

Research to Practice: K-12 Scholarship Journal

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Letter from the Editors

We are very excited to present the Fall 2013 edition of the Virginia Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children *Research to Practice: K-12 Scholarship Journal*. This issue includes four articles which we believe will reach a wide range of individuals all focused on one united goal: meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities in the K-12 setting.

The first article, titled *Family Expectations: One Dimension of Effective Family-Teacher Partnerships* was authored by Suzanne B. Thomas, Jan Davis Mallett, and Frank Dykes. Thomas and her colleagues studied the expectations of 257 families of students receiving special education services and found that individualized approaches to working with families are needed as their results revealed that no response profile fits any one family or any one set of child characteristics.

The second study was conducted by Ann McCarty and is titled *Co-Teaching in the Inclusion Classroom: Teacher Perspectives and Practices*. Through survey research with general and special education teachers McCarty explored the variables that directly affect the success of the co-teaching partnership. Findings from this study suggest important factors include how the team is formed, training specific to co-teaching and relationship-building, the availability and utilization of scheduled planning time, collaboration in grading, and on-going administrative support.

Jennifer Walker authored the third article, *A Synthesis of Research on Vocabulary Interventions for Secondary Students with Learning Disabilities*. In this research review Walker used meta-analytic strategies to synthesize findings from 10 research studies published in peer reviewed journals between 1985 and 2012 all focusing on investigations of vocabulary interventions with students with learning disabilities in secondary classrooms. The findings suggest vocabulary instructional techniques are more effective than teaching students how to use definitions or context clues. Additionally, while students have difficulty maintaining growth from most vocabulary interventions, mnemonics demonstrates more positive results.

In their article titled *The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS): A Strategy to Improve Communication and Behavior for Students with Autism*, Carole Ramser and Michelle Thompson present the case study of a young boy named “David” who has autism. Through their case study narrative and review of the available research, they present a compelling case for the use of a picture based communication system (i.e., PECS) as a useful strategy for improving communication and behavior problems for students with autism.

With articles addressing timely and important topics such as creating meaningful family-teacher partnerships, identifying factors associated with effective co-teaching relationships, selecting interventions for increasing vocabulary skills in secondary students with learning disabilities, and equipping children with autism and communication disorders with a strategy to communicate with their parents, peers, and teachers, we trust this issue will reach a wide ranging audience. While each article presents findings from research (e.g., survey research, meta-analytic synthesis, literature

review), all authors have been intentional to ensure that the research findings presented are clearly related to practice in order to provide teachers in the K-12 setting practical tools and strategies for meeting the diverse needs of the students and families they serve.

We wish to thank the authors for their contribution to this issue and the members of the *Research to Practice: K-12 Scholarship Journal* editorial board for their careful review and thoughtful suggestions for improving the articles presented in this issue.

Sincerely,

Lucinda S. Spaulding, Ph.D. & Sharon M. Pratt, Ed.D.

Editors, *Research to Practice: K-12 Scholarship Journal*