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## **The Pre-University Experiences of Students with Disabilities in Barbados and Trinidad**

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### **Abstract**

*This retrospective qualitative research utilised ecological systems theory and content analysis to explore the pre-university experiences and barriers to participation faced by students with disabilities in Barbados and Trinidad. Findings suggested that attitudinal and environmental*

*barriers heavily influenced the level of participation of students with disabilities at secondary school. In particular, the nature of social interactions in the micro and meso systems exerted a powerful influence on teacher-student and peers with and without disabilities' relationships. Teacher and peer interactions oscillated between being accommodating and conflictual. Implications suggest the need for more teacher training in inclusive practices and support to remediate dysfunctional relationships between students with disabilities, their teachers and peers at secondary school.*

**Keywords:** *Caribbean students with disabilities, barriers to participation, inclusion, secondary school, ecological systems theory*

## **Introduction**

According to research by Newman and Madaus (2015) and Coster, Law, Bedell, Liljenquist, Kao, Khetani & Teplicky (2013), the participation and accommodation of students with disabilities at secondary school remain understudied at the international level. It is more common to find recent literature that examines barriers to participation experienced by students with disabilities at the tertiary level (Babic & Dowling, 2015; Hong, 2015; Moola, 2015; Strnadová, Hájková & Květoňová, 2015) or primary school (Eriksson, Welandar & Granlund, 2007; Law, et al., 2006).

Participation is a multidimensional concept captured within the World Health Organization's (2001) bio-psychosocial model of disability or the International Classification of Functioning, Health and Disability for Children and Youth. This model loosely defines participation as engagement in everyday activities. Researchers like Eriksson and Granlund (2004a) have refined this definition and note that participation consists of three interrelated components: (a) activity, (b) feeling of participation, and (c) context. By extension, barriers to

participation are anything that prevents a person from engaging in everyday activities within a specified or given context.

The type of barriers most frequently cited in the literature are: physical, architectural, information or communication, technological, attitudinal or, a policy or practice that imposes barriers (Babic & Dowling, 2015; Hong, 2015; Moola, 2015; Strnadová, Hájková & Květoňová, 2015; Pivik, McCommas and LaFlamme, 2002). Most of these tend to impede access to learning, the curriculum, and extra-curricular activities within the teaching-learning environment (Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Ministry of Citizenship, 2001). Research by Coster, et al., (2013) documented ratings from parents of children with disabilities in the USA and Canada about the barriers to participation that their children encountered in school settings. Parents noted that their children were less involved with their non-impaired peers at school clubs, organizations and school activities. They also cited physical and social barriers to participation as the main reasons for their children's lack of involvement at school. This finding mirrors early research by Pivik, McCommas and LaFlamme (2002) in Ottawa, Canada with children with physical impairments like spina bifida and cerebral palsy. Their research classified barriers to participation as environmental, attitudinal, and related to the nature of the students' impairment. Students' narratives distinguished between intentional and unintentional attitudinal barriers. The former referred to instances of isolation, physical and emotional bullying like being called names, and difficulty forming friendships with peers. Unintentional barriers, on the other hand, referred to teachers' and other support staff's lack of knowledge, ignorance, understanding, and effort. Teachers exhibited a lack of knowledge in the assignment of appropriate work for students with disabilities, a lack of adaptation of physical education activities to facilitate the participation of students and the assignment of students as teacher helpers in the classroom (Pivik, et al., 2002).

The importance of hearing the voices of students with disabilities gained prominence in the 1990s and continues to the present day (Messent, Cooke & Long, 1999; Kiernan, 1999; Eriksson, 2005; Valchou & Papananou, 2014). Currently, more studies employ qualitative approaches to data collection. These facilitate a richer sharing of the voices and experiences of students with disabilities in regular education settings (Eriksson, 2005) and focus more on the participation of these students. Added to this, is the use of retrospective studies to understand the schooling experiences of persons with disabilities and the accounts of adults with disabilities. Some researchers who utilised retrospective studies to document the experiences of students with disabilities include Valchou and Papananou (2014) in Greece; Harrington (2014) in Australia; Angelides and Aravi (2006) in Cyprus and Kluwin, Stinson, & Colarossi (2002) in the USA. Valchou and Papananou (2014) for example examined the narratives of students with disabilities who attended higher education institutions in Athens. The findings of this study mirrored those of Angelides and Aravi (2006) and Kluwin, et al., (2002), which revealed that teacher-student interactions oscillated between accommodation and discrimination. Negative teacher-student interaction manifested itself at all levels of the school vis-a-vis academic, social and environmental. At the academic and social levels, participants experienced prejudice, lack of differentiation of curriculum, and teachers' failure to provide instructional support. Students also felt that their psycho-social needs were not met and felt alienated and ignored at school. At the environmental level, participants with physical impairments experienced a lack of autonomy and felt unsafe because of the architectural inaccessibility of the school environment.

### **Ecological Systems Theory**

A dynamic view of environmental systems is needed to explain how students with disabilities perceive their interactions with peers, teachers and their schools. Our research draws on Urie Bronfenbrenner 1979 bio-psychosocial model that described a series of bi-directional influences between the individual and the environment. This theory suggests that the

environment is a set of nested concentric circles that comprise of the micro, macro, meso, exo and chrono systems, with the child or individual at the centre.

The micro and meso systems contain the most critical set of proximal influences that include the child's family, child rearing practices, close friends, teachers, and the school (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Interactional patterns in this layer are bidirectional, reciprocal, and experienced more acutely between the individual and other significant adults for example teachers. Supportive settings represent one of the more distal influences in the exo-system Bronfenbrenner (1979) and access to provision of services here for example technology, transportation, or academic support influenced students' psycho-social and academic adjustment. The outermost level of the system is the macro system that refers to the values, laws, customs, and culture of a place (Bronfenbrenner 1979). At the school level, this might include administrative regulations, rules, and customs that influenced both the implementation and enforcement of policies related to inclusion, type of support accessed and the accommodation of students with disabilities. The chronosystem lies at the periphery of the ecosystem, it is temporal and comprises of life events that influence development across the lifespan of an individual (Berk, 1989). Changes can be imposed on the individual from external forces or arise equally from within the person since people are both products and producers of their own experiences within various settings.

## **The Schooling Experiences of Students with Disabilities in the Caribbean Context**

### **The Barbados Context**

Barbados is the most eastern island of the Caribbean archipelago and is 166 square miles. The island's education system is compulsory for students between the ages of 5 to 16 years old and is tiered to reflect the spectrum of service delivery options available to meet the

diverse needs of students. These are pre-primary, primary, special education, secondary schools and tertiary level of education.

Primary education caters to students from the ages of 5 to 11 years old, and there are 96 schools within this tier that serves over 20,000 students (Ministry of Education, 2013). Students complete four years of school and then sit the Secondary School Entrance Assessment (SEA) to gain entry into secondary school. According to the 2013/14 statistical digest, Barbados has seven service delivery options that serve 599 students with special needs (Ministry of Education, 2013). These include special education schools for students with intellectual impairments, developmental disabilities and those with sensory impairments, Autism, and Attention Deficit Disorders and special education units. Special units are either separate buildings or classrooms that share the same physical spaces as regular education schools but serve a smaller population of students who need individualised instruction. Secondary education caters to children from the ages of 11 to 16 and mirrors the British education system. Students in their senior years at secondary school, that is, between their fourth and sixth year of schooling take the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) across a number of subject areas to gain entry to tertiary level institutions. There are 36 secondary schools that serve a population of over 20, 000 students (Ministry of Education, 2013). The final tier of education is at the tertiary level, and there are three public institutions at this level including a regional university, teachers' college and local community college. Other post-secondary options available to students in Barbados includes a technical vocational institution that offers a number of courses to develop the skills of students in non-academic disciplines.

### **The Trinidad Context**

Trinidad is the larger of the twin island republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It is

5,131 square kilometers or 1,981 square miles. As Barbados, education is free and compulsory from 5 to secondary (high) school. While not compulsory, participation in preschool education is the norm starting at two years. The education system comprises preschool, elementary or primary, secondary and upper secondary, and tertiary levels.

Students have seven years of primary education classes beginning with First Year and ending with Standard 5. 'Standard' in this context is equivalent to 'Grade 1' at the international level. During the final year of primary school, namely Standard 5, students take the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) which determines their secondary school placement.

Secondary school education continues for at least five years. It leads to the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations. Students with satisfactory grades may opt to continue their secondary education for a further two-year period, leading to the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE). Both CSEC and CAPE examinations are administered by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).

At tertiary level, there are four main higher education institutions, including three universities along with a myriad of other public and private institutions. Tuition costs are provided for via The Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses program (GATE) up to the level of the bachelor's degree. Some Masters' level programs are subsidized.

Education for students with disabilities, also known as Special Education, continues to be in a state of transition from the traditional special school's system to more inclusive settings. Internationally, inclusion is an approach to education reform aimed at providing appropriate and seamless education from early childhood to tertiary levels.

There are approximately four hundred and eighty (480) primary schools and one hundred



and forty (140) secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago National Task Force on Education, 1994).

Research on the schooling experiences of students with disabilities is still an emerging field in the Caribbean. To date, Blackman (2010; 2011) has documented the academic experiences of students with dyslexia in Barbados. This research employed a multiple case study strategy and qualitative design to capture the experiences of this group of students in the Caribbean. Findings from these studies not only add to the international pupil perspective and voice research literature, but they also serve as a reminder of the efficacy of this type of research to inform teachers' pedagogical decisions. Blackman (2010) for example challenged ideas about teachers only utilizing heterogeneous groupings of students for instruction while ignoring the social and cognitive benefits to be derived from homogeneous groupings and friendship dyads. Also, Blackman (2011) established that students with dyslexia benefited from a range of regular teaching strategies such as more detailed explanations, demonstrations, drama and role-play, storytelling, and inquiry-based learning. This research challenged notions that only specialist and individualized approaches to instruction worked for these students.

More recently Conrad, Blackman, and Philip (2015) conducted a qualitative study that employed an interview strategy to enquire into the barriers to participation experienced by a group of university students in the islands of Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. This followed calls by Law, Petrenchik, King and Hurley (2007) at the international level to understand how students with disabilities experience barriers to participation within and across various social, cultural and environmental contexts. In this first study, we described the experiences of university students and found that the main barriers to participation experienced by them were contextual and personal in nature. Students expressed concern about the lack of equality of opportunity, institutional barriers to inclusion, lecturers not being familiar with how to meet their needs and challenges navigating the environment for those with physical impairments. When

students adopt an attitude of self-actualization buttressed by supportive relationships contained within the micro, meso, and exo systems, then barriers can be circumvented.

Our research also collected information on their experiences in society, at secondary school, and at work. The current study looks at the data collected retrospectively on their earlier secondary schooling experiences. The research questions are:

1. What barriers to participation were experienced by students with disabilities at secondary school?
1. How can secondary schools better include students with disabilities?

### **Methodology**

We used a qualitative research design to document the experiences of students with disabilities at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill (UWICH) and the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine) UWISA campuses. We used an in-depth interview strategy and an interpretative framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) to engage in dialogue with students and co-construct knowledge about the meanings that participants gave to their unique experiences.

### **Measures**

We formulated an in-depth structured interview guide to collect data in a standardized format across participants at the two campuses. The protocol collected: (a) Demographic information on the age, sex, nature of the participant's impairment, interests and education qualifications; (b) Perspectives of participants as to the barriers faced at secondary school. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), the employment of structured or systematic interview protocols increases the comparability of responses across participants and assist in uncovering and unpacking participants' perspectives, thoughts, attitudes, and opinions about a phenomenon or issue (Flick, 2006).

Questions on barriers to participation in school captured the unique experiences of persons with various types of impairments. Examples of questions included: (1) How difficult was it for you to get around at your school? and (2) Can you tell me if you participated in physical exercise and sporting activities and how did school help you to do this?

### The Participants

Our sample comprised of 12 undergraduate students (4 Males and 8 Females) from Barbados (6 students) and Trinidad (6 students). Table 1 presents the demographic information for the sample.

**Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants**

Name	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Disability
Shannie <sup>a</sup>	F	21	S	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
	F	19	S	Deaf
Sandra <sup>a</sup>	F	26	S	Neurological Disorder (Cerebral Palsy)
Crystal <sup>a</sup>	F	28	S	Genetic Disorder
Shea <sup>a</sup>	M	24	S	Deaf
Shawn	F	29	S	Neurological Disorder (Cerebral Palsy)
Rene <sup>b</sup>	F	19	S	Neurological Disorder (Cerebral Palsy)
Josie <sup>b</sup>	F	33	S	Health and Sensory Impairment
Terry <sup>b</sup>	F	23	S	Apergers
Althea <sup>b</sup>	M	21	S	Dyslexia
Jason <sup>b</sup>	M	23	S	Attention Deficit Disorder
Jacob <sup>b</sup>	M	21	S	Physical Impairment
Kirk <sup>b</sup>				

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Note. Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness which adversely affects a child's educational performance which is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, 300 § A, 300.8

*<sup>a</sup>UWI students at Cave Hill <sup>b</sup>UWI students at St. Augustine*

## Procedures

. Participants were recruited for the study through the Office of Student Services at UWICH) and with the support of Academic Support Disabilities Liaison Unit (ASDLU) at UWISA). Officers in charge of the OSS canvassed students with disabilities using word of mouth, telephone or as walk ins and informed them about the study and its objectives. The criteria for involvement were that students needed to possess a physical, learning, sensory or health impairment and enrolled in a course of study at the university level. The Office for Student Services then contacted us by email informing us of persons interested in participating in the study. We gained participants' consent and briefed them about the study by utilizing an informed consent form that outlined the purpose, duration, procedures of the study, risks and benefits, and a statement of confidentiality. We followed ethical guidelines outlined by the Institutional Review Board of the University of the West Indies. The Board approved our informed consent form, and we informed participants that they could exit the study without any adverse implications for their academic achievement.

Interviews took place in a quiet location at the Office of Student Services or classrooms on both campuses and lasted for approximately between 30-45 minutes. We debriefed students, and collected outstanding informed consent forms. Students were invited to verify the accuracy of the transcripts once transcribed and addressed any errors found in the documents.

## Analysis

Data were analyzed, using content analysis associated with the grounded theory

tradition (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The first two principal researchers were mainly responsible for the analysis of transcripts, while the third researcher transcribed the interviews and prepared them as electronic files. The first researcher used open coding from three Barbados transcripts to produced an in vivo coding scheme (Saldaña, 2015) or list of possible codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In vivo codes for example “TEACHER DIDN’T LOOK AT ME” “TEACHER IGNORED ME” served to guide not direct the analysis of data. A Google doc was produced which aided to discuss the reliability of coding after the second principal researcher completed independent coding of transcripts.

Open Codes were then recorded into subcategories to further unpack their meanings, for example, ‘Ignored’, ‘Accommodated,’ and ‘Imposed’ which described the nature of the interaction between teachers and students in school. Axial coding (Strauss, 1987) ‘lumped’ subcategories into larger units like ‘Teacher-Student Interactions. Dimensions captured opposing views in the data for example; axes for Teacher-Student Interactions were ‘encouraged-ignored-imposed’. Analytic memos were also used reflexively to document the researchers’ ideas about the meanings of codes, the representation of participants’ experiences and any biases imposed on the data. We ensured the trustworthiness of the data by using member checking to ensure the authenticity of the data collected Mertens and McLaughlin (2004). Participants read or listened to and verify the accuracy of the transcripts and analysis. We also triangulated data collection across multiple participants to ensure consistency in the way interviewers used the protocol (Trainor & Graue, 2013).

## **Findings**

Four themes emerged in this study. These are: (1) “I like when you encourage rather than ignore or limit me”; (2) ‘Better interaction means partnering with peers and not being picked on’; (3) ‘Adjusting to school means adjusting the environment to suit my needs’; and (4) ‘Including me means providing opportunities and access for my success’.

**Research Question 1: what barriers to participation were experienced by students with disabilities at school?**

Our findings suggested that students with disabilities in Barbados and Trinidad encountered barriers to participation at secondary school. However, this is not to suggest that all persons in the study experienced difficulties navigating school, in fact, some participants recounted positive memories of their experiences at school and we provide examples that reflect such in the students' narratives.

The main barriers to participation identified by students were interpersonal and environmental barriers. The students' narratives revealed that interpersonal conflicts with teachers and peers threatened their emotional stability and academic participation. The theme “I like when you encourage rather than ignore or limit me” captures the multi-dimensional nature of these interactions. When teachers ignored students, it produced conflict and exclusion which did not meet the affective needs of students. Ignoring had an active (denying opportunities and exclusionary practices) and passive (not acknowledging the presence of the student, lack of knowledge) component while the imposition of authority limited participation.

Many of the Barbadian and Trinidadian students interviewed noted that relationships with teachers were difficult at secondary school. It was a challenge when teachers possessed little knowledge of the nature of the student's impairment and the accompanying limitations associated with the disability. One female student self-identified with Asperger's Syndrome from Trinidad who struggled with her socialization skills, noted that ‘I know of a [teacher] back in high school was doing her best to help me, but she didn't know how and what she did was counterproductive because it singled me out and disoriented me’ [Althea/ Female/Aspergers/ TT]. She noted how the teachers attempted to use paired approaches to learning to help her build better social skills. She stated that

She had me switch seats with everyone in the class once a week, which gave me trouble in the class because, of course, people sit by their friends and they did not appreciate having that disruption and it also disrupted me. She was only trying to do what she could without knowing what to do because they didn't tell her. [Althea/ Female/ Asperger's/TT].

Althea's account provides a poignant example of how teachers struggle to include and group students with Asperger's for instruction. Through her narrative, Althea struggled to find her place on a weekly basis through 'switching seats' which only disrupted established friendships in the classrooms and perhaps incurred a sense of resentment from peers as Althea noted it 'gave her trouble in class' and left her feeling 'singled out and disoriented'. The literature on effective instructional practices for students with Asperger's Syndrome suggests that changing seating arrangements can accrue social benefits once done unobtrusively or when done for the entire class (Dugan, et al., 1995; Safran, 2002). Safran argues that teachers can assign particular tasks aligned with the strengths of the student and provide opportunities for the student to be successful in peer activities.

Students with physical impairments also provided accounts of how schools and teachers limited their participation. Out of four students with a mobility impairment at least, two students noted that the school administration did not make provisions for classes to be located on the ground floors. In particular, architectural barriers like no elevators to the top floor of the school posed an additional challenge since it meant that students with physical impairments needed more time to transition to classes on the upper floors of the school. Some teachers seemed to expect students to arrive for classes in a prompt manner in spite of the inaccessibility of the class from the ground floors. A typical comment is provided by Josie a student with a disease that affected her muscles. She noted that:

. . . this . . . time, it was IT [information technology] and the teacher's class was on the top floor of the library. I had to come down from the very top of the building all the way to the bottom to [and then to] go back up and reached five minutes late. I go in the classroom and the [IT teacher] is like . . . what time is it Josie? And I [told] her the time. And she said 'ya know ya late? She [said] I can't come in the class because I'm late and I had to go back out.

Crystal's narrative also offered a similar experience to that told by Josie. She noted that:

While I was at [names school], there was this teacher that made me walk up the stairs to be able to attend class because she thought it would be good for my muscles or therapeutic (sic). At the time I didn't share it with anyone because I needed to do the subject.

Both Josie and Crystal's narratives are insightful and illustrate the struggle that teachers have between fostering a sense of responsibility in all students and having a regard to the limitations imposed by the nature of students' impairments, lack of accommodation and accessibility to classes in the school. These teachers believed that they were helping students by not treating them differently from their peers. The consequences for both Josie and Crystal were that they had to accept their teachers' decision, were denied access from class and struggled to function with limited mobility as Crystal noted 'I needed to do the subject'.

However, not all accounts were as disparaging as those noted above. In fact, other students with physical impairments from Trinidad had positive and encouraging relationships with their teachers. Some examples of such included an account from Rene, a student with cerebral palsy who described herself as an independent person. She emphasized that teachers were often concerned that she had to climb flights of stairs at secondary school to reach her classes.

I had to climb stairs almost every day because sometimes classes was on the third floor at secondary school. Teachers were a bit concerned about me having to climb all those



stairs. But again, I am a very independent person, so it wasn't a challenge for me. [Rene/Physical Impairment/TT]. A male student from Trinidad described his relationship with teachers as "teachers understood [his impairment]" [Kirk/ TT/ Physical Impairment]. Architectural barriers to participation are frequently cited in the literature (Pivik et al., 2002) as a hindrance for students with disabilities. Our findings suggest that students in Barbados and Trinidad experienced similar difficulties. However, these accounts are reminiscent of Eriksson & Granlund (2004a) arguments that participation consists of three interrelated components. These are (1) activity; (2) feeling of participation and (3) context. The structure of the learning context and unsympathetic teacher attitudes excluded many students from participating in learning activities.

Perhaps the most poignant and extreme accounts of conflictual teacher-student interactions came from students who are Deaf in Barbados. They recalled instances of being ignored and limited at school. Sandra is a female student who is Deaf and one of the few students from a special school to participate in an inclusive education programme between a special and mainstream school. The programme exposed Sandra to the regular education curriculum while still maintaining links with her special education school to boost her sign language skills. A teacher who signed and interpreted for the Deaf accompanied her while she was at primary and secondary school. Sandra noted that relationships with regular education teachers did not pose any significant issues except at secondary school where she noted that 'there were [a] few problems with some teachers'. In fact, she experienced the more passive form of ignoring i.e. not being acknowledged by the teacher. When probed further about her relationship with teachers, she recalled how one teacher in her senior year at secondary school ignored her when she was preparing for Caribbean Examinations Council Exams [CXC]. She shared:

When I was getting ready for CXC and then all of a sudden near term, the teacher would [ignore] me. [She] would sit and purposely ignore me. Then, she would tell [the

interpreter] to take me to the library all the time. I sat down and waited and waited for a long time for the [interpreter] and I was totally lost in the class. The class teacher would sit and look at me, and I would look at her. [Sandra/Female/Deaf/Barbados]

When asked whether or not the relationship with the teacher improved Sandra noted:

It's more difficult for me to approach her in a way. She is *always* purposely ignoring me, continuing in a way that nobody would recognise. [Other] people don't see it but me. I don't expect that people would believe if I tell them about what is wrong.

Sandra's narrative amplifies the challenges in communication experienced by many students who are deaf in classrooms with hearing peers and teachers. It is easy to experience a feeling of being 'lost in the class'. Sandra recalls how the teacher projected her sense of helplessness to communicate 'she was in a bad mood' and 'you need to go away' onto her and how it led to her exclusion from the classroom when she was sent to the library. For Sandra, she too was helpless to change the teacher's disposition and advocate for herself. Her statement 'I don't expect that people would believe if I tell them,' is an indication of her acceptance that this is inevitable.

Shawn provided an example of how teachers' imposed their authority onto students who are Deaf. He attended the same school as Sandra and described students' social and academic interactions with teachers this way:

I did have some challenges, and the teachers did think that they were better than us and they would demand and command things of us. I wasn't comfortable with them. I would feel uneasy and I would feel insignificant and ashamed [Shawn/Male/Barbados/Deaf].

This comment reveals how this student felt about the affective climate of the school and the nature of social interaction between teachers and students who are deaf. The affective and cognitive climate of classrooms are important, and this could lead to disengagement and withdrawal if students do not feel supported and valued by teachers in their classrooms.

He also recalled how teachers at the school sought to involve the students in extracurricular activities. He shared:

The teachers there would encourage the deaf to get involved in signing [sign language] and drama. The deaf [students] would not want to get involved, so they [teachers] decided that they would choose for us . . . compel us to get involved. We felt uneasy about it. So we just did it because we didn't have a choice. [Shawn/Male/ Barbados/Deaf]

Shawn's story is unique in its description of how teacher-student interactions and relationships could be unevenly balanced. The picture he paints is one of heavy imposition of authority by teachers as they attempted to involve students in the extra-curricular activities at the school. The lack of co-agency produced a feeling of powerlessness according to Shawn, 'we didn't have a choice'. For both Shawn and Sandra, the psycho-social consequences of not being able to use their voice to express their dissatisfaction at their circumstances resulted in a feeling of insignificance.

The narratives above suggest that some students felt powerless at secondary school to change their circumstances and negotiate the power dynamics of the classroom between teachers and themselves. For students who are deaf, powerlessness was linked to their inability to speak and give voice or advocate for a change in circumstances, which they felt, was unfair. For those students with physical impairments, they experienced a sense of powerlessness to change the location of their classes so that it did not result in them getting to classes late. For students like Althea, her sense of powerlessness related to not fitting into the teacher's assigned seating arrangements with other peers in the classroom. The consequences of powerlessness were that students with disabilities felt isolated, disoriented and resigned to accept circumstances that often led to their exclusion from participating like their peers who are not disabled at secondary school.

While it is tempting to argue that this work supports the negative hypothesis (Fink, 1977), that students with disabilities are more likely to experience poorer social and academic relationships with teachers and peers, one needs to look at factors that might account for such circumstances. These findings are not surprising as many studies for example Valchou and Papananou (2014); Pivik, et al. (2002); Brown, et al., (2003) reported both negative and positive interactions between teachers and students in their studies. Research also supports students' explanations of their teachers' behaviours based on a lack of knowledge (ignorance) of the nature and needs of students' impairments and teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities that intentionally and unintentionally sometimes led to their exclusion and isolation in the classroom (Valchou & Papananou, 2014).

Theme: 'Better interaction means partnering with peers and not being picked on'

This theme suggests that peers also played a key role in determining how well students with disabilities participated in their school environments. Both friendly and unfriendly interactions occurred between students with and without disabilities. Friendly interactions emerged when students with disabilities experienced a sense of affiliation, connection, and cordial relationships with peers. By contrast, physical and relational aggression towards peers were unfriendly interactions. It is interesting to note that females more so than males in the study experienced being bullied by their peers in both Trinidad and Barbados.

Peers who were convivial assisted students with disabilities in some ways: they lip read, looked out for each other, shared jokes and accepted their counterparts with disabilities. Josie recalled an experience during a period of orientation to familiarize her with the school environment. She noted that students found it easy to accept her.

My aunt was a teacher, and I went to the school [where] she was teaching. Basically, before I even enrolled in the school, I was there . . . [informally] like in the system, in the classroom and being exposed to everything. Everybody was accustomed to me being

there... We were quite close. In fact . . . they didn't shy away from me or anything like that. [Josie/Female/Physical impairment].

For Josie, close contact with peers facilitated pro-social behaviours and interactions with other students at the school so that she found it easy to experience a sense of belonging in the school as she notes "everybody was really accustomed to me being there."

Shawn recalled how good he felt that being in the company of other students who are deaf like himself. He indicated that he felt connected to them. "I was comfortable at [names school for the deaf] in the sense that I had a natural connection with the deaf".

By contrast, many female students experienced acts of aggression and bullying from peers that often had negative psychological consequences. Physical forms of aggression included: being bullied, being picked on, having things taken away, being teased and being nicknamed. Relational forms of aggression included spreading rumours and being discriminated against. Seven of the students interviewed experienced physical forms of aggression at secondary school.

Sandra noted one of the more extreme accounts of bullying. She recalled how some students did not believe that she could not hear and wanted to 'test her hearing' to see if she was indeed deaf.

One girl, I do not know if she was just trying to test to find out if I can hear, walked around and shouted in my ear. And, I get [got] angry, ready to grab her hand but [names student] told me 'don't touch her'. [Then] she does it again and then again and I grabbed her hand. [She said] 'Wait, you can hear me?' [Sandra/Female/ Deaf/Barbados].

For Sandra, it was difficult to bond with peers who did not understand the nature of her impairment and this testing of her hearing was perhaps an attempt to see if she was 'normal'. Sandra's response 'I get angry', and 'I grabbed her hand' reveals that she was not going to condone the injustice of being bullied because of her impairment. She was prepared to defend herself like any 'typical' child would, who was experiencing bullying behaviour from peers.

Sandra also recalled when she stopped using her voice at secondary school because students made her 'feel bad'.

I used my voice a little and the children would tease me about my voice . . . but then the teasing continued on and on. I got tired. It made me feel bad, so I said nothing. I stopped using my voice there. [Sandra/Female/ Deaf/Barbados].

Through these words, we see how this student attempted to gain entry and social acceptance with peers at school. In the classroom, her primary mode of communication was through her sign language interpreter, but within the social context of peer relations, she wanted to use her voice to connect with peers. That she chose not to use her voice because she was teased and 'made to feel bad' is an indication that she was resigned not to become part of a peer group that did not value her as an individual.

Students with physical impairments also provided similar instances of teasing as their peers who are Deaf. For example, Martha recalled how boys called her names.

At school, I remember I went through a lot emotionally. I think that is where my self-esteem was damaged because as I said, I was tall. [Names impairment] means that you're tall and slim.

My nickname at school was Olive [as in the cartoon character in Popeye], I was called bony macaroni, I was called spaghetti . . . the boys would be like 'bony macaroni, bony macaroni, bony macaroni.' [Martha/Female/Physical Impairment/Barbados].

And Rene, a student with cerebral palsy noted that, 'Secondary school was a whole different ball game. Students because of their lack of knowledge and understanding, I was teased, I was harassed.' [Rene/ Physical Impairment/ Trinidad]

These accounts of teasing noted by Sandra, Martha, and Rene all occur in the foundational layers of the micro and meso systems, and they also provide an indication of how challenging it is for students with disabilities to negotiate acceptance and experience a sense of

homophily among peers within this layer. As Rene indicated, a lack of knowledge and understanding of the nature of students' impairment produced social barriers to participation for these students among their own peer group and this, in turn, did not augur well for the emotional well-being of students with disabilities at secondary school.

This is a common finding in the international literature. For example, Koster, Pijl, Nakken and Houten (2010) noted that students with disabilities tend to find it difficult to develop friendships with peers, experience bullying (Rose, Swearer & Espelage, 2012) or just find it difficult to fit into regular education settings (Valchou & Papananou, 2014). These findings are also mirrored in this research in Barbados and Trinidad among participants who reported that relationships with peers vacillated between periods of conviviality and aggressiveness.

The findings here also captured the challenges associated with establishing propinquity and homophily between heterogeneous groups of students at secondary school. In particular, social inclusion becomes even more difficult when students do not share the same mode and system of communication as is the case with students who are deaf and their peers who are not disabled. It is the same with students with Aspergers Syndrome who do not process the semantics of the English language in the same way as their non-disabled peers. They too, find it difficult to be socially included in schools. It is therefore not surprising that these students often feel isolated and unconnected from their peers and school settings (Weiner, Day & Galvan, 2013).

Theme: 'Adjusting to school means adjusting the environment to suit my needs'

The participation of students with disabilities depends on how well schools are able to accommodate the physical needs of students. In the study, adjusting to school means that the exosystem environmental layer needed to be modified to accommodate the students' learning and the dimensions here included either flexible or inflexible accommodations. Flexible as opposed to inflexible accommodations included the inclusion and use of technology in classrooms and by schools to include students in the life of the school. Josie noted how her school modified the

bathroom so that she could access it. “They had to remodel the whole bathroom. They put in the doorway, the government had to construct a wide angle ramp . . . ”[Josie/ Female/Physical Impairment/Trinidad]

By contrast, some students noted that schools were inflexible and not as accommodating with regards to meeting their needs. One student recalled how the location of classes in Information Technology influenced her choice of school subjects because the IT room was not accessible to her from the ground floor of the school. Crystal a student with CP noted:

There was this one time that I can really remember that was an inconvenience. I wanted to do IT [information technology] but that was on the top floor of one of the buildings, and I had to end up choosing Art instead. [Crystal/ Physical Impairment/Barbados].

Sandra provides another account of how schools did not meet the needs of students. She recalled when she was at morning assembly and ‘felt left out’ because the school did not have close captioning.

Most of the time there is a problem [participating in morning assembly] because when you watch the television in the hall there is no close captioning and then I would have to search and remind them that I am here, and I would feel left out. Sometimes, they would have it with a captioning, and then it would be good. [Sandra/Female/Deaf/Barbados].

The comments from Josie and Sandra illuminate how easy it is for the environment to exclude them and not meet their needs. For Josie, she experienced an architectural barrier in her environment that denied her access not only to the class she wanted to do, but more importantly, in the choice of subjects that were available to her. In Sandra’s case, she experienced a feeling of isolation from her surroundings when the school did not provide close captioning and this limited her ability to participate in the morning ritual of full assembly.

Although contextual barriers in the exo system layer presented barriers, participants’ narratives revealed that technology was the best way to facilitate inclusion. Research at the



international level by Lidström and Hemmingsson (2014) found that students with physical, hearing and visual impairments benefited for example from the use of information and communication technology. In particular, it improved the students' ability to function in school by compensating for difficulties associated with the nature of their impairments. Moreover, the need to adjust aspects of the school environment to suit the unique needs of students with impairments are also congruent with other studies on barriers to participation of school-aged students with disabilities at the international level by Hemmingson and Borell (2002).

**Research Question 2 asked: How can schools include students with disabilities?**

The theme 'Including me means providing opportunities and access for my success' captures participants' opinions about how schools could better include students with disabilities. Students' responses varied in some instances by disability and ranged between tangible and intangible dimensions. The more tangible suggestions were the need for accommodations in the area of technology, the implementation of the regular education curriculum in special schools and certification for students at special schools. While the intangible approaches to inclusion simply stressed the need for schools to provide equal access, opportunities, and teachers to adopt positive expectations of students with disabilities.

The inclusion and use of technology were the most frequently cited accommodation noted by students in the study. It was particularly important for students with sensory impairments who noted that skilled interpreters and closed-captioned were really in demand. Sandra captured this sentiment best, when she noted that: "[schools] need to have interpreters and more technology . . . the use of pictures to help you understand concepts more and putting up words to help you see spelling." [Sandra/Female/Deaf/Barbados]

For students with physical impairments, they noted the need for schools to locate their classes on the ground floor. Crystal noted that schools should "put more classes on the ground

floor . . . [it should be] paved to [help me] push myself around or have someone push me around.” [Crystal/Physical Impairment/Barbados]

On the other hand, the more intangible approaches to inclusion mentioned in the students' narratives included the provision of equality of opportunity, for example, Sandra stated that ‘the school made sure that I had an equal opportunity of obtaining an education . . . some teachers provided me with notes . . .’ [Rene/Physical Impairment/Trinidad]

Other accounts emphasised the need for special schools to provide access to certification opportunities similar to those for students without impairments in regular education settings. Martha emphasized: “The schools need to do it [Caribbean Examination Council Certificates] because everyone doesn’t have access to funding . . . doing it privately [like I had to] means paying for it.” [Martha/Physical Impairment/Barbados]

What is clear from the narratives of students is that the school bears a great social responsibility concerning how it includes students with disabilities. As schools in Barbados and Trinidad seek to become more inclusive, the continued existence of special schools and units are a contradiction that is not easily reconciled with either the philosophy or practice of inclusion. In reality, it means that there is a need to balance education provision and service delivery between special and regular school settings in these islands.

Finding ways for students in special schools to be successful and transition to post-secondary education settings starts by extending access to the same regular education curriculum and certification opportunities as their peers without impairments (Haber, et al., 2015). Furthermore, participants in this study suggested that technology specific to the nature of their impairments provided one of the best ways to facilitate inclusion. This is congruent with research by Newman and Madaus (2015) on the issue of accommodating students with disabilities in secondary schools. They suggested that students who were deaf needed to utilise close captioning and sign language interpreters, while other students needed access to the full range of

accommodations. Other research by Pivik (2010) suggests that architectural barriers such as narrow staircases and the inclusion of elevators were needed so students with physical impairments could access classes on upper floors. Students with disabilities are entitled to accommodation and principles of access and equality of opportunity are important to ensure the schools meet their social responsibility to these students. It should also extend and permeate the micro, meso, macro and exo system layers of the school setting to promote successful teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and transition planning.

### Implications

This retrospective study documented the schooling experiences and barriers to participation experienced by students with disabilities at secondary school in Barbados and Trinidad. Findings suggested that the environment profoundly influenced the level of participation of students with disabilities at secondary school. We found that the nature of social interactions predominantly in the micro and meso systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) exerted a powerful influence on teacher-student and peers with and without disabilities' relationships. Teacher actions and interactions oscillated between being conflictual and accommodating, and this was linked to how much teachers knew about the nature and needs of students' impairments. With respect to peer relationships, these also ranged between periods of conviviality and unfriendliness. Some students experienced conflictual social relationships that negatively impacted their psycho-social adjustment and emotional security. This is especially true of students that encountered bullying behaviours at secondary school, for example, those who are Deaf and those with physical impairments. Our research sample was modest and therefore we cannot speculate about the rate or frequency of bullying experienced by students with disabilities. It does suggest and support research findings by Weiner, et al., (2013) which noted that teachers and peers without disabilities must intervene and support students with disabilities to prevent further instances of bullying.

Similarly, we also found that teacher-student relationships in the micro and meso systems were conflictual and that there is a need for teachers to understand how conflict influences the participation of students with disabilities. When the environment does not meet the needs of an individual for relatedness, involvement, and competence, it can have an adverse impact on their adjustment (Fredricks, Blumfeld & Paris, 2004). Findings indicated that students with Asperger's Syndrome, mobility impairments, and sensory impairment experienced a sense of isolation and exclusion from their school settings when teachers were ignorant about how to meet their needs or were unsympathetic in their attitudes towards these students. The implications of this research in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados suggest a need for more teacher training in inclusive practices to remediate dysfunctional socio-emotional relationships.

Moreover, our research highlighted the need for the exo-system or the environment to be responsive and accommodate the social, behavioural, learning and psychological needs of students with disabilities. This could do much to allow students to enjoy a sense of belonging in Barbadian and Trinidadian classrooms. The inclusion of technology designed to compensate for the nature of the students' impairment is well documented and must continue to be endorsed. The addition of closed- captioning and sign language interpreters can do much to enhance communication between persons who are deaf, their teachers, and peers who are non-disabled.

Our research has limitations that include its small sample size and the nature of retrospective research which does not allow these findings to be generalised to a larger population and does not provide a current picture of the phenomenon. Despite these shortcomings, we believe that the findings are useful in that they provide a platform for future research and fills a gap in the international literature on hearing the voices of persons with disabilities (Farrell, 2000; Byrnes & Rikards 2011) from the Caribbean context. Further research is needed to understand the schooling experiences of students with disabilities longitudinally, and

studies are also needed to understand how barriers to participation influence specific group of students with impairments in the Caribbean.

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## **Engaging Students and Improving Behavior Through a Multidisciplinary Approach to Literacy Instruction**

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### **Abstract**

*This research explores the interdisciplinary collaboration between music therapy and language arts through the implementation of a psycho-educational unit of study. The effect on student motivation, engagement and academic motivation as reflected in approach, persistence, and level of interest were compared to baseline data collection. This study emphasizes the importance of developing units of study build on student interests and safe media, such as music and other pathways that foster motivation and engagement.*

## Introduction

Residential and day treatment facilities across the country provide therapeutic and educational services to vulnerable student populations: students who have experienced the effects of poverty, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and exposure to violence, and who are receiving services and treatment for chronic mental health issues and the educational and learning disabilities associated with those problems. Treatment facilities service a wide range of needs and provide extensive therapeutic and educational interventions for students of all ages. Every child who has experienced the effects of trauma presents unique and individual challenges for the professionals who treat and provide educational services for them. The severity of each student's behaviors determines the treatment model, and some receive developmentally appropriate treatment in a school-only format, day treatment, or are provided residency and more intensive therapeutic and educational treatment in a residential format. Adolescents who receive treatment in residential and day treatment facilities experience mental illness and are often diagnosed with Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD), also referred to as Significant Emotional Disturbance (SED). These illnesses and the behaviors that manifest themselves, thus, prevent these students from receiving educational instruction in a public setting, and, therefore, it has been determined that the least restrictive environment (LRE) for their education is in a residential or day treatment facility.

Adolescents with EBD demonstrate a wide range of challenges for educators and therapists in residential and day treatment facilities. Students who experience EBD display a variety of challenging behaviors and diverse diagnoses (Gold, Voracek, & Wigram, 2004; Kauffman, J., M., & Pullen, P., C., 2009). Most adolescents with EBD display one or more of the following behaviors: short attention spans, anxiety, low self-esteem, emotional dysregulation,

deficits in verbal memory, aggression, self-injurious behaviors, conduct disorder, obsession, and compulsion. Diagnoses for these individuals include, but are not limited to, depression, anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity, autism, eating disorders, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, and bi-polar mood disorder (Foran, 2009; Hallahan, D., P., Kauffman, J., M., & Pullen, P., C., 2009; Sausser & Raymond, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

Children and adolescents diagnosed with EBD are required to receive services, accommodations, and modifications in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (Kauffman, et al., 2009). IDEIA identifies the characteristics of EBD as the presence or exhibition of one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time, and to a marked degree, that adversely affect a child's academic performance: (a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (IDEA, 2004). Students who experience EBD and who display one or more of these characteristics must also be failing academically to receive educational services, accommodations, or modifications under IDEIA (IDEIA, 2004; Hallahan, et al., 2009; Sausser & Raymond, 2006).

These characteristics manifest themselves and are grouped as externalizing or internalizing behaviors (Chong & Kim, 2010; Gold, et al., 2004). These behaviors are a form of emotional or behavioral dysregulation. Externalized behaviors are considered verbal outbursts, tantrums, impulsion, coercion, manipulation, aggression, and noncompliance (Chong & Kim,

2010; Gold, et al., 2004). Internalized behaviors are subtle and manifest themselves in withdrawal, depression, anxiety, and lack of focus (Chong & Kim, 2010; Gold, et al., 2004; Gresham, Kern & Vanderwood, 2007; Hallahan, et al., 2009). It has been estimated that as many as 2% of children who are of school age suffer from EBD and that as many as 8% of all students with disabilities qualify under IDEIA, 2004. EBD is more prevalent in males than females, identified more in adolescent students than in younger students, and poverty doubles the risk of EBD classification (United States Department of Education, 2009).

Adolescents diagnosed with EBD and who suffer mentally and academically due to their disability receive services in an array of treatment options. In a residential and day treatment facility students, may receive individualized therapy, group therapy, and experiential therapies such as equine therapy, canine therapy, and geriatric assistance therapy. These experiential therapies have shown significant results in decreasing problematic behaviors, emotional dysregulation, and facilitating a transition for students with EBD into foster care, public school, or back into the home. One particularly effective experiential therapy utilized for the treatment of EBD in residential and day treatment settings is music therapy (Gold, et al., 2004; Rickson & McFerran, 2007).

Music has been used as a therapeutic medium in cultures for millennia, but it was established as a psycho-therapeutic treatment in the 1950's (Foran, 2009; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007). Music itself is diverse and contains numerous aspects such as tone, tempo, mood, lyrics, and emotion. Music therapy draws on that diversity in a behavioral, holistic, humanistic, and psycho-dynamic approach in treating neurological, developmental, emotional, and behavioral disorders (Rickson & McFerran, 2007). The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) identifies music therapy as, *"the prescribed use of music by a qualified*

*person to effect positive changes in the psychological, physical, cognitive, or social functioning of individuals with health or educational problems”* (AMTA, 2003). Per the World Federation of Music Therapy, this use of music in therapeutic and educational settings can promote and facilitate communication, expression, organization, and learning (Rickson & McFerran, 2007). Music therapy has been proven to be an effective therapeutic treatment and has shown significant success in reducing anxiety, facilitating emotional regulation, increasing motivation, improving self-esteem, decreasing hyperactivity, fostering positive social relationships, and providing appropriate coping skills (Chong & Kim, 2010; Elliott, Polman & McGregor, 2011; Foran, 2009; McFerran, 2009; Rickson & Watkins, 2003; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

Music therapy provides emotional support, cognitive remediation, and affective functioning support, encouragement, and treatment in various forms drawing on theoretical foundations. Music therapy draws on psycho-dynamic, behavioral, and humanistic models for therapeutic treatment. Music therapy is typically categorized as either active or passive and formatted or improvisational. Active music therapy promotes positive behavior and emotional or physical rehabilitation through physical participation in the creation of music. Passive music therapy uses music for emotional coping, the expression of feelings, and the communication for individuals with limited verbal capacity due to physical, developmental, and traumatic origins. Formatted music therapies often incorporate some aspect of technical musical instruction and guided passive music therapy to achieve treatment goals. Improvisational therapies are abstract and are often used as an outlet for frustration, anger, sadness, and other internalized behaviors to decrease inappropriate externalized behaviors. There are numerous classifications and forms of music therapy, but most of them follow and incorporate aspects of psycho-dynamic, behavioral, and humanistic approaches. They incorporate listening, discussing, and creating music to achieve

affective, therapeutic, social, academic, and physical goals for individuals affected by developmental, physical, emotional, or behavioral disabilities (Gold, et al., 2004).

Each individual case of EBD presents unique academic and treatment challenges for administrators, educators, therapists, and professionals who provide services in treatment facilities for these students. Adolescents who have experienced one or more diagnoses, and whose externalizing and internalizing behaviors prevent education in a public setting, demand individualized as well as behavioral group supports to facilitate academic instruction and therapeutic treatment. Academic instruction becomes a challenge for educators due to students' general depressive state, inability to learn, participate, form healthy relationships, and regulate behaviors in the classroom (Sausser & Waller, 2005, Hallahan, et al., 2009). Due to the complexities of EBD and the multifarious nature and adaptability of music therapy, increasing attention has been given to the interdisciplinary application of music therapy in educational domains for adolescents with EBD (Rickson & McFerran, 2007). Because IDEIA and IEP goals mandate interdisciplinary cooperation between professionals, treatment in residential and day treatment facilities as well as special education classrooms is beginning to incorporate aspects of music therapy into general and special education settings, after school programs, and in treatment facilities to meet EBD clinical and educational goals and objectives (Kim & Chong, 2010; McFerran, 2009; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; Sausser & Waller, 2006).

In addition to therapeutic treatment and behavioral supports, students in residential and day treatment facilities are also required to receive educational accommodations, modifications, and behavioral goals and objectives as mandated by IDEIA and as determined by the IEP team managing the individual's case (IDEIA, 2004). The educational adjustments to providing instruction often take the form of Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS). To meet eligibility



guidelines for EBD, students must be failing academically, and PBS aims to foster a learning environment that promotes, facilitates and provides emotionally stable learning environments (Hallahan, et al., 2009). PBS models used in treatment facilities structure the learning environment in a predictable and safe manner and create clearly defined behavioral expectations using common language across settings. PBS aims to foster communication between students, staff, parents, caseworkers, and administrators as well as promoting the use of appropriate behaviors, increasing instructional time, and providing extra support for individuals at-risk (Hallahan, et al., 2009).

Even with the wide range of therapeutic treatment services and the positive behavioral supports provided for adolescents in treatment facilities, academic instruction, curriculum development, classroom management, and educational goals and objectives continue to present demands and challenges for educators, administrators, and treatment professionals. Due to inappropriate feelings during typical classroom settings and events, depression, anxiety, emotional dysregulation, behavioral outbursts, tantrums, disruptive behavior, low motivation, low self-esteem, lack of engagement, and the inability to focus, all students with EBD experience academic difficulties because of their disability (Foran, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; Hallahan, et al., 2009; McFerran, 2009; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; Sausser & Raymond, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009). Low academic performance coupled with EBD presents several short-term and long-term outcomes including, but not limited to, substance abuse, school dropout, referral to mental health agencies, homelessness, juvenile justice system referrals, suspension, expulsion, and other negative life outcomes (Gresham, Kern & Vanderwood, 2007; Hallahan, et al., 2009). These negative outcomes affect self-image, self-esteem, motivation, engagement, behavior, and

academic performance in all academic domains and contribute to low graduation rates for students with EBD (Gresham et al., 2007; Hallahan, et al., 2009).

Promoting academic success in all domains is a critical goal for educators who provide instruction for students with EBD in treatment facilities. Remediation in mathematics, science, and social studies is critical to closing the achievement gap for students who receive services in facilities. In no academic domain is remediation more important for low-achieving adolescents than language arts and literacy instruction. Struggling readers are infrequently provided appropriate reading instruction, and this increases the ever-widening gap between their present grade level and their level of achievement (Chall, 2000; Edmonds, et al., 2009; Hallahan, et al., 2009; Torgenson, Houston, Rissman & Decker, 2007). As students move into their adolescence, the focus of instruction moves from learning to read to reading to learn, and when literacy and language arts remediation is not addressed, the achievement gap widens at a frightening rate (Spafford & Grosser, 2005). Key aspects of literacy instruction include fluency, decoding, and comprehension, and an ideal system of literacy instruction should include direct and explicit instruction in all three domains (Spafford & Grosser, 2005; Torgenson, et al., 2007). However, providing differentiated and scaffolded reading remediation for adolescents in treatment facilities presents a unique set of challenges for educators. In addition to the challenges that the mental health issues and the externalizing and internalizing behaviors that students with EBD present for educators, low achievement in reading reduces self-esteem, lowers motivation, and when combined with EBD, can increase disruptive behaviors (Edmonds, et al., 2009; McTigue & Liew, 2011; Spafford & Grosser, 2005; Torgenson, et al., 2007).

In the fast-paced tempo and the high-speed demands of our evolving technological society, adolescents face higher standards, larger quantities of content, and larger academic

demands driven by curriculum (Edmonds, et al., 2009). Adolescents, especially adolescents diagnosed with EBD, lack academic motivation, engagement, and academic self-esteem (McTigue & Liew, 2011). Motivation, engagement, and appropriate classroom behaviors are crucial for large group literacy, reading instruction, self-directed learning necessary for comprehension, and the importance of motivation and engagement for struggling readers cannot be overstated. Low motivation and engagement prevent students with EBD from getting to the starting line academically and prevent positive academic growth in individual and group directed activities in a language arts classroom (Spafford & Grosser, 2005). Struggling readers who are not affected by EBD suffer from negative self-image and are marginalized in Language Arts settings, and the risk for students with EBD, who struggle with reading increases the possibility for negative life outcomes (Gresham, et al., 2007; Hallahan, et al., 2009; Spafford & Grosser, 2005). Struggling adolescent readers with EBD in treatment facilities are at a high risk of slipping through the cracks and honestly believe that they have no power over their academic futures and, therefore, will not attempt to improve their situation (McTigue & Liew, 2011). It is critical that educators, administrators, and treatment professionals foster a language arts environment and provide literacy instruction that motivates and engages struggling adolescent readers diagnosed with EBD. Language arts teachers play a crucial role in promoting a safe environment in which adolescents with EBD can develop their decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills while fostering motivation, engagement, and self-esteem (Edmonds, et al., 2009; McTigue & Liew, 2011).

Language arts is a diverse academic domain that provides teachers who serve adolescent EBD populations in residential and day treatment facilities with a vast pool of opportunities to engage in thoughtful instruction about emotions, practical life skills, interpersonal relationships,

causality, conflict, tension, and character growth (McTigue & Liew, 2011). When students are engaged and motivated, even when decoding and fluency are delayed, comprehension and understanding of themes, concepts, and reading can be increased through auditory or visual presentations of text while fluency and decoding are remediated in other settings. Comprehension increases engagement, and engagement increases motivation, and motivation and engagement decrease problematic behaviors (Edmonds, et al., 2009; Gresham et al., 2007; Hallahan, et al., 2009; McTigue & Liew, 2011; Spafford & Grosser, 2005). Because of its diversity, language arts provide a fertile environment for social and emotional skill development, social and emotional learning, and traditional academic learning, and, when integrated, foster the affective, emotional, and academic goals of struggling adolescent readers with EBD (McTigue & Liew, 2011). In addition, literature's ability to facilitate academic, affective, social, emotional, and adaptive instruction makes it a unique venue for interdisciplinary collaboration with therapeutic disciplines.

Music and music therapy also provide a richly diverse set of components that make them ideal partners for interdisciplinary collaboration and academic instruction. Music has been used for self-expression, healing, relaxation, celebration, mourning, and self-expression since the dawn of time, and it is a powerful medium due to its pliability, diversity, viability, and familiarity (Chong & Kim, 2010). Teenagers utilize music to express themselves and their dreams, fears, joys, hopes, and anxieties (McFerran, et al., 2010). Identity is a crucial aspect of psychological development for adolescents, and one of the most crucial ways that teenagers express themselves and relate to others is through music (McFerran & Hunt, 2008). Students who suffer from trauma and who have been identified as EBD listen to 30% more music than typically functioning peers (McFerran, et al., 2010). Treatment facilities often provide music programs in which students

with EBD may use personal music in class to regulate emotions, and music provides these students with an appropriate coping tool for stressful situations that might lead to problematic behaviors. Studies have found that music therapy can enhance self-esteem, facilitate emotional regulation, decrease off-task behaviors, promote healthy social relationships, reduce stress, decrease anxiety, alleviate depression, increase confidence, decrease aggressive behaviors, increase engagement, induce intrinsic motivation, and decrease problematic or disruptive behaviors (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran, et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

Problematic and disruptive behaviors are often a result of boredom stemming from traditional forms of language arts instruction and can lead to low levels of motivation and engagement. Increased motivation and engagement in the language arts classroom have been shown to improve comprehension, decoding, and fluency as well as increase academic achievement, decrease problematic behaviors, and improve self-esteem (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; Hallahan, et al., 2009; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran, et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009; Spafford & Grosser, 2005). Adolescent students with EBD in a treatment setting demonstrate low levels of motivation and engagement and regularly demonstrate disruptive or problematic behaviors. Music and aspects of music therapy have consistently shown the ability to facilitate treatment goals that improve motivation, engagement, and decrease problematic behaviors in treatment and academic settings (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran, et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

Building on the needs of struggling adolescent readers diagnosed with EBD in residential and day treatment facilities, the current study sought to examine the efficacy of incorporating components of active and passive psycho-dynamic music therapy into the language arts curriculum for adolescent students between 14-18 years of age with a primary diagnosis of EBD to assess the effects on motivation, engagement, and behavior. The study hypothesized that student engagement and motivation would increase while problematic behavior would decrease by developing and implementing a thematic curricular design and implementation project that joins the language arts curriculum to the experiential music therapy program (psycho-educational). This study was designed to provide qualitative as well as quantitative data regarding motivation, engagement, and behavior to provide a holistic analysis of interdisciplinary collaboration between music therapy and language arts instruction.

## **Literature Review**

### **Music Therapy & EBD**

There is limited amount of literature available that has analyzed the effects of interdisciplinary collaboration between instruction in the language arts classroom and music therapy. In addition, much of the research completed on music therapy focuses on students who are non-verbal, have developmental delays, physical disabilities, communication, non-verbal, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Research on motivation, engagement, and reading remediation almost exclusively assesses the validity of one intervention in a predictable general education setting with typically functioning adolescents. Despite the limited pool of research on the purpose, setting, subject, and intervention strategies utilized in the current study, there has been significant research completed analyzing the effects of music therapy on bereavement, loss, and many of the internalized emotions that those affected by EBD suffer from, such as depression,

sadness, despair, acting out, and anti-social behaviors (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran, et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009). ADHD, EBD, anxiety, and depression have also been the extensive focus of studies in music therapy settings. These sources of information provide educational contexts and valuable insight from the current study and point to the necessity for interdisciplinary collaboration among music therapists and language arts teachers in treatment facilities to promote motivation, engagement, and appropriate classroom behavior for adolescents with EBD.

### **Bereavement, Grief, and Loss**

Katrina McFerran, et al., (2010) carried out extensive research studies analyzing the effects of music therapy in helping adolescents cope with grief and loss. McFerran (2008, 2010) routinely identifies the importance of music in the lives of adolescents and attributes it to their identity formation at this developmentally challenging stage. Studies note that there is a naturally occurring relationship between adolescents and music and that music provides a non-threatening medium to help with depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and anti-social behaviors associated with grief and loss. These internalized emotions are present in students with EBD in treatment facilities and often bear their origins in bereavement, grief, loss, or the trauma associated with them. Therefore, she asserts that music plays a reflective role for teenagers and especially teenagers who are emotionally vulnerable, citing that students with EBD might listen to up to as much as 30% more music than a similar peer without EBD. Her studies cited an increase in motivation, engagement, and assumption of personal responsibility while increasing productive coping skills. These studies suggest that music therapy promotes an engaging, safe, and familiar format for students who demonstrate similarities in externalizing and internalizing behaviors as

those diagnosed with EBD in a treatment facility. Finally, McFerran, et al., (2008, 2010) found that music therapy can be an effective, short-term application as well as an on-going treatment format for adolescents who suffer from grief and loss (McFerran & Hunt, 2008; McFerran, et al., 2010; Roberts & O'Grady, 2010).

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder**

Adolescents with EBD often experience other learning disabilities and, regardless of diagnoses, many share similarities with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). ADHD and music therapy have been studied extensively, and music therapy has shown positive results in decreasing problematic behaviors, increasing attention, task completion, and appropriate classroom behavior. McFerran, et al., (2008, 2010) noted that 41% of this research was conducted in group and individual formats, 20% was completed in individualized settings and 29% in group-only settings. These studies noted that significant improvements were made in on-task behavior, appropriate classroom behavior, attention, and motivation for adolescents diagnosed with ADHD when eclectic, humanistic, holistic, psycho-dynamic, and active models of music therapy were employed. McFerran, et al., (2008, 2010) also found that when PBS is present and, adolescents are receiving clinical treatment as well as music therapy; self-esteem was increased due to an increase in successful learning experiences. Student-centered approaches that focus on the strengths, abilities, and interests of adolescents with ADHD increase motivation, engagement, and improve behavior because they empower the students and give them a sense of control. Many adolescents who are treated for EBD feel a disconnection from their lives as well as an inability to effectively make positive changes to improve future outcomes. Music therapy has been shown to increase a feeling of empowerment in adolescents with ADHD and has been shown to decrease impulsive behaviors that commonly manifest in



educational settings for students with EBD (McFerran, 2008). Rickson & Watkins (2003) also found that music therapy increased self-control in adolescents with ADHD. In addition, this study found that combinations of active and passive psycho-dynamic music therapy decreased aggression, improved mood, increased motivation, and facilitated and fostered the development of positive relationships. Finally, this study suggested that these results might be attainable in less predictable and structured settings such as the language arts classroom (Rickson & Watkins, 2003).

### **Anxiety**

In almost all instances, individuals with EBD experience some degree of anxiety and internalizing behaviors associated with it such as fear, withdrawal, depression, low self-esteem, low motivation, and inappropriate behaviors. Elliot, Polman & McGregor (2011) refer to anxiety as an inappropriate or negative emotional response to routine situations, thoughts, or interactions that are perceived to be threatening. Up to 14% of the EBD population meets the full diagnostic criteria for Anxiety Disorder, and adolescents in educational settings have been found to underperform and consistently reach lower levels of academic achievement as unaffected peers. Schoenfeld & Mathur (2009) cite that the causes of this may stem from low levels of motivation and academic engagement, as well as a higher incidence of disruptive or inappropriate classroom behaviors. Music, music therapy, and their effects on anxiety have been researched rigorously and consistently have proven to lower levels of anxiety in active, passive, and psycho-dynamic applications. Elliot (2011) and his colleagues noted that music has been noted physiologically to reduce the signs of anxiety and stress such as heart rate and blood pressure in passive interactions. These studies found that music and music therapy reduce anxiety levels in adolescents with EBD and that they lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors in

clinical settings. Finally, these studies suggest that music would have a similar effect on adolescents in the language arts classroom and would help to promote positive social interactions, increase motivation, and decrease disruptive externalizing behaviors (Elliot et al., 2011; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

### **Psycho-Educational Music Therapy**

Several studies addressed effective models for the application of music therapy in a psycho-educational setting and application. Sausser & Waller (2006) present a model to address externalizing and internalizing behaviors for adolescents diagnosed with EBD in a group format. They found that creating a safe and structured environment that utilizes PBS and provides musical experiences that reinforce cognitive and academic learning work to decrease problematic behaviors, increase motivation, improve academic engagement, encourage self-expression, foster communication skills, and improve positive social and academic outcomes (Sausser & Waller, 2006). In addition, they found that active, structured music activities encourage positive responses and allow adolescents with EBD to channel negative emotions into a positive academic activity. Finally, Sausser & Waller (2006) suggest that language arts educators may easily implement and access the therapeutic components of music therapy and integrate them into academic venues (Sausser & Waller, 2006).

In their 2010 analysis, Chong & Kim assessed the efficacy of incorporating music therapy into an after-school program for students with EBD and found that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with EBD displayed positive behavioral changes because of the use of music therapy. Music therapy was used as an educational tool and facilitated improvements in assertiveness, self-control, and cooperation. There were significant differences in baseline behavioral data collection and post-intervention assessment for social skills as well as

problematic behavior. This study, like Sausser's (2006), implies that the use of music in a psycho-educational setting positively impacts students' achievement levels and improves behavioral outcomes for adolescents with EBD (Chong & Kim, 2010). Gold, et al., (2004) found that eclectic approaches to music therapy that incorporate interdisciplinary collaboration had significant outcomes for students diagnosed with EBD. They also found that literature supports the use of passive, active, and psycho-dynamic music therapies in individual as well as group settings and that these interventions provided positive outcomes for externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Gold, et al., 2004). Finally, Froan (2009) suggests that the neurological networks that experience traumatic events often believed to be the root cause of EBD could be positively affected by music. In addition, music therapy has physiological validity as well as behavioral, cognitive, and academic benefits. Froan's (2009) study suggests a positive benefit for interdisciplinary collaboration between music therapy and language arts because the cerebellum, motor cortex, and the frontal lobes responsible for language development also play a large role in passive interpretation of music as well as active engagement with music. In this study, neurological imaging revealed that engagement with music exercises more parts of the brain than almost any other cognitive activity and that passive and active interactions with music facilitate cerebral functioning that has delays, or that does not function at all for students with EBD (Froan, 2009).

Finally, in addition to the benefits cited from existing studies that examined music therapy's effects on anxiety, ADHD, adolescents with EBD, bereavement, grief, loss, and externalizing and internalizing behaviors, Rickson & McFerran (2007) found that music was especially beneficial in diverse settings that relied heavily on interdisciplinary collaboration such as treatment facilities and special education classrooms that service a diverse population of

students. This study notes that IEP mandates and structures facilitate collaboration between music therapists, teachers, occupational therapists, and counselors to develop individual academic and clinical goals and objectives through referral, assessment, documentation, education, and treatment for students with EBD. The authors cited the necessity for interdisciplinary collaboration between teams to assess, determine, and help children meet goals set by all the professionals providing services in a treatment facility or special education classroom. Their study indicates the importance of data collection in a residential and day treatment facility because it is difficult to find a population of students, with similar needs working on similar goals, which are available to participate in interventions that align with psycho-educational paradigms (Rickson & McFerran, 2007).

### **Rationale**

The benefits of music therapy are vast, and the application of its various theoretical underpinnings has produced results for diverse populations of individuals with an array of disabilities. Music therapy has shown statistically significant validity in treating physical, developmental, neurological, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Froan (2009) identified the neurological regions affected by trauma in the brains of individuals with emotional behavioral disorders and suggested that music has demonstrated the ability to repair unresponsive and damaged regions of the brain associated with the externalizing and internalizing behaviors demonstrated by individuals with EBD. In addition to the physiological benefits of music as a therapeutic medium, extensive research has consistently demonstrated that music therapy helps decrease anxiety, depression, aggression, inappropriate classroom behavior, off-task behavior, emotional dysregulation, socially inappropriate behavior, and stress while improving attention, positive social interactions, classroom behavior, self-esteem, self-expression, academic

engagement, motivation, and appropriate behaviors for adolescents who have been diagnosed with EBD behaviors (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

Music therapy has been utilized in therapeutic settings for over 50 years and has yielded significant results and positive outcomes for individuals with unique needs. The diversity of music as a medium and the diversity of music therapy make it a fertile ground for sowing seeds of interdisciplinary collaboration. Environments such as general education classroom settings and special education classroom settings offer the potential for collaborative interventions that facilitate the appropriate development of physical, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and academic skills for adolescents with EBD. Music therapy and language arts instruction offer the ideal setting for collaboration when Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) are present because both can promote communication, expression, self-esteem, and creativity in safe and appropriate outlets for emotions common to individuals with EBD such as anger, frustration, depression, loneliness, helplessness, and anxiety. Music has consistently demonstrated the ability to decrease inappropriate and disruptive behaviors in educational settings and facilitated a safe, predictable, and consistent learning environment for those who need it the most. Treatment facilities with clinical and educational resources provide the perfect setting for psycho-educational instruction because the students served in these settings have similar needs, behaviors, goals, objectives, and resources. These settings are ripe with opportunities to create programs that build self-esteem through music and language arts instruction, thus increasing motivation and engagement, and ultimately improving reading comprehension. They provide an outlet that increases attention on task, and, thus, increases task completion and academic performance and engagement. Also,

these settings can promote academic achievement in correlation to therapeutic and clinical goals in a safe and predictable environment that promote the development of appropriate social skills. Finally, psycho-educational instruction in residential and day treatment facilities provides adolescents with EBD an additional support for appropriate self-expression and creative, educational, and appropriate coping with the externalizing and internalizing behaviors that have prevented them from receiving instruction in a typical educational setting (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran, et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

Struggling adolescent readers are at a high risk for poor academic performance in multiple domains because the curricular expectations of science, math, social studies, and language arts require and demand the ability to read fluently, and the ability to learn and comprehend new concepts, themes, and ideas. The gap between grade level and achievement widens for struggling readers the more their needs go unaddressed and the more they approach adulthood. Adolescents with EBD, who are also struggling readers are at twice the risk as appropriately functioning peers for negative life outcomes such as dropout, unemployment, homelessness, and incarceration. Students with EBD consistently display low academic motivation, engagement, and problematic behaviors that prevent them from participating and learning valuable concepts, ideas, and themes presented in high school language arts classes. Studies have consistently demonstrated that improving motivation and engagement for struggling adolescent readers increases comprehension, enjoyment, and participation, which then may facilitate individual engagement and participation in reading remediation that addresses decoding and fluency (Chall, 2000; Edmonds, et al., 2009; Hallahan, et al., 2009; Spafford & Grosser, 2005; Torgenson, Houston, Rissman & Decker, 2007). Music provides the perfect avenue to

foster positive rapport with adolescents who are affected by EBD because adolescents use music to define themselves, cope with identity formation, and as an outlet for difficult emotions (McFerran, et al., 2010). McFerran, et al., (2010) cited that teenagers with EBD listen to 30% more music than typical peers. Many residential and day treatment facilities currently have music programs for adolescents who need assistance coping in the classroom.

Sausser & Waller (2006) noted that very little literature exists that defines or guides the work of music therapists working with adolescents diagnosed with EBD in residential or day treatment settings. They also note that there is data lacking on school-based models and interdisciplinary collaboration for therapeutic and educational goals and objectives for behavior, affective, and academic needs. Other studies also note that federal legislation such as IDEA mandate and promote an environment of interdisciplinary collaboration between therapists and educators, but that there is currently very little literature that addresses the potential benefits of psycho-therapeutic collaboration. Finally, there is little to no research that exists assessing the possible benefits or possible effects on motivation, engagement, and behavior for adolescents diagnosed with EBD when interdisciplinary collaboration occurs between academic and therapeutic disciplines in the classroom at residential and day treatment facilities. Treatment facilities offer the perfect sample population for such a study because PBS, therapeutic, and educational supports are preexisting for a population with similar behavioral and educational goals and objectives (Chong & Kim, 2010; Froan, 2009; Gold, et al., 2004; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Rickson & McFerran, 2007; McFerran, et al., 2010; Sausser & Waller, 2006; Schoenfeld & Mathur, 2009).

The current study attempted to add to the existing body of literature on the use of music therapy for adolescents diagnosed with EBD and the current literature that addresses motivation

and engagement for struggling adolescent readers by creating an interdisciplinary thematic unit of academic instruction whose aim was to increase academic motivation and engagement while decreasing problematic behaviors. The author of this study hypothesized that academic motivation and engagement will increase during the implementation of a language arts curriculum that incorporates aspects of passive, active, and psycho-therapeutic music therapy. Also, the author hypothesized that problematic behaviors such as interruptions, verbal outbursts, disrespectful behavior, in-school suspension referrals, and inappropriate classroom behaviors would decrease during the treatment phase of the study.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The participants of this research study are adolescent students who are receiving clinical and educational treatment in a residential and day treatment facility. There were 23 students between 14-19-years of age—14 boys and nine girls. The participants were grouped in educational pods; group one had six students—five boys and one girl. The second educational group had eight students—three girls and five boys. The third educational group had 11 students—six boys and five girls. Twelve of the students received residential services, and 11 were day treatment clients. Only five of the participants are were achieving at grade level in reading and writing, and all of them require PBS, clinical and, behavioral interventions, and IEP goals and objectives as mandated by IDEA for individuals diagnosed with EBD, who are failing academically in the general education environment. The primary diagnosis for all participants is Significant Identifiable Emotional Disorder (SIED) as defined by the State of Colorado and all are receiving federally and regionally appropriate educational services required by Colorado state standards, IDEA and No Child Left Behind (NCLB).



All the participants experience various manifestations of EBD as determined by the eligibility guidelines. The students assessed for this research study suffer from mental illnesses ranging from any singular or combination of severe to moderate depression, anxiety, and attention deficit hyperactive disorder, conduct disorder, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and schizophrenic thought patterns. These mental health problems and the learning disabilities and problems associated with them are managed with PBS and a variety of medications including but not limited to:

- Risperdal – schizophrenia
- Trazadone - depression
- Ritalin – attention deficit hyperactive disorder
- Tenex – attention deficit hyperactive disorder
- Seroquel - schizophrenia
- Abilify – schizophrenia
- Lorazepan – anxiety
- Welbutrin XL - depression
- Concerta – attention deficit hyperactive disorder
- Depakote ER – bipolar mood disorder
- Lithium Carbonate – bipolar mood disorder
- Vyvanse – attention deficit hyperactive disorder

- Zoloft – depression and anxiety
- Prozac –depression and anxiety

### **Setting**

The current study took place in a residential and day treatment facility that services the clinical and academic needs of adolescents between the ages of 12-19-years-old. Class sizes are typically between five and 15 pupils, and state licensed educators provide core content academic instruction. Each class has one instructor and a Youth Therapy Counselor (YTC) who provides behavioral support as needed. Academic instruction and classroom management follow PBS protocols for clearly defined expectations, limits, and consequences for behavior. Classes are 60-minutes in length. Clients receive individualized, group, family, and experiential therapies with emotional and behavioral goals determined by therapeutic staff and caseworkers during and after school hours. The clients treated at the facility are unable to receive an education in a public setting due to safety, behavioral, emotional, and judicial issues.

### **Design**

The study took place over the course of nine weeks. During the first two weeks, preliminary and background data about the participants were collected from educational records. Participants with a primary diagnosis of EBD and who were not discharged from treatment during the study were chosen for this study. During weeks three and four, baseline data collection took place using a rater scale designed by the researcher. Baseline data was collected by the author of the study assessing motivation, engagement, and behavior during language arts instruction by the participating teacher. The unit of study used was Zora Neale Huston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Instruction during this period followed the explicit and direct instruction teaching cycle, and the 60-minute class was organized as follows:

- 15 minute anticipatory set with a pre-writing exercise
- 30 minutes of group reading
- 15 minutes of direct vocabulary instruction

At the beginning of the fifth week, the researcher was the primary instructor in the classroom and introduced themes and concepts from the novel that was to be taught during the modified portion of the unit. During week six, the students were not in their typical classroom and no instruction occurred due to state standardized testing. Additionally, no instruction occurred during week seven due to spring break.

### **Psycho-educational Unit: Music and Language Arts**

The psycho-educational unit was created by the researcher by incorporating state standards for reading, writing, and communicating with the theoretical underpinnings of psycho-dynamic, active, and passive music therapy to create a curriculum that enhances content to improve motivation, engagement, and decrease problematic behavior for EBD adolescents (appendix 1). The researcher and developer of the unit based the design on Content Enhance Routines (CERs) whose principles are to (a) instruct academically diverse groups in ways that meet individual as well as group needs, goals, and objectives; (b) provide instruction in an active format engaging the students through rapport, technology, and popular mediums; (c) utilize teacher expertise to mediate learning through carefully designed content, thematic, and comprehension enhancement that transforms and promotes learning; (d) adhere to standards, curriculum, and content to maintain and ensure the integrity of the unit (Burlgren, Deshler, & Lenz, 2007).

## **Data Collection**

The behavioral rating system utilized for data collection in the current study was developed by the researcher to provide quantifiable and graphic representations of subjective and qualitative data gathering. The data collection system created aimed to measure motivation, engagement, and problematic behavior for adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders in the language arts classroom at a residential and day treatment facility. Each of these measurement areas was defined by commonly accepted definitions existing in previous literature review and research studies. The researcher developed Likert scales for each of the behavioral subsets.

## **Motivation**

For this research study, motivation was defined as academic motivation or an intrinsic desire to be successful. The researcher collected data using a Likert scale designed specifically for this study. This method of scoring qualitatively measured the subjects' perceived level of interest, approach, and persistence in the language arts classroom (Skinner, E. A., 1993). Following each period of instruction, the researcher compiled data and completed the following question for each student, assigning the following point value to each student's motivation for the class period.

1. Did the student display academic motivation as reflected in approach, persistence, and level of interest?

- 1) Never Motivated (displayed no persistence and appeared never interested)
- 2) Rarely Motivated (displayed low persistence and appeared rarely interested)
- 3) Occasionally Motivated (displayed average persistence and appeared somewhat interested)

- 4) Fairly Motivated (displayed strong persistence and appeared fairly interested)
- 5) Very Motivated (displayed extreme persistence and appeared very interested)

### **Engagement**

For this research study, engagement was defined as academic engagement or self-directed participation in the activities of the language arts class. The researcher collected data using a Likert scale designed specifically for this study. This method of scoring qualitatively measured the subjects perceived academic engagement by assigning a numeric value to the amount of time a subject participated in class and displayed a sustained behavioral involvement with enthusiasm, curiosity, and interest (Skinner, E. A., 1993). Following each period of instruction, the researcher compiled data and completed the following question for each student, assigning the following point value to each student's engagement for the class period.

1. Did the student display academic engagement as reflected in participation and interest?

- 1) Never Engaged (appeared never interested and never participated in class)
- 2) Rarely Engaged (appeared rarely interested and rarely participated in class)
- 3) Occasionally Engaged (appeared occasionally interested and participated somewhat in class)
- 4) Fairly Engaged (appeared fairly interested and often participated in class)
- 5). Very Engaged (appeared very interested and very often participated in class)

### **Behavior**

For this study, behavior was measured by the severity of inappropriate or disruptive behavior displayed by a subject in a typical language arts classroom. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior followed the expectations of the language arts classroom. Inappropriate or disruptive behaviors include verbal outburst, gossip, disrespectful behaviors, provoking, aggression,

swearing, not following limits, staff splitting, and opposing and defiant behaviors. The classroom rules for behaviors follow a redirect and three strike policy before in-school suspension (ISS), and reflective journaling is earned. Subjects receive up to three redirects for inappropriate or disruptive behaviors before they earn strikes, and upon receiving their third strike they earn up to two hours of ISS and reflective journaling. The researcher designed the Likert scale to measure behavior based on this school-wide protocol, behavior tracking, and PBS. Following each period of instruction, the researcher compiled data and completed the following question for each student, assigning the following point value to each student's behavior for the class period.

1. Did the student display appropriate behavior in the classroom?

1) Excellent Behavior (no redirects or behavioral prompting)

2) Very Good (few redirects and behavioral prompting)

3) Fair (several redirects and one strike)

4) Poor (several redirects and two strikes)

5) Inappropriate (several redirects, three strikes, ISSIS)

### **Results of the Study**

This study aimed to improve motivation and engagement in the language arts classroom for EBD adolescents in a residential and day treatment facility. It was hypothesized that by incorporating aspects of active and passive psycho-dynamic music therapy into the language arts curriculum, disruptive and problematic classroom behaviors would decrease as motivation and engagement increased. The author of this study developed a three-week unit of study based on the theoretical framework of active and passive psycho-dynamic music therapy in collaboration with content enhancement routine lesson plans for Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The effects of this interdisciplinary psycho-educational unit on student

motivation, engagement, and behavior were gathered and analyzed by class groups, males, females, and residential and day treatment clients.

**Table 1. Engagement, Motivation and Problematic Behavior Group 1**

Group 1	Pre/Post Treatment Averages	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.83 Post: 3.05	24% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.9 Post: 3.0	23% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 2.0 Post: 1.75	5% Decrease

Table 1: The first group demonstrated significant increases in motivation and engagement and a slight decrease in problematic behavior during the study.

**Table 2. Engagement, Motivation and \Problematic Behavior Group 2**

Group 2	Pre/Post Treatment Averages	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.69 Post: 2.79	19% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.65 Post: 2.8	23% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.64 Post: 1.98	6% Increase

Table 2: Group two significantly increased motivation and engagement but problematic behavior increased moderately during the study.

**Table 3. Engahement, Motivation and Problematic Behavior Group 3**

Group 3	Pre/Post Treatment Avg.	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.71 Post: 2.03	6% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.86 Post: 2.52	13% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.16 Post: 1.06	2% Decrease

Table 3: The first group demonstrated significant increases in motivation and engagement and a slight decrease in problematic behavior during the study.

**Table 4. Engagement, Motivation and Problematic Behavior All Students**

All Students	Pre/Post Treatment Averages	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.74 Post: 2.62	16% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.80 Post: 2.79	18% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.6 Post: 1.6	No Change

Table 4: When the data were combined the results were an improvement in motivation and engagement while there was no change in behavior.

### **Student Motivation Before and During Study**

Tables 1-4: All groups demonstrated an improvement in motivation

### **Student Engagement Before and During Study**

Tables 1-4: All groups demonstrated an increase in engagement.

### **Incidents of Negative Student Behavior Before and During Study**

Tables 1-4: Negative behavior decreased overall in group 1 and 3, and increased in group 2. Overall there was no change in incidents of negative behavior.

### **Study Results for Males**

**Table 5. Engagement, Motivation and Problematic Behavior for Males**

Males	Pre/Post Treatment Averages	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.67 Post: 2.81	23% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.63 Post: 3.0	27% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.65 Post: 1.64	No Change



Males demonstrated a significant increase in motivation and engagement during the implementation of the interdisciplinary curriculum while behavioral incidents remained the same.

### Study Results for Females

**Table 6. Engagement, Motivation and Problematic Behavior Females**

Females	Pre/Post Averages	Treatment	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.97 Post: 2.27		6% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 2.17 Post: 2.41		5% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.67 Post: 1.54		2% Decrease

During the study females demonstrated a moderate increase in motivation and engagement while their incidents of negative behavior slightly decreased during the implementation of the interdisciplinary curriculum.

**Table7. Study Results for Day Treatment**

Day Treatment	Pre/Post Averages	Treatment	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.59 Post: 2.07		9% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.64 Post: 2.32		13% Increase
Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.69 Post: 1.57		2% Decrease

During the study students in the day treatment program demonstrated a 9% increase in motivation, a 13% increase in engagement and a 2% decrease in problematic behaviors.

**Table 8. Study Results for Residential**

Residential	Pre/Post Averages	Treatment	Results
Motivation	Pre: 1.87 Post: 3.17		25% Increase
Engagement	Pre: 1.90 Post: 3.3		28% Increase

Problematic Behavior	Pre: 1.44 Post: 1.57	2% Increase
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During the study students in the residential program demonstrated a 25% increase in motivation, a 28% increase in engagement and a 2% decrease in problematic behavior.

### Analysis

The results of this study reported above depict the group averages of the scoring on the five-point Likert scale developed by the researcher. Overall, the students showed a 16% increase in motivation and an 18% increase in engagement. Problematic behavior remained unchanged. The youngest groups showed the largest changes in motivation and engagement. Motivation for group 1 increased by 24% while motivation for group 2 increased by 19%. Similarly, engagement for group 1 increased by 23% while engagement for group 2 increased by 23% during the implementation of the psycho-educational unit. Finally, Group 3 showed moderate improvements in motivation and engagement with a 6% increase and a 13% increase for the older subjects.

Results for behavior did not match the researcher's hypothesis, and potential causality will be discussed in the discussion and limitations sections of this research study. Problematic behavior, overall, did not change between pre- and post- treatment data collection. Group 1 displayed a 5% decrease and group 3 demonstrated a 2% decrease in problematic behaviors while problematic behavior for group 2 increased by 6%. Results for females, males, day treatment, and residential subjects did not vary from the previously mentioned behavioral results.

Males demonstrated the largest improvements in motivation and engagement during the implementation of the psycho-educational unit. Male motivation improved by 23% and engagement improved by 27% with no changes to behavioral results. Females, however,

demonstrated more modest improvements with a 6% increase in motivation and a 5% increase in engagement with negligible changes in behavior.

Mirroring the varying success of the unit on different populations are the results for the residential and day treatment subjects. Residential subjects, male and female, demonstrated a 25% increase in motivation, a 28% increase in engagement, and a small increase in problematic behavior. In contrast, day treatment subjects demonstrated a 9% improvement in motivation and a 13% improvement in engagement with a negligible decrease in problematic behaviors.

## **Discussion**

The results of this study suggest that interdisciplinary collaboration between music therapy and language arts through the implementation of a psycho-educational unit of study increased student motivation and engagement for adolescents in a residential and day treatment facility. During the research study, students displayed an increase in academic motivation as reflected in approach, persistence, and level of interest when compared to baseline data collection. Also, throughout the treatment phase of this study, students displayed increased academic engagement as reflected in participation and interest. This study did not yield the hypothesized results that predicted a decrease in problematic behavior, and, in fact, behavior remained largely unchanged during the study.

The results of the present study for the effects of active and passive music therapy on motivation and engagement are consistent with Sausser and Waller (2006) and McFerran (2009) who found that music therapy can motivate and engage students with EBD and other learning disabilities. In addition, the present study suggests that interdisciplinary collaboration between language arts and music therapy can increase motivation and engagement for struggling adolescent readers affected by EBD, which could potentially facilitate other more focused

reading remediation. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Bulgren, Deshler, and Lenz (2010), Edmonds, et al., (2009), Hallahan, et al., (2009), and McTigue and Liew (2011) that suggest student motivation and engagement will increase by developing units that build on student interests and safe mediums such as music and other pathways that foster motivation and engagement.

The results of this study do not reflect the behavioral results that were reported by Chong and Kim (2010) that suggested that psycho-educational instruction in an after-school program would decrease problematic externalizing behaviors. During the current study, behavior remained unchanged, and these results do not match Rickson and McFerran (2007) who stated that interdisciplinary collaboration between music therapy and special education would decrease problematic externalized behaviors. There are several possibilities for these findings that will be discussed in more detail in the limitations section of the current report.

Even though the current study did not support the findings that reported that music therapy decreases problematic behaviors, the study succeeded in demonstrating that interdisciplinary collaboration between active and passive psycho-dynamic music therapy and language arts curricular instruction resulted in increasing student motivation and engagement in a psycho-educational unit of study for struggling adolescent readers in a residential and day treatment facility. Engagement and motivation are cited as critical components of reading remediation by Bulgren, Deshler, and Lenz (2010), Edmonds et al., (2009), Hallahan, et al., (2009), and McTigue and Liew (2011) who added that both are integral in facilitating the acquisition of literacy skills for adolescents at risk of widening achievement gaps and academic failure.

The most promising results of this study showed that male, residential, and the younger subjects in groups 1 and 2 showed the largest gains in motivation and engagement. This is important because males typically outnumber females in diagnosis of EBD. Also, the results for residential treatment subjects is promising because clients treated in a residential setting usually display more severe internalizing and externalizing behaviors. The severity of those behaviors is reflected in the intensive treatment models provided for residential clients in treatment facilities. Finally, increased motivation and engagement for younger subjects is promising because literacy interventions and reading remediation yield more positive academic outcomes the earlier they are employed (Torgenson, et al., 2007).

Finally, the psycho-educational unit developed by the researcher provided a non-threatening medium for struggling adolescent readers to access the language arts curriculum and express themselves through the incorporation of active and passive psycho-dynamic music therapy techniques. The researcher observed students who had never participated become engaged and enthusiastic about the project and sharing feelings, emotions, and thoughts about their lives, the novel, and music. Also, the researcher believes that comprehension increased due to the benefits of music because of the complex thematic aspects of the novel, the subject's lives, and the music used created avenues for rapport, motivation, and engagement not typically present in language arts curricula. During the unit, numerous students chose difficult thematic concepts from the novel and tied them to their lives such as abandonment, persecution, gossip, abuse, domestic violence, and self-esteem. It is the opinion of this researcher that music facilitated the contextualization of these conceptual aspects of the novel and provided a safe place for students to relate the emotions experienced by the characters in the novel to their lives and, thus, increased comprehension of the novel. The psycho-educational unit was a success in

this researcher's opinion, not only in a quantitative analysis of increased motivation and engagement, but also in a qualitative analysis of comprehension, self-esteem, and the possible incorporation of therapeutic correlation between the novel, characters, and themes and subjects' emotional, behavioral, and treatment goals.

### **Limitations**

The current study had several limitations that could have affected the fidelity, validity, and reliability of the result. First, the current study was developed with limited assistance from a trained music therapist. During the planning stages of the study, a certified music therapist was consulted briefly, but during collection of baseline data the music therapist resigned from his position at the treatment facility, and no replacement was found during the study. Second, the current study and curriculum were developed and implemented by a graduate student with limited teaching and research experience. In addition to this, there was no inter-rater agreement for baseline and treatment data collection.

Another limitation of the current study is that there were two different teachers and teaching styles being used during baseline data collection and treatment data collection. Different teachers and different teaching styles could account for changes in motivation, engagement, and behavior that were not a result of the psycho-educational unit analyzed here. Also, the scheduling at the treatment facility created gaps in instruction that could have compromised the results of this study. There was a break between baseline data collection for statewide standardized testing, spring break, and smaller interruptions for field trips. These gaps in instruction may have compromised the validity of this study. Finally, during the study, student groups were restructured due to academic progress, behavior, and client discharge from services. These regroupings could have compromised the behavioral goals of the study. In addition, during

treatment data collection all the students were more engaged and present in class creating the opportunity for more behavioral disruptions.

### **Implications**

The current study highlighted the need for more extensive research and analysis of the positive effects of music therapy on motivation, engagement, and behavior when applied in an interdisciplinary psycho-educational unit with language arts. Because motivation and engagement are intrinsic traits, it is difficult to gauge from an external perspective. Future studies should utilize interviews and subject self-assessment for pre- and post-treatment effects on motivation and engagement. Future studies should be more structured and obtain inter-rater agreement and more consistent baseline and treatment data collection instruction. Future studies should also analyze other variables such as on-task behavior, mood, self-perception, positive relationships, anxiety, and academic progress. The current study points to the efficacy of music and the success of interdisciplinary collaboration between music therapy and language arts when attempting to increase motivation and engagement for struggling adolescent readers, and any future studies should attempt to achieve higher levels of fidelity, reliability, and validity to highlight the benefits of music as a therapeutic and academic medium in a psycho-educational unit of study.

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## Appendix 1.

### Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 1:

#### Historical Perspective: Internalized Racism in the Context of Zora Neale Hurston's, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Advance Organizer:** The instructor will play videos on the topic of internalized racism; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybDa0gSuAcg> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcAuO0PNnrs&feature=related>

Once the videos have been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

1. What is racism?
2. What is internalized racism?

#### Objectives:

Students will be able to complete a short writing about racism and internalized racism. Students will be able to discuss internalized racism in the context of the novel and in their personal lives.

1. Students will be able to individually journal about internalized racism or racism and how they have been affected by prejudice, racism, or internalized racism.
2. In a large group the students will be able to discuss prejudice, internalized racism, and racism.
3. Students will be able to discuss internalized racism in the context of the novel and in relation to the characters Janie Starks, Mrs. Turner, and Tea Cake.

#### Introduction:

The use of setting, historical influences, social, and racial themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. Racism in America exists in a continuum and within the context of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, as well as the social experiments carried out by Kenneth and Mamie Clark in 1939, repeated by Kiri Davis in 2005, and again in 2009 on "Good Morning America." The character, Mrs. Turner, personifies the sentiments, characteristics, and attitudes of internalized racism in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and during the historical context in which the novel is placed.

**Outline of Materials:**

1) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and having them justify their oral responses.

Have any of you been affected by racism or prejudice?

After watching the video, how do you feel about racism in America over the last 100 years? Has it gotten better or worse?

What is internalized Racism?

Does racism, prejudice, or internalized racism exist in the novel?

What does racism look like in 1920, 1950, 2000, and 2012? Are there any differences? Is there more or less racism in America now? What does racism look like now?

2) Play clips from the videos <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybDa0gSuAcg> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcAuO0PNnrs&feature=related>

3) In a large group read chapters 16 & 17. Highlight the passage:

“Mrs. Turner, like all other believers had built an altar to the unattainable – Caucasian characteristics for all. Her god would smite her, would hurl her from pinnacles and lose her in deserts, but she would not forsake his altars. Behind her crude words was a belief that somehow, she and others through worship could attain her paradise – a heaven of straight haired, thin-lipped, high-nose boned white seraphs.” p. 145

4) Building on the discussion from the videos, guide a discussion to address internalized racism in the novel in the context and relating to the characters Mrs. Turner, Janie, and Tea Cake.

**Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 2:****Setting, Geography, and Historical Relevance:****The 1928 Hurricane and *Their Eyes Were Watching God***

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Advance Organizer:**

The instructor will play videos from Hurricane Katrina and ask the students what they remember about the storm. Play a video for the song, *Tie My Hands*, by Lil Wayne and play a video from “Good Morning America” with storm footage.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXYQzej7aUw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s76Qn7bpCsQ>

Once the videos have been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

1. What do you remember about Hurricane Katrina?
2. Do you know what dikes or levees are?

Draw a picture of a dike or a levy and demonstrate what happens to people who live below levees when they break, like the people of New Orleans and the characters in the novel who live below the dikes of Lake Okeechobee. Show pictures from:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mfl/?n=okeechobee>

<http://www.orlandohurricane.net/History/1928.html>

### **Objectives:**

The use of setting, historical influences, and historical events determine and add to the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. Students will be presented with the concept that written narratives of real or imagined events utilize details, dramatic events, and well-structured sequences to further character development and plot. Students will be presented with the story arc, rise of conflict, climax, and will be able to predict resolution.

1. Students will be able to discuss Hurricane Katrina and utilize technology to view video clips about the destructive power of large hurricanes.
2. Students will be able to complete a creative writing exercise stating why they decided to wait out a hurricane like Janie and Tea Cake.
3. After they have read the chapter, students will be able to discuss their predictions about why Janie must kill Tea Cake.

### **Introduction:**

Students will be presented with the concept that written narratives of real or imagined events utilize details, dramatic events, and well-structured sequences to further character development and plot. Students will be presented with the story arc, rise of conflict, climax, and will be able to predict resolution.

### **Outline of Materials:**

- 1) In a large group read chapter 18.

Following the reading guide, students will be asked the following:

“Why did you think Janie was going to kill Tea Cake before we read chapter 18?”

“Why do you think Janie will kill Tea Cake after reading chapter 18?”

- 2) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and have them justify their oral responses. Make a list of answers on the board.

Why might people stay behind in the face of a brutal storm like Hurricane Katrina?

- 2) Show pictures of what Palm Beach, Lake Okeechobee, and other scenes from the novel looked like after the 1928 Hurricane destroyed parts of Florida, and emphasize the magnitude of that Hurricane vs. Katrina.

<http://www.orlandohurricane.net/History/1928.html>

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mfl/?n=okeechobee>

4) Building on the discussion from the pictures and videos, guide a discussion to address setting, story arc, rise of action, climax, and resolution.

5) Prompt the writing exercise by asking the students to write a letter to a loved one that communicates and defends the decision to stay behind in the face of a dangerous hurricane. The instructions are as follows:

Write a letter of 5–7 sentences in length telling a loved one why you decided to stay and not abandon your home as a dangerous storm approached. Give your reasons for staying behind.

Following the reading, guide a discussion that asks:

“Why do you think Janie was going to kill Tea Cake before we read chapter 18?”

“Why do you think Janie will kill Tea Cake after reading chapter 18?”

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 3:**

#### **Fate vs. Free Will: The Author and the Characters, Zora & Janie**

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

#### **Advance Organizer:**

Play the song, *Freewill*, by Rush to prompt a discussion about free will and determinism. Lead a guided discussion on the concepts of free will and fate/determinism in relation to the students' lives. Provide examples of each for the students.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnxkfLe4G74>

Once the video has been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

1. What is free will?
2. What is fate/determinism?

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be presented with the philosophical concepts of free will and fate/determinism in the context of the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

1. Students will be able to discuss the theme of self-discovery
2. Students will be able to discuss determinism vs. free will in the context of the novel.
3. Students will be able to complete a free write defending their personal feelings regarding fate and free will.

#### **Introduction:**

The use of setting, historical influences, and philosophical perspectives determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. An author's cultural, philosophical, and social views and influences contribute to the historical legacy of the work that students read. Through an analysis of free will, fate/determinism, the students'

personal experiences as adolescents, and the character Janie Crawford, students will be able to generalize and develop a personal perspective about the theme of self-discovery, fate/determinism, and free will. This analysis will transcend the text and provide the students with a philosophical and historical perspective about an author's cultural, philosophical, and personal beliefs and the influence on the fiction that he or she creates.

### Outline of Materials:

1. Oral Questioning: Following the anticipatory set, create another comparison chart and have the students list aspects of the novel that were fate and aspects of the novel that were free will. Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and having them justify their oral responses. Compare this list to the initial list the class created.

Show videos about fate and free will:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxCusNtD0PI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8EI4obG5zM&feature=related>

Following the videos, pass out the books and have the students read chapter 20. Highlight the following passage:

“Two things everybody’s got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin’ for theyselves.” p. 192

Summarize by saying that there is no clear answer to this debate and that Janie finds herself somewhere in the middle, but that she has made the decision to pursue love and self-discovery which was her free will.

Next, put all the Skittles in a cup and have the students pick a Skittle. Make a chart with fate on one side and free will on the other on the white board. After the students, have picked their Skittle, tell them not to eat it and to say if they picked it randomly or by choice and to write their name in the appropriate column on the board, i.e. Random = Fate/Choice = Free Will.

Have the students complete an independent writing that justifies and defends whether they believe that fate is in control or that they exercise free will. Ask them to provide examples and defend their beliefs.

### Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 4:

Gender and Rebels: Zora Neale Hurston, the Flappers, and Women in the 1920's

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard:** 1. Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard:** 2. Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard:** 3. Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

### Advance Organizer:

Play the song, *Hip Hop*, by Dead Prez and prompt a discussion about rebels. Lead a guided discussion on the

concept of what it means to be a rebel and to rebel compared to defiance and opposition in relation to the students' lives. Provide examples of each for the students.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1U3q9zgYaUA>

Once the video has been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

What does it mean to be a rebel?  
Was Martin Luther King a rebel?  
Was Janie a rebel?

The instructor should make a list of what it means to be a rebel, find a suitable definition, and make sure to delineate between rebels and people who are unjustifiably defiant or oppositional.

### **Objectives:**

Students will be presented with the concept of rebels in the context of sexism in America, their personal lives, Zora Neale Hurston, and the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Students will be able to discuss rebellion and the concept of being a rebel in a positive way.

Students will be able to complete a short writing defending a position on Zora Neale Hurston and Janie Crawford as rebels.

### **Introduction:**

The use of setting, historical influences, and philosophical perspectives determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. An author's cultural, philosophical, and social views and influences contribute to the historical legacy or the work students read. Through an analysis of rebellion, the students' personal experiences as adolescents, the author, and the character Janie Crawford, students will be able to generalize and develop a personal perspective about the theme of rebellion and what it means to be a rebel. This analysis will transcend the text and provide the students with a philosophical and historical perspective about an author's cultural, philosophical, and personal beliefs and the influence on the fiction that he or she creates.

### **Outline of Materials:**

Students will watch a video about Flappers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPCh1x9mLd4&feature=fvwr>

Students will discuss the theme of sexism and gender inequality in the novel and watch the following video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IHd49EbLN8&feature=related>

Students will view a video about the author, Zora Neale Hurston.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PANwrq\\_OuPM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PANwrq_OuPM)

Students will complete a free write and defend a position about whether Zora Neale Hurston and Janie Crawford were "rebels"

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan: 5**

Homage: Style, Themes, Genre, & Expressive Language in  
Poetry, Music, Song, & Ballad

State: Colorado

Content Area: Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Grade Level Expectations: 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>



**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

### **Advance Organizer:**

The teacher will play *Homecoming* by Kayne West <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ488QrqGE4> and *My Proud Mountains* by Townes Van Zandt <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3C8Nm9aYq4> to begin a discussion on style, detail, expressive language, genre, and a statement in poetry, song, and music.

Once the songs have been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

What are some examples of expressive language that each artist used in the lyrics to his song?

What were some details that added to the sentiment of each song?

What were the genres and how did they add to or take away from the sentiments in the song?

Who were the intended audiences, and did the songs address their audience?

### **Objectives:**

Students will study regional homage in music and poetry by analyzing the use of style, detail, expressive language, and intended audiences in Kayne West's *Homecoming*, Townes Van Zandt's *My Proud Mountains*, Zora Neale Hurston's, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3C8Nm9aYq4>

In small groups, students will create a graphic organizer comparing one of the songs with one of the poems and will be able to analyze themes, style, detail, expressive language, genre and audience.

Individually, students pick a city or place and they will be able to create a graphic organizer or an outline organizing themes, style, detail, expressive language, and the genre they will use to create a personal homage to a region or place.

Students will be able to compose a poem, song, narrative, or short essay about a region or area that is important to them in an homage demonstrating theme, style, detail, and expressive language in a genre of their choosing.

### **Introduction:**

The use of style, detail, expressive language, genre, and a statement by authors in song lyrics, rap lyrics and poetry will be examined to encourage the students to look at the various aspects of homage and the stylistic components that comprise artistic tributes to places or regions. The lesson will begin with an advance organizer that engages and encourages students to think about literary homage, writing style, and intended audience in a fun and exciting way.

### **Outline of Materials:**

1) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and having them justify their oral responses:

Do you feel a sense of connection to a city or place? Why or why not?

What makes someone feel as though he or she is a part of a community?

Do you think the fact that Zora Neale Hurston is from Eatonville, Florida contributed to the novel's setting?

Is it important to you to feel a connection to where you are from or some place you have visited? Why or why not?

What aspects of writing or literature reach you as an audience, i. e. style, attention to detail, tone, expressive language, or theme?

Why do artists, writers, and musicians seem to have such an intense sense of regionalism or why do artists, writers, and musicians pay tribute to cities through their art?

2) Listen to the following songs: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ488QrqGE4> and read a description of Eatonville from the novel.

3) In small groups, complete graphic organizers that compare one song with Zora Neale Huston's description of Eatonville.

4) Building on the discussion from small group work, outline and prepare a personal piece of writing that pays tribute to a place or region that has a personal connection with the author. Use theme, style, tone, genre, expressive language, and detail to create an homage that expresses a sentiment about a place or region.

5) Write a homage to a place or region conveying a sentiment to the audience using theme, tone, style, detail, and expressive language in a specific genre such as a poem, short essay, narrative, or song.

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 6:**

#### **Music Project Introduction**

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept: Literary** and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Standard: 4.** Research and Reasoning

**Concept:** Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources to answer a question, propose solutions, or share findings and conclusions.

#### **Advance Organizer:**

The instructor will play some instrumental music samples for the class. The instructor will play [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5xvz8\\_outkast-idlewild-blue-don-t-chu-wor\\_music](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5xvz8_outkast-idlewild-blue-don-t-chu-wor_music) by Outkast to begin a discussion and explanation about the final project.

Once the video has been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

What do music and literature have in common?

How did that song relate to the novel?

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify a song topic and an instrumental for their final project. Students will submit partner proposals for instructor review.

Individually, students will be able to create a graphic organizer that demonstrates an understanding of plot, character, and themes from the novel.

Students will be able to complete a free write brainstorming aspects of the novel that they identified with or found important.

### **Introduction:**

The use of setting, historical influences, social, and racial themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. Additionally, the use of literary devices such as genre, character, plot, climax, setting, tone, figurative language, intended audience, dialogue, and themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary texts. Music and literature have many things in common and utilize similar techniques to influence meaning such as tone, style, genre, plot, climax, setting, and themes. This is the introduction to the final music project for the unit on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

### **Outline of Materials:**

1) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and having them justify their oral responses. Create a comparison chart on the white board providing a list of the aspects and components of music and literature.

In what ways are music and literature similar? When you get to the concept of characters, replay the video and talk about how the video and the character, Tea Cake, are similar.

2) Play the video; [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5xvz8\\_outkast-idlewild-blue-don-t-chu-wor\\_music](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5xvz8_outkast-idlewild-blue-don-t-chu-wor_music)

3) Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following question and have them justify their oral response.

What were the similarities between the song and the novel?

4) Building on the discussion from the videos, guide a discussion to introduce the final project. Present the final project.

5) Have the students work individually or in groups to complete a graphic organizer and brainstorm for their final project.

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 7:**

#### **Figurative Language and Tone**

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Standard: 4.** Research and Reasoning

**Concept:** Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources to answer a question, propose solutions, or share findings and conclusions

**Advance Organizer:** The instructor will play

<http://www.educationalrap.com/song/figurative-language.html>

and prompt a discussion about figurative language.

Once the song has been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

What are some of the examples of figurative language?

Why do authors and musicians use figurative language in music and fiction?

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to provide examples of figurative language for the categories of simile, analogy, metaphor, hyperbole, alliteration, assonance, and idiom from music videos and the novel.

Individually, students will be able provide examples of each category of figurative language.

Individually, students will provide examples of figurative language from the song played

In small groups, students will be able to identify figurative language from the novel.

### **Introduction:**

The use of poetic techniques such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, figurative language, simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole add to the author's meaning and affect the audience's interpretation of literature and music.

### **Outline of Materials:**

1) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and having them justify their oral responses.

What is figurative language?

Why do authors and music artists use figurative language?

2) Play clips from the songs and videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3sMjm9Eloo>

[http://www.metacafe.com/watch/sy-18086078/outkast\\_atliens\\_official\\_music\\_video/](http://www.metacafe.com/watch/sy-18086078/outkast_atliens_official_music_video/)

3) Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following question and having them justify their oral response.

What were examples of figurative language in the novel?

4) Building on the discussion from the videos, guide a discussion to introduce the graphic organizer activity.

5) Have the students work both in groups and independently to create the graphic organizers and identify figurative language from the song and the novel.

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 8:**

#### **Relating Music to Language Arts**

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Standard: 4.** Research and Reasoning

**Concept:** Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources to answer a question, propose solutions, or share findings and conclusions

### **Advance Organizer:**

The instructor will highlight one scene and one passage from the novel and play the song that relates to the passage. Read chapter 18 and then play the video:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuAFZ\\_8lY-w&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuAFZ_8lY-w&feature=related)

Once the video has been played, the teacher will prompt discussion by asking:

What did the passage make you think?

What did the song make you think?

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to list and identify emotions that are the result of interacting with literature and music.

Individually, students will identify the emotions that are a result of interacting with a passage from the novel.

Individually, students will be able to identify the emotions that are a result of interacting with music.

Students will be able to complete a short writing assessing why music and literature can convey powerful emotions and what causes them to relate to a song or a book.

### **Introduction:**

The use of setting, historical influences, social and racial themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. Additionally, the use of literary devices such as genre, character, plot, climax, setting, tone, figurative language, intended audience, dialogue, and themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary texts. Music and literature have many things in common and utilize similar techniques to influence meaning such as tone, style, genre, plot, climax, setting, and themes.

### **Outline of Materials:**

1) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and having them justify their oral responses. Also, have them write down their responses prior to engaging in the discussion.

What emotions did the passage make you feel?

What emotions did the song make you feel?

2) Play clips from the video from:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuAFZ\\_8lY-w&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuAFZ_8lY-w&feature=related)

3) Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following question and having them justify their oral responses:

What causes you to relate to a work of fiction and a piece of music?

What is more powerful, literature or music? Why?

4) Building on the discussion from the passages and the videos, guide a discussion to introduce the writing activity.

5) Have the students work independently to complete the writing exercise.

6) Following the writing exercise, tell the students that their homework is to pick a song and a scene, character, passage, or theme from the novel to share with the class the following day.

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 9:**

#### **Passive Music and Literature**

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Standard: 4.** Research and Reasoning

**Concept:** Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources to answer a question, propose solutions, or share findings and conclusions

#### **Advance Organizer:**

The instructor will guide a passive music therapy session using the songs that the students choose.

Prior to the session, the instructor will provide the rules for the session:

Appropriate songs only.

Be respectful.

Quiet while songs are being played.

Take notes of how the song might relate to the novel.

Students who choose their song will present their justification for the song and the aspect of the novel they choose.

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to verbally justify the relationship between a song and an aspect of the novel.

Individually, students will be able to present a rationale for choosing a song that relates to the novel and identify tone, intended audience, genre, and figurative language.

In a large group, students will be able to discuss aspects of music that relate to the novel and identify tone, intended audience, genre, and figurative language.

#### **Introduction:**

Students can engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on high school level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Also, students come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (CCSS: SL.8.1) (CCSS: SL.8.1a)

#### **Outline of Materials:**

1) Oral Questioning: Engage the students and increase interest by asking the following questions and have them justify their oral responses. WHAT QUESTIONS? Have the presenter identify tone, intended audience, figurative

language, and themes from the song and passage they selected. Following their justification, engage the group in a discussion and have them identify emotions and literary devices they noticed in the songs and passages. Also, ask:

What emotions did the song make you feel?

2) Continue in this format until everyone has had a chance to present their song and the component of the novel they relate to the music.

### **Content Enhancement Routines Lesson Plan 10-15:**

#### **Active Music and Literature**

**State:** Colorado

**Content Area:** Reading, Writing, and Communicating

**Grade Level Expectations:** 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Standard: 1.** Oral Expression and Listening

**Concept:** Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

**Standard: 2.** Reading for All Purposes

**Concept:** Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts

**Standard: 3.** Writing and Composition

**Concept:** Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose

**Standard: 4.** Research and Reasoning

**Concept:** Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources to answer a question, propose solutions, or share findings and conclusions

#### **Advance Organizer:**

The instructor will guide an active music therapy session and aid, feedback, and support for students as they begin to write their songs for the final project.

Play the videos;

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcZr8vmAHBs>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYSNW2r\\_s9E&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYSNW2r_s9E&feature=related)

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to create a song that summarizes and addresses major concepts and themes for a final project.

Individually, students can will pick music and a topic for their music project and justify it orally.

Individually, or in pairs, students will be able to compose and perform a song that summarizes the novel or that relates a major theme to their personal life and experiences.

#### **Introduction:**

The use of setting, historical influences, and social and racial themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts. Additionally, the use of literary devices such as genre, character, plot, climax, setting, tone, figurative language, intended audience, dialogue, and themes determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary texts. Music and literature have many things in common and utilize similar techniques such as tone, style, genre, plot, climax, setting, and themes to influence meaning. Students can effectively use literary techniques to compose and create an original piece of writing that summarizes or addresses major themes from the novel.

**Outline of Materials:**

1) Begin by playing the videos and ask:

What emotions did the song make you feel?

How did the students in the video do summarizing the novel?

2) Walk the students through the process the instructor used to write a song and perform the song that the instructor has written for the students.

3) Have the students work individually or in pairs with teacher support as well as music therapist support to compose and develop lyrics for a song that will accompany the instrumental the students choose. Spend three days in class assisting the students with their projects and the final two days performing them.



## **Disability Laws and Special Education Provisions in China, Kuwait, South Korea, Turkey, and the United States**

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### **Abstract**

*This article describes disability laws and special education provisions in China, Kuwait, South Korea, Turkey, and the United States making note of the important role they have in the lives of people with disabilities. Anti-discrimination, rehabilitation, and special education laws enhance the quality of the lives of individuals with disabilities through the lifespan but differences exist in the degree of protections and services for individuals with disabilities in each country. Countries*

*with clear educational provisions in their special education laws may have more positive social and educational outcomes for individuals with disabilities.*

**Keywords:** *special education laws, disability laws, disability educational provisions, international disability laws, multinational education laws for students with disabilities*

## **Introduction**

It is estimated that one billion people have a disability, approximately 15 percent of the global population, making people with disabilities the largest minority in the world (WHO, 2011). Educational, employment, and social outcomes for individuals with disabilities around the globe are generally negative across their lifespan. Approximately 80 percent of people with disabilities live in poverty (WHO, 2011). This life outcome suggests that individuals with disabilities do not achieve sufficient levels of educational success or receive support to seek and maintain competitive employment, compared to their counterparts without disabilities. Of the total number of people with disabilities in the world, an estimated 150 million are children ranging in age from newborns to 14 years (WHO, 2011). Students with disabilities are commonly educated in segregated settings in developing countries, with limited access to the general education curriculum which is provide for their peers without disabilities (WHO, 2011). Limited access to educational opportunities lead to lower rates of literacy among people with disabilities when they reach adulthood (UNESCO, 2003). It is not clear whether education in a segerated or inclusive setting is a factor in the lower literacy rates of students with disabilities.. However, research does

show that students with disabilities complete fewer years of schooling compared to their peers without disabilities (UNESCO, 2003). Additionally, males with disabilities achieve an average of 5.96 years of education compared to 7.03 years in males without disabilities. Similarly, females with disabilities complete 4.98 years of education compared to 6.26 years in females without disabilities. Clearly, educational attainment is important because lower school attainment among individuals with disabilities may result in significantly reduced educational and economic outcomes in adulthood.

Given that many people with disabilities cannot maintain competitive employment, many countries have laws to provide a basic standard of living for adults with disabilities. For example, in the United States (US), the *Social Security Act of 1935* provides a basic monthly income to individuals with disabilities through Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income programs. Health insurance programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare, also fund long-term services and supports for individuals with severe disabilities throughout the lifespan (Martin & Weaver, 2005). Caring for the needs of people with disabilities who cannot provide adequately for themselves is important both for the individual and the larger society. However supporting special education and vocational rehabilitation allows individuals with disabilities not only to improve their quality of life, but also allows them to acquire the skills to support themselves through gainful employment.

Given the link between education and adult occupational and financial outcomes, the primary goal of this manuscript is to identify laws in the US, China, Kuwait, South Korea, and Turkey which focus on educational provisions for individuals with disabilities. Because American disability laws represent the most well-developed laws in terms of the provisions they

provide to individuals with disabilities, we use US disability laws as the model against which to compare disability laws in China, Kuwait, South Korea, and Turkey.

Those four countries were selected because doctoral students from each of those countries were represented in a course taught by the lead author of this paper. In addition, each author noted that their country looked to US special education policy as a guide in developing disability laws in their respective countries. In our comparison of special education services each country provides to its citizenry, we began by broadly describing the laws in each country which aim to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities and the rehabilitation laws that promote their improved quality of life and skill development. Our focus then shifts to the specific laws and sections of laws which mandate educational provisions to students with disabilities.

### **Anti-Discrimination and Rehabilitation Laws to Protect and Serve Individuals with Disabilities**

China, Kuwait, South Korea, Turkey, and the US have legislation to protect individuals with disabilities from overt or unintentional discrimination. Table 1 provides a list of laws in all five countries which protect their respective citizens with disabilities from discrimination. Legislation includes civil rights protections, as well as mandating services aimed at minimizing the negative impact of disabilities, such as special education and vocational rehabilitation. These disability laws seek to improve the quality of life and increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities by providing health, education, employment, and rehabilitative services. Without these laws, individuals with disabilities could face rejection and segregation from society.

### Disability Laws by Country

The US has a system of laws that coordinate to provide civil rights protections and a basic quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in federal employment or programs, agencies, as with employment with contractors receiving federal funding (US Department of Justice, 2009). Section 504 also provides funding for vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, and independent living. The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) prohibits discrimination in employment, government programs, services, and activities, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications (US Department of Justice, 2009).

**Table 1. Rehabilitation and Civil Rights Law**

Country	Law & Year	Provisions
US	Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)	Accommodations including employment, public services, transportation, and telecommunications
	Rehabilitation Act (1973)	Educational accommodations (Section 504; Vocational rehabilitation (Section 508)
	Social Security Act (1935)	Monthly base income, medical insurance, durable medical equipment, funding for long-term care and supports
China	Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (1990)	No discrimination and support in rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, social security, accessible environment, and legal liabilities
Kuwait	Article 29 of the Constitution of the State of Kuwait (1962)	Accommodations including education, employment, and social care
	Law Number 8 for the Rights for People with Disabilities (2010)	Accommodations including education, transportation, employment, and health services
South Korea	Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act (2014)	State and local government education and financial support; Equal employment opportunities; Employee self-reliance; Government entity collaboration
	Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination Against Disabled Persons, Remedy Against Infringement of their Rights, Etc.	Employment; Education; Use of goods and services; Judicial and administrative procedures; Services and political rights; Motherhood, fatherhood, and sexuality; Family, home, welfare facilities; the right

	(2011) Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities (2011)	to work Promoting prevention, medical services, educational rehabilitation, employment, subsidies, and housing
Turkey	Turkish Disability Act, Law No. 5378 (2005)	Accommodations including health, education, rehabilitation, employment, care, and social security

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Other laws provide specific protections for individuals with disabilities who are institutionalized (*Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act of 1980*), as well protections against housing discrimination (*Fair Housing Act of 1988*), air travel discrimination (*Air Carrier Access Act of 1986*), architectural discrimination (*Architectural Barriers Act of 1968*), telecommunications discrimination (*Telecommunications Act of 1996*), and voter discrimination (*Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984*; *National Voter Registration Act of 1993*) (US Department of Justice, 2009).

China's *Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities* (LPPD) enacted in 1990, is a civil rights law intended to protect individuals with disabilities against discrimination and ensure they have equal rights in all aspects of society. The LPPD is consistent with China's Constitution which safeguards the lawful rights and interests of persons with disabilities. The LPPD attempts to ensure "the equal and full participation of persons with disabilities in social life" and gives them access to "their share of the material and cultural wealth of society" (Article 1 of LPPD, 2008, p.1). The LPPD provides protections and supports for persons with disabilities in rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, social security, accessible environment, and penalties for organizations or government agencies that violate the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Kuwait is the first Arab country to enact laws for people with disabilities (Weber & City, 2012). According to Article 29 of the *Constitution of the State of Kuwait* (CSK) of 1962, all

people are equal in human dignity, public rights, and duties before the law, without distinction to race, origin, language, or religion. Provisions within Article 29 include entitlements given to people with disabilities in both employment and public services (Scull, Khullar, Al-Awadhi, & Erheim, 2014). Law No. 8: Rights for People with Disabilities (known as Law No. 49 until 2010, number of laws are not chronological) covers a broad range of rights and services such as the rights of persons with disabilities, rehabilitation and employment services, guidelines for integration in society, public transportation accommodation, family support requirements, and free education including higher education (Law No.8, 2010). Law No. 8 also requires new buildings to be accessible to people with disabilities. The Kuwait Family Act also requires compulsory premarital genetic screening among couples prior to marriage to detect the probability of having a child with a disability (Alben-Ali, 2014). The Kuwait Family Law Act may unintentionally prohibit a couple with disabilities from having a child.

South Korea's *Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act* (EPVRDPA, 2010) and the *Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act* (EPVRPA, 2014) mandate equal employment opportunities for Korean citizens with disabilities. Individuals of working age with disabilities are provided supports in the workplace, employment promotion, vocational guidance and training, and adjustment guidance after employment. Access to public transportation is ensured through the *Act on Promotion of the Transportation Convenience of Mobility Disadvantaged Persons* (APTCMDP, 2014). The *Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities* (AWPD, 2012) and the *Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination Against Disabled Persons, Remedy Against Infringement of Their Rights, ETC* (APD, 2014) prohibit discrimination of individuals with disabilities in all areas of life from

education to the workplace, housing, and political participation. The APD further guarantees individuals with disabilities the same healthcare, parenthood, and reproductive rights as individuals without disabilities.

The *Turkish Disability Act* (TDA Law No. 5378) of 2005 seeks to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights as their counterparts without disabilities. Before the enactment of the TDA Law No. 5378, only Article 50 and Article 61 within the Turkish Constitution pertained to people with disabilities. However, the TDA No. 5378 provides a new vision and direction to disability services in Turkey by helping individuals with disabilities and their families in addressing needs related to health, education, rehabilitation, employment, care, and social security (Article 1). The TDA No. 5378 removes obstacles to the coordination of services and promotes independence of people with disabilities in their everyday life to support their development (Article 1).

### **Comparison**

Discrimination based on disabilities is prohibited by law in each of the five countries. In addition, policymakers in each country strive to level the playing field for citizens with disabilities in all realms of life. Like the US, protections to ensure that citizens with disabilities have access to the same basic privileges that citizens without disabilities enjoy such as access to public services and protections against discrimination in employment. China and the US passed civil rights laws in 1990, the ADA and LPPD respectively, giving individuals with disabilities access to transportation and accessibility to public buildings among others previously described. Since 1962, Kuwait's Constitution has included language specific to individuals with disabilities related to employment. In 2010 Kuwait passed Law 8, giving individuals with disabilities similar rights available to US citizens with disabilities through the ADA in transportation and



access to public buildings. However, Kuwait currently has a federal law which may infringe upon the reproductive rights of individuals with disabilities if it found during the compulsory marriage health screening that there is a risk that their children might be born with a disability.

### **Education Laws**

As previously stated, people with disabilities experience lower levels of education and higher levels of unemployment and poverty (WHO, 2011). Policymakers in the US, China, Kuwait, South Korea, and Turkey recognize the importance of education and the need for educational laws aimed to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve positive social outcomes akin to those obtained by individuals without disabilities. Table 2 provides basic information about education for each country, including each country's general education law, the years of compulsory education required by the law, the size of general student population, size of population of students with disabilities, and special education expenditures. Information on general education law in each country is important to establish the context of where students with disabilities fit within the larger school-age population in each country.

### **General Education Laws by Country**

**US.** The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), last reauthorized in 2015, governs the education of elementary and secondary level students in general education from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In the 2012-2013 school year, the total elementary and secondary school enrollment was 54.7 million. The current number of students with disabilities is approximately 6.4 million, representing 11.75% of the entire elementary and secondary student population (Snyder & Dillow, 2015). The majority of students with disabilities in the US are educated in regular schools in a general education classroom. Educational statistics showed that 61.1% of students

**Table 2 . General Education Laws, Size of School Population, and Expenditures by Country**

Country	General Education Law Compulsory Education Grades	Size of General School Population	Size of School Population with Disabilities	Annual Expenditures for Special Education (Percent of Total Annual Budget)
US	Every Child Succeeds Act K-12	54.7 million	11.75% (6,429,331)	\$11.47 billion (0.30% of \$3.8 trillion)
China	Compulsory Education Law 1-9	138 million	0.29% (394,900)	\$993 million (0.73% of \$1.36 trillion)
Kuwait	Constitution of the State of Kuwait 1-9	365,624 (ages 6-18)	2.42% (8,841) (ages 3-22)	\$93 million (0.13% of 66.5 billion)
South Korea	Constitution of the Republic of Korea K-12	2 million	2.41% (48,145)	*
Turkey	Turkish National Education Law (Law No. 6528) K-12	15 million	3.23% (483,537)	\$250 million (0.15% of 150 billion)

Note: Size of general school population is rounded up to nearest million. Asterisk indicates information was not available.

with a disability diagnosis spent greater than 80% of instructional time in the general education classroom (ATLAS, 2015). Statistics from the same source show that only 5.1% of students with disabilities are educated outside of the general education school. In the 2014 fiscal year, the federal government reported spending a total of \$11.47 billion, which was 0.3% of the total national budget, for special education expenditures (ATLAS, 2015). The federal expenditures covered approximately 16% of the estimated cost of educating children with disabilities. The remaining cost was covered by state and local governments. The combination of federal and state level expenses totaled \$71.69 billion to educate students with disabilities (ATLAS, 2015).

**China.** The *Compulsory Education Law* (CEL, 2015) mandates free education to children with and without disabilities from first grade to junior secondary school (grades 1-9). Education

beyond the 9<sup>th</sup> grade is optional and only partially funded by governments via scholarship, subsidies, or loans. In 2014, the total school-aged population (grades 1-9) was 138 million. There were approximately 394,900 students with disabilities in 2014, representing .29% of the total school-age population (Ministry of Education, 2015). Among students with disabilities, 52.94% (209,100) were educated in regular schools in general or special education classrooms (Ministry of Education, 2015). The expenditures for special education schools for 2010 was \$993 million, representing 0.73‰ of the total national fiscal expenditure (Zhao, Wang, & Wang, 2014).

**Kuwait.** Kuwait has compulsory education for students in primary and middle school (grades 1-9). Secondary level schooling (10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) is free of cost but not compulsory (Burney & Mohammed, 2002). The size of the general student population (grades 1-12) in 2014/2015 was 365,624 (Al-Turki, 2015). Special education services are provided by two governmental agencies that work independent of each other: Ministry of Education and the Public Authority of the Disabled. The Ministry of Education consists of 29 schools that educate 1,739 students ages 6 to 22 who have mild to moderate disabilities. The Public Authority of the Disabled consists of 51 schools that educate 7,102 students ages 3 to 21 who have moderate to severe disabilities. All students with disabilities who are incapable of succeeding in the general education classroom without accommodation are educated, regardless of severity of disability, in special schools. The total number of students with disabilities in Kuwait was 8,841, representing 2.42% of the general student population. The expenditures for special education schools for 2014/15 was \$93 million, representing 0.13% of the total national budget (T. Alshatti, persona lcommunication, November 27,2015).

**South Korea.** South Korea (or, more formally, Republic of Korea) has free compulsory education from kindergarten to high school (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Education for

students in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade is governed by the *Constitution of the Republic of Korea*, Article 31, Section1. There are approximately 2 million students in the general school population, of which 2.41% (48,145) receive special education services (NCEE, 2012). Approximately 50.40% (24,287) received special education services in regular schools in either general or special classrooms, while 49.6% (23,858) received special education in separate schools (MEHR, 2010). Expenditures for special education were not available to the public at the time of this writing.

**Turkey.** Turkey has free compulsory education from kindergarten to high school. There were approximately 14,950,897 students in the general student population in grades K-12, of which 483,267 (3.23%) received special education services. Approximately 54.38% (262,818) received special education services in private schools or rehabilitation centers (Meral & Turnbull, 2014) while 45.62% (220,449) received special education services in the regular school system (MEB, 2013). The expenditures for special education was around \$250 million representing 00.15% of total annual budget (MB, 2015; MEB, 2015).

### Comparison

Three of the five countries (US, South Korea, and Turkey) mandate elementary and secondary level education (K-12) while Kuwait and China's compulsory education ends in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, respectively. An important consideration about students with disabilities in Kuwait and China may be to gage if they achieve less educational achievements since compulsory education ends earlier for all students compared to the countries in which compulsory education extends by about three or four years. The US, compared to the other four countries, identifies a larger proportion of the school age population (approximately 13%) as disabled and spends a larger proportion of the national budget to pay for the education of students with disabilities. There are

two ways to interpret this. It could be argued that the higher rates of identification for disabilities is problematic and potentially stigmatizing. It could also be argued that the US prioritizes the education of students with disabilities because it spends more of its national budget on their education compared to other countries who spend less on the education of their school-age citizens with disabilities. Presently, the majority of students with disabilities in the US, China, and Kuwait, are educated in regular schools in either general education or special education classrooms. In South Korea and Turkey, approximately half of the students with disabilities are educated in private or community rehabilitation centers instead of regular schools. Until data regarding life outcomes are collected, it is difficult to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the location of education of students with disabilities, in private school or community rehabilitation centers. Two important questions, however, do seem relevant: Does inclusion of students with disabilities in regular community schools result in positive educational outcomes? Or is the quality of education offered in educational settings the most important factor to consider when determining where to educate students with disabilities in any country? In other words, is place more important than quality of education for students with disabilities?

### **Provisions within Special Education Laws**

We analyzed each country's special education laws in their original language to extract the educational provisions each contained for students with disabilities. Table 3 provides the name of each special education law by country, the school grades covered under each law, and the special education provisions each law provides for students with disabilities.

**Table 3. Special Education Laws**

Country	Law	Grade of Supports	Provisions
US	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act	P-12	Child find; Free Appropriate Public Education; Least Restrictive Environment; Procedural safeguards
China	Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities	P-Postsecondary	Free compulsory education; Differentiated instruction; Different education placements; Subsidy
	People with Disabilities Education Ordinance	P-Postsecondary	Free compulsory education; Different education placements; Differentiated and individualized instruction; Appropriate curriculum; Vocational education; Admission counseling
Kuwait	Chapter 3 of Law No. 8: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities	K-Postsecondary	Free compulsory education; Structural building accommodations; Inclusive education; Lower entrance criteria to higher education
South Korea	Act on the Special Education for Individuals with Disabilities and the Like (ASEIDL)	P-Postsecondary	Free and compulsory education; Free special education services for preschool-aged children; Individualized and inclusive education; Higher education support
Turkey	The Special Education Regulation Law (No. 573)	K-12	Zero rejection, Least restrictive environment, Inclusion, Appropriate education, Individualized education, Parental-student participation, Procedural due process, Vocational education and rehabilitation
	Special Education Services Regulation of Turkey	P-12	Same provisions as The Special Education Regulation Law (No. 573)

In addition, we sought out published literature in English related to each country's disability laws. We elaborate on each country's educational provisions for students with disabilities within special education laws in the sections below.

**US.** The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (IDEA), is the federal law that governs the education of students with disabilities in the US. IDEA provides educational services to students with disabilities from ages 3-21 and includes the following provisions: child find, free appropriate public education (FAPE), education in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and procedural safeguards. The child find mandate requires schools to identify and evaluate students who may need special education services. The FAPE provision requires public schools to customize instruction to children with disabilities and write and follow an individualized education program (IEP) for each student. The IEP must specify transition services from secondary school no later than the age of 16. The IDEA also directs schools to consider each student's LRE and to educate them alongside their peers without disabilities to the extent possible. Underlying these provisions are procedural safeguards and the right to due process, which parents and schools can initiate if a disagreement exists between the two regarding any aspect of a child's education. IDEA recognizes 13 disability categories: 1) autism spectrum disorder, 2) blindness, 3) deafness, 4) emotional disturbance, 5) hearing impairment, 6) intellectual disability, 7) multiple disabilities, 8) orthopedic impairment, 9) other health impaired, 10) specific learning disability, 11) speech or language impairment, 12) traumatic brain injury, and 13) visual impairment.

As previously mentioned, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* is a civil rights law but also provides broad accommodations to students with disabilities in primary, secondary, and

post-secondary education. Section 504 defines disability more broadly than IDEA including any physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities as well as anyone with a history of impairment or who are regarded as having an impairment. This results in students with disabilities such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, or epilepsy not covered by IDEA receiving educational accommodations through a 504 plan (Hulett, 2003). However, unlike IDEA, Section 504 provides no funding for special education services during the primary and secondary levels of education beyond vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, and independent living (Hulett, 2003).

**China.** The *Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities* (LPPD) and the *People with Disabilities Education Ordinance* (PDEO) provide educational services to students with disabilities in China. A person is defined as having disabilities if he or she has a diagnosis under one of the following categories: 1) visual, 2) hearing, 3) speech, 4) physical, 5) intellectual, 6) psychiatric disability, 8) multiple disabilities, 9) other disabilities (Article 2 of LPPD, 2008). Disability identification and diagnosis is the responsibility of medical specialists outside of the school system (McLoughlin, Zhou, & Clark, 2005). Regular schools are required to accept school-age children with disabilities who can adapt to learning in the general education classroom. Students who are not able to function in regular education classes are the responsibility of special schools (LPPD, 2008). School-age children with hearing impairment, visual impairment, and intellectual disorders receive the majority of education services in special education classes or schools (Ellsworth & Zhang, 2007; McLoughlin et al., 2005). Students with more severe or multiple disabilities are segregated in separate schools or programs (Law, 2011; McLoughlin et al., 2005).



The PDEO (2011) urges special schools or classrooms to provide differentiated or individualized education, adjusted curriculum, and appropriate vocational training based on the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities. However, these laws only establish some general principles; there are no specific procedures schools must follow as they educate students with disabilities. There is no provision in Chinese special education legislation requiring a formally written individualized education program for student with disabilities akin to the IEP in the IDEA.

Parental rights are limited in China as it pertains to special education. For example, it is illegal to deny children with a disability access to any level of school if the child meets entrance requirements. If the regular schools violate that right, family members have the right to appeal to relevant authorities who can instruct the schools to enroll the student (Article 25 of LPPD, 2008). However, there are no other provisions protecting the rights of parents as advocates of their children. Unlike the due process safeguards in the IDEA, Chinese special education laws do not have formalized procedures for addressing disputes parents may have with schools or legal recourse that students and parents can access.

**Kuwait.** *Chapter 3 of Law No. 8: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities* guarantees that no child with a disability can be denied free public education. The special education law provides guidelines for identification and placement of students in need of special education services (Al-Hilawani, Koch, & Braaten, 2008). A person with a disability is defined as, “one who suffers from permanent, total, or partial disorders, leading to deficiencies in his/her physical, mental, or sensory abilities that may prevent him/her from securing the requirements of life to work or participate fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others” (Law No.8, 2010, p. 4-5). Law No. 8 recommends conducting a comprehensive assessment and diagnostic procedure of

children including medical, mental, emotional, social, behavioral, and educational aspects before deciding placement of students with disabilities (Kelepouris, 2014).

Unlike the IDEA, which allows school teams to make determinations about placement of students with disabilities under the LRE provision, Law No. 8 provides services to students with mild disabilities such as learning disabilities and some students with Down syndrome in either the general education classroom or self-contained classrooms in regular schools depending on whether they can be successful in the general education curriculum with limited accommodations (Al-Hilawani et al., 2008; Al-Manabri, Al-Sharhan, Elbeheri, Jasem, & Everat, 2013; Almoosa, Storey, & Keller, 2012). Students with severe disabilities are educated in segregated public schools. Students with severe disabilities attend specialized schools depending on their disability, meaning students who are blind or vision impaired attend a separate school from students who have intellectual disabilities (Al-Shammari & Yawkey, 2007). Although school teams in Kuwait write and use IEPs for students with disabilities, they are not legally binding documents, as they are in the US (Kelepouris, 2014). Transition services or goals for older youth are not required to be included in the IEPs. Parent participation is encouraged, but in most cases, parents do not attend meetings in which educators make decisions (Al-Shammari & Yawkey, 2008). For those parents who do participate in these meetings, they, as parents, cannot reject the IEP team's decisions for their child.

**South Korea.** The *Act on the Special Education for Individuals with Disabilities and the Like* (ASEIDL), provides free education services for individuals with disabilities throughout the lifespan. Preschool-age children (3 years or younger) who are at risk for or who have disabilities are offered free education. Students with disabilities from kindergarten to high school are

guaranteed a free appropriate, compulsory education. Under Article 33 of ASEIDL, adults with disabilities may receive lifelong support for continuing educational opportunities.

The ASEIDL makes it illegal to deny or refuse children with a disability access to any level of school if the child passes all necessary entrance requirements. Under ASEIDL, heads of districts or educational superintendents must engage in public efforts to reach the public and relevant agencies to identify individuals with a disability or who might have the potential for a disability. An individual diagnosed and identified as potentially needing special education services is eligible to receive services if he or she has a diagnosis that falls under one of 10 categories: 1) visual impairment, 2) hearing impairment, 3) speech impairment, 4) cognitive disability, 5) developmental delay, 6) emotional or behavioral disorder, 7) physical impairment, 8) autism, 9) learning disability, 10) health impairment.

The head of the district or educational superintendent determines if a student is eligible for special education services (ASEIDL, 2012). ASEIDL requires school administrators, with the coordination of a support team of teachers and service professionals, to develop an IEP each semester (which translates into approximately every 6 months). In South Korea, inclusive education has been a goal since 1977. School administrators must provide the necessary materials and equipment for educational and physical access that children with disabilities in regular schools need in order to succeed in their education (ASEIDL, 2012). Article 16 of the ASEIDL requires school administrators to provide written notice and educational support to the parents of children who are eligible for special education, and mandates that parents always maintain the right to express opinions regarding their child's IEP. Educational support for parents includes, but is not limited to, detailed information on the school's special education program, the child's education in the future, and the potential for future vocational rehabilitation

(ASEIDL, 2012). Higher educational and vocational support can begin as early as junior high school and may continue into high school. The ASEIDL also requires schools to provide transition services to students with disabilities who need vocational training, vocational education, and independent life skills training to transition to adulthood after secondary school (ASEIDL, 2012).

**Turkey.** The *Special Education Regulation Law: Law 573* (SERL, 1997) replaced the previous *Children with Special Education Needs Law*. Unlike its predecessor, the SERL allocates government funding for special education services to be provided by private special education and rehabilitation centers (Melekoglu, 2014). The SERL emphasizes free education in public school settings for all students with disabilities. However, under SERL, only up to 12 hours of therapy sessions per month in private special education and rehabilitation centers are paid for through federal financial support. Inclusive educational practices are valued and accepted as activities to promote awareness among society about the needs of individuals with disabilities (Melekoglu, 2014). SERL includes principles to provide general and vocational education to people with disabilities.

*Special Education Services Regulation of Turkey (SESRT, 2006)* regulates the provision of special education services within the Turkish education system. SESRT (2006) includes all students with disabilities regardless of severity from birth to 21 years of age in public schools at no cost to parents (Meral & Turnbull, 2014). The SESRT covers 13 categories of exceptionalities: 1) intellectual disability, 2) multiple disabilities, 3) attention deficit

hyperactivity disorder, 4) speech and language disorders, 5) emotional and behavioral disorders, 6) visual impairment, 7) hearing impairment, 8) orthopedic disability, 9) autism, 10) specific learning disabilities, 11) cerebral palsy, 12) chronic health problems 13) gifts and talents. SESRT emphasizes individualized education through an IEP, which is defined as a program appropriate for the child's developmental level, needs, and educational performance. The IEP in Turkey is a legally binding written document. IEPs include targeted goals and supported training services (Meral & Turnbull, 2014). Although SESRT mandates education for students with disabilities in classrooms with their typically developing peers, it also underlines that the least restrictive environment and other special education services must be identified according to individual needs and characteristics through an educational assessment conducted by the IEP team (Meral & Turnbull, 2014). Parents have a right to participate and monitor all aspects of their child's special education and training. Under SESRT parents are considered part of IEP team with a right to be present with other professionals in IEP meetings. While the SESRT does not require schools to notify parents before the evaluation for special education services is conducted, parents do have the legal right to appeal a decision about their children's evaluation results directly to the school. Unlike the IDEA, however, independent hearing officers are not part of the appeals process. The process ends with the school's decision to a parent's concern.

### **Similarities and Differences between Countries in Special Education Provisions**

Special education laws in the US, China, South Korea, and Turkey provide a multi-categorical system to diagnose students with disabilities while Kuwait seems to use a broader disability categorization system. Kuwait's special education law specifies medical, mental, social, behavioral, and educational disability diagnoses, broader versions of the other four countries' more specific categories of disabilities. Although China uses a multi-categorical

system to diagnose disabilities, the categories of Specific Learning Disability and Autism are not recognized as separate categories. Of note, only Turkish special education law includes students with a Gifts and Talents (G&T) in the list of students who need special education. All other countries do not include the G&T category among the population of students eligible for services under special education law.

The role of school-based professionals in the identification and diagnosis of students for special education services appears to be diminished in China and South Korea. In China, medical specialists outside of school system take the responsibility of identifying and diagnosing students with disabilities. In South Korea, the superintendent of education or governmental district official makes a unilateral special education eligibility decision. In contrast, Kuwait and Turkey appear to promote, albeit at significantly different levels, a school-based team approach to the identification of students with disabilities. Law #8 in Kuwait appears to provide guidelines for a school-based team to follow in the identification of students with disabilities. However, the same guidelines prescribe where a student is educated, depending on the level of disability the student is deemed to have. If the school team decides the student has a significant disability, Law #8 requires those students to attend a separate school. If the school team determines the student has a mild disability (e.g., a specific learning disability) Law #8 requires those students to attend a regular public school and receive special education services in that setting. Turkey's SESRT allows school-based teams to make special education assessment decisions. However, it limits services, regardless of disability diagnosis, to 12 hours total per month. Only the IDEA in the US has language in place that allows school-based team to make decisions about identification, diagnosis, and treatment of special education services to students with disabilities.

All countries, with the exception of China, provide free education, paid for by the government, to individuals with disabilities from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. China provides free and compulsory education to its citizenry of school age, regardless of ability status, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Notably, Kuwait's and South Korea's special education laws have language which can extend free public education beyond secondary school. Under Article 33 of South Korea's ASEIDL, some adults with disabilities who meet a minimum income requirement and who are accepted to public postsecondary education or vocational training programs can receive financial support for tuition and housing.

Special education laws in all countries, with the exception of China, use the term Individualized Education Program (IEP) and develop each student's educational goals around the IEP to respond to the unique learning and behavioral characteristics of students with disabilities. However, only the US and Turkey consider the IEP as a legally binding contract between parents and schools. South Korea mandates the use of IEPs for students with disabilities, but it is not a legally binding contract. Kuwait encourages the IEP, but their use is not mandated by law. Chinese special education law encourages differentiated and individualized education, however, the term IEP is not mentioned in special education law. IEPs in the US, Turkey, and South Korea mandate the inclusion of transition goals in the IEP, although to varying levels of specificity. Only the US provides specific language mandating that transition planning must be included in the student's IEP no later than age 16. Although China does not mention transition specifically, the LPPD and PDEO do emphasize the development of vocational skills thus suggesting that schools should help students with disabilities transition from school to employment.

Due process and the rights of parents of children with disabilities vary significantly across the five countries. Special education laws in the US, Turkey, and South Korea promote

parental involvement throughout the child's educational process and protects the rights of parents as voices in their children's education. Although the ASEIDL in South Korea does not explicitly include the procedural safeguards provision for parents of children with disabilities, parents do have the option to contest a school's decision legally. Turkish special education law also gives parents the right to disagree with decisions made by school-based teams about their children. However, Turkish parents must accept the decision made by the school-based team the final say in special education matters. Parental legal rights in China and Kuwait are even more limited. Parents in Kuwait are allowed to attend IEP meetings but it is not clear that they have a say in any of the decision-making process. As noted previously, Chinese special education law doesn't have a formal process to allow parents to contest a school's decision about children with disabilities.

## **Conclusion**

Broad anti-discrimination disability laws are the first step in improving the quality of life of individuals with disabilities across the lifespan because they promote equal opportunities to life activities and attempt to further acceptance of people with disabilities in the larger culture. However, anti-discrimination laws alone cannot guarantee equality between people with disabilities and people without disabilities. These individuals require special services to help them meaningfully integrate and contribute to the societies to which they belong. Special education has been demonstrated to increase opportunities for students with disabilities by increasing the likelihood that they will be able to compete more equitably in the job market and live more independently. This reduces their risks of living in poverty, promotes improved quality of life, and reduces the financial burden of care. In closing, the quality of life for individuals with



disabilities is improved by their ability to be self-actualized in education and employment, the same realms of life people without disabilities are expected to succeed.

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**Immigrants' Job Expectations:  
A Study of What Predicts Immigrants' Job Expectations After  
Completing Language Training Programmes**

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**Abstract**

*The overall aim was to identify predictors of adult immigrant students' job expectations after they have finished the language training program. We studied both socio-demographic predictors (sex, family status, socio-economic status, and level of education) and experience predictors (age at arrival, teacher, and language exposure). To get a more in-depth understanding of immigrants' job expectations, we also studied the following predictors: having had a job in the home country and in the host country. Using survey data collected from 187 adult immigrants participating in the Swedish-language-training program (SFI), we conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regressions. We found that the majority of immigrant students have high job expectations*

*and that age at arrival and level of education predicted job expectations. In addition, we found that student sex predicts having had a job in the home country but did not affect job expectations in the host country. The study has implications on how we organise inclusive education for adults in Swedish education and hence build an inclusive society throughout one's life course.*

**Keywords:** *job expectations, Inclusive (adult) education, immigration, age at arrival, language training program*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, untold numbers of refugees from conflict-affected countries have sought asylum in Europe. Two of the most generous countries in proportion to their population size are Germany and Sweden. Consequently, most refugees tend to seek asylum in these countries. During their journey to Germany/Sweden, the refugees endured many hardships. They were in great danger, and many of them had to use all their savings to pay smugglers. Consequently, they were under significant emotional and financial strains such as loss of home, savings, family members, and friends left behind, as well as the loss of employment security (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2005; Chatty, 2009; International Labour Organization, 2013; UN report, 2015).

Thus, finding employment is one of the first tasks facing newcomers. Securing a job is not that easy. Unemployment is twice as high among immigrants compared to natives (Camarota, 2015). Although adult immigrants bring human capital (education, experience) with them the problem is that, as Chiswick and Miller (2009) note, human capital is not always transferable between countries. When immigrants for example arrive to the host country they may find that their human capital- language skills, education and work experience- is not automatically relevant to the host country's labour market. Many foreign languages have little value in the host country.



That seems to be the case for skills acquired on the job or through formal schooling and training in the home country also ( Adamuti- Trache, 2016; Burns & Roberts, 2010; Donlevy, Meierkord, & Rajania, 2016; Statistics Sweden, 2016).

When immigrants came to Germany and Sweden during the '50s and '60s, they could start working directly in the industry. Today, direct transition to work in the industry is less likely. Most available jobs require some sort of communication in the host language (Adamuti-Trache, 2011). Moreover, most employers tend to require that the employee learn the host language to be eligible for employment.

Currently, the adult education system therefore plays a critical role in bridging and building up the host human capital; education and work exposure (cf. Sweetland, 1996). Language learning, education and work exposure represent a key component to smooth the integration process in the host country as such skills are necessary for effective functioning in the community and the workforce.

Most scholars of immigrants' education and training focus on children. Although much is known about the policies and their consequences for inclusion of immigrant children into education, we agree with Nicaise (2012) that far less is known about the education and training of immigrant adult. At the same time, we believe that inclusive education needs to address adult immigrant as well as young immigrants, since inclusive education needs to address the entry life course during which a person enters into education. From a policy perspective, inclusive education needs to promote inclusion into society by fostering job expectations to smooth the transition from training to work. From a research perspective we want to know to what extent adult immigrants differ in their job expectations.

### **The overall aim**

Currently, our knowledge about newly arrived (less than or equal to three years of residence) immigrants' expectations of getting a job after they have participated in the language-training programmes has not been sufficiently studied (Elstad, Christopherson, & Turmo, 2013). There is much research on the second-generation immigrants' expectations after they have finished their education (Feliciano, 2006; Li, 2001; Minello & Barban, 2012; Somech & Ron, 2007). Moreover, much research on adult immigrants concerns employment status and entrepreneurship (Basu, 2004; Lerner & Hendeles, 1998). However, these topics are seldom synthesised into a coherent research question. Consequently, we know little to nothing about how adult education fosters newly arrived immigrants' average job expectations. Job expectations may have profound consequences for immigrants' job-seeking behaviour and family life. Findings from our study will provide new insights about the average job expectations of newly arrived immigrants between 20 and 67 years old who have arrived in Sweden within the last three years. Consequently, the overall aim is to identify predictors of adult immigrants' job expectations after they have finished the language-training programme.

More specifically, the research questions guiding the study are:

1. To what extent do socio-demographic predictors (sex, socio-economic status, and level of education) impact adult immigrants' job expectations?

Research question one attempts to capture our theoretical concern to see; to what extent the human capital variable level of education does impact the mean adult immigrants' job expectations after adjusting for other socio-demographic predictors.

2. To what extent do experience predictors (age at arrival, the teacher, and language exposure) impact adult immigrants' job expectations?

Research question two attempts also to capture our theoretical concern to see; to what extent the human capital variable age of arrival does impact the mean adult immigrants' job expectations after adjusting for other experience predictors. Age of arrival indicates exposure to the host labour market as explained later in the theoretical framework.

3.               What predicts having a job in the home country and in the host country?

Research question three attempts to capture our theoretical concern to see; to what extent the human capital variable level of education does impact the probability of adult immigrants' holding a job in the home country. Thus the question validates the relevance of home human capital after adjusting for constraints on the individual's time such as having a family and children.

The layout of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we discuss the background of the study. Then, we discuss our conceptual framework and anchor our concepts within the current research. Then, we discuss our survey data and the methods for measuring our concepts (scaling and factor analysis). Finally, we present the results using descriptive statistics, *t* tests, and ordinary-least-squares (OLS) regression. We follow up the OLS-regression on job expectations with a logit model on work in the home and in the host country. We conclude with a discussion on the plausible explanations for our findings and discuss how our findings can be positioned within the current research on adult immigrants' integration and language learning.

### **Background: Adult education policies for immigrants**

In the current study, we are interested in the Swedish case. Sweden is interesting because the country together with Germany have had one of the most generous migration policies (Bundy, 2016; van Selm, 2016). Consequently, a diverse group of refugees have sought asylum in Sweden and Germany within a very short period of time as we have witnessed recently. The refugees

coming to Sweden/Germany are quite diverse groups, consisting of people with a range of education levels. Many of them are illiterate, while others are highly educated.

In Sweden, newly arrived immigrants (18–67 years of age) are offered extensive language-training programmes (SFI). The programme is state-funded, but it is the responsibility of the different municipalities to provide SFI. The programme ensures that adult Swedish immigrants have the right to free basic-language tuition up to a level corresponding to B1 as described in the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001). SFI is a labour-market instrument, and it is stated that SFI should focus on work-related communication skills, periods of practical work experience, and courses targeting rapid employment (Sandwall, 2013). Sweden is not the only country to offer language-training courses. There are courses in, e.g., Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and Canada but they differ from the Swedish language-training programme.

The ‘Integrationskurse’ in Germany consists of language instruction and civic instruction. The Residence Act sets out various rules with regard to attendance at and paying for integration courses (Joppke, 2007). In the Netherlands, there is The Newcomer Integration Law (WIN) which obliges most non-EU citizens to participate in a 12-month integration course, which consists of Dutch-language instruction, civic education, and preparation for the labour market. This course is mandatory. The migrants are requested to pay for the integration courses in full. In order to access the courses, immigrants must have gained a residence permit. “The Dutch state thus does not care whether the courses are actually attended; only the result counts” (Joppke, 2007, p. 7).

In Canada and Australia, language-training courses are voluntarily. According to Joppke (2007), this can be explained by the fact that the new arrivals coming to these countries are predominantly highly skilled, resourceful, and language competent.

### Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

The early definition of human capital included schooling, on-the job training (Schulz, 1962, Becker, 1964). However, some researchers have argued for an expansion of the early concept of human capital to include language capital and other types of knowledge, such as computer skills and literacy and numeracy skills (Chiswick & Miller, 1995, Miller & Mulvey, 1997, Chiswick, Lee & Miller, 2003) .

Adult immigrants coming to Sweden differ in terms of human capital but also in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, such as, sex, socio-economic, and ethnic background. However, one thing they have in common is that they cannot speak Swedish. Swedish is a Germanic language that is not widely spoken in other parts of the world. Furthermore, there is a linguistic distance between many immigrants' mother tongues and Swedish. Thus, language barriers stop adult immigrants from working in Sweden or pursue secondary or tertiary education—college and university—directly after arrival to Sweden.

Human capital theory is based on the assumption that (a) more years of education and (b) labour market exposure leads to employment in line with the early definition (Chiswick & Miller, 2009). Since foreign human capital is often discounted in the host country many immigrants decide to continue formal education to avoid downgrading of their previous socio-economic status (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2005, 2010; Adamuti Trache, 2011, Chiswick & Miller, 2009). Obtaining educational credentials that signal the possession of work-relevant knowledge seems to be a good strategy with which to enhance employment expectations (Adamuti-Trache, Anisef, Sweet & Walters, 2013).

We use the following key variables: *level of education* (human capital), *age at arrival* (human capital), *language exposure*, *sex and family status*, and *the teacher*.

*Education and job expectations*

Human capital theory predicts, as mentioned above, that the more time you invest in education the greater the expectations of getting a job is. The human capital theory assumes that people on average invest more time on education and less time for leisure if the potential benefits are greater than the potential costs. In this case, finding a job in the host country becomes a futile exercise and investing in education pays off in the long run.

Most research on adult immigrants' expectations after education has been conducted in Canada, Australia, England, and the United States (Adamuti-Trache, 2011; Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2005; Basu, 2004; McKenzie, Gibson, & Stillman, 2013; Shakya, Guruge, Hynie, Akbari, Malik, Htoo, & Alley, 2012). Moreover, this research has mostly focussed on expectations about getting employment after education. In this , Adamuti-Trache and her colleagues have conducted interesting studies about getting a job after validating credentials.

Many immigrants who have newly arrived in Canada are highly educated. Credential recognition of their "home human capital" is a significant problem in the settlement of these immigrants, and although they can speak English they feel obliged to attend college or university to enhance their existing qualifications (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2005; Adamuti-Trache, Sweet, Anisef & Walters, 2013; Shakya, Guruge, Hynie, Akbari, Malik, Htoo, & Alley, 2012). The problem of recognition of home human capital is not unique to Canada . Chiswick, Lee and Miller (2003) have demonstrated that highly educated immigrants in Australia are particularly disadvantaged when the host country employers are not prepared to reward education with suitable employment. Low-educated immigrants are at even greater disadvantage since they lack the necessary human capital from their home country. The lack of home and host country human capital has led to that many low-educated immigrants in the United Kingdom becoming

entrepreneurs (Basu, 2004; Chiswick, Lee, & Miller, 2003). Thus, becoming self-employed is a strategy to avoid discrimination and live a fulfilled life (Hjerm & Peterson, 2007).

### *Age and expectations*

Human capital theory predicts, as mentioned above, that host labour market exposure and work experience matter for employment. Many immigrants are thus at a disadvantage because they arrive in the host country at a later stage of life and have not had the same exposure to the host labour market where age and age at arrival are typically “squared” and used as proxies for immigrants’ work experience and/or host labour market exposure. For example, a senior engineer from Iran may have a vast home country experience. But if the senior engineer only has resided in the host country for six months, his host labour market exposure to the host country will be rather low. Meaning that the senior engineer lacks host human capital with respect to experience and language. Consequently, work experience has been defined in previous studies as the difference between immigrants’ age and age at arrival. For example Adamtu-Trache (2011) found that those in age groups of 25–29 years and 30–34 years are willing to make a long-term commitment regarding education while those between 35–39 are more likely to make a short commitment.

However, in the present study we are more concerned with age of arrival due to the short duration of residence in the host country of the participations (see method sections).

### *Sex and job expectations*

Another key predictor for job expectations is sex. McKenzie and colleagues (2013) found a difference between male and female immigrants’ expectations. Male immigrants tend to

underestimate the employment likelihood and the income they can earn abroad, while female immigrants have reasonably accurate expectations. Male immigrants have expectations that adult education will help them to feel that it is possible to be a family provider also in the host country (cf. Chatty, 2009).

### *Teachers and expectations*

Moreover, yet another factor of importance is the teacher. Teachers in higher adult education can play a role in immigrants' lives (Costa, 2010; Norton , 1997; Sandwall, 2013; Zachrisson, 2014). Norton (1997) reported adult language learners who attended evening courses to improve their language skills but ended up being disengaged because the teachers' methods did not match their needs. The teacher factor has remained fairly unexplored in prior research. Although scholars have addressed the engagement among adult language teachers, these studies used the reports of the teachers and not the adult students. Thus, teachers may be highly engaged, but we do not know whether that matters for the immigrant student. Thus, our study makes an important contribution.

### **Method**

In this section, we will present how the participants were sampled. Thereafter, we will discuss the variables used in the study, which were derived from the survey. Finally, we will discuss the strategies used for the data analysis.

### **Sample**

Our study builds on a survey of 187 adult students. All students were participating in a language-training programme at a facility called Swedish for Immigrants (SFI).



In our study, most of the participants were refugees from Syria, followed by Somali land, and Iran/Iraq, and 52 % were male and 48% female. Unfortunately, we were unable to acquire reliable measures of country of origin at the individual level. The mean length of the participants' stay in Sweden was 2 years (Table 1). They were quite young when arriving to Sweden, around 18 years old, whereas the oldest arrived at an age of 63 years. The mean age of arrival was 33 years. Although being from the same country, our participants were a diverse group. On the one end of the spectrum, the participants were highly educated (up to 20 years of education) with diplomas from universities and had had well-paid jobs in their home country (20%), while on the other end of the spectrum there were illiterate students who in some cases never had attended a school. While most of the men in the illiterate group had been shepherds or had a small shop, most of the women had been busy with traditional house work and hence isolated in the home (cf. Chatty, 2009). By participating in adult education, immigrants had a chance to break their isolation in the home and learn the host language. Moreover, almost 30% had been unemployed in the home country (Table 1). Furthermore, many of the participants who had attended school had only been there for a few years. The mean of years of education was eight (Table 1), with a dispersion of standard deviations rounded to six years.

The high amount of illiterates posed a methodological challenge. Our solution was that the participants' teacher and one of the researchers had a thorough oral description of every survey item. Moreover, every item was translated by interpreters who were fluent in the participants' native language. The interpreters were part of the staff at the language training centre. Thus the participants had the possibility to ask for clarity if they did not understand a question. Although our sample size may be small, we consider the sample as drawn from a "hard-to-reach population" because gaining responses about expectations from refugees at this stage of their stay in the host country may be difficult.

## Measurement

### *Dependent Variable*

Job expectation was part of our first and second research questions. Thus, our main dependent variable was *job expectations*. Job expectations were measured on a 1-to-7 scale with the wording: “I believe that I will get a job after finishing the language training programme.” In addition, we had two other dependent variables to measure our third research question: first, whether the participant had had a job in the host country (= 1) or not (= 0); second, whether the participant had had a job in the home country (= 1) or not (= 0).

### *Independent Variables*

*Education* = number of years of education. Here, we took the natural log to transform the measure of level of education. There, the natural log has a base of “e” which is a constant number ( $\approx 2.72$ ). For example, log of 5 years of education is  $\approx 1.61$  because  $e^{1.61} = 5$ . In the regression analysis, we subtracted the mean from the variable (i.e., centring). Subtracting the mean from continuous predictors makes the interpretation more meaningful as other values are at the expected value (the mean) rather than “zero,” as zero is not a realistic value.

Our study also included a number of variables of the experiences in the host country. *Age at arrival* = we subtracted the length of stay in Sweden from the age of the participant since combining the measures was more meaningful given prior research showing that chronological age masks the age at arrival. In the regression analysis, we subtracted the mean from the variable (i.e., centring).

### *Control variables*

The demographic variables of the study included the following: *sex* = whether

the participant was male (= 1) or female (= 0), *family status* = whether the participant had a family (= 1) or not (= 0), *number of children*. We treated this as a categorical variable: “No children,” “One child,” “Two to three children,” “Three to four children,” and “Five or more children.” *Socio-economic status* = we coded the participants’ occupations in the home country using the European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC) schema. The use of the ESeC as the schema is comparable across countries. The schema takes into account both (a) the specific skills needed for the job and (b) the degree of autonomy of the employee. As our sample was small, we used the three-class schema. The first class was “salaried status.” Examples of salaried in our sample include lawyers, teachers, social workers, and civil and professional engineers. Common to these occupations is high autonomy, high skills, and non-routine jobs. The second class was “intermediate status.” Examples of intermediate in our sample include clerks, self-employed hairdresser, barbers, bakers, and farmers. Common to these occupations is high autonomy. The third class was “working class status.” Examples of working class in our sample include miners, truck drivers, janitors, and construction workers. Common to these occupations is low autonomy, low skills, and routine jobs. In addition, we added unemployment status as a precarious class (predominantly students, housewives).

*Teacher factor* = through this measure, we approximated the effect of the learning environment at the language training programme. The measure consisted of three questions: “teacher is nice,” “the teacher has humor,” and “the teacher is engaged.” All items ranged from 1 to 7. The items were converted into z-scores by subtracting the mean and dividing by one standard deviation, and we computed the mean of z-scores. We prefer z-scores because one change in the standard deviation indicates a substantial change on the scale. Moreover, z-scores imply centring, as discussed above. *Language exposure* = to measure the host language exposure and information gained from social networks such as friends, associations, and neighbours, we

combined four questions: “To what extent can you speak Swedish with your neighbours?”, “To what extent can you speak Swedish with your friends?”, “To what extent can you speak Swedish in associations?”, and “To what extent can you speak Swedish with your child’s teacher?” All items ranged from 1 to 7. The mean and the standard deviations of the variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Predictors and Outcomes**

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Outcomes</b>				
Job Expectations	5,808	1,692	1	7
Work home	0,731	0,445	0	1
Yes	73%			
No	27%			
Work host				
Yes	12%			
No	88%			
<b>Predictors</b>				
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	52%			
Female	48%			
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>				
Salariat	20%			
Intermediate	12%			
Working class	41%			
Unemployed	27%			
Years of Education	8,140	5,640	0	22
Teacher factor			0	22
Teacher humor	5,995	1,532	1	7
Teacher nice	6,462	1,163	1	7
Teacher engaged	6,328	1,268	1	7
<b>Exposure factor</b>				
Friends	3,599	2,549	1	7
Neighbors	3,839	2,427	1	7
Associations	3,691	2,240	1	7
Kids teacher	3.983	2.601	1	7
Age	34,720	9,265	20	65
Length of stay	2,102	1,780	0,3	11

Age at Arrival	32,619	9,311	17,6	63,4
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To validate the teacher factor and language exposure factor, we used factor analysis following the Keiser criterion of extracting factors with an Eigen value above 1.0. Table 2 shows the factor loadings of the rotated matrix. We used an orthogonal rotation as we have no reason to believe that the factors would be oblique. Oblique factors are a common assumption with psychological factors (e.g., self-esteem), but ours are not psychological.

**Table 2. Rotated Factor Solution**

	Language Exposure Factor	Teacher Factor
Teacher humorous		0.774
Teacher nice		0.798
Teacher engaged		0.699
Exposure with friends	0.694	
Exposure with neighbours	0.912	
Exposure within associations	0.610	
Exposure with children's teacher	0.660	

*Note.* Rotated factor solution using varimax and maximum likelihood. Blanks represent an absolute loading of <.3.

### Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations for the study. First, the study analyses a small and non-random sample. Thus, making generalisations to the population becomes difficult. However, we still contend that the sample captures the diversity of the immigrant population in language training in Sweden because all the major groups are represented in the sample. Thus, there is some representativeness. Secondly, the study has a cross-sectional design, i.e., only one measurement point in time. Expectations may be subject to change over time, and our study design does not allow us to model such effects. However, by modelling the age of arrival, we get a proximal

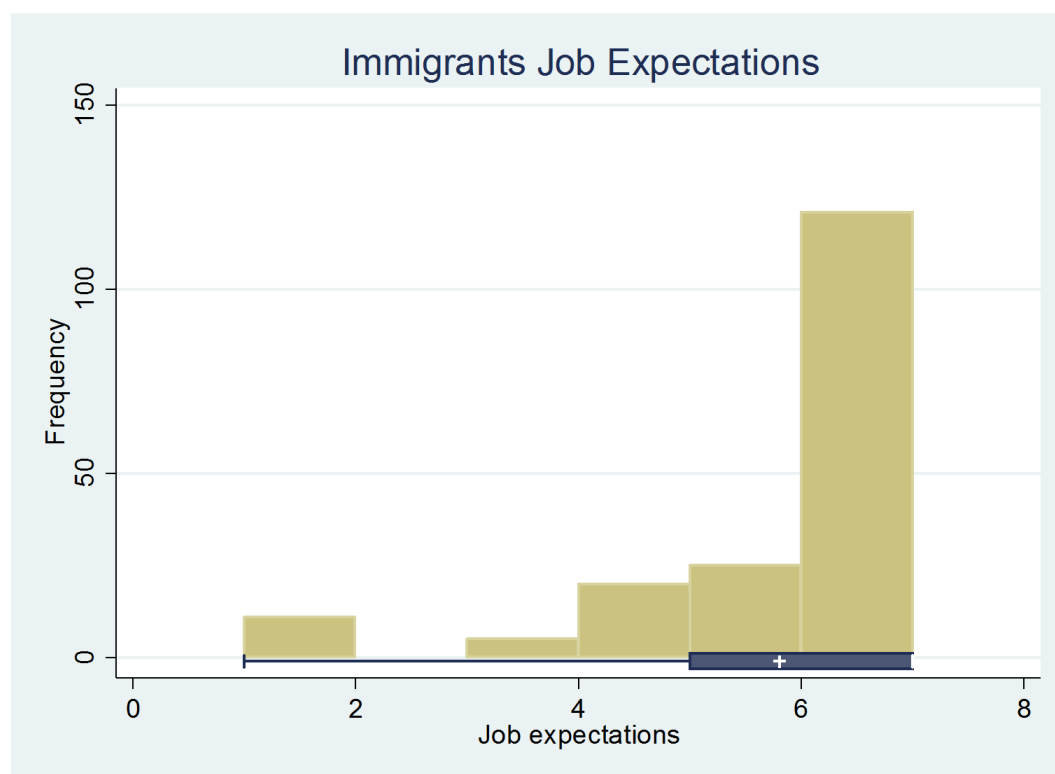
measure of time. Still, panel data would be desirable to make causal claims (cf Adamuti- Trache, 2012).

Thirdly, it was not possible to break down the data into subgroups based on nationality since (a) the refugees from Syria were so dominating and (b) in some cases we did not get correct data since the refugees reported two countries where they came from.

## **Results**

### ***The effects of education***

Our first research question was, “To what extent do socio-demographic predictors (sex, socio-economic status, level of education, family status) impact adult immigrants’ job expectations?” To answer this question, we started by describing the distribution of the immigrants’ job expectations. We then continued *t* tests for differences in means between immigrants depending on family status and sex. Finally, we conducted an OLS regression using all the socio-demographic predictors. As can be seen in Figure 1, the immigrants’ job expectations are highly skewed, as the mode is 7 on a 1 to 7 scale. This suggests that most immigrants hold high expectations for finding a job. However, there is a great dispersion within the lower quantile suggesting some of the immigrants are rather frustrated.



**Figure 1. Histogram with boxplot and mean (+) for Job Expectations.**

In the second step of our analysis, we conducted two  $t$  tests to investigate whether there was a difference in means depending on either family status or sex of the student. As the distribution was highly skewed, we bootstrapped the test using 1,000 replications. We did expect an effect, although we did not have a prior hypothesis about the direction of the effect;  $H_0: \mu_0 = \mu_1$ . Thus, we set up a two-tailed test for both family and sex. Contrary to our expectations, we found no statistically significant difference in the mean of job expectations ( $t = .764$ ) depending on sex. Moreover, the magnitude of the difference was small ( $d = .11$ ). Continuing with family status, we again were surprised to find no statistically significant difference ( $t = -.982$ ) and a small effect ( $d = -.16$ ).

In the third step of our analysis, we conducted a series of OLS regression on job expectations.

Again we used bootstrapping to adjust the standard errors for skewness (non-normality) and non-constant error variance. We also checked that the Variance Inflation Index was below 2 to make sure that education and socio-economic status were contributing to collinearity.

The results are shown in Table 3. In the first model, we added the socio-demographic predictors. Again, contrary to our expectations, sex did not have an effect significantly different from zero. As such, our data suggest that neither men nor women have stronger job expectations. Moreover, having a family does neither significantly increase nor decrease the students' job expectations. We also found that social class did not have a statistically significant effect on job expectations. However, we do note that the size of the coefficient is greater for those who in their home countries had intermediate ("middle class") jobs and were unemployed compared to those that had working class jobs in their home country. As such, those who had working class jobs seem to be as optimistic as those with salariat jobs in their home countries. The answer to the working-class optimism concerning job expectations can be found in the effect of level of education. As can be seen in Table 3, the log of level of education has a statistically significant effect below 5%, suggesting that the higher education the students have the lower their job expectations become. As we described above, we used the natural log of education, meaning that we interpret the predictor in terms of percentage change. Thus, we interpret the coefficient of 0.499 by looking at the expected mean difference for an increase in education by multiplying by mean difference log of job expectations. If we use the laws of logs, we get  $\log(\text{Job}_1) - \log(\text{Job}_2) = \log(\text{Job}_1) / \log(\text{Job}_2)$ . For example, a one percent increase in education would be expected to decrease the job expectations by  $-0.499 * \log(1.01) = .01$  points. By comparison, a 10% increase in education would be expected to decrease one's job expectations by  $-0.499 * \log(1.1) = .55$ .



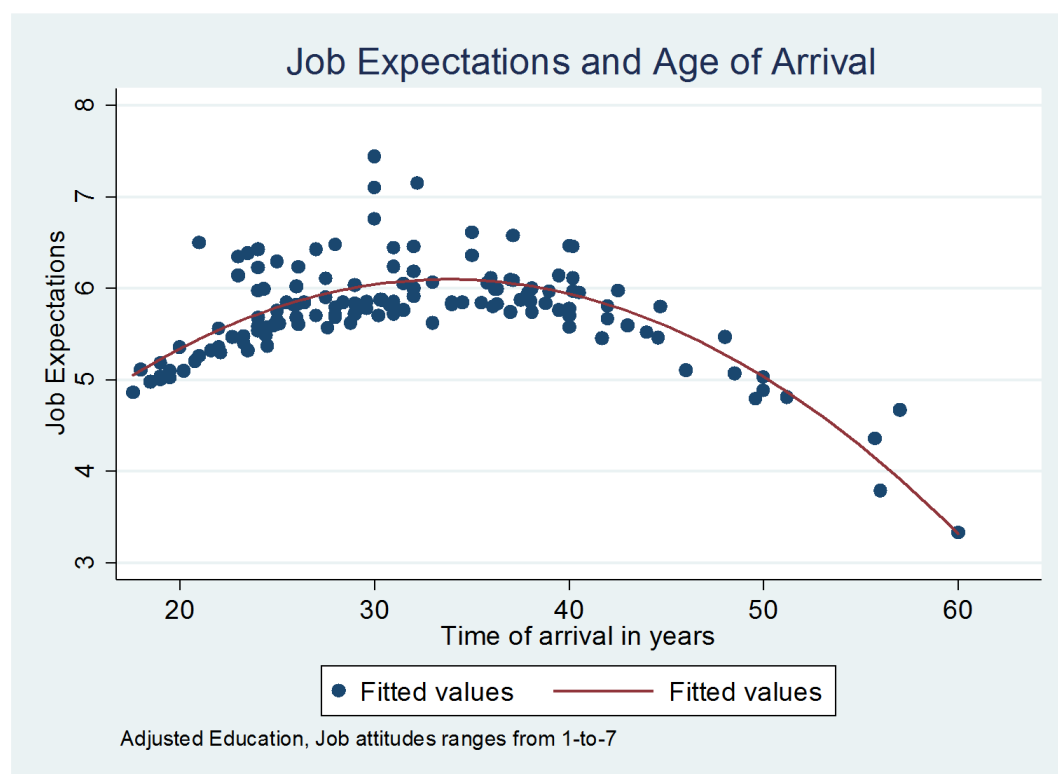
**Table 3. OLS-regression on Job Expectations Using Bootstrap**

Dependent variable: Job expectations	Model1 b/se	Model2 b/se
Demographic Variables		
Sex <sub>f</sub>		
Male	-0.071 (0.322)	
Socioeconomic Status <sub>w</sub>		
Salariat	-0.004 (0.354)	
Intermediate	-0.278 (0.536)	
Unemployed	-0.260 (0.380)	
Family		
Yes	0.001 (0.322)	
Log of years of education <sub>c</sub>	-0.499** (0.162)	-0.334 (0.172)
Experience variables		
Age at arrival <sub>c</sub>		0.329** (0.116)
Age at arrival <sup>2</sup>		-0.005** (0.002)
Exposure Factor <sub>z</sub>		0.270 (0.180)
Teacher Factor <sub>z</sub>		0.240 (0.188)
Constant	5.884*** (0.424)	1.166 (1.874)
R-sqr	0.04	0.16

<sub>c</sub> = Centered at the mean<sub>z</sub> = Z-scores<sub>f</sub> = Compared to *female*<sub>w</sub> = Compared to *working class*

### *The effects of experience*

To answer the second research question “To what extent does age at arrival, the teacher, and language exposure impact adult immigrants’ job expectations?” we formulated a second model. In the second model, we entered experience variables, e.g. variables that had to do with what happens in the host country. We dropped all non-significant socio-demographic variables. However, in model 2, the effect of education is no longer statistically significant from zero. To our surprise, there was also no effect of the degree of exposure to the language. Thus, having social networks in which one can speak the host language did not support one’s job expectations. Furthermore, our indicator of the learning environment, the teacher factor, did not significantly affect the students’ job expectations. The finding suggests that teachers do not foster students’ job expectations. Instead, we find that what matters is the age at arrival. As can be seen, age at arrival has a curvilinear effect. Consequently, the reason immigrants have high job expectations has to do with the fact that they arrived at an early age. When immigrants are young, they have hopes and dreams about the host country as they have “their whole life in front of them.” However, when immigrants arrive at later ages they may tend to be more aware of the low demand for their services in the labour market. Immigrants arriving at later ages may fear double discrimination, as minorities and as elders. Thus, the effect of arrival cancels out the effect of education because educated young persons may have job expectations, whereas elderly highly educated persons may fear that their credentials are outdated. Interestingly, taking the absolute value of the derivative, we note that the turning point comes at age 35. Thus, the turning point comes when the students are already in their “midlife,” as can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Predicted job expectations and age at arrival, adjusted for teacher factor, exposure and level of education.**

### *The effects of education, children and family status*

To answer our third research question, we proceeded with building two completely new models. Thus, the fourth step of the analysis was to see who had had a job in the host country and who had had a job in the home country. For such a purpose, we estimated a logit model (i.e., “logistic regression”) as the dependent variable has only two values (yes or no). Thus, we specified two models based on demographic variables only. The first model yield:

In Table 4, we present the coefficients of the log odds (i.e.,  $\log (P/1-P)$ ). These coefficients can be interpreted as an increase or decrease. Thus, we do not report the exponentiated coefficients—odds ratios—in the table. We reason that exponentiated coefficients

can be deceptive in the interpretation as odds ratios have a relative interpretation. To aid our interpretation, we report odds ratios in and predicted probabilities in the running text.

In the model for work in host country, we find that those with one child have six times the odds of having a job compared to those with no children. The effect of one child is statistically significant at 5%. There the probability of having a job in the host country for those without children is 16% and 20% for those with one child. Consequently, we note the magnitude of the effect of having one child is rather low. Moreover, those with families have an 82% less chance of having a job compared to those who do not have families. The effect of family status is statistically significant at below 5%. The expected probability of those with families is 9% compared to 19% for those without families. Thus, not having a family predicts having a job, but in general it is not a strong predictor. But student sex, socio-economic status, and education did not have a significant effect different from zero. The lack of effect of education may be the most interesting. As the model suggests, there is a difficulty of transferring educational credentials from the home country to the host country.

In the second model, we merely drop socio-economic status in the home country. In the model of work in home country, we find the opposite pattern. Family status and number of children do not have significant effects different from zero. Instead, as Table 4 shows, both education and sex have a significant effect at below 5%. The effect is rather substantial for females, 56% as compared to 90% for males. Therefore, we note that the effect of student sex can be found with respect to the home country but not the host country. The finding confirms the fact that the immigrants were exposed to a work life depending on sex, with women having a greater probability of being a housewife. Moreover, education was significant for the chance of having a job in the home country at below 5%. One percentage increase in education is expected to increase the chance of having a job approximately twice as much. There, the expected average

was a marginal effect of 11% for an incremental increase in education. The results clearly explain the potential lack of optimism among highly educated immigrants. Educational credentials are strongly related to home country but not the host country.

**Table 4. Logit Models for Work in Host Country and Work in Home Country (unstandardized coefficients)**

	Dependent variable: Work in host country b/se	Dependent variable: Work in home country b/se
Demographic variables		
Sex <sub>f</sub>	-0.642	1.629**
Male	(0.569)	(0.502)
Socioeconomic status <sub>w</sub>		
Salariat	-0.670	
	(0.718)	
Intermediate	-0.073	
	(0.755)	
Unemployed	-1.988	
	(1.131)	
Family		
Yes	-1.764*	0.197
Children <sub>n</sub>	(0.752)	(0.587)
One child	1.813*	1.013
	(0.913)	(0.805)
Two to three children	0.397	0.194
	(0.877)	(0.643)
Three to four children	1.240	0.890
	(1.045)	(0.908)
Five or more children	0.149	1.435
	(1.257)	(1.012)
Log of years of education <sub>c</sub>	1.040	0.818*
	(0.650)	(0.320)
Constant	-0.815	0.145
	(0.615)	(0.515)
Pseudo-R	0.14	0.15
ll2	-48.85	-62.27
chi2	16.02	22.34
P	0.10	0.00

<sub>c</sub> = Centered at the mean

<sub>f</sub> = Compared to *female*

<sub>w</sub> = Compared to *working class*

<sub>n</sub> = Compared to *No children*

## Discussion and Conclusions

The civil war in Syria has triggered a migration crisis in Europe. Many European states have in a very short time been facing an exponential increase in the number of refugees fleeing from the civil war. The current crisis has increased the pressure on Europe not only to provide food and shelter, but also to integrate the refugees into the host country. One key factor in immigrants' integration into the host country comes from getting a job. But to get a job one needs to learn the host language, which requires immigrants to undergo training and education. Our study has two contributions: no previous quantitative study has examined adult immigrants' expectations after finishing Swedish-language training programmes, and no previous study has used the reports of the adult students—only the reports of the teachers. Therefore, we knew little to nothing about the mean Swedish-language training programme participants' job expectations until now. We agree with Nicaise (2012) that we know much about inclusive education for immigrant children but we know remarkably little about inclusion of adult immigrants in education and training. At the same time we believe that inclusive education and training is important through a person's whole life course and not only during the early stages.

We had three research questions. Our first research question was: "To what extent do socio-demographic predictors (sex, socio-economic status, and level of education) impact adult immigrants' job expectations?" In contrast to previous Swedish research (Sandwall, 2013; Zachrisson, 2014), the majority had job expectations despite the fact that parts of their human capital-, were not transferable. This is obvious in the case of language skills, where many foreign languages have little value in Sweden as well as certain home country job experience (cf Chiswick & Miller, 2009). Our findings are in line with previous international research that demonstrates that immigrants have expectations and ambitions for a better life and to be

integrated at the workplace in the host country (cf. Costa, 2010; McKenzie, Gibson, & Stillman, 2013).

We did not find a statistically significant difference depending on sex or family situation regarding job expectations. Nor did social class have any effect on job expectations. However, when we broke down the data and adjusted for education, we found that highly educated immigrants did not share these expectations. Instead, we found that having home country education actually decreased highly educated immigrants' job expectations. They were lawyers, teachers, social workers, and civil and professional engineers and it is difficult to get credential recognition for these occupations. Moreover, in these occupations, it is necessary to communicate, and the refugees' first language is linguistically distant from Swedish. Consequently, there are many obstacles to overcome (cf. Adamuti-Trache, Anisef, Sweet & Walters, 2013). Thus, they may feel frustrated, and this can explain their low expectations. This is in line with Valenta (2008) who found that Norwegian immigrants who had substantial human capital and who experienced downgrading were very frustrated.

Our second research question was: "To what extent do experience predictors (age at arrival impact adult, the teacher, and language exposure) impact adult immigrants' job expectations?" In response, we found that the teachers or language exposure did not foster job expectations. Instead, in agreement with prior research, we found that the age at arrival did matter statistically. Young immigrants have expectations of getting a job after finishing the language programme. In our study, age at arrival follows an inverted U-shaped curve (Figure 2). Interestingly enough, the turning point comes at age 35. This figure corresponds with the findings of Adamuti-Trache and Sweet (2005, 2010) and Adamuti-Trache (2011), who found a higher participation in educational programs before 35 but a drop after 35.

One explanation may be that learning a second language requires more effort and determination as one gets older. Thus arriving at a late stage of one's life, the immigrant student may struggle seriously with learning the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and comprehension. When realising how difficult it is to learn and pronounce Swedish—there is a linguistic distance to their first language—they get frustrated and their job expectations decrease (cf. Chiswick & Miller, 1995; Cummins, 1981). Another explanation may be that arriving at a late age makes it more difficult to get exposure to the host language, as making new friends becomes more difficult with age (cf. McKenzie, Gibson, & Stillman, 2013). Therefore future research is needed to explain why age of arrival has an inverse U-shaped effect on the mean job expectations.

We interpret the lack of a teacher effect as when adult immigrants come to the host country they have experienced so much that the quality of education may not really matter for them (Burns & Roberts, 2010). Moreover, they are disengaged because the teachers' methods did not match their needs and their opinion of how a teacher should provide knowledge. Many of them come from countries with old teaching traditions, while Sweden has progressive education (cf. Norton, 1997; Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2005; Costa, 2010). Therefore future research is needed to clarify the role of different pedagogical styles on the mean job expectations of adult immigrants.

The answer to our third research question—"What predicts having a job in the home country and in the host country?"—is that family status matters for having had a job in the host country. Those without families seemed to be in a better position to secure a job. One possible explanation may be that these immigrants were less constrained by family responsibilities, e.g., spending time with the family. This is likely to be the case when one has many children; however, having only one child did predict a greater chance of having a job (Chatty, 2009). Supposedly, having one child is less demanding in terms of time, and having one child also comes with the



responsibility of being a provider. Thus, family matters, as suggested by the chance of having had a job and not for the job expectations (cf. Mojab, 1999). Future research could clarify if time allocation is the main underlying variable explaining the effect of the family and children on the mean job expectations of adult immigrants.

Moreover, we find that sex and home country education did matter for having a job in the home country. As such, we see a clear structure in sex differences in the home country but not in the host country. Several of our female participants were “house wives” in the home country and not participating in the labour market (cf. Chatty, 2009). Such findings suggest that the language training programme fostered expectations among the female participants to look at the host country as a fresh start and an opportunity to get a job.

In summary, our study contributes to predicting the attitudes towards job expectations among adult immigrant students. The study shows that adult immigrants have expectations but that seems not to be due to the host education but rather to home education and age at arrival. Thus, the present study provides support for the human capital theory but not to the same extent as in previous studies (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2005, 2010). Interestingly enough, while sex difference seems to have mattered in the home country, such differences do not seem to affect job expectations. As such, immigrant students may have expectations regardless of sex.

### ***Implications for inclusive education of adult immigrants***

The study has implications on how we organise inclusive education in the Swedish school system and hence build an inclusive society. Adult educators need to be focussed on how to maintain the hopes of students arriving before 35 years of age, but more importantly how to keep students arriving after 35 from becoming frustrated with the host society (cf. Burns & Roberts, 2010). The policy implication is that language-training programmes need to focus on promoting expectations

among elderly students. Language-training and civics know-how are important but students also need to be supported to enhance and be ‘equipped with’ high expectations, i.e. hopes and dreams. If not, we worry that this may have an adverse effect on their future job-seeking behaviour.

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## **A Survey on Parent-Conductor Relationship: Unveiling the Black Box**

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### **Abstract**

*Teacher's perceptions and attitudes regarding working with parents are critical factors contributing to family-centered service. This survey provides an in-depth understanding of the*

*components perceived by conductors (teachers in Conductive Education settings) as being cornerstone of successful parent-conductor relationships. The Conductors and Parents Questionnaire of children with disabilities was administrated to thirty-seven conductors (97% consent rate). Conductors identified working with parents, exploring parent goals, degree of parental investment and instilling a sense of confidence in parents as the most significant factors enabling a child's progress. Evidence of significant factors contributing to successful partnerships emphasize delivering services in a wider context, in which families and not just children are the focus for support*

**Keywords:** cerebral palsy; family-centered service; conductive education; family - professional relationships

## **Introduction**

*"No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main"*  
(John Donne, 1624).

Contemporary conceptualization of family-centered service (FCS) views the family as an inseparable part of the child's development, whose responsibility is to cope with the multifaceted challenges associated with child's life long management. (King & Chiarello, 2014). This perspective, supported by the framework of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001), expands our view to include the child's family in the educational and interventional process, and promotes family-professional collaboration as the context of intervention (Dunst, 2002; Rosenbaum, 2007, 2008). Family-professional collaboration refers to mutually supportive interactions between families and professionals,



focused on shared goals, meeting the needs of children and families, and characterized by a sense of equality, positive communication, respect and trust (Hanna & Rodger, 2002; King, King, & Rosenbaum, 2004; Summers et al., 2005; Keen, 2007; An et al., 2015). While stressing the importance of parent-professional collaboration, accumulating research reveals discrepancies between professionals' and parents' beliefs regarding collaboration and its implementation into actual practice. Findings indicate that while professionals provide parents with knowledge and skills related to their child's intervention, there is less emphasis on parent concerns and needs (Bamm & Rosenbaum, 2008; Hinojosa, Sproat, Mankhetwit, & Anderson, 2002). Furthermore, Bezdek, Summers, & Turnbull (2010) found indications of professionals' dissatisfaction with parent partnerships, particularly regarding their lack of follow-through by the parents. They also noted that despite professionals' verbalized commitment to family-centered principles, in practice they tend to take a controlling approach. In addition, concern has been raised that empowering parents to assume more responsibility results in a loss of focus on the development of true collaborative relationships between families and healthcare providers (Leiter, 2004; MacKean, Thurston, & Scott, 2005).

Explanations for this discrepancy vary, and include indications that professionals' place less emphasis on parent concerns and needs (Bamm & Rosenbaum, 2008; Hinojosa, et al., 2002) do not see parents as equal partners, continue to maintain control (Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, & Beegle, 2004); and fail to operationally define the construct of partnership and develop meaningful accountability. Also lacking are preparation programs and strategies for professionals to promote collaboration (Dunst, 2000; An & Palisano, 2014; Sewell, 2012).

In accordance with these findings, Raghavendra, Murchland, Bentley, Wake-Dyster, & Lyons (2007) call for further exploration of families, (Hinojosa, Anderson, & Ranum, 1988; Hinojosa et al., 2002). It may therefore be of great value to illuminate this multidimensional process.

In understanding such views, the specific nature of the intervention program has been shown to be significant (Tang, Chong, Goh, Chan, & Cho, 2011). One such program is Conductive Education (CE), a worldwide comprehensive system for educating children (mainly those with cerebral palsy) and adults with physical disabilities. (Schenker, Parush, Rosenbaum, Rigbi, & Yochman, 2016).

Conductive Education (CE), developed originally in Hungary by *András Petö* and followers, is a comprehensive educational system for raising and educating children and adults with physical disabilities. Its underlying premise is that children's development and learning are distorted due to the effects of the manifestations of neurological impairment upon body function and through this, upon individuals' transactions with the social and material environments, through which learning and development occur. This counterproductive learning process may lead to the development of non-use at the physical level and learned helplessness at the psycho-social level, and may restrict children's ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions and become active participating autonomous persons (Sutton, 1988; Kozma, 1995; Bourke-Taylor, O'Shea, & Gaebker – Spira, 2007; Feuerstein, 2008; Schenker, Capelovitch, Sutton, & Rosenbaum, 2010; Lotan, Schenker, Wine, J, & Downs, 2012). Based on the belief that child development is active, reciprocal and transformation in nature if provided with appropriate learning conditions, CE offers a unified process of teaching and learning that merges the various developmental domains (e.g. emotional, cognitive, motor, communicative) through a unique integrative pedagogy of

social and psychological mediation (conductive pedagogy), led by a broadly-trained teacher specialist known as a ‘conductor’, in an appropriate organizational structure.

Tsad Kadima (TK) (Hebrew for 'a step forward'), is the Association for CE in Israel, established as a collaborative educational initiative of parents and professionals, providing nationwide services to children and adults with CP in educational and community settings. Conductors delivering the conductive pedagogy are the primary workers in the trans-disciplinary team working with the child and are therefore the main figures to collaborate with parents (Schenker, et al., 2016).

As part of a comprehensive study to evaluate the family-centeredness of Tsad Kadima as a FCS (Schenker, et al., 2016), the aim of this survey was to unveil the components, which comprise the parent-conductor relationship, perceived by conductors as being cornerstones of family-center service. To the best of our knowledge, such close examination of the unique characteristics of parent-conductor relationships has never been explored.

Our survey seeks to explore conductors' perceptions regarding the following: (1) views about working with parents; (2) enabling and restricting factors in working with parents; (3) issues important to parents (4) conductors' roles with parents; and (5) positive and negative feelings characterizing parent-conductor interactions.

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

Thirty-seven out of thirty-eight conductors (97% consent rate) working in TK's conductive education settings nationwide (nurseries, kindergartens, schools, and day care centers)

participated ( mean age 36.1 years, range 23 to 49 years), all but one were women, the majority married with children, all working full-time. About two-thirds (24) had earned a bachelor's degree in Education/Special Education and one-third (13) a master's degree. Almost 50% had worked more than 10 years in TK. The majority of the conductors (97%) had taken courses on family-centered service.

### *Instruments of evaluation*

*"Conductors and Parents of Children with Disabilities"* (CPCD) is the adapted Hebrew version of the *"Occupational Therapists and Parents of Preschool Children with Disabilities Questionnaire"* (Hinojosa, et al., 1988, 2002). The original questionnaire was reported to have face and content validity. Reliability for the first two sections, using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was found to be 0.77 (Hinojosa, et al., 2002). The questionnaire consists of 59 items, divided into eight sections, which vary in format, featuring both continuous and categorical variable as well as some open-ended questions. Following approval by the developers, the questionnaire was translated into Hebrew followed by the standardized procedures required for back-translation. Cultural adaptation of the CPCD was discussed in a multidisciplinary group of experts, with minor linguistic and content adaptations, and was found to be culturally adaptable. Table 1 presents reliability analysis of the translated questionnaire sections composed of continuous variables. The analysis revealed moderate to good internal reliability coefficients ranging from  $\alpha=0.62$  to  $\alpha=0.83$ .

**Table 1: Reliability analysis of questionnaire continuous sections**

<u>Survey sections</u>	<u>Reliability (Cronbach <math>\alpha</math>)</u>
A: Conductors' views about working with parents of children with disabilities	0.62 <sup>a</sup>
B: Conductors' views about obstacles that limit working with parents of children with disabilities	0.75 <sup>b</sup>

D: Feelings that may characterize parents' conductors interactions	0.63 (all items) 0.78 (positive feelings items) 0.63 (negative feelings items)
F: Importance of factors when treating children with disabilities	0.83

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### *Procedure*

Following approval from the Ethical Committee of the Association for Conductive Education in Israel, the participants received written invitations to participate in the survey, describing its purpose, and a blank copy of the CPCD questionnaire. Consent was indicated by submission of the questionnaires. Participants sent the questionnaire to the setting's secretariat who transferred it anonymously to the chief researcher. As return packages were anonymous, an effort was made to optimize response rates by sending two reminders to all participants (after two weeks and after a month).

### *Statistical analysis*

Summary statistics for continuous variables are presented as means with standard deviations. Summary statistics for categorical variables are presented as counts and percentages.

## **Results**

Results are presented according to the survey aims as indicated in the Introduction. Tables are presented either as full rating scales, or as two joint categories.

### **1. Conductors' views about working with parents of children with disabilities**

Respondents ranked their agreement with statements related to their views about working with parents (Table 2.). The vast majority of the conductors (97%) agreed that they work most effectively when parents appear invested in their child's progress, and that working with parents

has a greater impact than any other aspect of intervention (95%). Furthermore, the majority (95%) disagreed that Conductive Education with a focus on the child's development of physical and cognitive skills, is more important than working with the parents. In addition, they reported that conductors' basic professional education adequately prepares them to work with parents (84%), and that they reported that conductors' basic professional education adequately prepares them to work with parents (84%), and that they have enough time to spend with parents (73%).

**Table 2: Descriptive findings of conductors' views about working with parents of children with disabilities**

<u>Item content</u>	<u>Agree (3,4)</u>	<u>Disagree (1,2)</u>
	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>
Conductors work most effectively with parents who appear invested in their child's progress.	36 (97%)	1 (3%)
Working with parents has a greater impact on a child with disabilities than any other aspect of intervention.	35 (95%)	2 (5%)
The importance of working with parents of children with disabilities has been overemphasized.	14 (38%)	23 (62%)
Parent's feelings towards their child's disabilities interferes with intervention objectives.	10 (27%)	27 (73%)
Conductors do not have enough time to spend with parents.	10 (27%)	27 (73%)
Parents do not understand the roles of conductors.	8 (22%)	29

## ***2. Conductors' perceptions of enabling and restricting factors***

**Table 3: Descriptive findings of conductors' attributes for enabling factors in working relationships with parents**

<u>Item content</u>	1 <b>Most Important</b>	2	3	4	5	6	7 <b>Least Important</b>
	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>
-Instilling a sense of confidence	31 (84%)	3 (8%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
-Being a good listener	4 (11%)	13 (35%)	10 (27%)	4 (11%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

-Showing empathy with parents' situation and stressors	3 (8%)	6 (16%)	12 (32%)	12 (32%)	3 (8%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
-Being knowledgeable about the effects of the disability	0 (0%)	7 (19%)	7 (19%)	4 (11%)	8 (22%)	5 (14%)	6 (16%)
-Being responsive to the needs of the parents	0 (0%)	4 (11%)	3 (8%)	10 (27%)	8 (22%)	9 (24%)	3 (8%)
-Following through with commitments	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	4 (11%)	8 (22%)	10 (27%)	9 (24%)	4 (11%)
-Having a good sense of humor	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	11 (30%)	24 (65%)

Tables 3 and 4 describe the conductors' perceptions of enabling and restricting factors in working with parents. Regarding perceptions of enabling factors, from a list of seven characteristics, conductors were asked to rank-order what they believed would develop enabling and effective working relationships with parents. As can be seen from Table 3, "*Instilling a sense of confidence*" was ranked as the most important characteristic (84% agreement rate), whereas "*having a good sense of humor*" was ranked as the least important (0% agreement rate).

Regarding issues perceived as potential obstacles that may restrict working with parents, Table 4 shows that "*Insufficient time to talk with parents*" and "*Parental over-involvement*" were perceived as being major obstacles in working with parents (73% and 62% agreement rates, respectively).

**Table 4: Descriptive findings of issues perceived as obstacles that may restrict working with parents**

Item content

Major to moderate  
obstacle (3,4)

Minor to no  
obstacle(1,2)

	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>
Insufficient time to talk with parents	27 (73%)	10 (27%)
Parental over-involvement	23 (62%)	14 (38%)
Child's developmental limitations	21 (57%)	16 (43%)
Lack of appropriate skills to deal with parents	18 (49%)	19 (51%)
Parent financial limitations	17 (46%)	20 (54%)
Parental non-involvement	17 (46%)	20 (54%)
Personal conflicts with the value system of the facility	15 (41%)	22 (59%)
Lack of clarity of the role of occupational therapists in working with parents	12 (32%)	25 (68%)
Lack of support services for parents	11 (30%)	26 (70%)
Administrative limitations	11 (30%)	26 (70%)
Difficulty adjusting to parents' cultural values	10 (27%)	27 (73%)

Perceptions were also measured qualitatively using two open-ended questions: (1) What are the most difficult issues that you have had in working with parents? and (2) What are the most satisfying experiences that you have had in working with parents? Both difficult issues and satisfying experiences varied. Among difficult issues mentioned were coping with unrealistic parental expectations regarding the child's progress, parents' coping with transitions from kindergarten to school settings, parents stress, non-involvement and over-involvement with their child. Among satisfying experiences, conductors mentioned parental gratitude and appraisal, parental presence and cooperation, respect and satisfaction, hope and excitement.

### ***3. Issues important to parents***

From a list of eight issues relevant to having a child with disabilities, conductors were asked to rank three issues that most commonly arose during their interaction with parents. Altogether, when looking at those issues ranked first, second and third most common were; "*The child's progress/lack of progress*" (65%/48%), followed by "*Parent's individual difficulties*" (52%), and



*"Adjusting to their child's disabilities"* (49%). *"Parental decisions regarding the child's life"* and *"The cause of the child's disability"* were ranked as the least common issues.

In addition, conductors were asked to rank their perceptions of parental concerns related to six areas of the child's progress from 'most concerned' (1) to 'least concerned' (6). The three most concerning issues were *"ambulation"* (43%), *"speech/language"* (22%), and *"independence in ADL"* (16%). The concerns ranked least important were *"future concerns about their child's ability to manage"* (32%) and *"reducing negative behaviors"* (49%).

#### ***4. Roles of conductors with parents***

Conductors rated, on a 4-point scale from 'not important' to 'essential', the importance they ascribe to eight roles related to working with parents (Table 5). The majority (above 90%) ranked about two-third items as 'important' (e.g. *"Providing information to parents as to what their child can do"*, *"exploring parent goals"*). About two-thirds of these items were ranked by approximately 50% of the respondents as 'essential' (e.g. *"providing the parents with support and encouragement when there is no progress"*), whereas *"Explaining the causes of the child's disabilities"* was perceived by two-thirds of the respondents (65%) as 'least important'.

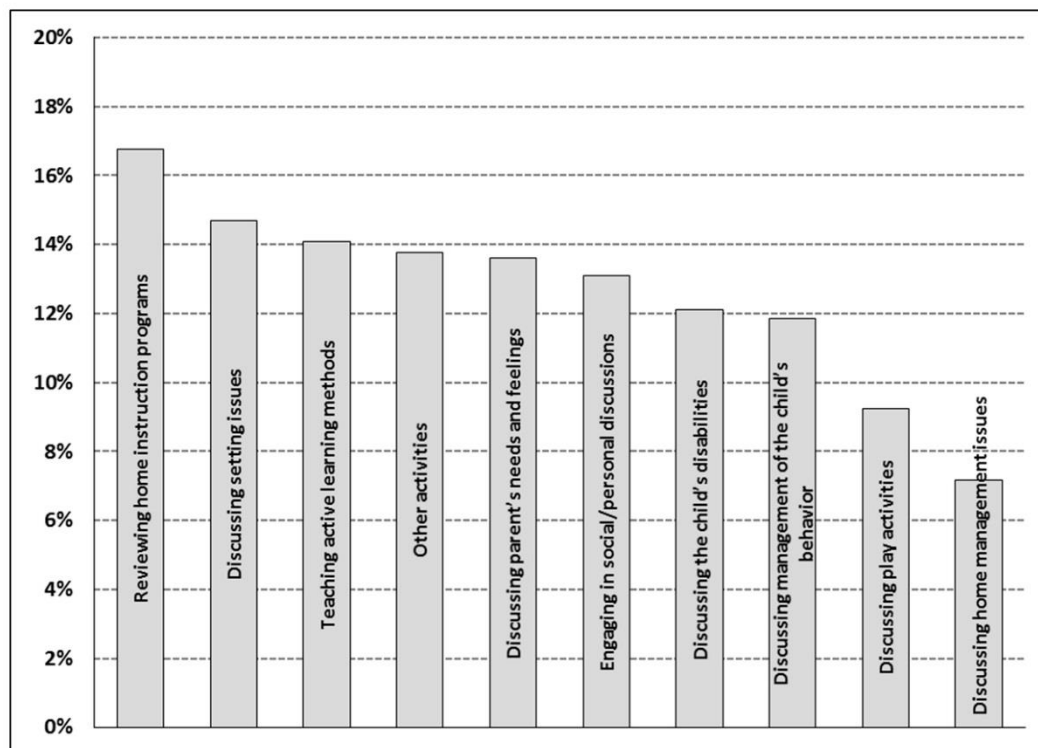
**Table 5: Descriptive findings of roles of conductors when working with parents of a child with disabilities**

<u>Item content</u>	Not to somewhat Very important to <u>important (1,2)</u> <u>essential (3,4)</u>	
	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>
Providing information to parents as to what their child can do	1 (3%)	36 (97%)

Providing the parents with support and encouragement when there is no progress	1 (3%)	36 (97%)
Helping parents to understand their roles in the education process	2 (1%)	35 (95%)
Instructing parents on a home - program	3 (8%)	34 (92%)
Exploring parent goals	3 (8%)	34 (92%)
Providing parents with information on advocacy programs and support groups	10 (27%)	27 (73%)
Providing parents with information on alternative forms of treatment/ intervention	13 (35%)	24 (65%)
Explaining to the parents the causes of the child's disabilities	24 (65%)	13 (35%)

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Respondents were asked to estimate, from a fixed list, the percentage of time they spent in selected activities with parents (see Figure 1). The list included mostly child-focused activities (e.g. *"teaching active learning methods"*, *"reviewing home instruction programs"*) together with several parent-focused activities (e.g. *"engaging in social/personal discussions"*, *"discussing parent's needs and feelings"*). Combined percentages reflect that conductors spend most of their time (77%) instructing parents about the care of their child and less time (27%) on parent-related concerns.



**Figure 1: Estimated percentage of time conductors spent with parents in selected activities**

### ***5. Positive and negative feelings that may characterize parent-conductor interactions***

Conductors were presented with a list of 16 items regarding parental feelings (7 positive and 9 negative), and were asked to rank how often they had to deal with these feelings when interacting with parents (Table 6). Our findings reveal that conductors experienced both positive and negative feelings regarding parents. The most frequent positive feelings were "*hopefulness*", "*appreciation*", and "*acceptance and gratitude*" (49%, 43%, and 41% respectively). The most frequent parental negative feelings were "*defensiveness*" (84%), "*helplessness*" (59%), and "*fear*" (51%).

**Table 6: Descriptive findings of feelings that may characterize parents'-conductors' interactions**

Item type	Item content	Rarely to sometimes (1,2) <i>n</i> (%)	Frequently to always (3,4) <i>n</i> (%)
Neg.	Parent Defensiveness	6 (16%)	31 (84%)
Neg.	Parent Helplessness	15 (41%)	22 (59%)
Neg.	Parent Fear	18 (49%)	19 (51%)
Pos.	Parent Hopefulness	15 (41%)	18 (49%)
Pos.	Parent Appreciation	21 (57%)	16 (43%)
Pos.	Parent Acceptance	22 (59%)	15 (41%)
Pos.	Parent Gratitude	22 (59%)	15 (41%)
Pos.	Parent-Therapist	24 (65%)	13 (35%)
Neg.	Parent Denial	25 (68%)	12 (32%)
Neg.	Parent Noninvolvement	27 (73%)	10 (27%)
Pos.	Parent Enthusiasm	29 (78%)	8 (22%)
Neg.	Parent Over-involvement	30 (81%)	7 (19%)
Neg.	Parent Resistance	31 (84%)	6 (16%)
Pos.	Parent Relief	32 (86%)	5 (14%)
Neg.	Parent Guilt	34 (92%)	3 (8%)
Neg.	Personality Conflicts	33 (89%)	2 (5%)

## Discussion

Family-professional collaboration has been proposed as a primary aspect of family-centered service (FCS) (Rosenbaum, King, Law, King, G, & Evans, 1998; King, et al., 2004), and is a key concept in service provision to children with cerebral palsy and their families. Accumulated empirical evidence strongly supports the efficacy of the FCS model and its positive influence on parents' psychological well-being and their satisfaction with intervention, as well as improved children's outcomes such as skill development and psychological adjustment (Cunningham & Rosenbaum, 2014; King & Chiarello, 2014).

Service providers' views, beliefs and attitudes about working with parents are considered important precursors to development of successful collaborative relationships with parents (King, et al., 2003). In line with results of Hinojosa, et al. (2002) and others (Hanna & Rodger, 2002; Raghavendra, et al., 2007), it seems that in general conductors view relationships with parents very positively, and regard parent collaboration as essential to the benefit of the child. Furthermore, the majority of the conductors perceive parents' non-involvement as a possible obstacle that could be detrimental to the interventions they offer.

Yet, unlike Hinojosa's findings, the majority of the conductors in the current study reported having a favorable setting to implement their views in practice, and having enough time to spend with parents. These findings can be explained by the fact that family-centered practice is embedded into a core conductor curriculum, as well as the organization's culture, both theoretically and in practice. Such embedding is considered to be vital in professionals' preparation programs. Therefore, in-service training is necessary in order to increase the implementation and effectiveness of family-centered practice (Bruder, Mogro-Wilson, Stayton, & Dietrich, 2009; Murray & Mandell, 2004, 2006, Sewell, 2012). Furthermore, the adequate time resource reported may be explained by the fact that as teachers, conductors have greater contact with parents in comparison to health professionals.

Beyond views and attitudes towards working with parents, there are other factors that either support or hinder professional-parent relationships. Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby (2007) describe two dimensions of help-giving practices: relational and participatory. Relational help-giving includes practices typically associated with good clinical practice (e.g., active listening, empathy and respect) and positive beliefs about a family's strengths and capabilities. Participatory help-giving is more action-oriented and includes practices that are individualized, flexible, and

responsive to family concerns and priorities. In our survey, conductors ascribed importance to relational help-giving, such as instilling a sense of confidence, being a good listener and interpersonal attributes-such as empathy. In general, it has been noted that professionals practice relational help-giving more often than participatory help (Dunst & Trivette, 2005). Taking into consideration that a central problem in the development of partnerships is failure to establish trusting and empowering relationships between families and professionals (Blue-Banning et al., 2004), our findings imply that these difficulties have been overcome in CE practice.

With regard to restricting factors, parental over-involvement was the most notable. Indeed, the 'goldilocks' perception is mentioned in the literature as a barrier of effective partnerships (Bezdek, et al., 2010). This idea refers to the perception that parents may be involved too much, too little, or just enough. Being a parent-professional association, parents in TK are involved in all aspects of the association's functioning and therefore, although this finding is not surprising, it was interesting to see that this over-involvement, when occurring on a daily basis, was not necessarily perceived by conductors as an enabling factor.

An additional restricting factor of working with parents, identified by conductors, was insufficient time to talk with parents. Interestingly, this finding seemingly contradicts conductors' previous reporting of having enough time to spend with parents. When interpreting these results with the conductors themselves, they suggested that spending enough time with parents does not necessarily mean having sufficient time to talk with them individually, since spending time together in this setting is mostly being engaged in group activities with the children, their parents and the conductors. Yet, although allocated time for individual talk with a parent is provided, it seems that this is perceived as never being enough.

The qualitative data we gathered regarding enabling factors shed light not only on help-giving, but also on relational help-receiving, and revealed three main parental themes perceived by conductors: parents' satisfaction (e.g. gratitude, appreciation), parents' inner resources (e.g. hopefulness, confidence), and parents' cooperation (e.g. involvement of the whole family, parents' contribution to the benefit of all).

As expected, when asked what the parents' most important issues and concerns were, conductors reported their beliefs that parents consider their children's progress/lack of progress to be critically important, and that ambulation followed by speech and language are primary concerns. We know from experience and from the literature that parents of children with CP are most concerned about whether their child will walk and talk (Iversen, Shimmel, Ciacera, & Prabhakar, 2003; Missiuna, et al., 2006; Rosenbaum, 2003; Thompson, et al., 1997). These findings are also in line with OTs' perceptions (Hinojosa, et al., 2002). They are logical, taking into account that parents expect their children to progress following intervention, and as parents of children with CP, they are focused on their children's primary impairments. We also found that "*Parent's individual difficulties*", and "*Adjusting to their child's disabilities*" are among the most common issues conductors face in interacting with parents. While the "*child's progress/lack of progress*" is a child-related issue, the others are parent-related issues. Difficulty in adjusting to the child disabilities was reported in previous studies as preventing parents' involvement in therapy and parental cooperation with the staff (King, et al., 2004; Piggot, Hocking, & Paterson, 2003). Although the majority of the conductors agreed that the time they spent with parents had a greater impact on the child than any other aspect of intervention, and that meeting parents' needs is essential to meeting the child's needs, in practice, they spend most of their time (77%) instructing parents about the care of their child, and less time (27%) on

parent-related concerns. Although this may reflect the conductors' acknowledgment of the importance parents' place on understanding their child's disability and progress, these results emphasize the significance of delivering family-centered service in a wider context, in which the families and not just the children are the focus for support and intervention (King & Chiarello, 2014).

Overall, the data from this study provide evidence of the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of conductors toward working with parents – characteristics that form the basis of family-center service. These findings have been validated in a complementary study that examined the actual practices of family-centered service delivery (Schenker, et al., 2016). Evidence from that previous study showed that TK was perceived and experienced by both parents and conductors as a family-centered service. The results from the present study allow us to look at what comprises family-centered service in a higher resolution, and therefore more thoroughly at its building blocks. This exploration inevitably sheds light on the demanding complexity of working with parents. It is evident that conductors have to cope with, among other things, a kaleidoscope of parental feelings, from hopefulness, appreciation and gratitude on one hand to helplessness, denial and fear on the other. As if this were not complex enough, parents differ from one another in a variety of ways, and cannot be considered as a homogeneous group. This complexity is not unique to conductor-parent interactions but is a shared experience of other professionals as well (Hinojosa, et al., 2002; MacKean, Thurston, & Scott, 2005; Bezdek, et al., 2010; An, et al., 2015).

Since the specific nature of the intervention program (Tang, et al., 2011), as well as the professional specialization (Dyke, Buttigieg, Blackmore, & Ghose, 2006) have been shown to be significant factors influencing FCS (Tang, et al., 2011), this information will hopefully encourage



professionals from a variety of disciplines and programs to reflect on their own experiences in their relationships with parents.

### **Limitations of the study and future research**

The data of the current survey were based on the conductors' perspectives. Yet parent-professional relationships should be seen as an 'interaction paradigm' entailing the developing of reciprocal relationships. Widening our perspective by surveying the perceptions of parents of children with CP on the very same issues would allow us to encompass a more complete perspective of both sides of the coin.

In this survey, parent-conductor relationships have been analyzed. However, with the growing influence of family systems theory and family-centered service, there is a call to better embrace not only the parents within the relationship but the whole family (King, et al., 2004). Future research should therefore explore the family-conductor relationship and its qualities from the perspectives of both parents and conductors.

Altogether, underlying parent-conductor relationships, partnership, and family-centered service in practice, would provide a meaningful multidimensional picture of the complex parent-conductor collaboration in a conductive education setting. As suggested by Blue-Banning, et al., (2004), the quality of partnerships between families and professionals should be conceptualized as one additional outcome for which programs should be held accountable.

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# **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Social Skills Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders**

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## **Abstract**

*Given the rapidly growing number of students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) from diverse cultural communities in the United States, researchers have steadily emphasized the*

*importance of developing and implementing culturally responsive interventions and practices. Unfortunately, there is no clear understanding of culture and diversity in the field of special education, nor are there guidelines to intertwine students' diversity with the practical process of interventions. The purpose of the article is to highlight the importance of considering the cultural responsiveness and social validity of social skills interventions to accommodate increasing needs of students with ASD from non-dominant cultural and linguistic communities. Understanding an individual's ecological contexts and needs, as well as social validation of interventions among a student's cultural contexts or communities, can provide vital information about the contextual fitness of the interventions and further promote feasibility and sustainability of the interventions. Recommendations for practices and research are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *autism spectrum disorders, social skills interventions, cultural responsiveness, social validity, ecological approach*

## **Introduction**

Over recent decades, researchers, clinicians, and policy makers have made great contributions to develop and identify the most effective treatments for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), focusing on empirical validation and effectiveness. These treatments basically reflect scientific rules of applied analysis that environmental factors regulate the occurrence of behavior (Schreibman, 2000). *“The science wherein these principles are applied to the improvement of socially important behaviors is known as applied behavior analysis, and the development of the behavioral treatment[s] of autism is largely the result of this field of science”* (Schreibman, 2000, p. 373).

Understanding which intervention strategies have sufficient empirical validation and effectiveness may affect the selection of interventions (National Autism Center; NAC, 2009). Many researchers from state and national research organizations, such as the National Research Council (NRC), New York Department of Health, and What Works Clearinghouse, have identified treatments for individuals with ASD that are supported by sufficient scientific evidence as well as those with insufficient or emerging evidence (NAC, 2009). To identify evidence-based interventions (EBIs), researchers consider the body of research available on the selected treatment and examine whether the treatment produced beneficial effects or harmful outcomes for individuals with ASD (NAC, 2009). They also consider the values of stakeholders (e.g., parents, caregivers, and individuals with ASD) to ensure that the treatment does not violate their cultural values, preferences, needs, and the goal of the intervention (NAC, 2009). National policies such as NCLB and IDEA also have highlighted the importance of EBIs and required educators to use them, and stressed their cultural responsiveness or appropriateness.

Meanwhile, there is general agreement among most scholars and researchers that the best treatment for children with disabilities is individualized intervention to meet each child's needs and the learning context (Bernal, Jiménez-Chafey, & Rodríguez, 2009). Researchers admit that *“there is no ‘one size fits all’ treatment for children with autism”* (Schreibman, 2000, p. 373). Particularly, because much human development and EBI research have been established within the middle-class white communities of Europe and North America (Artiles, et al., 2010; Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Murri, 2008; Rogoff, 2003; Padilla, 2004), researchers have questioned whether EBIs developed within a dominant group of people could be effective on other cultural and/or linguistic groups (Bernal et al., 2009; Ortiz & Yates, 2008). Would EBIs adopted outside middle-class learning environments strengthen external validity? Research

should avoid over-generalizations that assume that human development across the globe functions in the same ways as in the major communities, and must be able to account for both similarities and differences across communities (Rogoff, 2003). Emphasizing the importance of using EBIs without knowing its efficacy across diverse communities could still be impracticable. Thus, diverse micro-cultural groups within the United States should become an important part of research, so that researchers can examine the external efficacy of EBIs as well as the needs for accommodation to meet ecological contingencies for different cultural communities (Artiles, et al., 2010; Kim, 2016; O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006; Rogoff, 2003).

To date, few social skills intervention studies have reported or embedded participants' cultural and contextual factors, such as race/ethnicity/nationality or socio-economic status (Delano & Snell, 2006; Harper, Symon, & Frea, 2008; Kuoch & Mirenda, 2003; Lee, Odom, & Loftin, 2007). Although these studies provided relatively detailed information about the participants' current needs in languages and social skills, they may present a limited understanding of the cultural responsiveness of interventions because of a lack of information regarding how the research design reflected participants' needs (i.e., whether the accommodations were necessary to meet participants' needs and whether the intervention affected the participants' and families' lives). More attention should be paid to making effective EBIs for children with ASD from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Artiles, et al., 2010).

The purpose of this article is to provide better understanding of the concept of cultural diversity in the field of special education, particularly for children with ASD, and the importance of considering cultural responsiveness in behavioral intervention research using social validity. Given an increased attention to but limited information about cultural responsiveness in the

applied field, this article provides implications for future culturally responsive intervention research and practices.

### **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Autism**

While the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) individuals has been rapidly growing in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) education has been emphasized (Artiles et al., 2010, Trainor & Bal, 2014). However, there are scarce resources to support those students with ASD and their families (Tincani, Travers, & Boutot, 2009). Etiologically, ASD is considered to occur equitably across ethnicity/race and linguistic communities (Dyches, Wilder, Sudweeks, Obiakor, & Algozzine, 2004; Fombonne, 2007; Tincani et al., 2009). Dyches et al. (2004) also explained by citing the Autism Society of America (2000) that income, education levels, and family lifestyle are not directly related to the occurrence of ASD. However, there is a disproportionate representation of people with ASD among various race/ethnic groups in the United States (Artiles & Bal, 2008). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), the prevalence of ASD was 1 in 186 among Asians/Pacific Islanders; 1 in 211 among Whites; 1 in 255 among Blacks; 1 in 288 among American Indians/Alaska Natives; and 1 in 342 among Hispanics (Marks & Kurth, 2013). The reasons behind this disproportion in ASD are not yet clearly known (Dyches et al., 2004), although researchers have suggested two possible reasons: persistence of prejudice and racial stereotypes (Artiles, et al., 2010; Sullivan, 2011). Researchers and educators need to design and implement CLR interventions to better account for the disproportionately represented, but under-served populations of children with ASD in the U.S.

## Conceptualization of Culture

Although researchers have called attention to the importance of CLR education (Gay, 2000), there neither is a clear definition of cultural diversity pertaining to responsiveness in research in the field of special education, nor are there clear guidelines for applying these concepts to intervention planning (Trainor & Bal, 2014). Thus, the first step to understanding cultural diversity in special education is to define “*culture*” and diversity of human development. Trainor and Bal (2014) define culture as “*characteristically dynamic, multifaceted, and conflict laden, resulting in power/privilege differentiations, and innovations that are locally or heuristically accomplished*” (p. 204; see also Bal, 2011). They also explain that culture is always changing, because it is the product of individuals who come together in varied “*social, economic and physical contexts*” (Trainor & Bal, 2014, p. 204). Cultural groups are thus multifarious, and roles that each individual takes on are fluid and changeable, depending on the needs of different contexts (Banks, 2006; Padilla, 2004; Trainor & Bal, 2014). Solely considering one cultural group membership (e.g., race/ethnicity) as cultural diversity is limited as an approach, because it fails to account for change and variation (Padilla, 2004; Trainor & Bal, 2014). Because change and variation are vital to concepts of culture and diversity, generalizations based solely on membership in a group are impractical and misleading.

The field of education, however, may have not caught up to this understanding of culture. Banks (2006) points out that “culture” in the field of education is often characterized as “static, unchanging, and fragmented” (p. 71; see also Artiles, 2003; Arzubiaga, et al., 2008). In other words, simplified descriptions of racial/ethnic groups, such as American Indian culture, Mexican American culture, and African American culture have caused stereotyped perceptions of particular ethnicities, nationalities, or races (Banks, 2006). While scholars have visualized

culture as nationalities or colors, this concept of culture has not considered “*variations within the national culture or the smaller culture within it*” (Banks, 2006, p. 72). This might exacerbate stereotyped thinking and interpretation of nationality or race/ethnicity. Obviously, “every nation-state has particular overarching values, symbols, and ideations shared to some degree by all micro-cultures” (Banks, 2006; p. 72; see also Banks, 2008). However, more importantly, the shared values, symbols, and ideation may be perceived, interpreted, reinterpreted, produced, and experienced differently or diversely by micro-cultural groups within the nation (Banks, 2006, p. 72). Micro-cultural groups within a nation encompass the complex characteristics and the ways in which several other factors such as race, language, gender, ability/disability, regional groups, sexual identity, and social class interact in shaping individuals’ behaviors and development trajectories (Banks et al., 2005; Padilla, 2004).

Cultures may possess or be distinguished by the aforementioned components as well as many other impalpable components such as values, behavioral styles, language and dialects, cultural cognition, identification, nonverbal communication, and perspectives and worldviews (Banks, 2006; Banks & Banks, 1995). Each component influences the behaviors and development of individuals; these components also interact to influence the behaviors of individuals (Banks, 2006). Individuals develop as participants in cultural communities or groups that possess tangible and intangible components (Rogoff, 2003). Everyone has culture; this construct facilitates their human activity (Erickson, 2009). In this way of thinking, culture is ever-changing, as individuals participate in cultural activities and communities and accumulate their historical experiences from social groupings that are different combinations of the various components mentioned (Erickson, 2009; Trainor & Bal, 2014). Therefore, culture is a product of human creativity in action (Erickson, 2007). Once individuals are embedded in a culture, the culture

empowers the individuals when they explore further activities and experiences (Erickson, 2007; Trainor & Bal, 2014).

### **Ecological Approach**

Due to the complex nature of culture that distinctively characterizes each individual, culture can be understood in-depth within an individual's cultural boundary. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (1979; 2005) as a theoretical framework in the field of education, is often adapted for a person-centered intervention to account for each individual's cultural system and how the individual develops in and interacts with cultural contexts (Garcia & Dominguez, 1997; Gil-Kashiwabara, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Powers, 2007; Trainor & Kim, 2012; Trainor, Lindstrom, Simon-Burroughs, Martin, & Sorrells, 2008). The framework explains an individual's cultural contexts in five dimensions: micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-systems.

The micro-system includes all immediate contexts of an individual, such as a child's family, school, and neighborhood. As part of this micro-system, the individual directly interacts with environmental contexts. The meso-system involves the relationships and connections between micro-systems. For example, the relationship and incorporation between families and an IEP team might affect the education planning and future goal setting for a child with ASD. The relationship between family and neighbors might affect the child's quality of social life. The exo-system is the larger social system. The child with ASD may not interact with this system directly, but the child's development may be affected by the exo-system's interaction with the micro-system. For instance, parents' busy work schedules may affect the child's daily routine (Trainor & Kim, 2012). The macro-system encompasses the broader culture, such as values, laws, attitudes, and social supports, which potentially can determine interactions within other systems.



National policies such as IDEA and NCLB may relate to the quality of education and services. Lastly, the chrono-system represents the dimension of time. It relates to the passage of the individual's time, the change of circumstances, such as family structure, over the individual's life course (Hong, Huang, Sabri, & Kim, 2011), and history or memorable timing of society, which influences the individual's development (Trainor & Kim, 2012).

As described, individuals and cultures have a symbiotic feedback loop. Thus, in order to understand culture and diversity and reflect them in education research, researchers need to first focus on the ecology in which the individual's cultural contexts are embedded. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that "*the ecological validity refers to the extent to which the environment experienced by the subjects in a scientific investigation has the properties in it supposed or assumed to have by the investigator*" (p. 29). From the steps of designing and implementing interventions to evaluating their effectiveness, the contextual fit and ecological validation of the intervention should be examined; thereby, the intervention better achieves cultural sensitivity (Bernal, et al., 1995).

### **Introduction to Social Validity**

Fields such as business and the social sciences use other terminology to describe ecological validity, such as clinical significance, social significance, cultural validity, and social validity (Carter, 2010). In the field of applied behavior analysis, social validity is the most commonly known term, proposed by Kazdin (1977) and Wolf (1978; see also Carter, 2010; Kennedy, 2005). Social validity in behavior intervention research has been defined as the social importance and social acceptability of interventions applied to enhance the function of behavior (Carter, 2010; Wolf, 1978). Thus, in intervention research, social validity is included to understand and evaluate the effectiveness, contextual fit and ecological validation of the

intervention. In other words, social validity measures the degree of feasibility of the independent variables and its procedures by including stakeholders (e.g., research participants with disabilities, parents, grandparents, teachers, therapists, and/or neighbors) as research participants (Carter, 2010; Wolf, 1978). The importance of having social validity data has been highlighted in intervention research; but Machalicek, et al., (2008) found that few intervention researchers consider this a critical research component. Nonetheless, it is vital to understand and include the contextual fit of intervention, ecological needs, and stakeholders' perception as a component of intervention research.

Kazdin (1977) and Wolf (1978) first addressed the importance of social validity, which relied on subjective information in the field of applied behavior analysis (Kennedy, 2005). Because subjective evaluation encompasses concepts like social validity and conflicts with the idea of objective measurement, researchers have not considered it to be an important research component in behavior intervention research (Carter, 2010). However, Wolf (1978) poses an important question: even if we can measure objective and quantitative changes in behaviors, "How do we know that they [behaviors] are really important changes?" (p. 206). Social validity can supply such subjective judgment about the social importance of interventions and behavior changes, determined by the collective values of a given society (Wolf, 1978). As social skills interventions are subjected to promote development of 'socially important' and '*socially acceptable*' behaviors, the process of developing appropriate tools using societal input can become "*a supplement to a well-developed, objectively measured program*" (Carter, 2010, p. 9).

### **Components of Social Validity**

Wolf (1978) defines social validity in terms of three components: "(a) the social significance of the goals, (b) the social appropriateness of the procedures, and (c) the social

importance of the effects” (p. 207). Specifically, the social validity of an intervention is ascertained by asking stakeholders several questions related to the three components, such as whether (a) the intervention goal is really what the consumers in the society need to learn, (b) the treatment procedure is socially appropriate for the consumers, and researchers treat the individual humanely, and (c) the consumers are satisfied with the level of outcomes and there are no unexpected side-effects associated with the intervention (Kennedy, 2005; Wolf, 1978). Thereby, a dialogue develops between researchers and the intervention stakeholders for continuous feedback and assessment (Carter, 2010; Kennedy, 2005). Measurement of social validity allows researchers to note whether or not they “*avoid infringing on the rights of the individuals receiving the treatments*” (Carter, 2010, p. 8; see also Kazdin, 1980). Additionally, the ongoing conversation with stakeholders possibly increases the cooperation between researchers and stakeholders and the usability of interventions across settings, such as in a home setting implemented by parents or siblings or at work sites implemented by a job coach, because the stakeholders know how to apply the specific intervention.

### **Social Validity Measurement**

When researchers implement interventions, they interact with multiple stakeholders and influence their routines and lives (Kennedy, 2005). Since these consumers can directly and/or indirectly contribute to feasibility of the intervention (Schwartz & Baer, 1991, p.193), researchers should seek social validation of the intervention among the multiple consumers in the research participant’s community. For instance, in order to design and implement interventions to change the behavior of children in educational settings such as a school or community (e.g., afterschool program, recreational centers), the researcher should directly interact with and incorporate school personnel, community directors, the participants with ASD, and their friends

in their natural settings. The intervention would directly affect the lives and routines of the families of the participants (Kennedy, 2005). The participants, their families, school personnel, and close neighbors are the direct consumers (Schwartz & Baer, 1991). Because applied research occurs in natural settings, researchers may want to understand and illustrate the clinical impact of the intervention on the specific environment and other ecologically significant people in the participant's life, as well as to gather statistical evidence of the participant's behavior changes (Barlow, Nock, & Hersen, 2009). Additionally, researchers can obtain social validity for the intervention from the persons and agencies who are the "members of the immediate community" and "members of the extended community" even if the people do not have direct relationships with the participants (Schwartz & Baer, 1991, pp. 193-194). For example, if a student with ASD uses the acquired social skills from the intervention in a community setting such as a coffee shop, cashiers and other customers in the store could be asked to evaluate social validity of the intervention (Schwartz & Baer, 1991).

There are now several systematic approaches to assess social validity since Kazdin (1977) and Wolf (1978) first introduced the concept: consumer comments, informal discussion, interviews, inventory sheets, questionnaires, surveys, rating scales, normative comparison, and observation (Carr, Austin, Britton, Kellum, & Bailey, 1999; Carter, 2010). Among the useful methods, researchers have most widely used questionnaires or rating scales (Carter, 2010). Questionnaires are typically used to present a series of questions that ask a person to respond in a simple way (e.g., checking a box, using simple words; Carter, 2010). Researchers also can include questions regarding the intervention (Kennedy, 2005) and measure the treatment acceptability by adopting a more formal method, such as a Likert-type rating scale.

Recent research involves several technologies (e.g., video cameras) and includes a larger number of naïve raters (e.g., 32 teacher-assistant trainees; Lancioni et al., 2002) who are not familiar with the research participants or the intervention strategies, but are studying in fields related to special education (e.g., psychology; Stahmer, Schreibman, & Powell, 2006). These raters observed videotaped sessions and evaluated the significance of participants' behavior changes and thus the effectiveness of intervention, using Likert-type rating scales (Lancioni, et al., 2002; Stahmer, et al., 2006).

Given the dearth of research on measuring ecological and social validity of EBIs across diverse cultural groups, Kim and the colleagues (2016) recently implemented a social skill intervention, pivotal response treatment (PRT), for four Korean American children with ASD and measured the social validity of the intervention among key stakeholders. Using a qualitative case study, the researchers (Kim & Trainor, 2017) conducted multiple interviews and observations with parents and siblings of the children with ASD and community members who interact with the children regularly (e.g., pastors, volunteers, and community program teachers) before, during, and after the intervention. Through the in-depth exploration of social validity regarding the adequacy of goal, appropriateness of procedures, and acceptability of outcomes of the social behavior intervention, the researchers, first, could set the contextually and culturally valid intervention goals and study preferred play themes/materials, which were used during children's play sessions. Moreover, the researchers reported the stakeholders' perception of intervention procedures (e.g., perceived positive/negative aspects of the intervention) and to what extent the stakeholders were satisfied with the children's behavior changes with the intervention. Stakeholders reported their high satisfaction, as the intervention was helpful to teach new social behaviors to children with ASD, as well as to broaden stakeholders' insights and knowledge

about social skill interventions for individuals with disabilities and to increase community interest in the experience of living with disability.

### **Social Behavior Interventions for CLD Children with Autism**

When social behavior interventions are designed for and delivered to CLD children with ASD, examination of social validity is even more valuable. Stakeholders in diverse communities or tribes may have distinct social behavior traits, values, or expectations (Cartledge & Loe, 2001). Social behaviors, compared to other skills (e.g., academic, functional), are more likely to be influenced by cultural contexts, and therefore vary widely between groups and individuals. For example, many Asian countries use honorific languages to shape the pragmatics of interactions and communications. These languages are used to acknowledge, for example, elder people or people with higher social roles, and they can characterize the social hierarchy in relationships (Farver & Lee-Shin, 1997; Kim, 1991). The pace of a conversation, the way facial expressions are used, eye contact, proximity, and gestures in social interaction situations may also differ in different communities (Westling & Fox, 2009). Additionally, some social skills are not considered important to learn in some cultures. For example, in cross-cultural community studies, researchers have found that Korean Americans place less value on play skills for children's development, and thus parents and teachers maintain "social distance[s]" and accentuate academic tasks in the school setting (Farver & Lee-Shin, 2000, p. 318; see also Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995; Farver, Kim, & Lee-Shin, 2000; Farver & Lee-Shin, 1997). European American parents and teachers place a relatively high value on play activities and are themselves active participants in these activities (Farver & Lee-Shin, 2000). Examination of stakeholders' values, preferences, and ecological needs are, thus, crucial elements that guide the development of a meaningful intervention plan.

## **Implications for Research**

Our discussion provides some implications to enhance socially valid/culturally responsive practices for CLD learners with ASD for future social skill intervention research within three premises: conceptualization of individual's culture, ecological understanding, and embracing social validity.

### **Conceptualization of Individual's Culture**

By adopting Banks's (2006) definition of culture, we have highlighted that shared values and cultures may be experienced, perceived, and interpreted in diverse ways by each individual. Culture is ever-changing and developing as an individual uses their cultural affiliations as a tool and participates in cultural activities. Regarding culture, future researchers first should study and define each student's and family's culture and diversity of human development (Trainor & Bal, 2014) and pursue the appropriateness and cultural responsiveness of the intervention within each participant's contexts. In particular, when a social skill intervention is designed for a student with ASD, the heterogeneity of the autism spectrum requires a more thorough understanding of the individual's needs for social skill learning and how those needs are interpreted within the individual's ecological contexts.

Although the cultural responsiveness of EBIs has been stressed, there has been a lack of research and support for teachers who struggle to improve the outcomes of culturally marginalized students in schools. Trainor and Bal (2014) provided the rubric for culturally responsive research to determine the extent to which interventions reflect on cultural responsiveness. The rubric items, for example, include: relevancy of the research problem to individuals; descriptions of participants' characteristics and positions; descriptions of research settings regarding physical, cultural, and historical factors. Additionally, it includes information

on their influence on the research process, dynamic analysis of results in reflecting participants' characteristics and backgrounds, and cultural/contextual factors (Trainor & Bal, 2014, pp. 207-209). Future intervention researchers might examine the rubric as a reference for designing high-quality intervention studies that consider cultural factors more responsively. Also, future intervention research might describe how those cultural factors are understood and embraced to design and implement a culturally responsive intervention.

### **Ecological Approach**

Ecological conceptualization and design, is particularly helpful for researching students with ASD from diverse backgrounds. In order to have ecologically valid or culturally sensitive research, it is important to have an ethnographic investigation of the student's cultural groups, and adaptations and translation of research instruments (Bernal, Bonilla, & Bellido, 1995). Moreover, researchers should acknowledge that the development and evaluation of the study should be occurring in temporally and spatially sensitive contexts. Thus, researchers should provide ecological descriptions of the cultural, socioeconomic, and political environments of students, families, and communities. This transparency about the student's contexts can also assist in developing ethical and rigorous procedures to ensure ecological validity of the research instruments and interventions. An ecological approach can also provide an index to analyze the validity of services in socially and historically situated contexts. Despite the possible dissonance among researchers due to the subjective characteristics of ecological descriptions, this type of approach will help develop transformative research, which involves methodologies that radically innovate existing educational practice (Randall, et al., 2007). In this regard, ecological investigation will provide a new framework for culturally responsive research for students with ASD from diverse backgrounds.



## Embracing Social Validity Measures

When designing social skill intervention studies that are more culturally responsive, a social validity measure can be a vehicle to incorporate family and community cultural values into intervention research. As described above, the two most frequently used methods, questionnaires and rating scales, take relatively little time to implement and yield relatively simple outcomes, yet this simplicity may not meaningfully reflect social behavior changes and perceptions in their educational situations (Kennedy, 2005). Future researchers might consider using diverse methods that can provide a greater depth of qualitative and quantitative information, such as interviews and observations. Developing interview protocols based on the three areas of social validity (i.e., goal, procedure, and outcome) would allow researchers to collect more detailed and extensive information beyond simple like/dislike or yes/no answers and would give researchers opportunities to build rapport with research participants.

Social validity has been measured in only a few recent studies of social skills interventions for students with ASD (Machalicek, et al., 2008; Wang & Spillane, 2009). Kennedy (2005) argues that only when “*a particular experimental question is developed in which this information would be useful*” (p. 226), is the evaluation meaningful and important. When Baer, Wolf, and Risley (1987) initially developed applied behavior analysis, they stated:

*We may have taught many social skills without examining whether they actually furthered the subject's social life; many courtesy skills without examining whether anyone actually noticed or cared; . . . many language skills without measuring whether the subject actually used them to interact differently than before.* (p. 322)

Therefore, the investigation of social validity within social skills interventions for CLD participants with ASD can especially elucidate the extent to which an intervention can address

social behavior changes that meet cultural and contextual needs. Contemporary researchers have indicated an increased interest in the qualitative significance of intervention outcomes, along with quantitative evaluation. The integration of social validity as an important qualitative component of future culturally relevant research would produce useful and meaningful information. Thus, future research should consider measuring social validity by incorporating data collection methods that can yield more in-depth information, such as interviews, or by using multiple methods to strengthen the outcomes of social validity measurement. This approach will provide a meaningful framework to create culturally and linguistically responsive interventions for developing social skills for children with ASD.

### **Implications for Practice**

From the ecological perspective, family and community involvement are key to providing meaningful services for students with ASD from diverse communities. To ensure meaningful participation of the family and accessibility to appropriate services, educators and service providers should offer sufficient information about educational options for children, while examining socioeconomic and political contexts. For instance, insurance coverage of autism-related services outside of schools, such as applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy, varies by state; families and educators should acknowledge the distribution of local resources. In particular, as those intervention services, including ABA services, might impose a financial burden on families, educators should be able to mediate families' access to the effective services, when socioeconomic status is varied (Tincani, et al., 2009).

Given evidence that many CLD parents often exhibit low involvement in children's education due to several different factors (e.g., different level of expectation for children's education, different understanding of disabilities and the school system, different level of

education, high poverty; Tincani et al., 2009), having diverse channels of communication with the family can be useful for educators to encourage CLD parents' involvement, by individualizing educational services and evaluating the effectiveness of the services. When navigating educational service options, families can reach out to community members. Systemic supports for educators and families are critical to provide ecologically valid services. Administrators should regularly monitor whether their educational systems meet the student's individual needs and improve their programs to fit the behavioral and communicative goals of the student. These collaborative efforts throughout the educational system are beneficial for implementing ecologically meaningful practices.

While the notion of individualized intervention practice is widely accepted, culturally responsive models of intervention for students with ASD from non-dominant cultural groups are still scarce. We suggest that adding cultural components in our practices and research, such as conceptualizing individual culture, having an ecological approach, and enhancing social validity measures in research, will make positive changes in our students' educational trajectories. More work is needed in this area to improve the quality of education services that CLD students with ASD receive and their educational outcomes.

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**Policies and Issues Surrounding the Identification of Students  
With Learning Disabilities in South Korea**

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**Abstract**

*The definitions and educational policies related to learning disabilities have been updated throughout the last two decades since the passing of the Special Education Promotion Act (1994) in the Republic of Korea (South Korea). In particular, the definition of learning disabilities was entirely revised in the Special Education Act for Individuals With Disabilities and Others in 2008. Additionally, guidelines for selecting students with learning disabilities were introduced by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in 2010. With the help of special education policies and government guidelines, students with learning disabilities started to receive special education services. However, identification and*

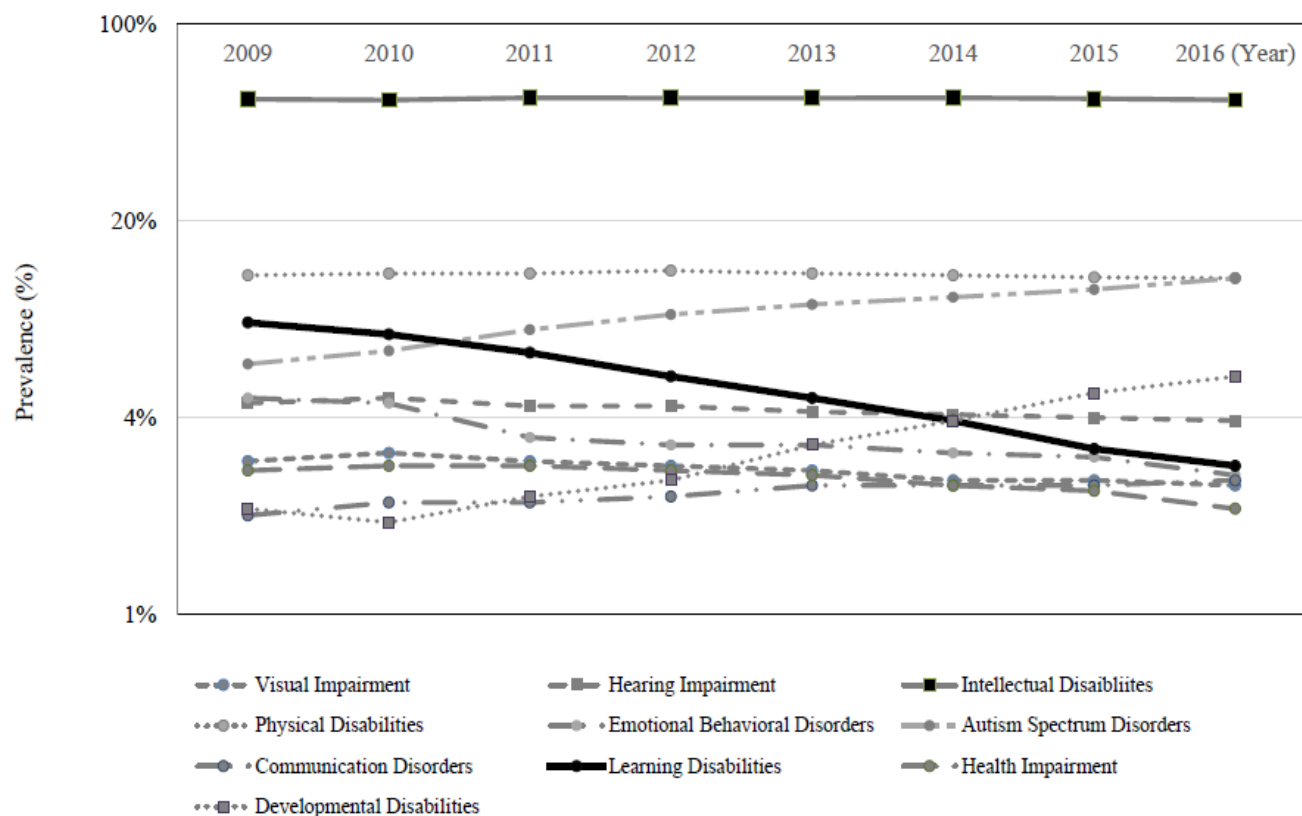
*evaluation of learning disabilities are still controversial issues in South Korea. This study reviews South Korea's special education policies and practices for identifying students with learning disabilities. This study also provides policy recommendations for improving current practice.*

**Keywords:** *assessment, identification, learning disabilities, South Korea, special education policy.*

## **Introduction**

The term of “*learning disabilities (LD)*” is relatively new across countries in the history of special education, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) is no exception. In South Korea, it is very noticeable that the prevalence rate of students with LD served under special education acts has been decreasing for several years. Thus, the prevalence rate of students with LD in 2016 was the lowest of the last six years reported: 2011: the prevalence of LD was 6.8% (5,606 out of 82,665); 2012: 5.6% (4,724 out of 85,012); 2013: 4.7% (4,060 out of 86,633); 2014: 3.9% (3,362 out of 87,278); 2005: 3.1% (2,770 out of 88,067) and dropping to 2.7 % (2,327 out of 87,950) in 2016. Figure 1 shows the trends of disability prevalence in South Korea from 2009 to 2016.

According to D.-S. Lee (2014), there is limited evidence to suggest why the prevalence of students with LD has been decreasing. However, among the possible explanations, A. Kim, U. Kim, Kum, and J.-H. Kim (2013) noted that the unclear definitions of LD and identification criteria might have contributed to the decreasing rate of students with LD. However, D.-S. Lee (2014) insisted that the assessment and evaluation of LD remain controversial and that little is known about how students with LD receive special education services in schools.



**Figure 1. Trends of disability prevalence in South Korea from 2009 to 2016.** Data from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (2011) and Ministry of Education (2016).

According to Korean special education acts, students with LD receive special education services after being assessed and identified as having LD. In order for more students who have difficulties in learning to receive special education service as needed, the definition of LD needs to be defined clearly and appropriate assessment tools used. Given the important role of educational policy in the field of special education, it is imperative to discuss policies and issues surrounding the identification of students with LD in South Korea.

### A Brief Overview of the LD Special Education Policies in South Korea

The first special education act, SEPA, was passed in 1977, and has served as the foundation for special education policy during the last three decades. It was revised entirely in 1994 and later replaced with SEAIDO in 2008.

## **The Revision of Special Education Promotion Act**

When the *Special Education Promotion Act* (SEPA) was revised entirely in 1994, significant changes occurred. First, inclusive education for students with disabilities in general education schools was included (Article 2, Clause 6). The inclusionary placements included special classrooms in general schools (Article 2, Clause 4) in addition to placing students with disabilities in general classrooms. In addition, LD was included as one of disability categories in the special education act (Article 15).

According to the definition of SEPA's enforcement decree (1994), students with LD were defined as students having learning difficulties in a specific area such as counting, speaking, reading, or writing (Article 9, Clause 2). The enforcement rules only included the specific types of assessment tests: (a) IQ test, (b) KEDI-Individual Basic Learning skills test, (c) First Grade Screening Test, (d) Korean Developmental Test of Visual Perception: Adolescent, (e) Perceptual-Motor Diagnostic Test, and (f) Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Article 3, Clause 3). However, this was not sufficient. The SEPA (1994) did not include the specific areas, concepts, and main characteristics of LD and, as a result, researchers and teachers assumed responsibility for assessing at-risk students, including those with LD. For example, the Korean National Institute for Special Education, established in 1994, attempted to estimate LD prevalence as 1.17 % (Korean Institute for Special Education, 2001) even though the definition and diagnosis procedures were not clear (D. Jung, 2007).

In the 1990s, researchers generally perceived students with LD as students having an average IQ but were underachieving for reasons related to basic psychological processes, without relating to any other disabilities (A. Kim & U. Kim, 2012). Thus, the selection of students for special education services was based on an LD test identifying a discrepancy between a student's IQ and his or her academic achievement (D. Jung, 2007). To that end, the Korean Development Institute modified the previous version of KEDI-WISC (1987a). Also, during 1990s, the K-WPPSI (H. Park, Kwak, & K.

Park, 1996), K-ABC (Moon & Byun, 1997), and K-WISC- III (Kwak, H. Park, & C. Kim, 2001) were standardized and used to identify students with LD (D. Jung, 2007).

### **Special Education Act for Individuals With Disabilities and Others (SEAIDO)**

When the SEPA was replaced with SEAIDO (2008), several changes occurred. Although SEAIDO (2008) kept a similar notion of inclusive education and special classes, defined as classes established in a general school to provide inclusive education to persons eligible for special education, they were still viewed as a support tool for inclusive education (Article 2, Clause 11). The capacity of both general and SETs (SETs) was enhanced. The role of general education teachers (GETs) with regard to teaching students with disabilities is getting more important than before. Specifically, according to the revised enforcement decree of SEAIDO (2013), GETs must receive training about special education curriculum, and SETs must receive training in general education content and curriculum (Article 8).

Furthermore, the LD definition was updated, and at-risk students were to be evaluated at the local special education support centers (SESC) rather than at school. Thus, with the establishment of SEAIDO (2008), the task of assessment and evaluation has moved from individual schools to the SESC of 182 local school districts (Article 11, Clause 1). For example, each SESC is to perform assessment and evaluation within 30 days after the referral for such assessment and evaluation (SEAIDO, 2008, Article 16, Clause 1).

According to enforcement of SEAIDO (2008), a student with LD manifests significant difficulties with learning abilities, such as listening, speaking, attention, perception, memory, and problem solving, or in academic achievement areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics due to intrinsic factors (Article 10). Although LD may occur concomitantly with other disabilities (e.g., sensory disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disorder) or with environmental disadvantage (cultural, economic, instructional factors), an LD is not primarily the results of the above conditions.

Despite much progress, the SEAIDO (2008) included no rules or regulations for how to assess and identify students with LD. Thus, the types of assessment tests suggested in SEPA (1994) remained (Article 2, Clause 1).

Several years after the implementation of SEAIDO (2008), the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST, 2010) announced selection procedures for students with LD. In the first stage, or the referral for eligibility by parents or the head of school, at-risk students can be referred for eligibility for special education services. At this stage, schools conduct screening tests and provide effective instruction for three months by monitoring the student's progress through curriculum-based assessment. Eligible students typically perform at the 15-20 percentile on tests.

At the second stage, the SESC perform an assessment and evaluation within 30 days after the referral. The centers administer IQ tests and determine if the student's results are at least 75 ( $\pm 5$ ) on two different IQ tests. The centers also administer academic achievement tests to determine if the student performs at least -2 standard deviation (SD) below the average for his or her chronological age (or 2 grades below). Finally, at the third stage, exclusionary factors are considered. When there is clear evidence that the student cannot pay attention to studying due to (a) other disabilities such as intellectual disabilities or emotional/behavior disorder, and (b) external factors such as family issues, school maladjustment, and cultural concerns, the student is not selected as a student with LD. Since the government's announcement of selection procedures for students with LD (MOEST, 2010), each local SESC has started implementing the guidelines.

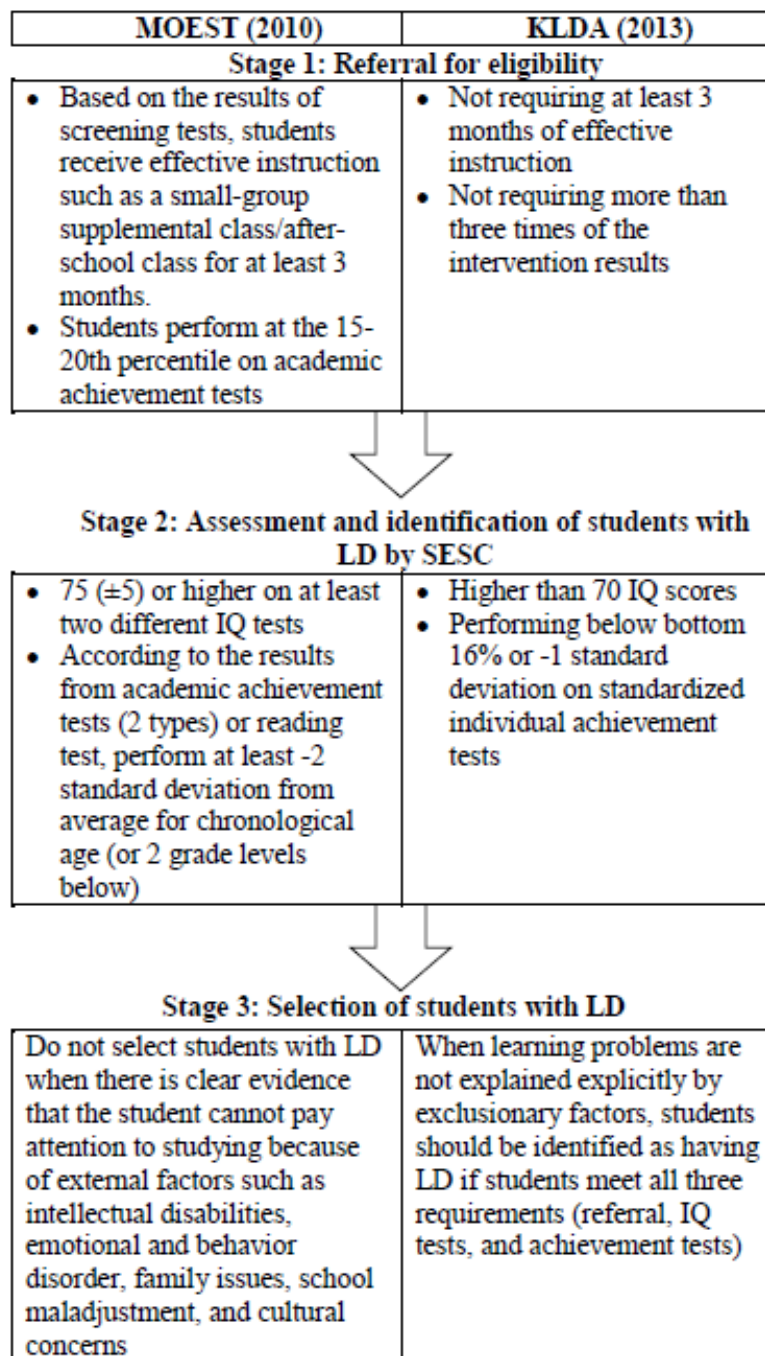
Based on the MOEST (2010) guideline for students with LD selection procedures, early intervention and referral for at-risk students in the general education settings has been emphasized. Typically, however, GETs have limited knowledge of how to evaluate at-risk students, to provide effective intervention, and to assess the students' responses of the intervention (K. Jung & Kang, 2015; A. Kim, U. Kim, M. Kum, & J.-H. Kim, 2013; D. Kim et al., 2012). Thus, the purpose for the MOEST



(2010) guideline intended to identify students with LD was helpful; however, the guideline for selecting students with LD is not be effective to assess at-risk students in educational settings.

The Korean Learning Disabilities Association (KLDA, 2013), which was established in 2004, suggested a revised version of the MOEST guideline in 2013. The KLDA (2013) provides the reasons behind the updated version for LD selection: (a) limited schools provide more than three months of effective instruction to students during the referral and intervention stage, (b) the number of students who are identified as having LD decreased due to the first stage of MOEST (2010) guideline since 2010, and (c) students not being selected for having LD have increased even though they have LD and could be identified as having other disabilities. The KLDA (2013) guideline suggested that students be referred based on a low achievement model while having above 70 IQ scores, students are identified as having LD when they meet the first and second requirements even though exclusion factors still exist. The KLDA (2013) guideline; however, is not used widely in educational settings. Figure 2 shows the selection requirements and procedures for identifying students with LD.

With the help of the recent MOEST (2010) and guideline, at-risk students are increasingly being referred to SESCOs, and 2,327 students were identified as having LD in 2016 (MOE, 2016). According to the national statistics regarding special education service delivery model, most Korean students with LD were placed in general education schools. Specifically, 1,537 (66.05%) out of 2,327 students with LD were placed in special classrooms, and 772 (33.17%) were placed in general classrooms under the full inclusion provision (MOE, 2016). The remaining 18 (0.77%) students were placed in special schools. Thus, 99.2% of students with LD were in inclusive education setting because special classrooms in general schools were considered as an inclusive education option in South Korea special education act (SEAIDO, 2008).



**Figure 2. Selection requirements and procedures for identifying students with LD.**

The MOEST (2010) selection guideline for students with LD included detailed procedures and requirement compared to the special education acts (e.g., SEPA, SEAIDO). Nevertheless, several concerns have been expressed with regard to the practical implementation of RtI. The following section

discusses how the MOEST (2010) guideline is used in South Korean education settings along with issues and recommendations for improvement. Specifically, the current study tried to answer to the following question: What are the current practices and issues with regard to identifying students with LD in South Korea?

## Methods

The recent special education acts have influenced not only identification of students with LD in educational settings but also research of those students. When using “*learning disabilities*” as a keyword to search one of the most popular online databases in South Korea, Research Information Sharing Service (RISS), for publications between 1994 and 2015, 1,098 articles were identified. A total of 444 studies were published between 1994 and 2007. Of these, 53 (11.9%) were about assessment and identification of students with LD. Additionally, 654 studies were published between 2008 and 2015, and of that number, 100 studies (15.3%) focused on assessment and identification of students with LD. Most of research, however, consists of non-empirical studies of LD assessment and identification; position and conceptual papers. To examine current practices of identification and assessment of LD based on the MOEST guidelines, the four most recent empirical studies since MOEST (2010) were selected. The reason for this selection was those studies interviewed and surveyed of SESC teachers who assess and identify students with LD (K. Jung & Kang, 2015; A. Kim et al., 2013; D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012).

## Results

Current practices and issues of identifying students with LD based on the results of the four studies are described in this section. Four themes from the current practice studies review are discussed.

### **Current Referrals and Challenges for At-Risks Students**

Three studies (K. Jung & Kang, 2015; D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012) demonstrated the complexity of referral procedures and GETs' lack of knowledge about LD. Specifically, D. Kim and his colleagues (2012) used a survey method to examine the status of screening and evaluation for students with LD; 11 SESC teachers of three provinces participated. In terms of difficulties in conducting screening tests at schools for referral, 36% of the participating SESC teachers had negative opinions due to the complex, difficult, and time-consuming procedures. Some of GETs even reported giving up referring students because of the complex referral procedures. Another finding was that GETs sometimes referred under-achievers to SESC for evaluation. These findings are similar to those of Y.-S. Kim (2012).

Y.-S. Kim (2012) examined the status and difficulties of the identification process for students with LD through surveys of 30 teachers (15 SESC teachers, 13 elementary SETs, 2 GETs in the Gyeongnam province. Again, the SESC teachers noted that GETs did not understand the distinction between slow-learner and students with LD and that, as a result, slow-learner were likely to be placed in the special classes. Furthermore, SESC teachers reported that GETs demonstrated a lack of LD knowledge and willingness to collaborate. Consequently, they insisted that GETs needed in-service training about conducting screening tests.

A qualitative study by K. Jung and Kang (2015) led to mixed opinions about the referral procedures. In focus group interviews of five SESC teachers for status, difficulties, and recommendation for LD evaluation, one SESC teacher pointed to beneficial role of implementation of MOEST (2010) in the RtI context, noting that the number of at-risk students who used to be identified as having LD had decreased with the provision of effective instruction in advance. However, others disagreed on the use of RtI for identifying students with LD for the following reasons. Students were likely to be identified as having other disabilities (e.g., ID) due to the complicated identification

process. GETs were unlikely to implement three-month interventions adequately due to the complex procedures and extra workload of test results during the intervention. Furthermore, as in the previous two studies (D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012), SESC teachers in K. Jung and Kang (2015) reported that GETs often referred under-achievers or students with behavior problem to SESC.

### **Current Use of Assessments Tools for Identifying Students With LD**

Three studies (A. Kim et al., 2013; D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012) examined the current assessment tools and difficulties of evaluation by SESC teachers. Since passage of SEAIDO (2008), one of the main roles of SESC teachers is to assess and evaluate students for the eligibility for special education services. SESC teachers in Y.-S. Kim (2012) and D. Kim et al. (2012) used the KEDI-WISC-III and K-ABC as the most frequently used IQ test tools. In a nation-wide study by A. Kim et al. (2013), the K-ABC (40%) was used little less than the KEDI-WISC (95%) and the KISE-KIT (58%) at 172 SESC.

Regarding IQ tests for LD evaluation, 94% of SESC ( $n = 14$ ) reported following the MOEST (2010) guidelines by administering two types of IQ tests (Y.-S. Kim, 2012) with an average IQ score above either 70 or 75 (66%). However, in A. Kim et al. (2013)'s study, only 60% of SESC ( $n = 100$ ) used more than two tests. The remaining 40% used only one type of IQ test. SESC teachers reported that a 10-score gap between the K-WISC- III and K-ABC leaded them to use the IQ results difficult by having the cut-off IQ score as above either 70 or 75 (Y.-S. Kim, 2012). In D. Kim et al. (2012)'s study, 7 out of 11 SESC teachers expressed concerns related to the administration of IQ tests, noting that administering two IQ tests within one month was challenging and that the IQ tests themselves were outdated.

Regarding achievement tests, the KEDI-Individual Basic Learning Skills test (KEDI, 1987b) and KISE-Basic Academic Achievement Test (KISE, 2005) were used the most frequently in accordance with the MOEST (2010) recommendation (A. Kim et al., 2013; D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S.

Kim, 2012). In Y.-S. Kim (2012), SESC teachers used achievement tests results as the criteria for conducting achievement tests 2 grade levels below (73%) or 2 standard deviations (*SD*) below the average for students' chronological age (26%). In A. Kim et al. (2013), 172 SESC teachers reported implementing the criteria of -2 *SD* lower on academic achievement tests (90%) to evaluate students' eligibility for special education services. However, SESC teachers reported that the KEDI-Individual Basic Learning Skill test developed in 1989 is outdated and that, therefore, they doubted reliability of test (Y.-S. Kim, 2012). When students are in the lower grade level (first or second), the two-grades-below criterion is inappropriate. Furthermore, SESC teachers had difficulties in conducting achievement test and two IQ tests all within 30 days (D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012).

### **Lack of Consensus on the Definition and Assessment Criteria of LD**

Despite the national level of effort for clearer definition and appropriate identification procedures of students with LD (e.g., MOEST, 2010; SEAIDO, 2007), there is still a lack of consensus on the definition and assessment guidelines for students with LD. Even after the updated definition of students with LD in SEAIDO (2008) and guidelines for identifying students with LD through RtI model (MOEST, 2010), several concerns had been raised in studies, especially these two studies conducted by D. Kim et al. (2012) and Y.-S. Kim (2012). Many teachers shared difficulties in collecting students' achievement test results because of lacked consensus for screening criteria for at-risk students (D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012). For more students who have difficulties in learning to receive appropriate special education services, the definition and assessment criteria of LD must be defined clearly and appropriate evaluation tools are needed.

Further, the “*at least three months*” requirement of the RtI support system was also considered controversial. With regard to following the MOEST (2010) guidelines, Y.-S. Kim (2012) found that before referring at-risk students to SESC for eligibility assessments, students received three months of after-school instruction focusing on Korean literature and math (73%) implemented by SETs (53%) or

GETs (26%). In terms of the three-month intervention period, both special education and general teachers in general schools complained the lack of consensus on guideline for intervention and in-service training. Teachers requested national guidelines, including textbooks, time, effective strategies, and changes in the duration of the intervention.

Furthermore, D. Kim et al. (2012) stated that 82% of 11 SESC respondents reported concerns about the evaluation criteria and assessment procedures of LD, especially from the unclear guideline of three months intensive intervention. SESC teachers specifically wondered who the support provider is and how the support should be provided. They revealed that results of interventions at schools were not sufficient information to identify of students with LD.

### **Lack of Professionalism of SESC Teachers**

Additionally, studies reported issues related to SESC teachers' professionalism regarding assessments and identifying students with LD. SESC personnel lacked knowledge on how to utilize assessment tools and interpret the results for LD evaluation (Y.-S. Kim, 2012). In Y.-S. Kim (2012)'s survey, 60% of SESC teachers ( $n = 9$ ) had less than 3 years of assessment experiences, and the remaining of 40% ( $n = 6$ ) had more than 3 years of assessment experiences. In addition, out of a total of 11 SESC teachers from three different provinces in D. Kim et al. (2012)'s study, only 4 received 180 hour in-service training for LD evaluation.

In Y.-S. Kim (2012)'s study, SESC teachers reported difficulties in distinguishing between slow learners, under-achievers, and students with LD, and, thus, felt they needed in-service training. The systematic education program for slow-learner and under-achievers will help those students are not identified as having LD. Furthermore, SESC teachers in another study by K. Jung and Kang (2015) reported that sometimes they have difficulty providing guidelines for GETs for referral of at-risk students for LD. The SESC teachers are also received training how to support GETs for LD evaluation.

The national foundation study for special education eligibility criteria by the Korean National Institute for Special Education (KNISE, 2012) raised the issue of a lack of professionalism among SESC personnel. Given this situation, SETs should receive training on assessments and instructional programs (KNISE, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

With the help of current special education act and policies, many more students could receive special education services than before. In particular, the development of special education policy has played an important role in guiding educators to identify at-risk students and students with LD for special education services and educate students to meet their individual needs in South Korea. However, there is a large gap between theories of LD screening and referral procedures and practices in educational settings (D. Kim et al., 2012). To solve issues related to identification and assessments of LD, D. Kim et al. (2012) suggest specific and clear referral procedures and requirements, development of reliable intervention programs, and sufficient in-service training for procedures and uses of assessment tools. Based on previously discussed practices and issues related to identifying students with LD in South Korea, we suggested five key policy recommendations below.

First, in order to provide effective instruction to at-risk students and prevent their academic difficulties in the school setting, both GETs and SETs should know how to collaborate and implement best practices for students. The learning strategies need to be modified according to each student's needs. Schools and government should also provide administrative supports to GETs and SETs so that they can teach students with effective strategies (Kang, Kim, & Dermot, 2004) in inclusive settings. The special education policy has emphasized teacher capacity issues in inclusive setting and continued expanding to identify students with LD in S. Korea. As shown in MOE (2016), most students with LD received inclusive education either in general or special education classes (99%). Additionally, in the



current implementation of the RtI model in South Korea, students take screening tests and receive Tier 1 in their general education classroom (MOEST, 2010).

Second, both GETs and SETs need to fully understand characteristics and instruction of students with LD through in-service training. South Korea has a short history in the field of LD and has paid little attention to this population of students compared to other disability groups (Kang et al., 2004). With the help of the SEPA (1994), students with LD were identified and started receiving the special education services officially. Because many students with LD spend time at general schools and even in general classrooms, GETs should know how to support students with LD. GETs often refer under-achiever or students with behavior problem (e.g., Y.-S. Kim, 2012) to SESC, so they should be aware of what LD means. At the same time, SETs should develop professionalism in subject areas such as reading and mathematics and be proficient in providing instruction in collaborative instructional settings (Shin, Lee, & McKenna, 2016).

Third, teachers in inclusive setting and SESC teachers should enhance the professionalism by receiving intensive training on effective instructional strategies, screening tests, and assessments. For example, schools or local offices of education should hold conferences or hand out guidance books not only to GETs but also to SETs to provide information about LD. K. Jung and Kang (2015) concluded that KNISE or local SESCOs should provide in-service training for LD evaluation. In terms of instruction and learning strategies imported from the United States, these should be modified according to South Korean conditions and circumstances. Further studies about LD need to be conducted in other areas, such as writing or math as well as in middle school or upper grade level.

Fourth, in order to fully implement RtI system appropriately and prevent academic difficulties, more clear definition and assessment criteria should be established. Despite the MOEST (2010) guidelines for selection procedures of students with LD, many professionals in educational settings have difficulties with identifying students with LD (D. Kim et al., 2013; Y.-S. Kim, 2012). As Y.-W.

Kim, Woo, Y.-G. Kim, and J. Choi (2009) suggested, the term LD needs to be defined more accurately, and effective evaluation tools must be made available for diagnosis and evaluation. In addition, more specialized personnel have to be secured for diagnosis and evaluation at SESC's (Y.-W. Kim et al., 2009).

Fifth, to improve the status of LD evaluation procedures, exceptional clause should be included in SELIDO's (2008) LD definition. Study expressed that from screening to evaluation of at-risk students would take more than 30 days (K. Jung & Kang, 2015; D. Kim et al., 2012; Y.-S. Kim, 2012). According to SEAIDO (2008), students are evaluated in within 30 days from the referral (Article 16, Clause 1). Conducting IQ and achievement tests for students take a while and SESC teachers should evaluate all the referred students for possible ID, EBD, and other disabilities in a school district.

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