

Public Abstract

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Title:TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND DISTRICT/SCHOOL SUPPORTS FOR DEAF EDUCATION TEACHERS: A SURVEY OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between deaf education teachers' perceptions of preparedness and their learning experiences in preparation programs and districts' and schools' supports they receive during beginning years of teaching. Additionally, this study provides suggestions regarding what colleges and universities and school leaders can do to ensure beginning teachers a successful year. A total of 62 first through fifth year teachers participated in a quantitative survey that asked their perceptions of their deaf education programs and their districts/school supports.

Based on this study, beginning deaf education teachers reported that they received program support such as support for the Praxis exam and the SCPI interview as well as on-going mentor/advisor support during student teaching than in any other area. Beginning teachers also reported that their teacher preparation program taught them Deaf/HH content (knowledge of deaf culture/history, teaching reading/language, teaching speech, knowledge of audiology). However, beginning teachers reported they did not feel that their program provided adequate course content in language/communication modes, course content in special education foundation coursework, and content in the area of Deaf Education Setting. Furthermore, beginning teachers reported that their school districts also adequately supported them in the areas of mentor support, professional development, administrator support, and building resources in their beginning years. However, there were few statistically significant associations between their learning experience in teacher preparation programs or district and school supports and with higher level of preparedness to teach Deaf/HH students.

Providing supports for beginning deaf education teachers begins long before they enter their very first classroom. Ensuring that deaf education programs at the collegiate level provide the necessary knowledge and skills is vital to the successful retention and recruitment of new teachers for school systems. As such, universities may want to emphasize the importance of a strong curriculum that develops a variety of skills such as working with others and a variety of communication modes as well as focuses on course content in language and communication modes and course content in special education foundation, etc. Universities/college administrators who want to increase beginning preparedness may also need to foster collaboration among schools systems to develop a more sustainable program. However, the support should not stop there. Considering the significant role districts and schools can play in supporting beginning teachers, school systems must increase the support they provide the beginning teacher by doing a variety of things such as providing adequate administrator and mentor support, providing adequate building resources, and providing adequate ongoing professional development.