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TEACHING SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19: CURRENT CONDITIONS OF DELIVERING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES DURING DISTANCE LEARNING

Kalvin Davis

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TEACHING SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19: CURRENT
CONDITIONS OF DELIVERING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES DURING
DISTANCE LEARNING

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Special Education

by
Kalvin Davis
January 2021

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak led to restrictions, school closure, sickness, hospitalization, humanitarian crisis, and the rise of death total. With efforts from healthcare and government officials, the best reactive response was to limit personal interactions amongst large groups and to keep a certain distance to limit the spread of COVID-19. With these limitations, school environments have drastically changed to meet student's educational needs by using distance learning. Special education provides an opportunity to educate students who have specific educational, social, and behavioral needs in which they are given individualized education programs (IEPs) where principles are met for their services. As education is delivered in a different format, the focus of this research study is to better understand the current condition of how special education teachers deliver services for students with disabilities. It addresses the delivery method of distance learning and the effectiveness of delivering special education services amid COVID-19. The participants have given constructive response within an interview format to better understand the usage of distance learning. The study includes seven special education teachers who provide special education services to students with disabilities participated in this study. Through qualitative analysis of interview transcripts, the following major themes were found: delivery methods, effectiveness of distance learning, advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, appropriate data tracking of goals, and support from the district. The findings will provide special educators with a better

understanding of the realistic experience of distance learning for educators and what additional supports will contribute to education during COVID-19.

Keywords: Distance learning, individualized education program, special education teachers, services, COVID-19.

DEDICATION

Personally, I want to thank my wife and family. Because of their trust, belief, and commitment, I was possible to continue this path in education. I also want to thank my friends who encouraged me along the way. The study aims to help better serve students with and without disabilities within the school environment regardless of the delivery method.

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CHAPTER ONE:
ROLE OF DISTANCE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

Problem Statement

Around the middle of March 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. This led to a post intervention in different areas (e.g., shutting down non-essential businesses, loss of jobs, uncertainty with how to continue education, and possible lock down). With the unforeseen future of the first quarter of 2020, there has been a disruption within the school setting. In response to continuing education, many students across the world had to experience some type of change in the traditional (face-to-face instruction) approach of learning. Since the pandemic has started, the delivery of education has drastically changed from meeting in a physical classroom to distance learning. Code, Ralph, and Forde (2020) concede that K-12 school systems around the world suspended classroom-based operations in response to public health officials' declarations of emergency. To continue education around the world, many schools and institutions took on the approach to utilize distance learning in which they implement remote teaching practices. Moving forward with emergency remote teaching, one must have an understanding of the impact that traditional learning has versus remote learning. To give more information about the traditional setting, the traditional educational setting, face-to-face instruction receive the highest ratings in terms of helpfulness and support from students in

the classroom (Gaskell, 2009). Consequently, knowing the complications of COVID-19 and the possibility of not being able to meet in person, teachers have to settle for distance learning. Teachers are also responsible for managing students' behaviors, as well as socio-emotional health while teaching online. With the rise in special education services and their specific needs along with distance learning, there has to be a clear understanding of how such needs will be met through this avenue. How can educators provide effective education while teaching virtually?

During COVID-19, many students with disabilities have been housed and have to accept online services in replacement to not being able to go to school for their services. National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD, 2020) recorded that many school districts were not too fond of providing distance instruction because they believe that federal disability laws present barriers that are too hard to overcome. In truth, despite the indifferences many districts have, school districts “must provide FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students” (NCLD, 2020). The Department of Education (ED) makes it clear that education must continue and that all services of students with disabilities must be met via distance learning. While education is doing its best to accommodate students with disabilities, there is a possible chance that provisions of the law will be implemented differently than what special educators are used to. Through this

pandemic, it will be noted how teachers are able to appropriately serve students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and protect the rights of these students with the opportunity that they have through distance learning amid school closure.

COVID-19 has subdued the regular lifestyle that people have partook of each day. Life has gone from a free schedule of outgoing to a restriction on how people interact with one another. With COVID-19 causing a global pandemic, it has effected how people do life: restrictions on going out in public, State-wide lockdowns, travel bans, working from home, and even school closure. While COVID-19 has placed limits on how people interact in society, the education system has to find alternative ways to implement education to students around the world. COVID-19 has really impacted the school setting. Students are not able to do school in a traditional way (face-to-face interaction) but having to receive education virtually. Zaheer and Munir (2020) acknowledge that efforts of distance learning being implemented lacks student–teacher interaction, face-to-face interaction, and physical absence of the teachers hinders relationship building. From the perspective of students, Distance learning has posed threats to students as they might feel alone and dejected and physical distance from the supervisor may make them skeptical about the quality of their work (Zaheer & Munir, 2020). Many students have taken on the full-time responsibility of distance learning and ideally become more confident in their work. Students are in hope that there is enough time for teachers to support each of them during the whole

time period. To expand this issue of distance learning, parents have concerns as they have run into multiple problems with online learning with their children.

According to The Education Trust (2020), parents are experiencing insurmountable issues in regard to their experience helping their children with distance learning. Many of these concerns have a great deal to do with the students functioning level, background, emotional state, ethnicity, and disability. In regard to academic support, about 7 in 10 Latino and Black parents are concerned they do not have the resources or supplies to help their child stay academically on track (The Education Trust, 2020). Many non-English and native Spanish speaking parents may experience comprehension issues with materials that are given only in one language, predominantly English. As a result, parents are worried that many of their children can fall behind academically and suffer from a socioemotional standpoint.

Research Focus/Purpose

The purpose of this study is to better understand the current conditions of how special education teachers deliver services for students with disabilities during COVID-19. It is surmised that education is to be delivered through the avenue of distance learning until conditions with COVID-19 changes. Seeing that special education teachers are responsible for tracking student's progress of their individualized education program (IEP), the researcher seeks to find out the various methods used to provide specialized instruction to students with disabilities. With education being placed in such an important spotlight, ideal

conditions will be considered in regard to how special education services will be delivered.

Research Question

In the midst of the pandemic, under what conditions are special education teachers delivering special education services to students with disabilities through distance learning?

Perspective of the Researcher

From the qualitative data that was gathered, the researcher wanted to ensure that the research aligned with participants and what they have been experiencing in the midst of distance learning. As distance learning is constructed in different ways by each school district, there is a possible chance that each educator's experience will be different based on the approach of different districts. According to Spectrum Center Schools and Programs (2020), distance learning is a strategy in order to continue students' education online in place of their physical school interaction because of the limitation and/or closure of normal educational hours. A glimpse at distance learning is when the learner and the educator are separated by distance in which the educator carries out instruction. Within the constructivism paradigm of distance learning being implemented by educators across the world, the researcher's real-life experience with distance learning has been a physical and mental depletion. As an education specialist, the researcher understands the importance of each student being unique and that they deserve assistance in order to help them achieve

goals in life. This is to make sure that students with disabilities are receiving equity in education in hope to get the same representation as nondisabled students.

Special education services are individualized for each student to give them the proper accommodations to meet the needs of their specific goals in hope to make adequate progress (Turnbell, H., Turnbell, A., Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003). However, distance learning has made it arduous to meet such needs of students with goals tailored to their needs. There is a missing factor of a hands-on experience. Connecting learning skills to newfound knowledge that an educator teaches has not been ideal for many students (eLearning Industry, 2020). From a behavior standpoint, most of the students have found ways to exercise negative behavior by leaving the computer screen, muting their camera, hitting the monitor/laptop, utilizing inappropriate language, turning off their computer webcam, and ending the meeting (Child Mind Institute, 2020). Exemplifying such behaviors has resulted in the researcher utilizing redirections expecting to help students regain focus on the subject at hand. This experience has been witnessed in the classroom when I have tried to implement specialized instruction to students with disabilities. I emphasized that there is no easy way to successfully experience distance learning when students lack motivation to learn or to attend online sessions with their teacher.

Risk and Benefits. Taking into consideration of the study, here is the minimal risk: stressful experience, disclosing students and staff private

information. Participants may want to respond from a more personal standpoint when it comes to the difficulties they may experience, even to a point where they might disclose certain students' private information in their responses. Taking preventive measures to minimize the risk of the participants' responses, the researcher will remind the participants beforehand about student/staff privacy and for them to speak more from a general standpoint with their answers in a way that will give more understanding of the current conditions of delivering special education services during distance learning. Their responses will give more insight of the experiences they go through instead of exposing student/staff confidential information. In closing, participants will explain the current conditions of educating students during distance learning amid COVID-19 regulations on schools.

Though there may be an indifference within the participants input, the benefit of the study will provide an excellent opportunity for special education teachers to correlate their experiences to one another which in turn give applicable insight to educating exceptional students during distance learning. It will render specific experiences and a shared understanding on a particular issue with servicing students with disabilities.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study primarily plans to further understand the current conditions of distance learning during the pandemic. Speaking on the importance of delivering specific special education services, and students with disabilities and COVID-19 will give insight to the experiences of our special education students and the teachers that service them. The time is more important than ever to analyze this new perspective of education along with the given approach of distance learning. Seeing that there is a difference in the delivery of education, the original riposte may be a response of the past for while the new approach of distance learning may embark on an up-to-date approach to delivering special education services. In regard to the summary of this literature review, there is an overview of evidence-based practices, the case of specifically delivering special education services, students with disabilities and COVID-19, providing services to children with disabilities during a COVID-19 outbreak, and the role of technology during distance learning.

Distance Learning and Understanding Special Education Services

For students with disabilities, specific education services are embedded in their individualized education programs (IEPs). Education services are specific for students with disabilities depending on each student. Before this was

applicable, two important cases were considered: Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley and Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District. Tucker (1983) elaborates that the outcome of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley concluded that the student with a disability should be given specific instruction to progress in their class. Cases like this made it possible to help students with their specific educational needs. According to Couvillon, Yell & Katsiyannis (2017), it is possible for students to have educational benefits within their school setting where they will be able to get their unique needs met. This displays that students with disabilities will receive special education services that are meaningful to the particular student. Following, individuals with disabilities education act (IDEA) made it possible that public schools will provide each eligible student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Depending on the students' unique needs, individual services are given through individualized education programs (IEP) in hope to have a long-lasting impact to their education exposure (Hartmann, 2016). Each student has their difference within special education, which makes the IEP individualized and specific to whatever student it serves until the annual year.

Continuing further, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2019) shares that educators have to be able to provide all students, including students with disabilities, with instruction even if they have to differentiate it to meet the needs of students for their services and supports. Understanding why this is possible is because Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), formerly recognized as

no child left behind (NCLB), deemed that even students with disabilities deserve the right to be educated and considered important as any other student (CCSSO, 2019). Plainly put, IDEA makes sure that students with disabilities receive any services that will help enhance their experience during education. With understanding how special education services are delivered, taking a different approach may make a difference in how educators are able to implement those services. Consequently, special education services need to be given in every aspect of education no matter the avenue it is being delivered. Each environment presents itself differently. Hence presenting an onerous challenge to deliver specific services to students with disabilities, especially during distance learning amid COVID-19.

Students with Disabilities and COVID-19

With the importance of education being contrivance, there must not be any difference in the way education is being serviced outside of the physical location. Addressing the global concern, the U.S. Department of Education (2020) believes that it is vital that nothing stands in the pathway of education being delivered to students on-line; Not even COVID-19. The initial outbreak of COVID-19 has provoked this country to worry beyond measures. Many schools have taken in consideration opting out of distance learning and proceeding with school closure because it inhabits the services of students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Refuting to close school will not only halt education for the time being but declining the required services of students with

disabilities will be at the expense of the student's educators serve. In the attempt to close schools, students with disabilities will be at a disadvantage if they do not have the opportunity to participate in distance learning. The U.S. Department of Education (2020) opines that the responsibility of each school district is to provide FAPE to exceptional students in the field of special education. COVID-19 has placed an importance on school districts to impart that will assist the best decisions to make in which it takes into consideration of each student's health and safety during this sensitive time (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Though there may be current conditions that place a hold on delivering special education services from making progress that is similar to the in person classroom environment, it is stated that, "FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through distance instruction provided virtually, online, or telephonically" (2020). Being able to make it possible to implement specific services to students with disabilities via an alternative method (distance learning), special education teachers are still identified as giving appropriate services. Though education through the platform of distance learning may be a different experience for most educators and students, it is a method that continues the path of education being provided to all students. Within the reading, Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities, U.S. Department of Education (2020) concludes that educators, especially special education teachers, may still meet their legal obligations by providing children

with disabilities equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or related services included in their individualized education program (IEP). In closing, the current effects of COVID-19 should not be a valid intention or purpose that prevents any school from offering educational programs through distance learning.

Providing Services to Students with Disabilities During COVID-19

Education continues in the fashion it once was, but slightly demonstrates a different approach. In the prior section, it mentions that school districts are liable for delivering education, even for students with disabilities. Moving forward, there have been answers to most commonly asked questions if a school district was to shut down in the midst of slowing the spread of COVID-19. In such cases where particular students are unable to partake in instructional lessons the

U.S. Department of Education (2020) said that,

Each dismissed child could benefit from online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum- based instructional activities, to the extent available. In so doing, school personnel should follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and address the risk of transmission in the provision of such services...If a child does not receive services during a closure, a child's IEP team must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost. (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

The most prominent step to take is to make sure the safety of each student is taken into consideration. The ideal appropriate way to deliver educational instruction is to provide an alternative method that students are able to participate in the process of learning (2020). Education needs to continue on. If the alternative teaching method is distance learning, instructional telephone calls, or other curriculum-based instructional lessons. If this approach is taken, an educator who is willing to do the essential qualities of providing education in such a path like distance learning (2020). Many educators have provocatively the responsibilities of educating through the distance learning process. For special education and the teachers that service students with disabilities, the use of distance learning presents a unique approach to delivering special education services. Early intervention with distance learning can be a cooperative support, but there can also be certain conditions that negate the use and effectiveness of distance amongst special education teachers.

Distance Learning in California

There is a mixture of approaches in delivering education via distant learning. Edsource (2020) explains that California has three strategic approaches to instruction: distance learning, mixed, or in-person in which education is provided. Basically, Northern and Southern California region has determined instructional methods for specific counties based on where students live the overall health. For a better understanding of each strategy, Edsource characterizes each approach as:

Mostly In-Person Instruction: offering some form of in-person instruction or are planning to offer it in hybrid or range of other formats. Distance Learning: offering instruction via distance learning. Mixed: offering in-person instruction, while others are still principally in distant learning mode (EdSource, 2020).

Looking closer, each strategic approach is emphasized based on their area or region. For in-person instruction during distance learning, the state of California has about twenty-one counties that are planning to spend most of their time in class or some sort of hybrid approach (2020). Additionally, EdSource (2020) describes that distance learning has about 17 counties who will service students from a virtual approach. Seeing that COVID-19 has presented restrictions in how education is delivered throughout California, many different counties have accommodated their students based on the severity of COVID-19 within their region. Interesting enough, this educational approach did not fully take into account the delivery of delivering education to students with disabilities. In the article, *In-Person Instruction and Distance Learning in California*, it concedes that the information presented “does not include private, charter schools, or special education or other small group classes for students with special needs that districts are offering through the state’s “small cohort” guidance” (2020). Special education teachers deliver special education services through each student's IEP resulting in them being able to make progress (Turnbell, H., Turnbell, A., Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003). COVID-19 has halted traditional instruction services. Special education received most of its services via

in class. With the switch in delivery approach for instruction, it is noticed that special education services were not fully considered when instruction strategies were put in place for counties throughout California. Hence, leading to the thought-provoking question how special education services are delivered through distance learning.

The Role of Technology during Distance Learning. Technology plays a key component to the success or failure of distance learning. It is a valuable resource within our world. According to McKenney & Voogt (2010), children are utilizing computers at an earlier age than they can read or write. The ability to have access to technology makes the difference in how information is accessed. In light of distance learning, the most important component is adaptation to the online learning environment (eLearning Industry, 2020). Technology has been the tool used to deliver distance learning, which is the delivery method for education in the midst of COVID-19 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). In most regions of the world, traditional instruction is living in the shadow of distance learning. Since this delivery method has taken the place of education, the importance of utilizing technology is by far the most prominent tool in education for distance learning (eLearning Industry, 2020). The goal is not to replace the way education was previously delivered, but a way to continue education in the midst of a pandemic. With technology being the core utilization method to service each students' education, there needs to be an understanding on how to use certain resources (computers, use of computer programs, online

resources, communication methods, navigating online assignments, online meetings, etc.). eLearning Industry (2020) suggests that in order to have a continuum of learning there needs to be an awareness of the use of technology, adaptation of learning approach, and the application of resources for distance learning.

Summary

In closing, education is a prominent component that students experience during school. The COVID-19 outbreak has presented an emerging challenge where traditional (face-to-face) instruction is not ideal. Importance to continuing education for a pandemic is something that the U.S. Department of Education (2020) deemed as imperative. If a school district decided to halt their services for the safety and health of their students, there should be no penalty toward them, and as well if they remain open (2020). The most important concept is that whichever service is delivered, that service is to also be delivered for students with disabilities. Seeing that technology is important during this service of education, the implication of technology deems as an imperative resource in the success or failure of distance learning. Though education response for COVID-19 made such a reactive response, there are certain conditions and impacts distance learning will have on educators and students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study conducted one-on-one interviews with seven special education teachers to collect a plethora of data on the impact of delivering special education services via distance learning amid of COVID-19 and the restriction of traditional instruction. The participants in this study were able to identify common perspectives, but not limited to some indifferences.

Interview questions focus on the experience and perspective of special education teachers during distance learning while delivering specific services to their students with disabilities. The problem statement raised concerns about the reliability of teachers delivering special education services via distance learning and if there will be a change in the way students with disabilities receive them. The researcher's thesis started off with one question in which to ask how services for specialized instruction are being delivered to students with disabilities in the midst of distance learning. Careful consideration about the plethora of experiences many teachers go through on a regular school day made me consider more questions in which the researcher ended up with nine questions that go over areas of delivery method, advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, types of difficulties in distance learning, collaboration, progress monitoring, IDEA, and school district support. With the guidance and

advice of Dr. Nam and Dr. Kim, the researcher was able to come up with appropriate questions to ask educators as they experience the change of the physical classroom and having to adjust to delivering services online to students with disabilities. Based on the study that is being conducted, the researcher believes that open-ended questions will be appropriate to cover in hope to get volunteers of the study to be honorable about their experience with distance, how it has advantages, disadvantages, and any improvements that can be made to better aid them.

Participants

Seven special education teachers participated in the study. Their demographic and teaching related characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and educational experience) are shown in Table 1. Five out of the seven participants currently serve as a specialized academic instructor (SAI) in the elementary school setting. Their occupation is related to various areas of special education (i.e., SAI, behavior interventionist (BI), speech and language pathology (SLP), special day class (SDC), mild/moderate disabilities, and moderate/severe disabilities). Meanwhile, the remaining two out of seven participants service special education in the middle school setting (i.e. moderate/severe disabilities, SDC, BI). Three out of the seven participants have serviced special education services in different settings such as high school and nonpublic school (NPS) settings in different capacities. The participants served the students with the following disabilities: learning disabilities, autism, emotional disturbance (ED),

physical impairment, visual impairment, and intellectual disabilities.

Consideration of teaching special education services deems these teachers appropriate to answer such questions about the impact distance learning has had and the differences they are experiencing while servicing students. To get a better understanding on what this research seeks to find and adding a variety of perspectives, interviewing seven participants will be applicable for enough data collection for the study.

Selection of Participants

The seven participants of this study have been chosen based on the diverse special education experience each of them has obtained. Expertise was a direct position as a special education teacher working with students as a paraeducator, resource specialist provider (RSP), specialized academic instruction (SAI), different classroom environments based on instructional level (mild/moderate, moderate/severe, or special day class (SDC). And different special educational needs (speech and language pathologist). Each one of the participants have an understanding that giving special education services to students who have disabilities is ideal in hope that they will make adequate progress and experience the quality of life outcome. The seven participants the researcher recruited are seven active employees who work in a school district public school system in Southern California ranging from elementary, middle school, high school, and transitional living in Southern California. Schools were randomly selected to recruit seven participants representing a range of special

education populations. The selection of these schools was based on an array of education experience coming from the public-school setting, SDC classes, and non-public school expertise of the staff. Initially, the researcher went through the school district's process of conducting a research with participants. The first line of duty was to fill out an application that asked about the reason for the research, the problem statement, research question, thesis proposal, risk and benefits, and how would the research benefit the district. After completing the application and turning it into the appropriate administration department, the researcher awaited approval to continue forward. The selected school district in Southern California approved the research to go ahead in the process of contacting the appropriate principals of each school site and the participants. Once the principals of each school site agreed to the approval of participants, access to school emails was given to the researcher of the potential participants. The researcher sent emails to twenty-nine special education teachers within eleven schools in the k-12 grade range. Seven participants out of the twenty-nine teachers that were emailed responded to join the research. The selection was based on if the special education teachers accepted or declined the voluntary invite of being a part of the research. For the participants that declined, the researcher thanked them for taking their time in considering being a part of the potential study. For the participants who agreed to be in the research, they were given a more in depth understanding of the research that was being conducted. This background

information of the study was given to the participants in order to give them a glimpse into what will be entailed in the interviews.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with seven participants to collect their narratives about the current conditions they experienced with delivering special education services during distance learning. While the participants given their narrative perspectives, the researcher made running notes by hand during the interviews. In addition, the researcher recorded participants' responses with an audio recorder device that is a tool on google meet and/or zoom. Any time during the one-on-one interviews where a participant does not feel comfortable about answering a specific question, it was not included. The conducted interviews were saved on a USB drive and accessed for future use (to analyze data). All the data from each interview was collected and compartmentalized. Once the one-on-one interviews were finished, the researcher transcribed each interview. Once all the interviews were transcribed, the researcher deleted the recordings in order to protect confidentiality.

Data Gathering

Once the researcher was able to get consent forms signed from each participant, they collected data during the interviews via online (Google Meet). Each session was recorded in order to collect information for the interviews from each participant's personal perspective of the current conditions special

education teachers are experiencing with delivering special education services to students with disabilities through distance learning. To start, the researcher opened the conversation with explaining the study's intent and what it is looking to accomplish. Instead of using a mixture of data collection methods, the researcher chose to utilize interview questions that each participant was willing to answer. Once confidentiality was explained and consented, the researcher gathered high quality data for each participant. States that, "a well-planned interview approach can provide a rich set of data" (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Before starting, it was imperative to prepare the participants before getting into the interview. The interviewees were informed of all dangers, risks, and benefits of the study which components of the interview will lead to some sort of impact. The researcher asked questions in regard to each participant's demographic to understand what level they taught, their experience, and what amount of time they spent as a paraeducator prior to becoming a special education teacher. Though each participant serves students with disabilities, each of them provided different perspectives within their interview. There were some areas of correlating responses in which participants experience the same commodity during distance learning. From the discussed concepts within the interview question that looked into distance learning as an effective delivery method for special education services, each participant's response made it possible for the researcher to further explore the relation of responses amongst the participants.

Recording Method and Confidentiality

When the time came to conduct interviews, the researcher conceded that the most appropriate approach was to utilize a professional recording device. With limitations due to COVID-19 and gathering restrictions, the researcher believed that in order to get an accurate recording of each person interviewed they needed to use an online communication service such as Zoom or Google Meet which included a digital voice recording device that helped the researcher refer back to in order to transcribe the response of the participants. In regard to protecting confidentiality, the most important concept to understand is how treatment of confidential information is handled. The researcher made sure that the narrative responses from each participant from the recordings were uploaded on a USB drive that was safely stored away in a locked file cabinet until the responses are transcribed. Once each interview response was transcribed, the narrative responses were erased and/or deleted. Once the transcript responses from the interview were utilized properly in the research, the researcher shredded them.

Data Recording

Prior to starting the interviews with each participant, the researcher prepared a recording device to make sure that each meeting did not interfere with the prior interviews conducted. Hence, the researcher was able to transcribe each interview in the order they were given. The researcher made sure they were fully prepared so that there was minimal room for error within the interview

(stumbling over reading interview questions, long pauses, etc.). With a structured interview process, questions asked interviewees a series of pre-established questions, thus generally giving responses that satisfied answering the question(s). The pre-established question better helped the researcher stay on track while providing participants a chance to respond to open-ended questions. Each interviewee was giving the interview questions in an ordinal fashion, which made recording and transcribing the interviews during data analysis more convenient.

Data Analysis

The notes were collected, and the live recording was transcribed. When transcribing, the researcher's process included collecting feedback and formulating it into an inductive qualitative analysis (Ranney et al., 2015). Plainly put, each interview that was analyzed and transcribed helped formulate tables that identify common themes or responses for the participants. In tables 2-6, there was a possibility to unveil delivery methods, effectiveness of delivery methods, advantages and disadvantages, appropriate data tracking of goals, support from district. With the use of constructivism responses, the use a thematic content analysis made it possible for the researcher to find common patterns across the research that discovered the implementation of distance learning for students with disabilities who have special education services provided by special education teachers. Once the interviews were collected, they were analyzed through open coding. The use of open coding provided the

chance to collectively gather participants' responses; recording significant data in regard to this topic on current conditions on delivering special education services during distance learning (Gallicano, 2013). Hence, the necessary information from each participant within the interview led to the findings of the research conducted. The gathering of data made it possible to conceptualize each interview as a form of interpretation of what is exactly being experienced in distance learning. Once open coding took place within the study, there was room for the researcher to utilize axial and selective coding in which responses from the interviews were characterized into themes and core variable information were collectively put together (Gallicano, 2013). Though these components of coding would break down the data gathered, it also assisted with putting the responses of participants into related categories. In closing, the categorized interview questions and use coding methods (open, axial, and selective) has made the concept of understanding the current conditions of distance learning in a more relatable fashion on the fact that it is based on the common conditions of education delivery and its effectiveness via distance learning.

Summary

Concluding this chapter, the implementation of distance learning, these topics included: the study participants, how they were selected, data gathering/collection, data recording, and data analysis in which the researcher transcribed through coding (open, axial, and selective). Each study participant

was informed about the problem statement, the purpose, and the goal of the study along with protection of their confidentiality. In regard to data gathering/collection, the best method to use during this time of no in person connection was online communication. Data recording had allowed the researcher to gather qualitative data from each participant leading to data analysis. From here, each interview for data analysis was transcribed. The researcher believed that the summarized data analysis, from a thematic content analysis approach, giving insight to the teaching experience in hope to provide a course of action for the betterment of the problem statement.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

Introduction

Within this section, it will present information found in the research study, a demographic table (Table 1) about special education teachers who deliver special education services, and the results/findings that were found during the individualized interviews who participated in this study. There was a total of seven participants who completed the interviews. Each participant works within special education at some capacity ranging from the ages of 27-52 years old. In regard to gender, there were six females and one male participant. Establishing a relationship has made it possible to correlate and understand the conditions that teachers deal with the delivery method and effectiveness of distance learning.

Seeing that face to face interaction for each interview was not ideal, the researcher was able to meet each participant via online (Google Meet) in order to get responses to fulfill the interview questions. With the data collected, Tables 2-6 are able to illustrate the findings for the data of demographics, delivery methods, effectiveness of delivery, advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, progress monitoring, and support from the district.

Research Findings

All the participants have experience teaching special education for at least two years. In the Tables below (1-6), illustrates the themes of the data collected from each participant's recorded discussion during the data collection of the research. Each table was arranged in regard to the subtopics of the interviews conducted: delivery methods, effectiveness of delivery, advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, progress monitoring, and support from the district. The categories were created once each interview was analyzed and transcribed. There are quotations that avail statements that participants verbally mentioned.

Descriptive Review of Tables (1-6)

To provide an objective description of each table, here is the information provided to give a better understanding. Table 1 showed the demographic information that was gathered through online interviews in which all seven participants were able to indicate their sex, age, profession, grade level they service, how long they served that grade level as a special education teacher, and the amount of time they spent as a paraeducator. Table 2 demonstrates the overall approach of distance learning. In what manner is distance learning delivered and what component methods is utilized to service students. With the collective remarks in table 3, the researcher placed the most common remarks that participants made about the effectiveness of distance learning amid COVID-19. This table provides insight of how special education teachers visualize the

overall use of distance learning (effectiveness, the ability to teach an appropriate lesson, beneficial education approach for all students, servicing students who have specific services, and behavior). The data collected in Table 4 involved the integrative intervention outcome. Put plainly, this table identified the aspects of what the advantages of distance learning are and what disadvantages special education teachers are experiencing personally and with their students. Table 5 dives deep into the participants' responses on how viable data tracking is and what efforts they are making to get concrete data. Finally, Table 6 illustrated the plethora of support the district has given to make distance learning identical to traditional instruction. From table 6, one will see the support, guidance, and participants' perspectives on how their district aids in such a time in education (education delivered through a virtual platform).

Table 1. Demographics Table.

Participant #	Sex	Occupation	Teaching Grade Level	Duration	Age	Paraeducator Experience
Participant #1	F	SAI Teacher (M/S)	Middle School	11 years	35	2 years
Participant #2	F	SAI Teacher	Elementary	3 years	47	11 years
Participant #3	M	SDC/BI/(MM) Teacher	Middle School	2 years	41	15 years
Participant #4	F	SLP	Elementary	2 years	27	2 years
Participant #5	F	SAI/BI Teacher	Elementary	3 years	52	None
Participant #6	F	SAI Teacher	Elementary	15 years	42	5 years
Participant #7	F	SAI/SDC/MS Teacher	Elementary	4 years	30	2 years

*SAI(Specialized Academic Instruction) *BI (Behavior Intervention) SDC (Special Day Classroom) *M/S (Moderate to Severe) * M/M (Mild to Moderate) *Speech and Language Pathology (SLP)

Table 2. Delivery Methods via Distance Learning.

Delivery Methods
<p>Zoom Meetings</p> <p>Google Meet</p> <p>Google Classroom</p> <p>Class Dojo</p> <p>Asynchronous Learning</p> <p>Kami</p> <p>Google Sheets</p> <p>“When going over the behavior goals with the students I use a google sheets spreadsheet that is shared with the students and their parents.” (Participant #3)</p> <p>Reading programs (MyOn, Epic books)</p> <p>Boom Cards</p> <p>“Boom cards and Epic books. Both programs allow me to see how much time each student is on.” (Participant #6)</p>

Table 3. Effectiveness of Distance Learning.

Delivery of Special Education Services
<p>Effective for students who are independent</p> <p>Distance Learning can be successful for those students who can work independently.” (Participant #5)</p> <p>Difficulties experienced during distance learning (Technology, training parents, adjustment to education approach)</p> <p>“Many students have siblings helping them navigate technology and keep to their school schedule.” (Participant #2)</p> <p>In need of more support (academically and behaviorally)</p> <p>In need of appropriate environmental factors.</p> <p>“I believe this method of delivery could be effective if all of the appropriate environmental factors were in place.” (Participant #1)</p> <p>Ineffective delivery of special education services.</p> <p>Inconsistent/inaccurate data collection</p> <p>Lack thereof conducting appropriate assessments</p>

Table 4. Integrative Intervention Outcomes.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Less physical behaviors experienced “my staff and I are not getting injured as much, as we work with aggressive students. We aren’t getting hit, kicked, bit, spit on, or having classroom materials thrown at us.” (Participant #7) Alternative classroom instruction An array of delivery methods “all the different programs I can use and present to my class.” (Participant #6) Self-directed learning experience/Educational equality “I think that some students can work at their own pace and complete the assignments.” (Participant #3) Intellectual gain with the use of technology</p>	<p>Data collection of specific services for students with disabilities Inability to conduct assessments Inadequate technology skills Alternative online behavior (walk away, turn camera off, object distraction) trying to keep a kid’s attention when they have access to video games, phones, and TV’s right next to them.” (Participant #1) “turn the camera off and they are nowhere to be found.” (Participant #6) Inappropriate work environment “difficult to hear because of the background noise in their homes and often they cannot hear us because there is too much background noise.” (Participant #1) Inaccurate academic progress Long exposure to computer screen that may raise health concerns “negative impact on health due to extended time online.” (Participant #5) One to one support “difficulties faced while delivering instruction through Distance Learning has been in providing one/one support.” (Participant #5) Lack of education equity I feel that even with scheduling individual time with a child, as a whole they lose quality all around instructional time.” (Participant #6)</p>

Table 5. Progress Monitoring.

Progress on Goals/Progress During Distance Learning
<p>Utilizing delivery method to collect specific data for goals (behavior) Work samples used to track current and/or make new goals. As for academic goals I use work samples that have been assigned.” (Participant #3)</p> <p>Difficulty with tracking data for students daily (academically, speech-based goals-receptive language) “It is very difficult/nearly impossible to get receptive language data.” (Participant #4)</p> <p>Dependent on parents to track data “at this point I am just trying to teach parents how to teach and work with their student.” (Participant #7)</p> <p>Lack of progress made Inconsistent data tracking “a tricky thing to achieve in the sense of getting proper reports with the data.” (Participants #2)</p> <p>Inaccurate informal assessments “The inability to track actual correct data, authentic work samples and assessments.” (Participant #5)</p> <p>Lack of engagement Difficulty with turning in assignments “They turn in assignments blank, but when I ask them about it, they say they did work on it.” (Participant #2)</p> <p>Absence during support time (affects continual data tracking) “In addition, meeting with students during student support time is difficult, they often don’t show up and are not always in our classes to collect work samples.” (Participant #1)</p>

Table 6. District Support and Guidance for Distance Learning.

Support from District
<p>Necessity of parent collaboration to help provide a more educational experience for distance learning</p> <p>“Their input at times can be more insightful then what I can see in the camera at any given time.” (Participant #3)</p> <p>Weekly academic support per grade level from district team</p> <p>Weekly staff meetings to collaborate and provide assistance with distance learning</p> <p>Program/service departments providing meet times to help further understand programs used during distance learning</p> <p>Online reading program webinars</p> <p>“provided some online trainings for distance learning tools.” (Participant #1)</p> <p>Training to better familiarize staff with distance learning delivery methods</p> <p>“access to various platforms for teachers to incorporate in their lessons.” (Participant #5)</p> <p>Online support (Academically, Behaviorally, technology issues, usage of programs)</p> <p>“Everyone in the district is working so hard to do as much as possible for all students.” (Participant #2)</p>

The initial goal of this study for the researcher was to be able to fully understand the current conditions of delivering special education services during distance learning. Seeing that distance learning is a different approach to education, the research deems to find out the effectiveness of distance learning for special education students who have services. Under the circumstances of COVID-19, distance learning is the delivery method used to continue education. Hence, this research aims to view certain conditions of distance learning in view of delivery methods, effectiveness of distance learning, integrative intervention outcomes, progress monitoring, and district support and guidance for distance learning. A striking resemblance of the study has made an impact on both students and special education teachers. With this delivery method of education, it has shown that distance learning can be ideal/beneficial for some students who are independent learners; but, for most students, distance learning has been the most difficult source for continuing education.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Within this section, the researcher will review the components of the research: delivery methods, effectiveness of distance learning, integrative intervention outcomes, progress monitoring, and district support and guidance for distance learning. Subsequently, they will reveal more of an in-depth portion of the study from the perspectives of the participants. Each table that was provided will be summarized to give a better understanding of the data collected for the interviews that were conducted. This will give a better interpretation of the study and lead to suggestive actions that can be followed to provide a more effective approach to education.

Each component of the research has given insight to the current conditions special education teachers are dealing with when it comes to delivering services via distance learning. With each component of the research expanded to give further understanding, recommendations and the closing statement will give light to furthering education in the best way possible for all students within the school setting; no matter their academic, social, or behavioral functional level.

Delivery Method

Delivery of education has been ideally the most important aspect to distance learning. Prior to COVID-19 and mandatory distance learning, there was an universal approach to education in which it was delivered in a traditional format (face-to-face instruction). When it comes to the programs that are used, participants identified the following as tools they are able to use to reach their students academically: Zoom Meetings, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Class Dojo, Asynchronous Learning, Kami, Google Sheets, reading programs, and boom cards. Scanning through the transcribed responses, these were common responses that participants gave in regard to the most effective tools to use for distance learning. In the study, one can see that in order for students to have access to their newfound approach to education, there needs to be an appropriate way to deliver education to students who are bound to be at home for instruction. This is where delivery methods come into play. The change of the education approach has prompted educators to deliver education through an array of methods. The transition method of delivery is described by one of the participants as, “extremely challenging, during distance learning” but, “purchased a program called Kami which allows us to turn any document into an interactive one. Students and teachers can write/draw on or type on to work on worksheets.” (Participant #2). Additionally, it was mentioned that, “deliver special educational services through zoom observations for most of the behavior goals” (Participant #3). In these two examples given, one can see that there was a method where

students can use online services to complete assignments that students are used to doing in class. Also, video connective services help educators connect to their students. Being able to still connect with student is a great reactive response to continue education amid COVID-19.

With the timely response to providing education in a different format, this shows that high ranked officials within the education field sought out a solution in hope to provide a continuum of education for students. Hence, they made the proper adjustments to service all students' educational needs. In every instance, all the participants have mentioned some form of a delivery method in which they were provided with that has given each of the opportunity to engage with every student online as a form of delivering education via distance learning.

Effectiveness of Distance Learning

This section presented drastic findings within the study that led to a negated turn in regard to the effectiveness of delivering special education services. To lay it out, distance learning operates in a sophisticated way, but many students have shown minimal interest in the approach and lessons that are being taught. Consequently, students have found learning new material difficult. This solely has to do with difficulty of working mainly independent with little to no assistance. When asked about the effectiveness of distance learning, participant #5 implies that, "No, our students are already working below grade level, struggle building and maintaining relationships." Though this is one response, collectively others stated that, "No, for me this method is not the same. I believe in person is

more effective” (Participant #7) and “I do not believe this delivery of services is as effective as in-person” (Participant #2). Seeing that distance learning is taking the place of traditional education, it can be understood that there is no simplicity for this method with students who need constant redirection, additional support, and directive. With hope not being fully lost, one participant mentioned that, “I feel like it is less effective than in person therapy, but it remains effective, students are still making progress...the progress is definitely slower for some students (Participant #4). Similarities are seen within this study in regard to the effectiveness of distance learning, but there are some areas where differences are presented which provides insight to a different perspective that can possibly impute other positive findings.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning

The occurrence of this research was to find under what current conditions are special education services delivered to students with disabilities. From the figure of the graph above, there are an array of advantages and disadvantages to distance learning. Though it is mentioned earlier, the participant says that the, “advantages have been only noticed for the more capable students, they have developed more independence and responsibility...Disadvantages for teachers and students are that many of the hands-on learning activities that increased engagement cannot be done via distance learning” (Participant #1). Additionally, another participant adds that, “Some of the weaknesses are that the social opportunities of school and the ability to interact in person are not being offered

to the students” (Participant #3). While some disadvantages have an identical response, participant #4 tells us that, “difficulties are keeping students engaged, audio quality, tracking data for receptive language.” There are some students who have encompassed the skill of being able to independently monitor themselves with less guidance. Experiences with other students may be the lack of social interaction and the additional hands on support (depending the severity of the student’s disability).

Special education teachers have their preference with distance learning, and they recognize the strengths (advantages) and weaknesses (disadvantages). One response that was recorded mentioned that, “Distance Learning does not accommodate all learners” (Participant #5). One of the many responsibilities of a special education teacher is to make sure that each student with disabilities gets the specific services that are identified within their IEP. Seeing that each student disability is different, each student academic level will vary. Heeding the comment made by participant #5, the delivery of education through the avenue of distance learning places most students at a disadvantage. Hence, this can lead to students falling behind academically, socially, and behaviorally. COVID-19 has been relentless, but the initial response to continue education has provided a chance to benefit from this educational opportunity.

Progress Monitoring

Progress makes all of the difference of this study. Seeing that the study looks into the delivery of special education services, it is important how data is

tracked. Table 5 exemplifies the exact perspective of data tracking. Servicing students with disabilities who have specific services is imperative. Participant #1 explains that, "Determining actual student ability is difficult when they can just copy or paste from the internet and when parents insist on helping them, even when asked not to...Data is not entirely accurate because of these things." Being in such a situation places the educator in a position where they are not getting an accurate placement of the student's proficiency with their IEP goal and academic progress. Achievement (progression) during distance learning has made special educator become creative in which they will, "evaluate my students and their goals, is doing mini lessons on items/concepts that are in their IEP goals" (Participants #2). However, the method for data collection is imperative and it will make all of the difference in how IEP goals are tracked and play an important part in how future goals are made and implemented. As special education teachers, there is an importance on collecting data. When that method is taken away because of certain circumstances (change of education delivery), there needs to be some effective approach to best utilize distance learning and track data for students. In closing, various challenges have presented itself while tracking data, but special education teachers are looking for ways to better assist their students with disabilities during distance learning amid COVID-19. With continual guidance, this area will better serve students with disabilities as more components and/or deliver methods can be better utilized with in-home services.

District Support and Guidance During Distance Learning

Building up a new approach to education has not been easy, but districts have been providing guidance and support in order to make distance learning more accessible and amicable for all students. Initially, the pandemic with COVID-19 has placed the world in such a reactive mode instead of a proactive approach. Nevertheless, higher officials throughout different school districts have found ways to continue education without students missing out on the opportunity of receiving an appropriate education, especially students with disabilities. As an initiative, teachers are ecstatic that districts, “have offered many trainings on how to use the classroom and Google slides. They are sending home sensory kits and supplies to our kids” (Participant #6). In addition, participant #2 believes that, “the very best they can to provide FAPE...different teams to put together training, collaborations, tech support, and so much more....we are doing our best with the support of the district.” With the resourceful techniques, district support has been well accepted amongst some special education teachers in which they believe that the most effective support the district is giving is being applied in hope to fully service students with disabilities.

Though there is a plethora of support given in retrospect of collaboration, tech support, training, delivery methods, and much more, there are some areas of concern in regard to support of distance learning. Participant #5 irate that, “Special education teachers should be receiving more support during distance learning to ensure that they have what is needed to provide effective instruction.”

This points to the ineffective manner of distance learning and giving special education services to students. Though there is support, some components of distance will never be fully understood or utilized because of the complexity and demand distance learning has on students and special education teachers who service them. They take on a toll that is too much to bear. It is mentioned that, “I do not feel that there is enough time given to fully understand all the resources that are given. I think that we are doing the best we can right now, but I do not think that this model, distance learning, can be sustained” (Participant #5).

Distance learning has been the ideal answer to substitute traditional education, but the readiness to implement the demand distance learning has is an ongoing process for students with disabilities. They have services they do require in person interaction (e.g., hand-over-hand writing, receptive language). Majority of students with disabilities are not fully equipped to self-monitor themselves to focus on lessons being taught and/or receive less support where they will exemplify completion of assignments.

Limitations

This qualitative research is promising, but it does have its limitations. First, the findings of this research covered only 7 special education teachers who volunteered to participate. Initially, twenty-nine special education teachers were contacted in hope to give their input. Without limitations, this study can expand off into different areas of education (general education students and teachers

experience, parent's implementation of education to students, etc.) making it more viable about the conditions of education delivery during COVID-19. It will not be limited to a district, but it can expand across the whole region of Southern California. Second, interview questions could have been expanded to get more understanding of the experience of distance learning making it much more of a focused topic on education delivered through during learning amid COVID-19.

Implication to Research

The data contributes a clearer understanding that delivering special education services through distance learning is not valid without key components (efficient delivery method, appropriate data tracking of goals, support from district, etc.). According to the result of the study, distance learning has been the only useful resource to continue education in most of the Southern California region where distance learning is not optional. Taking into consideration of delivering special education services, distance learning is an ineffective method if students with disabilities are not self-reliant, special education teachers do not have proper training and appropriate programs, active participation from students, behaviors still present issues, and there being a lack in progress monitoring. The researcher implies that these findings should be taken into account when collectively complying an effective learning approach for students with disabilities in the midst of COVID-19. This may be a difficult time in education but the researcher believes that continuing to provide added

accommodations for academics, creative ways to teach specific special education services, holding collaborative meetings amongst teachers will help special education teachers learn ways to adapt, and continual collaboration with parents in how to better serve students will be an approach that is worth implementing. Guidance on how to best support students, accessible programs that meet the needs of each student, accommodations, and making sure to provide an equitable opportunity online just as much in class will bind together a curation of ideal support for every learners and their learning goals during their experience with distance learning.

Conclusion

With COVID-19 restricting face to face instruction, early interventions of delivering effective education to students was the reactive response: distance learning. Considering students with disabilities who have special education services, distance learning has been insolvent and demands more of a traditional approach to education. The current approach is deemed as not ideal on the fact that delivering education services is ineffective for students with disabilities who are not independently driven. More availability for students with disabilities is essential when it comes to delivering special education services. Once the data was gathered, it revealed that distance learning is applicable to those who are self-driven, independent learners, but it also presented a unusual experience of education within the comfort of students' homes. Each participant shared their

experience in which it is seen that many of them have similar issues or complications with the use of distance learning for their students. With minimal effectiveness and the absence of valid data tracking, distance learning can be seen as an ineffective method for students who struggle without accommodations/supports that they are used to getting in the classroom setting. This method of teaching has presented some challenges for the special education population and tracking individualized goals.

Distance learning employs a risk factor for students with disabilities who are not fully independent. Many of these students have particular needs that cannot be accommodated through the computer. Many of the services that students with disabilities get are usually in person. When a student who has an IEP specifically designed for them and they cannot access those services, they are not being serviced properly. Since the pandemic, distance learning has been the main source of how education is delivered. Though many students have not adapted to it, it is even more difficult for students with disabilities to utilize such an approach if they do not have the skills to properly understand the methods of delivery. Though opting out of distance learning and heeding to school closure is an option, distance learning should be embraced instead of halting the services of students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). In all honesty, such actions will put students with disabilities at a disadvantage. Hence, prolonging their academic, social, and behavioral growth.

Distance learning has the ability to be effective for all students with disabilities if it is aligned with the right methods and/or accommodations for students with disabilities. The action plan for distance learning incorporated by districts has the ability to be more understanding if the circumstances (ideal training programs, webinars, continual support virtually, etc.) for learning is present in such a way that it is relatable. Even though distance learning is not the ideal implementation of education for students with disabilities, make the experience exclusive to the student in which the special education teacher can provide the appropriate professional assistance that is needed. Like most students who do not adjust to a change in the environment or sudden change, it takes some time to get adjusted to. The primary goal is to utilize distance learning as a platform to continue the educational experience for special education students who have specific services that need to be met annually. Instead of having a dissension outlook on distance learning, the perspective should be seen as an opportunity to best provide education to students who have disabilities that are obligated to get accommodated for their specific educational needs. Hence, with time, distance learning will be a valuable teaching method for all students, even students who are getting special education services, once the adjustment phase is over.

APPENDIX A:
INFORMED CONSENT

Teacher's Informed Consent

Opening Statement of Research being Conducted

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate how special education teachers are able to deliver special education services during COVID-19 to students via distance learning. This study is being conducted by Calvin Davis under the supervision of Dr. Sang Seok Nam, Professor of Special Education, Rehabilitation & Counseling, California State University, San Bernardino. The research that is being conducted has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study will be to find out how teachers are able to deliver special education services during COVID-19 to students via distance learning. It is surmised that education is to be delivered in a different method (distance learning) until conditions with COVID-19 changes. Seeing that special education teachers are responsible for tracking students' progress of their individualized education program (IEP), the researcher seeks to find out the difference of providing specialized instruction to students with disabilities.

DESCRIPTION: The research will be conducted in a one-on-one interview approach in which each participant will be given a chance to give their input on the subject at hand. Once the interview is over, the researcher will go over each interview thoroughly and transcribe the data that was given. The researcher will analyze the data and interpret the results in hope to come up with the best plan of action.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and can freely withdraw from participation at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will make sure that the narrative responses from each participant from the recordings are uploaded on a USB drive that will be safely stored away in a locked file cabinet until the responses are transcribed. Once each interview response is transcribed, the narrative responses will be erased and/or deleted. Once the transcript responses from the interview are utilized properly in the research, the researcher will shred them.

DURATION: The researcher wants to make sure that there is an adequate amount of time to go through each interview question. Each interview can range a response of at least to 3-5 sentences or more if needed. The researcher believes that each participant will be able to give a thorough understanding of the message they want to get across to the researcher in regard to the interview questions that are being asked. The duration of time of each interview will be 30 to 45 minutes. If there is a case where the interview surpasses the time mentioned above, then an additional session will be scheduled.

RISKS: Taking into consideration of the study, here is the minimal risk: stressful experience, disclosing private information, and disclosing student private information. Participants who respond to interview questions of the research can possibly want to speak from a more personal standpoint when it comes to the difficulties they may experience and even disclose stressful experiences with certain students. In such a case, the researcher needs to remind the participants beforehand about student privacy and for them to speak more from a general standpoint with their answers in a way that will give more understanding of the current conditions of delivering special education services during distance learning. In light of the situation, participants will give more of a thorough understanding of the experiences they go through in such a time as educating students during distance learning amid COVID-19 regulations on schools.

BENEFITS: Though there may be an indifference within the participants input, the study will provide an excellent opportunity/benefit for special education teachers to correlate their experiences to one another which in turn their insight of educating exceptional students during distance learning will render specific experiences and a shared understanding on a particular issue with servicing students with disabilities.

VIDEO/AUDIO/PHOTOGRAPH:

I understand this research will be video recorded

Yes or No

and/or

I understand that this research will be audio recorded

Yes or No

CONTACT: (In order to get an explanation to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, please contact Dr. Sang Seok Nam at snam@csusb.edu.)

RESULTS: Once the research is complete, the results can be obtained after measurement of the study is met which will complete my study and disseminate the results for publishing. It will be obtained online from the Office of Graduate Studies, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino CA 92407.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:

I have read the information above and agree to participate in your study.

Or

I have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

Or

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B:
INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Interview Questions

The focus of the interview questions will be a chance to get a better insight of how teachers are adjusting to distance learning.

Delivery Method

1. In the midst of school closure, how do you deliver special education services to your students? Are there any specific programs used and your delivery method?

Effectiveness of Distance Learning

2. Do you believe that this method of delivering services is effective? If not, please explain why.

3. How effective is distance learning? How is distance learning compared to classroom instruction when it comes to delivering special education services?

Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning

4. What are the advantages (strengths) of delivering special education services via distance learning? Any disadvantages (weaknesses)?

Progress Monitoring

5. Utilizing distance learning, what difference have you experienced when it comes to tracking student data?

Types of Difficulties in Distance Learning

6. While delivering distance learning to students with disabilities, what difficulties do you experience?

Collaboration

7. In the light of this situation, what kind of collaboration do you expect from parents?

School District Support

8. What support is your school district providing during distance learning? How do they aid teachers to deliver special education services for students with disabilities?

Developed by the Researcher.

APPENDIX C:
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORMS



November 10, 2020

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Protocol Change/Modification

IRB-FY2021-54

Status: Approved

Prof. Sang Seok Nam, Prof. Jemma Kim, and Mr. Calvin Davis
COE - SpecEd Rehab&Counslg SRC
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Prof. Nam, Prof. Kim, and Mr. Davis:

This letter serves as final approval for your application to use human subjects, titled "Teaching Special Education in the midst of COVID-19: Current Conditions of delivering Special Education Services during Distance Learning" which has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB greatly appreciates your submitting the appropriate approval letter from the district. Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study. A lapse in your approval may result in your not being able to use the data collected during the lapse in your approval so ensure you keep renewing it as needed if you have not completed your study within the one-year approval period. Please also review the bolded areas below which are requirements of your approval.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Office of Academic Research website for more information at <https://www.csusb.edu/academic-research>.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following by submitting the appropriate form (modification, unanticipated/adverse event, renewal, study closure) through the online Cayuse IRB Submission System.

- 1. If you need to make any changes/modifications to your protocol submit a modification form as the IRB must review all changes before implementing in your study to ensure the degree of risk has not changed.**
- 2. If any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research study or project.**
- 3. If your study has not been completed submit a renewal to the IRB.**
- 4. If you are no longer conducting the study or project submit a study closure.**

You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

IRB #: IRB-FY2021-54

Title: Teaching Special Education in the midst of COVID-19: Current Conditions of delivering Special Education Services during Distance Learning

Creation Date: 10-6-2020

End Date:

Status: Approved

Principal Investigator: Sang Seok Nam

Review Board: CSUSB Main IRB

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type Initial	Review Type Expedited	Decision Approved
Submission Type Modification	Review Type Expedited	Decision Approved

Key Study Contacts

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