Collaborative Practices in Special Education: An Exploratory Study
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Introduction and Purpose

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

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

However, IDEA legislation does not guide professional collaboration in special education. Barnes and Turner (2000) recommended a collaborative approach to school-based sensorimotor programs. Observations from a SELPA in northern California, n=27 (~30% response rate)

Participants

Participates from a SELPA in northern California, n=27 (~30% response rate)

Design

Quantitative exploratory design - online survey

Results

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

Facilitators of Collaboration

- Frequency of Collaboration
- Time
- Distance
- Facilitators

Barriers to Collaboration

- Frequency of Collaboration
- Time
- Distance
- Facilitators

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

Frequency of Collaboration Per Classroom Type

- Classroom Type
- Frequency

Frequency of Collaboration Per Age Range

- Age Range
- Frequency

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

- Classroom Type
- Prioritization

Prioritization of Sensory-Motor Programming in Different Age Ranges

- Age Range
- Prioritization

Quotes

Sensory Strategies: Facilitators

- My students need to find and utilize strategies that help them self-regulate and manage their over or under activity/attention/internal sensation in not only my class, but generalized over all settings of their lives.

- Respect among members of the team - you don’t have to be besties, but you do have to respect each other!

- When members of the team do not value the contribution of other disciplines. When team members see tasks/challenges as “an OT thing” or “just behavior” or “speech issue” rather than a combination.

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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Limitations

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• Respect and understanding of OT has supported prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both the student and the classroom equally

• Plan face to face meetings

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• 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

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• Collaborate with OT to build classroom based sensory motor programming

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

Moderate correlation between understanding of OT and the prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both classrooms, $r = 0.52, p < .05$; and students, $r = .49, p < .05$

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

Selected References
