Analysis of Teacher Perspectives on Effectiveness of In-Class Support programs

Kanwal Sayani, Dr. Fike
Department of Special Education and Literacy, Kean University, sayanik@kean.edu

Introduction

Co-teaching is increasingly becoming the mode of instructional delivery as a result of policies implemented by the federal government. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourage students with disabilities to be in the least restrictive environment. As such, both co-teachers (general education teacher and special education teacher) are placed together in a classroom and provide students access to the general curriculum with modifications to help students succeed. Usually, guidance counselors, child study teams and administrators make decisions about the most appropriate educational options for students with disabilities (Friend & Cook, 2010). Little is known about what makes collaborative teaching efficient and productive, therefore the goal of this study is to gather information from general and special education teachers and obtain their perceptions in terms of the challenges of co-teaching and in-class support programs at the high and middle school level. This study will also identify which co-teaching model is mostly applied in the classroom, and identify factors that hinder productive co-teaching.

Methods and Materials

Research was conducted on the effectiveness of co-teaching in-class resource programs at North Plainfield Middle School, North Plainfield High School, and Harrison School. A 25 question Google forms survey was created with fifteen multiple-choice, six Likert Scale survey, and four short answer questions. This survey was sent to 75 educators specializing in Math, Science, English, History, and Special Education backgrounds. Twenty-three general and thirteen special education teachers perspectives were gathered over a two week period. Teachers were asked about their co-teaching experience, their knowledge of the co-teaching models, and their feedback on what makes co-teaching productive. The results were charted and then analyzed. Conclusions were drawn.

Results

Figure 1: Teachers believe that co-teaching is most beneficial in help students with IEPs.

Figure 2: One Teach, One Assist is the most prevalent co-teaching model in middle and high school classrooms.

Figure 3: Teachers’ perspectives on factors that make up a productive co-teaching relationship

Conclusions

This study confirms that co-teaching is beneficial for students with disabilities. Educators believe co-teaching helps students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), managing student triggers, and helping students both academically and personally. Co-teaching allows for lessons to be differentiated and individualized.

Educators use all co-teaching models in the classroom, however, One Teach, One Assist is the most prevalent co-teaching model applied in middle and high school classrooms. The most significant barriers to co-teaching are the time to co-plan, assign equal responsibilities, and present collaborative lessons. Educators identified respect, flexibility, communication, knowledge of the subject, clear expectations, and distributing responsibilities as factors that make up a productive co-teaching relationship.

References
