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## Video Coaching for First-Year Special Education Teachers

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## **Literature Review**

### **Topic:**

Video Coaching for First-Year Special Education Teachers

### **Abstract:**

There is a shortage of special education teachers, especially in rural areas (Hopkins, 2023). School districts have attempted to address this shortage by hiring people on a variance and providing them with a specific timeline to obtain a special education teaching license (Tier Requirements, n.d.). Based on my school district and my experience, many of these teachers are hired without formal training in education and/or experience teaching in a special education setting. They may not have background information regarding due process and may need guidance on special education paperwork as well as best practices for teaching students in special education. How can schools provide this?

Mentoring programs can assist early career special education teachers in learning the basics and assist in the beginning stages of independent practices. This matches Billingsley et al. beliefs that special education teachers need more assistance, practice, and clear information in order to be successful when carrying out their responsibilities (2011). While this assistance is important for teachers, it is also important early career teachers have resources for when they are no longer receiving extended support and mentoring (Pierangelo et al., 2018).

The purpose of my capstone project was to provide support for early career special education teachers in ensuring clear information and instructions are available at any time extra

support is needed. After initially interviewing two special education colleagues about support they may have needed or wanted during their first years as a special education teacher, and reviewing my own experiences, I set about creating short (ten minutes or less), close-captioned videos for teachers. The content of each video was specific to the school district we work for, and the education district that it is within, to ensure that early career educators can most effectively and appropriately benefit from them. A map describing themes and topics of the video content accompanies them so viewers can easily find videos on specific topics such as collaborating with general education teachers, enhancing partnerships with administrators, and communication with parents. The 26 videos are all stored in a shared google file for anyone with the password to access. In this way anyone seeking information can quickly find the video they need – and watch it as many times as they need.

### **Introduction:**

There is a shortage of special education teachers, especially in rural areas (Hopkins, 2023). Within my three years of teaching, I have met multiple early career special education teachers who have not had formal training in education and/or have experience teaching in a special education setting. Consequently, they may not have information regarding due process and need guidance on special education paperwork and best practices for teaching students in special education. I have noticed that even with mentoring and additional support, without having resources that early career special education teachers can look back on, aspects of their job may be missed or continue to be confusing for the early career special education teachers. I have created videos and a document that assist the early career special education teachers with general information about their position, how to complete due process, and other information about special education best practices.

**Themes:**

Early career special education teachers need to know about the challenges that they may face and be given strategies about how to work through the challenges and situations that they may encounter (Rivera et al., 2023). It is extremely important for early career special education teachers to understand collaboration with general education teachers, colleagues, parents, administration, and other professionals to ensure that their students are as successful as possible while at school (Hopkins, 2023). It's important that early career special education teachers have resources to look back on to ensure that when they are attempting to complete tasks or paperwork independently, they have some support as needed.

Special education law and policies are important for early career special education teachers to know because of the due process requirements that come with them. It is important that early career special education teachers are aware that special education law is in place to ensure that school districts are making decisions that are student centered, fair, and appropriate for the student. The special education codes are important to ensure that we are in compliance with auditing and funding requirements in order to receive appropriate funding and support for our students with disabilities.

Special education procedures are emphasized as an area that early career special education teachers need to have knowledge about. Procedures may include best teaching practices to reduce behavior, engage students, and differentiate instruction to maintain inclusion. Without mentoring and other support being provided to the early career special education teacher, there may be information and best teaching practices that may be missed.

Within my school district, I have noticed that special education teachers typically get mentoring for the first month to two months then are expected to complete all of their job duties,

paperwork, and teaching independently. When considering if this is enough time to learn all of the necessary skills and information, I am unsure if I would say that it is. The twenty six videos that I have created for my capstone project assist new career special education teachers with policies and procedures for as long as they may need the support for.

When considering which method of teaching and learning I respond most to, I decided that creating videos that the early career special education teachers can watch and review as much as they need to may be the best option. I also included a map in which describes what topics each video is relevant for so that the viewers can easily find videos that they may be looking for or videos on topics that they may be looking for. I included an introduction video stating the names of all the informational videos so that they are easily accessible to the viewer. The videos are all ten minutes or shorter in length, ensuring that these videos are not taking up too much time during a teacher's preparation period. I also wanted the videos to be short so that the viewers can find the information that they are looking for rather quickly compared to reading long articles to get the information that they need. These videos are specifically relevant to the school district that I work for and the education district that it is within to ensure that it can benefit most effectively and appropriately the early career special education teachers in my school district.

Special education coordinators are shared within the education district that I work in. With that being said, the school district that I work in only has the special education coordinator in the building two days per week. My school district does not have a special education secretary so all of the due process information, filing, and coding is up to the case manager to complete. Special education teachers that previously worked in other school districts that have a special education coordinator and a special education secretary on a daily basis, may not have had to

complete the coding, filing, and other due process information. To me, this was an important piece to add to my videos as this may be relevant to veteran special education teachers that previously had been in school districts that had those supports in place.

When considering the need for continued support after two months of mentoring that I had as a first-year special education teacher on a variance, I knew that my future colleagues would need more than I had received as I felt that I needed more at the time too. I wanted to ensure that there were continued support videos available to my future colleagues so that they felt confident and comfortable with completing due process paperwork independently. The videos that I created were all relevant to the needs that I had demonstrated and continued to need support with when I was a tier-two, first-year special education teacher. To determine more needs and information necessary for early career special education teachers, I interviewed two of my colleagues who also entered the special education field on a variance, tier-one license, tier-two license, or are first-year special education teacher to receive more information about supports that they may have needed or wished that they had received when beginning their career.

### **Conclusion:**

Special education teachers need more assistance, practice, and clear information in order to be successful when carrying out due process paperwork, instructional practices, and other special education job duties (Billingsley et al., 2011). Utilizing videos to ensure that clear information and instructions are available to the viewer any time that they may need them was important for my capstone project. Mentoring and other school supports assist early career special education teachers in learning the basics and assist in the beginning stages of independent practice but it is important that these teachers have more resources for when they are no longer

receiving extended support and mentoring. After sharing my capstone project videos with my colleagues, I have had responses from veteran special education teachers stating that they have had to look back on my videos to ensure that they are completing specific paperwork or other information correctly.

**Link to Google Drive Folder with Videos:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Y4DRVjtLWSeLz7CFULViTDA4jX\\_a6Xbs](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Y4DRVjtLWSeLz7CFULViTDA4jX_a6Xbs)

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