An Investigation of Collaboration Among School Professionals in Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Exceptionalities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate and report the perceptions, practices, and needs of educational professionals as they relate to service delivery to culturally and linguistically diverse and exceptional (CLDE) students. For this study, the Collaborative Survey for teachers working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional students (CS-CLDE) was developed and completed by a sample of 125 educational professionals (25 English as a Second Language teachers, 25 general educators, 25 counselors, 25 speech pathologists, and 25 special education teachers) in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Quantitative data were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and frequencies. Qualitative data were analyzed and formulated into themes and then into clusters. The majority of the participants' responses indicated that they had the training and skills to work with CLDE students. However, they did not know the roles, responsibilities, and practices of other school professionals who worked with CLDE students, they did not receive appropriate training on ways to collaborate, and they did not have adequate support from the administration in order to collaborate with other school professionals in serving CLDE students. The qualitative analysis indicated that there is a need for professional training on collaboration, support from the administration, and time for collaboration, resources related to CLDE students, and information on the other school professionals' roles and responsibilities.

Introduction

As we start the new millennium, it is necessary to be aware of the changing demographics in our society. The implications of these changing demographics will have a major impact on our educational system (Adler, 1991; Peters-Johnson, 1992). As more bilingual and minority children enter our schools, we must learn to address their specific needs. In 1998, an estimated 1.5 million minority children were identified as having special needs (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2002). Researchers note that minority students are significantly more likely to be identified with learning disabilities (Oswald, Coutinho, & Best, 2002). This overidentification has been found to be correlated with educational professionals' lack of knowledge on issues and stresses occurring in English-language instruction. A lack of knowledge on issues related to English language acquisition has led some educators to mistakenly label certain language-minority students as learning or emotionally disabled (Baca & Cervantes, 1998).

Often, it is difficult for educators to determine if a child's difficulties in the classroom are a result of an exceptionality or the result of issues related to second language acquisition. Ovando and Collier (1985) as well as Baca and Cervantes (1998) underscore the need to focus on the overrepresentation of learners with English language learners (ELLs) in special education classes, as well as the underrepresentation of ELLs receiving special-needs accommodations. Additional current research supports their concerns (Battle, 1998; Roseberry-McKibbin & Eicholtz, 1994; Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Adler, 1991).

On a federal level, the U.S. Department of Education has been interested in the issue of the disproportionality of ELLs in special education classes. Due to the increasing number of language-minority students in U.S. schools during the past decade, there has been a push to combine bilingual and special education to ensure all students' needs are met (Maldonado, 1994).

The current collage of cultures represented in today's diverse classrooms is having an impact on educational service providers. Given the mandates of the Education for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), inclusion requires the collaboration of educational professionals in order to provide equitable opportunities to students who are culturally and linguistically diverse and exceptional (CLDE). Those serving CLDE students are intrinsically attracted to the logic of collaborative, inclusive educational service delivery. Collaboration in a school setting can occur among a variety of advocates for the children, including general educators, special education teachers, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, interpreters, administrators, parents, and other professionals serving students with special needs.

However, professionals of a variety of disciplines tend to socially divide themselves (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). Infrequent communication between mainstream educators and other educational professionals fractures

the educational experience provided for CLDE students. As professionals continue to work in isolation, policy makers, school district officials, and educational professionals are becoming increasingly aware that this type of fragmented aid for various groups of students ultimately leads to inequity of service, and therefore inequities in achievement (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995).

The present research attempts to look at collaboration between and among professionals in the school environment. Specifically, general educator, special education teachers, ESL teachers, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, and other professionals are examined to understand the extent of their ability and desire to work together.

Reform in service delivery to CLDE students is necessary. The initiative to begin such reform requires substantive support from the professionals themselves. In the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), there exists support for a collaborative effort to bring all children up to high academic achievement standards. Though the philosophical foundations for collaboration have been paved, many educational professionals are unaware of the roles their colleagues serve in the education of their students and how to coordinate services with them.

In discussing collaboration and inclusive practices, there is a dearth of research on best practices as they affect CLDE students. Fradd (1992) states that "effective collaboration models exist . . . but few of these models include the cultural and linguistic diversity that often complicate the collaborative process" (p. 1). For professional development training programs to be successful, it is essential that teachers develop an in-depth understanding of the influence of culture and language on students' academic performance to distinguish between actual learning problems and cultural differences (Utley, Delquadri, Obiakor, & Mims, 2000).

Research indicates several conditions that prevent effective, collaborative instruction of CLDE students. Root (1994) states that "many of us work in settings where we do not have ready access to consultation, guidance, or referral advice and special needs professionals" (p. 1). The Council for Exceptional Children reports that special education teachers, in many instances, work in isolation instead of collaborating with general or other special educators. As a result, they feel powerless to effect change (*Council for Exceptional Children*, 2000). According to Fradd (1992), some of the barriers to collaboration are due to the compartmentalization of federal funds for services and research, which leads to fragmentation of instruction and promotion of competition among the funding recipients. Fradd indicates that, though most educators serving CLDE students have not received training in collaboration, many collaborative cross-disciplinary programs are being developed. However, studies have indicated that professionals feel unprepared to fully collaborate with their peers (Baca, 2000).

Harris and Evans (1995) conducted a study of the challenges of putting an inclusive program into place. Similarly, Walter-Thomas, Bryant, and Land

(1996) conducted a study of inclusion and teaming in order to assess the collaboration between general education and special education staff. Findings from the Walter-Thomas, Bryant, and Land study indicated that students with disabilities developed higher self-images and recognized their own academic and social strengths when included in the mainstream classroom and serviced by teams of educational professionals. Students who were identified as low achieving showed academic and social skill improvements. The staff reported professional growth, personal support, and enhanced teaching motivation.

Stainback and Stainback (1992) underlined the need to implement a definition of collaboration that would be helpful to the classroom teacher. They faulted the common practice of forming teacher assistance teams that attempt to provide intervention support to the general educator. Often, the team offers plenty of expert advice, but due to time constraints, a lack of commitment to collaboration, or too many teachers requiring aid, there is a lack of support for implementation.

Furthermore, teachers of CLDE students report that they are not prepared in teacher preparation programs with information on how to serve their culturally and linguistically diverse students (*ADVANCE*, 2000). Juarez (1983) implies that there is a critical need for teacher educators and educational specialists to reevaluate their roles and responsibilities in addressing the needs of CLDE students.

Of interest to this discussion is the literature addressing the difficulty in achieving true collaboration due to educators' role differences. Pugach and Johnson (1989) believe that specialists have a difficult time relinquishing their role as "experts" when they are involved in a consultative relationship. For the purposes of assisting the school staff in the implementation of a comprehensive inclusionary program for CLDE students, team members serving CLDE students must assess their skills and knowledge. As Kuamoo (2002) outlines, each member of a collaborative team has specific knowledge of his or her discipline, and transdisciplinary teams integrate these areas. For example, a bilingual or ESL teacher can share knowledge regarding the development of language skills and language instruction methodology. Counselors and psychologists can be valuable because of their knowledge and skills as human development specialists, and their expertise in conducting small-group counseling and large-group interventions (Ponterotto & Casas, 1987; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994). School staff and instructors can profit from what mainstream teachers can add by means of performance information and knowledge of measures and benchmarks. Special education teachers are experienced in designing and implementing behavior management programs and strategies for effective instruction to students with special needs. Speech pathologists contribute their knowledge of speech and language development and can provide insight into the identification of learning disabilities in language- minority students. Transdisciplinary teaming requires team members to build on the strengths and the needs of their particular populations.

Collaborative efforts have been positive and successful when the nature of the collaboration is guided by the needs of the school community (Schlessman-Frost, 1994). Harkalau (1994) confirms the notion that interdisciplinary collaborative teams are necessary to ensure success for a variety of students. The separation that exists among professionals working with CLDE students makes it difficult for these students to compete on equal academic footing with their mainstream counterparts (Cummins, 1982; Collier, 1987).

The purpose of this study was to investigate collaboration among school professionals and educators working with CLDE students. Numerous sources document the increasing numbers of CLDE individuals in the United States. Passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has highlighted the need for integrated, teacher-driven, long-term professional development for all staff involved in the education of CLDE students. This study investigates the perceptions, practices, and needs of educational professionals as they relate to the service delivery of CLDE students. Given the mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1992), inclusion requires effective collaboration of educational professionals in order to provide equitable opportunities to CLDE students. Educators, as well as administrators, can benefit from the results of this study in developing effective professional development plans.

Methodology

Utilizing a nonexperimental descriptive design, the researchers in this study collected information that can be used to generalize to a larger population of educators. Four questions were addressed in this study:

1. Do educational professionals have the skills and academic training necessary to support their educational service delivery to CLDE students?
2. Do educational professionals have knowledge of the roles, responsibilities, and practices of educational professionals related to their service delivery to CLDE students in their schools?
3. Do educational professionals receive the necessary training in ways to collaborate with other educational professionals in order to meet the needs of CLDE students?
4. Do school districts, educational professionals, and administrators in the metropolitan Washington, DC, public schools support collaboration among school professionals in their educational service delivery to CLDE students?

Participants and Sampling Procedures

This study used a sample of 125 educational professionals. The researchers contacted the professionals through district leaders, school principals, and school administrators to receive permission to attend staff and department

meetings to distribute the survey. The first 25 surveys submitted from each of the five disciplines were chosen for analysis. The sample included elementary, middle, and high school educators from four major school districts in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The 125 respondents were general educators (25), special education teachers (25), ESL teachers (25), speech pathologists (25), and school counselors (25) from schools with a population of greater than 25% language-minority students.

Instrumentation

To explore the question of educators' perceptions, practices, and needs as they relate to service delivery to CLDE students, the national survey of public school clinicians conducted by Roseberry-McKibbin and Eicholtz (1994) provided the researchers with some format and substance with which to prepare a new survey. Fink's *Survey Kit* (1995) was used as a guide to develop the survey. The researchers developed the Collaborative Survey for teachers working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional students (CS-CLDE) for this investigation.

The survey had a quantitative and a qualitative component (see Appendix). In the first part of the quantitative component of the CS-CLDE survey, participants were asked to provide demographic information. In the second part of the quantitative portion of the survey, participants were asked to respond to questions using a Likert scale from 1 to 5 with 1 = very frequent to 5 = very infrequent. Respondents were asked questions that indicated the extent of their understanding and familiarity with each other's roles, responsibilities, and practices.

In the qualitative component of the survey, participants were asked to respond to three open-ended questions: a) How would you describe your philosophy in working with CLDE students, b) how would you define "collaboration" among school professionals who work with CLDE students, and c) what kind of support do you need from other school professionals in your work with CLDE students?

A Cronbach Alpha was used to calculate scale reliability for our instrument. All items on the survey were found to have an alpha of $> .70$. The overall average reliability found for the instrument, based on the sample in the study, was $> .70$ (.7603). Litwin (1995) states, "By convention, alpha should be .70 or higher to retain an item in a scale" (p. 1). This suggests that the instrument was, therefore, appropriate for collecting data on collaboration among public school professionals.

Content validity of the instrument was established through expert review by three statisticians who reviewed for content clarity, bias, and conciseness. The instrument was piloted with a small sample of educational professionals representative of the larger sample. The pilot sample provided information regarding clarity, ambiguity in sentences, time for completion, directions, and any other issue related to the survey.

Data Analysis

Results

As a part of the quantitative data analysis, survey responses were analyzed using descriptive analysis measures. The researchers transformed several variables to create four composite variables to answer the four research questions. The composite variable consisted of grouping answers to questions into one composite score in order to investigate each specific research question. This was done because each of the survey questions was designed to answer the overarching research questions related to creating effective professional development for educational professionals.

To address the first research question, "Do educational professionals have the skills and academic training necessary to support their educational service delivery to CLDE students?" the survey responses to Questions a though f were grouped together (see Appendix). Participants answered questions related to their own knowledge of a second language. In addition, they were asked to rate the extent of their knowledge related to their students' backgrounds and language acquisition. For the six questions, the highest possible composite score that could be obtained was 30; six questions multiplied by a score of 5 (very infrequent) on the Likert scale equals a value of 30. The lowest score that could be obtained was 6; six questions multiplied by a score of 1 (very frequent) on the Likert scale equals a value of 6. Therefore, the middle score for the a through f composite score would be 18, which could be obtained from six questions multiplied by a score of 3 and is the middle value of the Likert scale. Participants who scored more than 18 were represented by a 2 for yes (indicative of the frequency with which they experience a certain situation), and responses that totaled less than 18 were represented by a 1 for no (indicative of the infrequency with which they experience a certain situation).

To address the second research question, "Do educational professionals have knowledge of the roles, responsibilities, and differences in practices of educational professionals related to their service delivery to CLDE students in their schools?" the survey responses to Questions i and j were grouped together. For the two questions, the highest possible number that could be obtained was 10; two questions multiplied by a score of 5 (very infrequent) on the Likert scale equals a value of 10. The lowest score that could be obtained was 2; two questions multiplied by a score of 1 (very frequent) on the Likert scale equals a value of 2. Therefore, the middle score would be 6. Participants who scored more than 6 were represented by a 2 for yes; scores 6 or less were indicated by a 1 for no. Again, yes or no representations indicated the frequency and infrequency of experiencing the situation.

To address the third research question, "Do educational professionals receive the appropriate training needed on ways to collaborate with other educational professionals in order to meet the needs of CLDE students?" the survey responses to Question k was analyzed alone as it related to the

issue of training. For this question, the highest possible score was 5 (very infrequent) on the Likert scale, the lowest was 1 (very frequent), and the middle score was 3. Participants who scored higher than 3 were represented by a 2 for yes (frequent experience of the situation); responses of 3 or lower were indicated by a 1 for no (infrequent experience).

In regard to the fourth research question—"Do school districts, educational professionals, and administrators in Washington, DC, area public schools support collaboration among school professionals in their educational service delivery to CLDE students?"—participants responded to questions related to whether they felt there was adequate time and support for collaboration. To analyze the survey responses, Questions l, m, o, and r were grouped together. For the four questions, the highest possible score that could be obtained was 20; four questions multiplied by a score of 5 (very infrequent) on the Likert scale equals a value of 20. The lowest score that could be obtained was 4; four questions multiplied by a score of 1 (very frequent) on the Likert scale equals a value of 4. The middle score for survey responses would be 12. Participants who scored more than 12 were represented by a 2 for yes (frequent experience); responses of 12 or less were indicated by a 1 for no (infrequent experience).

Crosstabs were used for each occupational grouping (e.g., general educators, ESL teachers, special education teachers, counselors, and speech language pathologists) to determine the frequency distribution for each of the four questions. To analyze qualitative data, the researchers looked at the 125 surveys to identify recurring themes. Significant statements were extracted from the original surveys, and central or most frequent themes were identified. These themes were arrived at by reading, rereading, and reflecting upon the statements of the respondents on the survey instrument. The formulated themes were organized into charts that the researchers used to organize their findings. Researchers then grounded these themes in the previous literature on collaboration among professionals who work with CLDE students (e.g. Clair & Adger, 1999; Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Harris & Evans, 1995; Fradd, 1992).

Themes were organized into clusters. These clusters represented responses common to the majority of the subjects' descriptions. The researchers referred back to the original responses in order to validate the themes. Each description was reexamined to see if there was anything in the original that was not accounted for in the cluster of themes, and whether the cluster proposed something that was not in the original.

Analyzing the responses to Research Question 1, researchers found that 24% of the participants' responses indicated that they did not have the training and skills necessary to support their educational service delivery to CLDE students. Crosstab analysis revealed that of the respondents who indicated they did not have the necessary training and skills necessary to reach CLDE students, 30% were general educators, 10% were ESL teachers, 16.7% were special education teachers, 20% were counselors, and 23.3% were speech

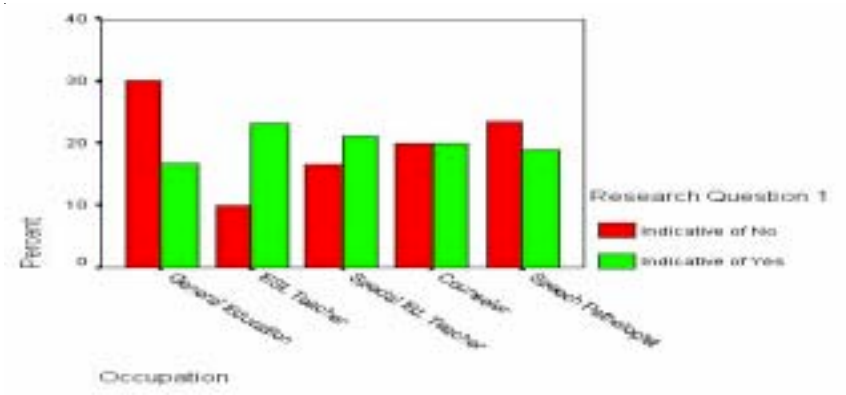


Figure 1. Crosstab Analysis of Research Question 1.

language pathologists. Of the 76% respondents who indicated that they did have the training and skills necessary to support CLDE students, 16.8% were general educators, 23.2% were ESL teachers, 21.1% were special education teachers, 20% were counselors, and 18.9% were speech language pathologists. Crosstab analysis of Research Question 1 appears in Figure 1.

In the qualitative data, the need for staff training and development was one of the central themes extracted from the analysis of the participants' responses regarding their philosophy in working with CLDE students, their definition of collaboration, and the support they needed to collaborate. To support the 76% who responded that they felt they did have the skills and academic training necessary, responses from the demographic data revealed the following: 43.2% of the respondents could speak at least one other

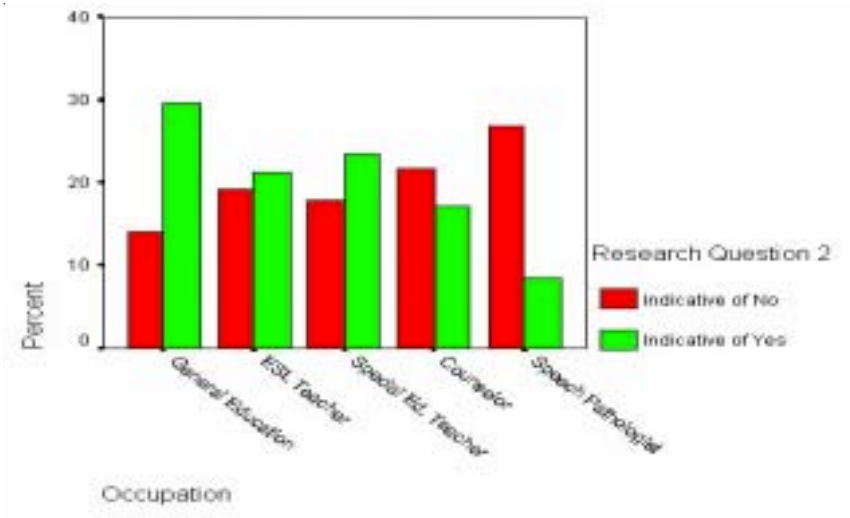


Figure 2. Crosstab Analysis of Research Question 2.

language, 42.4% could read at least one other language, and 36% could write in at least one other language. Only 6.4% of the respondents had degrees in areas other than their educational specialty.

In regards to Research Question 2, 62.4% of the participants indicated that they did not know the roles, responsibilities, and practices of the other professionals who worked with CLDE students. Crosstab analysis show that of these respondents, 14.1% were general educators, 19.2% were ESL teachers, 17.9 % were special education teachers, 21.8% were counselors, and 26.9% were speech language pathologists. Of the 37.6% who did know the roles, responsibilities, and practices of other professionals working with CLDE students, 29.8% were general educators, 21.3% were ESL teachers, 23.4% were special education teachers, 17% were counselors, and 8.5% were speech language pathologists. Crosstab analysis of Research Question 2 appears in Figure 2.

In qualitative data, participants from all five groups expressed the need to obtain information, materials, and other resources related to serving CLDE students. They suggested that they respect other professionals' expertise, knowledge, roles, and responsibilities. One of the respondents asked for "more in-service training regarding CLDE students." Some quotes that supported the themes were:

1. "General educators need to ask what approaches will work with CLDE students."
2. "General educators should be aware that our role as special educators is not to do classroom work that is not finished or too difficult, but instead to address the objectives on the IEP [Individualized Education Program]."

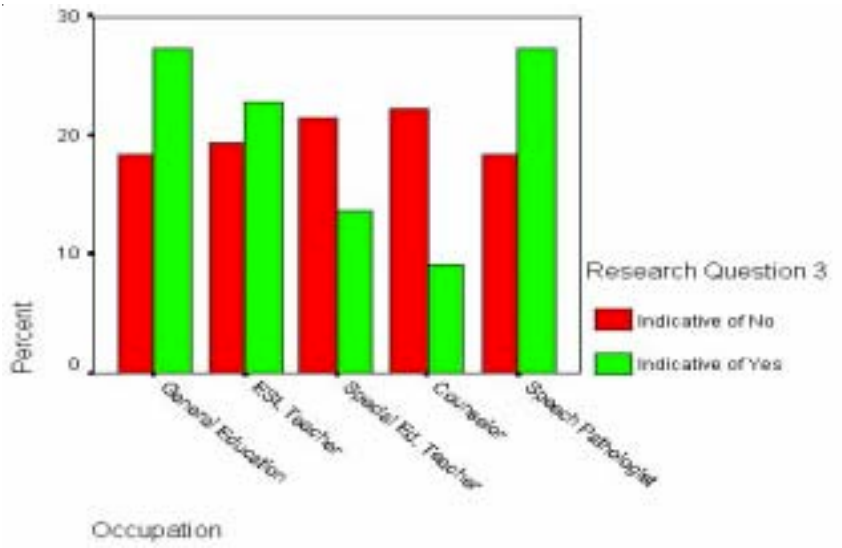


Figure 3. Crosstab Analysis of Research Question 3.

3. "I think teachers who work with CLDE students do not share their experience."
4. "I'd like to know more from LD [learning disability] specialists to better meet the needs of students."

Participants' responses in regards to Research Question 3 indicated that 82.4% did not have the appropriate training on ways to collaborate. Crosstab analysis indicated that of these respondents, 18.4% were general educators, 19.4% were ESL teachers, 21.4% were special education teachers, 22.3% were counselors, and 18.4% were speech language pathologists. Of the 17.6% respondents who indicated that they did have the appropriate training on ways to collaborate, 27.3% were general educators, 22.7% were ESL teachers, 13.6% were special education teachers, 9.1% were counselors, and 27.3% were speech language pathologists. Crosstab analysis of Research Question 3 appears in Figure 3.

In the qualitative data collected, respondents indicated training and support for the entire staff is necessary to understand and implement collaboration. The following statements supported these themes:

1. "General educators and other staff need to better understand the benefits of collaboration."
2. "You cannot learn in books what you can learn from others' experiences. We need to be supported with time to collaborate."
3. "I would like to know the best resources and methods to reach all my students. Time for staff development and training sessions on collaboration might help."

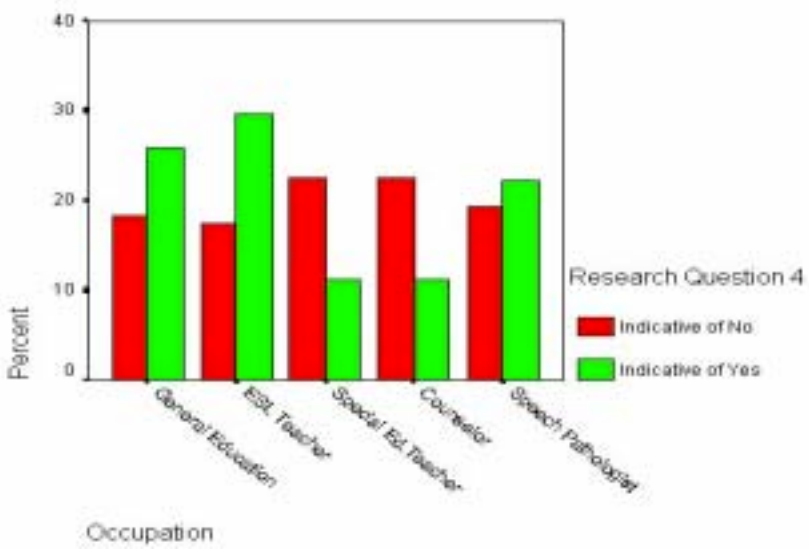


Figure 4. Crosstab Analysis of Research Question 4.

4. "Professional development sessions devoted to supported collaboration would help all educators working with special populations learn the benefits of working together and how to do it to best reach the students."

Participants' responses in regards to Research Question 4 indicated that 78.4% do not receive enough administrative support in order to collaborate with other school professionals in serving CLDE students. Crosstab analysis revealed that of these respondents, 18.4% were general educators, 17.3% were ESL teachers, 22.4% were special education teachers, 22.4% were counselors, and 19.4% were speech language pathologists. Of the 21.6% respondents who indicated that they do receive the support needed to collaborate, 25.9% were general educators, 29.6% were ESL teachers, 11.1% were special education teachers, 11.1% were counselors, and 22.2% were speech language pathologists. Crosstab analysis of Research Question 4 appears in Figure 4.

The qualitative data revealed the following themes: need for administrative support, staff training, and development on collaboration; need for information on where to locate resources and specific information related to needs of CLDE students; and access to related materials. Some specific resources needed in schools are translators, floating subs, reduced class size, help from bilingual special education specialists, and time for planning and collaboration. Respect for each other's knowledge, roles, and responsibilities and willingness from all staff and administrators to collaborate in order to meet the needs of CLDE students were two other themes cited. Some quotes from the participants that highlight these themes suggest a need for:

1. "On-going staff development of effective strategies for all professionals working with CLDE students."
2. "Time to plan collaborative strategies."
3. "[Administration support for] efforts to educate and collaborate."
4. "Respect for the special expertise I have to bring to the CLDE students' education."
5. "Flexibility in scheduling to allow me to have access to CLDE students."
6. "Sharing concerns, successful strategies, and goals for specific students."
7. "Access to information about language and cultural issues on a wide range of students."
8. "Willingness to collaborate."
9. "Training and time to collaborate."

Conclusion

The findings of this study support previous research on collaboration among school personnel. This research indicates that educators understand the need for collaborating with each other when serving CLDE students, but their responses indicate that they do not know the roles of other school

professionals. In addition, they do not have the time and the support from the administration to collaborate. Finally, they do not receive adequate training on ways to collaborate.

Research has indicated that ESL children can benefit when professionals collaborate to provide services for them (Murphy, DeEsch, & Strein, 1998; Ortiz & Wilkinson, 1991), but many practitioners feel unprepared to deal with this issue (Baca, 2000; West & Cannon, 1988; Harris & Evans, 1995; Harris, 1999). District leaders, principals, and teacher educators must have current knowledge about trends in effective professional development and the education of English language learners. According to Clair and Adger (1999), "In order to make teaching and learning a priority, principals must safeguard teacher and student time, engage the entire staff in taking responsibility for the education of English language learners, model collegial relationships with teachers and students, and participate actively in the learning community of the school" (p. 2). Furthermore, Clair's 1993 study (in Clair and Adger, 1999) found, "Teachers need to understand basic constructs of bilingualism and second language development, the nature of language proficiency, the role of the first language and culture in learning, and the demands that mainstream education places on culturally and linguistically diverse students" (p. 2). Fradd (1992) calls for the establishment of a formal transdisciplinary teaming approach that could lead to "a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere that may lead to informal collaboration in the future" (p. 2). Without training or professional development, Harris and Evans (1995) argue that general educator should not be expected to willingly accept inclusive practices. They caution not to assume that teachers already possess collaboration competencies, which are key ingredients in implementing effective inclusion programs.

A report in *Teaching Exceptional Children,* titled "Bright Futures for Exceptional Learners: An Action Agenda to Achieve Quality Conditions for Teaching and Learning" (2000), utilized data collected from hundreds of special and general educator, administrators, parents, national databases, and published research studies and found that some principal conditions that prevent special education teachers from offering effective, high-quality instruction are: inadequate administrative and district support for educators; ambiguous and competing responsibilities that confuse potential collaborators as to their role in the process; isolation of special educators. poorly prepared new special and general educators; and increased demand for well-qualified special educators.

Trends toward collaboration in the schools among general educators, administrators, and other school professionals raise policy and advocacy issues regarding the education of CLDE students. Collaboration in schools among special education teachers, ESL teachers, speech pathologists, counselors, and other school personnel could produce effective service delivery to meet the diverse needs of CLDE students.

The challenge to collaboration in CLDE students' education is to develop democratic, ethical processes with multicultural understanding and respect. ESL specialists can help other school professionals gain a greater understanding of second language acquisition issues that influence the academic performance of CLDE students. Counselors can provide multicultural training to school staff in terms of how culture affects the social behavior of CLDE students.

However, collaboration efforts may result in conflict between educators, if not done carefully. To avoid these potential areas of conflict, it is important for the collaborative team to establish democratic processes of collaboration and have a clear understanding of the roles, expertise, and responsibilities of each team member. As Kuamoo (2002) reports, this process starts with information gathering on the specific needs, interests, or expertise in each of the disciplines. In addition, time for collaboration should be allowed by the school administration.

Finally, more in-service training is needed on multicultural education issues and on ways to collaborate with other school professionals in serving CLDE students. Effective in-service training can be planned by conducting a pre-training survey at the beginning of the school year.

Collaboration among professionals in the school system is not a new phenomenon. School professionals have always worked with other school personnel in order to make a positive difference in the lives of students. Elementary, junior high, and high school students are better served by school personnel who cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate. This kind of effort is especially important to maximize the growth and development of students from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary to gain support from those directly involved with this process in order to identify needs and to provide support for professional development and programs that increase collaboration.

Multicultural and diversity training, as well as training on collaborative models, are necessary in order to reach all children. Administrators and faculty interested in pursuing collaboration as a part of their staff development programs must investigate the various collaborative models, keeping in mind the needs and goals of their particular school, and make the necessary adaptations to meet their needs.

Administrators, professors of education, and staff development personnel need to continue working to increase educators' preparation to serve CLDE students. In order to set a context for professional development initiatives, it is necessary to distinguish needs, goals, and definitions of collaboration. To design and implement successful collaborative programs among educational professionals serving CLDE students, it is necessary to identify the programs that exist and those that must be created.

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Appendix

The Collaborative Survey for Teachers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional Students (CS-CLDE)

DIRECTIONS: Carefully read each question and respond in the space provided.

PART I: Demographic Data

Where is your place of birth?

What is your occupation? *(please circle one of the following)*

General Educator ESL Teacher Special Education Teacher
Counselor Speech Language Pathologist

How long have you been working as a school professional? _____ years

What are the areas of your training/degrees?

Undergraduate_____ Graduate _____

In what country did you receive the above training/degree(s)? _____

What is your language proficiency?*(indicate the language and check areas that apply)*

Language _____ Speak ____ Read ____ Write ____
Language _____ Speak ____ Read ____ Write ____
Language _____ Speak ____ Read ____ Write ____
Language _____ Speak ____ Read ____ Write ____

What is your racial/ethnic background? _____

Have you ever worked with culturally and linguistically diverse and exceptional (CLDE) Students? *(please circle one)* Yes No

If yes, in what capacity. _____

How many years have you worked with CLDE students?_____ years

What grade level students have you worked with? *(please circle all that apply)*

NK–3 3–6 7–9 10–12 ____ other

In a few lines please describe your philosophy in working with CLDE students.

_____

DIRECTIONS: Carefully read each question and respond in the space provided.

PART II: Questionnaire

Read the below questions and respond by completing the frequency scale that follows.

How frequently do you encounter roadblocks when collaborating with other school professionals when working with CLDE students? What specific problems and roadblocks do you encounter in collaborating with other school professionals when working with CLDE students and to what extent?

(*Respond to these questions by checking all that apply and rank their frequency)*

1= very frequent 2 = frequent 3 = somewhat frequent 4 = somewhat infrequent 5 = very infrequent

a. ____ I don't speak the language of the children.
b. ____ I don't have knowledge of children's cultural characteristics.
c. ____ I don't have knowledge of the phenomenon of bilingualism.
d. ____ I don't have knowledge of second language acquisition issues.
e. ____ I don't have knowledge of special education issues.
f. ____ I don't have knowledge of developmental norms in children's first languages.
g. ____ There is no availability of other school professionals who speak children's languages.

(Respond to these questions by checking all that apply and rank their frequency)

1= very frequent 2 = frequent 3 = somewhat frequent 4 = somewhat infrequent 5 = very infrequent

h. ____ I don't have knowledge about the roles/skills of other school professionals who work with CLDE students.
i. ____ I don't have knowledge about the responsibilities of other school professionals who work with CLDE students.
j. ____ There are differences in practices, strategies, and techniques among school professionals who work with CLDE students.
k. ____ There is a lack of training on ways of collaborating among school professionals who work with CLDE students.
l. ____ There is a lack of time for collaboration among school professionals.
m. ____ There is a lack of support from the part of the administration.
n. ____ There is a lack of motives and bonuses for professionals working with CLDE students.
o. ____ There is a heavy work schedule with a lot of pressure and limited support.

(*Respond to these questions by checking all that apply and rank their frequency)*

1 = very frequent 2 = frequent 3 = somewhat frequent 4 = somewhat infrequent 5 = very infrequent

p. ____ There is a lack of adequate services to CLDE students.

q. ____ There are different views on the appropriateness of "pull-out" and integration models among school professionals.

r. ____ There is a lack of support for professionals in schools with significant CLDE student numbers, including consultation time, materials, and in-services.

s. ____ I collaborate with other school professionals when working with CLDE students.

t. ____ I find the collaboration with school professionals when working with CLDE students useful.

u. ____ I feel comfortable in collaborating and working with other school professionals.

v. ____ I feel my professional area being invaded by other school professionals in my work with CLDE students?

w. ____ I feel that my opinion is not respected by other school professionals regarding issues of assessment and placement of CLDE students?

____ Other _____

DIRECTIONS: Carefully read each question and respond in the space provided.

How would you define "collaboration" among school professionals who work with CLDE students?

_____

_____

_____

What kind of support do you need from other school professionals in your work with CLDE students?

_____

_____

_____

School District: _____

Thank you for your time in responding to this questionnaire!