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Diane C. Marti

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Katherine Bevins

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Susan M. Sheridan

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, ssheridan2@unl.edu

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Culturally Sensitive Services Using CBC: A Case Illustration

Diane C. Marti, Ed.S., Katherine Bevins, M.A., & Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural Contexts:

- The United States is becoming an increasingly diverse nation. In 2000, 38% of the US population under the age of 18 was non-Anglo whites and nonwhites.

- In addition, since the 1990-91 school year, the LEP population has grown approximately 105%, while the general school population has grown only 12%.

- Many ethnic minority students in English Language Learner (ELL) programs have difficulties achieving in the general education curriculum, and are considered at risk for academic failure (Barona & Garcia, 1990).

- Strong, positive relationships between the home and school systems have been shown to improve a child's educational experience (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001), and this positive relationship is critical in addressing the needs of non-English speaking, diverse families (Sheridan, 2000).

- School psychologists are in a unique position to take the lead in identifying effective methods for working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds and to work effectively within systems to strengthen relationships among homes and schools. Additionally, identifying effective ways to utilize interpreters in the consultation process is important for families of ELL students.

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation:

- Conjoint behavioral consultation* (CBC; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996) is an indirect, structured model of service-delivery whereby parents, teachers, and support staff are joined to work together to address the academic, social, or behavioral needs of an individual child for whom all parties share some responsibility. CBC is operationalized via four stages: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, plan evaluation.

- CBC emphasizes home-school partnerships and parental involvement (Sheridan et al., 1996), and is particularly effective in including the parents as equal members of the consultative process (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

- CBC incorporates fundamental structural and relational features thought to be important when working with culturally diverse families. Awareness and sensitivity of the consultant, and the ability to consider and communicate all frames of references can be utilized via an empirically validated CBC model (Sheridan, 2000).

- CBC has been noted to be an effective model to work within a multicultural framework by its very design (Sheridan, 2000); however, there is a dearth of empirical studies attesting to the effectiveness of consultation approaches including an interpreter, parent and teacher (Lopez, 2000).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

- The purpose of this case study was to demonstrate the effectiveness of CBC while working with an interpreter and diverse, non-English speaking family.

METHODS

Participants:

- Five-year old Iraqi male (Sam).
- Second year in a Head Start program.
- Consultees included Sam's mother and classroom teacher.
- Challenges faced by family included the following: (1) low income family, (2) parent consultee received less than a high school education, and (3) parent consultee did not read or write in any language.

- Meetings were facilitated through a Kurdish interpreter.
- Referral concerns were social withdrawal and lack of verbal communication in the classroom. Parent reported no notable concerns at home.

Outcome Measures:

Objective Measures:
Direct observations conducted at home and school and related effect sizes with school intervention.

Subjective Measures:
Perceptions of effectiveness (BIRS-Effectiveness factor; GAS), acceptability (BIRS-Acceptability factor), consumer satisfaction (CEP), and Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS).

Procedures:

Location:
CBC was conducted in Sam's home and classroom settings with mother, teacher, interpreter, and consultant present.

Target Behavior:
Words spoken in the classroom.

Direct observations:
School - Sam's speech was observed by teacher and consultant using data collection forms.

Home - Sam's mother used a data collection method that did not require the use of written language (i.e., placement of brass fasteners in a cup to record the number of words Sam spoke at home).

Interventions at school:
Social game
Positive reinforcement
Home - school communication note

Behavior Outcomes:

School - Words spoken
Baseline phase - average 0.14 words per minute
Intervention phase - average 5.68 words per minute
Effect Size - 4.70

Subjective Measures:

BIRS - Eff. - 5.57 (T), highly effective; 4.29 (P), effective
BIRS - Acc. - 6.0 (T), highly acceptable; 5.47 (P), highly acceptable
GAS - 5.0 (T), goal completely met; 4.0 (P), goal partially met
CEF - 6.67 (T), completely satisfied; 7.0 (P), completely satisfied
PTRS - 4.13 (T-pre), 4.67 (T-post); 4.79 (P-pre), 4.46 (P-post)

- While parent and teacher reported the CBC process as highly effective and acceptable, differences were noted in the areas of goal attainment and the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale. Teacher reported being completely satisfied that the goal of CBC had been met, while the parent reported the goal only partially met. Additionally, teacher rating on the PTRS increased from pre- to post, while parent ratings on the PTRS decreased. Differences noted on the PTRS may be attributed to the presence of an interpreter for all parent-teacher communication.

- The consultant utilized several key strategies to address participation and partnership goals: (a) avoided culturally loaded terms (e.g., "shy"), (b) used clear and direct language to effectively convey information, (c) provided numerous examples and descriptions to clarify ambiguous information, and (d) frequently summarized to confirm the transmission of correct information through the interpreter.

- The consultant adhered to a validated, data-based problem-solving model and utilized data collection and plan development procedures that were sensitive to the families' ideas, beliefs and practices.

- CBC provided an essential link between school and home which included an effective, easy to implement intervention plan, and improved relationships and communication within a multicultural framework. For example, prior to the implementation of the CBC process, Sam's teacher had not communicated directly with his mother for over four months.

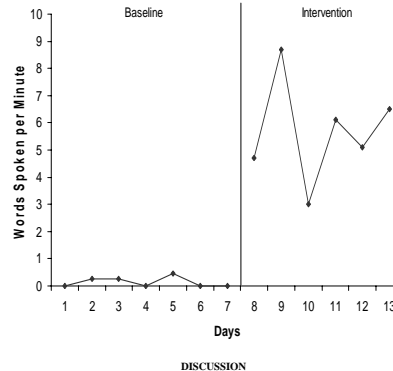
LIMITATIONS

- Ability to generalize results of a single-subject case study is limited.
- Lack of maintenance data during the intervention at school due to end of school year.
- Lack of data determining the degree to which the observed increase in Sam's speech generalized to other school settings.
- Data acquired failed to elucidate certain qualitative aspects of the case study (e.g., personal experiences of Iraqi parent).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Future research should continue to explore the use of CBC as a model of culturally sensitive consultation services.
- Systematic, empirical investigations are needed to identify specific procedural aspects of the model that are most effective in facilitating communication with linguistically diverse families through an interpreter.
- Use of mixed-methods may be helpful to further understand relational features that may be essential when working within a multicultural framework.

Words Spoken - School



DISCUSSION

- This case study illustrated how CBC can be an effective, culturally sensitive consultation model utilizing the services of an interpreter.

- Strategic communication strategies led to the development of a highly effective intervention at school. Sam spoke infrequently during baseline observations (0.14 words per minute). In contrast, Sam's speech increased noticeably during the intervention condition (5.68 words per minute).