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Editors' Note

Full
Text

Anna Osipova and Jemma Kim, Co-Editors

“What Doesn’t Kill You, Makes You Stronger!” Alternative Certification Programs: Interns Perspectives About Mentorship

0 Full
1 Text

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Given the national shortage of special educators, many are entering the profession through alternative certification, assuming full responsibility for classrooms or caseloads before they are fully licensed as special education teachers. This qualitative study explores the support provided to beginning alternative certification teachers in a special education program. Through several sources of data, we describe the perspectives of first-year versus second-year interns about the frequency, helpfulness, and nature of support they received from their assigned mentors, other sources of support at their school sites, and their university intern program. The findings illustrate the need for universities and schools to immediately identify a school site mentor for first-year interns and the need to provide more intensive support for an initial period when the intern first assumes responsibility at a school.

Keywords: alternative certification, teacher education, mentorship, university and district partnerships

The Effects of a Video Self-Analysis Package on Pre-Service Teachers' Use of Behavior-Specific Praise

0 Full
2 Text

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This study used a single-subject, multiple baseline across participants research design to explore the effects of a multi-

component intervention on pre-service teachers' use of behavior-specific praise (BSP). The intervention consisted of explicit instruction and modeling of the skill, followed by on-going video self-analysis, self-monitoring, and performance feedback. Participants ($n=4$) were undergraduate senior teacher education students who were completing their student teaching semester. Results indicate improvements in BSP rates across all four student teachers, and participants found the intervention to be socially valid. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: classroom management, pre-service, single-subject research, teacher preparation, video analysis

Exploration of Training Needs of Paraprofessionals to Support Students with Disabilities

0 Full
3 Text

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Paraprofessionals are often hired to conduct one-on-one or small group support to students with disabilities within the K-12 school system. Existing literature illustrates a limited expectation that paraprofessionals in school districts receive training surrounding their job requirements. With the rise of students being identified for special education services and the lack of training often received by paraprofessionals, questions arise related to the training backgrounds and needs necessary for professionals to support students with disabilities in the classroom. This study sought to better understand the extent to which paraprofessionals believe they are trained to performed requisite job duties. In addition, participants identified the specific types of training they have received and would like to receive to improve their ability to support students with disabilities. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through a cross-sectional survey. Findings show that most participants reporting general understanding of working with students with disabilities, but a split response on whether these participants had this knowledge prior to employment. Also, the results of the training section of the survey demonstrated that paraprofessionals would be interested in further training related to job requirements. Participants expressed a desire for training in a variety of areas, including culturally responsive pedagogy, evidence-based practices, and inclusive education.

Keywords: paraprofessionals, training, special education

What Do You Meme? Meme Humor Comprehension in Adolescents with Language Disorder or Hearing Loss

0 Full
4 Text

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Easy access to the internet allows adolescents to share humor, such as memes, via social media. This quasi-experimental study investigated whether there was a difference in the number of memes comprehended on an assessment test among adolescents who were typically developing, adolescents who were deaf or hard of hearing, and adolescents with language disorders. It also sought to determine if the meme's picture, whether related to the text or unrelated, contributed to adolescents' comprehension. Participants were given a short reading screening and a multiple-choice test of meme comprehension. Adolescents who were typically developing outperformed adolescents who were deaf or hard of hearing or who had language disorders. Supporting pictures did not appear to aid in meme comprehension. Findings from this study suggest the need for professionals to include direct instruction of humor when working with adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have language disorders.

Keywords: deaf, humor, meme, learning disabilities, comprehension

Readability of COVID-19 Parental Guidance Documents

0 Full
5 Text

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The purpose of this study is to examine the readability levels of the state departments of education guidance documents regarding COVID-19 protocols for families of students receiving special education services. The authors searched the 50 states

and the District of Columbia's departments of education websites for their COVID-19, special education, parental guidance documents for the 2020-2021 school year. Parental guidance documents were available from 90% (46/51) of the department of education websites with 61% (31/51) of those documents specifically designed for parents of children receiving special education services. The researchers used the Flesch Reading Ease (FRES) to analyze the reading level of the 31 documents that the departments of education websites created for families of individuals receiving special education services. The FRES score was 43.05, indicating that the average reading difficulty was "difficult" with a "college reading level." The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL) average score for the reviewed documents revealed an average U.S. grade level of 12.34. Thus, documents produced during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exceeded the appropriate reading level recommended by the current research (Nagro & Stein, 2016). To improve communication and provide caregivers with the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding their children's educational need during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential for parental guidance documents to be written at lower reading levels to accommodate the general population.

Keywords: COVID-19, Parental Rights, Health Literacy, Readability