T-CARE

Teachers Connecting to Advance Retention and Empowerment

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What's on your mind? What kinds of things are you dealing with, negotiating, problem-solving, or celebrating? In this issue of TCARE, we didn't send out a themed call for papers. We simply asked for articles that spoke to educators. As always, we want articles that are teacher-friendly, practical, offer concrete strategies and suggestions, and speak to the current needs of American educators. We think the authors of this issue came through brilliantly!

Teachers are often in danger of burning out (even pre-pandemic!) and those who work in the field of special education are even more so (Park & Shin, 2020). In fact, one superintendent I worked with recently shared that his teachers were so burned out after the past two years, he said they were "crispy." He wasn't intending to be disrespectful; on the contrary, while using humor, he was still recognizing and lamenting how stressed teachers are these days. Spencer and Kang's plea to administrators to take action to support teachers is well-timed. Holle also questions "where have all the teachers gone?" and implores us as a field to find creative ways to build interest in joining the teaching profession – despite all the barriers currently working against us.

Special education tends to always result in multiple article submissions. That could be because of the editor's background and network (guilty as charged) or because it is a field fraught with the need for additional strategies and suggestions. In this issue, Gaines and White offer tips for running more efficient Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, both in-person and on-line. Their suggestions are realistic, doable, and critical. Applied Behavior Analysis may seem overwhelming at first, but three doctoral students from Ohio University found a way to break it down to reasonable actions. An article that marries the need for teacher longevity and sustainability with the focus on special education is the one by co-teachers Golding & Williams and their university mentor, Dr. Magiera. Learning how to maximize those things that can keep co-teachers together for "the long haul" can help reinvigorate teams and combat burn out. Finally, Gerry emphasizes why educators should recognize the impact cultural differences play when intersecting with the nuances, norms, and varying understandings of disability and special education.

Additional articles address topics of widespread importance and need. In our "Caring Connection," Spencer reminds us how critical true empathy can be, especially in today's trauma -filled environments. Strategies for improving skills in math and technology – two areas that might cause trauma in some students, and teachers for that matter – are offered by Gaspard and Slemrod respectively. Overall, the authors of this issue do a wonderful job of offering readers concrete techniques and tips for continuing to improve education in our diverse inclusive schools.

From all of us to all of you, here's to hoping the next few years are far better for our students, families, teachers, and teacher educators than the past few years have been.

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Applied Behavior Analysis in the Classroom:

A Few Quick Tips

Student behavior challenges can disrupt the academic environment and make teaching difficult. As school-based board-certified behavior analysts (BCBA) trained in the science of behavior, we are often called to support students having difficulty with social, emotional, and academic skills. Teachers have limited time and resources so strategies must be both evidence-based (research supports used with the students and teachers in the setting) and efficient. The two strategies listed below require little time and professional development; yet our teachers report that they make significant positive differences. These are considered Tier 1 universal supports so they can be applied by all teachers in general education settings without additional pull-out or in-class support.

1. **Behavior-specific praise (BSP)** reinforces what students are doing correctly. It not only serves as a reinforcer but also teaches students what positive behavior looks and feels like. It is a reliable way to increase the likelihood that positive behavior will occur again. Think of this intervention the way you would a compliment provided to you by another person. If someone tells you that they like your outfit, you are more likely to wear that outfit in the future. To implement this intervention, think about the positive behaviors you would like to see increased in your classroom (i.e., rules and procedures such as following directions, raising hands to get attention, being on task, etc.). When students are observed engaging in positive behaviors, verbal praise is provided in a way that specifically states what the student is doing well. For example, "Tina, I like how you raised your hand to get my attention. Thank you for raising your hand!" Praising specific behavior increases the likelihood that this student and others around her will continue the positive behavior. The result: No cost, low time investment, and increases in positive behaviors.

2. **Opportunities to respond (OTR)** is a quick teaching strategy that encourages student responses when a teacher delivers an instructional question, gesture, or statement. This instructional strategy provides students with many opportunities to comment in response to a question, gesture, or statement. It promotes student engagement and on-task behavior. The responses from a student can include verbal, written, or gestures. These responses can be choral responses from a small group to a large group. They can also be required from one individual at a time. For example, the teacher holds up a flash card and points to it. The teacher establishes which type of response he/she is requiring. Students can respond by group choral responding, writing the answer on a dry-erase board, or giving a gesture such as a thumbs up or thumbs down. It's best practice to intersperse opportunities to respond between the whole class and individuals so students do not become accustomed to one type of response. It's important to ensure that all students get many OTRs and not just ones that typically respond. This will contribute to improving the level of student engagement with on-task behaviors while decreasing the levels of disruptive behaviors. In another example, the teacher provides a verbal statement of "class, class" and the students' choral response is "yes, yes". This example is a great way to get students to stop what they are doing and turn their attention to the teacher.

Many of us have heard of these strategies; however, it is helpful to periodically monitor the use of these preventative strategies. The techniques offered in this article are appropriate for any school environment, from the bus to the cafeteria to the hallways and classrooms. They can affect the environment in a way conducive to improving the academic climate while reducing challenging behavior.

The contents of this article were developed under a grant (SPIDERS) from the U.S. Department of Education, #H325D210042. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Tina Diamond.

Behavior-Specific Praise in the Classroom. July 2016. Tennessee Behavior Supports Project at Vanderbilt University. https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/psibehaviorspecpraise.pdf

Haydon, T., MacSuga, A. S., Simonsen, B., & Hawkins, R. (2012, Fall). Opportunities to Respond: A Key Component of Effective Instruction. *Beyond Behavior,* 22 (1), 23-31.

The authors have been in the field of education for a combined 26 years. All three authors are employed by a large school district in the state of Oklahoma as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). The authors are doctoral students at the University of Oklahoma, where they focus their research on rural special education through an OSEP grant.

From left to right: **Amanda Bowers, M.Ed, BCBA, LBA-OK**, **Bre Martin, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA-OK**, and **Jasmine A Justus, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA**.

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The Quick and Dirty Guide

to Running a RockStar Collaborative IEP Meeting - even online!

In IEP meetings, special educators are often tasked with keeping the meeting efficient, collaborative, and legally compliant, all while managing the notes page, facilitating a fruitful discussion, and updating and documenting all pertinent information. It's a lot to navigate! Since the pandemic, we have found a few resources and strategies to be especially helpful when running IEP meetings, and we hope others can benefit from these as well.

Statements in blue are hyperlinks to additional resources.

- **Share an agenda and norms at the beginning of the meeting.** Customize and share your screen with the attached agenda before you get started. Establish and agree upon an allotted time and norms to set the tone and tempo for the meeting. As an option and to add a personal touch, replace the image with a picture of the student as a visual reminder to remain student-focused.
- **Take the time to build a bridge.** Although we are required by law to work collaboratively with parents in crafting the IEP document, be intentional in building bridges between school and home. Whenever possible, partner with the parent before the meeting. Use that opportunity to share any news that may be difficult for them to hear in front of an audience, gather their input, and solicit suggestions for the agenda.
- **Invigorate the introductions**. Before you begin introducing each team member, ask all participants to state their title and their role at the meeting. In an online meeting, to keep things moving along, rather than waiting awkwardly for each person to unmute, take the lead by calling on each individual person to unmute and introduce themselves.
- **Establish roles before the meeting starts and share note taking responsibilities**. If you have time and a collaborative team, determine roles before the meeting starts. Can your administrator facilitate while you take notes? Can your counselor take notes while you facilitate? If you are tag teaming the notes, create a shared Google doc so multiple school site team members can capture the notes and document salient details in real time. Remind all participants that the document is a "live" document, and although information has been input into the system, changes can be made throughout the entirety of the meeting.
- **Include a robust discussion of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**. Always start by considering how the students may be successful in General Education with support! Facilitate and structure this discussion using this template. Don't be afraid to solicit input from every team member, and list all of the details - big and small - that are raised when discussing each environment. Do not hesitate to ask clarifying questions and explicitly reach consensus before moving on.
- **Don't lose sight of the big picture! - data drives the discussion and all subsequent decisions so fortify the conversation with a detailed Present Levels of Performance (PLOP).** Remember that data can consist of standardized test scores, informal and formal assessments, observations, rating scales, self-reports, medical information, and more. Be prepared to share trends, progress towards IEP goals, and areas in need of additional support. Use the PLOP (also known as the PLAAFP [present levels of academic achievement and functional performance] but PLOP is quicker and more fun to say) to really capture and describe the student in the school environment - and be sure to feature their strengths! You can also describe pedagogical approaches and techniques that have proven to be particularly effective for the student.
- **Paint the picture and see it through**. Utilize comprehensive and strategic use of data to establish the baseline for your goals and to make service and placement decisions. Wherever possible, capitalize on student strengths, preferences, and interests when writing goals and determining reasonable accommodations.

IEP meetings can and should be a collaborative, transparent process garnering valuable input from all team members. Utilizing the strategies and resources provided here may be enough to move the needle forward in the best interest of your students.

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Changing the Questions in Math Class:

Just NOD

In post-pandemic classrooms, students across the country are in desperate need for positive experiences with math. Math standards and textbooks haven't changed, but students have. Many curriculum materials used in current math classrooms represent more of the same pre-pandemic tasks, and now more than ever, students need something new. Teachers are caught in the middle, trying to follow national standards and district-mandated curriculum material. Unfortunately, most of the tasks only require students to find the right answer, which leaves little for students and the teacher to discuss. Math tasks and whole-class discussions need to involve more than just finding the answer because in our post-pandemic world, all students have to do is search online for the answer. There is no mathematical thinking involved in that, and it leaves nothing to discuss except the steps to the answer.

A big goal for teachers to change this environment might be to create alternative tasks that are not offered in their prescribed curriculum. While many do this with great success, it is time consuming and most teachers do not have the time, energy or resources to do make these major adaptations. Instead, one manageable step is to start small by trying different questioning strategies that do not focus on the answer. How do you do this? Use the "NOD" method.

Both written math task questions and discourse whole-class discussion questions that encourage students to explore, notice, and wonder help to create an engaging learning environment, rather than a competitive environment that simply focuses on the answer. We want questions that help students create a new perspective on math and their mathematical ability. Thus, after presenting a problem, instead of jumping to the answer and asking questions like "What did you get?" and "How did you get it?,' why not try the "NOD" technique?

NOTICE: *What did you notice at first? What else did people notice?*
OBSERVE: *What did you observe after that? Did anyone else observe something different?*
DECIDE: *What did you decide to do with what you observed?*

Teachers can also use the NOD when thinking about their students. We too must NOD to be mindful teachers. The allowing of thinking is so important for all students. When we feel the instinct to jump in, take a breath and NOD.

NOTICE: *What are the students' reactions to the problem. Are they eager, confused, unaware?*
OBSERVE: *Observe the students' approaches and strategies. Just walk around and observe. NOD to show that you see them in their process.*
DON'T Jump In: *Struggles often lead to breakthroughs. Resist the urge to help right away. Allow the thinking to play out.*

When "NOD"ing remember…

- **You are investigating** *with* your students!
- There are **no notes** required (during investigation).
- Step back, wait **[NOD]** and let students productively struggle (fast answers are a NO and hand raising should be limited).
- **Ask questions** about their *thinking* - THAT is what helps them. Avoid telling or answering questions (ask a question back instead).
- **Wait time** is important - and fighting that urge to JUMP IN and help them...even when they ask.

NODding also helps to reduce anxiety in students because the discussion is not always about a right or wrong answer. This is beneficial because we know from research that math anxiety disrupts performance because it reduces students' working memory, leaving them unable to block out distractions and irrelevant information or to retain information while working on tasks (Legg & Locker, 2009). That kind of anxiety triggers fight or flight. Changing the questions teachers ask is a first step to changing students' attitudes in the math classroom. Both students and teachers can NOD in agreement that mathematics is not just about the answer and NODding can help us find our inner mathematician.

Legg, A.M., & Locker, L. (2009). Math performance and its relationship to math anxiety and metacognition. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 11(3). http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6894/is_3_11/ai_n42379449/?tag=rel.res2.

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The Long Haul:

How to Make Co-Teaching Last for Years

In 2011, as newly hired teachers in the Buffalo Public Schools, Kristin and Kara were assigned to be co-teaching partners. While the literature recommends teachers volunteer or help select their partners (e.g., Friend & Barron, 2016), the reality is that many are placed together in an "arranged marriage" (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). For Kristin and Kara, this was a positive reality. During their eleven years together, they co-taught fifth and sixth grade; this year they are taking on fourth grade. These co-teachers have always instructed together in the same urban elementary school (preschool to eighth grade). Both teachers have always spent the entire day together. Kristin and Kara have co-taught classes as large as 32 students and classes as small as 19 students, with varying numbers of students with disabilities in the classroom. With the administrative support of the same principal for most of their time at School 81, Kristin and Kara have been able to grow a co-teaching partnership that has lasted for the long haul. How did they do that and what elements can be brought into other co-teaching relationships?

Making Co-Teaching Last

Based on their own experiences, Kristin and Kara identified three critical elements in making co-teaching last. The first critical element for sustainable co-teaching has been Kristin and Kara's **commitment to co-planning**. Through constant communication with each other via texts, emails, or in-person planning, their lessons have been intentional, while still leaving room for those middle of the night "light bulb moments" that make content accessible the very next day. By eliminating sidebar teacher conversations that often occur when co-teachers have not planned together, co-teachers are able to ensure smooth lessons and support students with classroom routines.

The next critical element in Kristin and Kara's co-teaching partnership has been their **commitment to deal effectively and consistently with student behavioral issues**. These co-teachers have become adept at determining classroom routines, grouping students intentionally, and following up with appropriate student consequences as needed. Kristin and Kara developed behavioral systems for individual students, while keeping other students engaged in learning the general education curriculum. Their commitment to positive classroom management has helped them avoid the "burn out" of working with challenging students.

They also have similar teaching styles, which have been noted as particularly helpful for educators sharing a classroom (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). Being willing and able to share responsibilities throughout the school day has helped these co-teachers to constantly feel supported by one other.

The final critical element of their longevity together has been the **consistency of having the same principal for many years** at School 81. This administrative support has been essential to making co-teaching last for the long haul in this elementary school. Because of the principal's clear understanding of the organization of co-teaching, Kristin and Kara feel supported and are therefore more flexible as needed when asked to co-teach various grade level assignments or when the number of students with disabilities placed in those classrooms rises or falls. Clearly, their principal took to heart Murawski and Dieker's (2012) admonition that, "when you have a good co-teaching team, don't break them up!"

Following Kristin and Kara's lead, consider how to make ***your*** co-teaching partnership an asset to your school. Find ways to plan lessons so that you can avoid on the spot hesitation during instruction. For example, establish groups ahead of time based on student needs. Next, establish a consistent classroom climate that both of you can buy into and that your students understand. Last, be clear with administrators on the coordination of what is needed for long haul co-teaching. Help them understand the critical elements for effective collaboration. If these are in place, co-teachers will feel more confident in being flexible with grade level assignments and with the students with disabilities in their co-taught class. With a little extra effort, you and your co-teaching partner can be together for the long haul!

Friend, M. & Barron, T. (2016). Co-teaching as a special education service: Is classroom collaboration a sustainable practice? *Educational Practice & Reform, 2*, 1-12.

Murawski, W. W. & Dieker, L. A. (2012). *Leading the co-teaching dance: Leadership strategies to enhance team outcomes.* Council for Exceptional Children.

Murawski, W. W. & Spencer. S. A. (2011). *Collaborate, communicate, and differentiate! How to increase student learning in today's diverse schools.* Corwin Press.

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Admin Corner

Calling All Administrators: How Can You Help Your Teachers?

The world of education has changed over the past two years. The pandemic has resulted in additional challenges for teachers and has shed light on apparent changes within the field of education. As normalcy has resumed, teachers are beyond "burnt out". A recent survey report (Steiner & Woo, 2021) shows that one in five US teachers is dealing with job-related stress, and half of the teachers reported feeling burned out. Furthermore, about a quarter of the teachers reported that they were planning to leave their profession. Lack of communication, student behavior, insufficient time to complete work-related tasks in a given workday, buildings being severely understaffed, and large caseloads and classes are just a few of the examples contributing to teacher burnout. Educators need to be supported and feel supported by their administration. Here is a brief list of ways administrators can support teachers to decrease burnout.

1. **Establish a Communication System:** Numerous events can occur in an educator's day. Administrators can communicate with teachers in diverse ways to show their support. Administrators showing their faces in the classroom makes educators feel like they matter and validates their job. If an administrator cannot make it to the room, using a device like a walkie talkie could be an easy communication system. Simply saying "how are you doing?" over the walkie talkie can go a long way. Administrators could also create a "special educator" or "3rd grade team" group chat and send a simple text message throughout the day. Whatever the chosen method, an established and consistent communication system is key to supporting teachers.

2. **Provide Support During Crisis:** Teachers often call for an administrator when a crisis arises. When that call is made, administrators arriving at the crisis in a timely manner is what educators need. Upon arrival, the simple question of "How can I help?" validates the situation, which provides comfort and reassurance, and allows teachers to feel supported. Follow up and ongoing communication to share the next steps following the crisis are also appreciated.

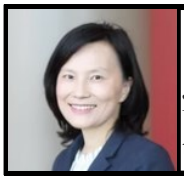
3. **Dedicate Professional Development to Paperwork:** There are many "early out" days throughout the school year. Administrators can provide staff with time to work on paperwork (IEP prepping, grading papers, sending emails to parents). This time can also provide teachers time to collaborate with colleagues to better serve students and meet their needs. There are also multiple district wide professional development days where there are not students in the building. Allowing educators time to work on paperwork for seven straight hours would allow them to catch up, lessen their load, and ease stress and anxiety.

4. **Listen to Teachers' Voices:** Educators often give their professional advice or make suggestions. This advice or these suggestions may not often be implemented or considered when big decisions are being made. Teachers know their students best and what each student needs to be successful. The brain of an educator is full of resources and strategies; let them help you! It is disenfranchising to be the ones implementing the work when others make important decisions without asking for input.

5. **Provide a Timesheet:** There are many hours teachers put into paperwork, connecting with families, or various other duties outside of contractual hours. Administrators can encourage educators to submit a timesheet for their hours worked. While this may or may not lead to additional pay (depending on the school and district), knowing that administration was aware of their time spent would help teachers to feel like their time is valuable and recognized. There is simply not enough time in a given workday to complete all the tasks that an educator has to complete. Writing individualized education plans, modifying assignments, creating data sheets, progress reports, report cards, and scheduling meetings are just a few of the tasks educators often complete outside of contractual hours. Timesheets may help administrators to see this excess time and work collaboratively with their teachers to revise or restructure requirements to reduce workload.

Teachers show up for their students every day. One or all of the suggestions listed above would make educators feel like their administrators are showing up for them. The current world of education is challenging, and teachers need support from administrators to decrease burnout.

Steiner, E. D., & Woo, A. (2021). Job-related stress threatens the teacher supply: Key Findings from the 2021 State of the U.S. Teacher Survey. *RAND Corporation*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-1.html



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T-CARE

THE CARING CONNECTION

EMPATHY:
THE BRIDGE TO CONNECTION

If we're being honest with ourselves, empathy is hard, and it requires more from us than we realize. Learning how to be truly empathetic is the first step in a long journey. Tough situations abound; so many individuals are currently experiencing a variety of traumas. As we learn more about empathy, we can begin to apply it to help those who need it – hoping others will apply it with us.

"We struggle to listen with empathy because our ways of making sense of events can interfere with our ability to see the world as it is." (Knight, 2016, p. 47).

What is true empathy?
Empathy is the act of setting aside our own experiences, thoughts, and emotions to sit with someone else as they experience their own challenges (Psychology Today, n.d.). Empathy does not require a response from us, an opinion, or a judgment. Empathy is, in part, the realization that all things are relative to the individuals experiencing them, and your experience is not relevant to theirs. Empathy is listening without processing for a solution.

Empathy with Colleagues
We each come to the career of education with different backgrounds, experiences, biases, and perspectives. Respecting one another without empathy can be an impossible task. Empathy requires that we not relegate someone's feelings about their daily challenges with students, families, or administrators to the drawer of irrelevance. We must practice empathy in order to not compare our challenges with that of our colleagues to determine worth or impact (Psychology Today, n.d.).

Empathy with Families
Empathy calls for us to suspend judgment and to make room for families to be heard (Psychology Today, n.d.). Oftentimes we comment on the deficiencies of families, noting that they were late to an appointment at school, only send junk food in their child's lunchbox, don't have a suitable bedtime routine, and the list goes on. We take these notes that we have made and use that information to determine whether they are a "good parent" or a "bad parent." We would feel better and act more professionally if we took time to practice empathy with the families with whom we work.

Empathy with Students
We may catch ourselves yelling at a spouse, being petty at the grocery store, honking the horn the second the light turns green, and being impatient with our colleagues. We are quick to justify our actions by identifying the cause of our frustration and giving ourselves a pass. When we enter our classrooms, we do not allow the same room for growth. We do not take a moment to consider that, perhaps, our students are dealing with external factors too and that our empathy could change our students' experience in school. Empathy requires that we take the time to stand in our students' shoes rather than rush to discipline.

Steps to Improve Your Empathy
Building a bridge between ourselves and others requires that we begin to practice empathy. Empathy is a skill that requires time, energy, and patience that we may feel we don't have, but, in reality, we can start with small changes.

- ***Listen-*** Just listen. That's all; nothing more. Don't think about a solution or a related experience, just listen. We know when others are not listening and we know when they are.
- ***Avoid Judgment-*** All experiences are relative, so don't make a judgment about whether someone should feel the way that they do about a particular situation. Let them feel the way that they do.
- ***Be Generous-*** Being generous with empathy won't cost you anything but time. Give time and space for others to be heard. Be the safe space that your colleagues, students, and students' families need.

Your bridge won't be built by practicing empathy once. It will require that you put in the time to develop an intentional practice with those around you. Practicing empathy with others will lead to the unexpected benefit of receiving it from yourself as well.

Psychology Today (n.d.). Empathy. Retrieved on July 10, 2022 from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/empathy

Knight, J. (2016). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work*. Solution Tree Press.

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T-CARE

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Critical Considerations When Working with Families from Other Cultures

The intersection of family experience with special education and cultural perception of disability should not be minimalized. Families and educators both hold important knowledge and context surrounding students, and as such, collaboration between families and educators leads to positive supports for students who receive special education services. Family involvement is a critical cornerstone in education protected by federal mandates. Despite its important role, educator collaboration with families is not always fully actualized. Let's face it – collaborating with families can be difficult! Collaborating with those families from different cultures is even more so. Consider why:

Special education is a multi-faceted system with different nuances and expectations that are sometimes difficult to understand. Though special education can be a difficult system for all families to understand, barriers in access are exacerbated for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. For example, the amount of time it may take for some families to understand the nuances of the American school system can vary due to differential experience with systems of education in other country settings (Francis et al., 2017). What is norm for some families may differ from the norm that is represented in American school settings, leading to misunderstandings in perception of caregiver involvement in education.

Especially problematic when considering these barriers is the potential for lack of educator awareness of cultural differences and experiences, which can result in educator misunderstanding or deficit perspectives of families (Francis et al., 2017). It is vital that all educators are made aware of these differences and barriers. Developing this awareness is one way support and access to special education can be provided to families and students. There are many areas for educators to develop awareness of when working with families from diverse culturally and linguistic backgrounds; some of the key areas are:

- **Models of Disability** – Different modes of disability exist across global settings, and these models are influential in how an individual may perceive disability. In the United States, it is not uncommon to view disability through the medical model or the social model of disability. These models influence the way that special education exists across the country. When considering the diverse makeup of American public-school classrooms, it stands to reason that some families may view disability through a different model. For example, some may view disability through a medical model and consider that a disability should be "corrected" through medical interventions. Others may see disability through the Religious-Moral model, considering its presence to be an act of god, or in some cases – a punishment. These models influence the way that individuals view disability, and it is important when communicating with families about disability that educators are mindful that the model in which they understand disability may vary greatly from that of the caretakers of students in their classroom. Culturally responsive care and awareness of these differences should therefore be developed in an attempt to support both student and family access to special education.
- **Language** – Language is one means through which an individual comes to understand the world. When considering linguistic differences, it is important to also note that in addition to different mastery of different language, language is also filled with nuance. Further, language can be helpful in developing an understanding of a culture. Nuance in language is one way that collaboration can be further impacted. Not everything is fully translatable, and therefore it is important to consider how to best support families by minimizing language barriers. Consider, for example, parent procedural safeguards in special education. These documents are often written at university, graduate, or professional levels of readability (Mandic-Gomez et al., 2012), and some of the legal terms and jargon may not be easily translatable to another language. Though these documents offer important information about caregiver rights in special education, the language used within these documents may be inaccessible to families of students with disabilities, especially those who are speakers of other languages.
- **Global Systems of Education** – Different systems of education exist across global settings. When working with culturally and linguistically diverse families, particularly from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, it is vital that educators understand how the model of education in the United States may be unfamiliar to families from other country settings. It is also important that educators do not consider one system of education as superior to another. Differences exist across different cultures and countries, and these differences are appropriate in different cultural contexts. For example, different countries practice inclusive education in different ways. Some do not implement this model of education in school settings at all, and other areas of the globe may not have funding for infrastructure for special education programs. Families unfamiliar with inclusion therefore might require support in understanding how students with disabilities receive services in American classroom settings.

Francis, G., Haines, S. J., & Nagro, S. A. (2017). Developing relationships with immigrant families: Learning by asking the right questions. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 50*(2), 95–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059917720778

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T-CARE

What Really Works

The Future of Technology, Access, and Equity in Education

The COVID-19 Pandemic demonstrated the urgent need and growing reliance on distance learning and educational technologies; there was an immediate need for teachers to deliver quality distance learning – most of whom had no experience on how to do so. As we (quickly) found, during the shift to emergency online learning at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, different modes of access exist within the educational system. For example, these may include a Traditional Model (home-to-school), Distance Learning (services or learning through a mobile classroom, or through online learning), or School-to-School (K-12 school partnerships). Students and educators may benefit from different modes of access to education and services moving forward, and technologies may be used to support learners in these different modes.

Traditional Model of Education

While most educators and students have returned to the classroom, the pandemic has shed light on the technical challenges that many students have – especially those from underrepresented populations. For example, a student from a low-socioeconomic area may not have access to reliable internet at home due to financial limitations but may have access to in-person schools. The student may have access to broadband at school, but still needs teachers that are trained in providing evidence-based technology and/or special education services in the inclusive environment.

Technology Solutions: While technology is often used through games and software programs (e.g. *Read 180, Lexia*, etc.), technology has the ability to also increase efficiency for educators and students. For example, the app *Quizlet* has been found to be effective for the use of keyword mnemonics, with data supporting its use to teach academic literacy for both general and special education students. These digital flashcards can be created once, and then shared across devices for all students – saving both teachers and students valuable time. Similar apps can be downloaded onto devices and brought home by students.

Distance Learning

At the start of the pandemic, educators often relied on synchronous online learning to teach students (usually through Zoom, Teams or Meets). While this provided an opportunity to quickly engage with students, many also found challenges with this modality. Teachers found that for some students, online learning was beneficial due to long commutes and work responsibilities at home. However, educators also discovered, that these same students did not always have access to reliable broadband internet and needed distance learning that utilized low data or asynchronous modalities.

Technology Solutions: For distance learning, recording and listening to podcasts, recorded lessons, vlogs (Video Blogs), Digital Stories, and other forms of asynchronous learning may be a successful method of content delivery. Each of these forms of technological learning strategies help bridge the digital divide while also provides space for engaging lesson plans. Similarly, there are solutions that meet in the middle of traditional and distance learning modalities. Two of these solutions may be in-person learning through a Mobile Classroom or Satellite Location. Establishing mobile or set locations in the rural or urban communities may allow additional learning opportunities that compliment online learning, as well support our students' food, social, medical, and mental health service needs that are typically provided in the in-person setting.

School-to-School

While many schools and districts have traditionally brought speakers and consultants into the school, administrators and higher educators should develop and re-establish partnerships with local universities and teacher education programs. These relationships not only provide placements for student teachers and recruitment for new teachers, but can also provide valuable opportunities for innovative professional development; learning new interventions and evidence-based practices are key factors in closing the research to practice gap. Similarly, schools and districts can partner to share strategies and frameworks, such as technology implementation, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). By collaborating, administrators, teachers, and staff can save valuable time and resources to support an effective implementation.

Technology Solutions: In school districts that may not have the budget or resources to purchase Assistive Technology (AT) or Instructional Technology (IT), sharing technological hardware through a regional repository is a strategy that shows promise. By using a check out system, through apps or *Google Sheets*, educators have the ability to borrow the technology that best serves students' needs. Relatedly, regions can then also share training and professional development.

As schools have returned to in-person teaching and learning, educators can use the lessons from the past few years to continue to provide and improve access to education and services for our students – especially our underserved populations. Technology can, and should, still provide access for many students to academic content. As we define the new normal of the educational system, technological solutions can continue to provide access to learning for all students, regardless of how and where that learning takes place.

Tal Slemrod, Ph.D., Dr. Slemrod has 16 years of experience in education and is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at California State University, Chico.

Admin Corner

Where Have All the Teachers Gone?

As teacher shortages rage across the United States, many are contemplating why. Of course, the usual culprit to all our woes is the pandemic. What about the inevitable technology divide between "digital immigrants" and "digital natives?" The Florida Department of Education predicts over 9,000 unfilled teaching positions for 2022. Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) currently has over 200 vacancies. Certainly, today's hyperbolic political discourse drives teachers to ponder if this is the right field for them. A recent survey of over 4,600 educators by *AdoptAClassroom* (2022) found that 71% of teachers are spending more out-of-pocket money for classroom materials than in previous years. Increased workload, inclusive classrooms, and amplified socializing responsibilities are being thrust upon on our classroom teachers. Finally, let's not overlook the obvious lack of financial reward teachers' experience that does not parallel with other professions that require a university degree.

I was interested in exploring this conundrum. Consequently, I conducted a study at my university in California. The purpose of this study was to investigate if an early classroom teaching experience might persuade or dissuade high school students' prospective attitudes regarding teaching as a future career. Research advocates that a quality teacher preparation program measured by teacher licensure is a leading indicator in teaching effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, how do schools attract capable young students into the teaching profession? The United States spends 800 billion dollars each year to employ nearly three million teachers who educate more than 49.5 million elementary and secondary public school children (NCES, 2022). Colleges of education consistently seek the most qualified candidates for their various teacher preparation pathways. The fundamental question remains: what characteristics predict teacher effectiveness and hence guide institutions of higher learning as to whom to recruit? Is there a way to know who could become a strong teacher prior to students entering teacher preparation programs?

In my study, 32 high school students taught five social studies lessons, tied to the common core standards, to elementary school children, grades K-5. The high school students were surveyed to ascertain their interest in becoming teachers. The survey also was designed to determine if their attitude toward teaching had changed based upon their experience after teaching these five lessons. (The lessons were created by Junior Achievement as part of their High School Heroes Program). Findings suggested that the classroom teaching experiences had a positive influence on the high school students' attitude regarding pursuing a teaching career. Initially, when asked if they ever considered becoming a teacher, only 25% had a positive response, whereas after teaching these lessons, 44% identified teaching as a possible career option.

As more classroom teachers leave the profession, either by choice (bureaucratic frustrations, such as curricular limitations or fear of gun violence) or through predictable retirement, we must create an accessible and attractive pipeline into education. Perhaps we might consider guiding high school students (in all fields of study) to teach children? This could be accomplished through persuasive options such as high school elective course credit, earning college units, or even financial incentives. If we are serious about alleviating the teacher shortage (both now and in the future) and providing a creative and effective education for our nation's children to maximize their preparation for exciting careers, we must begin to think outside the box in our recruitment strategies.

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