Unit 6

Assignment

Xavier Williams

My field of professional practice involves interacting with special needs children and youth on a daily basis. It requires adequate training especially since special needs children and youth require unique guidance and instructions so that they can achieve their greatest potentials like others. The profession also requires individuals to be patient, dedicated, caring and understanding to the needs of the children. Without these qualities, it may be difficult to navigate the challenging and busy environment of a special needs teacher. This is mainly because the profession sometimes requires teachers to work with children with severe emotional, physical and cognitive disabilities. The job requires teachers to teach life skills and basic literacy while ensuring that everyone reaches their potential. In most cases students require individualized learning experiences hence the teacher must be able to modify the curriculum to suit their needs.

**Problem Area in My Field Of Practice**

The two most significant problems in my profession that may benefit from educational research include how teachers can go about non-instructional responsibilities while handling other responsibilities and how they can deal with multiple disabilities. Although special needs teachers have been adequately trained to deal with the dynamics of special needs children, they easily become overwhelmed by other activities such as classroom assessments and attending meetings all while taking care of the needs of students. Dealing with multiple disabilities is even a bigger challenge and this forces teachers to modify their strategies and provide individualized learning. Unlike most professionals, they experience a higher rate of burnout hence the need for solutions to issues that affect them (De Stasio *et al*., 2017). I am interested in examining these issues so that special needs teachers can be more productive in their mandate

**Research Reports Analyzed**

1. Burnout in Special Needs Teachers at Kindergarten and Primary School: Investigating the Role of Personal Resources and Work Wellbeing.

2. The Potential Role of Perceived Support for Reduction of Special Education Teachers’ Burnout.

**Analysis of Article One**

The research is aimed at investigating the effect of how burnout syndrome, personal resources and demographic factors impact special needs teachers at the kindergarten and primary level. It was expected that the teachers’ personal happiness while in school and satisfaction with the job were going to reduce rates of burnouts**.** The study population involved teachers from Central Italy only. It was keen on assessing factors that affected level of burnout and if there was a difference between primary school teachers and kindergarten teachers.

This study had one hundred and ninety four participants all full time special education teachers and the method of collection of data that was used was questionnaires. Participants were asked about their happiness while in school and asked to rate it. There was also a survey on job satisfaction where they were also asked to rate it. Overall, teachers’ happiness and amount of satisfaction with the job turned out to be the aspects with the most effect on burnout and when increased, they would prevent the syndrome altogether. One limitation however, was the fact that all participants were from one region and hence did not represent the whole population of teachers in Italy. Lastly, the study was able to find out key factors that affected special education teachers which are happiness of the teachers while at school and satisfaction with the job.

**Analysis of Article Two**

This research explored the potential role of collegial support for the reduction of burnout among special needs teachers of both higher and lower secondary schools. Its aim was to show the connection between collegial support and collaboration with regular teachers and the level of burnout. The study also put into consideration teachers from socio-economically disadvantaged areas to see whether their levels of burnout would be any different. It had two hundred and seventy six participants working in both lower and higher secondary schools. In the research, both interviews and questionnaires were used to obtain data.

To be able to come up with the connection between collegial support and each burnout measure considered, analyses involving correlations were done by asking questions then evaluating the answers given. The study found that Perceived support was found to positively affect feelings of being accepted as well as job success hence lowering the level and rates of burnouts. There was however a limitation during the gathering of data since some of the teachers may not admit to depersonalization as it is not socially desirable. Lastly, the research was able to establish that teachers in lower secondary schools were more prone to burnouts due to the transition of students from primary school to secondary school.

**Examining Transferability of Research Findings**

The problem area I researched on was burnouts amongst special education teachers The two articles both agree on the fact that these teachers are more likely to experience burnouts due to the nature of their students and workload in general. To avoid or reduce the chances of having burnouts the articles suggest creating a better working environment for the teachers. For there to be such an environment, both teachers and parents need to build a support system whereby they will be able to work together hence reducing the pressure that teachers often go through alone.

Participants in both the research reports and my professional practice are special education teachers hence most of the findings apply to it and no major differences can be noted. Secondly, there is not much difference between the sites and my professional practice as both involve classrooms and special needs children. The researchers and participants definitely have the knowledge and experience to influence my practice in that the participants are also special education teachers and the researchers are well versed in the topic. The research findings offer good insights since the special needs teachers in my practice will be able to know what the causes of their burnouts are and things which they can do to reduce the chances of getting it.

**Conclusion**

Having reviewed both journal articles, it is clear that burnouts are a challenge that most if not all special education teachers face. To avoid this, the teachers should be given adequate support by their fellow teachers which will contribute to their happiness in school and in turn reduce the chances of a burnout. Secondly parents should be wary of the pressure they put on this teachers as they are already facing enough challenges as special education teachers but should instead be part of the support system. When this is done then the teachers will have a more conducive working environment.

References

Langher, V., Caputo, A., & Ricci, M. (2017). The potential role of perceived support for reduction of special education teachers’ burnout. *International Journal of Educational Psychology, 6*(2), 120-147.

De Stasio, S., Fiorilli, C., Benevene, P., Uusitalo‐Malmivaara, L., & Chiacchio, C. D. (2017). Burnout in special needs teachers at kindergarten and primary school: investigating the role of personal resources and work wellbeing. *Psychology in the Schools*, *54*(5), 472-486.