Collaborative Practices in Special Education: An Exploratory Study

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Collaborative Practices in Special Education: An Exploratory Study
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Introduction and Purpose
• Professional collaboration in special education is essential for student success (Barnes & Turner, 2000)
• However, IDEA legislation does not guide how such collaboration should take place (Pub. L. 108–446)
• The Conceptual Model for Collaboration (CMC) created by Czuleger and colleagues (2016) described professional collaborative practices of a transdisciplinary team at a special education center

Design
• Quantitative exploratory design - online survey
• Participants from a SELPA in northern California, n=27 (~30% response rate)

Participators
Special Education Teacher
Behavior Therapist
Speech Language Pathologist
Occupational Therapist
Registered Nurse
AT Specialist
Social Worker
Vision Specialist
Administrator

The purpose of this study was to examine the CMC in a broader context

Participants

Results

Question 1: What are common facilitators and barriers to collaboration and how does it take place?

Facilitators of Collaboration

Barriers to Collaboration

Methods of Collaboration

Question 2: What is the frequency of collaboration in different classroom types and age ranges?

Frequency of Collaboration Per Classroom Type

Frequency of Collaboration Per Age Range

Facilitators
Sensory Strategies

Barriers

Question 3: How much are sensory-motor programs prioritized in different classroom types and across age ranges?

Prioritization of Sensory-Motor Programming in Different Classrooms

Prioritization of Sensory-Motor Programming in Different Age Ranges

Implications for Practice

Team members are committed to collaboration for (1) student outcomes and (2) professional development. Suggested strategies include:

- Plan face to face meetings
- Use “virtual” methods of communication (e.g., email, texting, Google docs, etc.)
- Promote your professional scope of practice as part of daily service delivery and make an effort to respect and understand other professional roles
- Partner with administrators to facilitate best practices in collaboration
- Prioritize rapport building as part of professional development, both formally and informally
- Collaborate with OT to build classroom based sensory motor programming

Discussion

• Over 80% of participants agreed on common facilitators to collaboration
• Lack of time, large caseloads, and bad rapport are strong barriers to collaboration
• Most collaboration takes place in IEP meetings, through email and text messaging
• Frequency of collaboration is high in all classroom types and across all age ranges
• Respect and understanding of OT has supported prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both the student and the classroom equally

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References
(Czuleger et al., 2016) Collaborative Practices in Special Education: An Exploratory Study

Moderate correlation between understanding of OT and the prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both classrooms, $r = .52, p < .05$; and students, $r = .49, p < .05$

97% of participants agree that good collaboration leads to improved student outcomes and professional development

Moderate correlation between frequency of collaboration and the prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both classrooms, $r = .56, p < .05$; and students, $r = .48, p < .05$

Validated by RightAnswer.com 92% accuracy

Highly trained human coders

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