**Who Participates in School-Based Service Delivery Decisions and Why?**

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### Introduction

What are the legal mandates regarding service delivery decisions within the school setting?
- P.L. 94–142 (1975) required schools to provide students with special needs to be provided services to improve access to the academic curriculum.
- Revisions in 2004 within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) required the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to be developed by a student’s team. Teams included the student, the parent(s)/legal guardian, the service provider (e.g., SLP), the general education teacher, a district representative, and school personnel trained to interpret standardized test results.
- Teaming models are typically one of the following: Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, or Transdisciplinary.

### Purpose

With recent changes in education law and extensive professional development regarding collaborative practice (e.g., RTI/MTSS, classroom based services), the authors were examining the following research questions:

1. How do SLPs in the schools make decisions regarding service delivery for students with language-based disorder? Where are students with language disorders participating in services?
2. Does the teaming model predict the place where services for language-based disorders are provided?
3. What factors impact how SLPs make service delivery decisions?

### Methods

**Participants**
- 439 SLPs working in the public schools
  - 88.61% used full-time
  - 44% White; 1.4% African American; 2.5% Other; 2.1% Not Responding
  - 95.4% non-Hispanic; 1.2% Hispanic; 3.5% Not Responding
  - 92.2% had ASHA CCCs
  - School Setting
    - 46.1% rural
  - 36.2% suburban
  - 17.7% urban
  - Mean year of graduation = 2001
  - Average Caseload = 44 students

**Online Survey**
- 31 questions
  - X demographic questions
  - X questions about service delivery for students with language disorders
  - X questions about language evaluation practices

**Procedure**
- Administered using Qualtrics
- SLPs were recruited through state associations as well as SIG 1 and SIG 16.

**Analysis**
- Descriptive statistics were utilized to answer question 1.
- Multinomial logistic regression was utilized to answer questions 2 and 3.

### Results

**Question 1:**

How do SLPs make decisions about service delivery? (N=424)

**Question 2:**

Does how SLPs make service delivery decisions predict the place where services for language-based disorders are provided?

**Question 3:**

What factors impact how SLPs make service delivery decisions?

Factors included in model were:
- Caseload size
- Year of graduation
- School setting (rural, urban, suburban)
- School teaming model

Model fit not significant (α = .266)

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### Discussion

SLPs continue to be the primary decision maker regarding decisions about where services will be provided despite recent changes in the role of the SLP (ESSA, 2015) and increasing evidence on the relationship between reading comprehension and writing and language proficiency.

Services for students with language disorders continue to be provided primarily outside of the classroom regardless of severity of the language disorder.

Alignment with IDEA (2004) regarding the IEP process continues to be elusive to practitioners.

Factors impacting how decisions about service delivery are made remain elusive creating difficulty in developing strategies to increase participation of the IEP team in decisions about service delivery.

### Recommendations

SLPs in schools need ongoing professional development related to collaboration and integration of services into the general education classroom and curriculum.

Professional training programs should evaluate current training practices to align clinical experiences with best practice guidelines (ASHA, 2010) as well as legal mandates (IDEA, 2004) in relation to the development and implementation of IEPs. Continued investigation of factors impacting collaborative practice need to assist in the development of strategically designed training programs.

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**Selected References**


Farber & Klein, 1999; Gillam et al., 2014; Hadley, et al., 2010; Procedure Online Survey with IDEA (2004) regarding the IEP process continues to be elusive to practitioners.

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