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Facing the Challenges of Itinerant Teaching: Perspectives and Suggestions from the Field

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Abstract: Interviews with 23 itinerant teachers of students with visual impairments in Colorado gathered information on their views of the position, the challenges they face, and ways to improve the training of future itinerant teachers. The results offer insights into the positive and negative aspects of itinerant teaching, detail essential skills for successful itinerant teaching, and provide recommendations for improving the preparation of future itinerant teachers.

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The Education of All Handicapped Students Act (P.L. 94–142) and the subsequent Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; P.L. 105–17) serve as statements of national policy to guarantee all students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education. Under the least-restrictive-environment stipulation of IDEA, public agencies must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that students with disabilities receive education with their nondisabled peers. This provision also establishes that students with disabilities are to be placed in special classrooms or schools or removed from regular educational environments only when the severity of their disabilities prevents them from being educated in general education classes with supplementary services.

Over the past several years, students with visual impairments (that is, those who are blind or have low vision) have increasingly been served in schools and classes with nondisabled peers. As of 2002, over 85% of students with visual impairments were served in general education classrooms at least part of the time (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). As the number of students served in general education settings rises, the number of special educators who are prepared to provide services in inclusive settings must also increase. For students who are visually impaired, one common means of providing services is the use of itinerant teachers. An itinerant teacher is a professional who travels from school to school, providing individual instruction and special materials to students and offering consultation services to regular classroom teachers and other school personnel (Olmstead, 1991;

Stephens & Birch, 1969).

The itinerant model of educating students who are visually impaired has been in place for many years. In the 1990s, various studies were conducted to learn more about this teaching model. Investigators questioned the efficacy of the itinerant model on the basis of the size of caseloads, teachers' resources, and decision-making processes (Corn & Patterson, 1994; Hass, 1994; Olmstead, 1995a; 1995b). Since then, the use of the itinerant model has continued to grow in popularity. However, many of the issues that were cited by researchers in the 1990s continue to hamper the effectiveness of itinerant teachers today (Spungin, 2003). One such critical issue is the difference between the roles of itinerant teachers and teachers in other settings.

Itinerant services, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms, and residential schools should all be available to students with visual impairments, depending on their needs and educational goals. Obviously, the responsibilities of teachers who work in these settings vary as much as do the needs of the students. Itinerant teachers share many common experiences with resource and classroom teachers, but there are several critical differences. In some cases, itinerant teachers of students with visual impairments may have more in common with itinerant teachers in other fields (such as teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing) than with general classroom

teachers.

Several factors may influence the uniqueness of the itinerant experience. First, many itinerant teachers work with students of all ages, preschool through high school. Second, itinerant teachers have limited input regarding classroom teachers' daily lesson plans. Third, itinerant teachers must be skilled in providing adaptations and social supports that allow students with sensory impairments to gain access to the instructional and social expectations of the general education environment. Fourth, itinerant teachers work with a wide variety of educational personnel and must therefore be skilled in collaboration and consultation (Corn & Patterson, 1994; Luckner & Miller, 1993). Finally, itinerant teachers rarely work with other teachers from the same field, which can lead to feelings of isolation and the lack of opportunity for professional development (Yarger & Luckner, 1999).

Historically, special educators have been prepared to work with students with specific disabilities. Many state licensure systems are categorical, licensing teachers to work with students with "learning disabilities," "behavioral disorders," or "visual impairment or blindness." Furthermore, special educators have traditionally earned stand-alone licenses, rather than endorsements added to their licenses in general education. The underlying assumption of these licensing practices is that students with disabilities need highly specialized curricula and

instruction to remediate or, at least, ameliorate the effect of their disabilities. Consequently, although trends in licensure across the country reflect a shift to fewer and more general categories, most special educators have been prepared to work with a relatively narrow group of students, usually in separate environments (Ferguson & Ralph, 1996).

Itinerant teaching is vastly different from self-contained classroom teaching. As a result, itinerant teachers may find that the challenges they face are significantly different from those that are faced by teachers in other settings. The purpose of this study was to determine the perspectives of current itinerant teachers regarding the challenges of the position, general attitudes toward itinerant teaching, and skills that would enhance the preparation of future itinerant teachers. Through the use of interviews, the following questions were addressed: What do experienced itinerant teachers believe are the challenges and strengths of the position? What suggestions do these teachers have to strengthen the training of preservice teachers?

Method

Procedure

Itinerant teachers of students who are visually impaired in Colorado were contacted to determine their willingness to share information about itinerant

teaching by participating in individual interviews. The use of interviews has been established as an appropriate method of gathering information from individuals who are experts in their field, to discover things that researchers cannot directly observe (Merriam, 1998).

Letters were sent by e-mail to all the itinerant teachers of students who are visually impaired in Colorado, inviting them to participate in the study. E-mail was identified as the most effective method of contacting these teachers because this is the technique that this group commonly uses to share information. The letter indicated that the first 25 individuals to respond would be selected for participation. Interested itinerant teachers were asked to reply either by telephone or e-mail to set up convenient meeting times and locations. The response to this request was overwhelming; the 25 available slots were filled in just one week. Scheduling difficulties prevented 2 potential participants from being interviewed, which left 23 participants.

The participants worked in a variety of rural, urban, and suburban communities. Because of the wide range of physical locations, a combination of personal and online interviews were used. The personal interviews were conducted one-on-one at the participants' convenience. These interviews were recorded on audiotape and then transcribed by the authors. Online interviews were conducted over the Internet, again at the participants' convenience. A log of the chat session

was made, providing an automatic transcript. The participants received a small honorarium in exchange for their time and thoughts.

Participants

The participants represented a broad range of teaching experience, with an average of 16.57 years (range: 0.5–31). Most of those years (average: 13.67, range: 0.5–31) were spent teaching students who are visually impaired and in itinerant teaching (average: 12.09, range: 0.5–27). In addition to their high level of professional expertise based on experience, the participants were well educated. Of the 23 participants, 19 had master's degrees, and 4 had postgraduate degrees (a second master's degree or a Ph.D.). All but two participants were certified to teach students who are visually impaired in Colorado, and those who were not certified in Colorado had certifications from other states and indicated that they were taking courses to complete the state's requirements. In addition to the required certification, 15 of the 23 teachers had additional teaching certification in such areas as elementary education, early childhood special education, and mild /moderate special education, or were dually certified. Dual certification refers to certification as a state-licensed teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) and as a certified orientation and mobility specialist (COMS). Schools in Colorado have expressed a marked preference for teachers who are dually certified, and the majority of teachers fill

both roles. Because the number of dually certified teachers is so high and this is the typical certification within this state, there is no differentiation between TVI and COMS throughout this article. It may be important to note, however, that the participants who did not have dual certification were certified TVIs, but there were no individuals who were only COMS.

Survey

Each participant was asked a series of eight questions during the interview. These questions were adapted from a list of questions used for interviews conducted with itinerant teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (Luckner & Howell, 2002), with modifications developed specifically for this project (see Box 1). During the development of the list of questions, input from professional colleagues was sought. Once the questions had been developed, the interviews were conducted.

Before the interviews were conducted, the participants were asked to fill out the demographic questionnaire (the full questionnaire appears in the online version of *JVIB* at <www.afb.org/jvib>) and were given the opportunity to review the questions. Each interview took approximately 30–45 minutes. During the interviews, questions were elaborated upon when the interviewer or interviewee thought that further clarification was necessary.

Data analysis

Following the interview and transcription process, we analyzed the data to determine systematic categories through coding. We coded the data independently and then compared our results for consistency through all phases of the data analysis. The method we used to create these categories was constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During this process, we carefully reviewed the transcription from each interview for meaning units, examining each incident, phrase, sentence, or paragraph to identify the central meaning unit (Merriam, 1998). Then we grouped the meaning units for each participant into categories on the basis of the frequency of occurrence and labeled each category with a provisional category label. Each participant was then compared with the subsequent participant, again in search of categories that were established through repetition of the meaning unit. Similar meaning units were defined with the same category label, and new meaning units were assigned new category labels. After we compared each transcript to all the other transcripts, we examined the categories for consistency across all the participants. Categories that were drawn from meaning units across all the participants and/or in more than one question were retained. Categories that did not appear as meaning units for all the participants or across several questions were discarded for lack of support. Finally, categories were clustered into themes on the basis of similarity of content.

Findings

A careful analysis of the data set revealed several strong categories that can be organized onto four broad themes. The participants discussed their jobs as itinerant teachers in terms of positive aspects, negative aspects, necessary skills, and training requirements. Within each of these thematic areas, they revealed their perceptions and opinions about itinerant teaching, highlighting several common issues.

Positive aspects

When the participants were asked about the most enjoyable aspect of their jobs, their response was almost universal— a love for students. Itinerant teachers face many challenges during the day and have a job unlike any other teacher. One participant expressed the reason behind her continued motivation, "Certainly it seems obvious, the kids." The participants considered their time with students as precious and often emphasized their love for them throughout the interviews. As one participant put it, "The students are just great. I really enjoy working with the kids."

Many participants commented on the wide range of students they worked with, from birth to age 21 in some cases. In addition to their age differences, the students had a wide range of skills; some needed little assistance for a few adaptations related to low vision,

while others were totally blind or had additional disabilities that required more extensive support. These itinerant teachers worked with such a range of students that they often felt a sense of challenge in their work. As one participant indicated, "I have a variety of ages [and] disabilities, and I really like them all."

One of the most positive aspects that the participants mentioned was the progress that they were allowed to witness. Because the same teacher worked with a student for several years, the teacher was able to see the growth and development that other teachers often miss. As one participant noted, "When you can see kids doing things for themselves as adults, that's wonderful!" Even when days were difficult, these itinerant teachers looked to their students for a lift. Another participant commented, "There are so many good things you can see in the kid that, when it's time to go home, you can be really happy and maintain a positive attitude."

In addition to their love of working with students, the participants enjoyed working with other teachers. Several commented on how important it was for them to build lasting relationships as part of their jobs. These relationships helped teachers who travel from school to school without any real "home" to develop a sense of connection. Often, these relationships were built over several years. As one participant put it, "I have the benefit of being able to work with kids from birth to age 21, if they stay in the district that long, so I'm

really able to see progress and build relationships with teachers and families."

"I just love my job and I love this field." This statement was echoed throughout the interviews. The participants exclaimed with bright faces and huge smiles, "I enjoy my job!" The love for the job seemed to be intensified by the challenging nature of the work. As one participant said, "It's a tough job, and it takes lots of time and energy, but it's worth it!" These itinerant teachers were dedicated to providing high-quality services to students who are visually impaired. Often, they faced barriers that interfered with their provision of the most effective services, but they persisted even against overwhelming odds. For those who meet the challenges of itinerant teaching, "It's a job you love every year; you learn and it's always interesting, and every year you feel a little bit better about your teaching."

Negative aspects

As was hinted at in the previous paragraph, there are many challenges involved in itinerant teaching. It is interesting to note, however, that all the issues that the participants described as negative aspects of their jobs were the things that they viewed as "getting in the way of time with students."

Teachers work in highly political environments. Because public schools must request pay, benefits,

materials, and even buildings from the community, there are high demands for teachers to show members of the community that they are worth the money. In response to demands from the community, the private sector, and government leaders, schools are being placed under high-stakes testing situations, which make teachers decidedly uncomfortable. Because the itinerant teachers we studied traveled from school to school, they were sensitive to the political climate within each building and each district. They reported that the need to adjust their attitudes, depending on the location, was difficult.

In addition to the political climate of individual schools, itinerant teachers must respond to district or state policies. As one participant stated, "When the state changes guidelines, or the district changes guidelines, I hate that." Frequently, the complexities associated with visual impairment are poorly understood by administrators. The result is that changes in policy are frequent and are not always in line with best practices in the field. One participant complained about this lack of understanding, "I just don't think that a lot of the procedures in education are efficient, and I think that's a problem that we are running into again and again."

One unintended result of all the political maneuvering associated with education, and special education in particular, is that a great deal of paperwork is required to ensure that individual students receive appropriate

services. One of the major complaints that the participants voiced was "Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork! I find that it is taking more and more of my time." Many teachers complained about the consistent increase in paperwork that is slowly taking up a larger proportion of their job responsibilities. As one participant exclaimed, "The amount of paperwork that is being required since I started in this field is huge!" But the main concern about paperwork was not the hassle of filling out forms. The participants always came back to their first response—a consideration for the students. "Paperwork that doesn't directly benefit the children I'm working with takes time away from them," one participant noted.

The final negative aspect of the job was clearly in line with the sentiment of the other two categories. The participants simply did not have enough time. They repeatedly made statements such as these: "I don't have enough time with kids," "It just feels like there are not enough hours in the day and not enough days in the week," and "There is so much to teach in so little time."

The participants were also concerned about their caseloads. Some of the students require intensive services, and those services take a great deal of time. With a large caseload (an average of 17 students per caseload for the participants), it is difficult for teachers to provide effective services for all students. As one participant aptly put it:

> You're spread so thin. If you have a caseload of 15 and you have 3 braille users, your 3 braille users are your caseload of the day, basically, because they need services every day. So, if you have braille users, where do the other kids fit in?

To make up for this lack of time on the job, many itinerant teachers make hard choices that affect their personal lives. Most participants reported that they are not allotted a scheduled planning time. Many reported that they do not even have time to take a lunch break; they eat in their cars on the way from one school to another. As one participant said, "I'm bringing home lots of work. I think if I had a planning time, I could have done some of it."

The roles and responsibilities of itinerant teachers are unique and diverse (see Table 1). Squeezed into their busy schedules are specific services for students, such as adapting materials, brailling, and preparing other types of materials. Unfortunately, many general classroom teachers do not plan enough in advance for the itinerant teachers to get the materials adapted as requested. "The time between when the teachers get us something and we are able to get it back to them is a constant struggle for us," one participant stated. Many of these participants expressed frustration with general classroom teachers who change lesson plans without notice. "The amount of material prep at the last minute, that is the most difficult," one said.

Necessary skills

As is the case with any job, several skills are necessary to be an effective itinerant teacher. The participants expressed concern that the critical skills are not necessarily the ones being taught in teacher training programs. Although professional knowledge was mentioned as one essential aspect of the job, other skills, such as flexibility, communication, and professional association, were also mentioned.

This response may seem obvious from a group of teachers who travel from school to school: "You have to be very flexible; you have to be very creative." The unannounced assembly, sick students, substitute teachers, field trips, and all the other little things that interrupt a typical school day often put itinerant teachers off task. The participants complained that although these factors are easy to accept when a teacher works in one building, it is frustrating to drive 30 minutes to see a student who just left the building for a dental appointment.

Because of this kind of challenge, these itinerant teachers learned to change their schedules with little notice. They understood that nothing would go as planned and adopted the attitude that unexpected changes are part of life. "We do what we do because it needs to be done." This flexibility was demonstrated by one participant just before her interview. At the beginning of the day, an aide who was working with a deaf-blind student called in sick. The itinerant teacher

made some quick calls, changed a few appointments, and was ready to step in to make sure that the student would be able to attend classes with the necessary support. The teacher demonstrated her flexibility when she said:

> What a day, I thought, and it's not even 9:00! Of course, that's what itinerant teaching is like. You have to be so flexible and ready to make changes. You work so hard to get your schedule put together, but you know it's all going to fly out the window sometimes.

Itinerant teachers deal with so many people each day that good communication skills are another essential component of the job. The participants repeatedly stated, "You need to learn to be a very effective communicator." Necessary communication skills centered on being able to express technical ideas in plain language, advocating for students, making families and other professionals feel comfortable discussing issues, and being a good listener.

Because itinerant teachers are often seen as experts on vision-related issues, they are frequently called upon to consult in various situations. The participants repeatedly stressed the importance of careful listening in these situations. "You have to be a good listener first; you can't just come in and start giving information until you listen to what the family needs or what the teacher needs."

Another skill that the participants thought was essential

for the job was having a broad range of professional knowledge. Knowing about visual impairments and the specific types of adaptations is a central component of the position, but it is actually more difficult than it seems on the surface. It seems intuitive that "a strong foundation in braille is very important" or even that "knowing your technology skills will help," but the range of professional skills is so broad that many participants reported that they had difficulty staying abreast of advances in the field. As we mentioned earlier, itinerant teachers in Colorado may qualify for licensure as TVIs or as COMSs. Each certification requires expertise in a completely different set of skills, and the course work for both is time-consuming and demanding. Many schools prefer to hire individuals who are certified in both areas (dually certified) to save costs. The result is that the itinerant teachers must possess a broad range of skills. Considering this trend within the state, it is not surprising that the participants identified professional knowledge as being central to a successful career. As one participant summed up, "We cover preschool through 21, we cover academic curricula, we cover functional curricula, we cover compensatory skills, we cover the specific skills... braille, technology, everything."

Less than 1% of the school population in the United States is visually impaired. For students, it means that they are often the only visually impaired person in their school. For teachers, it means that they are often the only vision specialist in their district. However, the

participants stressed that physical distance does not need to result in professional or emotional distance. They discussed the importance of combating isolation by developing connections with other itinerant teachers. As one participant stated:

> Don't allow yourself to feel isolated—connect with other itinerant vision teachers in your state, in your district, and if they're not vision teachers, then find a [teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing] who knows what it's like because there are few people who understand the challenges you're facing.

Fighting against loneliness is one reason to associate with other itinerant teachers; another is to increase access to resources. Itinerant teachers are often faced with unique challenges and tough problems. The participants suggested that it is important to maintain contact with colleagues to "brainstorm solutions with other professionals, so you don't get stuck in a rut." They thought that it was important for itinerant teachers to "have a network in place with neighboring districts to lean on and ask questions." Professional discussions helped many of them solve problems or come up with innovative teaching techniques, which is essential for the professional well-being of teachers who generally work alone. In addition, several participants commented on the value of associating with itinerant teachers with expertise in other fields, such as deafness. The common experience of working as an itinerant teacher may prove more important than differences in content or methodology.

Training requirements

Across the nation, there is an increasing need for special education teachers, especially teachers who are specifically trained to work with students who have low-incidence disabilities, such as visual impairment. For training programs that emphasize visual impairment, itinerant teaching is a necessary part of preprofessional development. The participants gave their suggestions for improving training programs so that future teachers will be more prepared for the unique challenges of the position.

"There is no substitute for hands-on training." The participants emphasized the need for preservice teachers to get as much practical experience as possible. Ideas centered on the need to have "a combination of course work and practical work within the same semester," so that preservice teachers would be able to combine educational theory with practice. In addition to general hands-on experience, the participants voiced the need for preservice teachers to spend time actually observing or working with itinerant teachers. Because the job is so different from traditional classroom teaching, they thought it was important to "make sure that [preservice teachers] have designated time as part of their training to ride with itinerant teachers."

As preservice teachers attend university training programs, it is important that university faculty who

are involved with teacher training have a sense of connection with the current climate in schools. When university faculty members spend time in public school classrooms, they become aware of the changing face of education and are better able to prepare their students. "I think it would be nice if the professors were out in the field on a very frequent basis throughout the year, to see what's going on and what kinds of kids we serve now," one participant commented. When faculty members are not involved with schools on a regular basis, the participants noted, they will be unable to present accurately what novice teachers will face during their first few years. "One of my biggest concerns," one participant said, "is when was the last time any of those professors was in a teaching situation in a school, not just observing, but actually teaching?" Obviously, the participants thought that university must be a place for continued learning, not only for preservice preparation.

When one works with a variety of people in a variety of schools, knowing how to be an effective team member is important. The participants suggested that preservice teachers need better preparation in working with a variety of teams and taking a variety of roles on the teams. As one participant put it, "The most important thing is being able to be part of that team instead of coming in and claiming to be the expert. You know, in most cases you're not [the expert] because the families are." The participants suggested that teacher preparation programs should focus on

teaching students how to be part of "a team approach and a team effort." Emphasizing skills, such as collaboration, communication, and the qualities of effective teams, during preservice training will promote a generation of teachers who are prepared to tackle the variety of situations and personalities that are inherent in itinerant teaching.

The four themes that emerged from the data can be viewed together to form a picture of itinerant teachers. These teachers care deeply about the students they teach and feel challenged by the things that get in the way of their teaching. They are dedicated to their profession and concerned about improving the quality of services for students through better teacher preparation. Although itinerant teaching is demanding in many ways, these teachers enjoy the challenges and are ready to bend in any direction to meet their students' needs.

Discussion

Itinerant teachers of students with visual impairments experience several sources of stress on their jobs, such as isolation, the type of service delivery, driving, and slow progress in some children (Hass, 1994). The data obtained in this study confirmed that the roles and responsibilities are unique and varied. Politics, paperwork, and time are a few of the many challenges that itinerant teachers face each day.

The majority of participants reported that they spent the greatest amount of time (48%) working directly with students. Although itinerant teachers' main role is to provide direct services to students, they appear to spend a large amount of time also doing paperwork. Unlike previous studies that reported that driving, large caseloads, curricular adaptations, and isolation are the principal barriers to being an effective itinerant teacher (Bina, 1987; Hass, 1994), in this study, most of the teachers commented that the amount of paperwork that is required is an obstacle that interferes with the effectiveness of their services. Concerns about the amount of paperwork that special educators must complete were raised by the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002) and are under consideration in the efforts to reauthorize IDEA.

The participants reported that time was another obstacle that interfered with their services. Hass (1994) found that teachers' caseloads have an impact on the amount of time they can spend on each student. The caseloads managed by the participants in our study (an average of 17 students) were substantially higher than the 8–12 students suggested by researchers (Hazekamp & Huebner, 1989; Olmstead, 1995b). The demands of educating such a large number of students caused these teachers to make difficult decisions that affected their personal lives. As is the case with teachers in general (Drago, Caplan, & Costanza, 1999), many of them worked additional hours, took work home, and conducted a great deal of business by telephone and e-

mail on their own time. This situation should not come as a surprise, considering that the issue was raised nearly 20 years ago (Olmstead, 1995), but individuals who are concerned about the retention of teachers would do well to remember that stress that is associated with an overwhelming workload has been identified as a factor that causes teachers to leave the profession (Fore, Martin, & Bender, 2002).

A related issue is the amount of time that teachers are able to spend providing direct services to students. Most educators enjoy working with students and rate this factor high in surveys of job satisfaction (Brunetti, 2001). Itinerant teachers, however, spend less time than do other teachers actually working with students (Olmstead, 1995b). The participants reported spending an average of 48% of their time working with students, compared to as much as 98% for the typical classroom teacher (Waxman, Huang, & Anderson, 1997). The time that teachers spend writing reports, driving, and adapting materials at the last minute has a negative impact on the time they are able to spend with students. Considering these factors, it is not surprising that a primary complaint expressed by the participants was that they do not feel they spend enough time with their students.

Although the participants commented on their everyday challenges, they also said that the joys and satisfactions of their jobs are the main factors that help keep them focused. They said that their love of the

field and of the students are the most enjoyable aspects of their jobs. They also noted that collaborating with other professionals gave them the opportunity to learn more about other areas and to share their knowledge. Itinerant teachers work with a wide variety of students who range in age, grade level, ability level, and level of function and eye condition. Most of the participants stated that staying current in the field and building mentor relationships helped them to be successful. Similar to participants in prior research (Hass, 1994), the majority of participants in this study noted that teaching skills, good communication, tact, and problem-solving ability are important.

Suggestions for training programs

Universities are scrambling to provide districts with well-trained, professional teachers as quickly as possible (Darling-Hammond, 2001). To prepare teachers for the challenges of today's schools, it is important for preparation programs to solicit input from current teachers. The participants in this study indicated that their responsibilities are significantly different from those of teachers in resource rooms or self-contained classrooms. Because the majority of the visually impaired students in the nation are served in inclusive settings, the participants suggested that more hands-on experiences should be provided in training programs. They also suggested that training programs should offer courses on specific issues of itinerant teaching and that faculty members need to spend more

time in public school settings.

Limitations

There are limitations that restrict the applicability of these data to the population of itinerant teachers. First, the selection of participants was not random. Although random selection of participants is not an essential feature of qualitative research, a more diverse pool of subjects may have expressed different perspectives. Second, participation was limited to volunteers. Although many individuals reported an interest in the research project, there is no way of knowing how the perspectives of those who chose not to participate may have altered the findings. In addition, the limitation of the number of participants (subject to time and financial constraints) and the method of solicitation (e-mail) may have discouraged some interested individuals from expressing their desire to participate.

Future research

The number of students who receive itinerant services has risen steadily over the past several years. It is expected that this trend will continue, making research in this area essential for guiding teachers and schools as they strive to provide the best services for students. Future research related to itinerant teaching should address support networks, current practices in teacher training programs, and the impact of the size of caseloads on students' learning and teachers'

effectiveness.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide information on the roles of itinerant teachers of students who are visually impaired. These teachers perceive many strengths and challenges of the position, require skills in a variety of areas, and would like to strengthen the preparation of prospective itinerant teachers. University training programs for teachers of students who are visually impaired should provide more hands-on experiences and specific courses that address itinerant teaching and skills in collaboration and consultation. Future research on itinerant teaching should be conducted to assist administrators, teachers, and training programs to gain a better understanding of the needs of students with visual impairments and how to meet these needs effectively.

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