	Year 1 (n = 52)						Year 2 (n = 51)						Overall			
	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing
I will participate if I am recognized by my school for such participation.	28(14)	24(13)	48(25)	0(0)	37(19)	13(6)	50(26)	0(0)	34(33)	18(19)	51(51)	0(0)	30(29)	22(23)	51(51)	0(0)
I will participate if my school is recognized for my participation.	26(13)	26(15)	48(24)	0(0)	31(16)	15(8)	54(27)	0(0)	30(29)	22(23)	51(51)	0(0)	10(10)	15(16)	78(77)	0(0)
I will participate if I am given continued support from the University researcher.	10(5)	12(6)	78(41)	0(0)	10(5)	19(10)	71(36)	0(0)	10(10)	15(16)	78(77)	0(0)	10(10)	15(16)	78(77)	0(0)

= Strongly Agree) was developed and administered to Year ONE ($n = 51$) and Year TWO ($n = 52$) separately. The survey consisted of 25 questions categorized under (a) Interest to Participate, (b) Support, (c) Skills, (d) Practical Use, (e) Availability of Time, and (f) Opportunity and Networking.

Data Reduction and Analysis

The frequency of responses for each item were calculated and then converted to percentages. The percentage responses calculated for Strongly Disagree and Disagree were combined as were Strongly Agree and Agree to provide a better understanding of teachers' keenness or reluctance to participate in research.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate SE teachers' interest to participate in research with University lecturers and the reasons for their keenness or reluctance to participate as researchers.

Teacher's Interest in Participating and Time Available in Action Research

The results strongly support the idea that teachers are interested in participating in action research (see Table 1). Irrespective of the Year of Study, 70% ($n = 68$) of teachers were keen to participate in research and 65% ($n = 63$) responded that they would do so in the future. In addition, 67% ($n = 65$) of teachers would participate with the permission of their school (see Table 1).

The fact that the majority of teachers in Special Education showed a keen interest in participating in action research is very encouraging (Brady, 2002). This is especially important when research has identified the teacher as the key factor in any kind of change (Keyes, 1999).

Although teachers were keen to participate, they did not have the time to participate (see Table 2). For example, Year ONE had slightly more student teachers who responded that they did not have time to participate in research compared with Year TWO

students teachers (Year ONE = 37%, $n = 19$; Year TWO = 33%, $n = 17$). Interestingly, the majority of teachers were motivated to participate if they were given time off work (73%, $n = 71$; see Table 2).

In general, student teachers did not have time to participate because they were overwhelmed with their current course work and juggling with family life. Other research has also reported that teachers are extremely busy with their daily teaching and preparation (Day, 1998; Salleh, 2006). Salleh (2006) said that time affected mainstream teachers from participating as researchers in Singapore. Although mainstream schools were creative in using the 100 hours set aside for professional development in Learning Circles, the time-consuming nature of research projects and a teacher's school commitments does not seem to be the right combination for action research to flourish. To avoid this from occurring in special schools and encourage teachers' active participation in action research, it is recommended that special schools could (in addition to allocating the 100 hours for teachers), use the school's Edusave Grant to buy into teaching time. For example, schools could employ specialists to run specific co-curricular activities to free-up time for the SE teacher to participate in research. Given that both principals and teachers are naturally concerned about their pupils' progress, having a specialist would mean that teachers and principals would be able to concentrate on the research knowing that their pupils were in good professional hands.

University lecturers could also factor in research assistants remuneration when applying for research grants and use this to buy into the time of the teacher's teaching hours. While this is a very good alternative, the mindset of organizations in Singapore will have to change. In Singapore, the current mindset is that teachers are employed to teach. While one would not discount that the teacher's profession is to teach, their roles have changed (Bartlett & Burton, 2006).

In addition, while teachers are interested in research and may somehow manage to take out time to do research and universities would like to offer remuneration, teachers are reluctant to accept this role for fear of being questioned about this alternative

Percentage Responses Based on Practical Use of Research Experience (N = 103)

Response	Year of Study										Overall		
	Year 1 (n = 52)			Year 2 (n = 51)			Year 1 & 2 (n = 103)			Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing
	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree				
I will participate if my pupils are involved in the study.	18(9)	27(15)	41(21)	14(7)	21(11)	33(16)	42(22)	4(2)	20(20)	31(31)	43(43)	9(9)	
I will participate because I can make changes in my classroom.	13(7)	16(8)	71(37)	0(0)	2(1)	21(10)	77(40)	0(0)	8(8)	18(18)	77(77)	0(0)	
I will participate because it will help me better understand special education.	3(2)	6(3)	91(47)	0(0)	0(0)	4(2)	96(49)	0(0)	2(2)	5(5)	96(96)	0(0)	
I will participate because it will link me to the University.	20(10)	37(20)	43(22)	0(0)	30(16)	31(15)	37(19)	2(1)	26(26)	35(35)	41(41)	1(1)	
I will participate because it will help me better understand the educational needs of my pupils.	4(2)	26(13)	70(37)	0(0)	0(0)	23(11)	77(40)	0(0)	2(2)	24(24)	77(77)	0(0)	
I will participate because it will keep me up to date with current developments in special education.	4(2)	14(8)	82(42)	0(0)	2(1)	7(3)	91(47)	0(0)	3(3)	11(11)	89(89)	0(0)	

source of employment beyond teaching. This could also be the reason why teachers responded positively to research if they had the support of their school (see Table 3).

One example where this change in mindset of accepting remuneration for staff occurred with the inclusion of an invited specialist to teach on the Diploma in Special Education at our university. Invited specialists accepted remuneration with the approval of their organizations. Often part-time lecturers opted to give part of their remuneration to their organizations since it was time out of their weekday working hours. Alternatively, organizations were open to staff working on Saturdays to make up for the hours they spent lecturing. These are viable options that special schools could also consider to encourage teachers to participate in action research with universities. Organizations view such links with universities as partners in education and consider this tie-up as a win-win situation in which the students, the university and the organizations all benefit from this collaboration.

Teacher's Interest in participating in Action Research based on Support

The results showed that both Year ONE and TWO student teachers would participate in action research when they had the support of their schools through some form of recognition (Year ONE = 48 %, $n = 25$; Year TWO = 50%, $n = 26$; see Table 3). When data were combined, 51% ($n = 51$) wanted recognition. Based on this result, it is suggested that the MOE, special schools and universities seeking to encourage teachers in special education to participate in action research need to include recognition as part of the incentive package.

Interestingly, more teachers became interested if they received the support of the University researcher (78% $n = 77$; see Table 3). This mentoring of the teacher as researcher was also highlighted by Bartlett and Burton (2006). Mentoring is necessary especially when teachers are not trained but are interested to participate in research.

Teacher's Interest in Participating in Action Research based on Practical Use of Research

The results showed that a large percentage of teachers would participate if they could make changes in their classroom (77%, $n = 77$), it would help them understand the field of Special Education (96 %, $n = 96$), understand the educational needs of their pupils (77%, $n = 77$) and keep teachers apprised with the current developments in Special Education (89%, $n = 89$; see Table 4). For example, teachers reasoned that through action research they could identify effective teaching strategies, develop programs, and increase their knowledge of new technology available in the market. In all, student teachers felt that if they were involved in action research they would then better understand their pupils. This response from teachers is supported by other research (Angelides et al., 2006; Bartlett & Burton, 2006; Grundy et al., 2001).

Teacher's Research Skills and Professional Development

The results showed that 59% ($n = 30$) and 68% ($n = 35$) of Year ONE and Year TWO student teachers would like to participate, but did not have the necessary skill to do so respectively (see Table 5). Irrespective of the Year of Study, although 72% ($n = 72$) were keen to learn research skills, 56 % ($n = 56$) would consider training in the future (see Table 5). The reason for this lower percentage response to training could be that teachers were attending the DISE course in the current study and this may have not been the right time to ask about further training. Based on this result, it is suggested that a larger study be conducted in special schools using the same survey instrument to verify this result.

The result of a lack of knowledge in research skills has been reported in other studies (Bartlett & Burton, 2006; Due, 2006). The majority of teachers in this study may not have had any tertiary training in research methodology. Based on this finding, it is recommended that university lecturers could include projects that require research methodology in their courses applied to field experience. This hands-on

Table 5

Percentage Responses Based on Research Skills and Professional Development (N = 103)

Response	Year of Study										Overall	
	Year 1 (n = 52)			Year 2 (n = 51)			Year 1 & 2 (n = 103)					
	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Missing	Disagree	Unsure		Agree
I would like to participate but I do not have the necessary research skills to do so.	14(7)	27(15)	59(30)	0(0)	13(7)	19(9)	68(35)	0(0)	14(14)	24(24)	65(65)	0(0)
I am keen to go for training to learn how to do research.	10(5)	25(13)	65(34)	0(0)	6(3)	17(8)	73(38)	4(2)	8(8)	21(21)	72(72)	2(2)
I have the skills to do research.	35(18)	51(27)	12(6)	2(1)	39(20)	40(20)	19(10)	2(1)	38(38)	47(47)	16(16)	2(2)
I am interested to go for training in the future.	6(3)	37(19)	55(29)	2(1)	6(3)	40(20)	52(27)	2(1)	6(6)	39(39)	56(56)	2(2)

experience applied to school or classroom teaching and/or assessment of children with special needs would expose student teachers to real situations while also providing them with introductory skills in research. Due (2006) involved student teachers in a joint project on inclusion in pre-school and the first grades of school. The author found this joint project with student teachers very enriching as teachers learned new skills in research, although it had challenges of its own.

Conclusions

The majority of teachers from both Year ONE and Year TWO were interested in participating in research. Teachers were, however, concerned about the support they received from their schools to participate in collaborative research projects with universities. Support was in the form of recognition by the participating school and the university researcher and time off work. Time off work was as expected given that SE teachers were heavily involved in their schools beyond classroom teaching. The author suggests that for action research to flourish, a change in mindset of organizations to nurture the already existing interest of SE teachers in research would be necessary. A mindset change would mean that organizations would have to think creatively to provide support for teacher's participation such as buying in time of teacher's daily teaching and consenting to teacher's being remunerated for their work as teacher researchers. In addition, special schools are encouraged to develop a culture of research within their schools by applying for the grants made available through the MIF which they could use for specific areas of concern that teachers raise about their pupils in the classroom.

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Post-Mao China: Educational Services for Exceptional Individuals

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Abstract

When William Moore, a Scottish Presbyterian pastor, established the first special school in China in 1874, the country began her long and circuitous journey toward establishing formal educational services for individuals with special needs. Special education in China developed slowly on the infertile soil of continual wars, political instability, and adverse economic conditions for about three quarters of a century. These services are now developing more rapidly in concert with economic reforms and the Open Door Policy initiated in 1978. Legislative and policy changes initiated by the central government have encouraged increasing numbers of exceptional students to enroll in elementary and secondary schools, with similar outcomes occurring in vocational education and higher education. Although recent achievements in providing educational services to exceptional individuals have been positive, further development of special education in China warrants systematic efforts in improving the quality of learning in regular classrooms, shortening the discrepancy between urban and rural areas, and promoting psychological services for special students.

Key words: educational services, exceptional individuals, special education, post-Mao China

Introduction

Disregarding the fact that China has a long civilized history and maintains a distinguished Confucian tradition of valuing education, modern special education had remained nonexistent until the 19th century when Western culture emerged into Chinese society during the colony era. After Chairman Mao founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China initiated systematic reforms in special education based on a Socialist approach by learning from Soviet experiences. In 1951, two years after the founding of the PRC, *Resolutions on the Reform of the School System* advocated that central and local governments establish special schools for

individuals with disabilities (Yang & Wang, 1994). Outcomes were encouraging as increasing numbers of special schools were established and exceptional students began to enroll in the public education system. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), however, all levels of education (special education, general education, and higher education) were negatively affected by tremendous political and economic turmoil. By the late 1970s, the Chinese educational programs lagged behind those of many other developed countries.

With major economic reforms and a new Open Door Policy initiated in 1978, China embarked on gradual evolution from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. The successful adoption of

major reforms in finance, taxation, banking, foreign trade, and investment fostered rapid economic development. Under Deng Xiaoping's leadership in the 1980s, the national focus shifted from class struggle to economic reconstruction. In turn, educational reform was recognized as the pathway to achieve needed advances in science and technology (Dual & Cheng, 1990). Increased supervision and enforcement of the new policies and regulations from both the central and local governments led to increased educational opportunities for all citizens, particularly in special education, which has experienced rapid growth in China since the 1980s.

With a population of more than 1.3 billion people (20% of the world's population), China also has a large population of individuals with disabilities. Major economic disparities between urban and rural areas, disproportional distribution of teachers and other resources, limited budgets, and lack of professionals with adequate training have made it difficult to address the concerns and challenges of providing special education services to China's exceptional individuals. Previous reviews (e.g., Chen, 1996; Deng, Poon-McBrayer, & Farnsworth, 2001; Yang & Wang, 1994) have addressed the development of special education services in China by tracing three major timeframes, including 1874-1949 (early stage), 1949-1976 (Mao's leadership), and 1978 to 1990s (post-Mao era). Although Post-Mao China has witnessed considerable growth in special education that is parallel to China's rising economy, systematic description and analysis that primarily focuses on the development of China's special education in the past three decades are sporadic. The current review focuses primarily on the most recent achievements in educational services for exceptional individuals in post-Mao China (1978-2007). The successes and challenges experienced in China may give support and insight to understand how a developing country like China with the largest population in the world addresses the educational needs of school-age children with disabilities.

Historical Facts Regarding Individuals with Special Needs in China

Pre-feudal society in ancient China had a positive record of helping individuals with special needs (Lu & Inamori, 1996). However, a sympathetic social attitude toward those with disabilities ended with the establishment of feudal monarchies during the Qin dynasty in 221 BC. Feudal monarchies recorded special laws but rarely provided educational services to exceptional individuals. People with disabilities occupied the bottom of the hierarchic feudal pyramid of social status that dominated China for more than 2,000 years. During that time, the care of persons with special needs was provided by the base unit of Chinese society, the family (Lu & Inamori, 1996). Traditional philosophies and religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism also supported persons with disabilities but without an understanding of their educational needs (Thurston, 1966).

Disregarding the early efforts to help individuals with disabilities in Chinese society, there has been no documented evidence indicating that special education officially existed in China until the late 19th century. The first documented efforts to provide for the educational needs of exceptional individuals in China were mainly attributed to European and U.S. missionaries. In 1874, William Moore, a Scottish Presbyterian pastor, established the first school for blind students in Beijing that aimed to provide its students with basic knowledge, living skills, and religious education (Deng et al., 2001). In 1887, U.S. missionaries Charles and Annetta Mills founded the first school for blind and deaf students, named *Qi Ying Xue Guan* (Enlightening School), in Dengzhou, Shangdong Province. They taught sign language and edited the first textbook for deaf students in China. Other European and U.S. missionaries and charitable organizations subsequently established special schools nationwide (Epstein, 1988; Yang & Wang, 1994).

With the fall of the monarchy in 1911, the government of the Republic of China assumed a “hands-off” approach by continuing to allow various charitable organizations to provide services to citizens with special needs. In 1949, however, with the founding of the PRC, specific governmental rules were enacted for the education and support of individuals with disabilities, and the work of European and U.S. religious and charitable groups was discouraged and soon disappeared. Under Chairman Mao’s leadership (1949-1976), the government attempted to expand facilities for exceptional individuals based on socialist humanitarian principles. This system was fundamentally influenced by the Soviet Union’s special education model because of the close diplomatic relationship between these two countries in the 1950s. However, the special education system developed slowly under Mao’s leadership because of China’s political and economic instability. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), many special schools were closed and a large number of students with disabilities no longer received educational services.

Laws, Regulations, and Actions to Enforce the Rights of Exceptional Individuals

Positive changes began to occur when the Special Education Division under the Ministry of Education was established in 1980 with responsibility to provide special education nationwide (Piao, 1996). In 1982, a newly revised *State Constitution* stated that “the nation and society should arrange employment, living, and education for the blind, the deaf and other citizens with disabilities” (The National People’s Congress, 1982, Article 45). In China, this was the first legislation to mandate the provision of special education. During May of 1985, an important document entitled *Decisions on Reforming the Education System* (DRES) was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The DRES instituted a Nine-Year Compulsory Education system for each Chinese citizen based on age, and the right to compulsory education for children with disabilities was further emphasized in the *Compulsory*

Education Law of the People’s Republic of China in 1986: “All levels of governments are responsible for establishing special schools and special classes for children and youth with disabilities” (The National People’s Congress, 1986). This law established both the responsibility of government to provide education and the rights of exceptional individuals to receive education (Chen, 1996). The *Compulsory Education Law* was viewed as civil rights legislation, opening the doors of the public school system to all children, including those with disabilities (Yang & Wang, 1994).

Meanwhile, the Gold-Key Education Project in 1986 integrated 1000 children with visual impairment into general education classes (Deng et al., 2001). This project helped to establish the policy known as Learning in Regular Classrooms (LRC). Upon the completion of a successful trial of LRC, the National Conference on Special Education in 1988 stated that “although separate schools would still be a part of the special education system, they would only constitute the ‘backbone’ of the system, and a large number of special classes and Learning in Regular Classrooms will serve as the body” (Gu, 1991, p. 7, as cited in Deng & Manset, 2000).

The 1990s brought a series of significant events for special education in China. A document entitled *Guidelines for the Development of Special Education* (People’s Education Publishing, 1990) was published and changes were made to existing legislation, regulations, and policies regarding exceptional individuals. The *Law on the Basic Protection of Individuals with Disabilities* was passed in 1990 and became the first law in China to guarantee the right to education specifically for individuals with disabilities. Major goals included improvement of both the quantity and quality of special education, implementation of compulsory education and vocational training, establishment of early intervention programs, and gradual development of secondary and post-secondary education (Chen, 1996). Regulations for implementing the LRC program were detailed in the 1994 *Pilot Project on Implementing Learning in Regular Classrooms for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities* (Ministry of Education of China,

1994). This program reaffirmed that the LRC model would serve as the key mode of the delivery of compulsory education for exceptional individuals.

Recent Efforts toward Education of Exceptional Individuals: 1987-2006

According to the 1990 *Law on the Basic Protection of Individuals with Disabilities*, “a disabled person refers to one who suffers from abnormalities of loss of a certain organ or function, psychologically or physiologically, or in anatomical structure and has lost wholly or in part the ability to perform an activity in the way considered normal” (The National People’s Congress, 1990). In addition, the term “persons with disabilities” primarily referred to “those with visual, hearing, speech or physical disabilities, mental retardation, mental disorder, multiple disabilities and/or other disabilities.” After the Cultural Revolution, the central government of China conducted nationwide surveys in 1987 and 2006 on the status of persons with disabilities. The following section depicts the major achievements indicated by the 1987 national survey and 2006 national survey to address overall improvement in special education. Highlighted are the development and changes in special education at different levels, including preschool education (before the age of 7 years), nine-year compulsory education (1st grade to 9th grade), vocational education (after 9th grade), high-school education (10th to 12th grade), and higher education (at or above college level). For school-age special students who have access to education, the majority receive education in regular schools, which is termed “Learning in Regular Classrooms,” and the rest of them receive education in special schools.

Data from the First National Survey on the Status of the Disabilities (1987 NSSD)

Data from the 1987 NSSD (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1987) reported that of China’s population of 1.1 billion, more than 51 million people had disabilities. In other words, 4.9% of the Chinese population, or approximately 1 in every

20 individuals, was reported to have some type of disability. The number of children under the age of 15 years was estimated to be 309.5 million, with the data showing that 8.2 million or 2.7% of this number had some form of disability. The estimated population of school-age students (6-14 years) was 6.25 million. However, in 1987, there were only 458 special schools and 576 special classes, serving 55,876 exceptional children, which was less than 1% of the 6.25 million children in need of special education at that time (Chen, 1996).

Statistical data from the 1987 NSSD showed that less than 1% (0.9%) of children with disabilities received education in special schools, with the majority (54.3%) of exceptional students receiving education in regular schools. Those children without schooling (44.8%) stayed at home or resided in institutions without formal education (Chen, 1996). Table 1 presents the percentages of exceptional children who attended regular and special schools

Table 1

Percentages of Children with Disabilities Receiving Schooling in 1987

Categories	Regular School	Special School	No Schooling
Visually Impaired	41.8	1.0	57.0
Hearing/Language Impaired	41.5	3.6	55.0
Mental Retardation	61.0	0.5	38.0
Physical Disabilities	59.0	0.0	39.8
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	41.0	0.0	44.8
Multiple Disabilities	16.5	1.1	82.4
All Children with Disabilities	54.2	1.0	44.8

in 1987 and those who did not receive formal schooling.

Currently, the special education system in China primarily serves exceptional students with visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, physical disabilities, emotional/behavioral disabilities, and multiple disabilities. Gifted students are often described as one subcategory of exceptional students, but they are typically not served by the special education system. The data in Table 1 reveal that learning disabilities, the largest of all special education categories in the U.S., were not recognized as a special education category in China in 1987. Although China might have underestimated the population with mild or borderline disabilities, the number of students in need of special education who were identified in the 1987 survey already presented a challenging situation to Chinese government. Waiting for the establishment of special schools and newly trained teachers might be an option. However, Li (1994) estimated that even if the existing teacher training institutes in China had doubled their annual number of graduates, it would have taken more than 1000 years to train enough teachers to meet the needs only of students with mental retardation (approximately 5 million in 1991). An alternative approach, such as learning in the regular classroom, was needed to increase the low school enrollment of individuals with disabilities, given such a large population and such limited resources.

Since 1988, the LRC movement has played an important role in helping exceptional individuals in China enter school settings. Although researchers and professionals have not reached a unified definition of LRC, some view it as equivalent to the Western concept of mainstreaming (Mu, Yang, & Armfield, 1993). Others maintain that it gives the majority of children with disabilities, who had in the past been excluded from any education, the opportunity to attend school, even though it does not consider whether the educational program is appropriate or an individualized education plan is available (Deng

& Manset, 2000). However, most researchers agree that LRC is a policy enforced by the government that allows exceptional children to go to neighborhood schools with their peers (Deng, 1991) even without a guarantee to an “appropriate” education.

Overall Improvement of Special Education

By 1980, there were 292 special schools in China serving 33,055 students, most of whom were deaf and/or blind. In 1992, special schools, classes, and students increased to 1,077, 1,550, and 129,400, respectively (Deng et al., 2001). By the end of 2005, special schools increased to 1,662, serving approximately 561,541 students (China Disabled Person’s Federation Information Center [CDPFIC], 2006). The estimated population of school-age special students (6-14 years) was 2.46 million (as compared to 6.25 million in 1987). The decreased number of school-age special education students might be partially due to the One-Child policy and overall improvement in public health. In 2005, 6.34% of the Chinese population (as compared to 4.9% in 1987) was reported to have some type of disability. The special education system was serving approximately 17 times the number of exceptional students as it did in 1980. By the end of 2005, the overall entrance rate for exceptional children and adolescents in compulsory education reached 80% for the three major types of disabilities (i.e., visual impairment, hearing impairment, and mental retardation) in comparison to the entrance rate of 6% in 1987 (CDPFIC, 2006).

Data from the Second National Survey on the Status of the Disabilities (2006 NSSD)

The second national census on disabilities conducted in 2006 (2006 NSSD) showed that the overall entrance rate of compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years was 63.19% based on nationwide sampling (National Bureau of Statistics

of China, 2006). The entrance rate refers to the percentage of exceptional students who reached school age (aged 6 years or above) and were accepted by the education system. Meanwhile, there were also 2.59 million adults with disabilities receiving different levels of professional education. Most impressive was that approximately 16,000 students with disabilities were admitted into higher education institutions.

Preschool Education

Although the Chinese central government focuses primarily on education for school-age individuals, the number of public and private early childhood intervention programs has consistently increased over the past two decades. The first hearing rehabilitation institution, The Research Center for Rehabilitation for the Deaf, was established in 1983 in Beijing. Similar institutions were later founded in large cities (Deng, et al., 2001). By 1998, there were more than 1800 hearing rehabilitation institutions across the nation (Qian, 1998). Meanwhile, private institutions for autism and other types of disabilities were gradually established in major cities. The central government has encouraged the development of international assistance for preschoolers. For example, Joseph Morrow and colleagues recently opened schools based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis for children with autism and provided yearly consultation and workshops for special educators in China (Morrow, 2005). However, preschool education for exceptional children has not been guaranteed by Chinese law or policy and is primarily provided in regions with a well-developed economy. Most preschoolers in rural and remote regions do not have access to formal preschool education.

Nine-Year Compulsory Education

The *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China* (The National People's Congress, 1986) guarantees Chinese citizens' the right to free public education from first grade to ninth grade, which is termed "nine-year compulsory education."

To provide quality services to exceptional individuals, the Chinese central government developed a series of 5-year programs as guidelines for special education. In order to ensure the quality of the implementation of designated educational goals in special education, China's central government relies on 5-year program guidelines to guide the general directions of special education during each 5 years. Disregarding the fact that special education in the US often serves a wide range of students, such as children with mental retardation, visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning disabilities, autism, and so on, it is important to remember that the Chinese government currently takes primary responsibility for education for children with mental retardation, visual impairment, and hearing impairment (Deng, et al., 2001). Children with severe disabilities who cannot help themselves in school and classroom environments continue to be in need of services. Comparing the Eighth 5-year (1991-1995) period to the Tenth 5-year (2001-2005) period, the school entrance rates for children with visual impairment, hearing impairment, and mental retardation increased from 23.1% to 66.6%, 51.9% to 80.6%, and 72.8% to 82.6%, respectively (CDPFIC, 2006). The overall school entrance rate for these three disability categories increased from 62.5% in 1995 to 80% in 2005. Figure 1 shows the increases in exceptional students admitted by schools, comparing 1991-1995, 1996-2000, and 1996-2000.

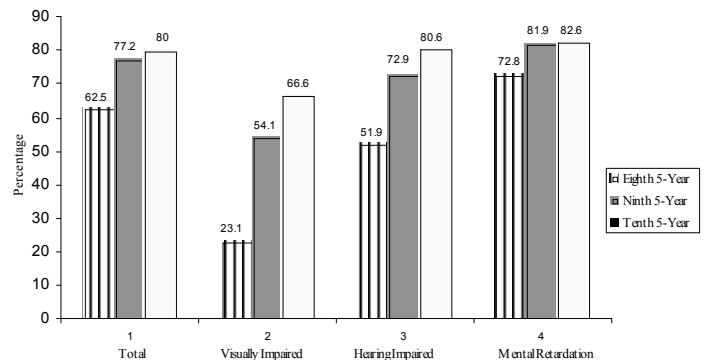


Figure 1. Entrance Rates of Exceptional Children and Adolescents in Schools during Eighth 5-Year (1991-1995), Ninth 5-Year (1996-2000), and Tenth 5-Year (2001-2005) Periods.

Considerable discrepancies in economic development exist between urban and rural, and Eastern and Midwestern areas of China, which are also reflected in uneven development of special education services. Based on the data provided by CDPFIC (2006), the provinces or cities that reached the enrollment standards of the Tenth 5-Year program were in the regions with rapid or intermediate developing economies. The state council divided China into three regions: developed (metropolises, large and mid-sized cities, and southeastern China), semi-developed (middle China), and under-developed (remote regions in western China; Deng et al., 2001). Those provinces and regions meeting the enrollment standards included (a) Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin (metropolises); (b) Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Guangdong, Hainan (provinces in southeastern China); (c) Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Shandong (northeastern China); (d) Hebei, Shanxi, Henan, Hubei, and Sichuan (middle China); (e) and Sichuan (southwestern China). All of the above regions have at least semi-developed economies. By the end of 2005, 243,490 special children were reaching school age but had no access to school education. Special children without schooling in western China were distributed among 12 under-developed provinces, making up 109,547, or 45% of the total of special students without schooling. Similarly, in the eight provinces in middle China with semi-developed economies, special children without schooling reached 89,828, which was 37% of the total. Other regions made up 18% of the school-age population without schooling. Overall, middle and western China, with relatively under-developed economies, reported higher percentages of special children without schooling.

By the end of 2005, the overall population of special children reaching school age but having no access to schooling was reported to be 243,490. This included (a) 34,560 individuals with visual impairment, (b) 43,701 with hearing impairment, (c) 66,737 with mental retardation, (d) 53,127 with physical disabilities, (e) 15,231 with emotional or behavioral disabilities, and (f) 30,134 with multiple disabilities. Students with visual impairment,

hearing impairment, physical disabilities, and mental retardation made up 83% of the total exceptional population that had reached school age with no formal schooling. Poverty was cited as the major reason for 207,123 special children with no schooling, making up 53.03% of the total school-age special population without schooling (CDPFIC, 2006).

Vocational Education

The vocational education system for individuals with disabilities in China primarily consists of independent vocational training institutes, vocational training programs affiliated with special schools, and vocational training programs affiliated with universities. China's central government specified detailed goals for each 5-Year program to ensure an adequate increase in the number of vocational training programs for individuals with disabilities. By the end of 2005, there were 1044 vocational training institutes for exceptional individuals established during the Tenth 5-Year period (2001-2005). This number represents an increase of 74 institutes compared to the total number of vocational training institutes during the Ninth 5-Year program (1996-2000). During the Tenth 5-Year period (2001-2005), there were 2.59 million exceptional individuals receiving vocational education and training, which indicated an increase of 0.08 million compared to the Ninth 5-Year period (1996-2000). In addition, during the Tenth 5-Year period (2001-2005), 110 special schools established extended vocational junior and senior high schools to ensure professional training. Associate degrees for people with hearing impairment are provided in Nanjing Special Education Institute of Vocational Technology, Changsha Professional Institute of Special Education, Chongqing Normal University, and Xi'an Institute of Art.

The focus of vocational education for individuals with disabilities in China is currently centering on the school-age population due to very limited resources. During recent years, there have been a few pilot programs which initiated vocational training for adults with disabilities. The College of Special Education at the Beijing Union University provides

adult education to those who are older than typical college students. On-line long-distance education has been initiated in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. However, such types of services are still at a very rudimentary stage.

Senior High School Education and Higher Education

Approximately 3,891 senior high school exceptional students were enrolled in 66 special senior high schools by the end of 2005, with an increase of 2082 students and 42 schools compared to the Ninth 5-Year period. Among these schools, 17 were serving 704 students with visual impairment and 49 were serving 3187 students with hearing impairment. During the Tenth 5-Year period, the higher education system admitted approximately 16,000 exceptional students (as compared to 6812 during the Ninth 5-year period) for an admission rate of 90%. It is important to note that the admission rate of 90% refers to the fact that 90% of those who completed college-entry examinations were admitted into colleges, but there were a large number of students who were not adequately educated to complete college-entry examinations. Higher education for exceptional individuals has a very short history in China. Only a small percentage of special students can reach the level of higher education, and they only have limited choices in certain majors at selected institutions.

International Cooperation in Special Education

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the Soviet Union model had a major impact on Chinese special education. However, after the Open Door Policy was initiated in 1978, Western and U.S. educational approaches, such as mainstreaming, inclusion, individualized instruction, and applied behavior analysis, began to influence recent trends in special education in China. For example, the idea of an individualized education plan and the use of functional behavioral assessment for children with disabilities have been introduced to China and have had a remarkable impact on special educators' practice. Some undergraduate programs, such as

the special education program at Beijing Normal University, have started using college textbooks that are widely used in the U.S. for undergraduate teaching in order to keep pace with new development in special education in the U.S. and European countries. In addition, an increased number of international education and psychology conferences have been conducted in China since 2000, providing opportunities for Chinese special educators and scholars to have access to effective strategies and programs. However, directly imitating U.S. and European models without considering the reality of China does not help Chinese special educators to find a quick fix for challenges and difficulties in current special education. For example, special students in the U.S. often have access to a one-on-one aide, which is impossible for Chinese special students due to lack of teacher resources. The other example is the utilization of Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Although many Chinese special education teachers have favorable consideration regarding the idea of providing individualized education to special students, they often have to generate a fairly simplified and concise version of the IEP due to the high demand of teaching loads (e.g., teacher: student ratio of 1:14-15) and student supervision. In addition, many intervention strategies (e.g., behavioral therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, interactive therapy) that are well studied in European and U.S. populations may not be automatically accepted by Chinese parents due to their lack of exposure to Western experiences. Although direct replication of U.S. and other European models of special education service delivery does not guarantee the same success in China, knowledge of and exposure to more advanced special education theories and practices will help Chinese special educators to keep pace with the latest developments in special education worldwide.

Discussion

How Much Progress Does The Data Represent?

Data showed that by the end of 2005, students with visual impairment, hearing impairment, or

mental retardation who were enrolled in special schools or special classes totaled 561,541, which was approximately 17 times the population served in 1980. However, the 2006 NSSD estimated the population of exceptional students, aged 6 to 14 years, at 2.46 million. Thus, approximately 22.8% of exceptional students were receiving special education in special schools or special classrooms, and the remainder of those receiving formal schooling were enrolled in regular schools. It is important to remember that regular schools in China primarily focus on the services for typically developing children and often do not have teachers who received adequate special education training or supportive programs to meet special children's needs. Regarding the reality of China, placing special children in regular schools is an avenue to provide them with some degree of education without guaranteeing an appropriate and least-restrictive educational environment. Although the increase from 1% in 1987 to 22.8% in 2005 was encouraging, the progress over the past 19 years indicates that the delivery of adequate and appropriate special education services in China has a long way to go. School enrollment rates for the three major disability categories (visual impairment, hearing impairment, and mental retardation) reached 80% in 2005. However, counting those with severe or other disabilities, the overall enrollment rate dropped to 63.19% according to the 2006 NSSD (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2006).

Concerns and Challenges

Quality of learning in regular classrooms (LRC). With the enforcement of compulsory education for exceptional students, the overall quantity of students with disabilities enrolled in public education rapidly increased. However, some scholars and educators (Deng et al., 2001) expressed concern regarding the quality of education, especially for those who received education in regular classrooms. Some students were described as "Dawdling in Regular Classrooms," rather than learning in regular classrooms. In several reviews of the literature (e.g., Deng et al., 2001; Xiao & Liu, 1996), factors attributed to exceptional

students' failure to learn included (a) general education teachers who were not trained to work with exceptional students; (b) instructional materials that were not modified to meet exceptional students' developmental needs; (c) lack of psychologists and other educational professionals (e.g., special education consultants, speech pathologists), which made classroom teachers the sole educators and service providers for their students; (d) poor communication and collaboration between school systems and communities, leading to isolation of schools from available resources in their neighborhood environment; and (e) no guarantee of a free and appropriate education for all levels of disabilities, resulting in children with severe and multiple disabilities still being excluded from LRC programs.

Large discrepancy between rural and urban regions. Special education services in large cities such as Beijing and Shanghai do not reflect the status of special education in rural China. Limited teacher resources and educational facilities in rural regions, especially in western and central China, result in the fact that many exceptional children's educational needs remain unmet. Poverty has been reported as a major factor that prohibits these children from attending school (Council of Education of People's Republic of China [CEC], 2000).

Limited psychological services for special children in China. In the United States, psychological services for exceptional children are deemed as an important component of special education. However, school psychology's recognition as a profession in China existed until recently only in name. No formal curricula, degrees, or professional academic associations had been established (Zhou, Bray, Kehle, & Xin, 2001). Oakland and Cunningham estimated that there were only 250 school psychologists (educational psychologists) in China in the 1990s (Xie, 1992). Counting educational psychologists, researchers, and scholars engaged in psychological measurement and consultation, the total number was approximately 500; given 170 million school children and adolescents, the psychologist:student ratio in the 1990s was only 1:680,000 (Xie, 1992).

Table 2

Landmarks of Special Education Development in China

Time Lines	Major Events
<u>Early Development (1874-1949)</u>	
1874	William Moore, a Scottish Presbyterian pastor, established the first school for blind students in Beijing.
1887	U.S. missionaries Charles and Annetta Mills founded the first school for blind and deaf students, named <i>Qi Ying Xue Guan</i> (Enlightening School), in Dengzhou, Shangdong Province.
<u>Mao's Leadership (1949/founding of PRC-1976)</u>	
1951	<i>Resolutions on the Reform of the School System</i> advocated that central and local governments establish special schools for individuals with disabilities.
1960s	Increasing numbers of special schools were established and exceptional students began to enroll in the public education system.
1967-1976	During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), all levels of education were negatively affected by tremendous political and economic turmoil.
<u>Post-Mao Era (1978-2007)</u>	
1978	The initiation of Open Door Policy indicated that China embarked on gradual evolution from a planned economy to a socialist market economy.
1982	A newly revised <i>State Constitution</i> stated that “the nation and society should arrange employment, living, and education for the blind, the deaf and other citizens with disabilities.” In China, this was the first legislation to mandate the provision of special education.
1985	<i>Decisions on Reforming the Education System</i> (DRES) was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The DRES instituted a Nine-Year Compulsory Education system for each Chinese citizen based on age.
1986	<i>Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China</i> was passed. The <i>Compulsory Education Law</i> was viewed as civil rights legislation, opening the doors of the public school system to all children.
1986	The Gold-Key Education Project in 1986 integrated 1000 children with visual impairment into general education classes. This project helped to establish the policy known as Learning in Regular Classroom (LRC).
1987	<i>First National Survey on the Status of the Disabilities</i> .
1990	<i>Guidelines for the Development of Special Education</i> (People's Education Publishing, 1990) was published and changes were made to existing legislation, regulations, and policies regarding exceptional individuals.
1990	The <i>Law on the Basic Protection of Individuals with Disabilities</i> became the first law in China to guarantee the right to education, specifically for individuals with disabilities.
1994	Regulations for implementing the LRC program were detailed in the 1994 <i>Pilot Project on Implementing Learning in Regular Classrooms for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities</i> .
2006	<i>Second National Survey on the Status of the Disabilities</i> .

Given the great shortage of trained school psychologists, Chinese educators must rely on other personnel without formal training in school psychology such as developmental psychologists, research psychologists, pediatricians, and psychiatrists (Zhou et al., 2001). Within the school system, services related to psychology, speech, and physical therapy are not provided. The reality of psychological services in China makes special educators the sole and primary service providers for children and adolescents with disabilities.

Conclusion

China's long civilized history did not bring the existence of formal special education to the public's attention until the colony era, during which foreign missionaries became the earliest contributors to formal special education in China. Modern special education in China went through a circuitous journey due to constant wars and political disturbances. After the initiation of China's Open Door Policy, special education began a rapid development stage. Post-Mao China has witnessed a succession of positive changes in the delivery of educational services for exceptional individuals, especially for school-age children and adolescents. The most exciting achievements include the initiation of a series of legislation and laws, a major increase in the enrollment rate of exceptional students in formal schooling, and the rapid development of compulsory education, vocational education, and higher education. Given the reality of China's economic development and limited teacher resources, China has found a unique model, "Learning in Regular Classrooms," to provide students with disabilities with immediate access to free public education. The current goal of LRC is to provide some type of compulsory education to students with disabilities in their neighborhood community schools without guaranteeing an appropriate and least-restrictive educational environment. Although there are numerous critiques regarding the implementation of LRC, it is important to note that the special education system in China has been developing from

no education to some degree of compulsory education. Attaining the goal of "free and appropriate public education," which is guaranteed in the U.S., can only be achieved on the basis of ensured compulsory education. In short, it has been a long journey for China to find a developmental pathway of special education that fits the reality of China (see Table 2).

As a country with a population of more than 1.3 billion in 2005, China has encountered and will continue to encounter a variety of challenges in the process of providing better services to exceptional individuals. Major concerns include the quality of LRC programs, the considerable discrepancy between services in urban/rural and western/eastern regions, the unequal distribution of teachers and resources, and a significant shortage of psychological services. International input, support, and cooperation will help Chinese teachers, practitioners, and scholars achieve better outcomes for exceptional individuals. However, education reforms and programs implemented successfully in other developed countries may not have the same physical and cultural success in countries like China with different cultural, economic, and political systems. Those who introduce and implement services and programs initiated by other developed countries need to be culturally sensitive to the economic and political reality of modern China.

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Learning Disabilities and Reading/Mathematics Achievement of Eighth Graders in the USA

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Abstract

The No Child Left Behind Act mandates all students with learning disabilities in schools receiving Title I funds must show proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014. This stricture applies to all students, those with diagnosed learning disabilities as well as those without learning disabilities. Subjects of this study were eighth graders in one of the most racially diverse school districts in Pennsylvania. Two multiple regression analyses revealed that when number of months educated in the school district, socioeconomic status, and sex were held constant, students with diagnosed learning disabilities scored 297 points lower on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment reading test and 220 points lower on the mathematics test than students who did not have learning disabilities.

Standards-based reforms gained speed and momentum when the Improving America's School Act was passed in 1994. The Act initiated major changes in the Title I section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Goetz, & Duffy, 2001). When President George W. Bush took office in January 2001 he introduced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLBA), which built upon the standards-based reforms but added an accountability section for all students in the United States of America. In the national elections in 2006, the Democrats regained control of both houses of Congress. This change in the majority arrives at the same time that No Child Left Behind is up for renewal or changes. What transpires in the Legislative and Executive branches of the federal government may have an even more profound impact on the nation's public schools.

As currently written, NCLBA requires all schools to test all students regardless of a student's ability to take the tests. This federal mandate is in conflict with the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA), formerly entitled Public Law 94-142, the Education

for All Handicapped Children Act. IDEA mandates that all schools receiving federal funds shall provide education for those students identified with an exceptionality in the least restrictive environment at the appropriate level of learning.

The mandated state tests have been developed for a particular grade level with little adaptation incorporated to meet the needs of the majority of disability students. The dilemma for the nation's public schools is to implement the mandates of the two federal laws without violating students' rights.

At the time of this study, the Pennsylvania Department of Education required all public schools, as part of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), to administer tests in reading and mathematics to all students in Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 and in writing in Grades 5, 8, and 11. As of the 2006-07 academic year, however, all students in grades 4, 6, and 7 must also take the reading and mathematics tests. Students with exceptionalities are not exempt from the tests. There has been an adaptation to the tests for the lowest 1% of the disabled students. Students are classified into four segments based on

test score results: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced.

To add to the challenge of educating and testing special needs students, the Pennsylvania Department of Education reached an agreement with eleven parents that brought suit to have their children educated in a regular classroom rather than a separate but equal classroom. The court decision in *Gaskin v. Pennsylvania Department of Education* mandates that all Pennsylvania schools provide special education instruction in the least restrictive environment and make every effort to educate disabled children with their age-appropriate peers.

For accountability, test results for students diagnosed with a learning disability must be included in the building and district adequate-yearly-progress report. Statistically, many of the disabled students have difficulty in reading (Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1999; Horn, 2003; Xin, Jitendra, Deatline-Buchman, Hickman, & Bertram, 2002), as well as in mathematics (van Garderen, 2006). Furthermore, relative to mathematics instruction, DeSimone and Parmar (2006) asserted that teachers have a limited knowledge of the mathematics needs of students with learning disabilities.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which a learning disability predicts performance on the PSSA reading and mathematics tests when number of months in the district, socioeconomic status, and sex are held constant.

As noted above, disabled students are required to make the same adequate yearly progress as students who do not have a disability. If students with disabilities perform at the basic or below basic levels on the PSSA tests to a greater extent than students without disabilities, then teachers and administrators need to adopt policies and teaching strategies that will enable them to perform at least at the proficient level or above as students without learning disabilities must do.

This study attempted to test the null hypotheses that there is no difference in mean performance on these subtests between eighth-grade students with disabilities and those without when number

of months educated in the school district, sex, and socioeconomic status are held constant.

Method

Participants

The participants were originally 1043 eighth graders attending two middle schools in a school district with a large, continuing influx of new students. The actual *Ns* of the study, however, are 856 for reading and 861 for mathematics, as PSSA reading and mathematics scores were not available for 187 and 182 students respectively.

Of the reading *N* of 856, 403 were girls and 453 were boys; 110 were diagnosed with learning disabilities, whereas 746 were not; and 265 qualified for the free or reduced-price lunch program, while 591 did not. Of the mathematics *N* of 861, 406 were girls and 455 were boys; 110 were diagnosed with learning disabilities, while 751 were not; and 266 were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, whereas 595 were not. Demographically, the district is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Procedures

Months in the school district constituted the total number of months students were educated in the district. Students who began their schooling in the district spent the most months being educated in the district, whereas recently transferred students spent the least months. For socioeconomic status, students who qualified for the free or reduced-lunch program were coded 1, while those who did not qualify were coded 0. Students diagnosed with learning disabilities were coded 1, whereas those without were coded 0. Finally, girls were coded 1 and boys were coded 0.

Two multiple regression analyses were performed, each with the appropriate PSSA subtest scores as the dependent variable. Months in the school district, socioeconomic status, sex, and learning disability status were the independent variables. Number of months in the district is a continuous variable,

whereas sex, socioeconomic status, and learning disability status are categorical variables.

Results

PSSA Reading Test Scores

The 856 reading scores had a mean of 1315.99, with a standard deviation of 193.66.

The four independent variables in combination were significantly related to the PSSA reading scores, $R^2 = .35$, adjusted $R^2 = .34$, $F(4, 851) = 112.56$, $p < .001$. As seen in Table 1, the unstandardized regression coefficient (B) indicates that when number of months in the school district, sex, and socioeconomic status are held constant, students with diagnosed learning disabilities scored on average 297.29 points lower than students without such diagnoses, $t(851) = -18.38$, $p < .001$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The effect size, i.e., the partial correlation, is $-.53$. Therefore, learning disability status accounts for about 28% of the variance in the PSSA reading scores.

Table 1

Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Pennsylvania System of School Achievement Reading Scores (N = 856)

Variable	B	$SE B$	β
Months in District	1.12	.19	.17*
Sex	25.23	10.77	.07**
Socioeconomic Status	-42.46	12.18	-.10**
Learning Disability Status	-297.29	16.18	-.51**

* $p < .025$, ** $p < .01$

PSSA Mathematics Test Scores

The 861 mathematics scores had a mean of 1275.82, along with a standard deviation of 171.61.

The four independent variables in combination were also significantly related to the PSSA mathematics scores, $R^2 = .28$, adjusted $R^2 = .26$, $F(4, 856) = 82.47$, $p < .001$. The B in Table 2 indicates that when number of months in the district, sex, and socioeconomic status are held constant, students with learning disabilities scored 220.38 points lower than students without disabilities, $t(856) = -14.70$, $p < .001$. The null hypothesis is again rejected. The effect size is $-.45$. As such, learning disability status explains about 20% of the variance in PSSA mathematics scores.

Discussion

The major finding that students with diagnosed learning disabilities scored lower on the PSSA reading test than those without such disabilities agrees with the findings of Horn (2003) and Xin et al. (2002). It

Table 2

Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Pennsylvania System of School Achievement Mathematics Scores (N = 861)

Variable	B	$SE B$	β
Months in District	1.09	.18	.19*
Sex	-35.42	10.00	-.10*
Socioeconomic Status	-41.52	11.31	-.11*
Learning Disability Status	-220.38	14.99	-.43*

* $p < .001$

further lends support to Burns, Roe, and Ross (1999), who stated that many learning-disabled students need reading improvement, and to Beattie and Gaskins (cited in Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1999), who stated that reading is the skill most in need of improvement for more than half of all learning-disabled students. Also, the finding that students diagnosed with learning disabilities scored lower on mathematics tests accords with van Garderen (2006).

The findings of this study, along with the mandate of NCLBA, should motivate school personnel to determine what assistance students with diagnosed learning disabilities need to achieve academically at a higher level. Gorman (1997) suggested increasing teachers' knowledge of specialized reading strategies such as the Orton-Gillingham approach, a program based on the theories advanced in the 1920s by Samuel Orton. Though Orton's theories are no longer considered as tenable as they once were, aspects of the Orton-Gillingham approach, along with its modification, the Gillingham-Slingerland approach, are consistent with current research findings on phonics instruction (McCormick, 2003). It is highly unlikely, however, that upper middle and high school students would be receptive to such a skills-based approach unless it is accompanied by meaningful, contextual material.

According to Harris and Sipay (1990), correlational studies have shown a consistent relationship between reading and writing. As such, reading and writing across the curriculum seem feasible. One writing technique that appears ubiquitously in the professional literature is the K-W-L procedure first devised by Ogle (1986). K-W-L stands for "know," "want," "learn." Before reading, students write what they already *know* about the content to be read. Then they write what they *want* to learn from their reading. Next, they read the assignment. After reading, they write what they *learned* from their reading. Cantrell, Fusaro, and Dougherty (1990) found the K-W-L procedure to be more effective than summary writing in learning social studies content among eighth-grade students. Other strategies the school might want to

consider for students diagnosed with learning disabilities are peer-assisted learning strategies in which juniors and seniors might help lower-achieving ninth or tenth graders (Calhoun & Fuchs, 2003); process writing whereby the student is asked to focus on the writing rather than the end product (Wojasinski & Smith, 2002); an emphasis on basic skills instruction (Algozzine, O'Shea, Crews, & Stoddard, 1987); and curriculum-based measurement, in which teachers systematically check student progress (Calhoun & Fuchs, 2003).

Although the focus of this study was to compare students diagnosed with learning disabilities to students not so diagnosed, a discussion of the roles of sex and socioeconomic status on school achievement is fruitful. As noted in Tables 1 and 2, girls scored significantly higher than boys in reading by about 25 points, whereas boys scored significantly higher than girls in mathematics by about 35 points when months educated in the district, socioeconomic status, and learning disability status were held constant. These results generally comport with Harris and Sipay (1990) and McCormick (2007) apposite reading and with Marks (2008) relative to mathematics.

Tables 1 and 2 further indicate that for both reading and mathematics, students from the lower socioeconomic group scored significantly lower than students from the higher socioeconomic group by about 42 points in both reading and mathematics when months educated in the district, sex, and learning disability status were held constant. These results harmonize with Harris and Sipay's (1990) assertion that "high-SES children tend to be good readers, and a large proportion of poor readers come from low-SES families" (p. 362) and with Baker, Street, and Tomlin (2006) apposite mathematics.

Hence, with the advent and mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act, the challenge for all schools is to enable not only students with diagnosed learning disabilities, but students from any underachieving group to perform at a level commensurate with mainstream students.

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A briefer version of this paper was presented at the June, 2007, biennial conference of the International Association of Special Education, Hong Kong. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Joseph A. Fusaro, Department

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Home-School Partnerships and Nigerian Parents of Schoolchildren with Disabilities

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Abstract

Nigerian parents definitely need to enjoy more support services, particularly from special education professionals, than similar parents elsewhere would. This is because parenting children with disabilities in African communities usually entails encountering certain cultural practices which are very hostile to both the children with disabilities and their parents. This paper therefore explored the possibility for the same parents to access such support services through the home-school partnerships. This was done by first assessing the objectives and activities of the existing home-school partnerships in selected special schools viz-a-viz ascertaining what support services they are offering the parents in their present form, and then determining what could be done to redesign the existing partnerships to offer more support services for the parents. Three research questions were raised to attain the study purpose. A researcher-designed questionnaire was the instrument employed by the study. Two hundred and sixty four participants made up of parents and teachers were engaged in the study. Findings showed that existing home-school partnerships in special schools overconcentrate their activities on servicing the learning and social needs of the school children with little or nothing offered to the parents. There is therefore a need to redesign the objectives and operations of these partnerships to include meeting some specific socio-emotional needs of Nigerian parents of children with special needs.

Introduction

Two factors noticeably characterize the relationships between the African parents of schoolchildren with disabilities and the personnel in schools that their children attend (Iheanacho, 2007). First is that partnership activities between the two parties (parents and teachers) are usually very few and non-impactful. Second, where such activities exist, they are more concerned with meeting the learning and welfare needs of the school children than addressing the socio-emotional needs of parents.

This trend therefore largely showcases the nature and functions of special education-based home-school partnerships (or parents-teachers associations as they are commonly called) in many African communities. For instance, Ipaye (1996) observed that African parents of children with disabilities are always very reluctant to send such children to schools. If at all they do, they are not always willing to be committed to some extracurricular activities such as participating actively in parent-teacher associations. A survey conducted by Ademokoya (2005) on schoolchildren in some residential (special) schools in Ibadan, a metropolitan city in Southwest Nigeria, indicated

that 31% of the visited schoolchildren have been abandoned by their parents for more than five years. When the authorities of these schools made some efforts to trace the parents of such children through addresses which they (parents) had earlier stated in the enrolment records, these authorities discovered that some of the addresses are fake while some of the located parents gave various excuses for not visiting their children again in the schools. It would be very difficult for some schools to initiate or reinforce partnerships with parents who are not committed to the schooling of their children.

Conversely, the school may equally be unwilling to relate or collaborate with parents. This is because some of the school personnel made up of teachers, administrators and support staff do think that doing that may encourage parents to meddle with or intrude into their work and thereby become nuisances to them (Hammond, 1989). The fact is that many African teachers have not come to terms with the reality that they are as accountable to parents as they are to their employers and officers (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006).

An emergent reality from this matter is that Nigerian parents of children with disabilities seem not to be getting the necessary support and services they are supposed to access through the home-school partnerships. They are indeed worse for it because the school personnel who are also trained special education professionals owe these parents some obligations. They ought to dispense their experience and skills to offer necessary relief and support to parents who are very likely to have gone through some traumatic experiences for giving birth to such children (Heward, 2000).

The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine some socio-cultural and psychological issues which make the evolvement of some virile home school partnerships a serious necessity for both Nigerian parents who have schoolchildren with disabilities and the professionals of special schools which these children attend. The paper did this by highlighting issues which border on: (a) what does it cost to give birth to a child with disability in a Nigerian community, (b) what are the current status and functions of

home-school partnerships in special education based schools, and (c) how can home-school partnerships be redesigned or refocused to alleviate some socio-emotional problems which many Nigerian parents of special needs children do encounter?

Parenting Children with Disabilities in African Societies

It is usually a very disturbing embarrassment for Africans to discover that their children have disabilities (Nwoye, 1988). Not only because they do not expect such an unusual happening but also, going by their culture and beliefs, giving birth to a child with deformity or disability is always an exceptional case which calls for some serious concern (Alake, 1988). Disabilities are usually associated with curse, retribution, taboos, witchcraft and misfortune (Olawale, 2000).

The birth of a child with a disability usually places some unpleasant consequences on the parents. For instance, in some African cultures, the causes of child disabilities are often attributed to the parents (Mba, 1995). Parents could be assumed to have committed some grievous offences such as defying gods, defiling certain shrines or breaching some strong covenants with fellow human beings (Alese, 1980). If, for instance, someone has employed some diabolical means to unjustly inflict misfortunes on others, the gods could punish such individuals by giving them children with disabilities (Amadi, 1980). Similarly, parents could be held responsible for their children's disabilities for failure to provide necessary spiritual protection for the pregnancies of such children (Jegade, 1997). Africans' perspectives on disabilities also hold that such parents are culprits of one offence or the other. They are therefore treated with deserved penalties.

Consequently, the shame and disappointment which such parents do bear could be so devastating that they would wish the children are dead rather than living (Ademokoya, 1998). Parents usually go through a traumatic circle of shock, disbelief, self pity, isolation, disappointment, and hopelessness (Avoke, 2005). In their time of confusion and depression,

they do ask so many questions such as (a) “why me”, (b) “what did I do wrong to deserve a child as this”, (c) “who have I offended to receive a punishment as this,” in addition to many more such questions.

As culprits of some socio-cultural codes, their penalties could involve restrictions from some communal activities. They are usually banned from attending spiritual or social gatherings or are requested to undergo some rituals so as to appease the offended gods. Furthermore, such parents would be deserted by relations, friends and community members (Fagbohun, 1978). Mothers are always more affected than fathers (Mba, 1995).

Animasahun (1995) compared the emotional experiences of mothers who give birth to children with disabilities to what some women often encounter in times of war and violence. According to Animasahun, outbreak of war is similar to the arrival of a child with deformity: the two often bring shock and anxiety to women. The traumatic experience could cause some serious decline in their ego and emotional wellbeing. Giving birth to a child with disability is contrary to many parents’ expectations. Expectant parents and others around them usually anticipate the birth of normal children. As a result, the coming of an “exceptional child” is therefore an embarrassing development capable of causing some deep upsets for the concerned parents.

Africans do live a communal life. Everyone is a member of an extended family where things and happenings are jointly owned and shared together (Ehigie, 1995). Success of one is joy of all members of the family and the community. The same applies to happenings such as sickness or accidents. However, giving birth to a child with disability is an exception. It is a socio-cultural abnormality whereby the unfortunate child and his or her parents are believed to have defiled their community. Ostracism is therefore part of their deserved penalties; the parents and their child are usually isolated by many. They are often left to contend with whatever emotional upsets and distressful tasks are required for taking care of such children.

Such are usually the experiences of parents of children with special needs before these children begin

to attend schools. As these children reach the school attending age the parents also begin to encounter another set of some unpleasant developments.

Parents’ Expectations and Disappointments with the School Personnel

Again, the parents of the school-attending special needs children usually have some disappointments to contend with. First, given the above background, parents often believe that the only people they can turn to for sympathy, understanding or support are the special education professionals who constitute the school personnel in the form of teachers, administrators and support staff (Neely, 1982; Nwoye 1988; Okogbe, 2006). The parents often feel that these professionals supposedly are knowledgeable persons in matters relating to disabilities and are also duty bound to help them. They therefore expect the school personnel to show them an understanding of what they have gone through parenting such children and an appreciation for the embarrassments they have so far endured (Onwuchekwa, 1985; Olawale, 2000). Parents also expect that the school should henceforth assume greater if not total responsibility of the schooling of these children (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). This perhaps suggests the reasons why some parents do abandon their special needs children in residential (special) schools (Ademokoya, 2005). In essence parents do anticipate that the school personnel should be far more supportive than the community members.

Unexpectedly, parents often find out that the school personnel are more or less as unsympathetic and inconsiderate as the community members which have been very hostile to them and their children (Iheanacho, 2007). Such conducts are indeed very unethical for special education professionals; however, as unfortunate as it is, this is the reality of what parents of special needs children in some African societies often experience (Alase, 1980 & Neely, 1982).

The unwelcoming attitude of the school personnel could be explained in three dimensions. One is that the school personnel are indeed extractions from the

same communities in which cultural practices are very hostile to children with disabilities and their parents. As a result, the school personnel, in spite of their special education training, do share and practice the cultural norms of their societies (Mba, 1995). It is not unlikely that they often struggle within themselves in regard to which principles to believe in and act by (between cultural tenets or special education procedures) in the course of discharging their duties. For instance, a special education professional who is a die-hard traditionalist in spite of his special educational training is very likely to show more preference to cultural beliefs on disabilities and persons with disabilities than for following special education practices.

Second, the school personnel may be aware of what the disappointments and expectations of parents are. However, they could also assume that parents must have or are supposed to have outgrown the grief which accompanied the birth of such children; after all, they have been tolerating these children for some years before reaching the school attending age (Ajobiwe, 2000).

Third, the school personnel may not be as forthcoming as expected to welcome forming partnerships with the home parents if the school personnel feel that such would entail additional responsibilities for them or that it will give parents opportunities to intrude unnecessarily into their professional practices (Hammond, 1989). As Heward (2000) observed, special educators have for long considered parents as troublesome, especially if they ask too many questions about their children's school performance.

One important fact the school should endeavour to consider on this matter is that in Nigerian societies where there is relatively low awareness on disabilities and poor provisions for children with disabilities, teachers maybe the first professionals some parents would ever have contact with after giving birth to such children. Not only that, parents also look unto the teachers as their major hope for support and relief. Teachers, therefore, are supposed to give the parents necessary attention and cooperation.

There are other factors involved in this matter too. At times special educators who are supposed to handle parents' expectations with skill and understanding may not even be available in some schools (Adima, 1988). If available, they could have been overwhelmed by demands on their time and expertise (Mba, 1995). Another issue about the teachers is that they could be ill prepared to proffer such demanding functions as completely as required (Ozoji, 2004). All these often showcase the low level of manpower development of special education professionals in some African countries.

Whatever be the school response and whatever form such response takes, one important fact for the school to recognize is that parents of children with disabilities have expectations of schools (Hammond, 1989) and schools should be more than willing to satisfactorily meet such expectations. Doing otherwise is nothing but a breach of trust which the parents do repose in the school personnel (Craig, 1989).

Necessity of Home-School Partnerships

Regardless of whatever reservations parents of children with special needs and school teachers could have towards one another, the fact remains that home-school partnerships are an indispensable feature of special education (Ismail, 2004).

While it is true that the schools have the responsibility of preparing the special needs children to contribute meaningfully to their societies by equipping them with necessary attitude and skills, the schools however cannot and should not be separate entities from the home (Epstein, 1995). Homes and schools indeed have some traditional roles to play in the schooling of the special needs children. As a result, the roles of the two parties must be complementary and not conflictive. Efforts must therefore be made to maximize their contributions (Colleta & Perkins, 1995).

Adesina, Bolaji and Komolafe (2006) submitted that special education is a team game with many groups or individuals to collaborate with for the purpose of maximizing contributions both for the

professional advancement of special education teachers and for the optimum benefits of the special needs children as well as for their parents.

Parenthood is described as an awesome responsibility; when such parenthood involves a special needs child the parental responsibilities would involve greater physical and emotional demands (Heward, 2000). For the African parents of special needs children the ordeal may become almost indescribable. Unfortunately, special education teachers who are not parents of special needs children may not readily appreciate the frustrations of the special parents. They therefore need to include in the home-school partnerships activities some support programmes for the same parents.

Such support programmes should include regular and two-way communication with the parents and teachers. It should be open and honest to allow for some positive outcomes. As Ellis and Hughes (2002) opined, the schools should focus on evolving a communication with the parents. Furthermore, the home-school partnerships should engender the respecting and valuing of parents' diverse needs and integrating them into school services.

It is a known fact that parents are and should be collaborators with the teachers to offer impactful contributions to the children schooling (Ellis & Hughes, 2002). However, parents would not be willing to collaborate actively well with the teachers or offer their maximum contributions if the schools fail to understand and appreciate their emotional needs. All told, home-school partnerships in special education based schools should therefore endeavour to enlarge their activities to accommodate for programmes which would, among other things, involve proffering necessary support services for the Nigerian parents of schoolchildren with disabilities.

This paper sought to assess the status quo of some existing home-school partnerships in some special schools in an attempt to find out whether or not such partnerships have support programmes for meeting the socio-emotional needs of the special parents.

Research Questions

This study therefore proposed three research questions. They include:

1. Are there home-school partnerships in special schools?
2. What are the objectives of the home-school partnerships in whichever special schools they exist?
3. What are the barriers to having necessary support programmes for parents through the existing home-school partnerships?

Method

Participants

The study engaged 264 participants made up of 130 teachers and 134 parents of pupils and students in 10 primary and 7 secondary schools for children with disabilities in Oyo, Lagos, Osun and Ondo states of the southwestern region of Nigeria. The 17 engaged special schools are for children with hearing impairment, visual impairment and mental retardation. These schools were purposively selected. Parents who were selected for this study using certain exclusions are those whose children have profound congenital disabilities. In other words, those children were born with disabilities visibly noticed at birth and the disabilities were also very severe. The fact that the disabilities were visibly observed very early in life and are very severe therefore predisposed the parents to encountering shock, disappointment, confusion, and some African socio-cultural practices which are very hostile to the parents and their exceptional children.

Forty-seven of the parents are males while 87 are females. All of them have been residing in Southwestern states of Oyo, Lagos, Ondo and Osun States of Nigeria (where this study was conducted) for more than twenty years. They are as a result very familiar with the cultural practices of the region.

They are all illiterate. This also made their reactions to their encountered Nigerian cultural practices towards disabilities deeply disturbing.

In addition, more than 90% of the participants (teachers and parents) have been members of the parent-teacher associations (the common name for home-school partnerships in southwest Nigeria) for more than 3 years. By this they are expected to have been very familiar with the activities of such partnerships and thereby are able to ascertain very intimately the objectives or activities of their home-school partnerships.

Teachers engaged in this study are those who have been on their teaching job for at least 5 years. This is necessary to guarantee their sufficient experiences with parents of special needs children.

All the teachers are special education trained specialists. Fifty of them have the Nigerian National Certificates of Education, 60 are University graduates while 17 are postgraduates. Only 3 of them have the Nigerian Grade II Teachers Certificates. Of these, 47 of them are males while 83 of them are females.

Instruments

A researcher designed questionnaire was the major instrument employed by this study to obtain the study data. This instrument has three subsections. Subsection A was designed to ascertain the existence or otherwise of home-school partnerships in the selected special schools. This subsection also has a question posed for determining the spans of such partnerships wherever they exist.

Subsection B contains questions raised to determine the objectives/activities of the home-school partnerships. This subsection is aimed at finding out whether or not there are objectives or activities which address the socio-emotional needs of parents of school children with disabilities in addition to services provided for the schoolchildren.

Finally, Subsection C has questions intended to identify what constitutes some barriers to the provision of necessary support services for the parents of special needs children. These questions are considered very relevant to redesigning home-

school partnerships for the purpose of incorporating necessary parents' support programmes in their activities. This instrument was validated with an established reliability value of 0.87.

Results

Results are presented according to the stated three research questions.

Research Question 1

Are there home-school partnerships in special schools? Table 1 showed that 88.5% of teachers and 80.6% of parents confirmed the existence of home-school partnerships in the engaged special schools. Indeed, only 7 teachers indicated that they are not sure of the existence of home-school partnerships in their schools. This result therefore suggested that partners from the home and school acknowledge the need for collaborating. However, the objectives to be achieved

Table 1

Availability of Home-School Partnerships and their Span in Special Schools

Statements	Teachers		Parents	
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%
Availability of home-school partnership				
No	7	5.0	-	0.0
Yes	123	88.5	-	80.6
Spans				
Less than 1 year	-	0.0	3	2.2
1-5 years	26	18.7	24	17.3
6-10 years	95	68.3	71	51.1
10 years +	6	4.3	-	0.0

Table 2

Recorded Objectives of Home-School Partnerships in some Special Schools

S/N	Objectives	F	%
1.	Fostering interpersonal relationships among teachers, parents and the children	36	13.64
2.	Informing parents about the progress or otherwise of their children	27	10.3
3.	Appointing or electing PTA executives	3	1.14
4.	Setting standards education	57	21.59
5.	Updating parents on the school situations	18	6.82
6.	Attending to students' welfare	22	8.33
7.	Assisting government efforts on special schools	20	7.58

by such collaborative teams are to be determined by the second research question. Furthermore, 26 teachers (18.7%) and 24 parents (17.3%) agreed that the partnerships have been in existence at least for about 5 years in their schools. While 95 teachers (68.3%) indicated that the partnerships have been established between 6 and 10 years in their schools, only 6 teachers (4.3%) showed that home-school partnerships have existed for more than 10 years in their schools.

Research Question 2

What are the objectives of home-school partnerships in whichever special schools they exist? As indicated in Table 2, thirty six teachers and parents (13.64%) stated that home-school partnerships are set up to promote interpersonal relations among the teachers, parents and the school children. Twenty-seven participants, combined teachers and parents (10.3%), agreed that the partnerships are to provide necessary feedback for parents on

Table 3

Barriers to the Provision of Meaningful Support Programmes for Parents

S/N	Barriers	F	%
1.	Individual differences among partners (teachers and parents)	6	2.27
2.	Poor financial contributions by the partners	186	70.46
3.	Poor attendance at meetings	54	20.46
4.	Lack of necessary support from the government	14	5.30
5.	Insufficient time to execute partnership decisions or projects	6	2.27
6.	Socio-economic differences among the partners	12	4.55

their children school performance. Fifty-seven participants (21.59%) opined that the partnerships are to determine expected standards of education for the special schools while 22 participants (8.33) submitted that the partnerships are to address the welfare of the school children. Twenty participants (7.58) thought that the partnerships are to assist governments' activities in the schools. Eighteen participants (6.82%) stated that the partnerships are to provide information for the parents on the school situations, while 3 participants (1.14%) stated that "the partnerships' goal is to elect executives who will run the affairs of the partnership."

Research Question 3

What are barriers to the provisions of meaningful support programmes for parents through the home-school partnerships? According to Table 3, the respondents (teachers and parents combined) listed the following problems as barriers to the provision of meaningful support programmes necessary for addressing the socio-emotional problems of parents.

Differences among the partners (2.27%), poor financial contributions by the partners (70.46%), poor attendance at meetings (20.46%), lack of support from government (5.30%), lack of time to implement partnership decisions (2.27%) and differences in socio-economic status of the partners (4.55%).

Discussions

The major objective of this paper is to consider how some peculiar problems often faced by the Nigerian parents of schoolchildren with disabilities could be addressed via home-school partnerships. No doubt, the starting point for achieving this goal would be first to determine whether home-school partnerships exist or not in special education based schools. This is what the first research question sought to ascertain. As shown in Table 1, both teachers and parents of special needs school children who participated in this study overwhelmingly agreed that home-school partnerships exist in their special schools. In addition, many of such partnerships have existed for more than six years. This is fairly a long time for any partnership to have attained some remarkable growth and also to have realized a good proportion of its objectives.

The second research question probed into the objectives or activities of these partnerships. This question is very significant to the purpose of this study in that it attempted to examine how much of the partnerships' effort is spent on addressing the socio-emotional difficulties involved in parenting children with disabilities in Nigerian societies. As indicated in Table 2, much effort of the existing partnerships is on servicing the educational needs of the special school children and not for meeting the needs of the parents. For instance, 21.59% of the participants agreed that the existing partnerships place their attention on setting standards for the education of the same children while 13.64% believed that the existing partnerships are concerned about fostering interpersonal relationships among teachers, parents and the schoolchildren. It must be noted that such interpersonal relationships are more for social dispensation of all partners than of meeting the specific needs of the parents.

In all of the seven listed objectives the only one which mentioned of the parents in particular is Objective Number 2 which reads: "Informing parents about progress or otherwise of their children." This question focused simply on providing necessary feedback to parents on their children's school performance. It is therefore very apparent that home-school partnerships are having little or no specific support programmes for relieving the parents of their encountered social, cultural, emotional or financial difficulties.

The third research question sought to identify what factors could be hindering the dispensation of support programmes especially from the teachers or special education professionals to the Nigerian parents of children with disabilities. Participants listed factors such as individual differences among the partners. This characteristically reflects the interests, restraints and disappointments particularly on the part of parents and teachers. Parents do expect teachers to be supportive. Teachers on the other hand are often reluctant to go into partnerships with parents in order to avoid intrusion or added responsibilities. Parents do show their disappointment in teachers by resenting the teachers. This is indeed a major factor acting as barrier to employing home-school partnerships for meeting the parents' needs.

In addition, unresolved individual differences seem to be the springboard to other problems such as poor attendance at partnership meetings and poor devotion of time to execute the partnership projects or decisions. Since the partnerships lack the necessary cohesion and motivation, they could not act as pressure groups strong enough to attract financial support from the government.

Finally, status differences between the partners are also a force to be reckoned with. Disparities in socio-economic status of the partners (parents and teachers) are serious threats to having some result-oriented home-school partnerships. In societies such as Southwest Nigeria where class consciousness is very rampant, partners will be more self-centered than being selfless. This will indeed impair necessary unity and progress in the partnerships.

Table 3 showcased a consensus of identified obstacles to the tapping of the home-school partnerships activities for meeting the needs of parents. Evidently, the noted difficulties imply the lack of commitment especially from parents to the home-school partnerships. This indeed must have resulted in problems such as poor attendance at the partnership meetings as well as poor financial contributions to the cause of the partnerships. Similarly, difficulties in finding time to attend to the partnership activities (such as implementing the partnership projects and decisions made at meetings) are attributable to lack of dedication on the parts of parents and teachers. The fact is parents may have been disenchanted with the partnership activities since they offer little or no benefit to them.

Findings in relation to the third research question therefore call for some change in the objectives and activities of home-school partnerships in special schools. Parents as partners can only improve their contributions to the partnerships if in turn they get some specific services for meeting personal needs through the partnerships rather than directing almost all resulting benefits to the schoolchildren alone.

A new design of the goals and operations of the home-school partnerships should significantly include some specific support services for the parents. Such services would involve helping the parents access some relief and education services provided by the special education professionals such as teachers and support staff working in special schools.

Relief services will include special education professionals making themselves available to the parents, especially at the critical time such as when the parents just discover their children's disabilities. At such time, parents could be confused as to what to do. They could also be emotionally disturbed by being deserted by their close relatives and associates. Special education professionals should be readily at hand to comfort and counsel the concerned parents.

Home-school partnerships should therefore have a sort of rapid response team which will always be available to attend such parents from the birth of such children till they reach the school attending age. Home-school partnerships should also be actively

involved in organizing some educational programmes which will enable the illiterate parents of special needs children to become better enlightened about disabilities and persons with disabilities. For instance, through the dispensation of disability education, uninformed parents and indeed the community members would develop some proper or realistic understanding on disabilities. They would know what to do to assist both parents and the children. Such education will not only help to eliminate some unwholesome cultural beliefs and practices, it will indeed engender positive attitudinal change to the persons with disabilities and their families.

The crux of the matter is that special education professionals in Nigeria should appreciate the fact that Nigerian parents of the special needs children encounter more severe emotional upsets than their colleagues elsewhere do. These professionals therefore should consider home-school partnerships as a veritable means for assisting such parents as well as their schoolchildren too. A motivated parent would be more eager to assist actively in the schooling of his or her child than a dispirited one. Objectives and programmes for home-school partnerships in special schools should have as much consideration for the parents as they have for the schoolchildren.

African governments can through necessary legislations encourage parents to request more obligations from the school and its personnel just like the 1988 Education Reform Act in the United Kingdom stressed (Hammond, 1989). The school personnel too should be made more responsible or accountable to the parents not only on the account of their school attending children but also on their own emotional needs resulting from parenting the school-going children (Federal Ministry of Education 2006; Heward, 2000).

Conclusion

Parenting special needs children in Nigeria often unleashes some disturbing stress on the parents. This is enough to seriously search for means or channels for helping such concerned parents. This paper has identified the home-school partnerships

as an impactful channel for providing support and relief to these special Nigerian parents. Findings of this study indeed call for a redesign of the home-school partnerships in special schools to remarkably accommodate objectives and programmes that will offer necessary support services to such parents.

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Functional Assessment Based Intervention Plans in Alternative Educational Settings in the USA: A Case Study

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Abstract

In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) mandates functional assessment based behavioral support plans for all students with disabilities who display challenging behavior. However, very few studies have been undertaken to examine the effectiveness of the functional assessment-based behavioral plans with high school students in alternative settings. In this study, we present a case study of a high school student with behavior disorders attending an alternative school. First, we conducted indirect and direct functional assessments to identify the functions of the problem behaviors. Next, using a “competing behavior model” we developed a multi-component behavior intervention plan based on the functional assessment data. The effectiveness of the intervention plan, limitations, and implications for practice are discussed.

Functional assessments are defined as “combining descriptive and experimental methods to determine whether problem behavior is positively reinforced via attention and/or tangibles-or sensory stimulation-or negatively reinforced via escape from either task demands or aversive sensory stimulation” (Umbreit, 1995, p. 267). Functional assessments are based on the assumptions that (a) problem behaviors serve different functions for persons who display them (Ward, 1998) and (b) all problem behaviors are learned (Iwata, Vollmer, Zarcone, & Rodgers, 1993). Thus, the purposes of functional assessments are to (a) identify the function(s) of a problem behavior and (b) guide selection of appropriate interventions for the problem behavior. As there is no single cause for problem behaviors (i.e., different problem behaviors can serve a similar function and problem behaviors with similar topography can serve different functions), understanding the function of a problem behavior is

essential for selecting an appropriate treatment. For example, both head hitting or off-task behaviors of a child (or different children) might serve the function of getting teacher’s attention. Similarly, off-task behaviors of a child can serve functions such as gaining teacher’s attention or escaping from a task. Further, the same problem behavior such as head hitting can serve different functions, for example gaining teacher attention or getting a preferred toy (tangible) at different times (Pindiprolu, 2001).

The identification of the function(s) of a problem behavior in turn helps in the selection of appropriate interventions. For example, if the function of a problem behavior were to gain teacher attention, then a time-out intervention would be an effective intervention to decrease the problem behavior. However, if the function of the problem behavior were to avoid tasks, time-out would only increase the problem behavior and thus would be an inappropriate

intervention for the problem behavior (Pindiprolu, 2001).

There are three advantages to identifying functions of problem behaviors. First, effectiveness of the treatment increases when treatments are matched to the function of the problem behavior (Gable, 1996). For example, if off-task behavior serves the function of escape from a difficult task, an effective treatment based on function would be to allow the child to take a break upon completion of some part of his work to avoid the escape behavior. Second, identification of the functions helps rule out interventions that would not be effective, i.e., implementing time-out interventions for escape functions. Third, identifying functions facilitates generalization of treatment effectiveness across different topographies of problem behavior (Iwata et al., 1993).

Methods of Functional Assessments

Functional assessment procedures are broadly classified into three categories: *Indirect or informant procedures, direct procedures or descriptive analysis, and functional analysis or experimental analysis* (Gable, 1996; Iwata et al., 1993; Ward, 1998). The indirect procedures are usually undertaken at the beginning stages of a functional assessment. A variety of data collection tools such as questionnaires, functional assessment interview formats and rating scales are employed to obtain information on the problem behaviors and the events associated with them. The information is obtained from individuals who are familiar with the person displaying problem behavior (Gable, 1996; Gable et al., 1998; Ward, 1998) and at times from the student displaying problem behavior. *Information from informant methods* helps in (a) defining problem behavior(s), (b) narrowing down variables affecting a problem behavior, and (c) formulating hypothesized functions of a problem behavior (Ward, 1998).

The *direct or descriptive analysis* method involves observing persons with problem behavior in their natural routines (Drasgow, Yell, Bradley, & Shriner, 1999). Direct observations require (a) identification and description of problem behaviors in observable

and measurable terms, (b) selection of conditions under which problem behaviors will be observed, and (c) selection of assessment strategies (frequency, interval recording, etc) to record problem behaviors (Ward, 1998). Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) records, scatter plots or matrices, and lag analysis protocols (Gable, 1996) are some of the tools employed for data collection during direct observations. Information from direct observations is helpful in formulating the hypothesized function(s) of a problem behavior(s) (Kim & Choi, 1998).

Functional analysis or experimental analysis involves systematic manipulation of variables that are hypothesized as maintaining problem behaviors (Gable, 1996). Experimental analysis is generally conducted after indirect or direct methods have been undertaken and the hypothesized functions of a problem behavior are generated. During systematic manipulations, the events or variables that maintain or correlate with problem behavior are repeatedly introduced and removed using single subject experimental design tactics. The hypothesized functions are verified by contrasting the occurrence of problem behavior during conditions when the events maintaining problem behavior are introduced with the occurrence of the problem behavior during a suitable control condition in which events (hypothesized as) maintaining problem behavior are removed (Iwata et al., 1993). Unlike the direct and indirect methods, which are suggestive of the events affecting problem behavior, experimental analysis helps in verifying the role of the events in triggering problem behaviors (Iwata et al., 1993).

Intervention Plans

The primary purpose of the functional assessments is to develop effective behavioral intervention plans or behavior support plans. One model of designing a behavioral intervention plan based on the information from functional assessments is the "Competing Behavior Model" developed by O'Neil and his colleagues (O'Neill, Horner, Albin, Sprague, Storey, & Newton, 1997). The Competing Behavior Model requires a practitioner to (a) list

the antecedents, problem behavior, consequences, and function of the problem behavior, (b) identify alternative or incompatible behaviors that result in the same consequence that the problem behavior serves, (c) ensure that the alternative behavior is easier to perform than the problem behavior, and (d) identify antecedents and consequences that would decrease the relevance and effectiveness of the problem behavior (O'Neil et al., 1997). Thus, the Competing Behavior Model calls for (a) developing the behavioral intervention plan based on the summary statements from the functional assessments and (b) identifying antecedent (and setting), behavior, and consequence strategies to prevent and replace problem behavior.

In the United States the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) mandates functional assessment-based behavioral support plans for all students with disabilities who display challenging behavior. In the United States, students who exhibit severe/chronic challenging behavior are sometimes removed from their home schools to segregated settings (for example, an alternative school for students with behavioral disorders). It is these students with severe/chronic challenging behaviors who require intensive supports based on evidenced based practices. However, very few studies were undertaken to examine the effectiveness of the functional assessment-based behavioral plans with these students in alternative settings. The primary purpose of this paper is to explain the process of developing a functional assessment based behavioral intervention plan using the "competing behavior model" and examining the effectiveness of the intervention plan with a student placed in an alternative behavioral school for his chronic behavior problems. We hope that the procedures detailed in the case study will assist other practitioners around the world in their efforts to prevent problem behaviors of adults with behavioral disorders.

Case Study

Context

Independence Education Center is an alternative behavior school located in Midwest United States.

This alternative school houses one hundred and fifty students with chronic behavior problems. The classrooms for the younger students from kindergarten to eighth grade are located on the first floor and the classrooms for the high school students are located on the second floor. There are six high school classrooms on the second floor with an average of six to ten students in each room. Each classroom has a special education teacher and at least one paraprofessional. Some classrooms have more than one paraprofessional if a student needs one-on-one support. Each floor has an isolation room that has two isolation booths and at least ten student desks. The school uses a building-wide "level" management system. That is, the student's behavior is managed through a level system of "carrots and sticks." Students are placed at a level and earn privileges for positive behavior. If the student consistently complies with the program expectations, s/he advances to a higher level, which provides access to greater privileges. If the student does not perform well at a level, s/he is demoted to a lower level with reduced privileges. The isolation room is used as a timeout room. Typically students are sent to the isolation room for disruptive/non-compliant behavior. The student goes to the booth to calm down (i.e., sit quietly) for fifteen minutes and then moves to a student desk and works quietly to indicate that s/he has calmed down and is ready to return to the classroom.

Student Background

Bruce (a pseudonym) was approximately 18 years old and was attending 11th grade at the time of the study. He has been attending the alternative school for the past seven years. He was receiving special education services under the serious behavioral disorder category. For the past three years, prior to the study, he has been making inconsistent progress in both academic and behavior areas. His curriculum for 11th grade consists of one English class, two math classes, one social studies class, two sciences classes, one life skills class, and one business class. His coursework schedule is unique because Bruce did not have adequate credit hours in math and science

because of his past failing grades. His daily work is made up of a variety of independent seatwork and hands-on activities. With the help of a one-on-one paraprofessional support, Bruce was able to complete most of his academic assignments.

Prior to the intervention and for the past three years Bruce was placed in either the “off-trust” or “Level 1” on the school-wide behavior management system/level system. When in the off-trust level, Bruce had to sit behind dividers in the classroom and was not allowed to speak to anyone. At Level 1, he earned a few more privileges such as returning to his desk and was allowed to speak with other students at appropriate times.

Problem Behaviors

At the start of the 2006-07 academic year, Bruce was doing well academically with grades in the A-B range. He started to miss school, exhibit violent physical outbursts when at school, and discontinued taking his medications as he approached his 18th birthday. Further, Bruce was not completing any academic work when at school and his outbursts got worse with each occurrence. His outbursts consisted of throwing objects, physically hurting himself, calling the staff names, and disrupting the whole school. The outbursts were so severe that police were called on three different occasions. Due to his outbursts and trouble with the law, he missed school for two weeks and was court-ordered back to attend the alternative school. Bruce was also told that if he missed school for any reason and/or gets in trouble with his probation officer he will be sent to jail. As the current management system (level system) was not working, his classroom teacher decided to conduct a functional assessment and develop a positive behavior support intervention that is proactive and will meet Bruce’s academic and behavior needs.

Method

Functional Assessments

Bruce’s special education teacher, the first author, conducted functional assessment interviews in February (after the student was court-ordered back to the alternative school). First, the teacher filled out the FAI questionnaire (O’Neill et al., 1997) as she had observed Bruce for the past 5 months and had a good knowledge of the classroom context during which the problem behaviors were occurring. The teacher identified four problem behaviors that are of concern. The behaviors were (a) not following directions, (b) talking out, (c) inappropriate language, and (d) yelling at others. Sometimes the behaviors were usually followed by a violent physical or verbal outburst. After answering the questions on the FAI, the teacher was able to complete the summary statements based on her answers to the questions. The summary statements of the FAI indicated that predictors for all four behaviors were (a) independent seatwork, (b) demanding task, and/or (c) no attention from teacher or other students. The typical consequences for the four problem behaviors were (a) Bruce was reprimanded and redirected, and/or (b) sent to the isolation room (timeout). The hypothesized functions of the problem behaviors were (a) timeout allowed Bruce to escape academic work and/or (b) reprimands provided negative attention from teacher.

Second, the teacher conducted the Student-Directed Functional Assessment Interview (O’Neill et al., 1997). At the time of the interview, the student was in the off-trust level. However, the teacher had a very good rapport with Bruce and he was very honest with his answers during the student interview. During the student interview, Bruce indicated that he gets into trouble because (a) he talks out, (b) he does not follow directions given, and (c) he uses inappropriate language that just slips out of his

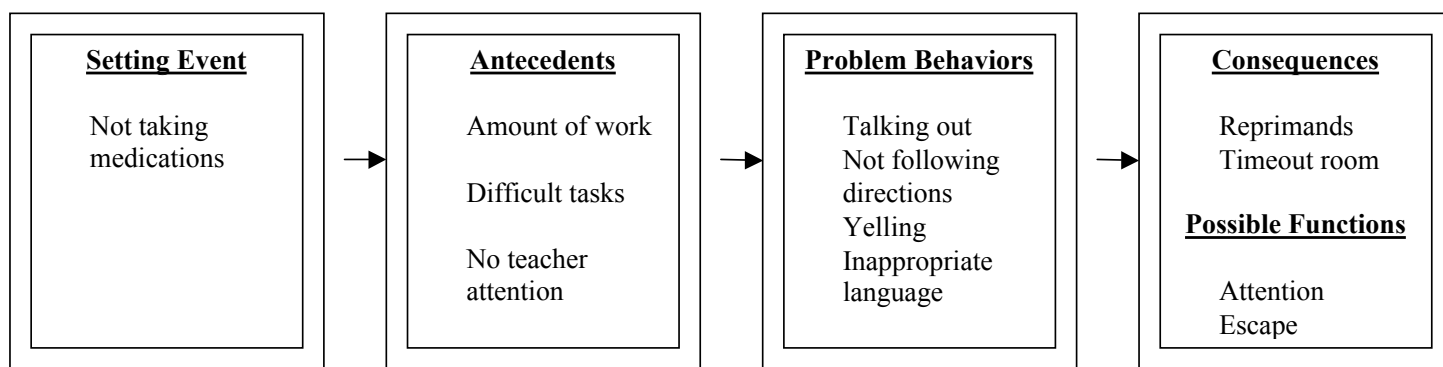


Figure 1. Summary statements from functional assessments (indirect and direct methods).

mouth. He indicated that the behavior gets worse when he does not take medication. The interview data indicated that predictors of the problem behaviors (according to Bruce) were (a) his class work being too difficult and (b) he had to remain in his seat for too long (especially when he had to make up the work for missing school). The problem behaviors escalated when the teacher or the paraprofessional reprimanded him for not doing his work. Based on the interview, it was hypothesized that the antecedents for the problem behavior were (a) amount of work and (b) demanding work. The consequences for the behavior were (a) negative attention when teacher/paraprofessional reprimanded or clarified the task and (b) escape from the work when Bruce was sent to the isolation room (timeout).

Third, the teacher collected some baseline data on the problem behaviors over a seven day period. The Functional Behavior Assessment Observation Form (FBOAF) was used to collect the baseline data. Further, the data from daily point sheets (used school-wide under the level system) provided additional information. The FBOAF allowed the teacher to indicate the type and frequency of the behaviors, the setting events associated with each behavior, the antecedent events, the consequence events, and also the perceived function for each occurrence of problem behavior. The observations (over multiple days) confirmed that the antecedent events triggering the problem behaviors were demanding tasks and/or long tasks with no teacher attention and the possible

functions of the behaviors were to escape and/or obtain attention.

Behavior Intervention Plan

Next, the “competing behavior model” flow chart was used to develop a positive, proactive behavioral intervention plan. First, the teacher wrote the hypothesized functional assessment summary statement in the A-B-C format with setting events (see Figure 1). Second, she identified evidenced based strategies reported in literature that were effective with high school students and targeted off-task behavior and physical aggression. A brief literature review indicated Daily Behavior Report Cards as being a very effective and acceptable tool for both assessment and intervention with high school students (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Sassu, 2006). Third, antecedent strategies that could prevent the occurrence of the problem behaviors and consequence strategies that would differentially reinforce appropriate behavior and decrease problem behavior were brainstormed (see Figure 2). These are described below.

Antecedent strategies to prevent problem behaviors. As the problem behavior occurred during difficult tasks and extended periods of seatwork, it was decided to break up the tasks to make it more manageable. A Behavior Report comprising three work sessions, three breaks, and lunch was developed. This new schedule helped to break up Bruce’s work

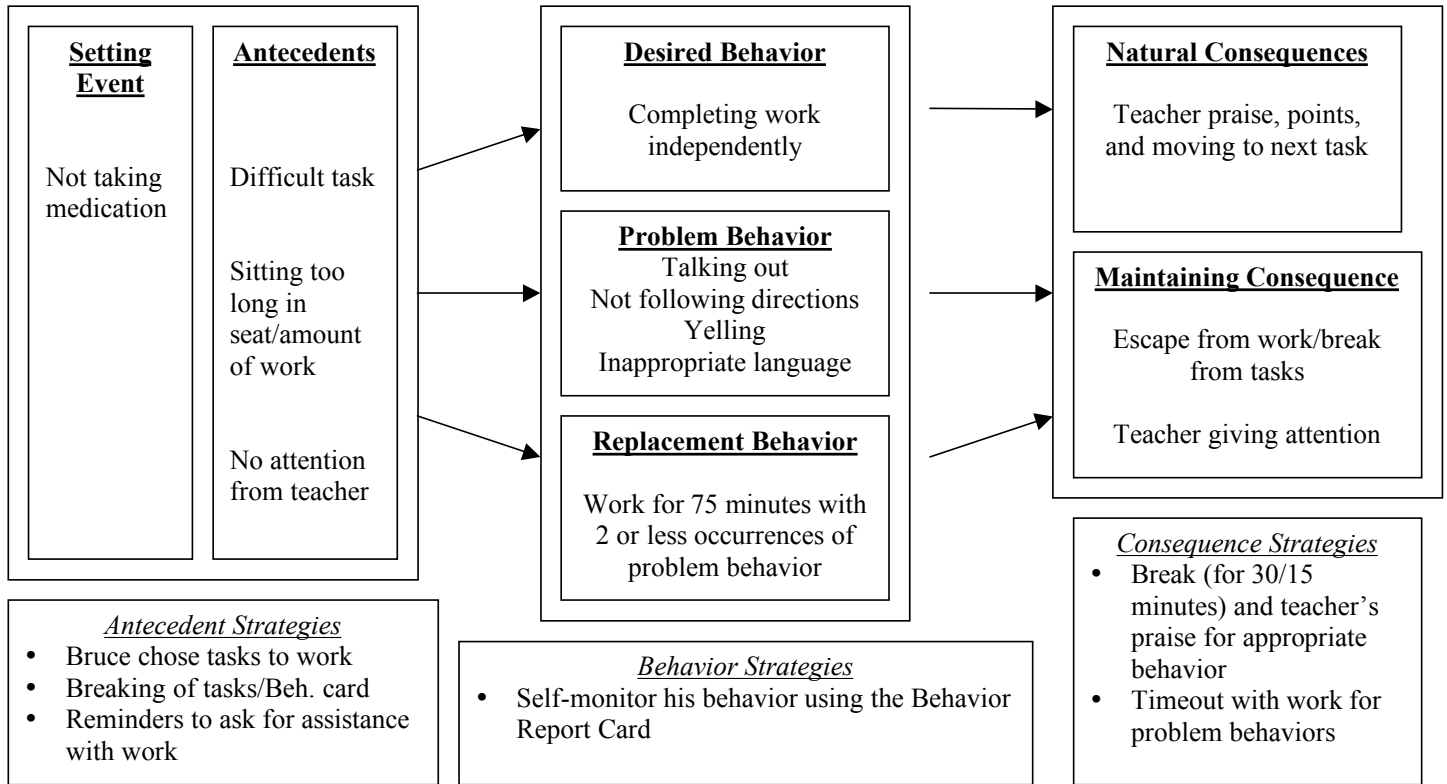


Figure 2. Competing behavior model with antecedent, behavior and consequence strategies.

into smaller parts so as to prevent the problem behaviors. Further, Bruce was told that he could ask for extra assistance if he needed help with the work at the beginning of each work period and also that he could choose the order of his assignments.

Behavior strategies to increase appropriate behaviors. In order to support appropriate behavior, a visual display (i.e., the Behavior Report Card) of Bruce's behavior performance was provided. During the initial days of the intervention, Bruce's Behavior Report Card was displayed on his desk so that Bruce was aware of the points he lost or gained during the work period. Later on Bruce was asked to record his negative behaviors during the work period. He decided on self-monitoring aspect as Bruce indicated during the student interview that his inappropriate language 'just slips out of his mouth.'

Consequence strategies to differentially reinforce appropriate behaviors. Bruce was told that if he exhibited no problem behaviors during a 75 minute

work session, he would have a 30 minute break time to play on the computer, or could choose an activity he liked and would be praised by the teacher. If Bruce had fewer than three problem behaviors in a work session, he was allowed to have a 15 minute break to work on an activity he liked and was praised by the teacher. If Bruce had three occurrences (or more) of problem behaviors during a work session, Bruce was sent to the isolation room, where he had to complete his work.

Emergency plan. The emergency plan that was in place for Bruce before the intervention started was used during the intervention. This plan consisted of calling in the probation officer when Bruce displayed violent physical or verbal outbursts. This plan was in place as Bruce had injured a fellow student earlier in the school year.

Once the intervention plan (antecedent, behavior, and consequences strategies) was identified, it was implemented in the classroom by the teacher and the

paraprofessional. Bruce was told of the new plan by the teacher. Under the new plan, Bruce's morning started with one hour and 15 minutes of academic work and was followed by a thirty-minute break if Bruce had no occurrences of the problem behaviors (i.e., talking out, inappropriate language, yelling, and not following directions). His Behavior Report Card displayed his work/break schedule and had a space beside each work session to color check his performance during the session. Three color checks were used. A green color check was used to indicate no occurrences of problem behaviors for which Bruce received 30 minutes of break time. A yellow color check was used to indicate less than three occurrences of problem behaviors for which Bruce received 15 minutes of free time/break. A red check was used to indicate three or more problem behaviors and Bruce was sent to the timeout or isolation room where he completed his work. Each work session and break was independent of each other so that if Bruce started out with a bad day, he did not lose the rest of his breaks as long as he did not exhibit problem behaviors during other work sessions.

Each morning Bruce was told the work he had to complete and the four appropriate behaviors he needed to display. He chose his assignments and completed them. This helped him save the harder work for a later time when he was actually ready to work on it. The breaks helped him to display appropriate behavior (an accommodation that Bruce needed) and he also received praise from his teacher for his appropriate behavior.

The Behavior Report Card sat on Bruce's desk so that he could monitor his performance and the paraprofessional placed appropriate check marks at the end of the work sessions initially. After a few days, the teacher asked Bruce if he would be interested in filling out his Behavior Report Card and thus take responsibility for his behavior. He liked filling out the Behavior Report Card and was very proud of doing it. He would say, "I've been good. Can I fill it in green and play on the computer now?" Bruce was always aware of the time and if he earned his break time, he made sure he received the breaks.

Results

After the intervention, all four problem behaviors decreased and continued to decrease significantly throughout the year. For "talking out," the baseline in February was 5.5 occurrences per day. It decreased to an average of one occurrence per day in April (Figure 3). For "not following directions," the baseline in February was 5.8 occurrences per day. It decreased to 1.1 occurrences per day in April (Figure 4). For "yelling at others," the baseline in February was .6 occurrences per day. It decreased to .1 occurrences per day in April (Figure 5). For the use of "inappropriate language," the baseline in February was 3.4 occurrences per day. It decreased to .8 occurrences per day in April (Figure 6). The data (as well as visual analysis of the graphs) indicate that all behaviors decreased with the implementation of the intervention. Further, after the intervention was implemented, Bruce was sent to the isolation room only once, which was a huge success. More importantly, before the intervention started Bruce was in the "off trust" level. After the intervention plan was implemented, Bruce advanced to Level 3 Day 1 (by the end of the school year), which was a tremendous achievement in itself for Bruce.

Follow-Up

However, due to unforeseen circumstances, Bruce was placed in a different classroom (this academic year) for his last year of school. The first author continued to follow up on Bruce's progress. The classroom teacher did not see the necessity for continuing the intervention plan or providing supports for Bruce because he was an adult. Bruce started the current academic year well, even though he missed the structure and special privileges he earned with the intervention during the past academic year. As the weeks passed and the work got difficult, two earlier patterns emerged. The number of incomplete assignments piled up and Bruce started to miss school. Further, Bruce got into trouble with the law and was again court-ordered back to finish school. Currently,

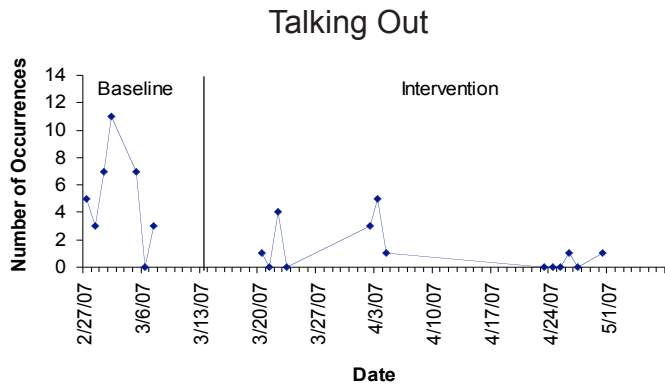


Figure 3. Results of the intervention package on the occurrences of talking-out behavior.

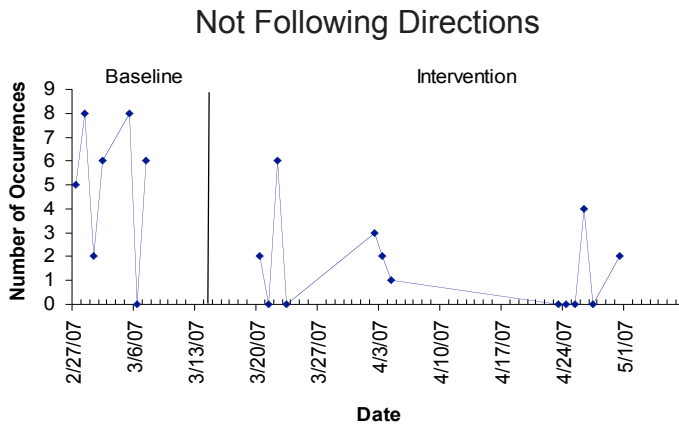


Figure 4. Results of the intervention package on the occurrences of not-following directions.

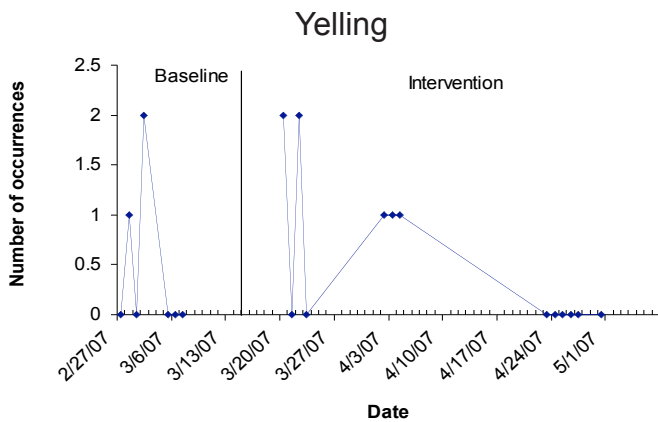


Figure 5. Results of the intervention package on the occurrences of yelling behavior.

Bruce is still attending school. His academic grades are low and he is demoted to the “off-trust” level. One can only wonder what his behavior would have been if the intervention was continued or tweaked to fit the needs of the new classroom.

Discussion

The major concerns of the teacher were Bruce’s (a) talking out behavior, (b) refusal to follow directions, (c) yelling, and (d) inappropriate language. The summary statements from the functional assessments indicated that Bruce’s problem behavior served to provide an escape from demanding work and/or obtain attention from teacher during long independent seatwork times. Based on the two hypothesized functions, a multi-component behavioral intervention plan was developed using the “competing behavior model.” The behavior support/intervention plan consisted of (a) providing Bruce an opportunity to choose his assignments, which helped circumvent teacher presenting the order of the assignments and directing him to complete, (b) breaking the work sessions into smaller sessions to reduce the amount of time Bruce had to work continuously, (c) implementing a Behavior Report Card that Bruce could use to self-monitor his behavior throughout the day, (d) providing a break

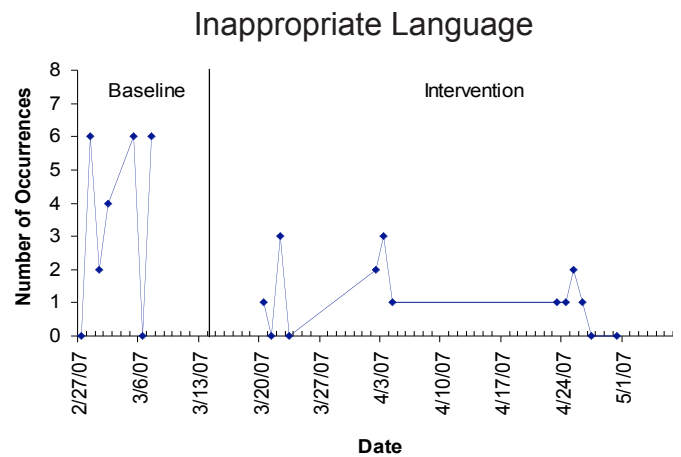


Figure 6. Results of the intervention package on the occurrences of inappropriate language.

(reinforcer/accommodation) after each work session contingent upon appropriate behavior, (e) providing multiple opportunities to obtain reinforcement in one day by treating each work session as independent of other sessions, and (f) not allowing Bruce to avoid work when he was sent to the isolation room for his misbehavior.

The data indicates that the intervention plan was effective in decreasing all four problem behaviors of Bruce. Not only did his problem behavior go down, he also advanced from the “off-trust” to a higher level (Level 3, Day 1) on the level management system. Further, he was sent to the timeout/isolation room only once during the entire two months (March and April) before the school year ended. Bruce indicated that he loved his breaks and he chose to draw, play on the computer, play basketball in the gym, or go outside. By the end of the intervention year, Bruce was back on track to graduate the following school year, provided he maintained his academic and behavior progress. More importantly, the current intervention supports will help him start his next academic year on a positive note (i.e., on Level 3, Day 1) and at a higher level.

This case study highlights a practitioner’s use of functional assessment-based intervention plans to provide individualized support to a student with chronic behavior challenges. It also highlights that the “one size fits all” behavior management model, the level system employed in the alternative schools has many limitations and is very ineffective by itself. For example, before the intervention, the school level management system included the use of daily point sheets. All problem behaviors were recorded and the students were shown their daily point sheet at the end of the day. Sometimes the students did not realize why they were marked down and it was too late for many of the students to make amends. The current intervention employed a Behavior Report Card (in addition to the daily report card) that the student could use to visually monitor his/her progress. The self-monitoring aspect along with other antecedent

and consequence strategies helped in the decrease of Bruce’s problem behaviors.

This case study also highlights the process that practitioners (teachers) could employ to use evidenced-based research/interventions to improve their classroom practices. In this study, the special education teacher was able to review the literature and identify Daily Behavior Report Cards as an effective intervention strategy with high school students. The teacher, instead of using this one isolated strategy, included it as a part of the multi-component intervention plan. The strategy by itself might not have had an impact as the functions of the behavior indicated that Bruce needed additional support in terms of academic task/work accommodations. Thus, it might be better to categorize evidenced-based strategies reported in literature under antecedent, behavior, and consequence strategies and then use the “competing behavior model” in developing a multi-component intervention plan.

There are two limitations to the findings of the study. First, Bruce was court-ordered back to the school when the intervention was implemented. Bruce was aware that if he got into further trouble, he would be sent to jail. Hence, this awareness could have had an affect on his behavior. However, our follow-up indicated that under similar circumstances the following year, Bruce performance was at pre-intervention levels without the intervention support, suggesting that the intervention plan was associated with improved behavior and also academic performance. Second, Bruce indicated that he does behave poorly when he missed taking his medication. The “competing behavior model” calls for a setting strategy that would prevent Bruce from missing his medication. We did have a setting strategy that would have assisted in monitoring his medication intake in the intervention package. Such a strategy and data collection on his intake of medication would have provided additional context for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention plan.

To conclude, this case study demonstrates that teacher implemented functional assessment-

based intervention plans can help in decreasing the problem behaviors of students with chronic problem behaviors. Further, it demonstrates the need for additional individualized supports for students placed in alternative school for their chronic behavior problems. It underscores the need for not relying on a “one size fits all’ level management strategy that is commonly used in alternative schools. Finally, it adds to the almost non-existent literature on effective behavioral interventions for high school students with behavioral disorders in alternative schools.

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Post-school Outcomes for Students in the State of Washington, USA, Receiving Special Education Services

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Abstract

States in the U.S. are required to provide transition services to young people in special education to increase the likelihood of positive post-school outcomes (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, IDEA, amended 1997). Fourteen years later the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 strengthened transition requirements and required that each state follow-up with former special education students to determine their post-school outcomes. These outcomes include the percent of youth that have been employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both within one year of leaving high school. Outcome data provide a glimpse of life after high school for these young people and should provide valuable information for program improvement. While states across the nation are beginning to collect this information, Washington State has conducted follow-up research with special education students for over ten years and is a leader in the effort to determine post-school outcomes. This article provides information on this research and presents data from the study of the 2006 Washington State special education graduates. Outcome data are presented by gender, race/ethnicity, disability and county size (urban, rural and semi-rural). Results indicate that outcomes for white males and youth with learning disabilities are more positive than those for females, youth of color and youth with developmental disabilities or emotional/behavioral disorders. Information is provided to assist programs in developing post-school follow-up studies and raise questions in examining data for program improvement.

It may be argued that the most important outcome of public education for students, including those with disabilities, rests with the way in which these young people perform in terms of work and adult roles upon leaving high school and entering community settings. Collecting data on the post-school experiences of students with disabilities is not a new endeavor in the United States. For many years, researchers in higher education have gathered data to determine the percent of youth in special education who were employed, in training and postsecondary education programs or both, after leaving high school. Post-school outcome data collected at the national level provided the initial impetus for transition policy in the U.S., providing a picture of life after high school for students with disabilities that was less positive than their counterparts without disabilities (Affleck,

Edgar, Levine & Kortering, 1990; Frank, Sitlington, Cooper & Cool, 1990; Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985; Mithaug, Horiuchi & Fanning, 1985; Sitlington & Frank, 1990; Wagner, Newman, D'Amico, Jay, Butler-Naln, Marder & Cox, 1991). Transition services were mandated for youth in special education with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 and have been strengthened with each reauthorization of IDEA. This legislation requires that transition planning is incorporated into the individualized education program (IEP) planning process. The transition component of the IEP is to be developed no later than the student's 16th birthday and designed to provide instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, focusing on

preparing youth with disabilities for life after high school.

Transition services were strengthened with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), focusing “appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills” (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)). To strengthen the emphasis on “measurable postsecondary goals”, the US Office of Special Education (OSEP), US Department of Education, now mandates that each state develop a State Performance Plan (SPP) across 20 identified indicators. Indicator 14 mandates that states collect, analyze and report post-school outcomes for young people in special education to determine the percentage of youth that are or have been employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school or training program, or both within one year of graduating or dropping out of high school (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B) (IDEA)). States are required to conduct follow-up studies beginning with the 2006 special education leavers (defined as graduates or youth who drop out) to determine post-school outcomes and report those outcomes to OSEP on a yearly basis.

The measurement used to determine these outcomes, as stated in Indicator 14, reads, “Percent = [(# of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school) divided by the (# of youth assessed who had Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and are no longer in secondary school)] times 100” (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)). Washington State has defined this as the percent of students “engaged” in employment, attendance at postsecondary education or training programs or both.

In the 1980’s and 1990’s Washington State was one of a handful of states in the U.S. collecting data from former students with disabilities and their families (Blackorby, Edgar, & Kortering, 1991;

Edgar, Levine, & Maddox, 1986; Edgar, 1996; Edgar, Brown & Johnson, 1997; Brown & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Brown, 1999; Neel, Meadows, Levine, & Edgar, 1988).

The initial post-school outcome studies in Washington were used as a foundation in writing and receiving a transition systems change grant from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, US Department of Education, in 1990. This five-year grant funded the newly formed Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) in Washington State. After the first five years, funding has been provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State Department of Education. The Center for Change in Transition Services was originally located at the University of Washington (1990-2004) and is now at Seattle University (2004-present). In addition to statewide training and technical assistance to schools in providing transition services, personnel at CCTS are responsible for collecting, analyzing and reporting annual post-school outcome data for all youth in special education in the state.

Because of the history and consistency of data collection beginning in 1996, Washington State has become a leader in the national endeavor to determine outcomes for youth with disabilities after they leave high school. The methods used to conduct this research provide useful information to other states, territories and nations in developing a similar system to collect, report and analyze post-school data.

Method

The purpose of this study was to determine the post-school outcomes in employment, post-secondary education and training of special education students in Washington State within one year of graduating from secondary schools. The follow-up study of the 2006 cohort is a continuation of the annual studies initiated in 1996 by CCTS in collaboration with the OSPI, Washington State Department of Education.

Participants

All school districts in Washington State participate in the post-school data research on a yearly basis. The 2006 study included 4,223 special education students from 247 districts with high schools (secondary schools). These were students who graduated from high school between September 1, 2005 and August 31, 2006. Washington State has only one type of diploma so all youth graduated with a “regular” high school diploma. It is possible for students to attain their diploma by meeting the credit (Carnegie unit) requirements or, in some cases, meet the goals on the IEP as determined by the IEP team. The team includes teachers, parents and school administrators. Youth with more significant disabilities may attain a diploma using this option and might also choose to remain in the high school program through the age of 21.

An attempt was made to contact and complete a telephone interview with all 4,223 youth or a family member approximately six months after the youth left high school. After multiple attempts 3,317 or 79% of the 4,223 special education graduates were successfully contacted and interviews completed.

Instrumentation

Survey questions included in this study were first determined in 1996 by the members of the CCTS advisory board and enhanced and revised over the following years. The survey can be found at the CCTS website (http://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/post-school_survey.asp). Questions include those asking if the former special education students were employed since graduating from high schools and, if so, the type of employment, hours worked per week and wages received. Also included are questions to determine if former students were attending postsecondary education and/or training programs since graduating and, if so, the type of program.

Prior to conducting the survey itself, demographic data were collected from school records and IEPs of the former students. These data included contact information (phone numbers, emails and emergency contact information), gender, race/ethnicity, age, and disability for the youth.

Procedures

Staff from the CCTS provided training and technical assistance to districts collecting post-school outcome data. Contact information was confirmed with students in the spring prior to their graduation and entered into a database using a demographic form provided by CCTS. The survey was provided to districts on a secure website. The telephone survey was completed with the youth or family member approximately six months after graduation. Special education teachers and teaching assistants conducted the majority of the interviews. Data from the surveys were entered into a statistical program for analysis.

In addition to data specific to the survey questions and post-school outcomes, respondents (youth or family members) often offered qualitative information about their high school programs, sharing concerns about their lives after leaving high school. Examples included information about what supports a student received in high school that were helpful and resources they may have used while trying to find a job or attend a training program after graduation. There were also requests for information in finding employment, getting into a training program, or finding housing and medical assistance. Although this information is important to the planning and provision of services it was not aggregated in the outcome data for this study and is only discussed in the final section of this paper.

Results

Post-school outcome data were gathered to determine the percent of youth with disabilities who

were competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school or training program, or both. Data in this study reflect the outcomes for students in special education approximately six months after graduating from high school.

Respondents

Surveys were successfully completed with 3,317 youth (or a family member). This represented 78.5% of the 4,223 special education graduates reported by districts for the 2006 study. The percent of successfully completed interviews was higher in rural counties than more urban counties. District personnel reported that it is easier to follow-up with former students in small communities than in large cities because they can “find” the young person even if the contact information is no longer correct (87% of graduates in rural counties were successfully interviewed). It is more difficult to successfully contact youth who have moved or for whom telephone numbers have changed or been disconnected in larger urban areas (75% of graduates were interviewed). Smaller districts had fewer graduates; often less than 10. It was much easier for district personnel to follow-up with these students the following year than in districts with more than 200 graduates.

The percent of successfully completed interviews with males was comparable to that with females. A higher percent of white youth were interviewed than youth of color (80% compared to 75%). Examining the data by disabilities indicates that contact with youth with developmental disabilities was highest (84%) while contact with youth with emotional and behavioral disorders was lowest (70%). Interviewers reported that youth with developmental disabilities are often living at home and under family supervision the year after leaving high school while many of the youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities were not in contact with their families and their contact information was not known.

The percent of completed interviews with former students by county (urban, semi-rural and rural), gender, race/ethnicity and disability are represented in Figure 1. Students of color include the following

Table 1

Interviewed by County (Urban/Rural), Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Type of Disability: 2006 Graduates Interviewed*

Respondent	Interviewed		Not Interviewed		Total
All graduates	3,317	78.5%	906	21.5%	4,223
Urban counties	2,000	75.3%	657	24.7%	2,657
Semi-rural counties	631	81.2%	146	18.8%	777
Rural counties	686	86.9%	103	13.1%	789
Male	2,142	78.2%	597	21.8%	2,739
Female	1,175	79.2%	309	20.8%	1,484
White	2,427	79.8%	614	20.2%	3,041
Students of color	859	75.3%	282	24.7%	1,141
Learning disability	1,885	76.9%	565	23.1%	2,450
Health impairment	703	80.4%	171	19.6%	874
Developmental disability	492	84.2%	92	15.8%	584
Emotional/behavioral disability	105	69.5%	46	30.5%	151
Other disability	132	80.5%	32	19.5%	164

**Urban counties include those with cities of 100,000 or more population (April 2007); semi-urban counties include those with cities with populations of between 35,000 and 100,000; and, rural counties are those in which the largest city is under 35,000.*

race/ethnicities: American Indian/Native Alaskan, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, more than one race or multiracial. The learning disability category is those students with average or above intelligence but with disabilities in reading, writing or even math (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) and non-verbal learning disabilities. Developmental disabilities include youth with cognitive disabilities (mental retardation,

mental retardation coupled with multiple disabilities and autism). Other disabilities include orthopedic impairments, deafness, visual impairments, deaf-blindness, communication disorders, and traumatic brain injury.

Engaged in Employment, Postsecondary Education or Both

Of the 3,317 youth contacted six months after graduation from high school, 74% reported that they were currently employed and/or attending postsecondary education or training programs. Washington State and other states have used the term “engaged” to describe youth who are working or in school or both since beginning the post-school outcome studies in the early 1980’s.

Although overall 74% of graduates were so engaged, this is not uniform across gender, ethnicity and disability. For example, more males interviewed were engaged in work or school than females (77% compared to 69% respectively). Differences in the percent of students engaged after high school were most notable when compared by type of disability. A higher percentage of youth with learning disabilities was engaged in work or postsecondary school or training programs than youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities (81% compared to 64% respectively). Slightly over half of youth with developmental disabilities was working and/or going to school (53%). Figure 2 shows engagement in work or school by size of county, gender, ethnicity and disability.

Employment

Of the 3,317 youth contacted, 1,894 (57%) were employed at the time of the follow-up interview. Employment is defined by the Rehabilitation Act as work (a) in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and (b) for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar

Table 2

Engaged by County (Urban/Rural)*, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Type of Disability: 2006 Graduates Interviewed*

Respondent	Engaged	No/DK	Total
All graduates	2,472 74.5%	845 25.5%	3,317
Urban counties	1,548 77.4%	452 22.6%	2,000
Semi-rural counties	442 70.0%	189 30.0%	631
Rural counties	482 70.3%	204 29.7%	686
Male	1,656 77.3%	486 22.7%	2,142
Female	816 69.4%	359 30.6%	1,175
White	1,836 75.6%	591 24.4%	2,427
Students of color	614 71.5%	245 28.5%	869
Learning disability	1,532 81.3%	353 18.7%	1,885
Health impairment	528 75.1%	175 24.9%	703
Developmental disability	262 53.3%	230 46.7%	492
Emotional/behavioral disability	67 63.8%	38 36.2%	105
Other disability	83 62.9%	49 37.1%	132

**Urban counties include those with cities of 100,000 or more population (April 2007); semi-urban counties include those with cities with populations of between 35,000 and 100,000; and, rural counties are those in which the largest city is under 35,000.*

work performed by individuals who are not disabled (Authority: Sections 7(11) and 12© of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 705(11) and 709©).

As with overall engagement, there are differences in the percent of youth employed when data are disaggregated by county, gender, race/ethnicity and disability (Figure 3). More males were employed than females (60% compared to 52% of those interviewed) and more white youth were employed than youth of

Table 3

Employed by County (Urban/Rural), Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Type of Disability: 2006 Graduates Interviewed*

Respondent	Employed		No/DK		Total
All graduates	1,894	57.3%	1,409	42.7%	3,303
Urban counties	1,163	58.4%	830	41.6%	1,993
Semi-rural counties	335	53.4%	292	46.6%	627
Rural counties	396	58.0%	287	42.0%	683
Male	1,290	60.4%	844	39.6%	2,134
Female	604	51.7%	565	48.3%	1,169
White	1,423	58.9%	995	41.1%	2,418
Students of color	452	52.9%	402	47.1%	854
Learning disability	1,217	64.9%	659	35.1%	1,876
Health impairment	385	54.8%	317	45.2%	702
Developmental disability	191	39.0%	299	61.0%	490
Emotional/behavioral disability	56	53.3%	49	46.7%	105
Other disability	45	34.6%	85	65.4%	130

**Urban counties include those with cities of 100,000 or more population (April 2007); semi-urban counties include those with cities with populations of between 35,000 and 100,000; and, rural counties are those in which the largest city is under 35,000.*

color (59% compared to 53%). Examining outcomes across disability categories, youth with learning disabilities were found to be employed with greater frequency than all other disability categories (65% of graduates with learning disabilities were employed compared to 53% of youth with emotional behavior disorders and 39% of youth with developmental disabilities).

Table 4

Attending Postsecondary Education by County (Urban/Rural), Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Type of Disability: 2006 Graduates Interviewed*

Respondent	Attending		No/DK		Total
All graduates	901	27.3%	2,395	72.7%	3,296
Urban counties	602	30.2%	1,389	69.8%	1,991
Semi-rural counties	161	25.6%	467	74.4%	628
Rural counties	138	20.4%	539	79.6%	677
Male	573	26.9%	1,556	73.1%	2,129
Female	328	28.1%	839	71.9%	1,167
White	660	27.4%	1,752	72.6%	2,412
Students of color	231	27.1%	622	72.9%	853
Learning disability	554	29.5%	1,323	70.5%	1,877
Health impairment	228	32.6%	472	67.4%	700
Developmental disability	56	11.6%	428	88.4%	484
Emotional/behavioral disability	19	18.4%	84	81.6%	103
Other disability	44	33.3%	88	66.7%	132

**Urban counties include those with cities of 100,000 or more population (April 2007); semi-urban counties include those with cities with populations of between 35,000 and 100,000; and, rural counties are those in which the largest city is under 35,000.*

Data for employment outcomes included types of jobs, hours worked and wages. Types of jobs were primarily entry level occupations in retail, restaurant or fast food businesses and service industries. The average hours worked per week was 35. Wages per hour was slightly higher than state minimum wage (\$7.63 per hour, January 1, 2006, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries) overall but

Table 5

Comparison of Post-school Outcomes by Year

Year	Post-secondary Education	Employment	Engagement
1998	31%	66%	77%
1999	30%	70%	81%
2000	28%	65%	77%
2001	31%	59%	74%
2002	33%	57%	73%
2003	30%	53%	70%
2004	29%	55%	73%
2005	28%	56%	76%
2006	28%	59%	76%

males were receiving wages at approximately \$1.35 per hour higher than females.

Postsecondary Education

Postsecondary education includes attendance at a 4-year university or college, 2-year community college, and vocational-technical college. Of the 2006 special education graduates contacted, 27% were attending postsecondary education at the time of the follow-up interview. The majority of youth in postsecondary education programs were attending community colleges.

As with other outcomes, there were differences in the percent of youth who were attending postsecondary education institutions when data were disaggregated by county size, gender, race/ethnicity, and disability. Youth in urban counties (30%) and youth with health impairments (33%) were more often attending postsecondary education institutions than youth living in rural counties (20%), youth with emotional and behavioral disorders (18%) and young people with developmental disabilities (12%).

Discussion

Continuing a data collection process established in Washington State in 1996 provides a rich database to inform statewide improvement efforts in secondary special education. These data have provided information pertaining to the post-school outcomes of young people with disabilities in employment and postsecondary education and training. Collecting, examining and reporting outcome data are important activities for agencies that serve youth with disabilities but are only the first steps of this work. Aggregated employment and postsecondary education outcomes have remained relatively stable over the last eleven years in Washington (Johnson, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Johnson, 2005, Johnson, 2006).

These data alone do not provide adequate information to inform practices, programs and policy that serve students with disabilities. It is only by disaggregating, examining and discussing the outcomes that we can use this information for program improvement.

Examining the post-school outcome data disaggregated by county, gender, race/ethnicity, and disability provides states and local districts opportunities to evaluate their programs and services and assure that evidence-based practices are used to provide students in special education the best chance of experiencing positive post-school outcomes. Looking at overall non-engagement rates, for example, 24% of all youth interviewed for the 2006 study were not engaged in either work or education of any type. This varied substantially by disability – 46% of youth with developmental disabilities were not engaged (working, going to school or in training programs) compared to 18% of youth with learning disabilities. For youth with emotional and behavioral disorders, more than a third of those young women or men were not working or in school or training programs (35%). For “other disabilities” (which includes orthopedic impairments, deafness, visual impairments, deaf-blindness, communication

Table 6

Not Engaged by County (Urban/Rural), Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Type of Disability: 2006 Graduates Interviewed*

Respondent	Not Engaged		Yes/DK		Total
All graduates	805	24.3%	2,512	75.7%	3,317
Urban counties	435	21.8%	1,565	78.2%	2,000
Semi-rural counties	179	28.4%	452	71.6%	631
Rural counties	191	27.8%	495	72.2%	686
Male	468	21.8%	1,674	78.2%	2,142
Female	337	28.7%	838	71.3%	1,175
White	564	23.2%	1,863	76.8%	2,427
Students of color	233	27.1%	626	72.9%	859
Learning disability	330	17.5%	1,555	82.5%	1,885
Health impairment	165	23.5%	538	76.5%	703
Developmental disability	224	45.5%	268	54.5%	492
Emotional/behavioral disability	37	35.2%	68	64.8%	105
Other disability	49	37.1%	83	62.9%	132

**Urban counties include those with cities of 100,000 or more population (April 2007); semi-urban counties include those with cities with populations of between 35,000 and 100,000; and, rural counties are those in which the largest city is under 35,000.*

disorders, and traumatic brain injury) 37% of these young people were unengaged in work, education or training. While 22% of males were not working, nor attending any type of education or training, 29% of females were unengaged. More youth of color were unengaged (27%) than youth that are white (23%). In addition to differences in post-school outcomes reported by gender, ethnicity and disability, there were differences within urban-rural settings as

well. Youth from rural and semi-rural settings were unengaged more often than youth from urban areas (28% of graduates in rural and semi-rural settings compared to 22% of graduates interviewed in urban settings).

The reasons for these differences are innumerable and complex. Many of these differences have been discussed and identified in studies conducted by the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and NLTS2 (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, Marder, Levine, Cameto, Cadwallader, & Blackorby, 2003; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2006). While this information is important to federal and state policy decisions, perhaps it is only at the local level that activities and services can be targeted in such a way as to increase positive post-school experiences for young people with disabilities. If outcome data are to be collected and used for program improvement, the information should be used to identify gaps in services, needed program improvements, and changes in policy. Post-school outcome data for youth with disabilities can then inform practices tied to the rich body of literature providing research-based information to increase positive post-school outcomes for youth in special education. (Steele, Konrad, Test, 2005).

The Washington State post-school outcome data are reported at the federal, state, regional, county and district level. State level data are used to develop goals for policy, training and technical assistance. Disaggregating outcomes by gender, race and ethnicity, disability and county identifies those youth who are experiencing positive post-school outcomes and those who are not. The outcomes are not as positive for youth with developmental disabilities or emotional behavioral disorders, youth of color, and females. This information gives impetus to renewed efforts to provide evidenced-based transition services to these young people. Data should be examined at the local level to determine which youth are experiencing less positive outcomes than their peers so that areas of needed improvement can be addressed.

The Center for Change in Transition Services conducts training sessions and facilitates discussions with districts to enhance the examination and use of

data for program improvement and goal setting to increase positive post-school outcomes for youth in special education. Districts are encouraged to share their post-school data with teachers, counselors, special education personnel, parents, students and community members in order to address these outcomes. Each district within the state develops goals based on their own data to inform their work at the local level and include these goals in their application for special education funding. Examples of two of these goals based on the post-school outcome data for one district included (a) increasing employment for youth with developmental disabilities and (b) increasing attendance in postsecondary education programs for youth with emotional behavioral disabilities.

At the district level goals also addressed practices and procedures, and increased agency coordination and collaboration. Specific activities were identified with the purpose of increasing positive post-school outcomes. Examples include:

1. Developed local community councils that included business and adult service agencies with the goal of working together to improve the outcomes of employment for their students.
2. Community councils identified annual goals from the outcome data, examining and discussing this information on a yearly basis.
3. Shared the post-school outcome data with school board members and identified areas of improvement to address for the coming year. This collaboration resulted in the identification of the need for stronger and earlier mental health linkages and resources for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders in order to improve their post-school outcomes.
4. Identified young people with developmental disabilities as having less positive outcomes when compared to other disabilities. Developed a community work-based program in partnership with county developmental disabilities agencies with the goal of employment for these youth prior to leaving high school.
5. Developed linkages with the local community college to increase attendance for those students for whom “college” was their postsecondary goal.

In addition to examining the data for outcomes in employment, postsecondary education and training, youth and family members often offer qualitative information to the interviewers. Conversations with the young person or a family member provide rich information about the lives of special education graduates, especially rich when it is the teacher speaking with a former student. These “stories” are not aggregated in the statewide and district level data but provide powerful sources of information for program improvement (Johnson, 2007). The stories are shared and discussed when district level teams examine post-school outcome data and are often the impetus for program improvement activities. One district developed a resource book for students, families and teachers upon hearing from former students about their lack of information regarding agency or community support after leaving high school. The team of teachers in this district developed activities to strengthen this connection by bringing in speakers from the employment office as well as taking students on outings to these offices. The teachers reported that they were not aware of a gap in information about these resources and agencies until talking with their former students during the telephone survey. It became clearer to the teachers that they needed a more deliberate and systematic way to share information with the students than they had previously.

Developing a system to follow-up with former students in special education and examining the post-school outcome data in areas of employment and attendance in postsecondary education programs is important to the work in schools, districts and at the state and national level. While we in the US and Washington State have spent many years and much funding on doing so, the outcomes have not significantly improved. It is not enough to merely gather these data to meet the legislative mandates. It is a combination of careful examination of outcome data and seeking to understand the circumstances

contributing to those outcomes that will impact local and regional efforts and improve post-high school experiences and prospects for youth with disabilities. The complexity of providing transition services within the myriad of contextual factors affecting students, teachers, schools and systems alike makes it difficult to draw correlations between IEP planning and post-school outcomes. Each student in this study had unique barriers and sources of support within their own ecological systems, yet this brief depiction of the post-school outcomes of 3,317 young people with disabilities should provide us the incentive to gather, examine and analyze these data with the goal of program improvement to increase positive post-school outcomes.

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Disability and Diversity in Canada: Problems and Opportunities in Creating Accessible and Inclusive Learning and Service Delivery Environments

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Abstract

A novel participatory workshop methodology was adopted in this qualitative study of the intersection of disability and diversity in the lives of individuals. Social service recipients, parents, educators, service providers, and policy makers in three Canadian cities were conjoined in daylong discussions designed to investigate if the realities of inclusion and access become more complex when individuals with disabilities also are recent refugees or economic immigrants of a visible ethno-cultural minority. The themes that emerged from the discussions focused on problems in the areas of appropriate educational provisions, access to work, access to services, marginalization, mental health, self-definition, human rights, and universal design. Opportunities for improved educational and social services are described in relation to the insights, observations, and recommendations of the workshop participants. The recommendations for improving the education and social service provisions to individuals with disability and diversity characteristics are related to: (a) adopting a more holistic approach to education and social service delivery, (b) extending educational inclusion, (c) strengthening home-school partnerships, (d) enhancing professional development, (e) expanding public education on disability and diversity issues, (f) developing better mental health services, and (g) augmenting employment supports.

Introduction

The intersection of disability and diversity in the lives of individuals occurs in complex and often troubling patterns. In this qualitative study,

we hoped to discover and understand how persons with disabilities from diverse ethno-cultural and linguistic communities in Canada experience access to opportunities and services, and how educators and service providers respond to their needs. In particular,

we wanted to investigate if the realities of inclusion and access become more complex when individuals with disabilities also are recent refugees or economic immigrants of a visible ethno-cultural minority.

To gain a fuller understanding of how disability and diversity might intersect in people's lives, we chose to include in the study all of the stakeholders in the provision of opportunities and services to individuals with disabilities from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. Specifically, we included three groups: (a) service recipients, including individuals with disabilities and the parents of children with disabilities, (b) service providers, including personnel from schools, disability advocacy and service organizations, and ethno-cultural community organizations, and (c) decision-makers from disability and ethno-cultural service organizations, schools, and government. We hoped that by bringing these three groups together we might discover better ways of understanding and supporting one of the most marginalized and at-risk groups at the tattered edge of our social fabric.

Since we wanted to understand not only what our informants experienced, but also how they understood their experiences in terms of the problems they perceived and the opportunities for improved services they imagined, we felt it was important to create a dynamic and interactive opportunity to share their experiences and insights, to discuss the problems they encountered from their unique perspectives, and to explore how they thought learning and service delivery environments might be made more accessible and inclusive.

Rationale

Since 1995, the number of refugee class immigrants (about 20,000 to 30,000 annually) to Canada has stabilized at roughly 12-13% of the total immigrant population (DeVoretz, Pivnenko, & Beiser, 2004; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). However, in the same period, the number of economic class immigrants to Canada has grown, both in terms of absolute numbers (approaching 140,000 annually) and as a proportion (approximately 60%)

of all immigrants (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Ray, 2005). Compared to past immigrants, recent immigrants are increasingly members of visible minorities from countries with historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic roots different from those in the traditional Canadian multicultural mosaic (DeVoretz, Pivnenko, & Beiser, 2004; Ray, 2005). In addition, many immigrants face significant challenges with respect to: (a) recognition of overseas education, credentials, and experience (Pendakur, 2000; Ray, 2005), (b) inclusion in educational opportunities (Brouwer, 2000; Montgomery, 2002; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003), (c) parenting difficulties and communicating with educators (Kilbride, et al, 2000; Montgomery, 2002; Mwarigha, 2002), (d) learning an official language and overcoming language barriers (DeVoretz, Pivnenko, & Beiser, 2004; Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, & Khattar, 2000; Montgomery, 2002), (e) discrimination and cultural insensitivity (Brouwer, 1998; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Pendakur, 2000), (f) adaptation to a new culture and environment (Mwarigha, 2002), (g) settlement and housing (Mwarigha, 2002), (h) finding employment (Brouwer, 1999; Picot, 2004), (i) access to social services (Mwarigha, 2002), (j) access to health care (Bowen, 2001), (k) poverty (DeVoretz, Pivnenko, & Beiser, 2004; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Orenstein, 2000; Ray, 2005), (l) social isolation and family reunification (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2002), (m) inadequate orientation and access to information sources (Montgomery, 2002; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Shields, 2002), and (n) stress and mental health problems (Khamis, 2005).

More importantly, many researchers, especially DeVoretz, Pivnenko, and Beiser (2004) and Omidvar & Richmond (2003), argue persuasively that the conditions that challenge immigrants, especially recent economic immigrants and refugees from visible minorities, are increasing in frequency and severity. These challenges are likely to be more daunting and have greater impact on the individual lives of parents and their children when disability is added into the equation. Interestingly, parallel patterns have been reported in the literature related to the transition from school to work and adult life for students with

disabilities. Challenges have been identified in a number of areas. First, there is a serious lack of post-secondary educational options, especially for students with intellectual, psychiatric, and severe physical and multiple disabilities (Grigal, Neubert, & Moon, 2002; Killean & Hubka, 1999). Second, there is a lack of supported employment opportunities, leading to unemployment, under employment, or exploitive employment for many individuals with disabilities (Freeze, Kueneman, Frankel, & Mahon, 1999; Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000; Matanga, 2008). Third, long waiting lists and exclusive eligibility criteria for adult services limit access to the supports individuals need to participate in the education and employment opportunities that do exist (Steere, Rose, & Cavaiuolo, 2007). In addition, inconsistent, complex, and unresponsive adult services (Timmons, Whitney-Thomas, McIntyre, Butterworth, & Allen 2004), the lack of effective collaboration among service providers (Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; Koskie & Freeze, 2000), and discrimination (Matanga, 2008) may limit access to essential adult supports for normalization. Furthermore, many individuals with disabilities, as well as their supporters and service providers, lack adequate knowledge of the full range of adult service options available (Chambers, Hughes, & Carter, 2004; Steere, & Cavaiuolo, 2002) and lack the planning skills (Nuehring & Sitlington, 2003) needed to access them. Even with good planning and support, the aspirations of young adults with disabilities may be unwittingly underestimated or devalued by their supporters (e.g., parents, teachers, service providers) (Steere, Rose, & Cavaiuolo, 2007). Finally, independent living may be undermined by a lack of accessible housing (Steere, Rose, & Cavaiuolo, 2007) and participation in the work place and school attendance limited by inaccessible public transportation or unreliable and slow handi-transit services (Matanga, 2008).

Purpose

Given the similarities in the challenges that daunt many individuals with disabilities as well as many refugees and economic immigrants, we wondered

what the impact of both disability and diversity might be in combination. Consequently, the purpose of this qualitative research study was to investigate if the realities of inclusion and access become more complex when individuals with disabilities also are recent refugees or economic immigrants of a visible ethno-cultural minority.

Method

Research Venues

Four participatory workshops were held in Toronto, Ontario (2), Winnipeg, Manitoba (1), and Vancouver, British Columbia (1). Toronto and Vancouver were selected because they have the first and second largest and most diverse ethno-cultural communities in Canada, and have received the most refugees and economic immigrants in recent years (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005). Winnipeg was selected because it represents an average Canadian city in terms of ethno-cultural composition with a stable but moderate inflow of immigrants (Lezubski, Kalloo, Westgate, Madariaga-Vignudo, & Blazevska, 2006).

Participatory Workshops

The participatory workshops were designed to bring service recipients, service providers and advocates, and decision makers from the disability and ethno-cultural communities into common, interactive, and open daylong discussions chaired by the researchers.

Subjects

The subjects (n = 90) were drawn from three groups: (a) service recipients, (b) service providers and advocates, and (c) decision makers. The service recipients were recruited through community organizations and service agencies engaged in the provision of a variety of services to them. They were selected purposively as individuals with disabilities or their close associates (e.g., parents, family

members, spouses, etc.), and also members of a visible ethno-cultural minority.

The service providers included educators (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary) and government personnel concerned with disability and ethno-cultural provisions. In addition, workers at all levels (i.e., front line, support, management, etc.) were invited from the following types of non-profit societies providing disability and multicultural services: (a) organizations that advocate for improved support services, (b) organizations that provide information, referral, counseling, and interpretation services, and (c) organizations with community access programs and classrooms.

The decision-makers were leaders drawn from government departments, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations with knowledge, experience, responsibility, and influence related to disability and multi-cultural policies and provisions.

Questions

The series of questions (see Table 1) were presented at each of the participatory workshops. The questions were developed to reflect common themes that emerged from our review of the disability and diversity literature cited in the rationale for this study.

Process

All three groups of stakeholders were encouraged to share meaningful and relevant information in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In addition, as workshop organizers and co-participants, we shared our own experiences to generate discussion, build trust, and create a commitment to building a climate of collaboration. Our goal was to turn the traditional workshop format on its head. That is, to step down from the podium, away from the PowerPoint, and into dialogue with the participants. We encouraged, but did not dominate or channel, the discussions beyond the

Table 1

Questions

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1. Do the realities of “access” and “inclusion” become more complex when individuals are members of both disability and ethno-cultural minorities?
 2. Will placing “diversity” and “disability” in the same conversation yield unique opportunities for deconstructing marginalization, devaluation, and exclusion in academic, advocacy, and social service contexts?
 3. In what ways do issues related to type of disability (e.g., intellectual, physical, psychiatric, etc.), poverty, class, language, immigration, religion, gender, and sexual orientation further complicate the possibilities of forging alliances within and across different groups who struggle against social, cultural, and economic marginalization?
 4. Is the disability rights movement inclusive of people from diverse ethno-cultural communities?
 5. Are organizations representing and/or serving ethno-cultural communities inclusive of individuals with disabilities?
 6. What factors, if any, maintain disengagement, if it occurs, between the disability and diversity communities?
 7. In what ways, if any, might disability services better respond to refugees, struggling economic immigrants, and other at-risk members of ethno-cultural minorities?
- In what ways, if any, might organizations representing and/or serving ethno-cultural communities better respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities within their communities?
8. What are the respective roles of disability and ethno-cultural community leaders in adapting disability services to better accommodate unique cultural and linguistic needs?
 9. Does the best approach emphasize legislation, litigation, policy changes, improved technologies, promotion of universal design, or other means?
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initial research questions. We sought to understand our informants rather than teach, correct, or disagree with them. We wished to empower people to tell their stories and share their understandings (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003). To reassure participants and allow for the unconstrained relation of experiences and expression of ideas, all comments were recorded anonymously and are reported in aggregate as emergent themes. One down side of the approach was that demographic data were lost in the effort to truly protect anonymity and build high levels of trust among strangers in a single day. No electronic recording devices were employed during the participatory workshops. In addition, while service providers and service recipients were at the same table during the participatory workshops, they were drawn from different agencies so as to obviate potential conflicts of interest. Nevertheless, agreement was sought and obtained from all participants at the outset so that no consequences, either positive or negative, in terms of present or future service delivery, would ensue from the workshop discussions.

In general, we followed a focus group methodology deemed appropriate for minority and disability research (see Madriz, 2000; Mertens 1998). After introductions, one of the researchers acted as moderator and introduced a question with a short explanation as to why we thought it might be important. We then invited comments in a round table discussion. Efforts were made to invite all participants into the discussion and to acknowledge all contributions as valued. Discussion continued until the question was exhausted, and then the next question was introduced. Throughout the process, the participants' comments were recorded by paper and pen and read back in summary from time to time, as a form of on-the-spot member checking, to verify any emerging consensus or clarify differences in opinion as exactly as possible without judgment. The results were analyzed by reviewing the record of the discussions for emergent themes.

Findings and Discussion

Extremely open, lively, and informative discussions took place at all four venues with a good balance between the contributions of the service recipients, service providers and advocates, and decision makers. Interestingly, there was a very high degree of congruence in the participants' observations and insights with respect to the intersection of disability and diversity in response to the questions posed at each participatory workshop. While the results could be reported as answers to the questions posed by the researchers, this would not reflect honestly the themes that emerged.

The pen and paper records of the discussions made at each workshop were analyzed, using a coding system to categorize information at broad and detailed levels, to discover themes and their component sub-themes (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003). Eight themes emerged: (a) appropriate educational provisions, (b) access to work, (c) access to services, (d) marginalization, (e) mental health, (f) self-definition, (g) human rights, and (h) universal design.

Appropriate Educational Provisions

Issues related to appropriate educational provisions raised at the participatory workshops were cast in a complex pattern. The participants felt that existing educational programs failed to respond to the full range of circumstances experienced by individuals within the disability and diversity communities. In addition, they reported that programs often were exclusionary, sometimes employed biased assessment practices, and typically failed to engage parents successfully.

Disparate circumstances. One important insight, made by several participants, was that newcomers arrive in Canada under a wide range of circumstances. They noted that some economic and family immigrants arrive with advantages such as: (a) high levels of education recognized in Canada,

(b) educated parents and family members, (c) strong networks of support from previously established family members embedded in a vibrant ethno-cultural minority community in Canada, (d) fluency in English or French, (e) user-friendly community services, (f) appropriate educational options for their children, (g) familiarity with the Canadian “system” due to historical, political, and cultural similarities with their country of origin, and (h) superficial similarities (e.g., ethnicity, culture, religion, etc.) to an established and accepted Canadian minority. They felt that such advantages allow newcomers to blend into the Canadian milieu more easily, with more supports, and with fewer risks.

In contrast, some participants drew attention to the fact that other newcomers come with significant disadvantages such as a lack of schooling prior to their arrival in Canada. They noted that refugees, in particular, may have had their own or their children’s education interrupted by war, civil strife, poverty, exploitive child labor practices, or the collapse of the school system. Alternatively, low standards, poorly trained teachers, low expectations, and lack of texts or school supplies may have compromised prior schooling. Even positive prior schooling experiences may lack relevance due to curriculum differences, language differences, or the religious basis of the curriculum in their country of origin. Finally, many participants stated that educational credentials from overseas may not be recognized in Canada or may be difficult for Canadian schools and employers to authenticate.

Educational exclusion. Many of the workshop participants experienced the Canadian school system as disaffecting and exclusionary. They reported dissatisfaction with English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for a number of reasons. First, while ESL programs taught language, cultural orientation and social acclimatization were ignored. Second, the ESL teachers lacked awareness of the linguistic, cultural, and religious differences of their students. Third, a lack of networking between schools and disability advocacy and service organizations and ethno-cultural community organizations deprived students of needed supports. Fourth, existing

school supports were discontinuous across the age continuum. For example, many participants felt pre-school supports were largely missing and access to post-secondary supports was restricted. Fifth, students often were placed in devalued and segregated programs such as ESL, special education, and alternative education settings. Many thought it was counter-intuitive to place students who needed to learn a new language and join a new culture in settings isolated from their Canadian peers. Sixth, the workshop participants thought students with disability and diversity characteristics were taught to a lower academic standard in elementary school, “streamed away” from academic opportunities in high school, and discouraged from preparing for and pursuing post secondary options. Finally, there were concerns that teaching methods, especially the “lecture-transmission” approach prevalent in high school and post secondary classrooms, were stacked against ESL students and students with disabilities. The workshop participants felt “cooperative learning”, hands-on experiential learning”, “differentiated instruction”, “visual scaffolding”, and other methods grounded in “universal design” advantaged both ESL students and students with disabilities.

Assessment. The workshop participants felt that assessment tools and practices often were biased against children and youth with disability and diversity characteristics. They noted that educational assessments often served the interest of the school rather than the child. For example, they reported that their children were included in assessments that could be used to: (a) obtain resources for the school, (b) label and explain students’ problems, or (c) delimit the school responsibilities to the student. In contrast, their children were excused from provincial assessments that might affect the school’s reputation. Such practices caused educational authorities to over-estimate the effectiveness of their programs and deprived parents of benchmarks of their children’s achievement in key areas such reading, writing, and mathematics. The workshop participants also perceived misidentification as a serious problem. They thought many students were misidentified as learning disabled when, in fact, they had ESL needs.

Parental disengagement. The workshop participants viewed parent disengagement with the school system as a complicated phenomenon involving the parents' perceptions, capabilities, and expectations. For example, they felt some refugee and immigrant parents had feelings of fear and disrespect for school authorities grounded in experiences in their country of origin where schooling was perceived as a form of colonial or post-colonial subjugation. Others may over-respect school authorities due to a tradition of highly authoritarian and religiously grounded instruction in their country of origin. In some cases, parents may disengage with school authorities as they perceive their children being labeled, devalued, segregated, and marginalized.

The parents' capabilities were another factor. Some may have been distracted by pressing problems of their own such as: (a) efforts to achieve family re-unification, (b) unemployment or under-employment, (c) poverty, and (d) physical and mental health problems. Others may feel uncomfortable communicating with school personnel due to linguistic barriers or a lack of self-advocacy skills.

Finally, some parents may disengage with their children's school because their values, beliefs, gender roles, and attitudes are inconsistent with Canadian expectations. For example, while parents may expect their child to retain their traditions of food, dress, music, and religious practice, school personnel may unwittingly ally themselves with the child's search for a "Canadian identity". As another example, disciplinary practices may differ dramatically and lead to parent-school conflicts in which the school personnel believe they are protecting the child from a parent's abusive discipline, while the parent believes the school is corrupting the child and concealing evidence of wrongdoing.

Access to Work

The workshop participants believed that people with disability and diversity characteristics often obtained temporary employment in low paying entry level jobs that did not reflect their education, prior experience, or potential. In general, it was thought

that employers discredited or underestimated the relevance of foreign training, education, and experience. This even occurred in economic sectors, such as technology and medicine, where skills in which some of the participants had been trained were needed. It was felt that employers also might shy away from people with disability and diversity characteristics because they fear they won't "fit in" with others in the workplace. A lack of "Canadian experience" often was cited as a reason for rejection. Many thought this was a form of racial profiling and discrimination in hiring.

Factors that triggered biases in hiring practices included visible and audible differences related to: (a) disability, (b) language or dialect, (c) color, race, or ethnicity, (d) gender, (e) age, and (f) religion. One recurring observation of the workshop participants was the need for more education of employers and human resources officers in the advantages of hiring individuals with different languages and cultural sensitivities as a form of capacity building and outreach to new clientele groups. In addition, it was suggested that persons with disabilities from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds be educated in self-advocacy and self-promotion that emphasizes the value their differences bring to their potential employers.

Access to services

Two sub-themes emerged in the discussions about access to services: (a) the barriers faced by individuals seeking services, and (b) the chronic insufficiencies faced by the service providers.

Barriers. According to our workshop informants, many newcomers do not understand the Canadian social service system, especially in the most important areas related to housing, employment, education, health care, and justice. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that some service providers adopt a "gatekeeper" rather than a "helping" stance when asked to assist. In addition, while many assistance applicants with disability and diversity characteristics are more comfortable with service providers who understand their language, culture,

and unique special needs, appropriate advocates and translators often were not available. This led to mix-ups about medications, therapies, services, and employment and educational opportunities. Finally, services varied by type of disability. In general, visible, common, and easily diagnosed disabilities (e.g., physical, perceptual, and cognitive disabilities) received more and better services than invisible, rare, and difficult to diagnose disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional-behavioral problems, and psychiatric disorders).

Another barrier identified by the participants was the lack of “one-stop shopping” for services. In other words, services often were administered by different agencies, with inconsistent, complex, confusing, and overlapping mandates. Typically services could only be accessed through multiple application processes; each with different regulations, information requests, and wait times. For newcomers seeking stability in housing, employment, and education, as well as supports for their own disabilities or those of their children, the adult service sector was a daunting gauntlet of trials and tribulations.

Insufficiencies. With respect to individuals with disabilities from diverse ethno-cultural communities, the workshop participants felt that government policies often were vague, service guidelines were impractical or remained unimplemented, and most agencies were severely under-resourced. In particular, they stressed that government funding policies had many problems, including the fact that funding for specific “projects” or provided on a “per case” basis lacked adequate provisions for project development and evaluation, employee training, and administrative costs. Agencies often had no stable, multi-year, block funding for core activities. Instead, they had to waste time and effort in a revolving door of funding applications for “seed projects”, “pilot projects”, and “research projects”, often in competition with the very agencies that they should be cooperating with to improve the social service system. Furthermore, funding often was “by the numbers” and did not reflect the complexities of individual cases, especially those where disability and diversity intersected in one child’s life.

Individual service recipients often faced funding barriers as well, including: (a) disqualification due to age, disability category, immigration status, etc., (e.g., disability benefits suspended or reduced when employment found, student loans denied due to immigration status), (b) constraints on the use of funds that undermine their original purpose (e.g., education funds can’t be used for extra-curricular activities that might expand support networks at school), and (c) lack of the assertiveness, self-advocacy, and research skills and supports needed to access funding opportunities in Canada.

Another insufficiency was the lack of adequate training for caseworkers, chiefly with respect to individual differences related to: (a) disability, (b) culture, (c) language, and (d) religion. Finally, services for individuals with disability and diversity characteristics need to be much more coherent, with: (a) co-location of services (i.e., “one-stop shopping”), (b) improved information sharing and case coordination between agencies, (c) mergers of agencies and the integration of services, (d) decentralization of intake and service provision to place supports closer to the clients, and (e) a philosophy that is “client-needs centered,” designed to help the program fit the person rather than force the person to fit the program.

Marginalization

According to the workshop participants, a number of factors contribute to the marginalization of people who share disability and diversity characteristics. In the context of this study, the participants’ use of the term “marginalization” referred to the processes by which an individual or group of individuals are excluded from attention, influence, or power in accessing education, employment, and social services. First, individuals with documented or visible disabilities are discriminated against in the immigration process. Second, refugees with disabilities, immigrants with invisible disabilities, and immigrant children with disabilities may not receive equal treatment. This is because immigration and refugee authorities are reluctant to admit applicants who might become a

burden to the social welfare system. Third, many newcomers are discouraged by: (a) the rejection of their professional credentials, (b) the dismissal or devaluation of their prior educational achievement, (c) discrimination in seeking employment, (d) the lack of support and guidance in the settlement process, (e) insufficient affordable housing, (f) the high cost of accessible accommodations for individuals with physical and perceptual disabilities, (g) the lack of continuity in services across the age continuum (e.g., supports for the inclusion of students with disabilities in elementary school and junior high school, but not pre-school, senior high, and postsecondary schools), across the cultural continuum (e.g., lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate group home options for young adults with intellectual disabilities), and across the jurisdictional continuum (e.g., overlap, off-loading, and gaps in service delivery between non-profit, for-profit, and government agencies, and between municipal, provincial and federal agencies). Finally, since supports for persons with disabilities often are connected to workplace insurance, disability benefits, workers compensation, and other employment-based programs, they very often exclude individuals struggling in part-time, temporary, and entry-level jobs due to their disability and diversity characteristics.

Mental health

Emergent sub-themes in the area of mental health services were related to: (a) the problem of concealment of mental health issues, (b) the lack of relevant mental health services, (c) difficulties in accessing existing services, and (d) the misidentification of service recipients' problems.

Hidden disabilities in a culture of silence. Another theme that arose in the discussions at all four workshops was the inadequacy of services related to the mental health problems experienced by many immigrants, especially refugees. Mental health problems in this population may be "hidden disabilities" for a number of reasons suggested by the workshop participants. First, immigrants and refugees

may be reluctant to mental health problems for fear that it may negatively affect their initial acceptance, status on arrival, and eventual citizenship application. They fear that successful family reunification, by eventually bringing additional family members to Canada, may be thwarted if any potential newcomer is identified with a disability.

In addition, mental health problems carry a stigma of shame in some immigrants' and refugees' countries of origin, within some ethno-cultural communities in Canada, and across Canadian society at large. This stigma may create a "culture of silence" in which (a) self-referral becomes unlikely, (b) concealment of problems more likely, and (c) recognition of problems in others less likely. In addition, many participants noted that Canadian immigration and refugees authorities, settlement workers, and other service providers did not appear to be trained to recognize mental health problems. Factors that triggered biases included visible or audible differences related to: (a) disability, (b) language or dialect, (c) color, race, or ethnicity, (d) gender and age, and (e) religion.

The same, but different. While common mental health problems in Canada such as stress, depression, and anxiety affect the refugee and immigrant population as well as individual with disabilities, many problems faced by immigrants and refugees either are different or present differently. For example, recent refugees may be coping with post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health problems related to war experiences, mistreatment during civil strife, recruitment as child soldiers, or abuse or neglect in refugee camps. Additionally, all immigrants, but especially those affected by disability, may face distress, depression, and anxiety related to culture shock, finding employment, poverty, lack of recognition of credentials, family separation, and loss of identity.

Access difficulties. Many of the participants felt that contemporary practices in mental health promotion and treatment have "Canadian oriented" characteristics that complicate access to services for individuals with disabilities from diverse ethno-cultural communities. In using the term "Canadian

oriented,” the participants meant that the mental health services were designed to meet the needs of mainstream Canadians and fell short when faced with service recipients with atypical needs. For example, the language of service delivery and ethno-cultural background and experience of the service providers lead to misunderstandings, difficulty in completing forms, and delays in service. Additionally, those seeking services often had a poor understanding of how the system works and found that restricted mandates of service and restricted hours of operation, in conflict with their employment and family obligations, made access difficult and protracted. Finally, once in receipt of services, many felt they spent more time trying to educate the mental health counselor about the realities of their lives than receiving help.

Misidentification of problems. Another problem raised by the participants had to do with the misidentification of problems, especially in children, when language barriers were present. For example, many felt post-traumatic stress disorder, culture shock, depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems were frequently misidentified as attention deficit disorder, emotional behavioral disorder, or learning disabilities. On the other hand, differences in language, dialect, culture, and religion were misconstrued as behavioral, emotional, social, and mental health problems. As well, differences in values and beliefs, especially with respect to disciplinary practices within families, were perceived as abuse or neglect.

Self-Definition

A number of factors complicate the perception of disability in ethno-cultural communities. In some families and cultures it is acceptable to admit to and to talk openly about disability. In others, children and other family members with disabilities may be concealed as they are thought to represent a shame on the family and a punishment from God for past sins. Conversely, children with disabilities may be seen as closer to God and as a message to seek family unity through their care. Strong religious and superstitious

beliefs about the meanings of various disabilities persist in some ethno-cultural communities.

Parents also may feel that asking for help outside the family is an embarrassment or a sign of weakness. In addition, they may fear that the child will be removed from the family into the care of others against their will. In some cases, grandparents, rather than parents, are primary care givers to children; unfortunately, they also may be more traditional in their beliefs about disability, more distant from and resistant to mainstream Canadian ideas like social normalization and school inclusion, and less aware of the systems and services available to children with disabilities.

The workshop participants raised several issues related to how children and youth with disability and diversity characteristics see themselves. They feared that some students might define themselves as victims based on their experiences of: (a) poverty (i.e., inadequate resources to fulfill basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, etc.), (b) discrimination (i.e., unfair treatment due to prejudice about race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, culture, class, language, etc.), (c) marginalization (i.e., exclusion from attention, influence or power), and (d) segregation (i.e., policies that enforce the use of separate schools, transportation, housing, etc. based on racial, ethnic, gender, religious, etc. differences). They noted that such perceptions may be exacerbated by: (a) previous experiences of political, religious, gender, or ethnic oppression in their country of origin, (b) prior victimization experiences in war or civil strife, (c) a history of victimization of their group related to slavery, eugenics, sterilization, genocide, institutionalization, or segregation, (d) prior restrictions on their human rights in areas such as voting, property ownership, reproduction, and freedom to work, and (e) feelings of fearfulness grounded in expectations of discrimination, exploitation, and victimization.

Another issue that emerged from the discussions was the problem of biased assessment practices. The participants felt that students often were mislabeled through the use of tests that were culturally and linguistically invalid for them. In addition, services

often were denied based on assessments that were focused on whether or not a student belonged to a particular “category” of disability, rather than on the functional needs of the student or adult client. For example, a student with a sufficiently low intelligence test score and a medically verified cognitive disability might be eligible for services, while a less functional student with a more difficult to categorize learning problem might be denied services.

Finally, the participants noted that there were few role models for young people with disability and diversity characteristics to look up to and emulate. They felt that the faces of disability represented in popular culture (such as children’s literature, disability awareness and fund raising campaigns, television programs, and film) are typically white and middle class. In addition, the opportunities for self-determination by service recipients, whether at school or in the community, often were extremely limited.

Human Rights

A number of human rights concerns were raised in the workshop discussions. Many participants doubted that Canadian immigration and refugee selection practices respected international human rights standards and Canadian constitutional guarantees. As examples: (a) immigrants and refugees with disabilities are presumed to be burdens rather than assets, (b) families are separated because a member with a disability is inadmissible, (c) family reunification is more difficult if the family member has a disability, (d) disabilities are perceived to have larger impacts on settlement and employment than they do in actuality, (e) parents conceal the disabilities of their children to maintain a united family and succeed in immigration, creating a “Catch 22” in which help cannot be sought because the disability must not be revealed.

Universal Design

On a more hopeful note, the workshop participants saw great potential in the extension of universal

design (UD) principles from the field of architecture into education and social services. They perceived several benefits in a UD approach to education and social services for individuals with disability and diversity characteristics. First, provisions designed to benefit all possible end-users might decrease the need for adaptation, accommodation, individualization, exclusion, and retrofitting. Second, services might be less discriminatory, more equitable, and more amenable to student and client self-determination. Third, UD provisions might be less expensive in the long run and likely would benefit a wider spectrum of citizens beyond the disability and diversity communities.

However, the participants identified potential problems in the implementation of UD principles in education and social service delivery, including: (a) government policy makers, educators, and disability and diversity service providers appear to be unaware of the potential of UD, (b) initially, UD provisions may be perceived as more expensive than traditional means, (c) UD advances likely will rely heavily on the more extensive use of technology in education and social services, (d) UD innovations may be used as an excuse to cut services, (e) UD services are only as effective as their weakest link, suggesting high levels of interdisciplinary cooperation and coordination will be needed, and (f) disability and diversity community end-users need to be involved in the design and implementation of UD upgrades in such diverse fields as mobility and transportation, communications, education, employment, housing, physical and mental health care, social services, immigration and settlement services, community access, and leisure and recreation.

Recommendations

The participants at the workshops formulated a number of recommendations for improved educational and social service provisions for individuals and families affected by the intersection of disability and diversity. These recommendations emerged at various times throughout the participatory workshop process.

Holistic approach. One sub-theme that emerged repeatedly in the workshop discussions was the need for a much more coherent, coordinated, consistent, and continuous set of services. This should include the blending of education, disability, ethno-cultural, and other services related to employment, social welfare, health care, housing, transportation, etc., which are currently disconnected and discontinuous. The present plethora of service providers may be an outgrowth of a mainstream society that rarely accesses more than one or two services at any one time and for whom their compartmentalized organization is neither illogical nor inconvenient. However, in the case of persons with disabilities from diverse ethno-cultural and linguistic communities, especially recent refugees, the need to access multiple services at the same time makes the present system far too complex, confusing, and exclusive. This is especially true when language barriers, a lack of cultural sensitivity, and restrictive eligibility criteria, and discrimination come into play. From the point of view of the applicant for multiple services, a “one stop shopping” approach would make a great deal of sense.

However, they anticipated that much more will be needed than improved communications between service providers. They suggested additional strategies such as: (a) the co-location of services, (b) shared decentralized intake and direct support centers representing multiple agencies, (c) single shared electronic case files across agencies, (d) shared long term planning, (e) cross-agency training, and eventually (f) the merger of now separated educational and social services. This approach implies a view of educational institutions and social service agencies as much more dynamic, fluid, and intermeshed than at present.

In addition, a new ethics of disability and diversity education and social service needs to be developed. In short, the participants felt provisions need to be organized around lives, not lives around provisions. They suggested that leaders in education and social services in Canada work to: (a) coordinate services across the age continuum from pre-school to elementary and high school to all forms of post secondary adult education, (b) establish

jurisdictional clarity and continuity between levels of government (i.e., federal, provincial, and municipal), (c) synthesize government departments addressing interwoven areas (i.e., education, employment, health care, family services, settlement, justice, etc.), and (d) eliminate the overlap, off-loading, and competition for resources between for-profit, non-profit, and government agencies.

Extend inclusion. A second recurrent sub-theme related to the need for more inclusive educational and social service provisions for individuals with disability and diversity characteristics. The recommendations of the workshop participants were: (a) extend the philosophy of inclusion, presently applied to students with disabilities, to include students with ethno-cultural and linguistic differences, (b) extend inclusion supports to pre-school and post secondary settings, and strengthen high school inclusion, (c) develop more inclusive assessment practices that do not confound cultural and linguistic differences with learning problems, cognitive disabilities, and behavior disorders, (d) utilize universal design principles in curriculum development and teaching to increase differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, experiential learning, and community-based learning, (e) expand the use of assistive and adaptive technologies in educational settings to reduce barriers to learning, (f) blend school and home educational contexts more fully to encourage language acquisition, cultural orientation, social acclimatization, etc., for the whole family and not just the school-aged children, (g) ensure that English as a Second Language (ESL) programs at all levels include cultural orientation and social acclimatization through shared activities with non-ESL students, (h) introduce world citizenship, cultural awareness and sensitivity, anti-racism, cross-cultural education, and much more diverse foreign language curricular options at all levels of schooling for all students, (i) educate students with disabilities and ethno-cultural and linguistic differences in human rights awareness, as well as self-determination and self-advocacy skills, and (j) enhance networking between schools and disability and diversity advocacy and service organizations.

Strengthen home-school partnerships. Several thematic discussions at the workshops reflected the lack of communications and mistaken communications that occurred between home and school. Language barriers between parents and educators often were complicated by different values, conflicting expectations, dissimilar disciplinary practices, and mutual perceptions of disengagement and devaluation. Educators need to become more aware of the linguistic, cultural, religious, and disability characteristics of their students. School policies need to be reviewed to create more inclusive and welcoming provisions that reject segregation, marginalization, and lowered expectations, even when those means seem to make sense on pedagogical grounds. Finally, educators and service providers need much more extensive pre-service and in-service professional development in diversity and disability issues, as well as in effective methods to promote learning, socialization, positive self-definition, and a strong home-school partnership for students with disability and diversity characteristics.

Improve professional development and training. Another recommendation that arose during several thematic discussions was the need for improvements in the professional development of educators and the training of service providers in areas related to disability and diversity awareness and sensitivity. First, they felt that present efforts often were simplistic and naïve. For example, anti-racism initiatives often failed to recognize that racism is expressed differently at different times (e.g., pre and post 9/11), at different ages (e.g., elementary school, high school, and college), and in different social contexts (e.g., school, employment, sports, etc.). Second, diversity and disability awareness and sensitivity workshops need to be less generic and more sensitive to differences within and across disabilities, disorders, and disadvantages, as well as within and across different ethno-cultural and linguistic groups. Third, awareness and sensitivity with respect to disability and diversity characteristics need to be placed within the context of the cumulative impact of other multi-layered and multi-faceted realities related to poverty, low social status, refugee

or immigration status, under-employment, lack of education, unfamiliar dialect, gender devaluation and discrimination, and the rejection of prior experience, education, and credentials in Canada. One resolution to this dilemma is to employ more individuals with disabilities and from diverse ethno-cultural and linguistic backgrounds at all levels within the educational system, as well as in social service agencies and government departments. This may require: (a) a more generous and less restrictive approach to the recognition of the foreign credentials, training, education, and experience of job applicants, (b) targeted post-secondary programs to educate potential applicants, (c) affirmative action hiring programs within agencies, and (d) on-the-job training programs targeted to include more employees with disabilities and ethno-cultural and linguistic differences. The participants also felt that improved professional development in education might help to spur the reform of school policies to create more inclusive and welcoming provisions that reject segregation, marginalization, and lowered expectations for individuals with disability and diversity characteristics.

Expand public education. The workshop participants suggested that educational programs designed to enlighten employers, human resources officers, co-workers, educators, students, and social service providers cover topics such as: (a) the advantages of including students and hiring employees with disabilities and expanding ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity within the school and workplace, (b) inspiring positive role models of successful refugees and individuals with disabilities at school and work, (c) how adaptive technologies and universal design accommodations for individuals with disabilities and ethno-cultural and linguistic differences often benefit others in positive ways (e.g., automatic doors for wheelchair users also help parents with strollers, delivery persons with lorries, shoppers with bags, etc.; universal symbols for play, forward, pause, rewind, etc., designed to overcome language barriers also make new technological devices more accessible to inexperienced users),

(d) cultural and disability awareness, and (e) how to reduce discrimination in the school and workplace.

Improve mental health services. The workshop discussions made it apparent that significant investments in new and improved mental health services are needed. The participants suggested that existing services are too “Canadian oriented.” For example, they asked for programs to deal with the kinds of disorders commonly experienced by immigrants, refugees, and persons with disabilities such as: (a) post traumatic stress disorder, (b) culture shock, (c) prior physical abuse, exploitation, mistreatment, and neglect, and (d) depression and anxiety related to under-employment, rejection of credentials, poverty, family reunification, inaccessible environments, and lack of employment supports. In addition, mental health services should seek out and hire providers with the same linguistic and ethno-cultural backgrounds as their service recipients. Furthermore, culturally aware advocates, paid translators, and providers with knowledge and experience of disabling conditions should be employed. Finally, such mental health programs need to be much more accessible to those in need. For instance, they should have hours of operation that do not compete with the work, school, and family obligations of their clients. More importantly, they should be community and school based. School counselors, in particular, need extensive professional development and increased programmatic support to implement accessible and effective mental health provisions for children with disabilities and ethno-cultural and linguistic differences.

Improve employment supports. The improvement of access to employment and on-the-job supports are essential to improved outcomes for individuals negatively affected by disability and diversity. Advocates are needed to speak to employers and human resource officers about the advantages of hiring individuals with additional cultural and linguistic capabilities. New strategies are needed to assess foreign credentials, education, and experience fairly. Newcomers may need orientation and upgrading to succeed in the workplace, but many do not need to be entirely discredited and told to

begin their professional training again from the beginning. Similarly, individuals with disabilities may need technological or co-worker supports in the workplace to be successful, but they do not pose the burden that many employers imagine and may bring new perspectives and strengthened collegiality to the workplace.

Conclusion

The participatory workshop approach adopted in this study provided an extremely rich array of insights into the difficulties encountered by individuals who face the combined challenges posed by disability and ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity in Canada. More importantly, the workshop participants were able to point to a wide variety of potential solutions to the problems they had encountered as students, parents, social service recipients, educators, service providers, advocates, and policy makers.

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New Role of Special Schools: Empowering Mainstream Teachers to Enhance Inclusive Education in Western Cape, South Africa

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Abstract

In South Africa we had an education system that was content-based, inflexible, oppressive, and segregated in terms of disability and race. It was determined by time, calendar and by failing and passing at the end of the year. Learners had to “fit into” a particular kind of system or were integrated into an existing system. A shift is now taking place towards a new, liberating system of education that is Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). OBE is inclusive in terms of disability and race and has a flexible approach to time and progression. Special needs education is a sector where the ravages of apartheid remain most evident. Here, the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability. Our Constitution (DOE, 1996) serves as the basis of our democratic state, common citizenship, our values and human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom. The new Ministry of Education had to move away from apartheid education and introduce a new curriculum in the interest of all South Africans. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS), OBE forms the foundation of the curriculum in South Africa (DOE, 2002).

Introduction

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is a country located at the southern tip of the African continent with a population of about 47,432,000 people. Two philosophies originated in South Africa: ubuntu (the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity), and Ghandi’s notion of “passive resistance” (Satyagraha), developed while he lived in South Africa (Pampallis, 1991).

The country is one of the few in Africa never to have had a coup d’état, and regular elections have been held for almost a century. However, the vast majority of black South Africans were not enfranchised until 1994. The economy of South Africa is the largest and best developed on the continent, with modern infrastructure common throughout the country. South

Africa is often referred to as “The Rainbow Nation,” a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and later adopted by then-President Nelson Mandela as a metaphor to describe the country’s newly-developing multicultural diversity in the wake of segregationist apartheid (learners with disabilities experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education) (DOE, 2001).

Very few schools for learners with special needs existed and they were limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories. Learners who experienced learning difficulties because of severe poverty did not qualify for educational support. The impact of White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System was that only 20% of learners with disabilities were accommodated in special schools.

A Historical Overview of the Western Cape Education Department

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has established Education Management and Development Centers (EMDCs) in seven education districts. Launched in July 2001, the aim of the EMDCs is to bring management and development support closer to public schools throughout the Western Cape and to assist schools in their efforts to become more accountable learning organizations and to manage themselves effectively, efficiently and economically. The launch marked a major milestone in the development of the education in the province, and followed several years of policy research and development by WCED task teams in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations and donor agencies.

Education Management and Development Centers offer a range of services provided by teams of specialists, assisted by the WCED's Head Office in Cape Town. These services include: (a) curriculum development and support; (b) Specialized Learner and Educator Support (SLES); (c) Institutional Management and Governance (IMG) support; and (d) administrative services, including institutional development and support for Articles 20 and 21 schools, labor relations assistance, and internal administrative services. Article 21 schools receive monetary funding from the WCED that they can spend at their own discretion. Spending must comply with the WCED's regulations. Article 20 schools can place orders for learning and teaching materials and can request funds for other expenses. The WCED approves the expenditure and is responsible for the payment thereof. EMDCs also promote parental involvement in schools through school governance, local participation in the WCED's Safe Schools Project, and internal administrative services. Four of the EMDCs are in the metropolitan region of Cape Town, and three are in the rural areas.

The WCED's Directorate: SLES offers a range for learners experiencing barriers to learning. The

services include: (a) the prevention of learning difficulties; (b) early identification of learning difficulties and early intervention; and (c) specialized support services including psychological, therapeutic, health and social services, and education programs for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) in both mainstream schools and in schools for learners with special education needs. The directorate manages 77 schools in the province for learners with special needs.

Education policies of WCED regarding Inclusive Education (DOE, 2001) focus on the constitution with specific reference to Act 108 of 1996 serve as the basis of our democratic state and common citizenship on the values and human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancements of human rights and freedoms. Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was introduced in South Africa in 1997. The new Ministry of Education (MOE) had to move away from apartheid education and introduce a new curriculum in the interest of all South Africans. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS), OBE forms the foundation of the curriculum in South Africa. It strives to enable all learners to achieve their maximum ability (DOE, 2002). According to Naicker (1999), there are various similarities between OBE and Inclusive Education.

Inclusive Education was introduced into South Africa by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). These bodies were appointed in 1996 by the President and the MOE to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of educational training needs and support services. A joint report on the findings of these two bodies was presented to the Minister of Education in November 1997, and the final report was published by the Department of Education (DOE) in February 1998 for public comment and advice (DOE, 1997). The central findings of the investigation included: (a) specialized education and support have predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with

disabilities within “special” schools and classes; (b) where provided, specialized education and support were provided on a racial basis, with the best human, physical and material resources reserved for whites; (c) most learners with disability have fallen outside of the system or have been “mainstreamed by default;” and (d) the curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. This has resulted in massive numbers of drop-outs and failures; while some attention has been given to the schooling phase with regard to “special needs and support,” the other levels, or bands, of education have been seriously neglected.

In light of these findings, the joint report of the two bodies, the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) recommended that the education and training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centers of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process (DOE, 2001).

In accepting Inclusive Education, it is essential to acknowledge that the learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion in South Africa are those who have historically been termed “learners with special education needs,” i.e., learners with disabilities and impairments. Interventions or strategies at different levels, such as the classroom, the school, the district, the provincial and national departments and systems, will be essential to prevent them from causing learning to be ineffective. Interventions or strategies will also be essential to avoid barriers to learning from contributing to the exclusion of learners from the curriculum and/or from the education and training system. The place and role of special schools (resource centers) in an inclusive education system is critical.

The White Paper 6 Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in South Africa (DOE, 2001) emphasizes the need to develop community-based effective support systems to support schools and education institutions. A particular emphasis is

the development of institution-level support teams, also known as Teacher Support Teams (TSTs), within all education institutions. A TST is a learning institution-based team comprised of teachers, specialists and other interested stakeholders who cooperate on equal footing in order to provide advice, assistance and support to staff members and to the learning institution (Jafthas, 2004).

As described earlier, special schools (resource centers) currently provide, in a racially segregated manner, education services of varying quality. While special schools provide critical education services to learners who require intense levels of support, they also accommodate learners who require much less support and should ideally be in mainstream schools. According White Paper 6 Building an Inclusive and Education and Training System (DOE, 2001), special schools will be converted to resource centers and will form part of District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs) at the departmental level, and provide specialized professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighborhood (mainstream) schools. Therefore, the new roles of special schools will have a vital influence on mainstream schools, and are as follows:

1. Provide a comprehensive education program that provides life-skills training and program-to-work linkages.
2. Staff of special schools, as part of the DBST at departmental level, will be retrained to assist and support mainstream teachers to accommodate learners with mild and moderate learning difficulties.
3. Serve as a helpline for teachers or parents to connect regarding queries.
4. Run workshops on a continuous basis on how to provide additional support in classrooms to visually impaired learners.
5. Share and exchange facilities, skills and information.
6. Empower mainstream teachers to support learners in their classes who may have learning difficulties.
7. Assist teachers in preparation of specific materials, training and capacity building.

8. Adapt the curriculum to focus specifically on differentiation.
9. Share good practices.
10. Promote sustainability and ongoing development.

The essential feature of the support from special schools to mainstream schools is that they will work in collaboration with, and provide assistance and support to, other schools in the area so that a range of learning needs can be addressed. Members, as well as training schedules, need to be more skillful to support mainstream teachers. With the new role of special schools in the education department the DBSTs will be extremely important. They are comprised of psychologists and learning support advisers at the district level, and therapists and special education teachers from special schools. The foundation for all learning is the creation of an inclusive ethos of the education institution, and a secure, accepting and stimulating society. Through the White Paper 6, (DOE, 2001) the Government is determined to create special needs education as a non-racial and integrated component of our education system. I am fully convinced that our Inclusive Education policy on the special schools project will be an advantage for our Western Cape Education Department

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Educating Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in Regular Schools in Jordan

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Abstract

This article presents a description of current practices in educating students with mild intellectual disabilities in regular schools in Jordan. The data were obtained using several methods, including interviews with special education staff at the Ministry of Education, summaries of documents and published research related to resource rooms and mild intellectual disabilities in Jordan, and teacher interviews. Findings are reported and recommendations are offered.

Introduction

This paper summarizes the findings of a study that was conducted within the context of the National Education Strategy adopted by the Ministry of Education of Jordan in light of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE 1) Program. This program seeks new educational vision in which schools' roles include the provision of equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their abilities. This entails providing students with special needs, including those with intellectual impairments, with specialized programs and resources for support. The National Education Strategy calls for the commitment of the Ministry of Education to offer appropriate educational programs in regular schools for students with special educational needs. In this study, the current situation of educational provisions for students with mild intellectual disabilities was analyzed. Main emphasis was put on referral and diagnosis, curriculum modification, instruction and evaluation, and international standards of best

practices in these areas and methods for improving practices and make them more aligned with those standards. During the implementation of this study, different sources of information were used. For the purposes of objectivity, participation of key staff as well as field practitioners was encouraged and the consensus building model was utilized.

Public Schools and Students with Special Educational Needs

The Ministry of Education, through the Directorate of Special Education, has a significant role to play in supporting students with mild intellectual disabilities and other special needs through remedial and special education services. At the present time, there are more than 511 part-time resource rooms in public schools offering remedial and special education services to 12,300 2nd to 6th graders with special needs, including children with mild intellectual disabilities (Directorate of Special Education, 2007). The Ministry focused on establishing resource rooms

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in geographical areas where special education schools are non-existent or in schools that demonstrated commitment to inclusion programs. Students are referred to these rooms without precise diagnosis. In these rooms, an individualized education program is developed for each student. Emphasis is placed on offering remedial education in academic areas where students face difficulties. Resource room teachers also assist students in regular classrooms, support regular class teachers, and provide counselling and consultation to parents.

However, students with mild intellectual disabilities are not identified as such since intelligence tests and adaptive behavior scales are not used due to lack of appropriate test and shortage in assessment specialists. Rather, they are commonly referred to as students having slow learning or learning disabilities or developmental delay based solely on teachers' observations and subjective impressions. Only assessment tools related to perceptual disorders are used in some cases. Thus, educational programs that meet the unique needs of these students are obviously called for.

Several of studies related to resource rooms in Jordan have been published in the last ten years (e.g., Abu Hassona, 2004; Al Ayed, 2007; Badarneh, 2006; Bustanji, 2002; Khazaleh, 2007; Khezai, 2001; Makahleh, 1999; Obeidat, 2003; Zaghlawan, Ostrosky, & Al Khateeb, 2007). Most of these studies were experimental and focused on investigating the effectiveness of various training programs on improving students' academic and social skills. In this paper, only descriptive studies addressing the situation of resource rooms are reviewed. Hadidi (2003) investigated common problems encountered by resource room teachers in both public and private schools in Jordan. Two hundred and nine teachers participated in this study. Problems were ranked by teachers in the following descending order: (a) working with parents, (b) student referral and assessment, (c) program development and implementation, (d) teachers' role, (e) school community, and (f) instructional resources.

Bairat (2005) investigated the perceptions of 301 parents of inclusion practices with their children in

resource rooms in Jordan. The results showed that parents were most satisfied with teacher competence and least satisfied with psychological support offered to their children. Perceptions of inclusive schools among regular and special school teachers in Jordan were addressed by Al Khatib (2002). Three hundred and ninety eight teachers responded to a questionnaire consisting of 26 items. Results revealed that teachers moderately supported some and not all concepts related to inclusion.

Al Ayed (2003) also explored challenges encountered by resource room teachers in the middle region in Jordan. A questionnaire consisting of 88 items was distributed to a purposefully selected sample of 150 teachers. Challenges were encountered in all eight domains covered by the questionnaire. The three major challenges reported by teachers were related to working with parents, the philosophy of inclusion, and the school community. In another study, Jafar (2003) attempted to identify major obstacles to inclusion of students with special educational needs in Jordan. One hundred teachers (50 regular classroom teachers and 50 resource room teachers) responded to a questionnaire consisting of 36 items. Participating teachers reported facing difficulties in all areas covered by the questionnaire in the following descending order: progress by students with special needs, teacher qualification, learning environment, administrative support, and attitudes of non-disabled students. The learning environment was perceived as the most pressing problem by regular classroom teachers while resource room teachers perceived attitudes of non-disabled students as the major problem.

Current Situation of Special Education Programs for Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

Although interest in educating individuals with intellectual disabilities in Jordan dates back to late 1960s, educational programs for these persons has traditionally been offered by special day schools or residential institutions run by the Ministry of Social Development. Until today, institution-oriented models

of service delivery remain common since, according to legislation, the Ministry of Social Development rather than the Ministry of Education is the national authority held responsible for educating and training people with intellectual disabilities. Despite that, thousands of children with mild intellectual disabilities infiltrate the regular education system due to absence of any identification procedures upon school entry. In other words, there is a “hidden mainstreaming” for children with mild intellectual disabilities where these children are not identified or provided with adequate educational support in regular schools.

The situation is changing currently as a result of the commitment of the Ministry of Education to make special education provisions. However, we cannot talk about clear policies of inclusion of students with mild intellectual disabilities. Most of these students are to be found in regular classrooms. Some of them, however, are referred to resource rooms and are believed to be children with learning disabilities or slow learning. In addition to incorrect diagnosis of these children’s difficulties, most resource room teachers have not been trained to teach children with intellectual disabilities and are offered no guides for adapting the curriculum or instruction to meet their needs.

There are currently 69 centers and special day schools for children and youth with intellectual disabilities administered by the Ministry of Social Development in Jordan. In these segregated settings, about 2,700 students with mild to severe intellectual disabilities are being served (Directorate of Disability Affairs, 2007). If the international prevalence rate of 2% is adopted, the total number of school-aged children with intellectual disabilities is estimated at 50,000. In light of this, only 5% of the target population is being served by the Ministry of Social Development. So where are the remaining 95%? There is no precise answer, but an educated guess would lead us to expect that many of them are included in public schools.

In the absence of objective assessment of intellectual and adaptive functioning, the number of students with intellectual disabilities in regular schools remains unknown. McBride (2007)

estimated in a recent report submitted to the Ministry of Education the number of students with mild intellectual disabilities in public schools in Jordan at approximately 7,160. That is a reasonable estimate given that almost 85% of cases of intellectual disabilities are mild cases.

In light of the documents available at the Ministry and surveys and interviews conducted by the researchers, the following facts related to resource rooms in Jordan were evident:

1. There are currently 511 resource rooms serving 12,300 students.
2. About 80% of resource room teachers are regular class teachers who have earned a graduate degree in learning disabilities and the remaining 20% have a bachelor’s degree in special education.
3. The staff in the Directorate of Special Education cannot monitor field practices.
4. The Ministry’s experience with resource rooms has not yet been evaluated.
5. Special education provisions are tailored to children from the 2nd grade to the 6th grade only.
6. The budget of the Special Education Directorate is very limited, and almost none is allocated for teacher training.
7. There are only twelve resource room supervisors in the Kingdom.
8. The Ministry has recently agreed to equip a resource room in each public school.
9. There is a child study committee in each school having a resource room.

Also, a core team of national trainers consisting of twenty three resource room teachers and supervisors who were nominated by the Ministry to participate in a training workshop were asked to respond to five open-ended questions related to their perceptions of major problems faced in teaching students in resource rooms in Jordan. These teachers and supervisors ranked problems in the following descending order:

1. Diversity of resource room students’ needs, with some students getting no benefit from being in these rooms.

2. Most parents hold negative attitudes toward resource rooms.
3. The numbers of students with special needs in the school are more than resource rooms' capacity to accommodate them.
4. Teachers do not follow a clear referral process. Students are referred to resource rooms in light of their achievement and teacher observation rather than accurate psycho-educational diagnosis. Some teachers refer students to resource rooms just to get rid of them.
5. Resource rooms in some educational directorates are inadequately equipped.
6. There is an absence of administrative flexibility related to curriculum, instruction, and evaluation adaptation/modification.
7. There is an unavailability of curriculum materials to meet the needs of resource room students.
8. There is a scarcity of assessment tools or teachers' inability to use available tools appropriately.
9. There is a lack of monitoring of child progress.
10. There is a lack of collaboration of regular classroom teachers, counselors, principals, or parents.
11. There is a lack of supervision of resource room teachers or accountability measures.
12. There is a huge amount of paperwork.
13. There are difficulties in transferring students from the regular classroom to the resource room and in daily schedules in the resource rooms.

Participants were also asked about their views on current practices in resource rooms. Their responses are shown in Table 1. Teachers were least satisfied with: opportunities for professional development, counselors' involvement in programs for resource room students, extent of test accommodations authorized by school policies, materials and equipment available in resource rooms, and extent of curricular and instructional modifications authorized

by school policies. On the other hand, teachers were most satisfied with: relationships among resource room teachers and their students, referral of students to resource rooms, administrative support to resource rooms, relationships among resource room and regular class teachers, and relationships among resource room students and their non-disabled peers.

Additionally, in-service training needs of resource room teachers were assessed using an 11-item questionnaire. Only 17 teachers returned completed questionnaires; the results are presented in Table 2. Training was perceived as most highly needed in evidence-based practices (100%), program evaluation (100%), curriculum modification (94%), behavior modification (88%), and referral and assessment (88%).

International Standards Related to Education of Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Benchmark of Jordan's Programs

A major goal of this study was to develop an adapted version of international standards of best practices in inclusion of students with mild intellectual disabilities, prepare a benchmark report on practices in Jordan, and provide suggestions for aligning existing programs and services with international standards. Standards were identified by reviewing and summarizing standards adopted by the Council for Exceptional Children and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, among others, and reviewing and summarizing standards derived from research studies published in refereed journals. This process produced a matrix of standards consisting of seven core standards and more than seventy sub-standards.

To benchmark special education practices in Jordan with international standards of best practices in educating students with mild intellectual disabilities in regular schools, meetings were conducted with the nine key staff at the Directorate of Special Education (director, heads and members of remedial education, assessment, and supplies units) and a consensus concerning its contents and congruence with international standards was reached (Table 3).

Table 1

Teachers Perceptions of Educational Practices in Resource Rooms (N=23)

#	Item	Satisfactory		Somewhat Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	Opportunities for professional development	1	4	5	22	17	74
2	Counselors' involvement in programs for resource room students	2	8	6	26	15	66
3	Extent of test accommodations authorized by school policies	0	0	11	48	12	52
4	Materials and equipment available in resource rooms	1	4	12	52	10	44
5	Extent of curricular and instructional modifications authorized by school policies	0	0	17	74	6	26
6	Assessment of students enrolled in resource rooms	2	8	15	66	6	26
7	Relationships among resource room teachers and parents	6	26	7	30	10	44
8	Professional competence of resource room teachers	3	13	16	70	4	17
9	Designing educational programs for students in resource room	3	13	16	70	4	17
10	Regular classroom teachers' support to resource room students	2	8	19	84	2	8
11	Relationships among resource room students and their non-disabled peers	3	13	17	74	3	13
12	Relationships among resource room and regular class teachers	7	30	10	44	6	26
13	Administrative support to resource rooms	4	17	16	70	3	13
14	Referral of students to resource rooms	7	30	15	66	1	4
15	Relationships among resource room	13	57	7	30	3	13

Table 2

In-service Training Needs of Resource Room Teachers (N=17)

#	Topic	High Need		Low Need	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Behavior modification	15	88	2	12
2	Normal child development	5	29	12	71
3	Assistive technology	12	71	5	19
4	Modifying attitudes	10	58	7	42
5	Program evaluation	17	100	0	0
6	Referral and assessment	15	88	2	12
7	Early intervention	14	82	3	12
8	Evidence-based practices	17	100	0	0
9	Instructional strategies	14	82	3	12
10	Curriculum modification	16	94	1	6
11	Designing learning environment	12	71	5	9

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since special education practices in educating students with mild intellectual disabilities in regular schools in Jordan were judged as either partially consistent or non-consistent with international standards of best practices, it is clear that efforts are needed for enhancing the quality of educational programs for these students. The Directorate of Special Education is not adequately equipped to meet the numerous challenges in the field. Of

particular importance are challenges related to: (a) teacher training and support; (b) psycho-educational assessment of students; (c) curriculum modification; (d) increasing involvement of parents, regular class teachers, and counselors; (e) widening the base of services to include more students from all age levels; and (f) offering more options for service-delivery. Accordingly, the Directorate of Special Education should be empowered in terms of manpower and its relations with other directorates within the Ministry so that educational policies can be modified as

Table 3

Benchmark of Special Education Practices in Jordan with International Standards of Best Practices

Core Standard	Consistent	Partially Consistent	Non Consistent	Data Unavailable
Foundations of Education				x
Child Characteristics and Development		x		
Instructional Strategies		x		
Organization of the Learning Environment		x		
Child Assessment and Diagnosis			x	
Professional and Ethical Practices			x	
Collaboration, Consultation, and Team Work		x		

necessary and adaptations of curricula, instruction, and tests can be regulated. Establishment of a special education unit within each educational directorate is also recommended. It is suggested that these units' main functions include, but are not limited to, development of referral and diagnosis tools and procedures, monitoring remedial and special education programs, mentoring new teachers, and implementing training workshops.

Furthermore, the scope of remedial and special education services should be extended so that they not be limited to 2nd to 6th grade only. More attention needs to be given to early intervention and transition services. Also, more service delivery models (i.e., itinerant teachers, consultant teachers, etc.) needs to be explored.

It would be helpful to launch periodic and purposeful education programs in the school

communities to foster realistic expectations and positive attitudes toward children with special needs. It would also be helpful to support special education teachers and regular classroom teachers with teacher assistants and guides for adapting academic curricula and life skills curricula. On the other hand, schools need to encourage the use of the peer-tutoring approach and voluntary work in schools to support students with special needs.

Rethinking both regular teacher and special teacher training programs so that teachers can work collaboratively is also a priority. Similarly, procedures for the enforcement of legislation, regulations and policies related to the education of students with special needs should be developed. Finally, the Ministry of Education should search for practical solutions to the assessment and diagnosis problems. This might best be achieved by collaborating with a

local university in the implementation of a diploma program in psycho-educational assessment of children with special needs for a carefully selected group of graduates holding a bachelor's degree in special education, psychology, or counseling.

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Positive Behavior Support Strategies for Young Children with Severe Disruptive Behavior

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The occurrence of problem behaviors in the repertoires of young children with autism can represent substantial problems for the children's development, access to appropriate services, and the functioning of the children's families (Dunlap & Fox, 1999). Although not all children with autism display serious disruptive or destructive behaviors, a large number exhibit behaviors such as self injury, aggression, property destruction, and violent, protracted tantrums.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) has emerged as a behavioral support which focuses on ecological relevance and meaningful outcome in the form of lifestyle change (Carr et al., 2002). PBS is a strategy that attempts to reduce or eliminate inappropriate behavior. It utilizes a multi-component behavior plan. The plan has two features: functional behavior assessment and a comprehensive behavior plan. At the school-wide level, primary prevention focuses on monitoring and preventing problem behaviors across entire student populations. At the next level, secondary prevention utilizes strategies aimed at preventing increased behavioral problems among students for whom primary prevention efforts have been insufficient in facilitating success. Finally, tertiary prevention is directed at preventing crisis and severe disruptive behaviors across larger life domains and is implemented with the students for whom both primary and secondary strategies have been unsuccessful (Scott, 2003).

This article focuses on severe disruptive behavior (SDB), the management of SDB by the application of positive behavior support strategies, and seeks to (a) provide a rationale for the use of PBS, (b) define the PBS, (c) provide research support, and (d) discuss different PBS strategies for managing disruptive behavior.

Rationale for the use of PBS for children with Disruptive Behavior

The main reason to encourage the use of PBS for managing disruptive behavioral concerns is that when a child with disability engages in a behavior that impedes his or her learning or that of others, the Individual Education Program team must use the functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and positive behavior intervention planning process. Additionally, intervention must be FBA-based with the inclusion of all supporting staff in the child's vicinity as well as home members.

Steps in the PBS Process

Step 1: Identify the Target Behavior

The very first step in this plan is to identify the target behavior. In the case study we chose Lila's hitting behavior as the target behavior. The following case vignette explains the procedure at a glance before we delve into detailed explanation of the plan.

Behavior Background Vignette

Lila is a four-year-old girl attending a preschool program. She has recently been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder. She yells and screams when asked to do work during the activity periods, hits other children, pulls hair, bites, destroys toys and materials, and resists redirection. Her parents are concerned that at home she yells if she is not able to watch T.V. when she wants. This is the first time that Lila has been in a group care setting. In the first months of her enrollment, her teacher thought that Lila just needed to learn the classroom expectations and get used to being with other children. Now it is half way through the school year and Lila's behavior has not improved. Her classroom teacher, together with Lila's parents and the School Psychologist, established a home/school plan to remind Lila of the classroom rules. Currently, the School Psychologist works with Lila for 30 minutes each week. Unfortunately, Lila's behavior is unchanged. Her classroom teacher is ready to give up. She isn't sure at this point if she can meet Lila's needs in the program. After much discussion with Lila's family and the school psychologist, we decide to try Positive Behavior Support Strategies.

Step 1. The hitting behavior was selected as the target behavior. This decision was made based on both the input of her parents and teacher as well as the nature of her behavior. According to her parents this behavior offends her younger brother and causes chaos at home. Moreover the behavior needs attention as it is causing physical harm to persons around her.

Steps 2-4. The functional behavioral assessment process included observing Lila during her routines at school and home. Each member of the team wrote down what happened, both before Lila's challenging behavior and after. The team learned from their observations that Lila was most likely to engage in challenging behavior when another child tried to play with a toy that Lila had chosen. When Lila attacked the child by hitting, biting, or grabbing a toy, the teacher would comfort the hurt child and then take the hurt child to another center or activity. Thus, Lila would be successful in getting that child to leave the activity or leave the toy. The team discussed these

observations and determined that Lila was using her challenging behavior to avoid sharing toys or engaging in activities that she did not like.

Step 5. The function of the behavior was found to be *attention* and *escape*. The next suitable replacement skill was explored and functional communication training implemented (i.e., for teaching her how to seek positive attention). It seems that she was not following what to do in her class routine and consequently did not know what she was expected to do.

Steps 6-8. The team developed a behavior support plan based on their new understanding of Lila and the function or purpose of Lila's challenging behavior. The following prevention strategies were used: warning Lila of transitions with a countdown cue (e.g., "five more minutes, three more minutes, one minute, time for circle"); watching Lila carefully during center time and facilitating peer interaction when peers approached Lila; and setting a timer for Lila that showed her how long she could play with a highly desired object before offering the toy to another child. In addition to these strategies, the team modified activities and transitions that were difficult for Lila. For example, at circle time, the teachers added a choice board that allowed Lila to pick the song that would be sung on arrival at circle.

Let's see how the visual schedule works for her. As can be seen in figure 3, mini individual schedules were prepared for each of the class routines. Also she was given a picture cue card for "I Want" and trained in various settings for how to communicate using it. This was chosen as she does not verbalize more than ten basic sight words.

Outcome

As illustrated in Figure 7, during the first baseline, Lila's hitting behavior occurred, on average, eight times per day. During intervention Phase One, hitting behavior came down to one time a day at the end of five days of intervention and it again increases to four times a day in the second baseline. In the second intervention phase, the behavior decreases to zero times a day. Data was taken over twenty days.

Step 2: Recording System

We selected event recording (as in Figure 1) as the recording method for measuring the behavior. For hitting behavior it is best to measure the number of times she hits. This type of recording will be comprised of making a notation for every time she hits in a defined time period (i.e., a thirty minute class period). It will most directly reflect the behavior frequency.

Step 3: Procedure and Strategies

Let's Build a Team

The first step in the PBS process is to convene a team of individuals who have the best interests of the child with autism in mind. This collaborative team could include a speech language pathologist, the student's teacher, paraprofessionals and other related service personnel, peers, and always family.

Strategies for teaming with families in the process of PBS include (a) reviewing the process with the family using a question and answer sheet developed for each child on PBS, (b) asking the family to provide observation information, (c) interviewing the family using the functional behavioral assessment process, (d) identifying problem behaviors/situations that are similar across home and school, (e) sharing hypotheses and a draft support plan with family members and encourage giving ideas, (f) developing a simple plan for home implementation, (g) providing the family with success stories, and (h) encouraging each family by praising their efforts and progress.

The special educator sends home a form for parents to complete, which is based on open-ended questions about Lila's problem behavior. Similarly all the therapists working with her (such as her speech therapist) are given the form.

Step 4: Comprehensive Functional Behavioral Assessment

Once the team is formed and engaged in goal identification, a comprehensive FBA should be used to provide a clear description of the challenging behavior (Susan & Johnston, 2001).

Rationale

The goal of an FBA is to gain an understanding of the function of the challenging behavior and when the behavior is most and least likely to occur. The best way to intervene with the problem behavior is to first find out what is the communicative intent of the problem behavior. This particular FBA is done using antecedent, behavior, consequence (ABC) cards (i.e., each of the staff can use them during playground sessions and class sessions, such as the assistant instructor is given that card to record the antecedent, behavior and consequence of behavior). A teacher can use the following method for doing a successful functional assessment.

Dates of data collection	Time		Notation of occurrences	Total occurrences of hitting and throwing
	Start Time	Stop Time		
10/25/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	IIII	5
10/26/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	III	3
10/27/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	IIII	4
10/28/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	IIII	5
10/29/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	IIII	4
10/30/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	III	3
11/31/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	II	2
10/01/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	II	2
10/02/2004	10 AM	10:30AM	I	1
10/03/2004	10 AM	10:30AM		0

Figure 1. Event Recording.

Name:	Observer:	Date:
General Context:		Time:
(A) Trigger:		
(B) Challenging Behavior:		
(C) Maintaining Consequences:		
Possible Function:		

Figure 2. Sample Observation Card.

Making an Observation Card

As can be seen in Figure 2, it is a simple 4X6 inch card which has three columns to be filled out by an observer of the behavior in a social context which does not involve teachers. It can then be handed over to a teacher or the parents who can hand it in to the special education teacher for further analysis.

Step 5: Best Hypothesis Development

The above functional assessment should lead one to the development of a hypothesis that is a statement representing the best-informed guess about the relationship between the challenging behavior and the communicative function of the behavior. Typically a hypothesis can lead to four factors: (a) attention, (b) escape, (c) tangible, and (d) sensory. Let's see how an FBA helps to identify the function.

Step 6: Developing a Positive Behavior Support Plan

The four components of the plan include (a) long term support, (b) prevention strategies, (c) physical structure of the classroom, and (d) schedules in the classroom.

Long Term Support

Long Term Supports are statements including strategies and supports to assist the child's overall health, development, and social interaction. These might include anything from scheduled team meetings and the instruction of team members in support strategies to medical management of the child.

Prevention Strategies

Prevention strategies include antecedent manipulations in the environment, activities, and others' interactions with the child, especially attending to the cues that have been identified as working for the child. This is not limited to physical indicators or triggers followed by individual problem behaviors and their characteristic patterns.

Physical Structure of the Classroom

Determine the following: (a) is there enough workspace for individual and group activities, (b) are the work areas located in the least distracting locations, (c) are there distracting features in the classroom, (d) are the work materials easily accessible by students, (e) do the work areas have visual cues associated with them, (f) do students know where to

put the finished work, (g) are the student materials clearly marked for easy access to them, and (h) are play areas located away from exits?

Schedules in the Classroom

Does the classroom have group schedules posted in a centralized area? Does every student have individual visual schedules posted for him or her? Does the schedule involve transition warnings?

Objective of individual schedule. To help students understand what to do during the activities listed in the general schedule.

Materials needed. The materials needed include: (a) pictures depicting steps to be done during each session, (b) bulletin board, and (3) clips.

Activity. Place a small bulletin board beside the child’s working area. Clip four to five pictures depicting steps to be done during each activity in either a vertical or horizontal, left to right manner. It will be more relevant to students if their picture is used. An example of an individual schedule is in Figure 3. The student starts with the topmost picture and finds materials needed, completes the activity, and puts the materials away.

For a session, which includes writing, a visual schedule could be made, as shown in Figure 3. Note that getting ready for lunch and packing are transition warnings included in a schedule. This is a schedule for children who comprehend at a concrete picture level. One can use clip art instead of magazine pictures depending upon the level and skill of the child.

Step 7: Developing Replacement Skills

Some non-verbal children have achieved functional communication of first words by means of word cards. When visual representations or product labels are paired with written words, children receive additional visual cues. Several word cards may be joined together for instructional sequences.

Figure 4 is a sample for usage of a visual word card for developing functional communication training in children with autism. This can be taught as a replacement skill for children who do not understand when asked to wait and hence word card










Timings	Activities	
9:00	Student Arrival	
9:30	Session 1	
10:00	Session 2	
10:30	Computer Time	
11:00	Get Ready for Lunch	
11:15	Lunch	
12:15	Session 3	
12:45	Pack Up	
1:00	Dismissal	

Figure 3. Sample of Group Schedule.

usage serves the purpose of teaching these children to communicate.

Objective of the Strategy

As can be seen in Figure 4, when shown the “wait” card, the student will wait for five minutes in four-week period with 100% accuracy.

Materials

One 3 x 5 inch index card and a picture or clip art depicting meaning of the word “wait”

Procedure

Use a 3 x 5 inch index card and print the word “wait” on it. Practice for this takes two or three seconds several times per day. Each time the child practices using the “wait” card increase the time. Hold a “goodie” in your lap, and tell the child you are going to give it to him or her. Hand the “wait” card to the child while saying, “Please wait.” Almost immediately, give the child the “goodie” with one hand while taking the “wait” card with the other and saying “Thank you for waiting.” Slowly increase the “wait” time.

Note that a younger child cannot wait too long anyway, but this system really helps them learn how to wait. The “wait” card can be used to help children take turns in a circle and wait in line to leave the classroom. A teacher may hand a “wait” card to a child along with the computer icon to help the child wait when the teacher needs to change a program. Objects can also “wait.” For instance, a puzzle that needs to be finished at a later time can “wait” for the child to return. The “wait” card may be placed on top of the puzzle. Some very young children do not quite understand the concept of “wait,” but do seem



Figure 4. “Wait” Card.



Figure 5. Green, Yellow, and Red Cards.

to understand they cannot get the “goodie” without the wait card.

Step 8: Consequence Strategies

Students in PBS, especially students with autism, require concrete and relevant praise for skill demonstration. For children with autism, the development of a token system based on visual cues may work as a consequence strategy. Here is one sample of such strategy:

Objective of the Strategies

To provide extra computer time as a reinforcement when a student completes an activity and redirecting the student to an activity when tantruming.

Materials

As can be seen in Figure 5, three 3 x 5 inch green, yellow, and red cards.

Activity

Each time the student begins an activity, the teacher turns the white card in the poster to green. Now as long as the student remains on the activity, she is on green card and she earns twenty minutes extra computer time for this session. As soon as the student starts showing problem behavior, the red card becomes visible, and the student’s computer time for

that day is reduced by ten minutes each time. Note that depending upon the child, the teacher can use variety of reinforcers.

Conclusion

Positive behavior support has emerged as one of the most effective fields of behavior intervention for children with behavior and emotional problems. Previously, the concept was to be used at broader levels such as school based positive behavior support programs. Lately it is gaining importance at narrower levels, for example at the classroom level. Teachers of young children with special needs have the extra responsibility of using PBS as an early intervention tool at the classroom level. It is at this early stage that the teacher involves parents and all professionals related to the child to actively participate in the child's negative behavior reduction plan. It is very important for the teacher to fully involve the parents in the process. The teacher may want to incorporate a checklist after employing various means of informal and formal procedures for the functional behavioral assessment. Next, after the communicative intent of the behavior is recognized, the teacher should design the replacement skill, for example, functional communication training for the successful behavior intervention program for the child. Hence, Positive Behavior Support could be a framework within which parents, teachers, and professionals work together for replacing problem behaviors of a child with alternative positive behaviors, which prove to be effective in meeting the communicative intent of the behavior.

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Reading Comprehension Strategy: Rainbow Dots

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Reading comprehension is a significant concern for many students in the U.S., especially for those who have learning disabilities (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003) and English language learners with disabilities (Sàenz, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005). For the past three decades, studies that addressed reading comprehension instructions for students with learning disabilities have increased substantially (e.g., Calfee & Drum, 1986; Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Fulk, 1990; Mastropieri, 2001). Rainbow Dots is an instructional approach that was influenced by the reading comprehension package, Multipass (Schumaker, Deshler, Alley, Warner, & Denton, 1982). The Rainbow Dots strategy helps students to become aware of when they utilize the comprehension strategies by assigning colored dot stickers while reading. The fundamental goal of Rainbow Dots is to help students process what they read in a way that creates a clear understanding – interrelating ideas, making generalizations, and understanding complicated information (Baumann, Hooten, & White, 1999). This also allows readers to be autonomous and in control of the comprehension process. Students with strong comprehension strategy usage are more likely to utilize these strategies in all content area classes (Neufeld, 2005).

Steps for Using the Rainbow Dots Strategy

Four comprehension strategies are introduced and a colored dot is assigned to each of the strategies: visualization (yellow), summarization (green), inferences (red), and connections (blue). Students are taught to mark their reading texts when the four strategies are utilized during reading (see Figure 1).

Visualization

To begin, the teacher develops a mini-lesson defining the strategy, Visualization. He/She then distributes copies of an easy read book with all the pictures being covered. Students are asked to read the text and place small yellow dot stickers in places where pictures related to the story are created in their minds. Students are then asked to share their visualizations with the class. Following class discussions, students will uncover all the pictures and discuss how their mental pictures are similar to or different from the pictures of the book. In each reading class, students will be reminded to use the yellow dots to show their use of visualizations.

Summarization

Once students are comfortable using visualizations during reading, the summarization strategy will be introduced. Summaries encompass main ideas and important details of the story. Using an interactive read aloud approach, the teacher demonstrates how to pause and summarize during reading. The teacher reads a story aloud and stops after each paragraph to demonstrate to his/her students how he/she thinks aloud. Each time the teacher stops to summarize, a green dot sticker will be placed next to that paragraph. Students are then asked to read a story or a short chapter in a book with a partner. Each pair will place a green dot sticker where they pause and summarize. Students then share their summaries with the class and discuss why they choose to summarize at that point of the story. During this phase, students should be encouraged to use visualization and summarization strategies together while reading.

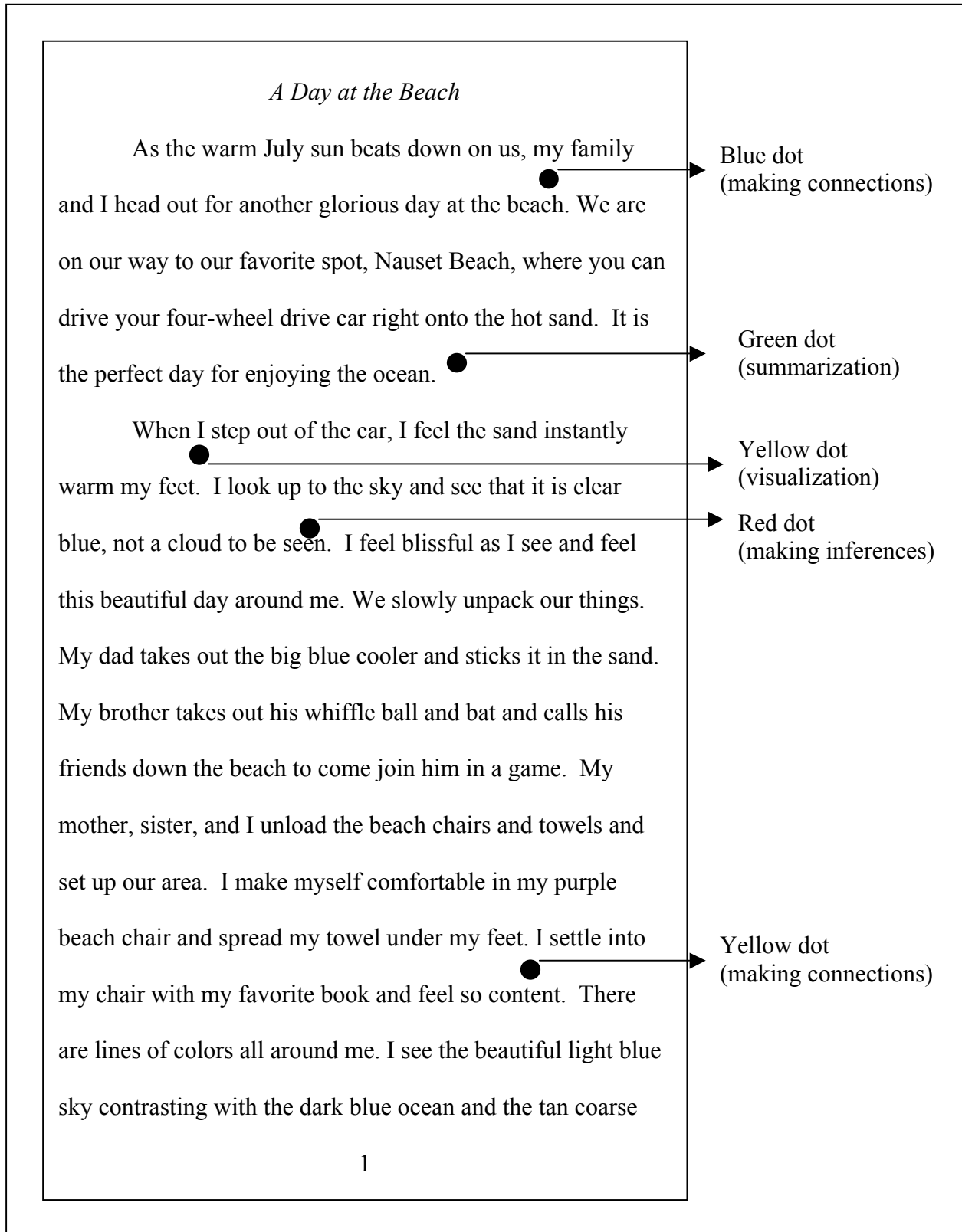


Figure 1. Sample Page with the Use of Colored Dots.

Inferences

In the third phase, students complete a series of listening comprehension activities to practice making inferences while reading. The teacher begins by reading a passage to students in which some of the details in the passage are missing. However, the context of the passage can guide the students and predict the missing information. Students are told to place a red dot next to where they have to make inferences in order to understand the story. For practice, students are assigned a short text to read, mark where their inferencing takes place with red dots, and share their predictions with the class. Students are asked to provide the class with supporting details regarding how they reach their predictions. Because this is a difficult strategy for some students, numerous opportunities for modeling and practice should be given. Students will practice using red dots for at least three to five lessons, and then begin to reuse the yellow (visualization) and green dots (summarization) along with the red (making inferences) dots.

Making Connections

As students become more comfortable using their colored dot stickers in class, they are instructed to use blue dots to show where they make connections while reading. Mini-lessons will be taught regarding the recognition of text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Each student is provided with a copy of a text. As the teacher reads the book aloud, he/she demonstrates how connections are made with the text. For example, the teacher will stop to think aloud when a particular passage is read, relating it to a similar childhood experience. Then the teacher places a blue dot where a connection is made with the text. Students are then asked to discuss if they can also make a connection with parts of the passage. Students will place the blue dots to where any of the three types of connections are made to the passage. Students share their connections with their reading partners. At this point, students are asked to use all four strategies and colored dots simultaneously.

Summary

An action research study was conducted using the Rainbow Dots strategy to evaluate its effectiveness on reading comprehension skills in a third-grade class with students both with and without a specific learning disability. Results of the study indicated that students' overall performances in reading comprehension have increased. Students also reported that the Rainbow Dots strategy provided them with guidance during reading. They were excited to read a new text and able to utilize all four taught strategies easily.

The Rainbow Dots strategy can be modified and used with texts in different languages. The authors encourage teachers to check in with individual students and monitor their understanding and usage of each strategy regularly. Students who misunderstand or misuse strategies will require additional individual instruction and practice. Depending on the students' levels, teachers can include additional reading comprehension strategies such as questioning (purple dots), rereading (orange dots), and using context clues (black dots).

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The Journal of the International Association of Special Education

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