

Exploring Factors to Close the Research-to-Practice Gap in Deaf Education

Brynne Powell, M.E.D., MPH Teachers College, Columbia University

Introduction

There is universal agreement in special education that effective, research-based practices address the needs of diverse students with disabilities¹. Without research being produced, best practice cannot be awarded to children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Few studies have addressed the research-to-practice gap in education^{2,3,4}. This study explored the root causes of this gap in deaf education from the perspectives of teachers of the deaf.

Research Questions

1. What is the association between past experiences with research and current research interests and practices by professionals in deaf education?
2. What supports do teachers of the deaf need to interact with research?

Methods

- Semi-structured interviews via Zoom
- 10 interview questions
- 3 Participants (convenience sampling)
 - Teachers of the deaf at Option school
 - 2 in preschool program
 - 1 in early intervention
 - Females
 - Varying educational backgrounds
- Transcriptions analyzed through open, inductive coding via NVIVO

Preliminary Findings

- Association between current relationship with research and prior experience/personal interest
 - Teachers who have “casual relationships” with research → desire to be more engaged; have personal interest in research; have prior experience in conducting research at undergraduate level
 - Teachers who have “nonexistent relationships” with research → no current interest in participating in research; did not enter deaf education field with prior research experience
- Commonalities regarding desired supports for teachers of the deaf:
 - Exposure to research and statistical training beginning in graduate school
 - Professional development about conducting research
 - Increased funding and time to participate in research
 - Stronger expectations/communication from a mentor



References

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