

COVER PAGE

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Abstract

It is my opinion that at times communication (i.e., related to students) among regular and special education teachers can be poor. Some challenges may include who should initiate communication, when and how often to communication, and what topics should be discussed. The purpose of the proposed investigation is to create methods (i.e., a set of semi-structured interactions/ a task analysis) to guide the interactions between special education and regular education teachers. An investigation of this type would address the following questions; (1) can a set of semi-structured interactions lead to improved communication between regular and special education teachers, (2) can a set of semi-structured interactions improved perceived working relationships between regular and special education teachers, (3) and can a set of semi-structured interactions improve outcomes for students. Investigation into this area could impact the practice of psychology in schools by addressing concerns created by the limited number of school psychologists available to collaborate and consult with teachers.

Proposal

In the past, I have had the opportunity to consult and collaborate with regular and special education teachers. Based on those interactions, it is my opinion that at times communication (i.e., related to students) among regular and special education teachers can be poor. Unless the regular and special education teachers are naturally effective communicators, it appears that they can face challenges when discussing the needs of students. Some challenges may include who should initiate communication, when and how often to communicate, and what topics should be discussed. These concerns are sometimes addressed by a consultant, a school psychologist, but often due to limited resources teachers are left to manage on their own.

In the past, I have worked on two projects examining teacher treatment implementation following behavioral consultation in schools. Within these projects interaction between the consultant and the consultee was guided using modified versions of the behavior consultation model. This included semi-structured interviews to identify the problem, develop an intervention, and evaluate an intervention. A new area I would like to investigate is consultation methods between special education and regular education teachers. That is, I would like to create methods (i.e., a set of semi-structured interactions/ a task analysis) to guide the interactions between special education and regular education teachers which will be loosely based on the behavioral consultation model. An investigation of this type would address the following questions; (1) can a set of semi-structured interactions lead to improved communication between regular and special education teachers, (2) can a set of semi-structured interactions improve perceived working relationships between regular and special education teachers, (3) and can a set of semi-structured interactions improve outcomes for students. Investigation into this area could

impact the practice of psychology in schools by addressing concerns created by the limited number of school psychologists available to collaborate and consult with teachers.

An investigation of this type would take place in a school setting. Participants would include approximately 100 triads consisting of a regular education teacher, special education teacher, and their assigned student. A budget of \$25,000 would enable me to compensate graduate-student assistants, purchase readings, travel, and afford materials for the implementation of the study.

An investigation of this size warrants a collaborative effort. The advantages of a collaborative multi-site research program to address the questions include shared efforts, a diverse participant sample, and shared expertise. Managing approximately 100 triad participants in a single site would be very challenging. A multi-site approach would result in a shared work load allowing the researchers to provide participants increased attention and potentially limiting threats to internal validity. A multi-site approach could lead to a more diverse participant sample with triads being associated with various geographical area, school types, and teacher communication concerns. Lastly, researchers' will have the opportunity to share expertise during collaboration process. This includes expertise in the areas of management of implementation, analysis of findings, and writing for dissemination.

Challenges of a collaborative multi-site research program may include communication, delegating tasks/ responsibilities, and the management of implementation. All of the above I predict can be overcome with careful planning and organization.

PERSONAL RESEARCH AGENDA

I have been fortunate to be able to collaborate on several research projects prior to accepting the position of assistant professor at Texas A&M University- Commerce. As a result, my history as a researcher includes a diverse group of projects that aided in the development of a large area of interests. As an assistant professor, I have freedom to pursue my own research agenda, which reflects my diverse interests. My current avenue of inquiry has been to investigate practice schedules as they relate to intervention planning, examine the effects of parent training and a parent implemented intervention on students' classroom behavior, examine teacher education about students' culture, investigate school professionals' knowledge about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and examine consultation methods between special education and regular education teachers and treatment implementation following such consultation. Other general areas of interest include studies related to academic and behavioral assessment/ intervention, parent training, and applied behavior analysis. I plan to continue investigations in these areas over the next 3 to 5 years with an emphasis on issues of practical importance.

My proposed research agenda includes further investigation into past projects and the establishment of a new area of study. For example, in the study entitled "Training Parents to Modify Students' Classroom Behaviors Using Electronic Mail" my findings suggested that students' classroom behavior can be influenced by a parent initiated intervention that utilizes emailing, but additional research is clearly needed in this area. I would like to examine the effects of various forms of electronic technology (i.e., email, text messaging, etc) on variety of behaviors (i.e., including academic) and at various levels of parental involvement. Further investigation into this area could impact the practice of psychology in schools by identifying

effective methods that reduce students' classroom problems while at the same time including parents in the management of students' classroom problems.

In the past, I have worked on two projects examining teacher treatment implementation following behavioral consultation in schools. A new area I would like to examine is consultation methods between special education and regular education teachers. It is my understanding that communication between these professionals about students can often lack direction and structure. I would like to create methods to guide the interactions between special education and regular education teachers. These methods would be loosely based on the behavioral consultation model. I would like to determine if the methods lead to improved communication, improved perceived working relationships, and improved outcomes for students. Investigation into this area could impact the practice of psychology in schools by improving collaborations and consultation efforts.