

Collaboration Among Educator Preparation Programs in NV: Collecting Data on MTSS Across the Silver State

MARYANN DEMCHAK -- UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO
MAD@UNR.EDU

JOSEPH MORGAN -- UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS
JOSEPH.MORGAN@UNLV.EDU

Opening Discussion Question

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO LEARN FROM THIS SESSION?

Purpose of this Session

- Discuss collaboration across four educator preparation programs in NV to conduct research studies as part of goals in the NV CEEDAR Blueprint:
 1. NV principals' understanding of MTSS and
 2. How MTSS is addressed within educator preparation programs
- We will share (a) information about how we collaborated, (b) the research methods and analyses used, and (c) research findings.
- We will also discuss how these data will be disseminated and used in the state.

Background

HOW DID NEVADA GET TO THIS SESSION?

CEEDAR Center: Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform Center



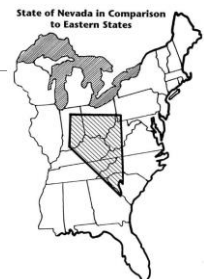
In 2016, Nevada was named a CEEDAR intensive technical state.

The CEEDAR Center works with state teams in promoting policies and practices that support the preparation of special education and general education teachers to provide evidence-based practices

<https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/>

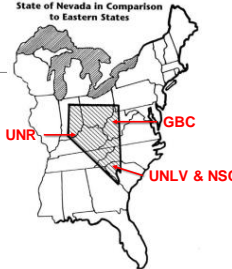
Nevada Background

- 7th largest state geographically
- 33rd most populous (just under 3 million)
 - Most in Las Vegas area followed by Reno area
- 18 school districts
 - 17 traditional and one recent charter school district



Nevada Background

- Four state-funded IHEs with educator preparation programs:
 - Great Basin College (GBC; Elko)
 - Nevada State College (NSC; Henderson – near Las Vegas)
 - University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)
 - University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)



The Nevada Blueprint: Goals of CEEDAR Work

- Goal 1: Promote the understanding of RTI/MTSS among educators, school leaders, and teacher educators.
- Goal 2: Promote the understanding of special education among school leaders and administration certification programs.
- Goal 3: Promote the understanding of the NEPF by all stakeholders.

The Nevada Blueprint – Focus This Session

Goal 1: Promote the understanding of RTI/MTSS among educators, school leaders, and teacher educators.

- Syllabi Review across the 4 IHEs
- Focus groups with principals
- Statewide survey of teachers and principals

Process for Syllabi Review

Goal 1: Syllabi Review of Teacher Preparation Programs of the Four State-funded IHEs

- Purpose:
 - Is there a common understanding and presentation of MTSS among teacher preparation programs (TPPs) as demonstrated in course offerings across the four state-funded IHE TPPs

Process of Developing MTSS Terms for Coding

- State team developed a list of terms representative of MTSS
 - Initial list developed by doctoral student in special education
 - Team members responded and added
 - Terms compared to glossaries of National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) and National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI)

Final List of MTSS Terms for Coding

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. MTSS | 10. Tier supports | 17. Diverse learners |
| 2. RTI | a. Tier 1 supports | 18. Multiple means (of representation, expression, engagement) |
| 3. UDL | b. Tier 2 supports | 19. Intensive intervention |
| | c. Tier 3 supports | 20. Progress monitoring |
| 4. Differentiation / differentiated instruction | 11. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) | 21. Data-based instruction/individualization |
| 5. Accommodations | 12. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) | 22. Benchmark/goal line/aim line |
| 6. Modifications | 13. Evidence-based Practices | 23. Formative and summative assessments |
| 7. Adaptation(s) | 14. Continuum of Services | |
| 8. Scaffolding | 15. Inclusion | |
| 9. Tiered instruction | 16. LRE | |



Syllabi requested from each TPP for the following programs, if relevant:

- Elementary education
- Secondary education
- Special education



Requested by team members who worked at that IHE

Process



Each IHE coded separately

Syllabus Coding and Data Analysis



Syllabi coded for the presence of specific terms related to the MTSS process from list
Also coded how addressed within the course (if included in the syllabi)

- Lecture
- Assignments
- Discussion
- Readings



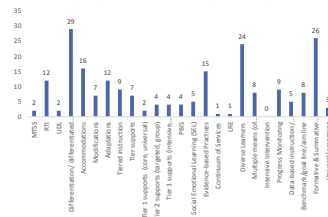
Second person independently coded percentage of syllabi for inter-rater agreement

Results

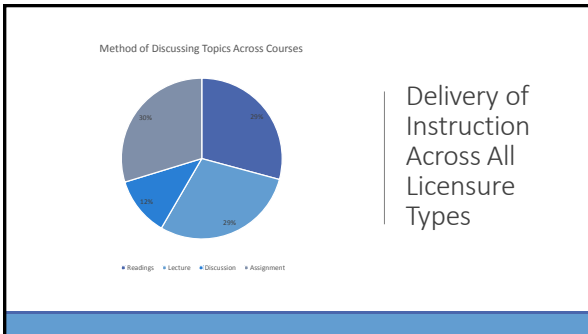
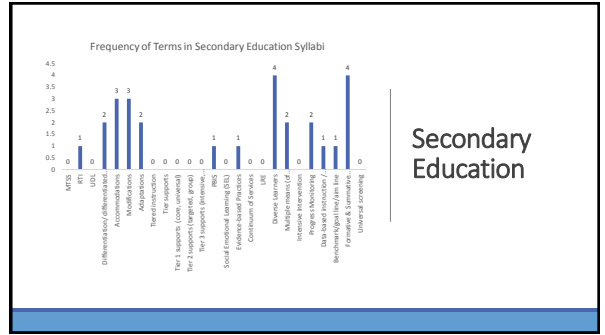
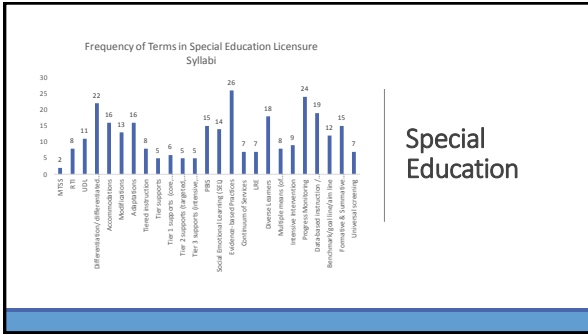
Types of Licensure Programs Across Institutions

Elementary	Secondary	Special Education
Great Basin College	Great Basin College	Great Basin College
Nevada State College	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Nevada State College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas	University of Nevada, Reno	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Nevada, Reno		University of Nevada, Reno

Frequency of Terms in Elementary Licensure Syllabi



Elementary Education



Results

- Elementary and special education licensure programs cover a majority of MTSS topics somewhere in program
 - Special education licensure programs appear to cover topics with more depth as determined by frequency of mention in syllabi
- Secondary education licensure programs do not appear to cover MTSS with much depth
 - Could be related to limited number of pedagogy classes compared to content
- Topics covered in a variety of ways across courses
- Universities situated in more populated contexts more likely to cover MTSS terms
- Inconsistent use of common conceptual framework of MTSS

Discussion and Implications

- All institutions need to increase MTSS-related terms and concepts into syllabi and practices across degree types
 - Special education faculty embed more specific, discipline-related MTSS terms and concepts into syllabi (and instruction) than do their general education counter-parts
 - Elementary and SPED syllabi showed a disproportionately higher number of MTSS terms than did secondary education syllabi
 - Elementary and SPED syllabi were comparable in the number of top five MTSS terms identified in their syllabi, but with different focal areas
- ## What We Have Found So Far

Implications for Teacher Preparation



Curricular alignment between general, special, and leadership education programs
Continuum of development from pre-service to in-service
Specificity of content by level of MTSS



Training related to the process of MTSS
Data collection and data-based decision making
Progress monitoring and tracking student progress
Content-specific and general progress monitoring
Navigating the tiers of MTSS

Implications for Teacher Preparation



Evidence-based practices and techniques
Identification of evidence-based practices
Monitoring impact of chosen practice on student outcomes



Applied practice with collaboration
At pre-service level, engaging in the problem-solving process
Collaboration with other pre-service professionals to practice process

Limitations and Future Research

- Syllabi coded, but nothing else related to course instruction
- Additional information might be available in assignment materials, online course site, etc.
- Perhaps our findings might be an under-representation of how MTSS is truly addressed
- Survey or focus groups with professors / instructors of elementary, secondary, and special education pedagogy courses to gain information about their knowledge and perceptions of MTSS
- Coding of TPPs in specialized areas of special education (e.g., ECSE, ID, SED, Autism)

Principal Focus Groups

The Nevada Blueprint – Focus This Session

Goal 1: Promote the understanding of RTI/MTSS among educators, school leaders, and teacher educators.

Syllabi Review across the 4 IHEs

Focus groups with principals

Statewide survey of teachers and principals

Process to identify focus group participants

- Researcher contacted state PBIS project
 - One focus group piggybacked on a statewide meeting/training with a few of their attendees (in-person)
- Facilitator contacted district administrators
 - Two groups were arranged that included suburban and rural (in-person)
- Researcher contacted frontier and rural administrators
 - One focus group and one 1:1 interview via Zoom

Purpose of Focus Groups

- Participants told purpose was to:
 - Gather information about what MTSS pre-training, support and implementation looks like for school administrators throughout the state.
 - Gather information to help the Nevada Department of Education and our state institutions of higher education
 - Gather candid responses regarding administrator pre-service and in-service training, current levels of implementation, and continued support relative to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support or MTSS

Focus Group Demographics

- 4 Focus groups and one 1:1 interview
 - Gender: 14 Females and 11 Males
 - Ages: 29-61 (Average 48 years)
 - Years as Principal: 2 – 24 years (Average 9 years)
 - Districts: Frontier, Rural, Urban, Suburban
 - Schools: Elementary, Middle and High School

Qualitative Data Analysis

- Initially reviewed collaboratively to code interviews linked to MTSS/RTI process
- Used the list of terms or phrases developed for review of syllabi as related to teaching about MTSS process
 - Determined if a comment related to one of those terms or phrases
 - Added to the list if new term or phrase introduced
- Coding combined into categories and then themes

Focus Groups

RESULTS

Theme 1: Conceptualization of MTSS

General understanding of framework and process

- Implications for academics and behavior

Consistency of terminology

- Confusing MTSS/RTI/PBIS/SEL
- Orientation of interventions within frameworks

Lack of national perspective

URBAN/SUBURBAN: "If you're talking behavior, it's PBIS. And...if you're talking academics, then it's...like for us it's instructional consultation and PLC teams, because they started PLC teams monitoring student progress..."

URBAN/SUBURBAN: "S2: Washoe's the one that uses that term. And..."

F: Got it.

S4: Cause they have a whole department called MTSS."

Theme 2: Process of MTSS

Formal versus informal

- Referral process (i.e., conversations with teachers, formalized process)
- Collecting data over time
- Comment from participant: "It is not about the student being blamed, it's that the match between student and teaching is broken."

Analysis of integrative supports

- Root cause analysis (i.e., eligibility history, attendance, teacher relationships, homework)
- Hybrid development of different models

Referral for special education

RURAL: "We have students in all of our classes...throughout the day. Special ed students and students who have...and teachers if they notice something where a student may not be on a special ed situation, that notices they need some help or extra time or whatever, then they...basically note that. And then, when we get in our staff meetings, we'll discuss different needs, and if it's something universal, then we'll start pursuing an RTI kind of situation where their tier might change."

RURAL: "...really dependent upon people volunteering and time to do the intervention program..."

Theme 3: School Leadership & Professional Development

- Steering initiative and accountability
- Vision setting and leader role in MTSS
- Professional development aligned to vision
 - Coordination of initiatives and professional development
 - Support of teacher capacity and skill to implement MTSS
 - Divergent skills related to specific processes

URBAN/SUBURBAN: "I guess in my school, if, if I'm not involved it's not gonna happen..."

URBAN/SUBURBAN: "I'm year six at this school, so it's much different in year six than year two or three, right? I, I did lead the cause in the beginning..."

Theme 4: Collaboration

Dedicated time for collaboration

- PLCs, intervention analysis time, teacher meetings

Informal conversations

- Discussions after staff meetings, talking with teachers in passing

Assignment of interventionists

URBAN/SUBURBAN: "...co-op meetings where we meet like, three times a year. And it's myself, and the counselor, and learning strategist, and specialist, and the ESL teacher..."

RURAL: "So...then we'll look at paraprofessionals, where we have them and where they're co-teaching or helping out. And do we need to move something or do something different. And then just look at our lessons, are we doing other re-teaching, or is it just simply going through and then moving on without taking those other kids and making considerations"

Theme 5: Integration of Evidence-based Practices

Focus on process, not on instruction

- Limited discussion of actual practices in each tier of instruction

Techniques chosen not necessarily evidence-based

- Some were, while others had limited evidence

Discussion and Implications: Focus Groups

Implications for Teacher and Leader Preparation

- Curricular alignment between general, special, and leadership education programs
 - Continuum of development from pre-service to in-service
 - Specificity of content by level of MTSS
- Training related to the process of MTSS
 - Data collection and data-based decision making
 - Progress monitoring and tracking student progress
 - Content-specific and general progress monitoring
 - Navigating the tiers of MTSS

Implications for Teacher and Leader Preparation

- Evidence-based practices and techniques
 - Identification of evidence-based practices
 - Monitoring impact of chosen practice on student outcomes
- Applied practice with collaboration
 - At pre-service level, engaging in the problem-solving process
 - Collaboration with other pre-service professionals to practice process

Limitations and Future Research

- Initial analysis of focus group transcripts
 - More in-depth analysis still needed
- Might be beneficial to survey leadership preparation programs to determine the degree they address MTSS in their pre-service programs

Interactive Discussion Questions

Table groups will engage in discussion of key questions: How might you do something similar in your state?

How do you identify the critical partners (within and across EPPs) to be at the table to establish priority areas? How do you keep an emphasis on the priority? How do you determine a research project lead?

Closing Connections

- Take 5 minutes and write down, what is important to share with my team that helps my context, lessons learned or things to avoid?
- 5 minutes and think about networking. Who should I connect with later/ when and what should I follow up?