

Delivering Inclusive/Collaboration S/L Therapy in Schools

TAASLP Public School Committee

History of Inclusion

Almost since the inception of IDEA, schools across our nation have implemented inclusion in varying models. For most of the inclusive education models, the SLP has not actively participated in inclusion. Recently, however, as more schools are developing and implementing inclusive education models that are proving to be beneficial to students, school-based SLPs are becoming more involved in the inclusive/collaborative educational model.

Inclusion grew out of the civil rights movement by way of the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka* which gave all children the right to an equal education. In 1990, IDEA introduced the blueprint for educating children with special needs within the regular classroom. With each subsequent revision of IDEA, the infrastructure of inclusive education for serving children with special needs within the LRE has been refined and re-defined. Together with NCLB, IDEA's infrastructure for inclusion fosters accountability for educators and service providers.

Infrastructure of Collaboration

The School's SLP Summer Forum (8/1/09) focused on implementing the collaborative S/L model in the educational setting. Collaboration involves a purposeful, concerted team effort with the intent to meet the academic needs of the students efficiently. The members include the general and special education

teachers, SLPs, OTs, PTs and administration. Collaboration is an interactive process that involves each team member using their individual areas of expertise to help resolve the students' academic challenges. The interactivity is interdisciplinary in nature and student-centered.

Collaborative S/L Therapy

Delivery of S/L therapy services in the collaborative model can be direct, indirect and/or consultative. The basic, professionally recognized collaborative S/L therapy models include supportive teaching, complementary teaching and team/co-teaching. Supportive and complementary teaching can be implemented in the therapy room or classroom, while the setting for team/co-teaching is the classroom. Each model fosters collaboration of the team members, which is crucial to the success of inclusive/collaboration educational models. The collaborative S/L therapy model accommodates IDEA, especially in reference to LRE. The collaborative S/L therapy model is also accommodating to NCLB, as it helps students to be able to improve academic test scores. Response to Early Intervention (RTI) programs generally require services to be delivered within the classroom, thus collaborative S/L therapy models are complimentary to RTI as well.

Student Benefits

As a student-centered model, it is naturally laden with advantages for the student. Instruction is enhanced using

varying teaching modalities within meaningful contexts while being delivered within the student's natural learning environment – the classroom. The classroom curriculum serves as the core from which the language skills are taught, thereby, enabling the students to acquire skills and knowledge pertinent to curriculum/academic requirements.

Teacher Benefits

There are also benefits for the teacher in the collaborative/inclusive educational model. As the teacher and service providers plan together, there is an exchange of professional/interdisciplinary knowledge, which ultimately results in benefits for the students. The interdisciplinary relationship also allows for shared responsibilities and accountability for the students.

SLP Benefits

The collaborative S/L therapy model allows the SLP effective time and workload management. Working closely with the classroom teacher gives the SLP opportunities to observe students at risk academically, address developmental articulation patterns, gather information for the S-Team and monitor student progress within the classroom curriculum.

ASHA Support

The collaborative S/L therapy model is supported by ASHA and a position statement is posted in detail on their website. It was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Roles and Responsibilities of the School-Based SLP. ASHA's position statement emerged as a result of "reform, legal mandates and evolving professional practices". ASHA's position with regards to the roles and responsibilities of School-

Based SLPs reflect services that "promote efficient and effective outcomes for students". In collaboration, "SLPs work closely with others to meet students' needs, providing services in the context of the overall school plan and define their unique contributions to curriculum learning". www.ASHA.org

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