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ABSTRACT

In response to the need for a more rich description of school professionals perceptions of the Instructional Consultation Team (IC-Team) model, interviews and surveys were conducted in one urban school to explore staff members experiences with and perceived impacts of the IC-Team in their school. Several major themes were derived from the analysis of transcripts and surveys. This paper describes in detail these themes and sub-categories derived from the qualitative analysis. The themes expressed are highly encouraging as they reflect many qualities of effective schools and are consistent with the literature on the benefits and outcomes of consultation. Additionally, they support the fact that, once implemented at a high level, the IC-Team does have positive impacts upon staff members, students, and the school as a whole. Suggestions for future research are also presented, including further confirmation of themes with more schools and exploration of similarities and differences among those at differing levels of implementation of the IC-Teams models. (Contains 10 references.) (GCP)

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School Professionals' Perceptions of the Instructional Consultation Team: A Qualitative Analysis

Poster Session Presented at the APA Convention
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ABSTRACT

In response to the need for a more rich description of school professionals' perceptions of the Instructional Consultation Team (IC-Team) model, interviews and surveys were conducted in one urban school in Mid-Atlantic United States area to explore staff members' experiences with and perceived impacts of the IC-Team in their school. Several major themes were derived from the analysis of transcripts and surveys.

One theme that emerged from the interviews was the development of professional skills, specifically, data-based decision making and improved instruction. Knowledge and skill development in the areas of curriculum-based assessment, collecting baseline and ongoing data, and creation of specific academic interventions was enhanced through participants' experiences with the IC process.

These changes in skill seemed to result in changes in professional beliefs about student problems as evidenced by a second theme that emerged from the data. Participants expressed a change in beliefs and practices through their new focus on using a problem-solving process to address academic issues rather than focusing on student deficits.

An additional theme was the change in staff mood and motivation. Many of the participants recognized either an increase in motivation, feeling of personal reward, or a decrease in stress as a result of participating in the IC process.

The impacts that the IC-Team had either on individual student success, the whole class through teacher generalization of skills learned, or the whole school culture of collaboration and support were also salient themes. As teachers began learning and using new skills, both referred and non-referred students benefited from the new strategies and an increase in differentiated instruction. The staff benefited from the increase in collaboration, dialogue, and encouragement they received by being paired with another school-based professional.

Lastly, a theme emerged surrounding the challenges of the IC-Team during its initiation. Primarily, participants commented on the amount of time it takes for the IC-Team to become effective and efficient when first implemented and the frustration that surrounds the beginning stages of that change effort.

This paper will describe in detail these themes and sub-categories derived from the qualitative analysis. The themes expressed are highly encouraging as they reflect many qualities of effective schools and are consistent with the literature on the benefits and outcomes of consultation. Additionally, they support the fact that, once implemented at a high level, the IC-Team does have positive impacts upon staff members, students, and the school as a whole.

In addition to a detailed discussion of the analysis the paper will also discuss research limitations of this study including issues related to sample size and diversity of staff professional roles represented in the interviews. Suggestions for future research are also presented, including further confirmation of themes with more schools and exploration of similarities and differences among those at differing levels of implementation of the IC-Teams model.

INTRODUCTION

As the need for school reform increases, there is a growing body of literature surrounding consultation in school settings. The literature suggests that consultation is an important agent for change and school reform. Consultation has been noted for increasing the collaborative nature of schools thus improving education for all children. As a result, many models have been designed to implement consultation, collaborative problem-solving, and/or intervention team services in schools and school systems (Bahr, Whitten, Dieker, Kocarek, & Manson, 1999; Rosenfield & Gravois, 1996; Gutkin & Curtis, 1999, Rosenfield & Gravois, 1999).

One model in particular, the Instructional Consultation Team Model (IC-T) developed by Rosenfield and Gravois (1996), is a team approach that uses consultation principles to reach two primary outcomes in schools. The first principle is to create a conceptual and behavioral shift away from the medical model paradigm (Rosenfield & Gravois, 1996), which proposes that students' problems are internal and not the result of an environment or instructional mismatch. The second principle is to develop a more collaborative and problem solving school culture. Founded on three critical assumptions, the IC-T Model is working towards changing the way that school professionals think about students' problems, pedagogy, assessment, and collaboration. The three beliefs that guide the model are: a) that all children can learn, b) the critical area for change is the student-teacher relationship and instructional management strategies, and c) effective schools are high in collaboration and problem solving among colleagues (Rosenfield, 1992).

The IC-Team Model (Rosenfield & Gravois, 1996) is a comprehensive approach designed to promote collaborative problem-solving and to assist teachers with classroom concerns. It is a collaborative multidisciplinary team process, in which teachers collaborate with case managers to ensure that students are working at an appropriate instructional level. The development, training, and structure of the team design are outlined in Rosenfield and Gravois (1996). This paper will focus on some of the aspects of the IC Team model, which set it apart from a traditional consultation approach. In the IC process, much focus is placed on the use of curriculum-based assessments and data-collection techniques to assess students' current level of functioning and to guide decisions about academic and behavioral interventions to promote student success. In addition, graphing is used with the case managers and referring teachers in order to encourage data-based decision making. Baseline data is collected, as well as the results of the intervention. In a review of school-based intervention teams, Bahr, Whitten, Dieker, Kocarek, and Manson (1999) found that graphing results of interventions, comparing pre- and post- intervention data, and using specific intervention practices are likely to enhance team effectiveness and student outcomes. This process creates innovative and productive changes in the ways schools operate as collaboration and problem-solving are increased within a school culture. Gravois, Rosenfield, and Vail (1998) assert,

School reform efforts that focus upon the professional development of educators' skills in collaboration, problem solving, data based decision making and assessments that are curriculum-based provide the greatest hope for supporting

short-term achievement gains and long-term cultural changes in schools that readies schools for the challenges of the next century (p. 1).

The Instructional Consultation Teams model (IC-Teams) has been implemented since 1991 in multiple schools and across multiple counties. It first began in Howard County Public Schools in the state of Maryland and was then piloted in one Baltimore City school in 1995-1996. It was then implemented in eight additional Baltimore City schools in 1996-1997. Currently, there are nine Instructional Consultation Team project elementary schools and three IC-Team project middle schools within Baltimore City. This study will only focus on the elementary application of the model, in one school.

Comprehensive program evaluation is a critical component of Instructional Consultation Teams. Each year, evaluation information is collected on the following: level of implementation of the model, as measured by the Level of Implementation Scale; student outcomes, as measured by goal attainment of the Student Documentation Form (SDF); accuracy of documentation on the SDF; evaluations of training; teacher satisfaction, as measured through surveys; and the percentage of students referred to and placed in special education. This information is reported yearly in the Instructional Consultation Baltimore City End of the Year Progress Report.

As a part of the comprehensive evaluation described above, teachers are surveyed each year to determine their satisfaction with the IC-Team model and changes in their instructional practices that occur as a result of participating in the process. Teachers are asked to rate anonymously their experiences on a five-point Likert scale, with five being 'Very Satisfied' and one being 'Not Satisfied At All.' In the most recent Baltimore City IC-Teams End of the Year Progress Report, teachers generally reported being within the satisfied range. An additional questionnaire is given to determine the number of instructional changes teachers made as a result of involvement with the IC-Team process. The survey includes five categories: class management, grouping of students, instructional assessment, instructional modifications, and teaching strategies. Specific practices are listed within each category for teachers to check if they used them *as a result* of IC. In the 1999-2000 report, teachers reported the greatest number of changes in teaching strategies and instructional modifications. This survey was revised for the 2000-

2001 school year. The revisions and results will be discussed further in later sections of this paper.

Statement of the Problem

While the previously discussed information is critical for program evaluation and provides documentation of the positive impact of the project, the survey methodology used did not fully describe the impact. As a result, there is still a need to explore staff members' specific views of their experiences with the IC-Team model and the impact they feel it has upon their professional practice, the school, and the students. This study will include, for the first time, evaluation information from a qualitative perspective on the impact and perceptions of staff members within an IC-T model school. This will allow for rich descriptions of the human experience with this collaborative problem-solving model.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the impacts of the Instructional Consultation Team on school staff members, students, and instruction. This study included, for the first time, two different types of information from a qualitative perspective on the impact and perceptions of staff members within an IC-Team school. Interviews and surveys were used as the method to explore participants' perspectives and experiences.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the research:

1. What are school staff members' experiences with and perceptions of the Instructional Consultation Team Model?
2. How have those experiences impacted staff members?
3. How has participating in the Instructional Consultation Team Model impacted staff members' professional skills (e.g., instructional practices, data-based decision making skills, and attributions of students' problems)?

METHODOLOGY

The investigation of the staff's perceptions of IC-Team impacts was conducted through a two-part study. Data were collected in one school at two different points in time using two different methods to capture participants' experiences and perceptions. Open-ended interviews were conducted at the end of the 1999-2000 school year with 5 members of the school's staff. Survey data was then collected at the end of the 2000-2001 school year to provide confirming and/or disconfirming evidence for the results of the first part of the study.

Site Selection

The school was selected due to the high implementation level of the IC-Team, as well as the interest of the principal in this type of research information. The selected school consists of approximately 25 teachers and 400 students and has been an IC-Team project school since the 1995-96 school year, when the project was first piloted in Baltimore City. At the time of the interviews, the end of the 1999-2000 school year, the school was finishing its fourth year of implementation. Although the IC-Team has been present in the school for five years total, the first year is regarded as a training year, the school is now considered to be at High Implementation, which means that the degree to which the IC model is actually being implemented meets the benchmark of 80% or higher. The school had an Overall Level of Implementation score of 93% for the 1998-1999 school year and 87% in the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, the years of the present studies. Furthermore, in the 1998-1999 End of the Year Progress Report, this school was reported to have 100% teacher satisfaction with the model, as measured by the Satisfaction with Instructional Consultation Survey.

IC-Teams, as an innovation, is becoming institutionalized in this school setting. The continuous high level of implementation and teacher satisfaction demonstrates the correct use and high support of the IC-Team model in this school. In spite of a number of staff changes, including a change in principal and IC-Team facilitator, the innovation has

continued to be successful over the years. The IC-Team has also become embedded into the regular structures of the school through their regularly scheduled team meetings, principal-facilitator meetings, and faculty updates. These are all characteristics of innovations that have reached institutionalization in a system (Rosenfield & Gravois, 1996).

In sum, the school was selected specifically to explore the impacts of an IC-Team once it has both been implemented at high levels and has become part of the school's regular way of operating.

Study I

Participants

Five professionals from one Baltimore City School were interviewed for the current study. They included the team facilitator, the principal, and three teachers (a case manager, an experienced referring teacher, and a new referring teacher). Staff members from all different positions and roles were invited to participate in order to determine the impact made on a variety of levels (teaching staff, support staff, administration).

Participants volunteered for participation in this project. All who volunteered were selected. Informed consent for the use of the interview data was gained through a written informed consent form prior to interviewing. In addition to gaining consent for interview participation, participants were asked for written permission to include direct quotes in the report of results. Permission to involve human subjects in this research project was granted by the University of Maryland College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee and the Baltimore City Public Schools Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Division.

Procedure

Each volunteer was interviewed, at the end of the school year, for 45-60 minutes using an open-ended interview format. The interviews were each audiotaped and transcribed. Each transcription was color coded to maintain the individual responses, while protecting participants' identities.

The interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) qualitative grounded theory methods. The transcripts were reviewed and similar themes and categories were highlighted. It is these themes and categories that were developed and will be discussed in the following section.

Study II

Participants

The subjects selected for this study were all teachers who had referred a student or students to the IC-Team and had worked with a case manager through at least the intervention implementation stage of the IC problem-solving process. Completion of the survey was voluntary, but highly encouraged as it is a regular part of the IC-Team program evaluation data collection process. All forms that were completed and submitted were used for review, and six teachers completed the surveys. However, some teachers completed more than one form if they worked on cases with different case managers. Teachers were instructed to complete one survey per case manager. Therefore, the total number of surveys completed and used for analysis was 15. A total of 17 surveys were distributed, making it an 88% return rate.

Procedures

One year after the interviews of Study One was conducted, survey data were collected to obtain further information about the impact and perceptions of the IC-Team at this particular school. As a part of the regular data collection of the IC-Team program evaluation process, the Satisfaction with Instructional Consultation Survey was revised and distributed to all IC-Team schools at the end of 2000-2001.

The survey was originally designed to measure teachers' satisfaction on eight different items (i.e., Ease of access; Timeliness of response, Case Managers support in

identifying the problem, etc.) using a Likert scale from Very Satisfied (5) to Not at all Satisfied (1). Three items used a slightly different scale; teachers were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the case manager, how helpful the case manager was, and how confident the teacher would feel implementing a similar intervention in the future. Additionally, a separate portion of the survey used a checklist format for teachers to indicate any new strategies and skills they learned as a result of working with their IC-Team case manager. After discovering some limitations to the survey's original format, the survey was revised from the checklist format to an open-ended question format to allow teachers to provide specific information about their use of the IC-Team, their appreciations, concerns, and suggestions. The new version of the survey was used this year to collect teacher satisfaction information.

Teachers' responses to the first part of the survey were compiled to determine their satisfaction on the 11-items. The mean was calculated and reported for each item. For the second portion of the survey, the responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed and categorized using the themes derived from Study I. The data were analyzed to determine confirming and disconfirming evidence of the original themes that emerged.

RESULTS

Study I

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the impacts of the Instructional Consultation Team on school staff members, students, and instruction. Three general themes emerged from the data:

- Professional changes as a result of working with the IC Team
- Impacts of the IC-Team
- Challenges of Implementing the IC-Team

Professional Changes

Throughout the interviews it became apparent that the staff members had experienced professional changes as a result of participating in the Instructional Consultation process. Professional changes occurred in three different domains: skills, beliefs, and affect. Each domain will be discussed in terms of the commonalities, which emerged from the interviews.

Skills

Consultation literature supports the fact that teachers report an increase in professional skills as a result of consulting with a colleague (Gutkin, 1980). However, the definition of professional skills still remains vague. In an effort to further develop an understanding of the professional skills that are changed as a result of consultation, sub-categories were formed. The two main themes that emerged repeatedly within professional skill development were an increase in data-based decision making and learning of new instructional strategies.

“Thinking in Terms of Data”. All five of the participants commented on how participating in Instructional Consultation has impacted them in terms of data-based decision making. This theme emerged within and across all interviews. At this school, it seems as if data-based decision making permeates the school culture. The principal noted this as one of the biggest impacts of Instructional Consultation:

...getting people to think in terms of data. That’s wonderful because we educators are notorious for not making data driven decisions. That has sharpened our skills and allowed us to make decisions based on an exhaustive collection of data based on behaviors of students, teachers, and interactions of variables associated with the school climate.

Many of the participants mentioned the importance of collecting baseline data, monitoring progress on an ongoing basis, using the graphing procedure, and then making intervention decisions based on those results. The knowledge and use of academic assessments to determine current performance was also highlighted by four out of five of the participants. In describing their experiences with assessments, participants mentioned a wide variety of curriculum based assessments that they had learned and used through

the Instructional Consultation process including: running records, informal reading inventories, sight word recognition lists, spelling inventories, and checklists or anecdotal records. Above and beyond the knowledge of assessments for the purpose of planning interventions/instruction within the IC case, one new teacher commented on the use of assessments in the daily planning of classroom instruction:

Constantly collecting data, we collected data on behavior issues, but we also collected data on the academic cases and by learning that process, I became very data driven so to speak. It helped me with my assessment. For example, if I'm teaching a certain skill, I want to know by the end of my lesson if they have mastered it and if there are students who have not mastered it, I'd like to know who they are so I can flexibly group and reteach the skills until they all master them.

In this case, the data-based decision making skills and problem solving process used for a specific IC case transferred to other areas and decisions that need to be made.

"Adding to the Instructional Handbag." Another major theme expressed by all participants was the learning of new instructional practices. Four out of the five participants personally experienced an increase in knowledge of specific assessments, interventions and strategies, which enhanced their instructional practices. The changes in instructional practices that seemed most salient were the increase in differentiation of instruction, flexible grouping, and better classroom management.

Two of the participants stressed that their experiences with Instructional Consultation has provided them with resources to pull from when planning instruction. It is evident that the specific strategies that they learned, (e.g., expert pages, word searches, strategies for learning DOLCH words, chunking, etc.) through case management or the Instructional Consultation Manual, are being transferred to the instruction of the whole class.

The thing with expert pages and word searches, we do that constantly in our rooms and we only referred one IC kid all year, but that's just stuff we do all the time in our classrooms now because its just become such a part of our instructional handbag. Whenever you need a strategy there's just something in there that always seems to fit what you are looking for. So I'm always willing to try to use the things my team has taught me that are in the manual. It makes my knowledge base a little bit more. I have more to pull from... It was really strange. I guess you learn by experience, but I feel like what IC teaches is very applicable and very useful and it works.

The Instructional Consultation experience changed one new teacher's instructional practices as well. The teacher reports getting important feedback from the case managers regarding the teaching that was happening in the classroom. The teacher then made many efforts to include those new strategies learned from the feedback into lesson plans. The teacher's words illustrate how, in addition to the case management and consultation that was occurring, collaboration as a part of the school culture provided an opportunity for more instructional feedback as well:

I had (case manager) in the class and she was my case manager for (student) so she was in the classroom taking data. She would sit in the back and record information about his behavior. In that, she also observed some of my teaching styles. She also made a...she brought it to my attention that I wasn't getting...I was moving on with my lesson before the kids were ready. I was sort of getting in the train and taking off before all the passengers were on board. So it was one simple observation that she made and now I'm much more aware of 100% attention before I begin. I look back on it now and I kind of cringe on how many lessons I started without all the children. It was as simple as she told me to write

an objective on the board. That gets the kids ready, tells them what to expect. She suggested like if you're bringing the children from their seats to the floor, obviously some kids are going to be there before the other kids and you could just do flashcards, while the kids are getting ready to sit on the floor and those who are already there could work on flashcards and when everyone is ready you can move into the text. That was a way of using...getting the kids engaged before the lesson. That was just a suggestion that she made based on her observation in here and it's helped me tremendously.

As is true for so many new teachers, this new teacher also expressed a need to change the classroom management procedures in the classroom. The teacher felt that the IC experience was invaluable in that regard:

I don't have a degree in education...so as a new teacher it has pretty much been invaluable. As far as classroom management, which is the most difficult thing for me, I picked up some pointers in the IC process that have helped my management issues.

In so many words, both this new teacher and the more experienced teacher above highlighted the usefulness of IC for their continued professional development. They both expressed the fact that, despite their different educational backgrounds, they did not come into teaching with practical instructional strategies for each situation and that IC helped them to develop those critical skills.

Beliefs

Another change that emerged from the data was the change in professional beliefs. The participants expressed an emphasis on using a problem-solving process rather than labeling students with internal problems. Additionally, the participants made many comments about the importance of focusing on academic goals. It was clear that

they now hold the belief that focusing on academic issues will result in positive behavioral changes.

“Understanding the Dynamic of Student Success.” Here, dynamic is the key word. The participants all noted the important dynamic that is involved with student learning. They mentioned the importance of acknowledging the instruction, the task, and the student’s current performance. This notion, that the problem is not internal to the child and that the focus of intervention should be within the regular education classroom, was a strong theme, which was supported by comments from five out of the five participants. Two of the participants commented on the fact that the Instructional Consultation process has decreased referrals to special education and that it provides valuable information for those cases that do go on to evaluation. The IC-Team Facilitator clearly expressed these issues:

This belief, this understanding that we need to look at other things besides just the kid. We need to look at the environment, the curriculum, the pacing, and the instruction...Understanding the dynamic of what goes into a student being successful, realizing that it goes much more beyond the student and their skill level.

Interviewer: And that’s something that you see has been impacted by IC?

I definitely think so. I doubt that would have occurred just naturally. It’s funny because the amount of referrals our IC-Team gets is almost three times that for special education testing. That really means a lot. People don’t see this panacea of special education anymore because it’s inclusion, all the kids are together anyway, and they realize that a lot of the special education stuff really doesn’t help them as a teacher. It may provide supports for the child, which they may or may not need, but it doesn’t help them as a teacher specifically. They understand that a WISC is not going to give them all of these classroom interventions and

they realize that, but a curriculum-based assessment will. So for them to access a CBA through the IC Team, plus we move at a much faster rate than a special education referral does, so...

Although, one might expect the school psychologist to hold this view, it is particularly important to note that comments such as this spanned all of the participants. The new teacher also came to this realization through the experience of working with two cases:

I look at the students who I thought were trouble makers and I realize that I allow them to do that. I'm really realizing that teachers can change their behavior to change the behavior of the children. And what IC will do, will help you make those changes yourself to make you as a teacher change and that will in turn effect the children and they will respond so IC helps make those small tweaks and changes in your teaching, which will show up as a more managed classroom. Again, (case manager) mentioned things I could do, not so much what the children could do, but changes in me which the kids then responded to, were able to...the behaviors I wanted to see. I recommend it hands-down.

Lastly, a more experienced referring teacher also notices the changes that have occurred as a result of participating in IC. This teacher alludes to the fact that in the past the problem was seen to be internal to the child, therefore the child would need to be referred to an outside source, but now the teacher realizes that changes can be made within the classroom to support the student.

I think it's probably, it's definitely, cut down on ARD referrals. I think it has also been helpful when it comes to the point when you know they still need that ARD

referral. You know you've tried everything you could possibly try and that's a good feeling. It's as if you don't give up on the child until you've tried everything and then you need to take it to another place. Where in the past you probably would refer all of these kids to ARD and now we're not, and some of these kids you can help before they need to be referred.

"Addressing the Academics." Another theme expressed by all five participants, is the change in the staff to focus on academic goals and interventions. The teachers described this in terms of the cases that they were working with and the specific academic goals that were in place. The team facilitator and systems manager were both able to comment on the more global picture of the trend in the school to focus more on academic cases. Here the team facilitator compares the experience of working at a non-IC school to this school and provides some examples for the increased focus on academics:

...most of our referrals are academic referrals not behavioral referrals and even if there were some behavior of concern, academics always took the forefront, which I found kind of amazing. Because I know when I did consultation before, at my other schools, it was always about behavior, behavior, behavior, and teachers didn't really identify academics as a major problem. But here, a lot of academic referrals, using lots of data, almost every case, no matter what the referral, a curriculum based assessment was done, just to get an idea of where they were academically...Just in listening to the teachers and the language, they say, I had this one teacher who said, "he never pays attention, but I wouldn't pay attention to if I couldn't read." I mean, just they could see that connection right there and said, "oh, I think we need to focus on the reading and then the attention might go up after that." I didn't have to say a thing.

A case manager also hypothesizes that the decrease in behavioral referrals is directly related to the fact that teachers are now focusing on academics:

I think that the behaviors are decreasing. I saw with our IC cases they started out being mostly behavioral three years ago and we've seen a decrease...I don't think we even had any behavioral referrals this year. We had all academic referrals, so I think the teachers are addressing the academics, which may have not always happened in the past, which would have led to behavioral problems.

Affect

Many of the participants made references to the affective change that they felt as a result of participating in the IC process. Four out of five of the participants recognized either an increase in motivation, a feeling of personal reward, or a decrease in stress.

"Motivation and Mental Health." A few quotes illustrate the true sense of relief or encouragement that the IC-Team provides:

What probably is the greatest impact was my um mental health. I think when you can manage and you have the support and you have a way out or a way to...when you know there's hope. There's hope with IC. That takes the load off so you're much more, you can do the job more, you're just less stressed and have a more positive outlook as a teacher. So it benefits you personally and it's going to naturally spread.

OK. I think that we have a lot less stress. I mean if I didn't have (case manager) to talk about (student) I would have quit by now. I probably would have lost my mind because of this child. It relieves a lot of stress. It makes you feel like

there's...like you're sick and you can go to a doctor. There's help. You can go to an IC person. That it's not so scary.

Like I said it has been a really great year. You do a lot of work, but it's good work. Work that you feel good at the end of the day. It's good because you feel like you've accomplished a lot, not like when you are exhausted and your morale is down. It's really neat work and I can't imagine doing anything else as a part of my job.

Interviewer: So it's a morale booster for you?

Yeah, it's a good kind of tired at the end of the day. It's nice and working with such great folks, like I said, kind of revives you.

Impacts

The second overarching theme that developed is the perceived impacts of the presence of the Instructional Consultation Team in the school. The impacts spanned from individual students, to whole classes, to the entire school. Each section will be discussed in terms of the specific impacts that were perceived at each level.

The Student

"Student Success." The primary purpose of Instructional Consultation is to meet the presenting needs of the individual student who is referred. Therefore, it is not surprising that individual student success appeared in four out of the five participants' responses. Most of the participants related stories of the individual students that were served through their cases. They cited the ongoing monitoring and data collection as the documentation of the student success. Student success took many forms and was dependent on the goal that was set during problem-identification. For example, there were many reading improvement success stories, as well as positive behavior increases and negative behavior decreases. Teachers also shared comments about individual students' increase in motivation or self-confidence, measured informally through their

observation of the process. They mentioned that having an additional person to provide positive feedback and support to the student was a contributing factor.

Interestingly, two participants highlighted the impact of Instructional Consultation on individual students who were new to the school. Apparently, the IC process is used at this school for many new students as a way to assess them and support them in the transition to the new setting and instructional materials that they will encounter.

Most salient, was the impact upon the student that resulted from teachers learning new strategies to modify instruction. Students were impacted as teachers gained new ways to think about individual students. One teacher states,

I think that being a teacher you know that kids are going to learn differently, but in all of my classes they never really taught us any concrete things that we could do to increase student performances.

In this situation, the teacher knew the benefit of differentiating instruction, but it wasn't until her experience with IC that she was actually able to put her beliefs into practice. These changes in teachers' instruction and instructional planning illustrate the major way that students are impacted as a result of IC.

The Class

Although the primary goal of IC is to meet the needs of the individual students who are referred for case management, a secondary goal is to enhance teachers' abilities to use the problem-solving method to meet the needs of all of the students in the classroom. Two themes emerged, which are consistent with this goal and illustrate the impacts that Instructional Consultation has on the class as a whole. The two themes reflect the teacher's transfer or generalization of skills learned in IC to the whole class or to individual students in the class with similar problems to those that they have previously referred.

"My Class Could Really Use This!" Very similar to concept of adding to the "instructional handbag," is this concept of generalizing what was learned from an IC case to the whole class. Four out of five participants acknowledged that they would use what they learned through case management with the entire class. Specifically, positive

reinforcement methods and DOLCH word practice, using drill sandwich and pocket word methods, were two of the interventions adjusted to use with the whole class. When asked what the impact of IC was on the whole class, the response was almost always the change in teaching that occurred as a result of what was learned from working on the case. One teacher recalls:

I will mention this. The strategies that I learned through the IC program were for individual students, but they could be applied to the whole class. I think that's the most valuable, what I got out of the IC program.

Another teacher confirms the perceived value of IC for impacting the whole class, as well as her instructional practices:

Very helpful because the one strategy that we worked with the little girl last year and the little boy that was in my class, I used that strategy with my whole class this year, all of the students that I had in my class this year. So that was helpful, cause we came up with that plan and I thought, well I could do this with all of my children not just these two children and it was helpful with all of them.

"Maybe I Won't Have to Refer." A slight differentiation was made between impacts on the whole class and impacts on different students within the class. Many participants also noted that they would use the problem-solving strategies and interventions learned in one case with future students who demonstrated similar problems. One teacher, specifically emphasized how this will allow for students with different problems to be attended to:

the things that I do with those students I know I can do with other students that maybe I won't even have to refer because if you see a similar problem then you can remember well we did this with this kid let me try it before I even have to refer him or her. That can carry on to another child you know. If I have someone

similar to him that needs the same type of help, I could do that with him and maybe refer someone who has a different problem.

The case manager saw this as being true for teachers across the school who have had experiences with Instructional Consultation:

I think to some extent the staff is so familiar with IC so the reason we're seeing not as much referrals is because teachers feel so comfortable doing their own interventions in their classrooms without having a formal referral and going through the process.

The School

The major theme that emerged regarding impacts on the entire school was that of collaboration and support being valued. One of the teachers expressed the value of "meeting with experienced professionals," which occurs as a result of Instructional Consultation. This next section will provide quotes that illustrate the collaboration and support, which is evident in the school.

"Meeting with Experienced Professionals." Collaboration and support, as discussed by all five participants, are major outcomes of the IC-Team being in the school. Collaboration was elaborated on in terms of the importance of dialogue among colleagues, shared responsibility, decrease in isolation, high esteem for coworkers, and being open to as well as seeking feedback. The principal shares his view of collaboration in the school:

Collaboration is a biggie. Teaching can be a very isolating experience. However, the more isolated one is, the least effective that one person is. So IC has contributed to individual collective school success of effectiveness, but that's not a mystery. Any time you have collaboration, you're going to have statistically a higher degree of success or effectiveness measured by many means. People are willing to draw on other resources, other peoples' resources, other peoples'

strengths to help facilitate improvement, student improvement and that's what we're about.

In addition, many of the teachers talk about the importance of being able to seek feedback from their colleagues in a supportive and non-evaluative way. They feel that the IC process has contributed to that occurrence in the school. One teacher offers:

Also, in the IC process, meeting with other teachers in a private setting where no one is around and you can just kind of have heart to heart talks about issues and teaching. It's related to the cases, but kind of extended to the bigger picture of teaching, so that was nice. Because these are experienced teachers that I was meeting with, so meeting with experienced professionals. They um, it's kind of an educational process for me too. It really is. They pick up some ideas too, so they learn as well. So it's this give and take so it's kind of nice.

Although an increase in communication between staff members is occurring across the school, one participant articulates that IC further helps by encouraging consultants and consultees to go beyond "talks" with teachers and move into collaboration. This teacher says,

There's help. You can go to an IC person. That it's not so scary. I mean you talk at lunch with your colleagues about your students, "oh this child this, and this child that," but you don't go into as much detail as you do. You don't try and if it doesn't work try something else.

With collaboration also comes support and encouragement, as one teacher suggests:

...sometimes it's hard to go to someone and let them know that you have a problem or that you need help. That's a very hard thing to do but it's (IC) such a

comfortable process that you don't feel like you're a failure. You know it's hard to go to someone and say, "I can't deal with this. I need help. Why can't I do it?" and it's such a comfortable feeling that you can go and work with someone else.

This same teacher also repeatedly came back to the theme of support and validation provided by the case manager. The process of continuously meeting to review the data and progress towards the set goal helped the teacher remain objective, as well as motivated to continue. Without this continued collaboration and support, the teacher may have given up on the intervention too soon. The teacher's words echo this claim:

And the case manager would say "look what he knew. He knew eleven letters in the alphabet and now he knows all of them. He didn't know any sounds and now he knows 54 of the sounds." The case manager would encourage me, whereas I'm looking at it as he's made progress, but not the progress I want and the case manager would make me feel good about the progress we did make and that was a nice part of it. You know, where the other teachers weren't as in tune with the child's progress because they weren't working with him and they couldn't give me that feeling that my case manager gave me. My case manager always made me feel like I was doing great things even though I felt the student was still behind.

It was clear from the many comments that illustrated these themes that this school both values and experiences collaboration and support.

Challenges

"No Quick Fix"

There were a few themes which illustrated the participants' perceived challenges associated with the Instructional Consultation Team. This may be due to the question format and will be discussed as a possible limitation to the study in the next section.

However, the one challenge theme that did emerge was that it takes time for the team to begin to be effective once it is implemented in the school.

Two staff members recalled that during the first year of implementation the team was slow to get back to teachers about their referrals. Equally as frustrating, they mentioned that, once assigned a case manager, the meeting times were inconsistent so little progress was made. Both staff members did, however, note that the following year there was great improvement. This quote shows the strong feeling attached with the slow change process in the team's beginning:

When it first started here I was very discouraged with it, to be quite honest. I had a lot of children who needed help and I filled out all the referrals and it was months and no one even got back to me... Then the next year here we had a new person who was in charge of it and that was wonderful last year. She was immediate response...I mean I'm telling you when it was first here, I thought, "this program is a joke! These people are getting all of this money and this program is an absolute joke!" but then it was new people and a total turn around and it became such a positive thing.

It is interesting to note that these concerns were expressed by those staff members who were at the school in the early stages of the IC team's development. It will be important to determine how level of implementation may affect the themes found within staff members' perceptions of both the positive and challenging aspects of the team's presence within a school.

Study II

The purpose of the second portion of this study was to determine if the themes from Study I were still relevant a year later. A different research method was used as well. After grouping the data from the surveys into themes and subthemes, the results of Study II were found to be consistent with those of Study I.

As was found with the first study, teachers were generally highly positive about the IC-Team being a part of the school. On the Satisfaction with Instructional

Consultation Survey Part I, 14 out of 15 respondents were 'very satisfied' with the IC-Team on 7 out of the 8 items. A total of 13 out of 15 were 'very satisfied' in terms of the timeliness of the IC-Team's response to their request for referral. All others rated themselves as being 'satisfied' with the IC-Team on all of the 8 items. Furthermore, all of the respondents, when asked, "how likely are you to use the IC-Team in the future for similar classroom concerns?" rated themselves as 'very likely.' A total of 14 out of 15 respondents felt that it was 'very helpful' to work with the IC Case Manager, while one found it to be 'somewhat helpful.' Lastly, 12 respondents stated that they were 'very confident' in their abilities to deal with similar problems in the future, while 3 felt they were 'somewhat confident.' These positive results indicate both the skill level of the Case Manager the teachers were working with and the teachers' high satisfaction with the process. As a result of this satisfaction, teachers are more likely to either use the team as a support again or to try some of the strategies they learned with other students. This is consistent with two of the themes that emerged in Study I regarding the impacts the IC-Team has on teachers' skill development and as a result, the whole class.

Also consistent with those themes, were the responses to the checklist questions that asked: 1) Did you access the IC-Team for supporting: an individual student, a group of students, or a whole class?; 2) Have you used this or other strategies learned in your work with the IC-Team with: an individual student, groups of students, entire class?; and 3) Do you anticipate using this strategy in the future with: another student, groups of students, entire class, or don't plan on using? A total of 14 respondents originally accessed the IC-Team for help with an individual student and one teacher referred to the IC-Team for help with a group of students. As a result of that work with the IC-Team with either the individual student or group they referred, teachers all have used the strategies with other students or plan on using the strategies they learned again in the future. All of the teachers anticipate using the strategies with another student. In 10 cases, teachers can see how the strategy could be adapted for groups of students and 7 anticipate using it for the entire class. The data illustrates how the teachers are generalizing the skills learned through Instructional Consultation with both individual students and groups of students.

Analysis of the open-ended responses highlighted a few of the key themes from the first study. The major theme that emerged from the surveys was that of professional changes, specifically data-based decision making and improvements in assessment and instructional strategies. Also, the impact on the school culture was another salient theme. A new subtheme also emerged under the impact on the school category, which will be discussed further below. Almost all of the responses confirmed the themes of the first study. Only four responses differed in some way. Those responses fell within the theme of challenges, but did not create a subtheme together. For example, one participant felt that the IC process inhibits cases that may need to be referred for special education evaluation right away. Another participant mentioned that case managers may be overworked thus causing more stress for the case manager or increasing the amount of time needed to progress through a case. Again, these themes were not confirmed, but may emerge upon conducting more interviews or surveys.

Within the professional changes theme, teachers exhibited skill development in two major areas, thinking in terms of data and adding to the instructional handbag. Comments which highlight the increase in data-based decision making skills include:

IC has helped me very much with assessing instructional levels and with designing interventions.

I have grouped my progressing student in a separate group for individual instruction. My other students are also grouped according to their academic ability (partial mastery and mastery).

A total of 9 of the 15 surveys listed academic strategies that were learned as a result of working with an IC case manager. Some of the strategies listed were: Drill Sandwich, Expert Pages, questioning techniques, and partner reading. Interestingly, teachers were highly enthusiastic about these interventions as well, as is illustrated by these comments: Drill Sandwich is miraculous!, Drill Sandwich, what a difference! 6 out of 15 of the cases produced an increase of teachers' skills with behavior modification and classroom management techniques as well.

The theme of impacts on individual student success, the whole class through teacher generalization of skills learned, and the whole school culture of collaboration and support was highly evident in the open-ended responses as well as the more quantitative

responses discussed above. One teacher's response highlights the student impacts working with an IC case manager can have,

That they help students too- not just the classroom teacher. I really don't think (student) would have ever passed a theme test if it weren't for this collaboration! The major subtheme within this category was that of collaboration and support. All of the teachers responded in some way about how the collaboration and/or support were what they appreciated most about having the IC-Team in their school. 3 teachers noted that the regularly scheduled meetings were what they truly appreciated. Being able to meet weekly was highly important to them. Many other teachers felt that the dialogue about strategies and discussion of student progress was what they felt to be the most important. One teacher even referred to it as a "networking of the brains."

DISCUSSION

As stated previously, the purpose of this study was to explore staff members' perceptions of the Instructional Consultation Team within their school. As a result, many themes emerged that are consistent with the consultation literature and literature on effective schools in terms of the outcomes and benefits of consultation. In summary, these themes include: (1) development of professional skills, specifically, data-based decision making and improved instruction; (2) changes in professional beliefs about student problems; (3) changes in staff mood, and motivation; (4) impacts on individual student success, the whole class through teacher generalization of skills learned, and the whole school culture of collaboration and support; (5) the challenges of the IC team during its initiation.

The emergence of these themes has many implications for schools and school psychologists. First, the positive perceptions of the staff towards the IC-Team and the IC process suggests that this type of innovation, when implemented with integrity, can be integrated and well-received into a school's operating system, but that it does take time. Hall and Hord (1987) illustrated this concept when stating, "change is a process, not an event."

Second, not only was the innovation embraced, but over time it began to be more effective and impacted the school culture as well. Staff members' perceived collaboration, problem-solving, data-based decision making, and skill development in

instruction and assessment, to have increased in the school since the IC-Team's inception. These increases are consistent with 3 of the 4 measures of organizational effectiveness as defined by Rosenholtz (1989), which include: the school's problem solving capabilities, satisfaction of individual teacher's needs and opportunities to learn, maintaining motivation and values of the school, and school productivity and student learning outcomes. This study's purpose was not to analyze the fourth measure, student learning outcomes, in relation to the the IC-Team, but it is important to note that over the past five years the standardized test scores of the school have also increased dramatically as these and other changes in the school culture have occurred.

Third, and probably most salient for school psychologists, is the finding that an indirect service delivery approach does promote generalization of certain skills in teachers. In surveys conducted by Gutkin (1980), teachers reported a significant change in their professional skills after consultation. However, "professional skills" were not clearly defined in that particular study. Through the interviews and surveys of the current study, it was discovered that teachers do gain skills in certain academic and behavioral interventions, as well as, the use of specific assessments, that they then use with other students and occasionally even a whole class. As with Gutkin's work, this study did not investigate actual behavior changes in teachers as a result of their interaction with an IC case manager. This is an area, which still requires much research.

The limitations of this research should be noted. First, the sample size of each study was particularly small. It did include a representative sample of staff roles within the school. However, only one person per role was interviewed, which may limit the variety of perceptions held across team members, or across referring teachers. Further research should take this into account and include more staff members to analyze themes within and across different staff roles. Second, teachers who did not refer to the IC-Team were not interviewed. It would be important to explore their perceptions of the IC-Team within the school as well to get a full picture. Additionally, another limitation is the voluntary nature of the study. All of the participants were self-selected and therefore may only have positive things to say about the program. While this information is valuable, it may not be a complete picture of the perceptions of the team within the school. Third, the questions, although open-ended, did not allow for as much open

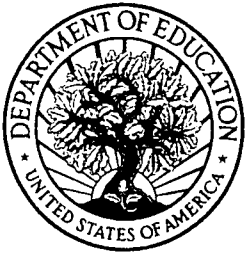
discussion about the perceived challenges of the IC Team. Future interviews should be designed to encourage participants to discuss areas of concern regarding the team.

The themes expressed are highly encouraging as they reflect many qualities of effective schools and some of the positive outcomes of consultation. Further research should be designed to continue to explore and to confirm the promising themes found in this study. IC schools with similar staff size, student demographics, and team implementation level should be included in a more comprehensive interview project to confirm the themes that were found in the present study. Furthermore, future research should look at schools with varying levels of implementation to assess how the themes might differ as a school progresses through the stages of change.

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