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Special Issue on
Leadership for Individuals with Special Needs

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Special JELPS Issue
Honoring All Individuals with Special Needs

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Special Issue on Leadership for Individuals with Special Needs

Preface

Arthur C. Evans

Chief Executive Officer / Executive Vice President

American Psychological Association

This special issue of the *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies* serves as a platform for promoting important research, practice, and policy changes aimed to address the effective delivery of an equal or equitable education to and inclusion of students with special needs. Legal mandates are in place to serve individuals with disabilities in schools and higher education. In addition, we have a moral imperative for inclusion of all citizens in employment, health, housing, and the opportunity to make creative contributions to the community. However, the effectiveness of current policies and practices to enact changes in higher education and employment must be improved. As the Chief Executive Officer of the American Psychological Association, I have been invited to introduce this special issue, which calls upon our leaders in education to engage with this challenge. I want to use this space to prime readers on the featured problems and solutions they will be reading about and show how the application of psychological science as well as principles from business and law are central to meeting these goals.

Despite improved legislation and an increase in school populations of students with special needs, individuals with disabilities continue to suffer from disproportional experiences of social exclusion and disparagement. School, university, and employment leaders can start to address this by moving beyond the notion of inclusion to begin incorporating an assessment of attitudes about inclusion of all members of their communities. If such assessments reveal negative or unsupportive attitudes, then it is time to move into a campaign of behavior change, one informed by psychological science. This starts with awareness of leaders' own attitudes and their courage to make informed changes to training programs, educational settings, and the workplace. Modeling and rewarding positive and welcoming attitudes in their respective communities are also central to effective leadership.

Psychology also informs the classroom with regard to principles of learning and instruction, motivation, assessment, and well-being. While all individuals generally respond to these psychological principles, individuals with special needs must continue to be the subject of ongoing research on effective interventions. Evidence-based interventions are assisting young people every day, but the work is ongoing and must be supported by federal and private funds. Outcomes of such research and innovative practice can be shared with instructors at all levels of education. Additionally, models informed by psychology and business, such as those that set clear, measurable quality process standards, can be applied to the education system to help to guarantee its long-term excellence. Collaboration and teamwork between leaders in general education and the workforce also requires thoughtful management and difficult discussions related to appropriate application of equality, equitability, and the design of educational and vocational venues. Thorough understanding of the legal obligations impacting students and those who work in educational settings can be used to inform these collaborative efforts.

Finally, with the ongoing concerns about gun violence, the contributors of this journal call our attention to the role of prevention, social climate, and how atypical and troubling behaviors must be dealt with by scholarship and informed policy. All these topics are approached with great thoughtfulness in this special issue and I am honored to introduce this work to the journal's readers.

Editorial

Servicing Students with Special Needs: A Social and Emotional Imperative

Norris M. Haynes and Olcay Yavuz

Southern Connecticut State University

 In this issue the contributors generally support the idea that it is the responsibility and the challenge of educators, including and especially educational leaders to address the learning needs of all students and especially the learning challenges of students with special needs. While most of the authors focus concern and attention on students with diagnosable physical and intellectual disabilities, some authors focus attention on the needs of students whose special socio-cultural circumstances and experiences warrant consideration from educators and demand approaches that are socio-culturally sensitive and responsive.

Our focus in this introduction is on the social and emotional imperative for inclusion for all students with special needs with special focus on students with diagnosable disabilities. A significant number of students with varying types of disabilities attend the nation's public and private schools. Between 2014–15, 6.6 million (13%) of the total enrollment of students in public schools received services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Of these students between 5 and 9 percent were identified as having intellectual disabilities (ID).(http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/special_ed/disabilities/).
Evidence suggest, that though these instances are less common than they are frequent, many students with disabilities, including those with ID experience forms of social and emotional mistreatment such as negative attitudes, exclusion and sometimes disparagement. In many instances negative attitudes and behaviors directed at students with disabilities are demonstrated by both students and adults without regard to impact. For example, Praisner (2003) found that a majority of school principals studied demonstrated ambivalent or negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with certain disabilities.This and other findings underscore the need for approaches to supporting students with ID and other disabilities that are

systemic and focused on addressing school policy, contextual culture, operational climate Strategies should also be in place for assessing the social and emotional dimensions of experiences for all members of the school community including the experiences of students with special needs. Milstrom (2006) suggested that, "schools make time to assess their cultures (i.e., attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities) as well as existing policies and procedures. Negative messages can unintentionally be communicated to students via language or procedures

Defining Inclusion

In our view, inclusion means the full acceptance, as members of the learning community, of all individuals regardless of the nature of the special needs they bring to the learning situation. Our view also embraces the idea that all students and staff must feel fully empowered to be all that they can be in a respectful, supportive and challenging learning community.

The federal statutes on the education of individuals with disabilities allude to inclusion as providing education in the least restrictive educational environment and providing free appropriate education. The interpretation adopted in this presentation is informed by that of the Special Olympics which views inclusion affirmatively and in ecological terms. I consider Inclusion as being a systemic process that includes and embraces physical, social and emotional dimensions fully respecting and accommodating the dignity of the individual with disabilities. Inclusion means full acceptance of individuals with special needs as integral members of the organizational community where their dignity, respect and opportunities for full participation are protected; where they are fully empowered to be all that they can be. There are, I believe, two broad drivers of full inclusion of individuals with ID. These drivers are imperatives

(1) Legal/legislative imperatives (11) Social justice humanistic appeals.

Legal/legislative Imperatives

Inclusion of individuals with disabilities to a large extent is a legal imperative tied to federal funding and/or tied to civil rights requirements based on the legislation invoked and the consequences that follow for discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Part B , PL 94-142 of the Individuals with disabilities education act (IDEA) made federal funds available to States and school districts to provide free appropriate public education to students aged 3 to 22 with certain disabilities originally enacted in 1975 The individuals with disability education act originally enacted in 1975 IDEA,. Eligible students include: Students with certain mental emotional sensory and physical, disabilities. Under the jurisdiction of the office of civil rights (OCR) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) prohibits discrimination of persons with disabilities by institutions that receive federal funds. Section 504 requires that a free appropriate public education be provided. Title II of the Americans with disabilities act (ADA) enacted in 1990 prohibits discrimination of individuals with disabilities by state and local authorities even if they do not receive federal funds.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by State and local governments, whether or not they receive Federal funds; OCR interprets the requirements of Title II of the ADA as consistent with those of Section 504. The similarities and differences in the requirements of the three laws are described in further detail in the response to question 13. Generally, the responses in this question and answer document reflect the requirements of IDEA, unless the question specifically calls for an interpretation of Section 504, Title II of the ADA, or another Federal law.

Social Justice Humanistic Appeal: Social and Emotional Impact

Social justice appeals to the better nature of all of us as human beings and as universal citizens in an interconnected universe. Though it is often associated with expectations and demands for inclusion related to race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, it speaks just as strongly to the

valuing and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. The inclusion of all individuals with special needs as a social justice appeal may be achieved through a combination of the following four related inclusion mechanisms:

1. Policy
2. Contextual Culture
3. Operational Climate
4. Assessment

Policy

Policies are value positions that include principles that drive action. Policies in some ways shape vision and are shaped by vision. They are framed with what ought to be and should be in mind and seek to move an organization or institution from an unacceptable status quo to an acceptable ideal. The total inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities is a valued ideal and clear, unambiguous, policies at the federal, state, local school district and school levels must be in place.
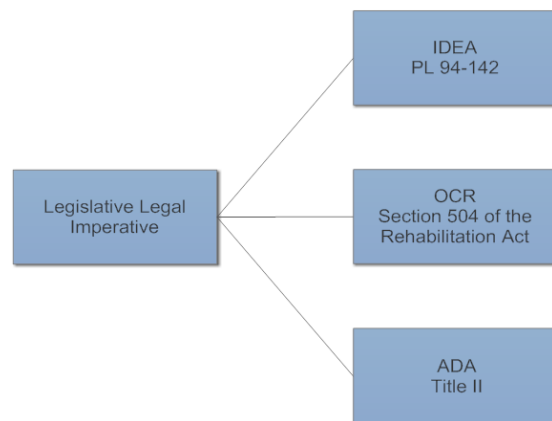
Figure 1 Legal Legislative Imperatives

Contextual Culture

One of the first steps in implementing a policy of inclusion is to create a context and culture that supports the rights and needs of all students to be and to feel included as integral members of the organizational community in significant and important ways. The organizational culture must value, espouse and support inclusion. Contextual culture is communicated through symbols that are often visual and strategically present throughout the organization. With respect to schools, the school culture then must eloquently and strongly convey

the value of and belief in inclusion. There must be a prevailing, invasive recognition of the importance of supporting the healthy, wholesome social and emotional development (SED) of every individual. Indeed the message is clear that respect for and inclusion of all individuals is considered to be a very strong contextual-cultural SED indicator

Figure 2 Social Justice Humanistic Appeal

Operational Climate

Climate is sometimes viewed interchangeably with culture. However, the reality is that climate is an operationalized set of physical, psychological and social contextual dimensions that reflect organizational culture. Therefore, physical accommodations, individual and collective attitudes, motivations and behaviors, social relationships, interpersonal interactions and group dynamics among members of the organizational community convey the climate of the organization. Schools as organizations can be unique in the challenges and opportunities that they can embrace to foster, develop and support climate dimensions that have long-lasting positive impact on the lives of both children and adults A close examination of school climate dimensions that have been found to be highly correlated with positive student outcomes, including achievement, heightened self-esteem, and behavioral outcomes, are climate dimensions that align with social and emotional development and

with core social and emotional learning competencies.

Children and youth are best served in a school climate in which they are perceived and treated with dignity, embraced inclusively as members of the school community and enjoy social interactions that are empowering and validating. For example, the Special Olympics champions program is an operationalized climate dimension of the Special Olympics culture of empowering those with ID through inclusion. In doing so the program promotes and reinforces core SEL principles and competencies through social engagement in sports.

Assessment

To be able to speak definitively about the influence of inclusion and its social and emotional benefits to students with special needs and those with whom they interact in social settings, formative and summative assessments are required. The research report on the Promoting Social Inclusion (Unified Champions Schools) study is an example of one kind of assessment approach that may be used. Studies that employ mixed methods designs using both qualitative and quantitative data can yield compelling and persuasive evidence of the social and emotional benefits of inclusion.

Commentary Developmental Pathways: A School Leadership Framework for Addressing the Needs of All Students

James P. Comer

Professor and Associate Dean, Yale School of Medicine

Founding Director of the Yale Comer School Development Program

The Aspen Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development, based on a study by its panels of distinguished scientists and practice leaders, states that some districts and states are integrating social and emotional development with better outcomes for children and adolescents. These policy makers and educators are acting on evidence that development and learning are inextricably linked; and that this approach benefits all students. This finding and trend underscore the need for present and future educational leaders to be able to create school cultures that can promote developmental processes in a central and intentional way; rather than through co-curricular activities only, an afterthought to academic learning, or to address problem behaviors.

Until very recently, and even now, many educators prepared in traditional education programs were focused on academic learning only, or primarily. Currently then, with style and substance differences only, much educational leadership is largely transactional. Many educators and leaders do not accept the notion that this limited perspective contributes to relationship problems among and between adults and students in schools; limits academic achievement for many, and may be particularly hurtful to Special Needs students. Transformational leadership demands more and the movement for a more visionary holistic approach to teaching and learning is gaining traction. Many educational leaders are now asking how do we get from where we are and what we know, to what we want to know and be able to do to support development and learning among all students, including those with special needs.

In response, the education enterprise must prepare new and existing school leaders with both transactional and transformational knowledge and skills. Both, because they must not only be the carriers of knowledge and skills related to child and adult development and functioning, they must also be able to create a vision about how it can be shared, and a process for sharing and implementation that helps all in their institutional settings contribute to and benefit from their leadership. Indeed, local and national leadership preparation standards do now require that educational leadership programs incorporate core developmentally informed and driven competencies in their leadership curricular. The challenge for many programs remains how to identify and implement a student-centered developmental framework that offers the most complete and comprehensive approach.

Developmental Pathways Framework

I began my work in schools in 1968 with child and adolescent development and interactive perspectives that were at the core of my thinking and work as a child psychiatrist with public health knowledge and skills. But these perspectives were not central in education. My earliest sense was that schools could not become more effective by doing more of the same. Transformational thinking and leadership, but shared leadership, was needed. How to make this possible within the pervasive residual thinking of traditional frameworks was the challenge. What we did led to our Yale School Development Program (SDP) model; and suggests useful ways that education leadership can be prepared.

SDP began to use the pathway metaphor as a way of sharing knowledge about the areas of child brain and mind growth, and how interactions between a child and the people, places, and things during all school experiences affected their learning and behavior. While the pathways of development are multiple, we determined that there are six that are most related to academic learning and life functioning: physical, social-interactive, psycho-emotional, moral-ethical, linguistic, intellectual-cognitive-executive functioning. Focusing all on these pathways required the creation of a school based interactive framework; the SDP. Our focus on the developmental pathways, and commitment to transformation, allowed us to begin to conceptualize and create structures, processes

and strategies that helped educators, students, parents and support staff better achieve their different but related tasks.

The SDP Framework

Our framework contains nine elements that are the structures that create the processes that in time create the school culture that promotes and sustains student development and learning. Three guidelines or elements—no fault problem solving, consensus decision making, and collaboration facilitate all that takes place in a school; reduces dysfunction and promotes a sense of safety and well-being. Three mechanisms or teams establish and oversee the academic and social program—School Planning and Management (SPMT); Parents, Staff Support teams. The SPMT coordinates and oversees the three operations—a comprehensive social and academic program; staff development, and data driven assessment and program modification.

These structures, processes, and operations acting simultaneously and synchronously—with the developmental pathways at the center as guide and touchstone—create a culture in which adults relate well; and can then support the development, learning and preparation for life of students. The process is organic in that our SDP team did not impose change, but co-constructed, with school leaders, conceptual change, structure and process creation and implementation; reducing SDP staff in-put as school staff and parents acquired the necessary transformation skills. Professional development took place in the context of everyday education practice—always focused on student development and how the organization and all the people in it had to interact to promote it. This approach enabled all the participants to feel ownership and responsibility for the challenges and successes.

Working in this way, the initial project—in two of the lowest performing of 32 elementary schools in New Haven—was transformed and they became two of the top four, in academic achievement and social functioning. We used a trainer of trainer (or local site facilitator) method to disseminate the model to more than 1000 schools across the United States and abroad with most schools, (approximately 60%) achieving good to remarkable success. We learned from this work that development centered leadership training is the key missing element in school reform; and even when achieved, is difficult to sustain with even normal turnover; and is very challenging in high stress student and community situations. Careful examination of success cases showed us that the greatest success came in situations where leaders prioritized attention to effective implementation of the developmental pathways in the shared vision for the school. The most effective leaders were those who provided the training, opportunities and resources needed for staff to implement and institute key provisions in the school's developmentally informed comprehensive school plan.

Implications for School leadership

It is clear from our experience and based on the research, that leadership preparation should be developmentally centered for schools be able to effectively address the needs of all students, including students with special needs. Transformational school leadership demands that school leaders must create cultures where there is a shared vision for serving and empowering every student regardless of background. To equip in-service leaders and the new generation of leaders with developmentally informed transformational skills we must help them understand how child and adolescent development takes place. We can do this by grounding them in the six most important developmental pathways through simulated and real practice conditions during in-service professional development and preservice service leadership preparation. It is clear that present and future leaders will have the best chance for success when they are able to create or use developmentally informed transformational and transactional skills to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of all students.

Leading a Multi-Tiered Approach to Bringing Social-Emotional and Character Development to General and Special Education Students

Maurice J. Elias, Rutgers University
Sarah L. DeMarchena, University of Missouri
Francine Luce, Ezra Nolan Middle School

In 2000, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 94,000 students with autism were receiving special education services in public schools. By 2008, that number increased to 336,000 students (NCES, 2010). Currently, over 6.6 million students, or 13% of all public-school students, are receiving special education services. Over the last decade, the increase in the number of students receiving special education services has resulted in a need for school principals that have the leadership knowledge and skills to effectively lead programs that will result in the successful achievement for these students (Lynn, 2015). Further, this rise implies that school principals are navigating educational environments in which they are having to be more directly involved with special education teachers, students, and parents (Lynn, 2015). Research suggests that while the responsibility for leadership in special education is being increasingly delegated to school principals, it is still unclear what specific practices are contributing to effective special education leadership and programming.

Several studies using qualitative research methods have focused on investigating principals' perceived effective leadership strategies in special education (Lynn, 2015; Simon, 2014). One study found several themes important to effective leadership, including current professional development, classroom support, visible involvement, parent relationships, and goals of student success (Lynn, 2015). Another study found that principals' leadership approaches for supporting special education programs are aligned with a social justice mindset. Further, they concluded that a majority of the participants see themselves as social justice leaders who create opportunities for inclusion and support cultural and diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Additionally, this study found several themes about leadership qualities that include creating a culture of acceptance, having strong interpersonal/communication skills, valuing feedback in collaboration, understanding the experiences and perceptions of special education teachers and supporting their professional growth (Simon, 2014).

At the same time, there has been increasing discussion about the importance of building students' social-emotional competencies for their academic and behavioral success (Jones, Brush, Bailey, Brion-Meisels, McIntyre, Kahn, Nelson, & Stickle, 2017). However, the majority of these discussions focus on SEL as a universal intervention, i.e., at Tier 1 within a multi-tiered system of support (Samuels, 2016). As noted above, the context for multi-tiered interventions is changing, with students who might traditionally be defined as needing Tier 2 services—so-called at-risk students, or students with early signs of behavior or emotional difficulties—being served primarily in the Tier 1, the universal environment of the mainstreamed classroom. Yet, it is clear that learning SEL skills requires more than SEL instruction—it requires an environment in which the skills are prompted, cued, reminded, and reinforced consistently and over multiple years. If that is true for universal, Tier 1 learners, then it will be even more important for students learning in a Tier 2 context (Elias et al., 2015).

This article discusses a case example of SEL applied in a coordinated, multi-tiered context with a particular focus on students at Tier 2 and Tier 3, i.e., students with identified difficulties in social-emotional competencies. It is worth noting that in this new, integrative multi-tiered context, SEL 2.0—a combination of social-emotional and character development (SECD)—is the preferred strategy to employ, and this will be illustrated through the case discussion (Elias, 2009).

MOSAIC: Tier 1 Intervention Supporting Special Education Leadership

Among the key elements needed in Tier 1 support systems to engage special education students, as well as students from high-risk, underprivileged areas, are (a) a focus on building positive relationships (b) emotion awareness and regulation, (c) problem solving and conflict resolution, (d) communication, (e)

positive purpose, (f) leadership opportunities within school and community, and (g) promotion of youth voice and empowerment (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011; Johnson & Weiner, 2017). MOSAIC, which stands for Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character, is a curriculum-based intervention that promotes student voice, engagement, and social-emotional and character development skills. Each month in the curriculum is centered on a main theme that is supported by a selected virtue and two skills. The activities include pedagogical methods such as debates, conversation series, service projects, problem-based learning, and teacher-led discussions.

In addition to teacher-facilitated activities, MOSAIC incorporates a component that gives students the opportunity to apply the skills they are learning on relevant issues in their classrooms, school, community, and wider world. Two students from each MOSAIC classroom are elected as Ambassadors to serve as classroom leaders. They are expected to maintain the responsibility of facilitating monthly discussions within their classroom through a format called Students Taking Action Together (STAT). The Ambassadors lead discussions about school- or community-related issues as well as engage students to give feedback and suggestions that are directed to the appropriate area of the school depending on the concern. The opportunity to become student Ambassadors aims to inspire students to develop a sense of purpose by encouraging them to apply and practice the MOSAIC virtues and skills in leadership roles (Vaid, DeMarchena, Hatchimonji, Linsky, Elias, 2015).

In the STAT component, Ambassadors are leaders within their MOSAIC classrooms and in the school. They help facilitate the suggestions and efforts provided by their peers in order to communicate solutions and create action plans that address school and/or community issues. Ambassadors are given the opportunity to identify concerns, get feedback from their peers, brainstorm solutions with their peers, practice effectively communicating their ideas to stakeholders, and putting together a plan of action. This Tier 1 intervention was created to address the need to address students' positive motivation, character, and sense of purpose as a vehicle to learn SEL skills, thereby providing principals with powerful tools to support their special education population. (Note that in the current example, focusing on a high-risk urban population, the approach would be equally advisable even if there were no special education students within the Tier 1 context.) As with all curriculum structures, the role of the principal in implementing it determines how effective this approach is in practice. We present an example of how principal leadership can lead to effective multi-tiered SECD implementation in a challenging educational context.

Case Study: Ezra L. Nolan Middle School #40

For one principal in Northern New Jersey, inclusion and positive relationships between peers and adults in the middle school is a high priority. Despite the variability in perspectives of leadership in special education, Ezra L. Nolan Middle School #40 prides itself in promoting a culture of inclusion; a place where there is no delineation between general education and special education. At MS #40, there is a strong focus on promoting strong, positive relationships and providing a safe and comfortable learning environment. Research supports the view that educational settings at the K-12 level should encourage student expression and be the spaces where students feel listened to and understood. In fact, one of the main factors associated with dropout rates is students' perceptions that they don't feel cared for enough and don't have positive relationships with their teachers (Elias, 2010).

Ezra L. Nolan has a total enrollment of 262 students with 90 6th graders, 84 7th graders, and 88 8th graders. In 6th grade, there are 44 males and 48 females enrolled, in 7th grade, there are 44 males and 32 females enrolled, and in 8th grade, there are 46 males and 41 females enrolled. Fifty-four percent of students are African American, 29% are Hispanic/Latino, 7% are Asian, and 6% are White. Seventy percent (N=183) of the student population is in general education and 30% (N=79) is in special education. Within special education, 48% of students are in self-contained classrooms, and 52% are in inclusion classrooms. Eighty-three percent of the student population are classified as economically disadvantaged.

When MOSAIC was introduced to the district, the principal at MS #40 was eager to make the necessary adjustments in the school structure and assign leadership positions in order to effectively implement the program. Several other adjustments were made to make sure that the program would adapt well to the culture and system of the school. There was a clear message from the school administration that MOSAIC could positively benefit their students and there was intentional collaboration within the school to make implementation and dissemination productive and effective.

Leadership for special education in a school in which special education students constitute a multiple minority numerical, learning and/or mental health status, sometimes race/ethnicity—brings special challenges. While the average percentage of students with special education classifications has been estimated at 13% nationally, that number is higher in urban minority school districts, and there is strong consensus that many students who would benefit from services are not getting them because of concerns about sanctions for higher classification rates (Ahram, Stembridge, Fergus, & Noguera, undated). One of these challenges in urban schools is how to create a cohesive, inclusive, positive learning environment in which all students can master essential social-emotional competencies and positive dispositions that will promote a trajectory toward college and careers. Those who might be effective leaders in more advantaged, less heterogeneous, lower stress contexts will not necessarily be able to do so in a highly inclusive urban setting (HIUS). Fortunately, some guidance is emerging. We will discuss each principle and then present how the case example exemplifies it

Start with a Positive Guiding Vision and Prioritize Student Voice

Because urban schools can have strong failure histories and staff and students may feel correspondingly demoralized, the first step is to activate aspirations toward a sense of positive purpose. For staff, this often means re-acquainting them with why they chose to be educators, and particularly special educators. For students, it means spending time on showing them examples of success despite challenge. In the service of positive purpose, individuals will undertake greater effort and be more likely to withstand setbacks. This also means that time is spent working from strengths and not focusing only on remediation. For many urban schools, the path to success does not travel through the greatest challenges and difficulties first, no matter how pressing these may be. A school cannot be "turned around" instantly and cannot pivot based on its weakest spots. A lesson learned and an operating principle from work done consonant with this case study is to start with a guiding vision of some aspect of the school linked with positive purpose. One useful jumping off point for a guiding vision is a focus on the positive value of student voice and agency.

A corollary of a failure history can be a combination of learned helplessness on the part of students (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) and lower expectations on the part of staff (Jussim &

Eccles, 1992; Jussim, Madon, Chatman, 1994). In many schools, this sets up a vicious, self-fulfilling downward spiral. A leader focusing on special education students must make explicit efforts to bring student voice and empowerment into everyday routines, as well as specialized programming. Consider roles of special education students on committees, in leadership or co-leadership roles, as greeters, doing morning announcements, and in other ways serving the school visibly, responsibly, and meaningfully.

MS #40's school vision is to be an inclusive environment and foster positive relationships among peers and staff in the building. When thinking about some of the ways the schools fosters student voice and leadership, one particular example comes to mind: The MS 40 community hosts a Martin Luther King speech contest every year. All students are afforded the same opportunities and support to present their speeches under the direction of the Language Arts Specialist. The students who prepare their speeches present them to the administration and in front of a group of peers. Ultimately, two students from each school in the community participate in a local contest with the rest of the district. One year, a student who was in a self-contained classroom for students classified as having learning disabilities was motivated to compete and reached out to the principal for more information. The student worked with the Language Arts Specialist, who supported the student in memorizing a few lines from one of Dr. Martin Luther King's speeches. Administration, teachers, and students supported the student in achieving this goal and the student felt validated. This example speaks to the intentions of MS #40's principal in fostering an inclusive and supportive schooling environment that provides students with opportunities to express their voice despite handicapping learning and/or mental health status, and to have that expression be heard in supportive and positive ways.

With MOSAIC's Ambassador component, students are given an intentional role to be active participants in their learning through the use of their voice. They learned to identify their concerns, work with their peers to come up with solutions, and present their ideas to leaders in their school. Ambassadors are as likely to be selected from among special education students as any other, because of the environment of positive expectation and acceptance created. MS #40's mission aligned well with the purpose of MOSAIC and therefore, the implementation of the program made sense and felt necessary to key stakeholders. However, establishing a system for realizing MOSAIC required

the active, coordinated, sustained involvement of several individuals in the school.

Build the Team

School leaders have so many demands on their time, including many that they cannot control, that they must delegate a team to carry forward any social-emotional and character development efforts in the school. The leader must be involved, but cannot manage day to day decisions and actions in each educational area and cannot be a source of backlog because he or she must make all decisions, large or small. Much is known about how to develop leadership teams (Marzano et al., 2005; Novick et al., 2002; Patti, Senge, Madrazo, & Stern, 2015). The team has to learn together how to work as a team; they must experience success together, develop trust, and build confidence. There is no shortcut for this, and it cannot be rushed. Teams must work on small projects and/or less persistent problems first, despite the pressures in the environment to do otherwise. A strong, effective leader understands this and will resist internal and, sometimes, community and central office pressure to tackle the most pressing issues immediately. These teams are best set up as peer learning networks that support one-another and spur their members on to learn more deeply.

Ezra L. Nolan's immediate team members include one MOSAIC and Ambassador point person, the principal, and one English teacher. Prior to taking a principal position at a special education alternative school, the Special Education Supervisor played a major role in the immediate team until the Spring of 2017. Several individuals are involved in other components of the project such as the Purpose Essay Project, which is headed by two Social Studies teachers. The MOSAIC point person manages all aspects of the program in the school. The point person creates the MOSAIC class rosters, provides all teachers with copies of the curriculum, helps facilitate professional development, answers questions about the curriculum, and overall, serves as a support system to the teachers that implement the lessons. With the support of the administration, the MOSAIC point person keeps the program running. Additionally, the MOSAIC point person also serves as the Ambassador point person, which manages the annual ambassadors' positive purpose project. The Ambassador point person schedules bi-weekly meetings with the Ambassadors to plan, propose, and develop a project to showcase at the end of the year. Ideally, different individuals would fulfill these roles and responsibilities, but MS #40 is a

fairly small school, thus, having a small team seems to work best for this school.

Another part of the team—and, indeed part of the infrastructure of the vast majority of enduring SECD efforts—is role of outside expertise (Kress & Elias, 2013). "Expertise" can be operationally defined as a resource with greater implementation experience than the school that is implementing. It reflects the evidence that working with someone or a group that has been farther down the road one is travelling and can provide ongoing guidance is an essential element of sustainability. A corollary of this is that such a resource is always relevant; it cannot be "outgrown." Indeed, many schools involved in the implementation process become resources to other schools even while they themselves are being supported by other experts. In MS #40, the partner was the Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab, which had developed and piloted the MOSAIC approach, and other SECD-related approaches, in other similar settings (Elias & Leverett, 2011). The SECD Lab provided a designated consultant to MS #40 to provide implementation and evaluation assistance and to serve as a liaison to the team, and the director of the SECD Lab—who had experience with SECD implementation with special education populations—held regular and as-needed administrative meetings with the school principal. Noteworthy is that momentum was maintained despite a change in the liaison from the SECD Lab and some changes in the leadership team in the school.

Implement Universal SECD and Show Links to Core Improvement Areas and Build Ongoing Feedback Systems

Adubato (2016) points out the paradox that schools with a history of failure often are reluctant to try different pathways to success. Academic difficulties are best overcome by adding more academic time and drilling on math and language arts; behavior difficulties are best overcome with strict discipline systems, often restricting privileges as rewards for good behavior. Social-emotional and character development (SECD) interventions seem risky because they take an ecological, developmental, and systems approach to reaching academic and behavioral improvement. They are based on the concept that academic difficulties are addressed by helping students be emotionally ready to learn and have the skills needed for effective classroom and

school interaction; that students often respond best to special opportunities as an incentive for them to improve their SECD and academic abilities, rather than as a reward; and that educational motivation is enhanced in the service of positive purpose, rather than being seen as a goal in itself. The focus is on strengthening, rather than remediating.

When schools employ the kinds of tactics that Adubato (2016) decries, they also reduce students' opportunities to learn essential SECD competencies that they will need for success in careers or higher education. Thus, leaders in HIUS have an ethical obligation to implement SECD interventions in their schools in the interest of both equity and effectiveness (Elias, 2009; Elias & Leverett, 2011). Correspondingly, leaders need to have conversations that make it clear that doing things the same way is more dangerous than trying something sensible and different. Along with that is the understanding that interventions are not implemented based on faith. All interventions should be subject to getting feedback from staff and students, and monitoring against key criteria- behavior, attendance, school climate, and academic achievement. Miracles cannot be expected. Benchmarks should be established and a developmental pathway to progress should be explicated.

In an effort to refine MOSAIC and make it more appropriate for the school, the teachers and students at MS #40 participated in ongoing feedback about the intervention. The integration of a curriculum feedback process was designed and used to create greater student and teacher participation and ownership in MOSAIC (Hatchimonji, Linsky, DeMarchena, Nayman, Kim, & Elias, 2017). Teachers and students submitted monthly feedback about the lessons. More specifically, they were asked to identify successes, obstacles, and suggestions. Feedback was compiled by Rutgers SECD Lab consultation team and reports were produced for the schools. The feedback reports included a summary of the feedback, and responses from the Rutgers team about changes made and changes to come. Beyond the opportunities that the feedback process allows for teachers and students to be more engaged in the learning process, it also allows for flexibility in the curriculum to meet the local goals and needs of educators and students (Hatchimonji, et al., 2017).

In addition to curriculum feedback, the school received feedback on teacher perceptions of students' social-emotional skills (SEL) and student perceptions of school climate. Teachers reported on perceptions of students SEL skills using the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-mini* (DESSA-mini). Students reported their perceptions of different aspects of the school environment, including respect, friendship and belonging, engagement with and ability to shape the school environment, and support from teachers. *Reports that summarized this information were created to provide actionable feedback to the schools. Data were disaggregated by gender, grade level, and ethnicity..* For teacher reports of student SEL skills, there was a mean of 3.52 (SD= 1.02) in the Fall of 2015 and in the Fall of 2016, there was a mean of 3.67 (SD= of 0.92). For student perception of student climate, there was a mean of 3.06 (SD= 0.72) in the Fall of 2015, and a mean of 3.32 (SD= 0.74) in the Fall of 2016.

Align Interventions in Tier 1 and 2 At Least, and Tier 3 and Tier 1, Ideally

In multi-tiered interventions, schools implement a universal, skill-building intervention (Tier 1) and when students show signs of difficulty with the skills areas and/or with the intervention, they are referred to Tier 2 services. Rarely, however, are the Tier 2 services provided aligned with the universal Tier 1 program (Elias & Tobias, 2018). This is also true of students who are included into mainstream classes— the interventions they receive outside of Tier 1 typically are not the same as those being given at a universal level. The upshot of this is that special education students, as well as those who are potentially referable for special education if their difficulties are not remediated, are least likely to find their skill development supported. What they learn in their pull-out groups or individual skill-building sessions rarely is aligned with the universal-level intervention students are receiving. When they interact with the rest of the building, they are out of sync; when they are in Tier 1, there is little prompting of what they have learned in Tier 2. Therefore, they are less likely to exhibit the skills they have been learning. Logically, a *Tier 1 intervention is truly universal: all students receive it. When students have difficulty, they should not get a different intervention, they should get a variation of the universal intervention so that their skill set is shared with their other classmates and can be prompted by all school staff.* This is true at Tier 2 and Tier 3. Whatever SECD approach is used in Tier 2 or 3 should focus on the same skills. This provides special education students, as well as those who might be referred for those services, with true inclusion and an optimal chance to feel part of a community of skill and character development.

At the Tier 1 level, the MOSAIC curriculum intervention is provided to all students in the building at Ezra L. Nolan Middle School. Tier 2 services include counseling where the guidance counselor and Crisis Intervention Teachers have smaller MOSAIC groups during this designated period. Students were identified for these groups based on their behavioral and emotional concerns. They are a mix of general education and special education students and therefore, not grouped by any academic level. Another example of Tier 2 services includes male crisis intervention teachers working with a specific group of boys who need additional guidance. For Tier 3 interventions, four self-contained classes participate in MOSAIC. Initially, the school attempted to integrate all self-contained students into the general population, but this was not met with much success. After surveying the students, the administration found that these students reported concerns about being separated from their homeroom teachers. Each of the self-contained teachers implements the program with great success. The relationships between students and teachers at this level have flourished since they have been able to spend personal time together and discuss current issues provided by the lessons in MOSAIC. On occasions where these students are with their wider peer group, they share in the MOSAIC virtue and skill structure in an unstigmatized way.

Communicate and Share Successes Widely

In the eyes of many, students with specific learning disabilities—behavior, language, mathematics, physical challenges, communication, intellectual, etc.—are often given the label "special ed student." Along with that label comes doubt that they can achieve accomplishments in any area (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002). Hence, it is especially important to widely and frequently communicate successes attained by these students (and all students, of course) as a result of participating in social-emotional and character development interventions. Indeed, these interventions should be designed in ways that allow public products to be conveyed to community audiences (Levy, 2008). Building leaders should ensure that communications take place with staff, parents, and central office, that the efforts of special education students are explicitly visible, and that every opportunity is taken to convey positive expectations about what all students can achieve, without exception (Adubato, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005).

As part of the MOSAIC program, the student Ambassadors participated in the showcasing of a Positive Purpose Project at Rutgers University, where all participating schools and Rutgers University staff and students attended. In the Spring of 2017, the MS #40 Ambassadors developed a Mentoring Program run by the 8th grade Ambassadors. They mentored 6th and 7th graders about what to expect once they get to 8th grade. They created poster boards, videos, and gave presentations detailing the rationale for their ideas and the process for achieving their goals for the project. The Assistant superintendent was available to go to the showcase and presented each group of Ambassadors with an award for their efforts and leadership. Additionally, in 2017, Ezra L. Nolan Middle School became the recipient of a Promising Practices Award for its work in MOSAIC. The award, given by Character.org, recognizes educators in the United States and internationally who have implemented unique, specific, and effective character education strategies. It is the school's first step toward becoming recognized as a State and National School of Character.

Beyond the leadership development in special education, MS #40 experienced a reduction in suspension rates since the implementation of MOSAIC. The total for the 2014-2015 academic year (pre-MOSAIC) was 6.4%, the total for the 2015-2016 academic year was a 3.4%, and in the 2016-2017 academic year, it dropped to a 1.4%. Of course, this clearly reflects a wider set of trends in the school co-occurring with implementation of MOSAIC. However, it at least suggests the importance of MOSAIC as a contributor to wider efforts at improving school culture and climate, building students' sense of positive purpose, giving them voice, and helping build their interpersonal competencies. Acknowledging that suspension as a discipline measure is often disproportionately used, it is important to note that interventions that focus on social-emotional learning and wellbeing are successful in enhancing students' behavioral adjustment in the form of increased prosocial behaviors and reduced conduct and internalizing problems (Durlack, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011) and should be used as an alternative. The principal in MS #40 attributes the reduction in suspension rates to the overall development of social-emotional awareness and emotion regulation in her students.

Additionally, the school has seen some academic gains for 6th and 7th graders with regards to Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) scores within the area of Language Arts Literacy (LAL) as well as Math.

Twenty-seven percent of 6th graders in general education received a score of 3 in LAL in the Spring of 2016, and 34% of 6th graders received a level 3. Between Spring 2016 and Spring 2017, the percentage of 6th graders that received a score of 4 or 5 increased by 1%; 15% in the Spring of 2016 and 16% in the Spring of 2017. Fifteen percent of seventh graders in general education received a score of 3 in Math in Spring 2016 and this percentage increased to 26% in Spring 2017. Nine percent of 6th graders in special education received a score of 3 in LAL in the Spring of 2016, and in the Spring of 2017, the percentage increased by 9% (18%). Similarly, 9% of seventh graders in special education received a score of 3 in the Spring of 2016, and this percentage increased to 21% in the Spring of 2017. Zero percent of 7th graders in special education received a score of 4 or 5 in Math in Spring 2016, and this percentage increased by 16% in Spring 2017.

Concluding Thoughts

In urban education, there is a severe need for educational institutions to embrace programs embedded within the school that address the social-emotional needs of all students. School leaders making the decision to implement a program like MOSAIC across Tiers 1, 2, and 3 can lead to meaningful benefits for students, particularly those most significantly at-risk. Leadership is required to establish a specific timeframe daily for relationship and skill building among students and staff members, to provide an opportunity for a deeper connection and sense of community within the school. The ability for all students in a school to address life's obstacles through a common set of skills and virtues provided by a program such as MOSAIC is an integral part of the school day and is particularly valuable among teachers and staff, given the time constraints during the day devoted to academic subjects and a rigid schedule. Over the past three years, it is evident that the students of MS #40 have greatly benefitted from their participation in the MOSAIC program and the overall climate of the school has improved. This happens when leaders are committed to making their school one community, across tiers. That this can happen in urban, economically disadvantaged schools such as MS #40 suggests that this is a viable strategy for similar, and less challenged, schools.

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Access versus success: Services for Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education

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Increasingly, students with disabilities are pursuing postsecondary education at two-year and four-year universities as well as vocational schools (OCR, 2011a). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1999), during the 1995-1996 academic year, approximately 6 percent of the undergraduate population reported having a disability. By 2007-2008, approximately 11 percent of the undergraduate population reported having a disability (NCES, 2013). The National Center for Special Education Research (2005) reported that nearly a third of students with disabilities pursued some form of postsecondary education (e.g., four-year colleges, two-year colleges or vocational schools) within two years of leaving high school. It should be noted that these statistics are likely to underrepresent students with disabilities on campus, as they reflect only those who elect to disclose that they have disabilities.

According to one longitudinal study, individuals in certain disability categories were more likely to pursue postsecondary education; 78% of youth with visual impairments, 72% of those with hearing impairments, 58% of students with autism, 55% of those with speech/ language disabilities, 55% of those with deaf-blindness, 55% of those with other health impairments, 54% of individuals with orthopedic impairments, and 52% of youth with traumatic brain injuries enrolled in education beyond high school (NCSER, 2005). By comparison, fewer youth with emotional disturbances (34%), multiple disabilities (35%) or intellectual disabilities (27%) enrolled in postsecondary educational opportunities (NCSER, 2005). As the postsecondary student population diversifies with regard to presentation and need, it is critically important to examine the rights of these students as well as the legal obligations of those who work in higher education. Without a clearly developed understanding of such, many of us who serve in the capacity of postsecondary educator may not only be putting ourselves and our employing institutions at risk for litigation, but also underserving our students.

Relevant Educational Laws

Those who work with students with disabilities in the public (K-12) schools should be familiar with the laws related to the provision of services therein. Chief among those federal laws commonly referenced is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1994; IDEIA, 2005), with other laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) also informing practices within the K-12 setting (Osborne & Russo, 2014). Mooney (2014) suggests that the IDEA is the "principal source for the legal responsibilities of boards of education with respect to special education" (p. 469). Thus, within the public elementary/ secondary educational system, educators are primarily concerned with adherence to the IDEA as it pertains to the legal responsibilities of the school in its provision of appropriate services to students with disabilities.

The IDEA recognizes 13 disability categories and ensures that children with disabilities are provided a "free and appropriate public education" (FAPE) through the provision of services, accommodations and modifications specifically designed to meet these children's unique needs. It requires that students meet four criteria in order to qualify for services: (1) they must be between the ages of 3 and 21, (2) they must have specifically identified disabilities, (3) they must be in need of special education (i.e., they must require specially designed instruction in order to receive a free and *appropriate* education), and (4) they must be in need of related services when necessary to benefit from their special education (Osborne & Russo, 2014). The IDEA protects the rights of children with disabilities and their parents through a system of procedural safeguards that place extensive responsibilities on school officials (Osborne & Russo, 2014). For example, schools must provide written notice and obtain parental consent before testing students, assigning placements to students, or altering

placements for students. Additionally, parents must be included in the process of developing individualized education plans (IEPs) for their children, students' progress must be reviewed at least annually, and students must be reevaluated at least once every three years (IDEA, 2005).

Postsecondary Settings

While IDEA offers protections to elementary and secondary students, it (and its Individualized Education Program provisions) does not apply to postsecondary institutions (OCR, 2011a). The high number of prescribed practices associated with IDEA in which elementary and secondary schools must partake does not exist for postsecondary educational institutions; there is no comparable legal requirement for postsecondary schools to identify students with disabilities, nor is there an equally detailed system of procedural safeguards related to special education services. There is no similar educational law under which postsecondary institutions are legally required to provide students with disabilities individualized educational programs as IDEA requires of elementary and secondary schools, nor are there legal requirements obligating postsecondary schools to review the progress of students with disabilities toward established educational goals. Rather, antidiscrimination legislation is the primary source used to inform decisions regarding how postsecondary educational institutions address the needs of students with disabilities. As such, there are two primary laws to which institutions of higher education must attend: (1) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and (2) the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) and its amendments (ADAA, 2008).

Section 504 provides that, "no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States…shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance…" (29 U.S.C. § 794). Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act are nearly identical with regard to the nondiscrimination requirements as they apply to public entities (see http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.summ.rights.htm).

These laws prohibit postsecondary educational institutions from denying admission to students on the basis of their disabilities (OCR, 2011a). That said, postsecondary schools have the right to establish criteria for admission and may deny admission to any prospective students, with or without disabilities, who do not meet the essential requirements for admission (OCR, 2011b). Insofar as students with disabilities meet the essential requirements for admission, they should expect to be granted admission in the same manner and at the same rate as nondisabled peers. Further, once admitted, these laws assert that students with disabilities may be entitled to receive "reasonable accommodations" based on their disabilities. That which defines the term "reasonable accommodations" will be discussed later herein.

Broad Legal Definitions

An individual with a disability is defined by Section 504 as someone "who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment" (29 U.S.C. § 794). Physical and mental impairments are defined somewhat broadly, and thus, while a list of representative examples is provided within the law, it is noted that the list is not exhaustive, as the definition may include a vast number of impairments. Further, Section 504 defines "major life activities" to include actions such as "caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working" (Russo & Osborne, 2009). The ADA provides the same definitions for an "individual with a disability" and "major life activities" as does Section 504. Because these definitions allow for some degree of interpretation, the piece requiring individuals to "have a record of such an impairment," often appears to be the critical component upon which the receipt of services hinges within postsecondary settings. This point will be explored later herein.

Though Section 504 protects elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students from discrimination, these protections are afforded only to those enrolled in "programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance" (29 U.S.C. § 794). For this reason, it could be argued that Section 504 may be less relevant in postsecondary settings as compared with the Americans with Disabilities Act; however, it has been suggested that financial aid to students, which nearly all postsecondary institutions receive, qualifies as "federal financial assistance" and therefore nearly all institutions meet this criterion (G. Adele, personal communication, March 10, 2015). Only some of the requirements set forth by Section 504 apply beyond the high school years. For example, the required provision of a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to children with disabilities pertains only to the elementary and

secondary public schools, as does the requirement that schools "must identify [students] with educational needs and provide regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs" (OCR, 2011a). The ADA extended to the private sector the provisions afforded to individuals with disabilities through Section 504, with the purpose of providing a more global mandate against the discrimination of individuals with disabilities (Osborne and Russo, 2014; Russo & Osborne, 2009). Taken together, these points may more practically speak to the reason why the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990; ADAA, 2008) is commonly considered the more relevant law when considering individuals with disabilities in postsecondary settings. Nonetheless, both laws aim to improve access to accommodations for students and adults with disabilities (Hachiya, Shoop & Dunklee, 2014).

Access Versus Success

The IDEA aims to serve the inherent function of providing supports for students with disabilities to succeed and NCLB promises consequences to school districts wherein the *all* students are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). It seems the spirit of the laws specifically pertaining to students in elementary and secondary educational settings (e.g., IDEA, NCLB) aims not only to aim to *protect*, but also to *support* students' success in education through the requirements of evaluation, placement, review and the associated strict timelines. By contrast, the laws relevant to postsecondary educational opportunities do not appear to reflect the same goals. Whereas IDEA places the burden of responsibility on the public elementary and secondary schools, the burden of finding and advocating for services at the postsecondary level largely rests with the student with a disability (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009).

Section 504 and ADA prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities on the basis of their disabilities, and allow that they may receive accommodations and modifications that are not available to non-disabled peers. Unlike IDEA, which entitles children ages 3-21 to free and appropriate public education specifically designed to meet their individual educational needs and in a manner from which they derive educational benefit, Section 504 and ADA offer no safeguards that serve to guarantee that one will derive educational benefit (http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.summ.rights.htm). While these federal laws require that postsecondary educational settings ensure that no discrimination based on disability interferes with students' rights to *access* their education, these laws only establish a minimum standard in terms of that which universities must offer with regard to supports/academic adjustments. In other words, the ADA requires only that institutions permit students with disabilities proper *access* to these opportunities in a nondiscriminatory manner, but does not promise *success* in the form of educational gains. As such is the case, postsecondary institutions may face legal ramifications if it is found that they have discriminated against a student with a disability. However, unlike the consequences likely to ensue when public elementary or secondary schools fail to assist students in making progress through the provision of best practices, it is unlikely that postsecondary institutions would face any consequences if the accommodations or modifications provided to a student were not optimal or if they did not result in the student's academic success.

Reasonable Accommodations

As aforementioned, postsecondary schools are not legally required to lower their admission standards, nor are they required to provide anything more than reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments (Russo & Osborne, 2009). Section 504 (29 U.S.C. § 794, 2005) defines academic adjustments as:

> modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability against a qualified applicant or student [with a disability]. Academic requirements that the recipient can demonstrate are essential to the instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements, substitution of specific courses required for the completion of degree requirements, and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted.

A reduced course load, extended time on tests, and the provision of auxiliary aids and services may also be included as academic adjustments (OCR, 2011b). Auxiliary aids and services are defined by Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (28 C.F.R. § 35.104).

Common examples include: note takers, readers, recording devices, sign-language interpreters, screen-readers, voice recognition and other adaptive software or hardware for computers (G. Adele, personal communication, March 10, 2015; OCR, 2011b).

There are circumstances wherein exceptions to the provisions afforded by ADA are permissible and students may be denied accommodations and/ or modifications; they are: (1) if an undue financial burden will be incurred by the university, (2) if an administrative burden will result (i.e., if many people are required to accommodate the student such that it becomes a multi-layered and administratively cumbersome process), and (3) if the accommodations or modifications alter the nature of the academic program (i.e., if a program requirement were to be waived due to a student's disability in that domain, this would alter the requirements in a way that would create different expectations for students with disabilities versus those without) (OCR, 2011b). The first among these points is often difficult for universities to prove in that the budget that must be considered is that of the institution, not that of the office providing services to students (G. Adele, personal communication, March 10, 2015). However, it is permissible that if a student with a disability requests an auxiliary aid or service that might create a financial or administrative burden to the school, and the school believes that an effective alternative exists, the school may provide the student with the alternative aid or service (e.g., an audio recorder for lectures as opposed to an individual note-taker) (OCR, 2011b). With regard to the third exception listed above, it is important to note that once admitted, students with disabilities must meet the standard requirements for advancement in their programs without modifications that would alter these fundamental requirements (Russ & Osborne, 2009). Interestingly, most courts "defer to school officials to determine whether requirements are essential to the nature of their programs" (Russo & Osborne, 2009, p. 56).

According to the Director of the Disability Resource Center at my employing institution, it is at the discretion of the university to offer more support to students than those which are established by the minimum standards of the law; often this depends on that which the university (or its office of disability services) has established as its overarching mission related to student success, (G. Adele, personal communication, March 10, 2015). Consequently, the provision of disability services in postsecondary educational settings has the potential to vary greatly from school to school (OCR, 2011b). Universities often base decisions on practice standards (current operating practices within the industry or movements/ changes within the industry) as well as that which can be gleaned from the advisory letters provided by the Office for Civil Rights' "Dear Colleague" letters (G. Adele, personal communication, March 10, 2015).

Additional Obligations of Postsecondary Educational Institutions

The ADA requires that postsecondary schools designate at least one individual as the person responsible for coordinating the efforts related to compliance with Title II of the ADA. Often this person is referred to as the "ADA Coordinator," of "Disability Services Coordinator" though this is not a title specifically prescribed within the law (OCR, 2011a; also retrieved from: http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap2toolkit.htm). Again, there is substantial variability with regard to how this is addressed at various postsecondary schools; at some, the efforts associated with compliance to the ADA and Section 504 are the sole responsibility of one individual, whereas other schools have large offices with many staff members orchestrating these efforts. Whether an individual or a designated office, the contact information (name, phone number, office location, etc.) must be readily available to anyone requesting it (retrieved from: http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap2toolkit.htm).

Postsecondary schools must also establish grievance procedures and make those easily accessible to students. Often, these are published in documents such as student handbooks or catalogs and available on school webpages (OCR, 2011a). If students believe that an institution is discriminating against them, they may also file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR, 2011a). Again, the burden of proof rests with the student with a disability.

Required Documentation for Services

Though "neither the ADA nor Section 504 specifically requires that individuals with disabilities have certificates from doctors or psychologists in order to be covered under its provisions" (Russo & Osborne, 2009, p. 27), the Office for Civil Rights has suggested that postsecondary schools "may set standards for reasonable documentation," as long as these standards comply with Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (OCR, 2011a; OCR, 2011b). Presumably, this is related to what was highlighted earlier herein as one of the key factors determining whether or not students

receive services in postsecondary settings. Referring back to the definition provided within Section 504 and the ADA, it reads that the individual, "has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment." Nonetheless, most postsecondary schools have a policy that requires students to provide evidence of an existing disability (OCR, 2011a). Such policies typically do require that students provide documentation that they currently have a disability and that said disability requires some form of an academic adjustment (OCR, 2011a).

Potentially Complicating Factors

It is suggested here that there are a number of factors that might potentially complicate the ability of students with disabilities to gain access to services at the postsecondary level, only several of which will be discussed below. First, if students do not have recent documentation of a current disability and the need for services, they may be denied. Requirements regarding the recency of the documentation are established at the discretion of the university. Given university policies regarding gaining access to disability services are applied in the same manner to both undergraduate and graduate students, this may result in an additional financial burden for some more advanced students. Whereas many undergraduate students may have recent documentation (e.g., a psychoeducational evaluation conducted during the latter part of high school) readily available, graduate students may be further removed from the public educational system wherein they previously received services, and thus may be required to undergo a new evaluation in order to provide evidence of a need for an academic adjustment. The expense associated with an evaluation performed by an appropriate professional may be quite costly and incurred by the student, as the university is not required to pay for such evaluations (OCR, 2011a).

Second, given the need for students with disabilities to self-identify and self-advocate, there may be some students with disabilities who do not seek assistance, even though so doing would be greatly assistive to them. There are many reasons for which some students with disabilities may not self-identify, not the least of which may be due to the stigma (or perceived stigma) associated with having a disability. This may be especially true for students with mental health challenges, given the common presence of stigma and misunderstandings associated with mental illness in our society. Additionally, some students with certain disabilities may lack the skills necessary to appropriately seek assistance.

Third, it bears noting that some students with disabilities may not be readily identified in their public secondary educational environments for a number of reasons. For example, when high schools are fairly accommodating for *all* students or have strong systems of supports (i.e., an effective execution of the Response to Intervention framework), high school students may not manifest difficulties severe enough to warrant referral and subsequent qualification for services. When these students transition to the postsecondary setting, wherein expectations change and accommodations are not readily available, they may begin to struggle.

Conclusion

Beyond that which the law compels us to do as educational leaders at the K-12 or postsecondary levels, we should embrace the shared responsibility that we have as a society to advance the learning of all persons. Whether or not one espouses the idea set forth by the African proverb that "it takes a village to raise a child," we comprise a society wherein the betterment of one has implications for the betterment of all. *Access* is insufficient in advancing the likelihood that students with disabilities at postsecondary institutions will actualize their greatest potential. As educational leaders at any level, we should commit ourselves to ensuring that students of any age receive that which they need to derive the greatest benefit from their education and *succeed*, whether through legal channels or other forms of advocacy.

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Learning Dysfunction, Disability and Diversity as the New Normal in Education Reform

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Abstract

Policy makers need to recognize that the historically comfortable education environment is changing. The present model of managing the new environment has a growing number of non-achieving student customers being labelled as being dysfunctional. The dysfunctional collective is becoming the new normal as it expands to accommodate students of diversity, who are classified as having a disability. The student customers, are the input that the education value chain is expected to transform into good and useful citizens. They are becoming increasingly diverse and volatile inputs to handle and shape. Our society is demonstrating increasingly higher level of incivility, lawlessness, antisocial attitudes and behaviors. This suggests that the existing learning system is inadequate. The education system needs to continually adapt to serve the needs of a changing society, if it is to remain relevant. The continuous improvement model of business management and the global sustainability models of economic development can provide a sound framework for satisfying student development goals and objectives, could be the bases for the reform of the complex educational process. Both are process models that will guide the educational community to think more deeply on all aspects of its system, about the benefits of inclusion, and about redefining the notion of the dysfunctional. The student who is empowered to learn, will emerge from the school system with emphasis on education for life, and will be more than ready and fully capable of making a unique and meaningful contribution to self and society.

Keywords: sustainability, continuous improvement in education, disability in education

Learning Dysfunction, Disability and Diversity as the New Normal in Education Reform

The continuous improvement management model and the sustainability model of economic development are applied by businesses to track current, emerging and future value demands on an ongoing basis. The models help businesses to stay relevant by delivering more value than competitors. Both are models that can provide a comprehensive strategic approach in planning for success in education outcomes and reforms in educational services.

Globalization models of economic development, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are intended to influence the modernizing of the national education system. These models promote liberalization, privatization, partnerships, sustainability and inclusion of the disadvantaged. However, the prerequisite for sustainability and quality improvement is the capacity to measure and track key processes and outcomes, in order to determine whether a change has happened. Most educational measurement systems have centered on either inputs or outcomes, with limited regard for system performance management, as the guiding framework.

The educational product is the result of a process-driven system. That system includes a complex mix of activities requiring the intervention of many diverse groups of stakeholders, working toward the same general outcome. Schools and districts, are not organized in ways that promote continuous learning. Those stakeholders often work in silos, applying metrics primarily at input and outcome levels and using those results to inform policy. Systems data are not provided frequently or rapidly, so cannot meaningfully be measured to inform and change practice. Ultimately, the customers of the process

rather than a misaligned system are blamed for poor outcomes.

The discipline of Psychology provides the definition of 'disability' – a term common to the disadvantaged customers in the education system. Traditional, historical and present notions in education see disability as an abnormality that arises out of some maladaptation of dysfunctional individuals to the environment. The disadvantaged are but one subset of customers on the education value chain. The Education system embraces learning theories and strategies as well as multiple levels of partnerships. Success measures that are indicated in these areas appear to lend credibility to the process.

Nevertheless, within the existing education process, there are a vast majority of children and adolescents in schools across every region, who are not learning. This has tremendous policy implications regarding the quality of education, and the ability to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. The initial United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) Constitution as agreed over 70 years ago, reflected the then 'new' times and demands. It indicated four pillars of learning – to know, to do, to be, and to live together, and set access goals for the international education system, based on expanding learning opportunities for all. These goals, although still relevant today, are threatened by deepening globalization processes and modernization.[1] UNESCO recognizes that in these modern times, access is not enough. Education, as an essential common good, must change, and a new focus on the quality of education and the relevance of learning, throughout and for life is required. The education system has to provide a learning environment that is built on new approaches to learning and cultural literacy, on the basis of respect and equal dignity, and on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The United Nations (UN) in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 – Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all), and its Millennium Development Goals (MDG 4 - Quality Education), outlines the vison of a modern education system that embraces a humanist vision of continuous learning. That vision demands a shift from narrow utilitarian teaching models to learning models that integrate multiple dimensions of human existence. This vision changes the historical and outdated business ideal of an educational process being managed as mechanical and industrial school mills.[2]

The humanistic approach emphasizes the inclusion of people who are often subject to discrimination, including indigenous people, persons with disabilities, migrants, and people living in countries affected by conflict. It requires an open and flexible approach to learning. Such an approach has implications for the definition of learning content and pedagogies, as well as for the role of teachers and other educators. However, when well executed, it will provide the opportunity for all student customers to realize their potential for a sustainable future and a life of dignity.

The performance of the education system is of interest globally, and education reforms are planned to move countries into a knowledge economy. Students with disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages are not to be left behind, and programs have been developed to help those students to improve their skills and be more fully included into society and work. Every student is entitled to a base education that is appropriate for his or her unique needs and that is provided free of charge.[3] Inclusion secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn inside mainstream classrooms and to not be segregated into special education teaching environments. Universal Design is the approach that makes a curriculum accessible to all students, regardless of their backgrounds, learning styles and abilities.[4]

Traditional, historical and present notions in education see disability as an abnormality that arises out of some maladaptation of dysfunctional individuals to the environment. Students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) have traditionally been educated in self-contained special education settings. Recent legislative changes such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 have led to increased inclusion of students with EBD in general education classrooms. Further, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) standards for classifying education systems (ISCED), updated the definition of special needs education. In 2006 OECD reported that this resulted in a wider range of students in all types of schools being brought under that net, and marked an 'apparent rise' in the numbers of students described as having behavior difficulties.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (2017), SDG4 requires primary and secondary education to result in minimum proficiency levels. Their achievement report has indicated that more than six out of ten children and adolescents worldwide (over 617 million, ranging from a high of 85% in sub-Sahara

Africa, to a low of 25% in North America and Europe), are not achieving the expected learning outcomes.[5] The study does not identify reasons for the low achievement or include data on disabilities, but does suggest that in every instance, the children who are not learning, are in school. This reflects negatively on the quality of education.

The Results for Development Institute (R4D) (2012) reviewed the progress on the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All Goals (EFA) to 2015. There is agreement that while there has been improvement in access, that primary school enrolment goal is an inadequate measure of actual learning. The growing momentum around learning has in turn raised concern about the lack of best practices for learning in the classroom and how best to design metrics that have global applicability in measuring learning. The R4D suggested that learning was being defined too narrowly – being equated with basic reading skills, and failing to account for the importance of non-cognitive skills like problem solving, critical reasoning, communication, and teamwork. Nevertheless, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) continues to redefine measures for English language learning that will ensure that countries with substantial language diversity will fall short of learning targets. The question thus becomes how to set progressive benchmarks for learning while accounting for diversity and regional differences.[6]

The existing metrics that track achievement, uncover major performance disparities among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. These students represent about 10 percent of the global primary school age population, of whom, 40 percent are disabled.[7] However the burden is greatest for those who are classified as victims of 'educational poverty', and who are not always included in the metrics. These members of multiple marginalized groups, include females who are also an ethnic minority, displaced urban youth affected by conflict or disaster, and minorities attending schools that teach in what for the students is a second or third language.[8]

In a liberalized economy, governments are more effective when they regulate and work with rather than dominate the productive sectors. In a modern liberalized education process, inflexible, authoritarian leadership does not encourage a dynamic or creative environment for learning. Success at both levels is dependent on building robust partnerships between those who manage, build and live in the society. That means, the integration of ideas, information, social and cultural activities by an intelligent, democratic State, productive sectors, and a vibrant civil society.

Historically, political and economic needs have dictated the function of American education. The article suggests that as the nature of the student input changes, and in the light of the increasing population of dysfunctional, this inclusive model should rethink the definition of what is classified as 'normal'.

Universal education needs to continually adapt to serve society's needs, to pass on knowledge and skills. It needs to transform the learners by bringing together people from diverse backgrounds who can make beneficial contributions in an ordered and cohesive fashion. This treatment suggests that the business concepts of continuous improvement can provide a sound framework for doing this, as it would take the needs of all stakeholders into account in shaping a quality product. The continuous improvement process will ensure that the student input is fairly measured and shaped to emerge from a viable school system, more than ready and fully capable of making a unique and meaningful contribution to self and economic development. The intention will be to ensure that the three factors of production, labor, capital, and land identified in traditional economic theory are supported by that key element, knowledge, which is a critical factor in development, growth and sustainability.

Private schools and tertiary institutions which are operated as for-profit businesses, are acknowledged as a natural fit for the application of full business models, and many of these institutions have begun to use business models to maintain and improve on their value. The business models that these institutions have applied, would need to be adapted in the social good public-school setting. The continuous improvement business models, applies measuring tools that are relevant at each stage of a process, identify stakeholders and customers in the value chain and build in a correction process to ensure that objectives are being met. Such a model will ensure that customers with all aspects of defined disability remain central in the value analysis.

The built-in measurement process will track numbers and progress. As their numbers increase, the need to mainstream and normalize learning approaches for this sub sector of customers will become apparent and have to be addressed, and learning approaches modified to produce the indicated result. With this continuous improvement method, it is not inconceivable that the present normal will eventually

become the outliers and the disabled trend towards a redefined normal. The paper ends with some conclusions and recommendations for further study.

Existing Practices in Education

Education systems are complex and multifaceted networks, thus the challenges for their reform and improvement will also be complex, as changes or improvement at one level will impact on all other areas of the network. The process of continuous improvement requires sustained commitment of all the stakeholders, who need to guide, evaluate and improve educational results to ensure that improvements are both sustained and incremental. Thus, issues related to the expertise of school leaders, teachers, faculties, and staffs, and commitment of educators to develop and apply solutions and improvement strategies, as well as tools of measurement, become important.[9]

Governance Framework

Thomas E. Downey (2000) is often cited as a pioneer in promoting reform of the current governance and practical models. Currently, the state and national governments share power over public education, with the states exercising most of the control. Power to exercise control over a school district may then be delegated to county, city or township-level school boards. Some school districts, such as those who have adopted the new school improvement strategy called the portfolio strategy, may further delegate to the school principals.[10] The adoption of Charter Schools has been a fairly recent method of the privatization of the public-school system. All models appear to focus on the financial viability of the operations rather than the quality of the final student product.

The 2017 conference of the Center on Reinventing Public Education) (CRPE) discussed the declining enrollment in Public Schools and its negative effect on district revenues, teacher and student morale and course offerings. The conference of superintendents, charter leaders, finance experts, and other education thought leaders acknowledged that the education process is fixed on maintaining a system that has been in place for the last 50 years.

The consensus was that while districts labor under rigidities in law, habit, and thinking, they remain responsible for providing a quality education and buffering children from the effects of changes in funding, enrollment, and other administrative needs. The conference discussed 'embracing a broader measure of success for reform, (to ensure) the well-being of all students'. The focus of the discussion

however remained at the level of short-term district fixes for revenue declines, and not on sustaining or improving the quality of instruction. Just one of eight recommendations from the conference, suggested that public education needed to commit to long-term decision-making to help manage decline.

Reforms in education. The urgency to educate students for an internationally competitive and changing workforce is impacting the need to reform, and there have been many recommendations and 'fixes'. The recommendations define measures of quality based on at redirecting resources (teachers and technical), academic standards, technology application and student assessment models. The education system has to implement comprehensive strategic measures to slow further downward spiral and to work effectively and sustainably, without harming students.

Recommended Business Models

The Value Chain

Performing a value chain analysis is no longer the domain of seasoned businesses or corporate players. All organizations can use it as a strategic evaluation tool, to address gaps in business development and identify opportunities for growth. The value chain identifies the key business driver concepts or core competencies, and the primary interlocking range of activities that are implemented by various actors and stakeholders (primary producers, processors, traders, service providers), to transform the inputs into the final product. Concrete action plans are developed for each activity. Metrics that are appropriate for the business, are assigned and weighted according to the impact value of the activity on the business. This is necessary to track the level of success in carrying out the activities, and to link all the stakeholders in the chain in such a way as to maximize the generation of value along the chain. Value chain analysis looks at how to contain costs while improving the outcomes and productivity.

Service value chain. The Service Value Chain clearly integrates all functions that influence the ability of a company to provide service to its customers. It emphasizes value for money spent (the cost advantage); supports a cross-functional approach that can enhance cost efficiency, maximize capital utilization, improve brand image, and enhance customer satisfaction. There has been some relevant research on service value chains by Nooteboom (2006), Gabriel (2006), Makkar, Gabriel & Tripathi (2008), and Van der Merwe & Cronje (2004).

The global value chain service development models emphasize building sustainable relationships between all the members of these chains in order to deliver the value expected by the end-consumer. Other researchers, including Rathee & Rajain (2013), Sison & Pablo (2000, p.2), Pathak & Pathak (2010, p. 170), and Hutaibat (2011), mapped several Service Value Chain Models for application in Higher Education. Although there are no publications which explicitly look at methods of value chain analysis from the angle of the primary and secondary education system, the Higher Education models could be a base for developing a primary and secondary education system value chain model.

Continuous Improvement

In recent years, there has been a groundswell of discussion in respect of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in Education, using hybrid business / services or non-profit education model. CQI models, which were first applied in business, are both applicable and adaptable to the education process, and are critical in enabling flexible-learning and technology-based environments. CQI's facilitates the increasing awareness of what students need to succeed in the workplace and reducing operating costs, while maintaining quality and demand.

There are several CQI models. Thomas Downey (2000) proposed a macro-model for quality and CQI in student learning, as a comprehensive approach for strategic planning and management of "educational products." The model is student centered, promotes self-paced anytime, anyplace learning; standardization; supports reduced operational costs; and development of "virtual team" social skills in students. It aims to promote customer satisfaction by giving the customers what they want, not what we think they should have. Useful components of the model are a program quality assurance system, and the assessment of learning from a distance and in the classroom. The model is applicable to compulsory 'social good' education.

CQI models. Boyle (1997) suggested that CQI models may be used to develop an Educational-based Quality Assurance Model. The Deming Wheel (Plan-Do-Check-Action (PDCA) cycle provides the basis for all CQI models. The PDCA is a reiterative process which focuses on results, collaborative planning, and implementing the improved process which has been defined through the planning step. A critical stage in this process is the use of quantitative and qualitative measures to determine efficiency and

effectiveness, and to continually refine the process. Other useful CQI models which were introduced as early as 1954, include the works of Juran - the Trilogy model, (Quality Planning, Quality Control and Quality Improvement), Total Quality Management (TQM), and Sig Sigma. More recent models are the Balanced Scorecard which is a consumer satisfaction model; and Kaizen Quality – a process driven model that applies small but incremental steps of improvement to build quality into the process.

The Value Chain input: Students with disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages

Metrics and Quality.

Quality parameters have to be used to measure achievements at each stage of the process. The education process applies competency-based as opposed to knowledge-based or "recall" based assessments to measure the ability of students to achieve relevant core competencies. The Ministry of Education in British Columbia (BC), Canada, includes positive personal and cultural identity competencies, defined as '…The awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all the facets that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself …. awareness and understanding of one's family background, heritage(s), language(s), beliefs, and perspectives in a pluralistic society' (BC Ministry of Education, 2014).

The system pays attention to measuring the student output, but the existing education strategy does not reflect the interconnected network. There is some disconnect in the measuring, review, and improvement of all the other inputs and outputs that shape the student. These would include the governance model, the teaching professionals, administrators, environment, training, technology and financial resources, as well as the businesses, families and community.

Students with disabilities (special (not normal) education students).

Cognitive, behavioral, and social learning theories provide a framework for sorting and discussing interventions with students, and for identifying and analyzing intervention types as general (normal) or special (not normal) education students. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 1990) defines thirteen disabilities including cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities, speech/language impairments and emotional behavioral difficulties. In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) updated the definition of special needs education in its international standards for classifying education systems (ISCED). A wider range of students with special needs are now being classified within the ISCED categories as follows:

- A/Disabilities - Students with medical disabilities or impairments.
- B/Difficulties - Students with behavioral or emotional disorders, or specific difficulties in learning as a result of 'technical' problems in the interaction between the student and the educational content.
- C/Disadvantages - Students with disadvantages arising primarily from socio-economic, cultural, and/or linguistic factors.

Categories related to C/Disadvantage.

The term 'special needs education', replaced the term special education, to extend beyond A and B disabilities. These C/Disadvantage special-needs children fail at school for a variety of other reasons that impede their optimal progress. They include second language, mother tongue students and socially disadvantaged students. The few countries that have data for these students, recorded between ten and 35 percent in the second tongue category. The US at approximately 27 percent reported 300 times more than the Czech Republic at 0.09 percent.

English language learners (ELLs), present the fastest growing diverse population in PreK.12, with one out of every ten public school children learning to speak English (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). Immigrant children account for almost a quarter of the juveniles in America, with some 23 percent of students in public schools coming from immigrant households, trending to between 93 to 80 percent in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and 75 percent in Los Angeles County.[11]

There is no quick solution to this second language problem. ELLs take between 2 years to 7 years under ideal conditions to acquire both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and fluent native speaking skills (Cummins, 1984, Utley et al., 2011, Krashen and Terrell,1983, Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006, Flynn & Hill, 2006). ELLs who are in the process of acquiring a second language will experience language and literacy development challenges similar to their peers with a language learning disability (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2010).

An increasing number of students with disadvantages arising primarily from socio-economic, cultural, and/or linguistic factors, will continue to be counted as part of the student population with a disability, as the migrant population continues to rise. As the definition of the disabled expands to embrace behaviors outside the present normal, those students that are labelled as 'dysfunctional' and 'disadvantaged' are overwhelming the present system and becoming the new normal. The education system is hard pressed to adjust its production process to reshape the inputs into its system. Thus these 'disabilities' are accounting for incivility, lawlessness, antisocial attitudes and behaviors, and need special attention to avoid negative consequences for the next generation.

Conclusions

'There is no more powerful transformative force than education – to … deepen sustainability, to build a better future for all, founded on equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility, all of which are fundamental aspects of our common humanity…'

(Irina Bokova Director-General UNESCO 2015)

The education services system which is supposed to promote learning that is deliberate, intentional, purposeful and organized, is being more deeply fragmented by liberalization, privatization and globalization models. This has resulted in tensions between stakeholders in the education process, and requires a new look at the business of education as a common good. In spite of the buy-in to the world vision as defined through MDG 4 and SDG 4, the public education sector is feeling the effects of limited resources and poor customer service. Marginalization of the customer is becoming more and more of the norm, as issues with the education process begin to overwhelm.

The children who are not learning, are in school, thus the quality of education is not satisfactory. The concept of 'no child left behind is becoming more difficult to manage in tandem with improving the quality of education delivered, in the face of increasing waves of immigrants and a widening economic divide. Intolerance and social issues continue to strain good intentions and resources, while the growing population of disadvantaged, exacerbates the struggle to maintain respect for cultural diversity, international solidarity and shared responsibility.

The challenge for national education systems is to work with the three regulators of social behavior - society, state and market, to shape an increasing number of diverse inputs, to provide both knowledge and education common goods. The ultimate goal is to deliver a product with a sense of good citizenship and regard for others in our pluralistic society.

Ultimately the education process needs to be guided by a process driven frame work, with measurable activities. This process would help reduce costs, promote the partnership and inclusion of primary customers in the education network, and add quality and value to the education offering. The value-added quality-focused method of embedding sustainability is an obvious choice for enhanced management growth of the education system.

Recommendations

The overall intent of education reform would be to deliver the best value to its customers. This would require the adoption of a process that develops, improves and sustains a modern education system that embraces a humanist vision of education of continuous learning as the best education business model. International experience with diversity and inclusion provide models for applying best practices for learning in the classroom and how to better design metrics that have global applicability, to measure learning. The education community has to:

- Examine the existing mission, business model and value chain, to ensure that they are complementary and delivering a valuable product or service to the market.
- Adopt an appropriate model that builds sustainability, quality improvement and a robust evidence-based methodology at each level of the mix of value added activities.
- Use relevant and internationally accepted standards, measures, protocols and guidelines to track key processes and outcomes. Embed these standards into the day-to-day activities of the education system.
- Implement a robust data system to collect metrics that track achievement among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds and those classified as victims of 'educational poverty'. Data produced in a more timely and accurate fashion, would guide planning in this area.
- Create classrooms that provide more equitable learning spaces, in which every student has the opportunity to have a voice, can participate, can shine and will learn.
- Remove the disability label from students who do not have debilitating medical conditions, to integrate them fully into the general classroom as is successfully done in some countries. This would free up resources that could be used to provide a learning environment to fully support and engage all students.

Education officials across the world believe that learning can be increased for all students regardless of heritage or income, through the setting of clear, achievable, higher standards, aligning the curriculum, and assessing outcomes. Such students they expect, will pass tests and succeed within the established system. Historical research shows that all ethnic and income groups score differently on all standardized tests and standards-based assessments.

The percentage of differently abled students in the system continues to grow. The education system has to acknowledge that its base norm has changed and is continually changing. It has to properly define and consider the diversity of its base student customers, in establishing standards, realigning the curriculum and in the assessment process. Continuous improvement and sustainable excellence of the education system and product, can only be achieved by refocus and the involvement of all areas of the diverse value chain.

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Footnotes

1 The 1996 Delors Report proposed this integrated vision of education based on, which was adopted by UNESCO.

2 The 1972 Faure Report, established the interrelated notions of the learning society and lifelong education to challenge traditional education systems.

3 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004

4 Universal Design here means the design of instructional materials and activities that allows the learning goals to be achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember (Orkwis & McLane, 1998, What is Universal Design section, para. 3).

5 To measure progress globally, the international community uses indicators: Proportion of children: (a) in Grades 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics.

6 The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is setting a target of reading fluency by grade two. Some teachers will need to be able to master over 80 languages.

7 The challenges are particularly acute in countries affected by violence, which account for 77% of children not in primary school and 59% of children not in secondary school (World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development).

8 The Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR) (2015) has developed a "deprivation and marginalization in education (DME) indicator" which demonstrates the overlap between education poverty (i.e. those with fewer than four years of education) and inequality (UNESCO, 2010).

9 Systemic reform; the Glossary of Education Reform, Last updated: 08.29.13.

10 In 2013, California had the highest density of ELLs enrollment (22.8%), followed by New Mexico (15.8), Nevada (15.7%), and Texas (15.1%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In Texas, of the 739,639 ELs, 17% are enrolled in Bilingual/ ESL programs, and 18% are enrolled in ELL programs; and there are 70,510 special education ELLs (Texas Education Agency (TEA; 2015).

11 Stephen Dinan reporting in The Washington Times - Wednesday, March 15, 2017.

Autism in Africa: The Critical Need For Life Saving Awareness

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What Is Autism?

We now recognize Autism as a complex neurobiological disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships. It is also characterized by restricted and repetitive behavior. Parents usually notice signs in the first two or three years of a child's life. These signs often develop gradually, though some children with autism reach their developmental milestones at a normal pace and then worsen. Early speech or behavioral interventions can help children with autism gain social and communication skills. Although there is no known cure, there have been cases of children who have recovered from the condition. Not many children with autism live independently after reaching adulthood.

Autism spectrum disorder is a highly heritable neurodevelopmental disorder. More than 100 genetic polymorphisms have been associated with autism spectrum disorder, with Africa having greater genetic diversity than any other continent. Without doubt, because of this, genetic studies of autism in Africa could provide unique insights into the pathogenesis of the disorder. Environmental risk factors for autism are poorly understood, but the incidence of the risk factors associated with autism in high-income countries, such as pre-eclampsia, placental insufficiency, prolonged labour, induced labour, birth asphyxia, pre-term birth, and low birthweight, are also common in Africa.

Incidence and Demographics

Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in one in 68 children in the USA, affecting four times as many boys as girls. In the United States, Autism has been labelled a "national public health crisis, whose cause and cure remain unknown," by the CDC. Autism knows no boundaries. It cuts across every nation, every ethnic, racial and social group. Indeed, although autism spectrum disorder is one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders in high-income countries like the United States, there is very little knowledge about the disorder in the low-income regions of the world, such as Africa. There is very little data on the prevalence of autism in Africa, even though this region has a population of nearly 1 billion, 40% of whom are children younger than 14 years. Although, in recent years, public-health emphasis in sub-Saharan Africa has been on communicable conditions such as HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis, with the reduction in childhood mortality rates in the past two decades, non-communicable diseases (especially neurodevelopmental disorders) are likely to become a greater health burden in these countries.

Some early studies have suggested that autism could be a culturally-bound disorder, and that autism spectrum disorder might be rare in regions such as Africa. However, this is proving not to be the case. In the 1970s, Lotter, a psychiatrist, identified nine children with autism in hospitals in six African countries. Shortly after this, many cases of autism have been reported from Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Ghana. Furthermore, emerging evidence from immigration studies now suggest that autism could be more common in Africa than initially believed. Studies of women who migrated from Somalia to Sweden gave indications that the frequency of autism in their children was three or four times that of children born to Swedish mothers. However, it was also recognized that certain risk factors thought to be associated with immigration might have predisposed those children to autism spectrum disorder. For instance, low vitamin D concentrations in dark-skinned immigrants in places with low sun levels, and perinatal infections in mothers. Yet, the evidence of such factors as being significantly inherent in the immigration process remain weak, and cannot yet be confirmed to contribute to increased prevalence of autism.

Awareness

With public awareness remaining at an appalling level, autistic individuals face major challenges associated

with stigma, adverse discrimination, abuse, severe isolation and lack of access to support. Thus a vast number of these people struggle daily with multiple barriers in their day-to-day existence. In Africa, in particular, the plight of people with autism is even worse, largely because the challenges are further exacerbated when they are combined with poverty, since there is no proper diagnosis and an abysmal lack of proper services. Worse, on the continent, there is a stigma attached to autism, and this strongly inhibits parents from seeking advice or information about the disorder, constituting a hindrance to early and correct treatment which is crucial for improving prognosis and the chance for the maximization of potential and better integration into society.

This author would like to relate the poignant story of an African living in Canada, and whose son was diagnosed with Autism at a children's hospital in Ontario. The man was shattered. His first consideration was how he could possibly break the news to his brother and other family members living at another part of Canada. "How can I tell them, they wouldn't understand," he spluttered dejectedly. What he couldn't tell them was that his son had autism. His trepidation would be surprising, and possibly confusing to the average American. His son was seven years old. Why couldn't he just tell them? To understand the man's peculiar fear, one would have to arrive at a comprehension of just how significantly and negatively African families are impacted by autism. For a start, the diagnosis is infinitely difficult to accept. For most Africans, Autism remains largely a condition that affects Caucasians, Asians and perhaps Caribbeans because of their mixed heritage. To further fuel their ignorance, even the media basically publish only stories of White, middle class autistic individuals. It is quite baffling that so many Africans subscribe to this erroneous belief. What is even more baffling is the shame, isolation and stigma that a diagnosis of Autism can wreak on an African family living in the Western world. It is surprising that they would feel that way, considering that they had done nothing wrong. After all, no one consciously solicits for infirmity of any sort. One inescapable fact, however, is that, although many Africans living in the West do try their best to fully integrate into their new societies, their values, beliefs, traditions and behaviors remain strongly sympathetic to those of their African country of origin. Their native culture forms their beliefs about all disabilities, and about autism in particular.

Surprisingly, for such a large and diverse continent of 54 countries and an estimated 3,000 languages, knowledge of autism is abysmally low across the African continent. Incredibly, this fact holds true even amongst doctors, healthcare professionals, social workers and special education teachers. Generally, Africans hold particularly strong beliefs in supernatural causes such as punishment from God, witchcraft, evil spirits and curses as causes of Autism. African cultures are collectivist in acceptance, and they are based on group values and consensus, with people being obligated to observe a myriad of traditions and customs, and failure, either wittingly or unwittingly, to observe these customs, or the breaching of local taboos, is believed to lead to consequences that could include the curse of Autism. Autism is also believed to be associated with bad omens, not only for an immediate family but also for the community in general. All these tendencies play a major role in the incipience of secrecy and isolation. They are usually the reasons given for the concealment of the diagnosis from family members and other members of the community. This should hardly surprise anyone. If a family admits to having a child with Autism, they risk being ostracized for fear that their "curse" might have adverse consequences on those close to them.

This author is in a good position to highlight the Nigerian experience as a case study, being half British, and half Nigerian herself. In Nigeria, there is increasing concern over the rise in cases of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Yet, the level of awareness about autism in Nigeria is pathetically low. There is some awareness amongst those in the medical community, but the extent of their knowledge is often limited. Most of them only know the symptoms and manifestations of "infantile autism." The majority do not know that there are different forms of autism spectrum disorders, while some don't even believe the condition is treatable, and nearly 70 percent have no clue as to where to refer cases to, and what to do even when they are certain about the diagnosis. Many children in Nigeria with autism are either not diagnosed or misdiagnosed. They end up being hidden at home, or when they are are 'lucky,' they are categorized with the deaf and mentally ill children. In the rural areas, where there are no psychiatric hospitals, the majority end up on the streets and labeled 'insane.'

There is a serious and disheartening lack of understanding about autism in Nigeria. Parents are often the most confused. Different doctors say different things, and by the time parents visit ten professionals, they come out with ten conflicting

professional explanations of the same condition. In most countries, a multidisciplinary team assesses, diagnoses and develops an individualized educational plan for each child with autism. However, what happens in Nigeria is very far from that. In Nigeria, the children are hidden at home, especially if the special schools (centers for the deaf, blind or mentally ill) reject them.

The legal framework necessary to support individuals with autism is another deficient area. The trend in most parts of the world is that 'no child should be left behind,' and that every disabled child matters, and that there should be free basic education for all. However, in Nigeria, there is no recognition of autism as a disability, and there are next to no services available to meet the needs of those with the condition, which is why it hardly comes as a surprise that many of the so-called 'mad' people on Nigerian streets are autism sufferers who were neither diagnosed nor treated. Yet they could have been treated. One significant reason for this is that, since there is no welfare program in Nigeria to offer government funding for educational and specialized services needed by these children, the entire financial burden is placed on parents. The few affluent ones prefer to send their children abroad, and if they must reside in Nigeria, they hire an expert from South Africa, the USA or the UK to work with their children on one-to-one basis. Often the cost of bringing in an expert would otherwise be more than sufficient to train 30 local therapists.

Collectivist African culture, with its clear rules of conformity, has difficulty with the strange behaviors of autistic individuals. In the West, public judgement tends to be silent and quiet, but Africans would usually openly and loudly express unsolicited opinions. Efforts to explain that a child is not just a spoilt, misbehaving brat, and to embark upon an explanation of the complexities of Autism, will almost always fail miserably. However, even though autism awareness remains low across Africa, there are some encouraging signs. The first Autism in Africa Conference that held in Accra in 2014 demonstrated a desire to learn, and to develop cohesive and inclusive strategies to increase awareness and management of Autism on the continent. Salutarily also, that conference is now an annual event, with local autism organizations being more active in different regions of the continent.

A principal impediment to awareness of Autism is inadequate research, and certainly, one significant barrier to the research and management of autism has been the scarcity of necessary and validated tools on the African continent. One such standardized tool for autism spectrum disorder is the Autism Diagnostic Observational Schedule, which has contributed inestimable to knowledge about autism in high-income countries. Unfortunately, the use of these tools in Africa poses major challenges that border on cultural appropriateness, cost of translations and adaptations, and copyright-related issues. Admittedly, although awareness of autism appears to be on the rise in developing countries, major challenges arising from limited awareness in many communities in Africa remain, especially with rural families. Certainly, in the face of insufficient awareness, such families are not likely to seek or be referred to appropriately-skilled personnel for comprehensive assessment and diagnosis. Inadequacies in the education sectors of these developing countries, such as inadequate knowledge and awareness of autism, and the absence of scarcity of inclusive curricula tend to pose similar challenges.

The Imperative For Awareness

It is imperative to raise awareness among health care providers, therapists, parents and the general population, about the signs and symptoms of autism, and about the need to seek and provide services as soon as possible so that children with autism will be diagnosed as early as possible. Today, it is possible to diagnose autism as early as the age of one year. Awareness is also important because of the need for the right treatment, and as soon as possible, in order to improve their prognosis and allow them the chance to become independent and peak performing members of the community

There is a compelling need for greater collaboration and cooperation of the advanced countries with the developing countries, particularly African countries, in order to increase awareness, reduce negative opinions and stigmas, strengthen capacities, help with allocation of financial support to provide proper diagnosis and early intervention treatments to children with autism. There is also an equally compelling need for training centers to be established in Africa, where parents and caregivers can be educated and offered the much need support.

Awareness about autism spectrum disorder should be urgently increased, and this requires partnerships between parent-support groups, not-for-profit organizations, private sector, governments,

international autism organizations, media, WHO, and funders, such as National Institutes of Health and the Wellcome Trust. Programs such as the Autism Speaks Global Autism Public Health Initiative that have expanded to sub-Saharan Africa could play an important role in bridging the gap in Africa. With awareness comes advocacy. The increasing number of parent, user, and carer groups in Africa is encouraging. However, these groups are still few and where they exist, many prioritize supporting individuals and families in local communities rather than building national and continental advocacy. Access to research and materials is being promoted through websites, but internet access is still limited in some rural areas of Africa. Harnessing more accessible technological platforms such as mobile phones could provide lasting solutions.

Education and training have clear links to awareness and advocacy. The goal should be to incorporate training in autism into health-care and social-care education so as to increase knowledge and expertise across the continent. Development of appropriate educational services for children with autism in Africa is urgently needed. Research on autism in Africa should be strengthened, and the key to this are development and validation of screening and diagnostic tools. Thereafter, epidemiological research is needed to assess the burden of autism spectrum disorder and define the clinical features of the disorder in Africa.

Initiatives

On Tuesday, December 8, 2016, operating under the auspices of her global humanitarian platform, the Engineer Aja Eze Foundation, this author executed a novel initiative to generate an unprecedented level of awareness of Autism in Africa and other developing parts of the world through a high-level conference convened at the United Nations. The conference, uniquely conceptualized as a tableau of Panel Discussions, was aptly tagged: "Autism in Africa: Life Saving Awareness; Whilst Implementing The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals And Towards Agenda 2030." The conference was held in technical collaboration with the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Zambia, Uganda, Malawi, Japan, Israel, Kenya and Angola, Nigeria and Poland. In attendance were the Their Excellencies, the Ambassadors of these countries to the United Nations, who also acted as Co-Hosts of the high-profile event that was held as a side-event under the official auspices of the 71st Session of the United Nations General

Assembly.

The Aims and Objectives of the conference were to: Raise awareness of the challenges faced by children with autism in Africa;Raise awareness about autism in Africa and to improve the lives of people living with autism in Africa; encourage collaboration and cooperation between all members states in order to share experiences and knowledge, and raise awareness of autism in Africa; and Advocate for policies which move children with autism and disabilities from exclusion to inclusion.

The principal outcome of the conference was a firm resolution to seek conveniently implementable and sustainable solutions to the lack of information on autism in Africa. It was recognized that there is a compelling need to raise awareness among health care providers, therapists, parents and the general population, about the signs and symptoms of autism, and about the need to seek and provide services as soon as possible so that children in Africa will be diagnosed as early as possible. The principal outcome of the conference was a firm resolution to seek conveniently implementable and sustainable solutions to the lack of information on autism in Africa. It was recognized that there is a compelling need to raise awareness among health care providers, therapists, parents and the general population, about the the signs and symptoms of autism, and about the need to seek and provide services as soon as possible so that children in Africa will be diagnosed as early as possible. There was also a unanimous call by the Ambassadors on the Eng. Aja Eze Foundation to immediately embark on efforts to take global autism awareness to another level, while pledging their joint full support and cooperation for any initiative that will continue to accord Autism its rightful place in global consciousness.

Significantly, it was in that regard, the Board of Trustees of the Foundation mooted an idea to publish a book that would be titled, "The Little Book of Autism." The 150-page book would be published with the primary objective of being a user-friendly manual that parents of autistic children, scholars, governments, healthcare providers, and indeed all other stakeholders in the world of Autism, can pick up and get fundamentally educated about autism in the shortest possible time, without having to labor under the burden of exposure to high-sounding academic and intellectual language that many of them may not be able to adequately grasp. The book would comprehensively cover and explain, in simple language, misconceptions, sacrosanct truths and

contemporary management options in an easily comprehensible flow and manner. The book would be published and distributed in the nations of the world Free of Charge. Country Representatives will be identified in about 20 countries, and they will be responsible for the circulation and distribution of about 250,000 copies of the book.

Conclusion

For families of African descent, social networks, including family members both abroad and back in Africa, can have a tremendous impact on how they live with autism, serving either to enhance feelings of stigma or to encourage openness and seeking support. One hopes that the World Autism Awareness Day will continue to bring more knowledge to all Africans the world over. It should be our collective hope to turn stigma, shame and isolation into awareness and acceptance. We have an ethical duty to develop post-diagnostic intervention, from neuro-psychiatric education to community-based and specialist programs. We need to link educational, health-care, and social-care systems for the generation of well-coordinated knowledge, policies, and plans that will ensure the overall efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the programs. The needs of Africa may be substantial, yet the world has much to learn from Africa in terms of the interplay between nature and neurological pathways to autism spectrum disorder and other neurodevelopmental disorders, and in finding creative ways to meet the needs of individuals and families using low-cost and high-impact methods.

Educational Leadership Implications

There is an opportunity for educational leaders throughout Africa to be at the forefront of addressing autism spectrum disorders through educational policy and educational programming across the continent. This requires transformational leadership that builds a collective vision among educators to establish educational cultures and environments that are inclusive and supportive of children with autism and their families. Working through organizations such as the United Nations and UNESCO we can transform the way we treat and educate children with autism across the African continent.

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Addressing Violence Among Students with Disabilities in Schools

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Abstract

The following will discuss school violence and address the relationship among students with special needs. Further research is needed on the effects of violence among special needs student populations. Efforts require observation and concrete data in order to understand how to address the increase in violence if we are to create safer schools. School violence is increasing the responsibilities of administrators, teachers and school personnel. Student related deaths from school shootings and other acts of violence perpetrated by students diagnosed as having a mental disability, as defined by the American Psychological Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), were examined across all 50 states, including 19 states where the use of corporal punishment exists. In states where corporal punishment remains legal, students with special needs are frequently punished, while acts of school violence and school shooting related deaths are proportionately higher. Safety is an increasing concern for administration and faculty, as they are required to follow Federal, State, and Local mandated laws to protect students with and without special needs.

Introduction

Globally, administrators, teachers, school personnel and students and their parents recognize the increasing need for school security and the similarities in the acts of violence. There are, however, no significant differences in the need for protection from potential threats, especially when considering security issues and proactive prevention measures. Increasingly, special needs students fall victim to acts of violence that often go unreported. In contrast, special needs students, intermittently, commit acts of school violence. Major transportation accidents, incidents of aggression, assault, threats, active shooter incidents and acts of terror are the most common events reported in public and private schools. Administrators, their teachers and personnel work collectively to prevent school violence. Statistically, schools are considered to be predominantly safe places. However, administrators, personnel, students, and parents have important roles to perform when creating and promoting safe schools. Adults can mentor students by exhibiting civility and excellence in character while providing appropriate leadership through the modeling of prosocial behavior, reassuring students, reinforcing and instilling safe habits within the students under their care.

In 2013, a UNICEF study indicated that students who fall within the definition of special needs; and who present as having a disability or psychological disorder are becoming, more often, vulnerable targets of school violence. It is also clear that students with special needs, whether clinically diagnosed or undiagnosed, are committing acts of violence in increasing numbers. In 1975, Congress passed the (EAHCA) Education for All Handicapped Children Act, sometimes referred to as EHA, or Public Law (PL 94-142) for the protection of special needs students. This Act of the United States Congress made special education programs mandatory. The enactment was created in response to discriminatory treatment by public educational agencies against students with disabilities. The EAHCA was later modified to strengthen protections for students with disabilities. The Act was renamed in 1990 as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Amendments to the IDEA were passed in 1997 and 2004.

On July 22, 2004, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13347, to provide additional protection for Individuals with Disabilities in U.S. Emergency Preparedness related statutes, regulations, and orders. The addition to existing legislation was put in place to ensure that the safety and security of individuals with disabilities are appropriately supported. The law also requires public services to provide accommodations for the unique needs of individuals with disabilities in their emergency

preparedness planning. "A key risk factor and consequence of social exclusion and vulnerability among students with disabilities is violence. Evidence from a recent systematic review indicates that children with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be victims of violence than their peers who are considered to be without limitations." (Devries, et al., 2014)

Economic Considerations

The costs of juvenile justice programs, institutions and "youth violence alone costs the United States more than $158 billion each year. Violent crime peaks in the late teenage years, despite spending nearly 15% of the gross domestic product on the upbringing and education of children." (Burr et al., 2018) Juvenile violence remains a serious societal issue with a significant financial burden. Perhaps it is necessary to reallocate resources and readjust attitudes to combat, prevent, and treat youth violence and delinquency in a sustainable, efficient manner.

In 2012, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, completed a World Health Organization (WHO) study which indicated a child's development is influenced by a wide range of biological and environmental factors, some of which protect and enhance their development while others compromise developmental outcomes. "Children who experience disability early in life can be disproportionately exposed to risk factors such as poverty; stigma and discrimination; poor caregiver interaction; institutionalization; violence, abuse and neglect; and limited access to programs and services, all of which can have a significant effect on their survival and development." (Ramos 2018)

In June 2010, The Economic Impact of School Violence: A Report For Plan International Project Score researched questions sought to ascertain the extent to which school violence affects both human and social capital; to what extent school violence jeopardizes the future of school children; what impact school violence has on a country's long-term development and economic growth; and finally, to estimate the cost of preventing school violence. Various studies have attempted to estimate the health costs of other forms of violence through data collection from hospitals and health services to assess the prevalence, the number of cases, in order to register the types of injuries that result from acts of violence, and thus to estimate unit costs of treatment. It is difficult, however, to determine the health costs of school violence based on these studies. "The research does not

break down costs according to where the incident occurred (for example at home, on the street, in a public place, at school, on the way to or from school) because the records used as a source of data fail to record this." (Pereznieto, et al., 2010)

The Impact of Exposure

In November 2014, the United States Department of Justice released a report on children exposed to violence and issued recommendations. The report stated, when youth become the victims or witnesses of domestic and gang violence, sexual assault or bullying, such exposure can lead to altered neurological development, poor physical health, mental health, poor school performance, substance abuse and overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system. Exposure to violence for all students, including students with special needs can lead young people to attempt suicide and commit other acts of violence. When students, experience a traumatic event, the act may cause PTSD, ongoing feelings of concern for personal safety and the safety of others. Sometimes, students may become preoccupied with thoughts about their actions during the event. Additionally, students may express guilt or shame due to what they did or did not do during the time the event took place. Some students might engage in a constant retelling of the traumatic event or describe being overwhelmed by feelings of fear or sadness. Special needs students who are non-verbal may express the impact through physical violence or other means as a way to communicate the experience.

Preschool students may lose recently acquired developmental milestones; increase behaviors such as bedwetting, thumb sucking, and regress to immature speech patterns. They may become more dependent, attached to their parent or guardian and worry about their parent or guardian's safety or return from daily obligations and places of employment. Young students may become more irritable, exhibit excessive temper tantrums and have more difficulty calming down. A student may show reverse behavior and become withdrawn, subdued, or mute after a traumatic event, while other students may experience problems falling asleep, staying asleep or have nightmares and dreams about the episode. Typically these students will process the event through post-traumatic play. Elementary school-aged students may show signs of distress through physical complaints such as stomach maladies, headaches, and pains. Students may have a change in behavior, exhibit increased irritability, aggression, and anger. The behavior may be inconsistent, exhibit a difference in school

performance; have impaired attention, concentration, and school absences. Students may talk excessively and ask persistent questions about the event.

When older students experience traumatic events, the effects may create feelings of self-consciousness about their emotional responses to the event. These students may experience feelings of shame and guilt about the traumatic event and express desires to regain control through revenge and retribution. "A traumatic event for adolescents may foster a radical shift in the way the student thinks about the world. Some adolescents may engage in self-destructive, accident-prone and reckless behaviors. There may be a shift in a student's interpersonal relationships with family members, teachers, and classmates. Attendance may be affected unless efforts are made to reach out to students and faculty with additional information and services." (White 2018)

Studies on violence (e.g., domestic violence) survey victims who have reported being victims of violence (e.g., to the police) and inquire about the consequences of acts of violence for their physical health and wellbeing. However, datasets that register the occurrence of school violence fail to include data on whether victims of physical abuse in school need to seek medical attention and of what nature. This information is necessary to establish the health and economic costs of school violence. Experts share their knowledge and ideas about the problems special needs student populations experience (school violence, health and education impacts, violence, cost analysis methodology, entry points for advocacy) while providing leads to pursue future research. Inclusive social protection entails using instruments that explicitly promote social inclusion and equity while ensuring that program design and implementation are sensitive to the added vulnerabilities that stem from social exclusion. This implies moving away from targeting particular groups and looking at the underlying causes of exclusion and vulnerabilities shared by the groups: discrimination and stigma; traditional social norms preventing the use of services; limited assets and visibility.

Protecting Special Needs Students and School Climate

A prudent approach to school safety measures is paramount when working to ensure that schools and educational centers remain safe, wholesome, learning environments where all students will thrive. Increasingly, school administrators and faculty are required to meet extensive school safety obligations,

while providing the established educational programs. School personnel are required to address new security challenges in an arena where prosocial behaviors are undermined, diminished and compromised. The compromises are revealed through statistical models that indicate an increase of deviance and violence that impact the school and community at large.

To protect students and the school climate, twenty-eight states, allow educators, who legally own firearms, to carry them in public schools from kindergarten classrooms to high school hallways. Seven of the twenty-eight states specifically cite teachers and other school faculty as being allowed to carry guns in school. "According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were 3.6 million elementary and secondary school full-time teachers in 2015. If the United States armed 20 percent of the educators, that would be more than 700,000 educators carrying firearms to school." (White 2018)

Positive relationships between students and their peers, teachers, and families can be critical assets in promoting well-being and preventing school violence. Several strategies enhance these relationships and have been found to be effective in reducing violence. According to the Centers For Disease Control, "many universal, school-based violence prevention programs improve students' social skills and problem-solving abilities, which can result in more favorable peer and student, teacher relationships throughout the school. Some school-based programs also help students to safely intervene and stop an escalating violent episode between peers. On a national level, students, parents, educators, stakeholders and others are joining together to create a voice that will resonate a global message stating that school violence will not be tolerated." (CDC 2017)

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a variety of school-based programs and policies prove to be useful in helping teachers build healthy relationships, model non-violent behavior and contribute to a broader favorable school climate, which will, in turn, lower the risk for school violence. These approaches are intended to teach educators effective ways to manage a classroom, resolve conflicts nonviolently, promote positive relationships between all students, regardless of ability and encourage positive student-teacher relationships to help create a safe and comfortable environment where students feel comfortable talking with teachers about violence-related issues.

Do Students with Disabilities Face More Punishment?

When children are victimized, generally, the people who violate them require both access and secrecy to commit their crimes. As a result, children are typically victimized by someone they know. For children who have special needs, the unique needs create opportunities for abuse; in other words, access. Consequently, the disability often facilitates secrecy due to communication and cognitive barriers. Parents and educators sometimes fail to inform children with special needs about abuse and how to recognize abuse. "Children with special needs face higher risks for victimization, and they also face a system that fails to prevent and respond to victims with special needs."(Cunningham, 2013)

Two systematic reviews recently published in The Lancet, indicated "children and adults with disabilities are at a higher risk of violence than their non-disabled peers." Additionally, studies carried out by the Liverpool John Moores University's Centre for Public Health, a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Violence Prevention, and the World Health Organization Department of Violence, Injury Prevention and Disability provide the most reliable evidence on violence against children and adults with disabilities. The studies also highlight the lack of data on the topic from low-income and middle-income countries."(Krug 2013)

The review on the prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities, published in July 2012, found that overall, children with disabilities are nearly four times more likely to experience violence and abuse than non-disabled children. "The review indicated that "children with disabilities are 3.7 times more likely than non-disabled children to be victims of any violence, 3.6 times more likely to be victims of physical abuse, and 2.9 times more likely to be victims of sexual violence. Children with mental or intellectual impairments appear to be among the most vulnerable, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual abuse than their non-disabled peers."(Krug 2013)

As special needs youth reach adulthood, the Systematic Review On Violence Against Adults With Disabilities, published in February 2012, found overall that they are 1.5 times more likely to be victims of violence than those without a disability, while those with mental health conditions are at nearly four times the risk of experiencing violence. The results of these reviews prove that people with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to abuse. When students experience violence at home, in school or elsewhere, the consequences of violence on physical health are more severe. If the abuse is repeated, particularly severe or if victims are not given adequate support following incidents, the effects will be compounded, particularly for students with special needs. Students who are non-verbal or who have processing disorders will find it challenging to express fears and concerns. For example, correlations are recognized between more significant ill health and the regularity of bullying. Physical symptoms include 'headaches, stomach ailments, backaches, and dizziness.' Psychological symptoms include violent tempers, nervousness, loneliness, and feelings of helplessness.

CASE STUDY: United States

During the 2016 -2017 academic year, a thirteen-year-old student diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD has been accomplishing prosocial behavioral goals through applied behavior analysis, therapy, and other modalities. In November 2017, the student began exhibiting new escape and avoidance behaviors at home in the morning and after school. The new behaviors were using profanity and miming violent behaviors, eye gouging, and physical self-harm before leaving the family home when the school bus was about to arrive.

After nearly six months of off-task behaviors, it was determined that the youth was trying to express a problem on the school bus. The teen was trying to reveal that while on the school bus, a younger non-verbal child had become a victim of repeat abuses. Additionally, other children on the school bus were physically violated, hit with seatbelts, a broom, and other items, not wearing seatbelts, humiliated and scorned in front of their peers by an adult school bus aide. Another non-verbal student passenger, anonymously, videotaped several of the incidents with a parent's cell phone to reveal to the parents the abuses that were taking place. The incriminating videos were shared amongst the parents of the adolescent victims involved. The videos uncovered the inhumane treatment of a non-verbal, autistic, middle school-aged youth by two school bus aides. Although the young passengers witnessed the repeated abuse of their classmate and were forced against their will to be spectators of acts of violence, they were unable to do verbalize or protect their peer from what they had experienced over the several months that the incidents were taking place.

Finally, the parent with the cell phone decided to drive her car behind the school bus to the homes of the other children because she did not have the telephone numbers or addresses of the other parents. She decided to park her car momentarily, wait for the school bus to leave, and then ring the doorbell of each home to inform each parent, on different days, in order to share the video that her child took on the school bus. When the parents collaborated, they each stated that their children were exhibiting unusual behaviors especially when they were preparing for school in the morning before the school bus arrived or when they returned home on the bus after school. Through collaborative efforts, several parents viewed the videos and turned the images into the local authorities. Child Protective Services and the Board of Education were informed as well as the school where the children attended. The organizations requested that the parents not share the videos on social media to avoid further exploitation while maintaining the town and school districts reputation. Public exposure was reduced, while the situation was under investigation. The school bus driver and aides were fired. Unfortunately, because the parent of the child who was violated refused to press criminal charges, the incident was dismissed.

Why Students With Disabilities Perpetrate Acts Of Violence

According to Dr. Edward Newman Brandt Jr., former Surgeon General of the United States 1981-1982 and Andrew M. Pope, Ph.D., Director of the Health Sciences Policy Program at the Institute of Medicine, "the onset of a disabling condition is often followed by a loss or a potential loss of control. What is most critical for adaptive functioning is how a person responds and what efforts the person puts forth to regain control." (Brandt & Pope, 1997). Perceptions of control will influence whether a disabling condition is seen as stressful and whether it becomes disabling. Individuals with disabling conditions who perceive that they have control over the management of their health, rehabilitation, and related outcomes will fare better. During conditions of perceived lack of control, people with disabling conditions are not likely to engage in behaviors (e.g., attend therapy or advocate for civil rights) to reduce disabling conditions and improve functional outcomes. Under these circumstances, the relationship between impairment and disability becomes circular. Once a disability increases, so may the level of impairment and functional limitation as a result of failure to pursue rehabilitation therapy. Conversely, under conditions of perceived control, a person is likely to engage in

behaviors that will subsequently reduce disability. Once disability is reduced, one's level of impairment may subsequently be reduced. Furthermore, under conditions of perceived loss of control, the individual may actively cope to restore control through primary control efforts (e.g., engaging in behaviors directed at changing the external environment to fit the needs of the person) and secondary control efforts (e.g., engaging in thoughts and actions directed at improving one's view of self through mechanisms such as setting goals and adjusting expectations). An example of primary control would be a person with decreased mobility moving from a building with no elevators to a building with elevators. An example of secondary control would be when the individual changed his or her beliefs about the importance of mobility. What is relevant in this case is not whether the individual has actual control but whether the person perceives that he or she has control. (Brandt & Pope 1997)

Several coping strategies may be used when a person confronts a stressful situation. The strategies may include the following: seeking information, cognitive restructuring, emotional expression, catastrophizing, wish-fulfilling fantasizing, threat minimization, relaxation, distraction, and self-blame. Dr. John Grohol defines Catastrophizing as "the irrational thought of believing that something is far worse than it is. Catastrophizing can take on two different forms: making a catastrophe out of a current situation and imagining making a catastrophe out of a future situation." To protect a school or teacher's reputation, decrease the level of responsibility, potential danger, lawsuits and harmful public exposure, it is recognized that some educators prefer not to have disabled students included or mainstreamed in their classroom. Although students with disabilities represent only about 12 percent of the K-12 student population, they account for 25 percent of students arrested and referred to law enforcement. In an era when zero-tolerance school discipline policies can result in suspension for a range of offenses. According to 2011–2012 data from the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education, it is recognized as a part of an ongoing survey, that students with disabilities are likely to be suspended from school two to three times more than their peers. Approximately 13 percent of these students are sent home for misbehaving. Students of color are penalized disproportionately. One in four male students and one in five female students of color who have disabilities are expelled. Students of color include all non-white ethnic groups except Latino and Asian Americans. (Huffington Post 2014)

Zero-Tolerance

According to Daniel Losen, Director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA, a research center for civil rights and equal opportunity for minority groups in the United States. "Long before the creation of zero-tolerance policies, students with disabilities were treated differently than their peers and were often denied schooling. Some educators didn't want students with disabilities in their classroom. Federal law, however, requires Public Schools to provide special education services to students with disabilities since 1975, while providing protection from frequent suspensions. Zero-tolerance school discipline policies, widely implemented in the 1990s, originally required suspension and expulsion for incidents involving weapons, drugs or violence.

Over time, however, zero-tolerance policies have evolved to demand the same strict punishments for a wide variety of misconduct, including minor infringements, such as violating the dress code. Today, suspensions are often given for offenses such as truancy or disobedience. "There's no question that students with disabilities are disproportionately punished under zero-tolerance," says Losen. "Students with disabilities that affect their behavior usually receive behavior assessments and behavioral improvement plans." For instance, before a student can be suspended for more than ten days, school officials are obligated to hold a hearing to determine whether the behavior in question had to do with the student's disability or with the school not providing adequate support. For example, if a disabled student with emotional disturbances is supposed to see a counselor every Wednesday and the student "flips out" after the counselor misses an appointment that could be considered a failure of the school system. So the question should be asked, 'Was the failure to provide counseling contributing to the behavior?' Rarely are these questions addressed.

Research shows disparities between the type of disability and the likelihood that a student will be suspended or expelled. In 2011, examining how school discipline relates to student success and juvenile detention, found that nearly 75 percent of special education students were expelled at least once between the 7th and 12th grades. The punishment varied significantly depending on the type of educational disability, according to a study, conducted by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, a national nonprofit organization focusing on public safety, and the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University. The study also revealed that students with learning disabilities and emotional disturbances were disciplined more often than students with other types of disabilities, including autism, physical disability or developmental delay.

The two primary teachers' unions, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA), are shifting away from their support of zero-tolerance policies. "It's about creating schools where our students can reach their full potential," said Harry Lawson, associate director of the NEA's Human and Civil Rights Department.

CASE STUDY:

Julie Landry's 8-year-old son has autism. One day in gym class, teachers and administrators said, he ran around screaming and throwing volleyballs. He flailed his arms and resisted when administrators tried to restrain him. According to the Fairfax County, Va., school system, he punched, kicked, bit and head-butted three people. For that and other incidents, the boy was suspended for 11 days and faced expulsion hearings twice within six weeks — all during a single school year. In Virginia, Landry's son avoided expulsion because a panel of school officials and special-education experts concluded that his actions were caused by his disability. "These children should not be expected to be capable of understanding [student rights] or be compliant like their non-disabled peers," said Elizabeth Schultz, a member of the Fairfax County School Board. "To hold them to the same standard is absurd."

According to data from the Fairfax school system, officials ruled that a student's actions were caused by his disability, in fewer than 20 percent of all cases involving students with disabilities who faced expulsion during the 2011–2012 school year. As for Landry's son, Fairfax administrators ruled that the public schools could not meet the eight-year-old boy's needs, so his family received state grants to cover his tuition at a private school.

Disability and Violence

Antisocial Personality Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Trauma, Violence, Addictions, Alcohol Abuse, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Gaming Disorder and combined emotional, mental and physical disabilities have and will continue to play a role in the acts of violence in our schools. The increase in youth violence and aggression in the past 50 years has been called an epidemic. From a clinical perspective, evaluation and treatment of aggression is a primary concern. "This epidemic has a tremendous impact on

society. From an economic and public health perspective, primary prevention of youth violence is desirable. In this regard, we recognize the economic impact of youth aggression, with an emphasis on the rationale for primary prevention; the use of current knowledge to guide evaluation and treatment of aggression in the clinical setting; and recent reports on pharmacotherapy in aggressive youths." (Bastaiens, 2006)

Providing Emotional Reinforcement

"High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel endangered or worried that friends or loved-ones are at risk. Students look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of security and talking with them about their fears. The following points developed by the National Association of School Psychologists are for providing emotional support for all students. NASP has made these resources available to the public in order to promote the ability of children and youth to cope with traumatic or unsettling events.

Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers

1. Reassure children that they are safe. Emphasize that schools are safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.

2. Make time to talk. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Be patient. Children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily. Watch for clues that they may want to speak such as hovering around to begin a conversation. Some children prefer writing, playing music, or doing an art project as an outlet. Young children may need concrete activities (such as drawing, looking at picture books, or imaginative play) to help them identify and express their feelings.

3. Keep explanations developmentally appropriate. Early elementary school children need brief, simple information, balanced with reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of school safety. Remind children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground and emergency drills practiced during the school day.

• Upper Elementary and Early Middle School children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they indeed are safe and what is being done at their school. Children may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools.

• Middle and High School students will have varying opinions about the causes of violence in school and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g., not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, and accessing support for emotional needs.

4. Review safety procedures. "Include procedures and safeguards at school and home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they can go to if they feel at risk." (Benedetto, 2018)

5. Observe children's emotional state. Some children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can also indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some children may be at risk for more intense reactions. Children who have had a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or other mental illness, or with special needs may be at higher risk for severe reactions than others. Seek the help of a mental health professional if concerned.

6. Limit television viewing of these events and be aware if the television is on in common areas. Developmentally inappropriate information can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children. Adults must be mindful of the content of conversations shared with each other in front of children, including teenagers and limit their exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.

7. Maintain a normal routine. Keeping a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed."

Educational Policy Considerations

In closing, if we must make adjustments to our educational systems, perhaps we might consider the impact that potential acts of violence have on the development of individuals who have been diagnosed as having special needs. What shall we consider with regard to students who have been misdiagnosed or not diagnosed? Are we mainstreaming students in educational settings where they will find it difficult to cope rather than reach their potential? If our current responsibility to provide security for all students does not lead to the provision of safe schools, what steps can we agree on that will protect our students in learning environments that are becoming increasingly hostile? Are we to continue inclusion and mainstreaming efforts and making changes, for the sake of change? Perhaps the time has come for educational policy leaders to consider collective efforts through a well thought out plan and realize that school violence will continue to increase if we fail to act accordingly. By mainstreaming, are we placing our special needs students in environments where they will fail before considering the potential outcomes based on the diagnosis and the special need?

Perhaps mainstreaming may be the answer for some children, but not all, especially when the current increase in school violence indicates that students with diagnosed and undiagnosed disorders present safety and security concerns. It appears that the rates of school violence are increasing and some simply cannot achieve in the systems that have been created. When students reach the point of frustration, perhaps their inability to cope is not their problem. A process is needed that will alert us, before potential levels of risk arise. As educational leaders, let's purpose to come together and create a national plan that will insure the protection of all students - whether or not having been diagnosed with a special needs, our educators and schools in a manner that will lead to safer outcomes.

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Eight Principles to Connect Preservice Educators to Urban Schools and Classrooms

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Abstract

This article examines eight principles that can help preservice teachers make the connection between the Introduction to Educational Psychology class and working with the special needs of urban students. Based on research in educational psychology and its importance to preservice teachers, it is essential that professors who teach this discipline realize that successful and good practices for preservice teachers are based on (a) teaching educational psychology from a historical perspective, (b) developing a community of learning, (c) teaching issues of race, class, gender, and immigration, (d) being aware of students' móres, culture norms, and traditions, (e) making a connection to theorists with how to teach and who to teach, (f) teaching the importance of development in knowledge, curriculum, and levels of understanding, (g) teaching the significance of proper feedback, and h) developing critical thinking skills. This paper is based on the perceptions of one of the authors on how to merge educational psychology theories with successful teaching practices within the urban classroom to work with the special needs of the diverse children.

Introduction

Educational psychology theorists have argued that many preservice teachers have not been fully prepared by their professors in colleges of education to work in urban settings (Haberman & Post, 2009; Sachs, 2004). Society has debated as to whether or not the ideologies of educational psychology with a focus on urban education as a discipline actually contribute to effective teacher training (Patrick, Anderman, Bruening, & Duffin, 2011). These two perspectives have led to controversy in the teacher preparation programs. The arguments have led to a clear disconnect. The theories and their impact on classroom activities are not effectively addressed in preservice education classes, and preservice teachers see no connection between what is taught in the theoretical courses and what they experience in their field classrooms (Haberman & Post, 2009; Sachs, 2004).

The connection between what the educational psychologists know and what these theorists link to curriculum, behavior, and culture in urban settings are a necessity for preservice teachers. For the purpose of this paper, these identified characteristics can be defined as the special needs that must be addressed when working with these diverse students. This paper is twofold: (a) to review the work of several educational psychologists in the context of their theories and their importance to preservice teachers as they work with the special needs of urban students, and (b) to provide professors who teach introduction to educational psychology courses with suggestions for successful preservice teachers working in the urban field. It is hoped that the insights provided in this paper will help preservice teachers in educational settings to learn, see, and to apply the ideas behind the educational psychology theories to the urban classroom. In order to accomplish the objectives, the paper will focus on (a) the need for a clear understanding of educational psychology theorists who have set the framework and the foundation for preservice teachers and how their students should be taught, (b) the background of 21st century urban settings in which preservice teachers are working, and (c) how the merger of theory and pedagogy can come together authentically in this urban setting to aid in the success of future preservice teachers.

Theoretical Framework That Supports the Merger

Researchers such as Burbank, Ramirez, and Bates (2012) believed that educational psychology is a waste of time in teacher preparation programs, and educational psychologists feel that their pedagogy is not being carried forward into the methods and the coursework for students to use accurately in a variety of demographic systems (Burbank et al., 2012). Perhaps if there were a shift in educational psychology theoretical discussions and how they pertain to the diverse 21st century classroom, both theorists and the public would reconsider their positions about educational psychology.

The infusion and diversity recently have become embedded in the policy and leadership of current teacher preparation programs. Many of these programs are held to new accrediting standards required by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2015). The first standard requirements include the following language: "Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice" (CAEP, 2015, p. 15). These P-12 students have been specifically defined as "children or youth attending P-12 school including, but not limited to, students with disabilities or exceptionalities, students who are gifted, and students who represent diversity based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, language, religion, sexual identification, and/or geographic origin" (CAEP, 2015), p. 2).

The authors argue that not only multicultural education studies are needed but also preservice students need to have a strong theoretical and praxis background of the theorists who shaped educational psychology in order to meet these standards. Coupled with this need is the need for relevant teaching of the major theorists in educational psychology and their connection to how their work will provide a successful framework from which preservice teachers can draw their references. Comber and Simpson (2001) stated that "student success in school hinges in part on the teacher's views of children's language, race, gender, and socioeconomic status" (p. 1). If teachers assume deficiencies from students' cultures and languages, they often attempt to fix students because they see them as problems and focus on that goal rather than on the curriculum, society, or school policies that can lead to success in schools (Burbank et al., 2012).

This philosophy of seeing students' language and culture as inadequate deflates the public argument and reinforces the need for preservice teachers to have solid knowledge of the framework of educational theorists from which many teach. It is time to merge what knowledge preservice teachers should have about Bronfenbrenner (1979), Clark and Clark (1939), Dewey (1956), Erikson (1950), Kohlberg (1968), Piaget (1954), and Vygotsky (1978) with how children learn, adapt, and cope with transitions in the urban environment.

Literature Review on Educational Psychologists

According to Santrock (2011), educational psychology is "the branch of psychology that specializes in understanding teaching and learning in educational settings" (p. 2). Zambo (2007) argued that "courses in educational psychology are the backbone of teacher education, a view that educators have recognized for a long time" (p. 1). Zambo (2007) also stated, "In 1912, William James proclaimed that psychology and pedagogy were unquestionably intertwined and equally important foundations of effective practice" (p. 1). The implication was that teacher education courses should have a strong foundation in educational psychology combined with effective field experience. Educational psychology can be further explained as a discipline that concentrates on human learning and human development, as it relates to instructional practices (Ormrod, 2012). Although there are several educational psychology theorists whose work is very important to the teaching of educational psychology, the authors have chosen to focus on seven theorists as they relate to the successful teaching of preservice teachers in urban settings.

When discussing founding educational psychologists, 20th century educator Dewey (1956) must be addressed, especially for his great international following on his reforms in child education. Dewey's ideologies can be directly linked to the urban environment because the indication for educational reform did not come from any abstract thoughts or ideas. The ideologies were derived from the realities of the industrial revolution and the influx of individuals and immigrants seeking employment who descended upon the urban areas. Their new situation forced both parents and children to seek ways of satisfying the new demands thrust upon them. The child brought up in a housing project or an apartment in crowded city streets has significantly different needs

and faces more complex and complicated problems than the child brought up on a family farm. The families who migrated from foreign countries to American cities since the end of World War II can attest to this (Samuel & Suh, 2012).

Dewey (1956) laid out several worthwhile reforms as to the purpose of education during World War II. He established that schools would be freely available to all from kindergarten to college. Dewey also believed that education should give every child the chance to grow up spontaneously, harmoniously. Each stage of child development has its own dominant needs, problems, modes of behavior, and reasoning. These special traits require their own methods of teaching and learning which have to provide the basis for the educational curriculum. More important, the child learns best through direct personal experience (Dewey, 1956).

Known for his advocacy of democracy, Dewey (1956) considered two fundamental elements, schools and civil society. Each of these reforms he established and believed in. Dewey is considered the father of the progressive education movement. He continually argued that education and learning are social and interactive processes. Thus, Dewey explained, the school itself is a social institution through which social reform can, and should, take place. In addition, Dewey believed that students thrived in an environment where they were allowed to experience and to interact with the curriculum. Furthermore, he maintained that all students should have the opportunity to take part in their own learning. Dewey believed that individuals learned through their own interactions with their environment.

Students taking part in their own learning were particularly important when a classroom was filled with diverse children, whether it be social economic or cultural status. With this in mind, urban preservice teachers can create a curriculum that needs to be written and focused toward the environment and the experience in which their students live in order for complete assimilation and accommodation to take place (Samuel & Suh, 2012).

Vygotsky's (1978) theory, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), occurs when new skills can be mastered if they fall within the child's zone. Horsch, Chen, and Wagner (2002) explained this by further identifying that there are "external and internal factors that make up the context for implementation" (p. 383). If educators do not identify these factors when targeting a child's ZPD, then the expectation of change will be partial (Santrock, 2011). In the urban environment, the external factors, such as family life, socioeconomic status, and stressors outside the classroom, need to be taken into consideration before academics can be introduced. Teachers in these urban schools need to establish safe environments that eliminate these external factors within the classroom walls before they can anticipate any learning to occur.

Piaget (1954) stressed the contributions of culture, social interaction, and the historical dimension of mental development. On the other hand, he was more interested in the biological and structural side of child development. A preservice teacher who understands his or her belief system, plus Piaget's (1954) four stages of cognitive development, sensiomotor development, preoperational development, formal operational development, and concrete operational development, will bring knowledge as to how students learn, materials to bring to each stage, learning disabilities, parent and teacher social interaction, and how children develop mentally. Additionally, because Piaget's theory (1954) of cognitive development proposed that humans should not be given information which they immediately understand and use, he proposed the idea that humans should be given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge (Piaget, 1954). Preservice education teachers who are placed in urban areas should both recognize and celebrate the knowledge each child brings to the table.

Piaget (1954) also viewed social interaction as one of the primary factors in cognitive development. In other words, Piaget (1954) believed that how children interacted with others would influence how they grew mentally. These interactions are unique in the urban environment because they involve trust and safety. The students have to trust that the negative external influences are not going to impact them when engaging with their teachers or peers. The school environment needs to be a place where they feel safe to make mistakes and to cognitively grow without consequences that may mirror their difficult home lives (Woolfolk, 2010).

Kohlberg (1968), another educational psychologist, began his theory with the assumption that humans are intrinsically motivated to explore and to become competent at functioning in their environments. In social development, people are led to imitate role models perceived as competent and to look to them for validation (Kohlberg, 1968). With this in mind,

preservice teachers occupy a very important role in an urban classroom. Students not only depend on the preservice teachers for issues of right or wrong but also parents look toward them for an understanding of society. For instance, the lack of resources in urban schools and ethical principles both inside and outside the classroom should be of concern to preservice teachers. Santrock (2011) proposed, "First, it is important to establish a community of mutual respect and warmth with a fair and consistent application of the rules. Without that kind of community, all of your attempts to create a moral climate will be undermined" (p. 101).

Erikson (1950) and his specific psychosocial theory emphasized "the emergence of self, the search for identity, the individual's relationship with others, and the role of culture throughout life" (p. 75). Erikson saw development as stages which were interdependent upon each other. Furthermore, preservice teachers who were given the opportunity to teach in urban areas could help students to grow and to develop along Erikson's developmental guidelines, according to his theory. Stages 3 and 4 of Erikson's theory, which represented initiative versus guilt and industry versus inferiority, respectively, represented the standard for children between the ages of 3 through 12. Preservice teachers who have learned this theory could apply the developmental milestones into their lesson plans and curriculum. Due to the financial and environmental disadvantages experienced by urban families, many children come into the classroom developmentally lagging, as per Erikson's stages. Therefore, using Erikson as a steppingstone for knowledge could increase the learning of preservice teachers and students.

Clark and Clark's (1939) impact on urban education cannot be emphasized enough for preservice teachers. According to the historical background of Clark and Clark's theory, which was referred to as the doll experiment, separate but equal schools were harmful to both Black and White children. They conducted research showing African American children's self-conceptions and identity (Clark & Clark, 1939). They argued that segregation was harmful to both Black and White students. In many urban settings, preservice teachers and children alike come together with different beliefs about each other.

It is important that preservice teachers have a solid foundation in Clark and Clark's work. Their contributions to the beliefs of African American children's upbringing demonstrate successful and unsuccessful events in the classroom and in society. Preservice teachers should understand Clark and Clark's philosophy of the Black child's concept of internalized racism that many may bring to the classroom. According to Clark and Clark's internalized racism theory, Black children buy into their oppression due to what they perceive as depicted as good or bad in society.

Clark and Clark (1939) were very specific with their internalized racism theory compared with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory, who provided a broad view of how to look at the socioemotional development of children through the ecological, multisystem model. Bronfenbrenner argued that development was very much a part of the environment through the ecological model he created. One can assume that preservice teachers are given the opportunity to actually embrace and to study Bronfenbrenner's theory as a part of their educational knowledge. They can prepare and execute their curriculum to coincide with a good teacher-parent relationship. Preservice teachers must understand the relationships (systems) in the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Bronfenbrenner maintained that children grow up as members of specific ethnic, religious, and economic communities, and are mirrored by their neighborhoods and schools. These contexts impact social and cognitive growth, which become the building blocks of growth, learning, and development. In effect, then, it is Bronfenbrenner's theory, combined with curriculum, which enhances the urban students' lives that should be the framework of success.

Background of 21st Century Urban Settings

Many preservice teachers, especially those who are coming from a social class environment that does not resemble or favor that of the urban classroom may find it very difficult to cope and to teach in urban areas. Chester and Beaudin (1996) contended that teaching in an urban environment may seem daunting and that a greater understanding can come with knowing some of the characteristics that urban students have which rural or suburban students may not share. These characteristics may be unfamiliar to the first-time urban teacher. Preservice teachers should not look at these characteristics as obstacles to overcome, but should be understood before they enter the urban classroom (Chester & Beaudin, 1996).

Additionally, the changing demographics of the 21st century have created a shift in terms of the diversity in immigrants who are coming to America. Many of these immigrants (people of color) and the change in the economic living conditions of many residents have put more people in urban settings compared with the past 30 years. The implication here is that the knowledge of demographics and ethnicity should be recognized when preservice teachers are being prepared to teach in urban environments. Many immigrants often settle into urban areas due to less expensive housing, accessibility to mass transit, possible unskilled employment opportunities, and social marginalization, self or societally imposed. In the 21st century, urban students are more likely to be of diverse Hispanic backgrounds or nationalities associated with darker skin color (Kopetz, Lease, & Warren-Kring, 2006).

The likelihood of language barriers or concerns also occurs more often in urban households. If this is the case, many of these students will fall further behind in reading, and their vocabularies will be diminished compared with those of students where there are no household language barriers and where education is paramount. The language situation is often coupled with the strong probability that either the parents or the primary caregiver did not graduate from high school, much less college. In many cases, these factors contribute to the urban student not graduating from high school as well, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Kopetz et al., 2006).

Kopetz et al. (2006) maintained that the fabric of society in the United States has undergone significant changes following the first 200 years since its birth as a nation when Western European heritage and English-speaking majority populations were dominant. Poverty, as in rural communities, is quite prevalent in urban settings. Many urban students are born poor and often remain so throughout the education process. Food stamps and other social welfare programs aid in providing what nutrition is received in the home. In many cases, subsidized lunches are often the only balanced meal many urban students receive daily. This lack of food often leads to health issues and high absenteeism. These health concerns cannot be addressed due to their parents or caregivers having little or no health insurance (Kopetz et al., 2006)

High absenteeism coupled with language obstacles can, and often do, lead to urban students falling considerably behind their fellow students in their classwork. Many of these students will find it necessary to repeat grades. Students never catch up, even though they have repeated the grade. It is believed that less-than-adequate living conditions, lack of attention from home, and scarce community support critically affect students' attitudes, behaviors, and potential to progress academically and into secure employment (Kopetz et al., 2006).

How to Create This Merger

The worldviews of the urban students and the teachers who instruct them often greatly differ. Teachers occasionally enter the urban educational setting with an agenda. A save the world syndrome may fuel the desire to help the underprivileged. This is based on the notion that inner-city students deserve a quality education. Who better to deliver that than an enlightened teacher from a nurturing and educated environment? However, preservice teachers are often unaware of the difficulties they may encounter being new to the urban classroom (Stairs, 2010).

As a fundamental understanding of the educational psychology theories is imperative to the success of preservice teachers, it is the role of the educational psychology professor to re-bridge the gap between theory and action. Many preservice teachers end up leaving the field early. Ingersoll (2001) conducted a longitudinal study, reporting that over 41% of new teachers will leave the field within the first five years. By closing this gap, preservice teachers will understand that theorists' work lays the foundation for how they will teach and function in their classrooms, helping for them to feel more prepared. This paper proposes eight principles in which educational psychology professors can connect educational psychology theory and practice for preservice teachers to prepare them to teach in an urban setting. Principles of learning, according to Ormrod (2012), identify certain factors that influence learning.

Principle 1: Teaching Through a Historical Perspective

Preservice teachers must understand from a historical perspective the diversity of the framework of the founders of educational psychology. More importantly, there is a need for preservice teachers to understand how history shaped the ideology of the theorists whom they are studying. Preservice teachers should enter their teaching profession with a strong

sense of sociopolitical history in America and a sense of how to impart justice, equality, and fairness through innovative curriculum to their students. The idea of looking at their classroom through a diverse perspective and with different lenses should afford the new preservice teachers with the tools they need to foster critical thinking and higher personal goals for their students. It is important that this knowledge is introduced to preservice teachers by their professors before they enter the classrooms in educational psychology courses. Understanding theories of learning, motivation, and child development and their applicability can "help teachers make sound instructional decisions that lead to achievement of the standards for learning set forth by states and districts in response to the No Child Left Behind Act" (Zambo, 2007, p.1).

Dewey (1956) argued for the importance of meaningful projects in learning. Following Dewey's instructions on the importance of learning by doing, professors can place preservice teachers in groups at the start of the semester to examine the historical background of each theorist and to answer questions. Students enhance their discussions by applying their research on the historical background of educational psychology theorists to American society. More importantly, students can discuss the importance to themselves as preservice teachers. As different theorists are researched every 2 weeks, preservice teachers take part in constructivist learning. Having preservice teachers study the conditions on which the theories were created and the social implications, preservice teachers will be able to make connections when they teach. The ultimate importance of this exercise is to have the preservice teachers make the correlation with the work of educational theorists and their own teaching practices.

Principle 2: Developing a Community of Learning

What plagues urban students and their families on a personal level can be mirrored in urban schools. Resources are scarce and, in some cases, nonexistent. Even in suburban settings, teachers frequently have out-of-pocket expenses to provide daily essentials for their students. In an urban setting, this may mean basic everyday classroom necessities (Kopetz et al., 2006). Overcrowded living conditions may transfer to overcrowded classrooms. This not only leads to tension in the household that is internalized and brought to school, but is further exacerbated by the tension which can exist in an overcrowded classroom.

If the instructor is unprepared to meet this challenge, it can cause friction between the student and the teacher, the teacher and the caregivers, and can compound the already prevailing angst between caregivers and students. School administrators rely on the teacher to recognize and to defuse issues such as these (Kopetz et al., 2006). In an attempt to address the development of a community of learners, educational psychology professors can use Dewey's (1956) theory of hands-on learning when educating preservice teachers.

Dewey (1956) focused on educative experiences in the classroom. He felt that academic materials could be transferred to students if they were provided instruction that was appealing and for educative purposes. This instruction lies in the hands-on, real-world experiences that students can have within the classroom. Dewey also felt that there needed to be connections to this material, especially between the prior experiences of the children and those developed by their educators. As discussed, this can be more challenging in the urban environment because the children do not come to the classroom with an abundance of prior academic experiences and background knowledge. The teacher needs to create these experiences for the children before this transference through educative experiences can begin. The obvious way to accomplish this is through field trips. Unfortunately, resources and funding are not always available for students to attend a variety of trips. Therefore, the teacher must bring the field trip to the classroom. This can be accomplished in two ways: demonstrations and virtual interaction. The teacher can bring real-world materials into his or her classroom for the students to experience and to manipulate, even for the first time. The alternative is to offer the students virtual field trips through a variety of website and technology simulations. Both offer the children engagement and experiences that lead to critical thinking and the learning process.

A difficult component of these encounters, however, initially may be engaging these students in these learning opportunities. There needs to be a connection and a purpose that is focused on the students' needs and interests with an underlying teacher purpose. This does not mean that the classroom becomes completely child-centered and depleted of an academic focus. This follows Dewey's (1956) philosophy that child-centered pedagogy should not be construed as completely free of content matter. It is the role of the educator to build that important subject matter into the educative experiences, by designing powerful

classroom learning experiences. The students are therefore engaged in the learning process and are gaining essential knowledge of the discipline they are studying. In other words, there needs to be buy-in from the students in order for academic progress to occur.

Vygotsky (1978) also spoke of the need for shared positive interaction between teacher and student. Through scaffolding there needs to be a relationship built through the teacher and student, creating a positive connection. Smagorinsky (2013) offered an excellent example of these connections. He explained that if a student comes to school and is constantly corrected on the use of poor English, then he or she will begin to link speaking English with feelings of shame and embarrassment. This student then shuts down academically when any English speaking is required, causing a deficiency in cognitive levels. This can then be interpreted by others as a lack of intelligence. Inevitably, this behavior will cause the students' peers to treat them differently. It is up to the preservice teachers in urban settings to be able to manifest these positive activities and not to be fearful and threatened by the initial negative behavior of these students. A new preservice teacher who has this kind of knowledge as a basis for his or her teaching experience will be an asset in an urban environment. It can be argued that preservice teachers whose educational backgrounds are centered on the teachings of educational psychologists are more prepared with clearer insights as to how to tie in the knowledge about the theorists and his or her relationships to urban settings. These teachers produce effective classrooms, successful students, and have a better relationship with parents and the community. They are better able "to understand the complexity of educational issues and recognize that no one single curriculum or new theory has the answer for all their students' needs" (Zambo, 2007, p.1).

According to Smagorinsky (2013), the second-language learner cannot thrive in a negative environment because he or she feels shame, embarrassment, and has been categorized by his or her peers and teachers as inferior in the cognitive arena. His or her social interactions are clearly negative and, therefore, so is his or her cognitive development. It is essential that the preservice teacher who is placed in this environment and who brings Piaget's (1954) theory to the top of his or her study should break these barriers and infuse the stage of learning, the culture, and the variety of language into the urban classroom.

This goes beyond having a designated month for different nationalities but, rather, including the culture of the students into the classroom on a daily basis. One way to accomplish this is through language swapping, an approach one of the authors used in the classroom. Each week the students learned key phrases from another language spoken in the classroom, such as "How are you?" or "Sit down please." The English speakers used the new language for those phrases every time they needed to, and the second-language learners used the English translation when it was their time to speak. Now there is a transfer of languages between the students, breaking down the feeling of shame and embarrassment. The English speakers will struggle with the new language as much as the second-language learner does with English. Now the teacher has created an environment of positive social interactions supported by Piaget (2000), which enhances cognitive development.

According to Kohlberg (1968), moral development primarily involves more reasoning, and it occurs in stages. Preservice teachers in an urban environment will need to put away their basic assumptions about what urban means to them. Curriculum in any learning environment should be filled with mutual respect and caring for one another. If the preservice teacher does not learn how to create and maintain a class culture of respect and a safe environment, he or she will not be able to educate the children. There needs to be an established sense of ownership for the classroom, regardless of what occurs. The children need to be able to trust the stability of their teacher and will not do so if they believe that every behavior issue or poor academic performance will make him or her leave the classroom.

Principle 3: Teaching Issues of Race, Class, Gender, and Immigration

Individuals are shaped by their environment (race, class, and gender), exclusion, and violence. Through immigration policies and segregation laws, the diversity of populations is spaced out, having an effect within the demographics in the classroom. Advocates of multicultural education argued that the only way to effectively prepare teachers to teach across in different environments was to expose them to a curriculum that focused on the history of race and class oppression in the United States and that forced the students to recognize and to unlearn their biases. Lee (1995), from Brooklyn, argued that "such an approach is essential because it provides teachers, students and parents with

the tools needed to combat racism and ethnic discrimination and to find ways to build a society that includes all people on equal footing" (p.8).

It is important for students to understand that the framers, or the creators of educational psychology, were not only White males (like educational psychologists Dewey, Thorndike, and James) but also were minorities whose work in educational psychology was very relevant to the discipline, however were under recognized (Santrock, 2011). For example, the recognition of Clark and Clark, two African American educational psychologists, is given two lines in the Santrock (2011) text. The same goes for Sanchez and Hollingworth (Santrock, 2011). Individuals who are kept out of mainstream literature leave students with an assumption that the discipline was only founded by white males. Hence, their work, the significance of their studies, and the relevance of their work to present day are not being adequately taught to preservice teachers (Santrock, 2011).

Professors who prepare student teachers to teach in a diverse classroom should be aware of historical educational psychology leaders who were not White males, thereby preparing their preservice teachers with important knowledge, concepts, and a body of work that has been generated and applicable to their presence in the classroom. Professors who subtly convey to preservice students that minority contributions to educational psychology are minimal can lead to preservice teachers thinking that minority researchers' work is not relevant to their field of study. Moreover, if professors in education prepare student teachers to teach in diverse communities, yet the student teachers have no connection to the theoretical work of these psychologists, the professors are setting up preservice teachers for failure. A lack of knowledge of the ideology of minority theorists, and their relevance to their location, prompt many to walk away from the profession after a few years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2001).

Many preservice teachers begin to look at issues of race, class, and gender in the context of educational psychology (Santrock, 2011). Educational psychology theorists can help with many race, class, and gender issues in the classroom. How does one deal with gifted students in the classroom? How do preservice teachers accommodate gifted students if they have no frame of reference? Hollingworth's (1926) work is worthwhile for the authors' students to understand the curriculum for gifted students and their environment. Clark and

Clark (1939) encourages preservice teachers to question, how do I, as a preservice teacher, begin to understand "internalized racism" and, at the same time, incorporate these issues of gender and race for students? How do I teach inclusiveness, social justice, and multicultural education from the works of these individuals? Sanchez (1951) helps preservice teachers question, if I have Hispanic students who are monolingual, how do I prepare them for the state tests? How do I prepare them to accommodate/assimilate and function in society?

Principle 4: Being Aware of Students' Móres, Cultural Norms, and Traditions

Another such concern is unfamiliarity with student cultural norms, móres, and traditions for which teachers new to urban schools are ill-prepared. With such a diverse racial and ethnic convergence present in the classroom, urban teachers need much more than a working knowledge of each ethnic group or race in order to be understanding of each of their students' needs concerning these issues. Teachers will need to incorporate cultural compatible communication patterns into their teaching repertoires while not losing sight of what learning needs are necessary for students to successfully move forward in the education system (Kopetz et al., 2006). In order to do this, professors can encourage preservice teachers to begin to connect the lessons taught within educational psychology with their other classes, such as multicultural education, educational history, and TESOL education. Within the last 2 weeks of their own lessons, students are in a diverse preschool or elementary school in order to tie in theory and practice. Within essay form, preservice teachers are to write an essay on the diversity of the classroom, through the lens of multicultural education, socioeconomic status, and disabilities. Most importantly, preservice teachers must be able to express their understanding of connections associated with race, class, and gender with educational psychology theories.

Principle 5: Making a Connection to Theorists with How to Teach and Who to Teach

Students must understand and must make the connections from the theorists' work to the way they create their lesson plans, how they teach, and who they teach. This can be accomplished by marrying subject knowledge with cultural knowledge to bridge the gap between developmental stagnation and learning liabilities. The current teacher education programs are

preparing students for a classroom environment that no longer exists, particularly in the urban setting (Kopetz et al., 2006).

Teacher preparation programs all consist of strong educational pedagogy and theory. It is essential that with the new diversified classrooms, these programs are tweaked so that teacher candidates become graduates capable of teaching in these differing environments. This is impossible if the topics that are taught are not properly connected across the placements. Teacher candidates should be required to take the theory and the pedagogy through their assignments and apply them into the varied classrooms.   This can be accomplished through fieldwork or practicum hours as long as they are placed in varying socioeconomic schools.

Teachers in these types of classrooms also need to be able to observe and to identify the skills that are lacking. Instead of getting frustrated, they should incorporate the skills that are lacking into their curriculum. Teachers and preservice teachers need to be flexible. In this stage, preservice teachers must help students in urban areas to make the transition from pre-elementary to their now elementary schools so that they may develop lifetime skills of perseverance, responsibility, and a skill set to help them carve out a sense of their identity. "In the transition to middle school, students confront an increased focus on grades and performance as well as competition on all fronts—academic, social and athletic" (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 78). This task might seem daunting for the preservice teacher to accomplish; however, being grounded in Erikson's (1950) theory will facilitate a smoother experience for both the preservice teacher and the student.

Principle 6: Teaching the Importance of Development in Knowledge, Curriculum, and Levels of Understanding

Students and teachers need to understand that development is important to the knowledge, curriculum, and levels of their students' learning. Preservice teachers need to be cautious of misconceptions when creating this curriculum.   For example, one common assumption is that students in the urban environment lack prior knowledge and experiences. This may have some truth, but they do have experiences and knowledge that need to be encouraged and shared in the classroom. Preservice teachers need to eliminate these assumptions and to

build on students' knowledge rather than to dismiss it. They need to create lessons that include the experiences these students do have and connect them to the new knowledge so that cognitive bridges begin to be built.

Preservice teachers also need to be aware of their students as children before they can design curriculum. There are often external factors that impact the students and how they learn. These external factors relate to Vygotsky's (1978) discussion of the home and school connections. Accordingly, Vygotsky's (1978) learning is done in a social setting. In other words, if there are problems students experience at home, they can be transferred into the experiences in the everyday classroom. "Dramatic tensions are also present within the individual, suggesting that the development of personality is a consequence of the personal and social dramatic conflicts a person experiences in everyday life" (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 195). Educators who teach in the urban environment must be aware of the life that surrounds their students in order to authentically block these stressors from entering their classrooms. It could be something as simple as having the students privately write down on a piece of paper the stressors that they are experiencing at home on a piece of paper and leave the paper in a box outside the classroom door.   This dramatic physical action demonstrates that these issues cannot enter a safe classroom environment and impact their learning. "From a Vygotskian perspective, emotions are inseparable from thinking" (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 194). The external stressors that some children from urban settings undergo can impact their thinking. If they are stressing over socioeconomics and instability in their home lives, they will struggle with thinking in the classroom, leading to poor performance. "How we think and how we feel cannot be separated" (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 195).

Principle 7: Teaching the Significance of Proper Feedback

Preservice teachers need to understand that immediate feedback and relevant feedback are the basis for student success. According to Bandura (1977), when feedback highlights positive accomplishments, rather than negative remarks, the self-confidence of students and analytical thinking are enhanced. The author recommends frequently asking questions during class, acting as a recap for the lesson that is being taught. An example of what can be done, is to periodically stop the lesson and ask students to summarize what has

been taught, particularly students whom seem lost, helping guide students attention back to where it should be (Lambert, Cartledge, Heward and Lo, 2006; Munro and Stephenson, 2009). An activity that the author encourages her preservice teachers to do is to write an analytical paper. Feedback is provided in a timely manner. The feedback is based on grammar, critical thinking, and the purpose of writing the essay. Suggestions for quality papers are given. Students are allowed to turn in papers following their suggestions for a second reading. By taking time to speak with each student on an individual basis provides each student with a greater understanding of the goals of educational psychology in terms of lesson plan writing, seeing their connection to the theorists, and seeing the theorists' connection to their future careers.

Principle 8: Developing Critical Thinking Skills

 "Critical thinking is a socio-cultural practice, not a discrete skill. To think critically is to engage in dialogue, to argue, to agree, to test limits, and to stretch boundaries" (Lyutykh, 2009, p. 384). The author engages students in dialogue through group presentations, reading from the text, centering questions in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy from rope memorization to critical thinking. Most importantly, the author allows the preservice teachers to teach a chapter within their own educational psychology class. The preservice teachers are able to make a deeper connection through teaching their lessons in preparation for urban environments as they critically engage within lesson preparation and other preservice teachers engage through critical thinking questions. Preservice teachers are encouraged to use several sources for presentation, as "students who learned with multiple texts instead of traditional textbooks actually learned more history content" (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 294). In order to help preservice teachers think on a deeper level, the author has them connect text with other technological devices in order for them to view the material in new ways:

Critical thinking is at the heart of effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It enables us to link together mastery of content with such diverse goals as self-esteem, self-discipline, multicultural education, effective cooperative learning, and problem solving. It enables all instructors and administrators to raise the level of their own teaching and thinking" (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 293).

Methodology

As a professor who teaches undergraduate courses in educational psychology, one of the authors has used theory and praxis in order for students to connect what they learn in class to practical application. Many of these students who take the class are early childhood, elementary, and high school preservice teachers; most have registered at the university during their junior year. Through the entire semester, the students do PowerPoint presentations on several educational psychology theorists whose work and philosophies have shaped teaching and learning. For example, in studying Piaget's (1954) stages of cognitive development in a group study situation, the students are provided with scenarios and through critical thinking and discussion, they develop a classroom setting, curriculum, and parent-to-parent conferences for each stage. They also look at what learning accommodations are needed to fit each scenario depending on the developmental stage of the child according to Piaget (1954). Each educational psychology theorist is treated in the same fashion. Therefore, throughout the semester, the students would do approximately 15 different scenarios. Six weeks before the semester is over, each student must visit an urban classroom and observe for an hour or more the setting of the school, the teachers of the school, the diversity of the classroom, and, more importantly, present an in-depth written observation of what they observed in the classroom. Copious notes must be taken by the students regarding the classroom setting, teachers' curriculum, and observable childhood development of the children. The preservice teachers then proceed to write a paper on their observations and correlate their findings by putting what they observed in the context of at least five educational psychological theories. The connection of both weeks of learning about the theorists and the writing of their critical analyses of the observation must be done in the context of the theorists who were discussed in their learning through the semester.

Teacher preparation programs can help by increasing the field placement component within the urban setting. This field placement cannot be "a standalone requirement, but structured around those key education courses, providing them with the preparation needed to succeed in urban contexts" (Hampton, Peng, & Ann, 2007, p. 271). Preservice teachers need a balance between the educational psychology theories that exist and how these theories are deliberately connected to the urban classrooms they are entering. One of the most

interesting themes that emerged was from Mason's (1999) study of preservice students during an 8-week urban placement before student teaching was the positive connections the students gained when the field and the university were interconnected.

Conclusions

By connecting their knowledge of educational psychology, pedagogy, and culture in the appropriate settings, the barriers between stereotypical preservice candidates and the preconceived notions of the urban environment begin to break down. The best way to accomplish this is through positive experiences. "We must help preservice teachers to see these diversities not just as problems but as assets" (Hampton et al., 2007, p. 87). When the negative stereotypes about the urban environment are removed, preservice teachers are able to see the positive impact they can make. "The quality of the interaction that takes place in the field experience can influence the commitment of these teachers to urban schools after graduation" (Olmedo, 1997, p. 245). These preservice students alter their perspectives and realize they want to stay in the urban environment to truly impact the lives of their students. If the next level can occur, preservice teachers will begin to realize that the educational theories they have learned in the college classroom can be applied in the field. They will be able to see firsthand how to set up lesson plans, how to deal with behavioral issues and, more important, create positive relationships with their students all through the connection of the educational psychology theorists they have studied.

Future Implications

The authors have had extensive student forums and discussions about the need for educational psychology as it relates to teacher preparation. Many students valued the course but felt there were no real connections between their educational psychology course and the practical application to their student-teacher experience. Many felt that this course was often taken too early in the program and that by the time they were in practicum and fieldwork settings, they had trouble recalling, connecting, and applying what they had previously learned to what they were experiencing as a preservice teacher. This is also being identified on professional state exams these students are taking. Passing scores are at 60%, with many students struggling with the theorists and practical connections.

With the knowledge of accreditation standards in place for teacher preparation programs, the authors are aware for the need to merge these courses in order to properly prepare their preserve students to work with their special and diverse students in the 21st century classroom. The authors believe that the placement of this course in the program needs to be altered, and the relationship between the course and the practicum course need to be developed. Furthermore, the authors are educational psychologists and practicum professors who are eager to work together to develop this course and to create these deficient connections.

School leaders and administration should expose these principles to preservice teachers who are new to the urban environment and may perceive the needs of this specialized group of students as too difficult. Before these principles are attempted with preservice teachers, professors involved in practicum courses should review and make suggestions with regard to the demographics and diversity of the school in which their preservice teachers are placed.

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School Leader Preparedness for Addressing Student Mental Health

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Abstract

This article describes an exploratory mixed method convergent parallel design study conducted to examine Connecticut Educational Leadership Preparation programs for the existence of mental health content in course work and field experiences to learn the extent to which preservice school leaders are being exposed to mental health content in their leadership preparation programs for developing the competencies needed for effectively addressing the diverse mental health conditions of students.

National data indicate that about one in five youth currently experience a diagnosable and treatable emotional-behavioral problem, and in Connecticut, this represents about 150,000 children and adolescents in need of mental health care (Bracey, Arzubi, Vanderploeg, & Franks, 2013). The concept of Expanded School Mental Health (ESMH) emerged from the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health in 2003. The Commission was charted by President George Bush to examine the state of the mental health system in the United States. It was found that the nation's mental health care system was fragmented and in disarray leaving many children and adolescents not accessing mental health care. The Commission produced a report which provided Recommendation 4.2 to include and expand school mental health programs. Since that time, schools have been identified as key settings in which to promote mental health and address the mental health conditions of youth.

Education reform initiatives over recent decades require that school leaders connect leadership behaviors to students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes. School leaders hold a pivotal role in whether, and to what extent mental health promotion and prevention take root in school contexts (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003). Therefore, it is critical that preservice school leaders are adequately prepared during their preservice training to develop the competencies and skills that are essential for effectively addressing the diverse mental health conditions of students.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nationally renowned school mental health experts, and in-service Connecticut school principals to learn what leadership competencies they believe are needed for school leaders to effectively address student mental health. Responses yielded 11 suggested leadership competency content categories which served as the basis for two researcher-developed online surveys completed by Connecticut school leader preparation program course professors and preservice school leader program students rating the extent to which mental health content was included in course work and field experience.

Program course syllabi were examined for mental health content. The convergence and paralleling of the study's qualitative and quantitative results illuminates the difference between what school mental health experts

identified as essential leadership competencies for meeting the mental health needs of students, and what is comprised in Connecticut Educational Leadership preparation program curriculum and field experience. Findings from the data sources suggest there is a dearth of mental health content in program curricula, and insufficient attention to clinical internships. Connecticut educational leadership preparation programs could do better in preparing preservice school leaders for addressing the mental health needs of students.

Introduction

The prevalence of mental health problems among children and adolescents in the United States is estimated to be 20% or one in five (World Health Organization, 2014). Although the exact cause of most mental illnesses is unknown, it is clear through research that many of these conditions are caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors (The Kim Foundation, 2016). In the case of school-aged children and adolescents, mental health disorders have strong implications on their social, emotional, and academic outcomes. A review of the literature suggests that multiple studies yield significant correlational data between children with mental health disorders and decreased student achievement (Biederman et al., 2004; Fergusson & Woodward, 2002; Försterling & Binser, 2002; Rothon et al., 2009).

Accessibility to mental health care continues to be a problem for school-aged children and adolescents. According to Murphey, Vaughn, and Barry (2013), the findings from national studies suggest that most children and adolescents with mental health disorders do not seek out or receive the services they need, and that between 60% and 90% of adolescents with mental health disorders fail to receive treatment (Murphey, Vaughn, & Barry, 2013). Similarly,

Whitley (2010) asserts the overwhelming majority of children with mental disorders are not identified, lack access to treatment or supports, and thus have a lower quality of life. More specifically, of Connecticut's children and adolescents, only about 20% access the care they need, leaving approximately 125,000 Connecticut youth struggling with untreated mental health concerns (Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, 2013).

Federal initiatives including the Surgeon General's Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) on mental health of the nation, the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, and the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) helped to promote the need for school mental health services for all children and adolescents (Gallegly, 2012). The Surgeon General's Report (1999) on mental health significantly increased public awareness about mental health disorders asserting that "mental health disorders are tragic contributors to mortality, with suicide perennially representing one of the leading preventable causes of death in the United States and worldwide" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). Additionally, within the report, the U.S. Congress declared the 1990s the "Decade of the Brain" because throughout the 1990s much was learned through research in basic neuroscience, behavioral science, and genetics about the complex workings of the brain.

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act ([NCLB], 2002) was signed into law by President George W. Bush. NCLB was the most significant federal education policy initiative in a generation. The primary focus of NCLB was to promote educational success for all children. The legislation also contained opportunities to advance school-based mental health (Daly et al., 2006). NCLB contributed to expanding the field of school mental health because it authorized the Secretary of Education to award grants to local education agencies for the purposes of establishing or expanding

counseling services for school-aged children and adolescents in school settings. Concerns about the accessibility of mental health care for children and adolescents spurred President George W. Bush to establish the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health in 2003. The Commission focused on evaluating the state of the U.S. Health Care System. The Commission's final report suggested that the health care system was fragmented and in disarray (New Freedom Commission, 2003). Additionally, the report enumerated several recommendations, including a recommendation that called for policymakers to improve and expand school mental health programs (New Freedom Commission, 2003).

Simultaneously, the concept of *Expanded School Mental Health (ESMH)* emerged from the President's New Freedom Commission Report Recommendation 4.2 to include and expand school mental health programs. ESMH describes programs that deliver a range of services including prevention, assessment, treatment, and case management to youth in both general and special education, with strong collaboration between schools, families and community agencies (Center for School Mental Health Assistance, 2003). The concept of Expanded School Mental Health resulted in an increase in youth's access to mental health care. Schools began to emerge as key settings in which to promote mental health and mental health prevention, as well as to treat mental health problems. Barrett, Eber and Weist (2013) contend there were many variables that contributed to the expansion of school mental health. Among these are: the growing prevalence of mental health problems in youth, the advantages to be gained from preventing and treating issues early, the demonstrated connection between mental health and educational outcomes, and, the significant access advantages of offering mental health services in a setting where youth spend the most of their day.

Recent educational reform requires that leaders connect leadership behaviors to students' social, emotional, and academic growth, and responding to the need for comprehensive, coordinated mental health services begins with strong leadership (Skalski & Smith, 2006). For example, NCLB required that school districts assume responsibility for all students' reaching 100% student proficiency levels within twelve years on tests assessing academic content. Furthermore, NCLB required schools to close academic gaps between economically advantaged students and students who are from different economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds as well as students with disabilities (Yell, 2006).

School principals are instrumental in determining whether and to what extent mental health promotion and prevention take root in school contexts (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003). Similarly, Caparelli (2012) asserts that the implementation of school mental health interventions is dependent upon many disciplines, and a key role is that of the educational leader.

However, within the field of school mental health, educational administration is regarded as a barrier to increasing the presence of school mental health services (Weist & Paternite, 2006). The aforementioned large scale, educational reform initiatives have made it imperative for educational leaders in their pivotal role to be prepared during their preservice school leader preparation training to develop the leadership competencies and skills that are essential for effectively addressing the diverse mental health conditions of school-aged children and adolescents, ensuring the social, emotional, and academic growth of all students.

According to Morris (2002, as cited in Koller and Bertel, 2006),

…increasingly, school-based personnel are faced with students who present with

growing mental health concerns, and while the rate of mental illness in youth continues unabated in the United States, and with the contributing etiological factors many and varied, questions are raised about the training adequacy of school principals. (para. 1)

Improving the quality of life and outcomes for children and youth, especially those who are at risk for or experiencing mental health challenges, is determined strongly by the school leader's readiness to meet the realities of the mental health needs in their school.

Conceptual Framework

Over the past two decades, there has been a great deal of attention to the development of models for advancing mental health in schools, including social emotional learning, school-wide prevention systems, and more timely and effective treatment. Innovations in education and in child and adolescent mental health are growing rapidly. One such innovation is the Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health developed by Barrett, Eber, and Weist in 2009. A mechanism such as the Interconnected Systems Framework can enhance the effective implementation of mental health services in schools and has the potential to make a major contribution to improving outcomes for children (Barrett et al., 2013). The framework provides a three-tiered structure and process which builds and expands upon the Individual's with Disabilities Education Act Federal Response to Intervention and Connecticut's Scientific Research Based Intervention frameworks for education and mental health systems to interact in the most effective and efficient way and is guided by key stakeholders in the education and mental health system who have the authority to reallocate resources, change roles and functions of staff,

and change policy. What follows is a diagram of the three-tiered structure of the Interconnected Systems Framework for Expanded School Mental Health:
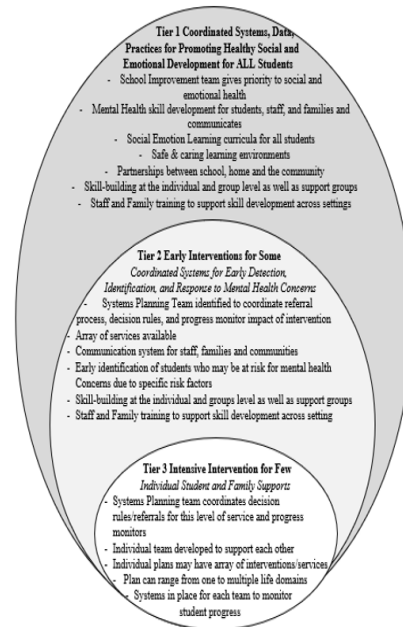

Figure 1. The Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health. Reprinted from *Data Matter: Excepts from "Development of an Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health,"* S. Barrett, L. Ebner, and M. Weist 2009. Retrieved from https://gucchd.georgetown.edu/data/issues/2010/1010_article.html. Reprinted with permission.

Schools have increasingly invested in building multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to address the academic and social behavioral needs of children and adolescents which has spurred attention to the leadership competencies of school leaders for implementing and sustaining an Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health. Today, school leadership, and more specifically, the principal, is a front burner issue in every state (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Koller and Bertel (2006) assert that with the alarming increase in the mental health needs of youth today, traditional preservice preparation training programs for school-based personnel in mental health are overwhelmingly insufficient. The systems that produce our nation's school leaders

are complex, interrelated, and governed by the states. Each state establishes licensing, certification, and re-certification requirements for school leaders and, in most places, approves the college and university programs that prepare school leaders. Many states have adopted, or adapted licensure and accreditation policies based on the standards for school leaders developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium in 1996 (revised in 2008).

The conceptual framework used for this study combines the Connecticut Common Core of Leading-Connecticut School Leadership Standards (CCL-CSLS) (Council of Chief State School Officers (2008), and the Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health. The conceptual framework illustrates the connection between the existing Connecticut leadership competencies comprised with the CCL-CSLS and those needed for school leaders to be prepared to adopt and sustain and Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health. The CCL-CSLS is comprised of six Leadership Performance Expectations: Vision, Mission and Goals; Teaching and Learning; Organizational Systems and Safety; Families and Stakeholders; Ethics and Integrity; and, the Education System.

Combining the CCL-0CSLS with the Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health into the conceptual framework used for this study enabled the researcher to explicate the essential school leader competencies needed for effectively meeting the mental health needs of school-aged children and adolescents particularly as they relate to Performance Standard 2: Teaching and Learning, Performance Standard 3: Organizational Systems and Safety, and
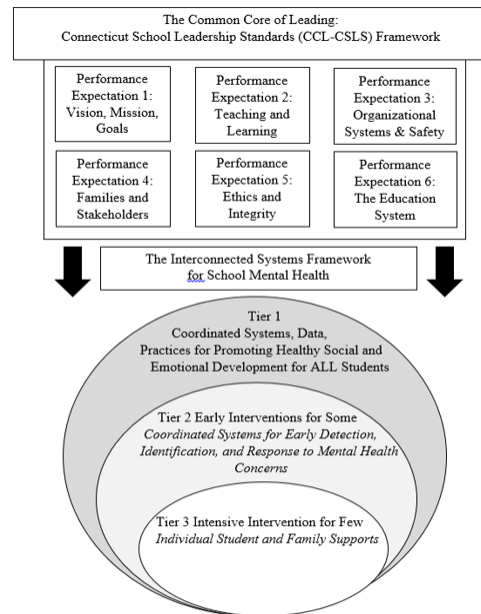
Performance Standard 4: Families and Stakeholders.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework: The School Mental Health Leadership Framework and the Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health. Adapted from *Data Matter: Excerpts from "Development of an Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health,"* S. Barrett, L. Ebner, and M. Weist 2009. Retrieved from https://gucchd.georgetown.edu/data/issues/2010/1010_article.html. Adapted with permission.

Methodology

A pragmatic, exploratory mixed method convergent parallel research design was conducive for this study. Creswell (2014) asserts that mixed methods design is useful when the quantitative or qualitative approach, each by itself, is inadequate to best understand a research problem and the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research (and its data) can provide for best understanding. The purpose of the study was to examine the leadership competencies needed for meeting the mental health conditions of students, the existence of mental health content in course work and field experiences in educational leadership preparation programs that reside in institutions of higher education located in Connecticut. The study sought to examine the extent to which preservice school leaders in

these programs were exposed and prepared through course work and field experiences to address the mental health conditions of school-aged children and adolescents, how leadership standards can be improved to better prepare preservice school leaders, and to investigate what challenges may be encountered in attempting to improve the educational leadership standards.

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. Qualitative data was collected through the researcher conducting semi-structured interviews with five nationally renowned school mental health experts and three Connecticut in-service principals at the elementary, middle and high school level to attain their perspectives about what leadership competencies they believe are needed for preparing preservice school leaders in educational leadership preparation programs for effectively meeting the mental health needs of school-aged children and adolescents. Participant responses yielded 11 suggested leadership competency content categories for expanded school mental health including psychopathology, expanded school mental health school infrastructure, system of collaboration, system of funding, system of professional development and training, system of school safety, system of data, Connecticut Scientific Research-Based Intervention Framework, principles of child and adolescent development, special education law and ethics, and psychological diagnostic tests and assessments.

Subsequently, to address how, and to what extent the 11, school mental health expert suggested leadership competency categories were addressed in preservice school leader preparation course work, the qualitative content analysis method was employed. Marshall and

Rossman (2011) assert that content analysis is a method, and analytic strategy entailing the systematic examination of forms of communication to document patterns objectively. The qualitative data collection method of content analysis was employed to examine 26 course syllabi from Connecticut school leadership preparation programs using Arafeh's (2016) Content Scope and Sequence Mapping Tool Template. Using the Arafeh template, the researcher documented frequencies of occurrence in which the syllabi included course content and field experience of the 11, suggested mental health leadership content categories. If content supporting the categories existed, the researcher documented how the preservice school leader student was exposed to the mental health content by indicating such in a "Course Item" column. The course items selections included Readings, Activities, Assignments and Assessments.

The school mental health expert and in-service principal 11 suggested mental health leadership competency categories then served as the basis of two, researcher developed quantitative Likert style online surveys which were completed by Connecticut Educational Leadership preparation program course professors, and preservice school leader program students.

Program course professors rated the extent to which their course content addressed the 11, expert suggested mental health leadership competency content categories. The survey was comprised of 14 items which included two open-ended, and twelve multiple choice items. Survey items 1 and 2 were open-ended items which required survey participants to identify the course number, and course title(s) they taught. The remaining twelve survey items required the participant to choose from three selections indicating the extent to which their course(s) addressed the 11, suggested mental

health leadership competencies. These selections included 1) strongly addressed (significant part of the course), 2) addressed in a limited way (content was covered, but not in a significant way, and 3) not addressed (content was not covered in the course).

The preservice school leader program student survey was comprised of 12 closed-ended items in which participants rated the extent to which the 11, mental health expert suggested leadership competency content categories were included in their course work and field experience through selecting one of three ratings. The three rating selections included: 1) significantly included (content was a significant part of the course in course work and/or field experience, 2) included but not significant (content was addressed, but not a significant part of the course in course work or field experience, and 3) not included (content was not included in either the course work or field experience). The researcher created both online surveys using the Survey Monkey software program.

In accordance with the mixed method convergent parallel study design, the researcher collected both forms of data at roughly the same time, and then converged and paralleled the qualitative and quantitative data in the interpretation of the overall results. Creswell (2014) provides the following diagram of the convergent parallel mixed methods design:
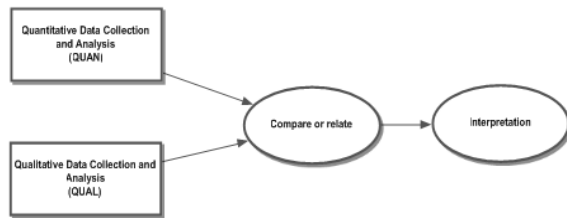

Figure 3. Model for Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design (Creswell, 2014)

Following is a more detailed diagram depicting the procedures and products comprised within this mixed method convergent parallel study design:
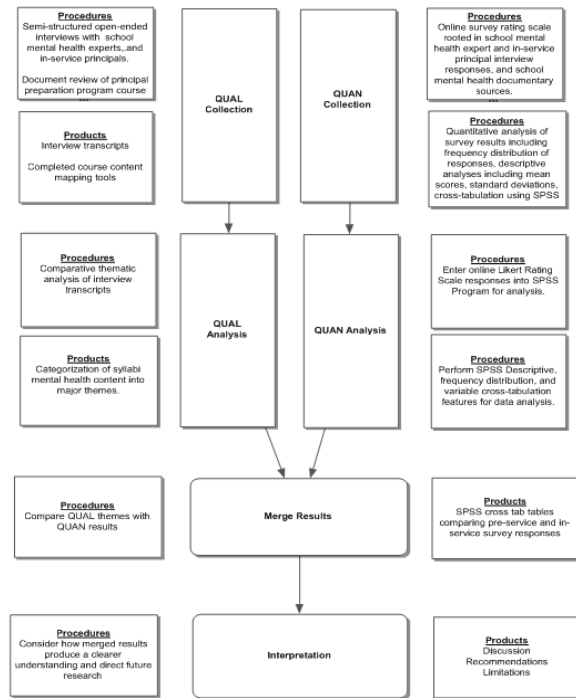

Figure 4. Model for Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Table 1

Table Summary of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Data Analysis

Research Question	Source	N	Instrumentation	Analyses
1. What competencies do pre-service school leaders need to be able to address the Connecticut SRBI Tier 3 mental health conditions of students?	School Mental Health Experts	5	Qualitative semi-structured interviews	Thematic Analysis
	In-service Principals	3	Qualitative semi-structured interviews	Thematic Analysis
	Research-based Documentary Sources	Various	Document Review	Content Analysis
2. How and to what extent are these competencies addressed in pre-service school leader preparation course work and field experiences?	Program Course Syllabi Review	26	Arafeh's (2015) Content Scope and Sequence Mapping Tool	Content Analysis
	Program Course Professors	48	Quantitative online Likert rating scale	Quantitative Analysis (SPSS)
	Pre-service school leaders (Program students)	83	Quantitative online Likert rating scale	Quantitative Analysis (SPSS) Descriptive Frequency Tables
3. How can pre-service school leader preparation programs be improved to better prepare principals to meet the CT SRBI mental health needs of students?	School Mental Health Experts	5	Qualitative semi-structured interviews	Thematic Analysis
	In-service Principals	3	Qualitative semi-structured interviews	Thematic Analysis
4. What challenges might impede the improvement of pre-service preparation programs to better prepare principals to meet the CT SRBI mental health needs of students and how might these challenges be addressed?	School Mental Health Experts	5	Qualitative semi-structured interviews	Thematic Analysis
	In-service Principals	3	Qualitative semi-structured interviews	Thematic Analysis

Inductive thematic analysis was conducted of the school mental health expert and in-service principal responses to the semi-structured interviews, which yielded eleven major suggested leadership competency content categories. The categories reflect the respondents' suggestions about what leadership competencies and skills are needed for pre-service principal students to be prepared to address the mental health needs of school-aged children and adolescents. The eleven suggested leadership competency categories derived include: Psychopathology, Expanded School Mental Health Infrastructure, System of Collaboration, System of Funding, System of Professional Development and Training, System of School Safety, System of Data, Connecticut Scientific Research-Based Intervention Framework, Principles of Child and Adolescent Development, Special Education Law and Ethics, and Psychological Tests and Assessments. What follows is a summary of the results from sources.

Study Results

Table 2

Frequency of Leadership Competency Content Categories Identified by Sources

School Mental Health Principal Expert Suggested Content Categories	Course Syllabi Content Programs N=26 Included	Course Professor Survey Responses N=48 Significantly Addressed	Pre-Service Student Survey Responses N= 83 Significantly Included
Knowledge of Psychopathology	2	0	4
Infrastructure for Expanded School Mental Health	0	0	2
Collaboration for Expanded School Mental Health	0	2	9
Funding Expanded School Mental Health	0	2	2
Professional Development for Expanded School Mental Health	0	3	9
System of School Safety for Expanded School Mental Health	0	3	4
System of Data for Expanded School Mental Health	0	3	5
Connecticut Scientific Research-Based Intervention Framework	6	7	6
Child and Adolescent Development Principles	0	0	7
Special Education Law and Ethics	8	3	15
Psychological Diagnostic Tests and Assessments	0	1	2

Psychopathology

Frequency and Percent of Program Course Professors Indicating Degree to Which They Address Leadership Competency Content Categories in Course Work

To what extent did your course include content focused on psychopathology (the study of mental health disorders) as it relates to types, prevalence, diagnostic features, causes, behaviors associated with, treatments, and effect of mental health disorders on cognition and learning?

A total of 48 course professors responded to Survey Item 3. Zero (0.00%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, four (8.33%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 44 (91.67%) selected not addressed.

Expanded School Mental Health School Infrastructure

To what extent did your course include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school infrastructure (school-level systems and practices) for supporting an Expanded School Mental Health program such as the Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health?

A total of 48 program course professors responded to Survey Item 4. Zero (0.0%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, nine (18.75%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 39 (81.25%) selected not addressed.

System of Collaboration

To what extent did your course include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school system of collaboration and channels of active communication with educators (teachers, psychologist, counselors, social workers), families, community-based mental health service providers, and other stakeholder groups to promote engagement in the Expanded School Mental Health program for the purpose of

ensuring the mental health needs of students are effectively met through team collaboration?

A total of 48 program course professors responded to Survey Item 5. Two (4.17%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, 17 (35.42%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 29 (60.42%) selected not addressed.

System of Funding

To what extent did your course include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school system of funding for school mental health, and activities that may bring and sustain resources and financial support into the Expanded School Mental Health program?

A total of 48 program course professors responded to Survey Item 6. Two (4.26%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, six (12.77%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 40 (82.97%) selected not addressed.

System of Professional Development

To what extent did your course include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school system of professional development and training for students, educators, families, and other stakeholder groups on the identification, referral, and behavior management of social emotional behavioral problems in students who present diverse developmental, cultural, ethnic, and personal backgrounds?

A total of 48 course professors responded to Survey Item 7. Three (6.25%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, 14 (29.17%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 31 (64.58%) selected not addressed.

System of School Safety

To what extent did your course include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a system of school safety that comprises a mental health crisis policy and procedures, crisis management, and debriefing for staff, students and families particularly for addressing post-traumatic stress following a critical incident?

A total of 47 program course professors responded to Survey Item 8. Three (6.38%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, nine (19.15%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 35 (74.47%) selected not addressed.

System of Data

To what extent did your course include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a system of data for continually assessing a student's response to individualized mental health interventions (CT SRBI progress monitoring), and whether ongoing services provided to students are appropriate and helping to address presenting problems?

A total of 48 course professors responded to Survey Item 9. Three (6.25%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, 14 (29.17%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 31 (64.58%) selected not addressed.

Connecticut Scientific Research-Based Intervention Framework

To what extent did your course include content focused on the Federal Response to Intervention (RTI) and Connecticut's Scientific Research-Based Intervention Frameworks, and the array of tiered interventions they comprise for effectively addressing the Tier 3 mental health needs of school-aged children and adolescents?

A total of 48 course professors responded to Survey Item 10. Seven (14.58%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, ten (20.83) selected addressed in a limited way, and 31 (64.58%) selected not addressed.

Principles of Child and Adolescent Development

To what extent did your course include content focused on the principles of child and

adolescent development in preparation for identifying irregularities in developmental behaviors of school-aged children and adolescents?

A total of 47 course professors responded to Survey Item 11. Zero (0.00%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, 11 (23.40%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 37 (76.60%) selected not addressed.

Special Education Law and Ethics

To what extent did your course include content focused on Special Education Law: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) Disability Categories, Special Education identification and referral process, Federal Response to Intervention (RTI) process, Child Find mandate, ethics and legal confidentiality in education requirements.

A total of 48 course professors responded to Survey Item 12. Three (6.25%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, 15 (31.25%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 30 (62.50%) selected not addressed.

Psychological Diagnostic Tests and Assessments

To what extent did your course include content focused on the various types of psychological diagnostic tests and assessments, and interpretation of results for developing working knowledge and language to communicate with parents and community mental health service providers?

A total of 48 course professors responded to Survey Item 13. One (2.08%) of the respondents selected strongly addressed, six (12.50%) selected addressed in a limited way, and 41 (85.42%) selected not addressed.

Frequency and Percent of Pre-service School Leader Students Indicating Degree to Which Leadership Competency Content Categories

were included in Course Work and Field Experience

Psychopathology

To what extent was psychopathology (the study of mental health disorders) as it relates to types, prevalence, diagnostic features, causes, behaviors associated with, treatments, and effect of mental health disorders on cognition and learning included in your course work and field experience?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 1. Four (4.82%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 13 (15.66%) selected included, but not significant, and 66 (79.52) selected not included.

Expanded School Mental Health Infrastructure

To what extent did your course work and/or field experience include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school infrastructure (school-level systems and practices) for supporting an Expanded School Mental Health program such as the Interconnected Systems Framework for School Mental Health?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 2. Two (2.41%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 13 (15.66%) selected included, but not significant, and 68 (81.93%) selected not included.

System of Collaboration

To what extent did your course work and/or field experience include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school system of collaboration and channels of active communication with educators (teachers, psychologists, counselors, social workers), families, community-based mental health service providers, and other

stakeholder groups to promote engagement in the Expanded School Mental health program?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 3. Nine (10.84%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 35 (42.17%) selected included, but not significant, and 39 (46.99%) selected not included.

System of Funding

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school system of funding, and activities that may bring and sustain resources and financial support into the Expanded School Mental Health program?

A total of 82 pre-service school leader students responded to Survey Item 4. Two (2.44%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 13 (15.85%) selected included, but not significant, and 67 (81.71%) selected not included.

System of Professional Development

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a school system of professional development and training for students, educators, families, and other stakeholder groups on the identification, referral, and behavior management of social emotional behavioral problems in students who present diverse developmental, cultural, ethnic, and personal backgrounds?

A total of 82 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 5. Nine (10.98%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 38 (46.34%) selected included, but not significant, and 35 (42.68%) selected not included.

System of School Safety

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a system of school safety that comprises a mental health crisis policy and procedures, crisis management, and debriefing for staff, students and families particularly for addressing post-traumatic stress following a critical incident?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader students responded to Survey Item 6. Four (4.82%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 26 (31.33%) selected included, but not significant, and 53 (63.86%) selected not included.

System of Data

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on the development, implementation, and sustainment of a system of data for continually assessing a student's response to individualized mental health interventions (CT SRBI progress monitoring), and whether ongoing services provided to students are appropriate and helping to address presenting problems?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 7. Five (6.02%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 30 (36.14%) selected included, but not significant, and 48 (57.83) selected not included.

Connecticut Scientific Research-Based Intervention Framework

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on the Federal Response to Intervention (RTI) and Connecticut's Scientific Research-Based Intervention (CT SRBI) Frameworks, and the array of tiered interventions they comprise for effectively addressing the Tier 3 mental health needs of school-aged children and adolescents?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 8.

Six (7.23%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 23 (27.71%) selected included, but not significant, and 54 (65.06%) selected not included.

Principles of Child and Adolescent Development

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on the principles of child and adolescent development in preparation for identifying irregularities in developmental behaviors of school-aged children and adolescents?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 9. Seven (8.43%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 21 (25.30) selected included, but not significant, and 55 (66.27%) selected not included.

Special Education Law and Ethics

To what extent did your course work and field experience include content focused on Special Education Law: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) Disability Categories, Special Education identification and referral process, Federal Response to Intervention (RTI) process, Child Find mandate, ethics and legal confidentiality in education requirements?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey 10. 15 (18.07%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 23 (27.71%) selected included, but not significant, and 45 (54.22%) selected not included.

Psychological Diagnostic Tests and Assessments

To what extend did your course work and field experience include content focused on the various types of psychological diagnostic tests and assessments, and interpretation of results for developing working knowledge and

language to communicate with parents and community mental health service providers?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 11. Two (2.41%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 16 (19.28%) selected included, but not significant, and 65 (78.31%) selected not included.

Overall Experience in Educational Leadership Preparation Program Course Work and Field Experience

To what extent did your overall experience in your Educational Leadership preparation program include mental health content in your course work and field experience in Expanded School Mental Health, and a clinical school-based setting?

A total of 83 pre-service school leader program students responded to Survey Item 12. Zero (0.00%) of the respondents selected significantly included, 27 (32.53%) selected included, but not significant, and 56 (67.47%) selected not included.

Frequency of Program Course Syllabi Indicating Degree of Leadership Competency Category Inclusion

Psychopathology

Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, Program B had two (2) syllabi that included psychopathology course content.

Infrastructure for Expanded School Mental Health

Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included Infrastructure for expanded school mental health course content.

Collaboration for Expanded School Mental Health

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Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included collaboration for expanded school mental health course content.

Funding Expanded School Mental Health

Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included collaboration for expanded school mental health course content.

Professional Development for Expanded School Mental Health

Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included professional development for expanded school mental health course content.

System of School Safety for Expanded School Mental Health

Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included system of school safety for expanded school mental health course content.

System of Data for Expanded School Mental Health

Of the twenty-six (26) program course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included system of data for expanded school mental health course content.

Connecticut Scientific Research-Based Intervention Framework (CT SRBI)

Of the twenty-six (26) course syllabi examined, Program A included one syllabus with CT SRBI course content, and Program B included five (5) syllabi with CT SRBI course content.

Child and Adolescent Development Principles

Of the twenty-six (26) course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included child and adolescent development principles course content.

Special Education Law and Ethics

Of the twenty-six (26) course syllabi examined, Program A included two (2) syllabi with special education law and ethics course content, and Program B included five (5) syllabi with special education law and ethics course content.

Psychological Diagnostic Tests and Assessments

Of the twenty-six (26) course syllabi examined, zero (0) programs included psychological diagnostic tests and assessments course content.

Conclusion

The results of this study, albeit limited in scope, may have revealed a significant deficit in the extent to which preservice school leaders are currently being prepared for addressing the mental health conditions of school aged children and adolescents, thereby, potentially limiting students from experiencing their greatest social, emotional and academic outcomes. Despite research findings, educational leadership preparation programs are nearly devoid of mental health course content, field experiences, or explicit direct expectations of school principals to prepare them for the realities of addressing the mental health conditions of the children and adolescents in their school. "Therefore, there is a call for a paradigm shift at the pre-service level to better prepare school administrators to confront proactively the mental health challenges of today's youth and the difficulties they face in serving those students" (Koller & Bertel, 2006, para. 1).

Several findings emerged from the semi-structured interviews conducted with school mental health experts and Connecticut in-service principals, online survey responses from Connecticut leadership preparation program

course professors, and pre-service school leaders, and the examination of program syllabi for the existence of school mental health content in course work and field experiences. The mental health expert interview responses yielded eleven suggested educational leadership competency content categories needed for pre-service leaders to be sufficiently exposed to in course work and field experience to be prepared for effectively meeting the Tier III mental health needs of K-12 students. The eleven categories then served as the basis for the researcher developed online surveys completed by Connecticut Educational Leadership Preparation Program course professors and pre-service school leader program students. The findings of the study present a discouraging picture that programs are nearly devoid of mental health content for preparing pre-service school leaders for meeting the CT SRBI Tier III mental health needs of students.

While there has been a national movement to improve the accessibility of mental health services provided to the school-aged population during recent decades, school leadership programs are nearly devoid of mental health content as evidenced in the significant discrepancy between the educational leadership competency categories suggested by nationally renowned school mental health experts who participated in this study, and what is included in Connecticut educational leadership program course work and field experience. Educational leadership preparation programs could do better in preparing pre-service school leaders for meeting the mental health conditions of school-aged children and adolescents.

However, positive change is promising because our nation appears to be moving in the right direction with the replacement of the ISLLC national standards that did not contain standards addressing school mental health, with the new PSEL 2015 national standards that include standards that address not only the academic needs of students, but also the social emotional well-being of students. The PSEL standards

may have been developed to include mental health content due to increased awareness among policymakers regarding the strong correlation between student mental health and academic achievement. Moreover, in response to the new PSEL standards, new state District and Building Level NELP Educational Leadership preparation program accreditation standards are expected to become available in January of 2018. The NELP standards will require Connecticut Educational leadership preparation programs to align their program curricula with the new accreditation standards. However, until the final NELP program accreditation standards are released in their finalized form, Connecticut, as true with other states, are in limbo during this intermediate, transition process and programs will not be required to include mental health content in their curricula for accreditation. Although, the PSEL and draft NELP standards offer promise that there is increased focus on preparing school leaders for addressing student mental health conditions, they lack specificity. It is strongly recommended that the national and state accreditation standards include content specific to the 11 mental health expert suggested leadership competency categories which include, (1) knowledge of psychopathology, (2) school infrastructure for expanded school mental health, (3) system of collaboration for expanded school mental health, (4) system of funding for expanded school mental health, (5) system of professional development for expanded school mental health, (6) system of safety for expanded school mental health, (7) system of data for expanded school mental health, (8) Connecticut SRBI Framework, (9) principles of child and adolescent development (10) knowledge of special education law and ethics, and (11) knowledge of psychological diagnostics tests. Additionally, pre-service school leaders need to be engaged in clinically rich field internship experiences that prepare them for the realities of addressing the Tier III mental health conditions of K-12 students. Including the suggested mental health content in

national, state accreditation, and university level will ensure that pre-service school leaders are better prepared for effectively addressing the mental health conditions of students enabling them to achieve their highest social, emotional and academic potential in their home schools to the greatest extent possible.

This research added to the sparse literature relevant to school leadership and school mental health. It is the hope of this researcher that policymakers at the national and state accreditation level, as well as educational leadership preparation program directors find value in this study. The findings can assist them in improving standards and university preparation program curricula through including the eleven, school mental health expert suggested school leadership competency content categories to better prepare pre-service school leaders for effectively meeting the mental health needs of school-aged children and adolescents.

Until the national PELP and NELP District and Building Level accreditation standards include sufficient attention on addressing student mental health, educational leadership preparation programs will not be required to include mental health content in their program curricula for accreditation purposes. Unfortunately, this persistent deficit is at the expense of innocent children and adolescents inflicted with mental health disorders who may continue to be deprived of the opportunity to experience their greatest social, emotional and academic growth in their home school setting. School leaders, educators, researchers, policymakers, and all others that have a stake in the lives of children and adolescents have a moral and ethical obligation to do all they can in their power to address the mental health needs of students.

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Commentary
Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

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Over the past several decades, we have witnessed a transformative shift in the way students with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities (ID), are educated. Physically, students with ID have moved from separate schools, to basements, to now learning side by side with their non-disabled peers—not just in music, gym, and art classes, but in math, science, and social studies, to name a few. The journey has been long since children with ID were found to be "educable" (thus the label "educable mentally retarded" in the 1930s), and the advances that have been made in the past 25 years have been significant. In 1990, only 33% of special education students spent most of their time in general education classes, and by 2014, this figure almost doubled (62%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Yet the full inclusion of students with disabilities has been somewhat illusory, as physical and instructional inclusion does not necessarily translate to social inclusion.

Students with ID, while physically present in the hallways, cafeterias, and now in the classrooms, still find themselves disconnected from the social fabric of their school communities. For example, in a study of over 5,000 middle school students across the country, only 1 in 10 reported having a friend with ID (Siperstein, Parker, Bardon, & Widaman, 2007). At the high school level, social interactions and friendships between students with and without ID are also limited, particularly in unstructured settings, like the cafeteria, where students have ample opportunity to interact with their peers (Jacobs, Albert, & Siperstein, 2016). Moreover, middle and high school students with disabilities are actively victimized by their peers (directly, relationally, and online) more often than students without disabilities (Rose et al., 2015), and experience more psychological distress as a result of their victimization (Hartley, Bauman, Nixon, & Davis, 2015).

Past approaches to promoting social inclusion in schools have focused on singular objectives, such as increasing disability awareness among students without ID, or expanding the social networks of individual students with ID through buddy programs. While these are important steps in promoting an inclusive school culture, the current view of social inclusion calls for a more complex, schoolwide approach (Siperstein, Summerill, Jacobs, & Stokes, 2017). As suggested by Simplican and colleagues, the successful social inclusion of students with ID involves meaningful relationships with peers without ID and full participation in all aspects of the school community (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek, & Leahy, 2015). This model is exemplified by the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program, an implementation framework that intentionally promotes interactions and participation among students with and without ID in normative school contexts.

In creating the UCS program, Special Olympics built on the success of its Unified Sports initiative, which provides opportunities for individuals with and without ID to play sports together through regular practices and competitions against other Unified teams at the local and national levels. Through the UCS program, Unified Sports are integrated into the school setting alongside other junior varsity and varsity sports offerings, fostering teamwork and equitable peer relationships among students with and without ID. In addition to Unified Sports, Unified Clubs bring students with and without ID together as members of a school club to promote inclusion in the school community by organizing or supporting Unified Sports teams and planning Whole School Engagement events. Whole School Engagement events encourage all students in the school to support and participate in the UCS program through large-scale campaigns, pep rallies, and fundraisers (Siperstein et al., 2017),

enabling Unified Sports players and Unified Club members to experience the agency and social reinforcement that comes from leading social change efforts while also shifting the school's cultural norms toward inclusion.

Importantly, the UCS program's multilayered approach to social inclusion benefits both students with and without ID and improves the culture of the school as a whole. For students without ID, the UCS program provides opportunities for meaningful social interactions with their peers with ID, which in turn leads to more positive perceptions of their school and more positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with ID in their classrooms (Siperstein et al., 2017). Furthermore, and most importantly, students with ID and their teachers report that they have more positive experiences in school and more opportunities to befriend other students when they participate in UCS activities. In the words of one student, as an athlete, she now feels like she belongs:

"[Other students] come up to me and give me high fives, and they talk to me. Sometimes they'll sit with me at lunch. It's usually some of the popular kids will talk to me since they kind of know that I'm on the Unified team. They like to talk to me about the games and stuff like that."

These subtle but significant shifts in the school's social culture are seen by teachers, too:

"In past years, oftentimes [students with ID] were just walking back to their room with their head down and just looking at their food or looking at the floor, and now they are looking up. It's a small thing, but I think that that has a lot to do with the fact that they know so many more people in the hallways."

Through the eyes of both students and teachers, UCS activities help students with ID truly connect with their peers—the ultimate outcome of successful social inclusion (Center for Social Development and Education, 2017a, 2017b).

Overall, the UCS program exemplifies the efficacy of a multitiered framework in infusing the spirit of social inclusion into the normative culture and fabric of the school. By facilitating meaningful interpersonal relationships and full participation among students with and without ID in a variety of contexts, this schoolwide approach telegraphs to the entire school community the inherent value of students with ID, and in doing so, the value of all students.

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