

Exploring Resources Provided to General Education Teachers to Enhance Their Understanding and Capacity When Working with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate learning leaders' perspectives on the most effective resources and strategies provided to general education [GE] teachers to enhance their understanding of autism, as well as build their capacity when working with students with autism in an inclusive classroom. A qualitative design was used, whereby five semi-structured interviews were conducted with learning leaders from a large urban school board in Alberta. Interviews were transcribed and data was analyzed with thematic analysis, with four themes arising: (1) Having conversations around building knowledge; (2) Working relationships; (3) Professional development; and (4) Providing teacher with specific strategies that produce results in the classroom. The present study identifies resources that are most effective in supporting GE teachers' work with students with autism in inclusive classrooms and will inform programs and services provided to teachers to improve their educational practice. Implications for practice and future research directions are discussed.

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Biography

Rachel has recently completed her MSc at the University of Calgary (UofC) where she continues to work as a graduate research assistant examining compassion fatigue and burnout in teachers. She has

presented at more than 10 conferences around the country and has been serving as graduate leader and student mentor at UofC and Mount Royal University