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Coaches' and Athletic Directors' Inclusion Practices for High School Student-Athletes with Disabilities

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Coaches' and Athletic Directors' Inclusion Practices for High School Student-Athletes

with Disabilities

by

Jason Alan Carrera

MA, Grand Canyon University, 2016

BS, Georgia State University, 1988

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2021

Abstract

The problem that drove this study was the need to improve the inclusive practices for
high school student athletes with disabilities in a large, diverse school district. The
purpose of this study was to examine how high school coaches and athletic directors
provide accommodations for students with disabilities (SWD) and the perceived needs of
the coaches and athletic directors to improve inclusion for SWD. The conceptual
framework was based on the universal design for learning, an instructional model for
students of diverse learning abilities. Research questions were used to explore the
perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and athletic directors related to SWD
during high school athletics. This basic qualitative study included data from
semistructured interviews with 12 coaches and athletic directors in a large school district
in Georgia. A priori and open codes were used to analyze data. Key findings were
coaches reported that they had little training for SWDs, little experience with student
individual education programs, and no written policy for the implementation of student
accommodations in extracurricular activities. Coaches and athletic directors also stated
that coaches, who are certified in special education, are helpful in the coaching of SWD.
The study contributes to positive social change by providing recommendations to
improve accommodations for SWD in extracurricular activities. The project, based on the
study findings, is a professional development training for coaches and athletic directors to
improve the experiences of SWD who participate in extracurricular activities. Providing
proper accommodations for athletes could enhance the students' experiences and facilitate
positive social and academic outcomes.

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Dedication

My doctoral study is dedicated to my family and my extended football family.

Without their support and encouragement, this process would not have been possible.

The long days and nights and the balance of life and completing this study all came from

their support. Before this journey started, I would not have ever believed that I would be

writing a dedication as Dr. Carrera. My faith and trust in God along with his continued

promise to always love and protect me has gotten me through.

To my extended football family I thank you passionately. I thank you for

listening to me, supporting me, and giving me the support needed to complete and follow

my desire to finish. You teach me resiliency, hard work, perfect effort, and the demand

for excellence daily.

To my sons I thank you, for somewhere deep down believing that I could do this,

finish, and be Dr. Carrera. From my dad you know I have always told you "that if it is

worth doing, it is worth doing right." I hope those words forever stay with you and you

remember and carry with you always. I love you!

To my dad, thank you forever for teaching me all that you have. That education is

one of the most important things we ever have an opportunity for and that completing the

process teaches consistency and strength. To my Mom, I know you are looking down

and smiling. Thank you for all that you taught me, and even though you are not here to

enjoy the end, I know you are proud.

To my wife, the reason I completed this study I love you and thank you. The long

days, the discussions and teamwork, I could not have done it without you and would not

have wanted to do it with anyone else. I love you Dr. Carrera and we will forever be Dr.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem that drove this study was the need to improve the inclusive practices for high school student-athletes with disabilities in a large, diverse school district. The athletic director (AD) of this district, who supervises 19 high schools, stated that coaches and ADs do not always implement proper accommodations for students with disabilities. According to the district AD, additional training is needed to meet the needs of students with disabilities (SWD). Vargas, Beyer, and Flores (2018) supported the importance of this problem when they determined that 78% of coaching educators did not believe that their preservice training adequately prepared them to work with athletes who have disabilities. Eighty-three percent of coaches felt that they did not receive specific training in the area of SWD, and over 70% reported that professional development would prepare coaches to work with athletes with disabilities (Vargas et al., 2018). Coaches, principals, and ADs have inadequate exposure to special education content and training during their schooling, resulting in a restricted understanding of effective instructional strategies for SWD (Lynch, 2016).

The problem indicated a gap in the inclusion practices of high school coaches when working with SWD participating in extracurricular athletic activities. Researchers have explored issues related to SWD who participate in sports, but there is little information in the research concerning SWD like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Vargas et al., 2018). Given the complexity of the population of SWD, there is a need for quality research to be conducted concerning the successful practices of coaches working

with SWD to understand the strategies that coaches can use to effectively meet the needs of their athletes (Cybulski, Culver, Kraft, & Formeris, 2016). There continues to be an awareness within sports coaching books and articles that the organizational culture and understanding of disability coaching is lacking (Crisp, 2019).

Rationale

Coaches who do not provide accommodations for SWD do not meet their legal obligations (Williams, 2014). According to the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the research setting's website, coaches should be providing proper accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities. Despite current laws and policies, adequate inclusion for athletes with disabilities does not always occur at the high school level. This problem supports the need for research regarding inclusion for student-athletes with disabilities (see Molfenter, 2017). IDEA includes language that children with a disability should have the additional supports and services needed to share with children without disabilities in extracurricular services and activities in the means necessary to give SWD an equal chance for involvement in sports and activities (IDEA, 34 CFR §300.107 & 300.117).

A campus school AD within the research district stated that coaches and students within the local high schools would benefit from research to examine ways to improve the implementation of proper accommodations for student-athletes. The AD also stated that coaches within the high schools in his district would benefit from research that improves their application of accommodations for student-athletes. The coordinator of

adapted sports within the studied district stated, "Teamwork, discipline, hard work, and overcoming adversity are all lessons that help us become better people. These student-athletes are working hard not to let their disability be an excuse for them not learning to play a sport" (GCPS Website, *Students with disabilities compete in adapted sports league*, 2019). The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) Special Education Rules Implementation Manual stated that "districts must consider supplementary aids and services necessary to provide students with disabilities the equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities" (GADOE, *Nonacademic and Extracurricular Activities, 2018, p. 22*).

Although many athletes with disabilities participate in sports today, the disability goes unrecognized by the coach. Studies found that as many as 54% of athletes on three different sports teams in college had unrecognized learning disabilities (Stokowski, Blunt-Vinti, Hardin, Goss, and Turk, 2017). In addition, Dymond, Rooney-Kron, Burke, and Agran (2019) found,

> Research investigating the perceptions of school personnel suggests several barriers that limit the participation of students with disabilities. These barriers include student characteristics (e.g., cognitive, communication, social, behavioral), insufficient extracurricular activity options and supports, lack of parent and teacher support, transportation issues, and budget constraints. (p. 1)

In 2010, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that although many SWD participate in a sport, many coaches do not attend individual education program (IEP) meetings for the students, and coaches training is minimally provided on how to work

with SWD. Coaches, like all physical educators, can work with special education professionals to provide expertise when working with SWD (see Morey, Ennis, & Katsiyannis, 2018).

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine how coaches and ADs at the high school level provide accommodations for SWD and the perceived needs of the coaches and ADs to improve inclusion for student-athletes with disabilities. Because there is a gap in practice, a deep understanding of the phenomenon was important to meet the needs of SWD and provide recommendations for improving the experience for the student-athletes with disabilities. Several different behavioral interventions can be used successfully within athletics by coaches (Vargas, Flores, & Beyer, 2015). The use of universal design for learning (UDL) by coaches allows for proactive planning for teaching different athletes with differing skills. It can avoid frustration by the athlete with a disability when concepts are not understood (Vargas et al., 2018). When creating successful coaches and students, it is key for the coaches to understand SWD and the challenges they face when competing in extracurricular activities. Giving the coaches and ADs the understanding of the challenges will allow them to be more effective and successful when working with SWD.

Definition of Terms

Accommodations: The teacher gives support and services to assist a student in accessing the general education curriculum. Extra time or extended time is an example of an accommodation. Other testing accommodations are a change in how a test is given to

minimize the difficulty related to a student's performance in the classroom (see Goegan, Radil, Daniels, 2018).

Extracurricular activities: Organized student activity that is normally a school event. This event normally does not give any additional academic credit, and for the purposes of this study, is related to sports and athletics (Steinmann, Strietholt, & Caro, 2019).

Inclusion: In education, inclusion refers to a model wherein students with special needs are placed in general education classrooms to meet the social/academic needs of students who need special support (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017).

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study can help increase the understanding of the practices and perceived needs of high school coaches and ADs to provide accommodations for student-athletes with disabilities while promoting social change at multiple levels. The study's results can be used to contribute to positive social change by informing school decision makers about how to improve accommodations for SWD in extracurricular athletic activities. Williams (2014) argued that not providing the proper accommodations means that some SWD miss the benefits of participating in an extracurricular sport. The United States Department of Education stated that persons with disabilities who partake in sports have "higher rates of academic success are more likely to graduate from high school and matriculate in college, and experience greater career success and more options" (Dear colleague letter, 2020, p. 1). An increased understanding by ADs and coaches of proper accommodations for SWD can give them the knowledge to improve the application of

best practices for SWD (DeMartini, 2016). A better understanding can likely lead to "positive long-term outcomes, such as increased involvement in social and community activities during early adulthood" (Vinoski, Graybill, & Roach, 2016, p. 258).

The study also provides information applicable to future training for coaches who work with SWD. More details regarding coaches' actual practice and teaching methods, when working with SWD, was used to equip better and identify the need to educate the coaches further to accommodate SWD when participating in extracurricular activities (see Vargas et al., 2018). UDL principles can assist coaches in overcoming barriers faced when working with SWD participating in extracurricular activities. Coaches, by using the principles of UDL, can identify obstacles and can plan meaningful instruction that allows education goals to be achieved through a variety of tasks and strategies, thus improving the students socially (Grenier, Miller, & Black, 2017). This study can significantly affect the education and understanding of coaches to use UDL when working with SWD, allowing them to provide the students proper instruction that advances them socially and physically.

The information collected can be used to improve the accommodations being provided by the coaches, thereby creating positive social change for the athletes and coaches. Coaches have reported a lack of adequate preparation and confidence, as well as negative attitudes toward inclusion. The removal of these obstacles can benefit the development of inclusive practices in schools (Braga, Taliaferro, & Blagrave, 2018). Training programs for coaches could improve teaching styles, adaptations to activities,

and techniques to support engagement and maintain SWD safety (St. Croix, DeLude, Scott, & Siver, 2017).

Positive relationships created through sports can enhance SWD experiences and make positive social change for the student-athlete when involved with sports. Participating in extracurricular activities provides many opportunities for SWD to interact with peers and to develop positive peer relationships (Grenier, Miller, Black, 2017). With proper education, coaches can accommodate the needs of students, including those with disabilities. Linking IEP goals to coaching using the UDL framework could enhance the overall experience and outcomes for SWD (Lieberman, 2017). The overall effects of proper teaching, coaching, and accommodations for SWD could improve the understanding and enjoyment of the coaches and students, creating positive social change.

Research Questions

The guiding research questions involved collecting the overall perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and ADs when implementing accommodations for SWDs. Semistructured, qualitative interviews were used to explore the understanding and experiences of the coaches within the research district. The research questions were developed to reveal the important perspectives of 12 coaches and ADs in a large district.

Research Question (RQ)1: What are the perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and ADs of one large school district on providing accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities?

RQ2: In a large school district, what are high school coaches' and ADs' perceived needs to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study included UDL. Vargas et al. (2018) established that one way for coaches to advance the learning of athletes is using UDL, which originated at the Center for Applied Special Technology (*CAST*, 2020). The set of principles designed in UDL meets the needs of a mixed group of learners. UDL is based on the premise that variability by each learner is normal in the classroom. Teachers can address this variability by designing lessons that proactively build flexibility and choices to assist all students in the school (Cook & Rao, 2018). UDL is defined as an educational framework that guides the growth and direction of flexible education settings that can accommodate all students (Griful-Freixenet, Struyven, Verstichele, & Andries, 2017). UDL principles were useful to this case study to guide the research questions and findings.

Vargas et al. (2018) used UDL principles in the education of SWD when participating in athletics and extracurricular activities. SWD may have bad experiences of participating in sports when coaches do not understand their behaviors or actions. Past experiences can limit a student's desire to join in, causing them to lose the benefits from participation in extracurricular activities. Vargas et al. established that UDL could assist SWD when participating in athletics, but UDL strategies have rarely been implemented

within the education of coaches. UDL principles can help coaches to develop practice

plans and coaching methods that support the learning needs of an expansive range of

learners, creating the need for additional research to confirm the impact of UDL on SWD

and expand opportunities and participation in athletics (Munafo, 2017). Rosso (2016)

also began to look at the use of UDL for SWD, specifically implementing the three

principles to allow for multiple means of action and expression (as cited in Siebert,

2018). Each of these studies established that UDL can assist coaches when working with

SWD. Conducting a study like this can help build previous research findings and provide

further scholarly data on the use of UDL with athletes in various sports.

Those who use UDL apply three principles to consider the unique way individuals

learn. Educators implement these three principles to give learners various ways to acquire

information, alternatives to demonstrate their knowledge, and motivation for the learner

by identifying their interests and learning styles. The three principles are (a) multiple

means of representation, (b) multiple means of action and expression, and (c) multiple

means of engagement (Cook & Rao, 2018). UDL in coaching allows for practical

preparation for learning variances as participating athletes have differing skills, interests,

and needs, and UDL helps avoid frustration during practice and competition (Vargas et

al., 2018).

Cook and Rao (2018) stated that the goal of the first principle of UDL is to give

students multiple ways to acquire information and knowledge through the presentation of

the material, different languages and symbols, and various ways to comprehend the

information. Principle 2 provides learners multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge

through physical response and executive functions like goal setting and progress monitoring. Principle 3 helps students engage by reducing threats and distractions, varying levels of challenge and support, and developing self-assessment and evaluation (Cook & Rao, 2018). These principles are part of the a priori codes and can help determine the results learned from research.

Each of the three principles of UDL assisted in guiding my research with coaches and ADs. Understanding if coaches are implementing multiple ways for the athlete to acquire information and understanding the experiences they have had implementing these methods helped relate to the problem and goals of the study. Principle 2, goal setting and progress monitoring, can provide a process for SWD to demonstrate their knowledge of what the coaches are teaching. Understanding if coaches are giving athletes these opportunities shows the success of using UDL. Principle 3 can reduce those distractions that often happen around a coach and players when trying to instruct and teach. Identifying if coaches implement each principle and recognizing each principle's understanding helped identify the knowledge of their experiences and success when working with SWD. Coaches may already implement many of these principles without understanding the strategy. Bringing together their expertise and understanding allows for developing strategies when working with SWD and closes a gap in research.

Limited research has been done to support this framework being used by coaches when working with SWD. Beyer et al. (2018) provided analysis and guidelines for coaches by giving best practice tips for behavioral expectations and management, the physical arrangement of practice and providing directions, the evaluation process, and

parental involvement. Each principle of UDL helps address the variability of learners by supporting flexible education environments with customizable choices that allow all students to proficiently progress from where they are towards where they need to be in ways that connect for them. The UDL guidelines support instructional progressions in an appropriate setting where students at all levels and stages across an expansive range of needs can, at the same time, learn. UDL supports students at all levels of learning simultaneously (West Virginia Board of Education, 2017).

However, there is a gap in the inclusion practices of high school coaches when working with SWD participating in extracurricular athletic activities. Effective coaching involves the communication of instruction and information from coach to athlete. Therefore, to make curricula more available and all-encompassing, UDL provides procedures that can help coaches improve flexible education to reduce the barriers and strengthen support levels (Rosso, 2016). The study's phenomenon is how high school coaches and ADs provide accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities and their perceived needs to successfully include these SWDs in high school athletics. Key research questions provided the perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and Ads providing accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities. The research provided the perceived needs to include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics successfully. Interview protocol refinement (IPR) is a method that can provide an increased value of the data gained from the research interviews. The IPR framework helped to deliver a common language for expressing the tough phases used to develop interview procedures and endorse their study's congruency (Castillo-Montoya,

2016). The coding strategies included the use of open codes and a priori codes. A priori codes are codes developed before probing the existing data and aligned with the conceptual framework to ground the findings (Timonen, Foley, & Conlon, 2018). The three principles of representation, action and expression, and engagement align the UDL with the coding (Kennette & Wilson, 2019).

Literature Search Strategy

In researching the problem presented, my goal was to obtain scholarly research articles that provided the experiences and understanding of implementing a student's IEP when participating in extracurricular activities. ProQuest, Walden Library, ERIC (Education Resource Information Center), Google Scholar, EBSCO (Elton B. Stephens Company), and the local district website were used to obtain key definitions and information about students with IEPs participating in extracurricular activities. Key search terms used to retrieve literature included *students with disabilities, special education, extracurricular activities, coaches*, and *sports and athletics*. The information obtained from peer-reviewed articles was used to understand research that has been conducted concerning the problem statement. Sufficient data were obtained from the published years of 2015 to 2020.

Coaches' Understanding of the IEP Implementation

Research literature has revealed a limited understanding of the level of acceptance of coaches and their concerns when working with SWD. Coaches are not always confident in their understanding of how to transfer this knowledge to their students and other educators (Cybulski, Culver, Kraft, & Formeris, 2016). Research concerning

coaching athletes with a disability still lacks depth related to its equivalent in the nondisabled sport. Exploration has taken place on the holistic experience of coaching select athletes with a disability and has covered not only the coaches' preconceptions but also the rewards of their coaching experience. Researchers have stated that some coaches are concerned that they may cause offense to the athlete, put their foot in their mouth, or use inappropriate terminology relating to SWD (Wareham, Burkett, Innes, & Lovell, 2017). Disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, specific learning disabilities, and ADHD may cause an athlete to lose focus, not be able to stay engaged with instruction, or not listen thoroughly to the coach's direction during practice without proper implementation of the IEP accommodations (Braun & Braun, 2015). Being able to understand and perform the skills needed to participate is often not apparent; therefore, SWD are often labeled as lazy or unmotivated because coaches are not equipped or proficient at recognizing when a student has a disability (Rosso, 2016).

Increasing good practice and professional development for coaches can improve skills needed when working with SWD. Lieberman (2017) reported that there is little published information for coaches when working with SWD. As a coach, engaging SWD and offering favorable surroundings can promote sports participation, yet education on good practice is often unclear. It has been conferred that studying this fact merits further attention (Rosso, 2016). Crisp (2019) presented evidence that professional development for coaching when working with SWD can enhance the core coaching skills and lead to better performance across coaching domains and allow the coach to gain a deeper self-awareness of working with SWD. As numbers of SWD in conventional schools increase,

the burden on teachers, coaches, and ADs to develop effective practices and strategies

that account for an assortment of environments also increase (Beacom & Golder, 2015).

Supports can be considered to increase the effectiveness of coaches in facilitating

the participation of SWD. Factors like insufficient knowledge or the lack of experience

coaching SWD may cause a reluctance by many coaches to coach these students. When

coaches only focus on winning and not the development of the athlete, it can create a

large number of academically and athletically underprepared student-athletes, especially

those with disabilities (Council, Hodge, & Bennett, 2018). Training programs for coaches

can educate them on coaching styles, adaptations to activities, and techniques to support

engagement and maintain safety for these students. Identifying coaches' perspectives on

inclusion is a step towards recognizing the barriers and facilitators of the participation of

athletes with disabilities in sports (St. Croix et al., 2017).

Coaches Responsibility and the Local Problem

Special education laws and court cases have provided coaches and ADs with

guidelines when working with SWD within public schools. IDEA requires that IEPs for

SWD must include "supplementary aids and services and program modifications or

supports to be provided to enable the child to participate in extracurricular activities"

(IDEA Regulations 34 C.F.R. § 300.320 et seq.). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. No.93-112, 87 Stat. 355) was the first civil rights

law for SWD to protect against discrimination. The act was a positive move on the road

to ensuring equal opportunity for all students to be included in extracurricular activities

such as athletics and other activities (Busse & Davis, 2016). In the 2004 IDEA

guidelines, local public school systems are required to offer extracurricular services in a way that allows SWD an equal chance for involvement in extracurricular activities (Williams, 2014).

In a review of the broader problem, it is evident that the discussion of SWD participating in sports and extracurricular activities has been a topic of debate for many years. The Department of Education (2011) explained how school districts could grow the involvement of SWD by removing mutual barriers. The explanation by the GADOE included guaranteeing that coaches have adequate training and chances for professional development, in managing the behavior of SWD, and applying the UDL model to the PE curriculum (Losinski, Katsiyannis, & Yell, 2014). Youth (age 5-17) account for 7.2% of the population living with a disability in the United States (Kraus, 2017). To increase public health, involvement in sports and recreational activities is particularly essential for persons with disabilities (Aytur, Craig, Frye, Bonica, Rainer, Hapke, & McGilvray, 2018). Allowing SWD the opportunity to participate in sports with their typically developing peers provides connections outside of school times that will improve ideal social, scholarly, and physical development and possibly contribute to more constructive functioning as an adult (Arbour-Nicitopoulos, Grassmann, Orr, McPherson, Faulkner, & Wright,, 2018). No study has been done since the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2010) study revealed facts related to SWD. The GAO (2010) study produced facts stating that 18-73 % of students across the United States participate in school-sponsored extracurricular athletics. The report also concluded that only 6-25% of SWD participate in extracurricular activities. Those percentages ranged from 10-56

percentage points lower than participation numbers for students without disabilities (GAO, 2010). The GAO report (2010) also concluded that the benefits to SWD when participating in sports, was of great importance to their development and experience in school.

According to the county AD at the local level, providing coaches with an understanding of their obligation to provide SWD the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities can be a part of coaches' education (Personal communication, County AD, 2019). Teachers, administrators, and coaches' understanding of the execution of inclusive extracurricular activities benefits SWD (Vinoski, Graybill, & Roach, 2016). Although many SWD face challenges, coaches interviewed in a 2016 study believed that participation for SWD is made possible no matter if it means changing how things are done and presented to the students (Cybulski et al., 2016). Limited numbers of teachers believed that planning events for SWD is their responsibility, even though teachers thought these activities were of value and provided several benefits (Agran, Achola, Nixon, Wojcik, Cain, Thoma, Austin, & Tamura, 2017). SWD has often faced obstacles, including inaccessible facilities and tools and inadequately skilled coaches that limit their participation (Stapleton,Taliaferro, & Bulger, 2017). Barriers to SWD participation in extracurricular activities include student cognitive abilities, communication, social, and behavioral characteristics along with activity choices and provisions, lack of parental and educator backing, transportation problems, and economic limits (Dymond et al., 2019).

Using UDL to Level the Playing Field

One way for coaches to improve the learning and success of athletes is to adopt the concept of UDL (Vargas et al., 2018). The UDL framework is used to "understand how to support learners with severe disabilities and how to support their access to authentic and appropriate curricula that improve their quality of life" (Hartmann, 2015, p. 55). UDL provides instructional practices for athletes without emphasizing ability deficits. UDL will allow for hands-on development concerning learning differences for athletes that play with different skills, interests, and requirements (Vargas et al., 2018). The use of the UDL framework can help to eliminate frustration for the coaches when working with SWD in practices and games.

Students may be offered tools like text-to-speech, online dictionaries and highlighting tools as accommodation when studying literary subjects in the classroom. Educator provided coaching that is applied using technology-adjusted instructional pacing created on student test scores, or ability is the use of UDL ideologies in the classroom (King-Sears, Johnson, Berkeley, Weiss, Peters-Burton, Evmenova, Menditto, & Hursh, 2015). On the field, a coach includes verbal instructions with a visual aid or demonstration and may even have physical prompts and guidance to assist SWD when participating in extracurricular activities and making instruction available for everyone (Vargas et al., 2018). Applying the strategic network of UDL will allow athletes to demonstrate fundamental skills in different ways that match their performance level and abilities, just as it is done in the classroom (Hall, Cohen, Vue, & Ganley, 2015).

Barriers for Coaches Including SWD

Barriers, as discussed, can exist for coaches when working with SWD. These barriers often concern the physical and mental abilities of the students. The barriers include the student's functional limitations, lack of specialized programs available in schools, and the need for specialized equipment that may be used to participate (Levine, 2019). SWD can be challenging to coaches because of low drive, poor motor functioning, and self-monitoring and regulation (Rosso, 2016). When coaches work with SWD, they face the challenge that many students have poor spatial orientation, difficulty with body awareness, and poor hand-eye coordination (Poretta & Winnick, 2016). Each of characteristics can lead to a poor experience for the students and frustrated coaches.

The lack of proper preparation and education of coaches regarding working with and training SWD can become a barrier when not provided in the coach's knowledge. Coaches will likely feel constrained in their working practice with SWD if they have not received prior training or do not fully understand the disability itself (Crisp, 2019). Poorly prepared coaches who work with SWD can lead to undesirable results for both the student-athlete and the instructor (Siebert, 2018). All athletes, and especially those with disabilities, are each uniquely diverse, and instructors have the task of interpreting a player's temperament and adapting their style of teaching technique to each athlete's requirements (Cybulski et al., 2016). Coaches' understanding of the athlete's disability and having the proper training to work with SWD will build the confidence coaches need.

Coaches are unsure, at times, about how to work with SWD when implementing rules and directions in the activity the student is participating in at school. Studies

identified that efficacy beliefs for coaching athletes with ADHD indicated that coaches felt relatively ineffective and not confident in their ability to implement rules and remain fair with SWD (Vargas et al., 2018). While some coaches are eager and gifted enough to teach SWD in inclusive settings, other coaches are not excited or ready to successfully include SWD (Pocock & Miyahara, 2018). Coaches are hesitant in fully supporting inclusive practices and implementation working with SWD because of a lack of self-efficacy and apparent behavioral control, a lack of professional development, and a lack of preparedness to coach SWD (Ruscitti, 2017). These identified factors can lead to a poor experience for the student and the coach, resulting in the student not receiving the benefits of participating in extracurricular activities.

Social Implications for Students and Coaches

There are social benefits when SWD participates in extracurricular activities. Coaches understanding these benefits and providing these students an opportunity for participation is essential to their success. Participation in sports among children with disabilities is progressively acknowledged as a critical rehabilitation (Woodmansee, Hahne, Imms, & Shields, 2016). Involvement in extracurricular activities provides academic, social, and vocational development for SWD when involved (Vinoski et al., 2016). When SWD's are included in general education classrooms and activities, the activity can improve social skills and an increased understanding of these students' success and actions (Stokowski, Blunt-Vinti, Hardin, Goss, & Turk, 2017). Inclusive physical activity, or athletics, is a socializing setting to teach social and physical skills, especially for SWD. Connection and acceptance by peers may also be enhanced when

SWD participate in extracurricular athletic activities (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2018). Research shows when working on the personal and social aspects of SWD who participate in athletics, coaches can gain a positive result on what SWD considers of themselves and what others feel about them (Ottoboni, Milani, Setti, Ceciliani, Chattat, & Tessari, 2017).

SWD who partake in school-sponsored extracurricular activities through grade 12 may have an improved probability of finishing a postsecondary degree. Additional research is needed to determine the advantages of the student's participation and the effects gained (Palmer, Elliott, & Cheatham, 2017). Besides the advantages of physical activity benefits, SWD who play sports will experience improved cognitive, emotional, social, and motor functioning (Rosso, 2016). Studies have suggested that when SWD are involved in sports and out-of-class activities, it helps them plan for their future and increase leadership skill development and self-determination. When participating with peers in the school, the action better allows for developing significant and permanent friendships (Vinoski et al., 2016).

When coaches are not prepared to work with SWD, it can become a negative experience for both the athlete and the coach. That negative experience can come from losing self-confidence, negative development of a student's identity, and undesirable feelings about them being involved in sports can be formed (Vargas et al., 2018). Studies support that typical peer athletes reduce the unpleasant attitude towards SWD when the activities are played and organized with a team-mate having disabilities (Ottoboni et al., 2017). The coaches' role is very critical to engage SWD by providing favorable

environments to increase participation. Good-practice for coaches when working with SWD is often confusing, and scholars agree that this aspect deserves further research and attention (Rosso, 2016). It has often been said that a coach can influence a student more than anyone else that he works within a school.

When the coach provides excellent leadership, the opportunity arises for the student and coach to develop useful life skills through a positive sporting environment (Cybulski et al., 2016). The role of the coach is essential to the delivery of actions when working with SWD, which includes the cerebral, social, and motor abilities of participants emphasizing that the coaches engage the students on an individual and singular level (Rosso, 2016). Influence can be why the coach's action and leadership can be so important in the life and development of SWD.

Design and Focus

Studying high school coaches and ADs in the implementation of IEPs and accommodations for SWD when participating in extracurricular athletic activities can help to understand their perceptions and experiences better and suggest proper methods for coaching these athletes. The current study was designed to focus on improving the inclusive practices for high school student-athletes with disabilities in a large, diverse school district by understanding the knowledge and experiences of high school coaches and ADs when working with these students. There is a need for the specific education of coaches and the collaboration with special education experts in the use of the principles of UDL when working with SWD (Rosso, 2016). The inclusion of children with disabilities is perceived to be beneficial for all parties involved, including the coaches and

students (St. Croix, DeLude, Scott, & Siver, 2017). The ability to coach and effectively reach SWD is one trait that should be taught to all coaches. To date, there is a shortage of this information, and this needs to be remedied. Often the misconceptions and misunderstandings of SWD, rather than harmful intentions, are the root of negative interactions between coach and player (Vargas et al., 2018).

Implications

This study may lead to coach and AD preparation changes, within the local district, for working with SWD. The findings of the research may lead to a better understanding of the challenges that coaches are facing when working with SWD. The findings established the need for professional development to educate coaches and ADs to further understand and provide direction for the phenomenon. Future research will help to understand the level of knowledge and information required by a coach to prepare them to work with SWD adequately. A long-term goal may include the opportunity to inform policy about the preparation and education of coaches and ADs to assist SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. In the future, education could be offered, through the information gathered in the interviews, to allow coaches the access and understanding of student-athletes' IEPs when the student is participating in sport or activities. Based on the findings, additional research could further understand the coaches' and ADs' experience working with SWD to inform future decisions or actions that may assist coaches and ADs. The information gathered from the interviews with peers can provide the knowledge to coaches to better understand their student-athletes and have more success in teaching and coaching them on and off the field.

Summary

In summary, there are very few identified SWD participating in extracurricular activities across high schools today. Many of these students go without the accommodations needed when participating because coaches do not know or understand the needs. Coaches and ADs have a great opportunity to assist SWD socially and physically when participating in extracurricular activities, and athletics can become a big part of a student's growth and experience. There is a gap in understanding in the district in Georgia that was studied. There is also a gap in the literature on a greater understanding of coaches for implementing UDL when working with SWD. Through interviews, a better understanding of the phenomenon was gained so that a possible need for further research may be established. A need was established for proper training for coaches that will allow them to be prepared to work with SWD and have a positive experience when working with SWD.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The research method for this study was a basic qualitative study. This methodology was appropriate to gain an understanding of the problem and to promote confidence in the study's findings (Yin, 2017). Interpreting the current experiences of the coaches and ADs was important and could be gained appropriately through the use of a basic qualitative study (see Babchuk, 2017). The setting, a large and diverse school district in Georgia, provided many cases, allowing data to be analyzed within each situation and across different conditions while informing the phenomenon. The ability to investigate the problem through interviews in a natural setting is an appropriate use of a basic qualitative study (Burkholder, Cox, Crawford, & Hitchcock, 2019). Because of the large size and diversity of the district, ADs and coaches face varied situations when working with SWD. Using a basic qualitative study design permitted the analysis of data to be collected from the coaches and ADs affected by diverse settings and helps form universal groupings of how specified circumstances might be linked (Morris & Wester, 2018). Another strength of a basic qualitative study lies not only in its capability to validate constant patterns of performance but also, and perhaps more importantly, in its ability to expose new and in differing themes (Gustafsson, 2017). Because there was a need to gain an understanding of knowledge and experiences of the coaches and ADs, the attributes of a basic qualitative study, like small sample size, ability to examine participant experiences, and exploration of their understanding, can be answered (see Locke & Strunk, 2019).

Description of the Qualitative Tradition

This project study used a basic qualitative approach. Yin (2017) described that a qualitative study can provide various views that occur in a natural setting, uses an indiscriminate group of participants, and produces data that can contribute to explaining social behaviors. Experiences of the coaches and ADs, along with their emotions and social movements, can be obtained through the basic qualitative approach (see Rahman, 2017). The guiding research questions helped me understand the perceptions and considerations of ADs and coaches regarding the participation and experiences of SWD participating in extracurricular activities and how the framework of UDL can bring success. A basic qualitative approach is drawn from fewer participants but includes detailed and heavily contextualized accounts from each source (Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson, & Suárez-Orozco, 2018). A basic qualitative approach allowed me to gather information from a small group of participants via interviews to understand better the experiences occurring in the research district.

Rationale for Not Choosing Other Qualitative Research Designs

Basic qualitative methodology design was an appropriate approach for this study because I sought to examine coaches' and ADs' perceptions and experiences concerning the participation of SWD in extracurricular activities (see Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Qualitative methodology best addressed the research questions by allowing the coaches and ADs to provide rich and intuitive data (see Probst, 2016). Choosing a basic qualitative methodology allowed for the best results when working with coaches and Ads. When studying those who participate in sports or athletics, qualitative exploration

has thrived considerably in the latest years as a mode of research (see Smith &

Mcgannon, 2017).

Other designs could have been chosen, like grounded theory design,

phenomenological research design, and ethnographic research design, but they were not

suitable for the study. Grounded theory design is used to discover and study data to

generate a theory on the studied phenomenon (Wyse, Selwyn, Smith, & Suter, 2016).

Developing a new approach due to the absence of ideas that support or ground the present

theory is a purpose of grounded theory but does not establish the current study (Tie,

Birks, & Francis, 2019). Phenomenological research design strives to understand a

phenomenon through emersion over a period and requires a greater participant pool, often

participants of a specific culture group (Yin, 2017). Ethnographic research design is an

unstructured study of participants' behaviors in everyday contexts using observation and

casual conversations (Hammersley, 2016).

Certain limitations existed in choosing a quantitative design. A quantitative study

does not explore the perceptions, and it provides more of a snapshot and depth of the

variables (Rahman, 2017). The goal of this study was to understand the perceptions and

experiences of the coaches and ADs working with SWD in extracurricular activities.

Interviewing the participants gave me a greater understanding of the phenomenon. A

quantitative study would not have been suitable, as it does not explain how people

understand behaviors or perceptions (see Rahman, 2017).

When researchers conduct qualitative studies, they understand what they are

studying and are knowledgeable about the subject. There is an opportunity to discover

information and experiences that may not be found using quantitative methods

(Friedensen, McCrae, & Kimball, 2017). The objective of qualitative research is to yield

in-depth evidence to understand the many dimensions of the phenomenon that is being

studied (Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). Qualitative research is instrumental in

effecting social change (Tracy, 2019). My goal was to investigate and understand the

perceptions and experiences of the coaches and ADs to collect data that would produce

various themes. The basic qualitative study fits these needs.

Participants

Data were collected using semistructured interviews with six coaches and six Ads

within the school district. Qualitative interviews offered ecological legitimacy, providing

rich, intuitive accounts, and making sense of intricate structural certainties (see Saunders

& Townsend, 2016). The transparency of one-on-one, semistructured interviews allowed

for deeper and richer data to be collected (Fouracres & Van Nieuwerburgh, 2020).

Semistructured interviews were used to explore the experience and understanding of the

coaches by collecting similar types of information from each coach and AD, by providing

them with direction on the topic (see Tammelin, Aira, Hakamäki, Husu, Kallio, Kokko,…

Palomäki 2016). The number of participants "should not be so small that it is difficult to

obtain data saturation and yet not too large to make in-depth analysis difficult" (Saunders

& Townsend, 2016, p. 839). Therefore, 12 participants allowed for proper analysis by not

being too small or too large. The participants were coaches and ADs of random male and

female sports, representing four different sports. The participants were chosen

purposefully to provide richly textured information pertinent to the phenomenon (see

Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018). Invitations were emailed to six coaches and six ADs once institutional review board (IRB) approval from Walden was attained. The high school coaches and ADs were purposefully chosen from various schools at different socioeconomic levels, including Title I and higher economic high schools. The goal of the selected participants was to achieve multiple data points by choosing precise interviewee characteristics and the avoidance of data saturation by the proper choice of participants (see Vasileiou et al., 2018). Of the research provided, the balanced number of participants from schools with varying socioeconomic statuses allowed for a greater representation of the experiences of the coaches and ADs.

A researcher to participant working relationship was established through a professional explanation of the research goals in the invitation letter emailed to potential participants. I stated the purpose of the study and explained the data collection method. The security and privacy of any information provided were protected and was stated in the emailed letter and consent form. I took other means to protect the participants from ensuring confidentiality in the collection and sharing of information, not identifying the participants in the research, and not linking them in any way to the information gathered. Access to the coaches and ADs was gained through the district research approval process and the Walden IRB. All participants' rights were protected through local district guidelines, including local IRB approval to conduct research and the Walden IRB, which has set forth rules for data collection and interviews when conducting a study. The approvals were gained through ethics acceptance for tailored guidance by the school district.

Data Collection

An interview is an instrument of examination where questions can be asked for detailed information connected to the study to create a conversation about the topic (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). A reliable interview protocol was critical to gain good qualitative data because of the interview process's facilitation to have consistent and comprehensive data (see Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, & Hamzah , 2018). IPR was a method that provided an increased value of the data gained from the research interviews. The IPR framework helped deliver a common language for expressing the tough phases used to develop interview procedures and endorse the study (see Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Accurate qualitative data helped me understand the coaches' and ADs' experiences and identify critical essentials about SWD (see Yeong et al., 2018). By applying IPR and gaining valuable data from the coaches and ADs, the appropriate evaluation was used. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B and relates to the research questions answered with probing questions to obtain useful information from the participants.

To ensure accuracy during analysis, data were generated through the interviews and gathered using a reflective journal, codebook, and voice recorder for my review. The reflective journal was used to write and review data collected during the interviews. Accessibility for interviews was gained by attending the participants' school setting to complete the interviews, in a private office setting, during non-school hours, and allowing for up to 1 hour. IRB approval by the district was also needed. Appendix C contains a letter to request an interview with the invitee, along with consent and procedures of the interview. All responses were cataloged to keep track of data and track

emerging trends. According to Weis and Willems (2017), quality in-person interviews aimed at producing actual experiences and knowledge of the coaches and ADs help mitigate any bias present during the collection of data. Not implying what desired answers might be with my questions and limiting facial expressions and gestures eliminated bias (see Burkholder et al., 2019). Member checking was also used to ensure credibility and accuracy and assist in eliminating bias. During the interview, each answer was confirmed by the respondent to check for accuracy. Also, the collected and analyzed data were sent to the interviewed coach or AD for their approval and checking.

Data Analysis

Various methods were used to ensure proper data analysis. Multiple data analysis methods that may be used in a qualitative study include summarizing, interpreting, and authenticating the collected data during the development of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Typological analysis, which is the development of related but specific categories within a phenomenon divided across the phenomenon, was utilized to examine the data collected in question two of this study. The goal of typology construction for analysis in practical social exploration is to derive and clarify typical patterns and guidelines from the data (Weis & Willems, 2017). Understanding Ely's (1990) condition of change and anticipation of codes that exist before the study help interpret the coaches and ADs' possible lack of knowledge of UDL and students' IEPs and support from the district. The study was structured to collect strong statements leading to themes that described the phenomenon's meaning. Gaining a level of understanding is a critical factor in the success of inclusive practices and student achievement because

educators are a pivotal element in student success to include SWD when participating in extracurricular activities.

Semistructured interviews and coding strategies were used to answer the research questions. Beginning with notetaking during the semistructured interviews and continuing through the transcription and the subsequent analysis process, the data were coded with highlighting and descriptive terms. The coding strategies included the use of open codes and a priori codes. A priori codes are developed before probing the existing data and aligned with the conceptual framework to ground the findings (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The a priori codes lacked understanding, lack of knowledge, and lack of training for coaches and ADs. Axial codes were used to develop meaningful categories (Blair, 2015), and thematic text analysis was used to look for the co-occurrence during interviews, as suggested by (see Popping, 2015). A codebook was used to assist in coding the responses. Summarizing, interpreting, and validating the information through the interviews was part of the ongoing process through data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The codes and analysis were used to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Member checking was also used, which is obtaining confirmation from the participant of the data analysis's accuracy assisted in checking for accuracy and credibility of the findings. Also, it is a way of inquiry into the accuracy of any data (Smith & Mcgannon, 2017). Member checking is also defined as a participant or respondent validation. It serves as a practice for discovering the integrity of outcomes by returning results to participants to check for correctness and quality with their

involvements (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Member checking serves as a technique to validate the results of a qualitative study. For accuracy, the transcripts and analysis were returned to the coach or AD to check for information. Respondents were also able to add data or delete data, understanding this may change the data set. Confirmation, modification, and verification was the focus of the interviews—both of the processes allowed for proof of accuracy and credibility in the data. There were no changes in the findings from the member checking process.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine how coaches and ADs at the high school level provide accommodations for SWD and the perceived needs of the coaches and ADs to improve inclusion for student-athletes with disabilities. The two research questions were used to explore the experiences and understanding of ADs and high school coaches when working with SWD while participating in extracurricular activities. Six of the participants were head coaches, and six of the participants were Ads. All participants were from a large school district. The interviews were a combination of in-person interviews and Google Meeting calls that did not exceed one hour. The coaches and ADs were chosen from diverse schools and different extracurricular activities to give a good differentiation in data. Differentiation of those that are participating in the interviews is important in ensuring the data represents all of the groups that are affected by the results (see Smith & Sparkes, 2016).

The conceptual framework for this study includes UDL, which promotes the use of techniques to proactively design and convey instruction reactive to students' different

learning abilities. The UDL Guidelines support instructional progressions in an appropriate setting where students at all levels and stages across an expansive range of needs can, at the same time, learn. Interpreting the current experiences of the coaches and Ads were gained appropriately through the use of a basic qualitative study (Babchuk, 2017). In the following section, I have provided the findings, patterns, relationships, and themes based on the data analysis. The study results helped to inform the instructional practices used by coaches and ADs when working with SWD who participate in extracurricular activities.

Process for When Data Were Generated, Gathered, and Recorded

The goal was for each interview to take place in person at the participant's school. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and requests by the participants, some of the interviews were done via Google Meet. Each interview was recorded through my computer. Notes were taken, and each interview was transcribed and loaded to my laptop, which is password protected. The results were then put into a Microsoft document for easier interpretation and analysis of the contents. I read and listened to each interview several times to allow and confirm the understanding of the data. The recordings were also used to make any corrections and additions. My final step was to listen to the recorded interview once again to check for accuracy and to reflect on the possible codes. Notes were taken and included in the transcription. A sample of this data audit process, labeled codebook in Appendix D, shows the method used to track and mark codes. I then read through the transcripts several times to start coding and highlighting the data while making notes. A sample of this transcript is provided in Appendix E. Each of the steps

used in this process, from recording and transcribing the interviews to note taking and color-coding the emerging codes, creates an account of the process with a detailed understanding of the results (Saldana, 2015).

The data were generated, gathered, and recorded through steps used for qualitative data research. The previously identified a priori codes, lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, and lack of training for coaches and ADs were placed in the transcripts. A priori codes are created before research and reflect ideas from previous reading, prior knowledge, and research (SAGE Research Methods, 2015). The a priori codes were used to categorize the data and themes by highlighting the transcripts and color-coding based on the codes and identifying themes. The data were first reviewed using the a priori codes and coded using the predetermined codes. Corbin and Strauss, (2020) outlined the steps for open and axial coding, as well as the benefits. Axial coding will assist in finding any relations and connections between the established codes. Axial coding was done by looking for causal conditions, the context behind the observations, and the consequences of phenomena (Bennett & McWhorter, 2016). The data were reviewed to identify any open codes then axial coding was used to combine the codes that were generated. The a priori codes were color-coded then each open code was color-coded with a different color and a descriptive label. An interpretation of each piece of data was labeled based on its properties, and all data related to the same subject was labeled with the same codes. A method of a horizontal tree structure was used to give a visual representation of the emergent findings. In qualitative analysis, visual displays have a role to play at various stages of the research (Saldana, 2015, p. 58).

Using the data, each portion of the findings was categorized into the emerging themes using the identified problem, the study's purpose, and the guiding research questions. The a priori codes: lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, and lack of training for coaches and ADs were used, along with the open codes, to categorize the data and emerging themes. As a result, the following themes emerged, large participation numbers, positive experience, little to no training, little knowledge of IEPs, no written policy in place, advantages to further study, and coaches who work in special education are an advantage for SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. Each of these helped to provide answers and allow for the organization of data to align with the established research questions.

Findings

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine how coaches and ADs at the high school level provide accommodations for SWD and the perceived needs of the coaches and ADs to improve inclusion for student-athletes with disabilities. For purposes of this study, the coaches and ADs' responses are coded as C1 through C6 and AD1 through AD6; they represent the responses of the coaches and ADs. The interview responses were analyzed considering UDL and the currently implemented methods coaches and ADs use to provide SWD accommodations when participating in their sports. Awareness of UDL principles by the coaches was not evident during the interview process. UDL principles that can assist coaches in overcoming barriers faced when working with SWD participating in extracurricular activities were considered. Coaches, by using the principles of UDL, can identify obstacles and can plan meaningful

instruction that allows education goals to be achieved through a variety of tasks and

strategies improving the students socially (Grenier, Miller, & Black, 2017). The themes

resulting from the collected data were aligned with the two research questions.

RQ1: What are the perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and ADs

of one large school district on providing accommodations to student-athletes with

disabilities?

RQ2: In a large school district, what are high school coaches' and ADs' perceived

needs to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school

athletics?

The data developed from a priori codes and open coding which led to categorizing and themes that emerged along with descriptions of those themes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes and Descriptions

Theme	Description
Large numbers	Many students with IEPs participate in extracurricular activities
Positive effects	Most students have a positive experience
Little to no training & no written policy	Statement of minimal training provided
Little knowledge of IEPs	Did not have the experience of reviewing IEPs
Advantages to further study	Stated agreement that further research could assist
Experienced coaches	Coaches that work in SPED are helpful

Research Q1 and Theme 1: Large Numbers

When asking the coaches and ADs about their experience and understanding of working with SWD, it was highly evident that there are large numbers of SWD participating in extracurricular activities. AD1, AD3, AD4 all stated that in their experience, they believed that over 45% of the athletes participating in sports are SWD. However, this statistic is not tracked by the district; each of the coaches and ADs who were interviewed thought it would be good to follow. The district does track the number of special education students within the district, but they do not track how many

participate in sports. C1, C3, and C4 stated that they were aware that several of their

students have IEPs only because they are SPED teachers themselves, and they may be the

case manager or co-teacher for some of their athletes. They also said it is helpful when

other coaches on staff taught SPED and made them aware that SWD was in their classes

and had an IEP.

C5 said, "When there are large numbers of SPED students like I have on my

team, it is difficult in teaching and coaching each of them differently to understand and

accommodate their learning disability." When C5 was asked how did they know of the

students who had a disability, they stated,

> When I have a problem with a player learning or grasping a certain skill, I will
>
> look into whether or not they are in special education or have an IEP. Although I
>
> look into that, I have never gone further to look at their IEP.

AD3 and AD6 had a similar experience at their school, with large SWD numbers

participating in extracurricular activities. Each of them believed that because they were at

Title 1 schools, the numbers are increased compared to other schools within the district.

Overall, the coaches and ADs understood that they have SWD participating but did not

feel they do a very good job accommodating them to align with the student's IEP.

Findings indicated that there are large numbers of SWD participating in

extracurricular activities. Coaches, to improve the learning and success of athletes, can

adopt the concept of UDL (Vargas et al., 2018). Because there are large numbers of SWD

participating, coaches must be prepared and educated on working with them. The UDL

framework is used to "understand how to support learners with severe disabilities and

how to support their access to authentic and appropriate curricula that improve their quality of life" (Hartmann, 2015, p. 55). UDL is used to provide instructional practices that can assist the coach in teaching and working with SWD without becoming discouraged. UDL will give the coach a tool that will work for differing learners (Vargas et al., 2018). The use of the UDL framework can help to provide useful tools for the coaches when working with SWD in practices and games.

Students may be offered tools like text-to-speech, online dictionaries and highlighting tools as accommodation when studying literary subjects in the classroom. Educator provided coaching that is applied using technology-adjusted instructional pacing created on student test scores, or ability is the use of UDL ideologies in the classroom (King-Sears, Johnson, Berkeley, Weiss, Peters-Burton, Evmenova,… Hursh, 2015). On the field, a coach includes verbal instructions with a visual aid or demonstration and may even have physical prompts and guidance to assist SWD when participating in extracurricular activities and making instruction available for everyone (Vargas et al., 2018). Applying the strategic network of UDL will allow athletes to demonstrate fundamental skills in different ways that match their performance level and abilities, just as it is done in the classroom (Hall, Cohen, Vue, & Ganley, 2015).

Research Q1 and Theme 2: Positive Effects From Participation

Each coach and AD gave a great example of the positive effects of SWD participating in extracurricular activities. When talking about their experiences and understanding of SWD, each stated that they felt like SWD prosper when they participate and are part of a team atmosphere and activity. AD1 said, "In my time as a coach, and as

an AD, I have seen players with disabilities come out of their shell and become more active in school and make friends when participating in sports." C3 said,

> My players do not know if a student has a disability, and often I do not think they
>
> care. I do think though my SWD prosper from working within a team. My
>
> experience has been that these students grow and mature when participating.

C4 said, "We have had students with severe disabilities participate and be part of our team and program as managers and assist with filming. It brings great joy to see these students participate with other students." Using UDL for SWD will encourage coaches to think about if their coaching is designed to optimize the learning and results for the student-athlete, instead of considering the variability in the learner is the problem (Hartmann, 2015b). If education for the student is variable, they will gain the opportunity to participate and gain the positive effects of being a part of a team.

The experiences had by the coaches assisting and seeing SWD prosper in a team activity is fulfilling to their job as a teacher and coach. Many stated that they have witnessed SWD earn scholarships to go on and play at the collegiate level and earn scholarship money to help pay for their education. C2 said, "I have had a lot of players on my team that have a disability, and many of them have gone on to play college sports."

Research Q1 and Theme 3: No Training and No Written Policy

The coaches and ADs showed that there was no training or professional development designed specifically for working with SWD when participating in their sports. All six coaches and six ADs stated that they had no formal training as a coach or AD that assisted them in working with SWD. C1, C3, and C5 noted that they have

experience working within Special Education, but as it relates to coaching, there has been no formal training. C2, C4, and C6 were not certified to teach Special Education, nor have they had any formal training for teaching or coaching SWD. Previous research states that coaches should receive the training to establish the qualifications, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to include SWD when participating in extracurricular athletic programs (Baldwin, 2017). C3 stated, "Although we know we are coaching SWD and they are on our team, we have received very little training on how to coach them differently or with accommodations." Teaching coaches the advantages of using UDL to coach and teach SWD will allow them to better understand and work with these students. Showing coaches how to control the rate of information students receive, exposing students to multiple depictions of the same concepts, mixing pieces of basic material before engaging with complex elements of material, and allowing the student to self-reflect, are all components of UDL that can be learned by coaches and ADs (Kennette & Wilson, 2019). Training and exposing coaches to use UDL and these methods will make them better coaches and create success.

Each of the ADs that were interviewed stated that they had not provided any specific training or professional development to the coaches in their program as it pertains to working with SWD. AD1, AD3, and AD4 stated that they had some knowledge of SWD due to a SPED background, which allowed them some experience of working with SWD. AD3 and AD6 noted that although they provide training for their coaches when working with the students, they had not offered or received any training when working with SWD. AD2, AD3, AD4, and AD6 all stated that it would be

beneficial for their coaches to understand better and receive training when working with SWD. AD1 and AD6 also pointed out that it would be advantageous to provide or offer training in this subject at yearly AD conferences. AD4 made the comparison that "coaches understand that all players cannot be coached in the same way, and good coaches adjust their coaching styles based on what gets the most out of a player."

Coaches and ADs stated that no written policy or procedure is provided for working with SWD. All the ADs interviewed said that they currently did not have a written policy or practice to educate coaches on implementing accommodations or UDL for SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. All coaches stated that they were not aware of any policy or procedure for working with SWD. C2, C4, C5, and C6 each said that it would help if the AD or school system provided coaches the training and material to assist SWD. "It seems like we would have policies in writing that new or existing coaches would have an opportunity to study or read so that they know how to handle or work with SWD," according to C5. C2 asked, "We have policies for everything else we do; why would we not have a policy for something as important as this?"

Each of the ADs stated that they do not provide their coaches with a written program or procedures for working with SWD. Although AD4 believed it would be beneficial to give the coaches a written plan for working with SWD. AD4 also stated, "Our coaches should understand that SWD receives accommodations when participating in sports because of the law, but we do not have any written policy for them to follow. AD1 stated, "Understanding the law, and the requirements to provide accommodations, is important and something we should provide to our coaches." AD1 also said, "We should

make this part of our pre-season training for our coaches so that they know the proper

way to work with and handle SWD."

Research Q1 and Theme 4: Experience Working With IEPs

The coaches and ADs stated that they had little to no experience looking at or

reviewing students' IEP when participating in their sport. C1, C2, C3, C5, and C6 stated

that they had not reviewed a student's IEP when participating in their sport. C4 had

reviewed a student's IEP on one occasion due to some discipline issues that arose with

the student. None of the coaches stated that they had reviewed a student's IEP to better

coach or work with students participating in their sport. C2, C3, and C4 have had

experience sitting in on a student's IEP meeting as the general education teacher but not

for better coaching the SWD. C2 agreed, "I get a lot of positives from attending a

student-athletes IEP meeting when they are on my team. Because I gain interaction with

the parents and the child, I show support for the child but, I have had very little if any,

experience reviewing the student-athletes IEP before or after the meeting." Studies

indicate that coaches continue to feel unprepared to include SWD in school-based sports

programs. This unpreparedness involves a lack of knowledge and understanding (Lirgg,

Gorman, Merrie, & Shewmake, 2017). The UDL framework challenges coaches who

hold tight to the same old coaching way to consider how it can include options and varied

supports for all SWD. Making this change is a positive transformation that helps coaches

to design and implement methods that are accessible, appropriate, and inclusive for all

student-athletes and SWD (Hartmann, 2015b).

Having the ability and training to review a student's IEP will give coaches and ADs the knowledge and information to make informed decisions on including UDL principles in the instruction of SWD. The ADs interviewed have minimal experience reviewing a student's IEP when participating in extracurricular activities. ADs stated that there had been a minimum need to check a student's IEP but only for eligibility issues and not for accommodations. AD1 did say that they had discussed a student's IEP, but only because the student showed behavior patterns that could become detrimental to outcomes for the team. The ADs wanted to understand the behaviors of the student better. AD3, AD5, and AD6 all emphasized that they have never specifically asked or required a coach to look at a student's IEP. "Although looking at a student's IEP could help better understand a student's disability, I have not asked my coaches to review all IEP's for players on their team. There is no way they would have enough time in the day to do all of that." (AD2).

Research Q2 and Theme 5: The Need for Further Training

When coaches were asked what would assist them in working with SWD, they stated that further study and training would be advantageous to their success. In theme three, coaches said that there is no formal training or procedures for coaches on how to work with SWD. Because of this factor, many of the coaches and ADs thought that it would be good to provide the coaches with proper training or information on working with SWD. UDL would be a part of this training and would assist coaches in deriving ways to work with SWD. Most coaches use a one-size-fits-all approach. The UDL framework focuses on providing options that can meet the needs of a wide variety of

learners by offering multiple means of coaching and instruction (Ok, Rao, Bryant, & McDougall, 2017). Coaches and ADs stated that PD would be important in understanding the best ways to work with SWD when participating in extra-curricular activities. C2, C5, and C6 thought that it would be good to study further the facts about SWD and their desire to participate in extracurricular activities. C2 stated, "It would be good to know the advantages gained by SWD when they participate in football and the positive and negative effects it may have on the student."

Both coaches and ADs stated that they attend several clinics and professional developments in the off-season, and they believed it would be advantageous for a subject like SWD participating in extracurricular activities to be covered in a clinic session. AD4 said, "We go to a lot of clinics, and some of them are useful, and a lot of them are not. It would be good to have a subject like this explained and examined by someone with the knowledge to help our coaches who work directly with SWD." AD4 added, "Because many of our coaches lack the knowledge of working with SWD and implementing accommodations for them, it would help to educate them in some way to give them a chance to become better at working with them."

Research Q2 and Theme 6: Experienced Coaches

When coaches on staff work within the special education department, they help identify SWD and work with those students. Many coaches working within the special education department know about a student's disability and facts about those students. Many of the coaches and ADs stated that they have several special education teachers on staff. When those coaches are involved with their athletes, it brings about awareness of

the student's disability. One of the trademarks of working with SWD is that instruction and interventions should be individualized, and UDL allows for this. Coaching that allows some flexibility in the application may enable coaches to tolerate the application of effective practices and confidently influence student results (Cook, Rao, Collins, 2017). Co-teachers and coaches that work in special education understand the idea of implementing effective techniques and concepts to SWD in the classroom, and that carries over to the field. C4 stated, "I have 4 coaches on my staff that work in special education, they often make me aware of students on the team that have an IEP or disability, and it allows us to better work with the student and be aware."

Some of the ADs look for and use the special education department to hire coaches. AD2 said,

My principal gives me the ability to hire coaches that work in special education departments, and we often fill many of our coaching vacancies from within special education. This has created some advantages for our students because coaches that work in special education make good coaches.

C2 uses his freshman coach, who works within the special education department, to be the case manager for all of his players on the team that has an IEP. C3 has a liaison from within the special education department to work on all of the players on the team's schedule and classes and says, "It helps to have someone within the special education department work with our players to help keep them eligible."

Discrepant Cases

Identifying and recording discrepant cases improves creditability and reliability in a study (Creswell, 2014). During data collection and analysis, no discrepant cases were identified or found. I confirmed that the data collection was valid and presented an accurate depiction of the findings throughout the data analysis. All the participants had similar experiences working with SWD, each based on their understanding of special education and a student's needs.

Procedures Followed to Address the Accuracy of the Data

Of the range of strategies available for achieving validity, I chose member checking as a strategy for participant validation. Information gathered through interviews, and the data collection process must establish accuracy through validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Validity refers to how a researcher can confirm that a study's findings are true to the participant's experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Member checking is a method of returning participants' responses in a study for validation and assessing the dependability of the results (Birt, et al., 2016). Member checking was utilized to assure the accuracy of the data and the validity within the study. Smith and McGannon (2017) stated that member checking is a way of inquiry into the accuracy of data and data analysis. Throughout each interview, I used member checking to confirm and assure the understanding of each participant as answers were provided to the research questions. Member checking involved stopping as needed to clarify what a participant stated during the interview for clarity. Second, after each interview, participants were given time to review transcription to certify responses were accurate. Finally, I checked each recording

multiple times to ensure my notes were correct. Member checking during and after each interview was important for the validity and accuracy of the results during data analysis. After confirming with each participant, the accuracy of the transcripts, there were no changes made by the participants or me, as all responses were confirmed.

Interview protocols (Appendix B) were also used to address the accuracy of the data. Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) was a method that provided an increased value of the data gained from the research interviews. The IPR includes a four-phase process that includes: (a) ensuring interview questions align with research questions, (b) constructing an inquiry-based conversation, (c) receiving feedback on interview protocols, and (d) piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 811). IPR framework is most suitable for refining structured or semi-structured interviews. The IPR framework can provide qualitative researchers with a common language for representing the demanding steps taken to develop interview protocols and confirm their congruency with the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Accommodations were made and followed for the participant that included providing adequate wait time, repeating questions as needed or as requested by the participant, defining terminology as required or as requested by the participant, and using prompts as necessary to assist participants clarifying their thoughts. A script of the IPR and interview questions was developed to help support a smooth transition from one topic to another (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Summary of Findings

A strong observation made during all 12 interviews was that there is little to no training for coaches and ADs when it comes to implementing and providing

accommodations for SWD when participating in extracurricular activities in a large school district in Georgia. Secondly, there was minimal to no knowledge of UDL, and it was not practiced when working with SWD during extracurricular activities. Coaches went to other coaches who had a history and a good understanding of special education to provide guidance when working with SWD. When the head coach of a sport had experience working within special education, they were more aware of SWD and their needs, but this was not the case for all coaches and ADs. Coaches stated that the use of a liaison or special education teacher would be a great addition to their staff to assure SWD were receiving the proper accommodations and helping coaches to understand the SWD. All coaches agreed that naturally adjusting their style of coaching with different students is something most do. They may be making accommodations for SWD without knowing if a student had an IEP or not. There is no written policy within the district when working with SWD. There was little to no experience reviewing a student's IEP, and often unless the student was in the coaches' class, they did not know that a student had an IEP.

The ADs had minimal experience working with SWD, and they did not have policies or procedures in place that were provided to coaches within their school and is currently not a requirement within the district. There was a lot of focus by the ADs to employ special education teachers as coaches. ADs did believe that some sort of educational program provided at clinics or conferences could lead to the knowledge needed to work with SWD. Both the coaches and ADs found the topic helpful. They created some thought to further look into their student-athletes that do participate and their IEP or accommodations.

Project Deliverable

Section 3 was used to describe a project that resulted from the research conclusions and the review of literature geared at suggesting professional development (PD) for the high schools in the district. The overall need was gathered through the statements made about the need for policy and training from the district on including SWD in extracurricular activities. Through the interviews conducted with coaches and ADs, it was highly evident that procedures and training were not in place when involving an SWD in extracurricular activities. Addressing the concern of the coaches and ADs by providing an outlet for PD that can increase the knowledge they have when working with SWD will make the experience better for coaches and students. Researchers suggest PD as a primary way to influence change within coaches and students and ascertain performance improvements (Hargreaves & Elhawary, 2019). A 3-day PD would be useful in addressing the apprehensions described by the coaches and ADs. Section 3 will present a 3-day PD and literature review focused on the project development and based on the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The focus of this study was the need to improve the inclusive practices for high school student-athletes with disabilities in a large, diverse school district. By providing PD on the inclusive practices and the research-based best practices that go along with working with SWD, an improvement in the experience and knowledge of working with these students in extracurricular activities can better the experience the student-athlete has when participating. In-service teacher training, through PD, is considered one of the most critical influences in student accomplishment and can be one of the reasons for students' success (Rosen, 2017). Results showed that coaches and ADs lacked the training and procedures to assist them when working with SWD in extracurricular activities. Coaches and ADs also expressed the need for PD or training to help them further when working with SWD. Given the findings in Section 2, a 3-day PD was developed that focuses on research-based strategies like UDL as an effective way to increase the inclusive practices for the SWD. The PD is guided by Ely's (1990) conditions of change, which explains that when an organization adopts new changes that certain influences occur to support the difference in the environment (Ellsworth, 2018). The PD was designed to develop an education program that results in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, 2017). Ely's theory directly applies to the PD needed for coaches to implement accommodations for SWD in extracurricular activities. Of the eight conditions found by Ely, the findings in Section 2 revealed that coaches lack sufficient knowledge and skills

regarding SWD in sports and that coaches need resources, leadership, and participation in PD to support the implementation of the SWD IEP accommodations. The PD sessions can help coaches using Ely's conditions of change to effectively implement change within the system (see Ellsworth, 2018 Ely, 1990).

The 3-day PD plan will provide the necessary components for active learning to a large and diverse group of coaches and ADs. The participants in the study were coaches of different sports and activities along with ADs who work with SWD regularly when participating in extracurricular activities. High value, continuing PD, is essential in helping teacher growth, excellence in classroom instruction, and finally, student learning (Rosen, 2017). Using the themes that emerged from the interviews, a PD was created that was of high quality and helpful to coaches and ADs. Covered in this section is the rationale for choosing this plan and an outline of the 3-day PD presented in its entirety in Appendix A. This section also includes a literature review of the preparation and development of the PD and the application that will take place that will positively help students. The PD is described below in-depth, including a plan for evaluation and any implications that will arise.

Description and Goals

The project will consist of a 3-day PD curriculum called *Coaching Students with Disabilities* and will address several areas of concern for the coaches and ADs when working with SWD. The data analyzed through my interviews supported the idea that coaches' and ADs' experiences demonstrated that they needed PD and support to serve better and understand SWD. PD will allow the district an opportunity to address the

attitude and understanding of coaches and ADs when working with SWD. Stakeholders within the district will see the value of increased teacher education when working with their SWD. The development and implementation of this PD can be used to develop and design other PD that may be useful to coaches and ADs within the district. *Coaching Students with Disabilities* will allow for research-based strategies to be presented to the coaches and ADs and allow for an opportunity for them to collaborate and provide feedback to each other on what works for each of them.

The goals that aligned with the expectations of coaches when working with SWD in extracurricular activities to achieve through the PD are as follows:

Goal 1: Coaches and ADs will become informed about UDL and research-based practices for coaching SWD.

Goal 2: Coaches and ADs will collaborate amongst one another to discuss experiences and knowledge of working with SWD and identify positive and negative results for future implementation of UDL principles.

Goal 3: Coaches and ADs will learn how to apply UDL and research-based best practices for coaching SWD.

Goal 4: Coaches and ADs will learn how to overcome challenges when coaching SWD.

Goal 5: Coaches and ADs will provide feedback on the PD application and identify its use for future coaches and ADs while designing a plan for distribution and execution for new coaches.

The 3-day professional development will also progress into a professional learning community (PLC) that will provide ongoing learning and development of using UDL and best practices for coaching SWD. Coaches will be able to share their challenges, successes, best practices, and ideas for meeting the needs of athletes with disabilities. A long-term goal is to develop a committee to examine policies and procedures related to meeting the needs of athletes with disabilities based on UDL and research-based best practices. These goals will support the district coaches and ADs in achieving the instruction of SWD when participating in extracurricular activities and assist in the implementation of UDL when working with these student-athletes.

Rationale

A basic qualitative study was conducted to examine how coaches and ADs at the high school level provide accommodations for SWD and the perceived needs of the coaches and ADs to improve inclusion for SWD. Three of the five themes that emerged from the study that was addressed in the PD study are (a) minimal training, (b) little knowledge of IEPs, and (c) no written policy on implementation. In this training, the coaches and ADs will observe UDL as a research-based strategy for teaching SWD. The PD will be presented to the coaches and ADs to address the lack of experience and understanding of working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities.

Preparing and equipping coaches with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of their role as a coach is important in their effectiveness (Peek, 2016). Coaches are considered the authorities in their exact sport, and they must have, and keep, the common knowledge of issues and methods to coach high school sports (Grant & Gerrard,

2019). Because of these needs, PD is the support needed for coaches and ADs. Educating athletic coaches is a priority around the world; however, there is a lack of standardization all through coach education programs within the United States, and particularly at the high school level (Woods, 2015). Choosing PD to educate the coaches on working with SWD is important to ensure the program's success. Given the impact that coaches have on athletes and the need for each state to provide leadership over their athletic programs, it is important to design education relevant to the wishes and requests of coaches and Ads (Watts, 2015). Effective professional development is defined as designed professional learning that results in modifications in teacher practices and enhancements in student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Some key facts that researchers believe in making an effective PD are: (a) intensive and ongoing, (b) focus on content knowledge and student learning, (c) provide opportunities for active learning on the part of teachers, and (e) develop strong working relationships among teachers (State, Simonsen, Hirn, & Wills 2019). In addition to PD, PLCs are an important part of learning and collaboration between coaches and ADs. Schools and districts must have structures that permit their staff to learn and grow as an expert, operating PLCs that draw on a common idea to pursue constant improvement (Admiraal, Schenke, Jong, Emmelot, & Sligte 2019). The use of PD and PLCs are an effective method to educate and assist coaches and ADs when working with SWD.

The research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

Research Question (RQ)1: What are the perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and ADs of one large school district on providing accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities?

RQ2: In a large school district, what are high school coaches' and ADs' perceived needs to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

The data collected from the interviews with identified themes were addressed through PD for the coaches and ADs. The coaches and ADs discussed the need to further study the problem of the lack of knowledge by coaches working with SWD and better educate coaches on how they can provide proper and lasting instruction for these students. The conceptual framework for this study was UDL. Vargas et al. (2018) established that one way for coaches to advance the learning of athletes is using UDL, which originated at CAST. The set of principles designed in UDL meets the needs of a mixed group of learners. UDL states that variability by each learner is standard in the classroom. UDL is based on the principle that coaches can identify "barriers" on the field or court and design instruction in ways that reduce those barriers (Cook et al., 2017). The success of the PD implemented for the coaches and ADs and impending training is reliant on the support of the large school district and all stakeholders.

Review of Literature

Results from this study specified that coaches and ADs felt a need for future PD due to a gap in implementing UDL when working with SWDs and their accommodations

when participating in extracurricular activities. Based on these results, there were

suggestions to create ongoing PD for coaches and ADs with a better understanding of

processes and procedures for coaching and working with SWD. The PD training sessions

for this project study were developed to address the findings supported by research to

increase the likelihood of coaches and ADs implementing UDL with greater fidelity. This

section of the study begins with the conceptual framework that guided the project

development and continues with a thorough evaluation of the recent peer-reviewed

publications. These include viewpoints related to professional development, training on

interventions, working with SWD in sports, and monitoring the progress of student-

athletes. Also considered are the district, state, and national policies when working with

SWD participating in extracurricular activities.

Literature Search Strategy

In my review of the literature, peer-reviewed articles were accessed through the

Walden University Library. EBSCO host databases were used to access ERIC, ProQuest

Central, ERIC, and Google Scholar. My key search terms included *coaching disabled*

athletes learning and professional development, professional development for coaches

for disabled students, athletic director professional development for students with

disabilities, and role of athletic directors in professional development for coaches,

coaches in the IEP process, and *UDL coaches and athletic directors and sport.* Only

literature relating to the published project in the last 5 years, available in full text, and

peer-reviewed was accessed through a Boolean search. The goal of saturation was

reached after obtaining literature that supported the project of professional development training.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study included UDL, Ely's conditions of change (1990), and the theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1972). UDL is the use of techniques for students that have diverse learning needs designed to convey instruction reactive to students' different learning abilities proactively. UDL principles are multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement (Kennette & Wilson, 2019). The findings in Section 2 show that coaches know that all students cannot be coached the same. Students have varying capabilities, preferences, beliefs, languages, and skills, all of which affect how they learn (Hartmann, 2015b). These variances are especially true when working with SWD, as identified in the study results by both coaches and ADs. UDL is a framework that has been determined to help ensure that SWD has access to the general education curriculum (Scott, Thoma, Puglia, Temple, & D'Aguilar, 2017). UDL framework has been used in federal and state legislation as far back as 2006 as an effective way to assist the inclusion of SWD in the classroom and sports (Lowrey, Hollingshead, Howery, & Bishop, 2017). Findings showed that coaches and ADs do not have the training to provide inclusion and differentiation on the field when working with SWD. Teachers' and coaches' variability in their instruction will allow for the success of students in the classroom and on the field (Lowrey et al., 2017). The principles that should guide the coaches in using UDL should be, UDL is about design, UDL should be applied proactively, UDL should provide a way

to design lessons and teaching based on learner variability (Rao & Okolo, 2018, p. 12). If used properly, UDL will allow coaches and ADs to have tools to teach SWD effectively.

UDL will serve as an effective framework for coaches to learn during PD to implement on the field or court when working with SWD. Engagement, representation, and action, and expression are all ways UDL has been used in physical education teaching and can be carried over to extracurricular activities (Lieberman & Grenier, 2019). Lieberman and Grenier (2019) stated that because there is a lack of training for teachers to address diverse learners, the physical education teacher education (PETE) programs should include ways to incorporate the concepts of UDL in their PD. Vargas et al. (2018) recognized that UDL is a proven method to assist SWD when participating in athletics but also stated the coaches had not received the education needing to implement properly. "UDL establishes both the philosophical and practical foundation for this unified approach to learning that serves all students" (*2015 Report of California's Statewide Task Force - Services & Resources (CA Dept of Education)*, 2015, p. 21.). Educating coaches to create instruction opportunities that consider the variability of the learners on a team and build flexible choices, supports, and scaffolds will allow for a great playing experience for everyone (Bracken & Novak, 2019). PD for coaches and ADs aimed at using UDL when working with SWD will better equip them for great success on and off the field.

Ely's conditions of change (1990) refer to the factors in the environment that affect an organization's transformation (Ellsworth, 2018). Change is difficult, and teaching coaches to use UDL and implement accommodations when working with SWD

when participating in extracurricular activities will be challenging. Ely found that when

government systems implement changes, certain impacts occur within the environments

(Ellsworth, 2018). Ely has eight conditions needed for change, and they are (a)

dissatisfaction with the status quo, (b) sufficient knowledge and skill for implementation,

and availability of (c) resources, (d) time, (e) incentives, (f) participation, (g)

commitment, and (h) leadership, although not all may exist in every environment of

change (Ely, 1990). Each theory will need to be satisfied for change to be implemented

with fidelity. The findings in Section 2 support that coaches do not understand the need

for providing accommodations, and the ways to accommodate, SWD on their team.

The findings revealed the need for participation in PD for a better understanding,

the importance of commitment to the change, and leadership and support needed to

implement the change. The PD addresses the need to provide the knowledge and skills

required when working with SWD for student success. The PD course also will assist

with resources for coaches to commit to the change and better serve SWD. Because of the

PD, a PLC will be offered as a continuous PD for coaches to learn from one another and

share struggles and successes found within their program when working with SWD. Ely's

change conditions support the PD and what is needed to implement the necessary change

within the district.

Designing PD that is grounded in theory and supported through literature and

research will allow for effective and successful learning by the coaches and ADs. Adult

learning is more intricate and diverse than how children learn (Leigh, Whitted, Hamilton,

2015). The theory of andragogy, an adult learning theory developed by Knowles (1972),

will be used to establish the PD for coaches and ADs. Andragogy is based on four assumptions: self-concept, adult learner experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn (Leigh et al., 2015). Adult learning is much different from student learning because the needs of adults are different from children and even college-aged students.

Professional Development

PD is meaningful, lasting learning that develops origins and teaching preparation representing a teacher's personal, professional, and social breadth (Makovec, 2018). The findings of the study gave an understanding of the experiences of coaches and ADs in implementing accommodations to students when participating in extracurricular activities. The findings will allow an opportunity to create PD that will assist them and educate them in working with these students. Tools will be provided to teach coaches about the IEP process, what is in the IEP, and how that can assist them in coaching SWD. This PD aims to educate the coaches and ADs to implement each principle of UDL and understand their experiences and success when working with SWD. PD can prepare coaches for enhanced performance in their current and future teaching with the projected result to enhance their teaching practices and the outcomes for students (Osman & Warner, 2020). Developers of coaching education programs at the local level must consider curriculum design strategies that provide a PD that is both rigorous yet flexible for different sports coaches when designing coach education (Martin et al., 2019). Coaches are not always confident in their understanding of how to transfer this knowledge to their students and other educators (Cybulski, 2016). High-quality PD that

encompasses role-play, practice, and coaching, will better equip coaches with the knowledge and skills for application (Wood, Goodnight, Bethune, Preston, & Cleaver 2016).

Creating confidence and understanding by preparing coaches and ADs to work with and coach SWD will be the PD's goal. There is a gap between implementing practice when coaching and teaching student-athletes and PD provided (Brown, 2016). PD for coaches is unregulated; because of this, coaches are usually required to decide which learning options will be most useful to improve their coaching preparation and to find those opportunities on their own (Wareham et al., 2018). Yoo (2016) stated that PD could have a great effect on teacher efficacy. A sense of self-efficacy for coaches is an important factor influencing student achievement and behavior (Yoo, 2016). Creating this confidence in novice teachers has been proven by in-depth PD and rigorous induction practices to teach and develop tools needed for working with SWD (Cornelius, Rosenberg, & Sandmel, 2020). Well-designed and executed PD should be considered a critical factor of an all-inclusive system of teaching and learning that supports students to develop the knowledge needed for success (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Without PD, the reliability of application for a substantial improvement significantly decreases (Castillo, Wang, Daye, Shum, & March, 2018).

Schools and colleges create initial knowledge, but PD can cultivate a coach's skill development and increase their understanding of current research (Wood et al., 2016). Patton and Parker (2017) stated that effective PD should aid teachers and coaches to transfer information gained during PD and put it into practice. One factor, which

complicates coaching education, is the disagreement between research into coaching and pedagogy, compounded by the discrepancy between the varying needs of athletes, predominantly those with disabilities (Wareham et al., 2018). Townsend (2018) revealed how knowledge about SWD is often marginalized in coach education, with experience in the field working as the main source of knowledge about coaching SWD.

Coaches and ADs are often involved in PD through clinics and conferences but very rarely in a district setting aimed directly at their ability to work with SWD. Coach learning is essential to the improvement of high-quality coaching, and the structures that encompass effective education and evolving paths for coaches have progressively become scrutinized in coaching research (Townsend et al., 2018). According to literature, coaches and ADs should be involved in the design and assessment of the learning, the focus should be on real-life experiences, it should be relative to their current career, problem-based, and education should be facilitated and not dictated (Diep et al., 2019). Programs designed to improve coaches' knowledge and behaviors have appeared as a fundamental development in sports and teaching and are embedded in the process of PD (Lefebvre et al., 2016). One facet of learning which coaches of all levels regularly rate highly is the knowledge expanded by watching or communicating with other coaches (Wareham et al., 2018). Offering an opportunity for coaches' to experience and learn from others who can provide knowledge and methods to work with SWD will be important in the success of the coaches and the SWD.

Training Coaches and ADs on SWD

Coaches and ADs gain knowledge and experiences through many different means. Learning from other coaches, attending clinics and conferences, and asking peers for advice and assistance are ways coaches and ADs learn today, but very little, if any, is geared toward working with SWD. The education of coaches is located on a continuum between informal and formal, and findings revealed that even though attendance at clinics is of value, the focus is interacting and socializing with other coaches versus the content itself (Wareham et al., 2018).

Including coaches is an important part of the IEP process, and understanding and avoiding the coach's barriers to participation is important. The California Task Force (2015) stated the need for an integrated system where coaches' work together to provide SWD effective services with rigorous standards alongside their general education peers to equip them to make their way as adults. Many coaches feel that there was a lack of value for athletics and a lack of admiration and gratitude for their abilities and contributions as professionals (Samalot-Rivera & Lieberman, 2017). Physical education teachers and coaches have faced obstacles in participating in the IEP process, in both writing and being part of the meetings. Barriers regarding participation include (a) lack of respect, (b) better communication, and (c) training (Bittner et al., 2020).

Altenburer and Wilson (2017) stated PD for working with SWD created concern with the coaches about saying or doing the wrong thing to offend the SWD when coaching and working with them. Two aspects that were largely cited in (Wareham et al., 2019) as the cause of this unwillingness to coach SWD were the perceived stigma relative

to disability and the lack of knowledge of the physical aspects of disability. Another matter when working with SWD, was understanding when to adapt to participant limitations of the student when the coach was not aware of what was in the students' IEP. In previous studies, PD was used for coaches to discuss UDL as an alternative when working with SWD. Coaches participating in this study done by Cunningham (2017), demonstrated that methods that take very little preparation time and involve readily available classroom resources as the best techniques for use with SWD (Cunningham et al., 2017). Positive outcomes for students and coaches are congruent with well-designed PD and educator practice when working with SWD (Cornelius et al., 2020).

IEPs and Coaches

The IEP is a mandatory document for all students who have a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004). The U. S. Department's Office for Civil Rights has mandated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that school districts must offer equal access to extracurricular activities to SWD and provide suitable accommodations and modifications (Agran et al., 2017b). Because of these laws and requirements, coaches and ADs should be aware of students' IEP when participating in extracurricular activities. Simultaneously, the coaches and ADs should also understand the contents of the accommodations and often be involved in the IEP process to provide services and to coach better. However, all physical educators and coaches must be part of the IEP process to promote physical education goals and objectives, placement decisions, social inclusion, community integration, and transition needs (Block, 2016). Schools that encourage, recruit, and allow SWD to

participate in extracurricular activities have evidence that they are working to help all

students (Agran et al., 2017b). Samalot-Rivera Lieberman (2017) reported that in writing

an IEP, the special education teacher, occupational therapist, physical therapist, or

general classroom teacher wrote the goals for physical education, as opposed to the

physical education teacher or coach. Some said they did not know what to do relative to

the IEP. Training coaches to be part of the IEP process and making them part of the

process is important in the success of SWD.

Professional Learning Communities

The improvement of the project stemming from the research will include

developing a PLC that will benefit coaches and ADs. PLCs are utilized to improve

collective efficacy, collaboration, and skill development among those involved, such as in

coaching (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). After the PD, coaches will be asked to join the

PLC that was created in Google Classroom. The PLC will be utilized for supporting one

another for coaching SWD while obtaining positive outcomes and problem solving. One

of Ely's (1990) conditions of change includes the advancement of knowledge and skills.

Coaches that participate in PD and PLCs will have the opportunity to learn what works

with SWD and what may not work. The PLC will also support teachers across the district

to bridge the gap between schools regarding ways to help SWD participating in sports by

using a system-wide, leadership-based approach from the district and school level

(Paterson, 2019). Coaches working together with other coaches is a key feature of

successful PD and is the central structure of PLCs (Hargreaves & Elhawary, 2019). PLCs

should focus on shared visions, student learning, collaboration, shared practices, and

supporting one another (Hairon, Goh, Chua, Wang, 2017). My goal for the PLC is to create a place coaches and ADs can go to for learning and collaboration on working with SWD. After the PD training, implementing a PLC for the participants and other coaches will be critical. Since the goal will be for coaches across the district to collaborate, the PLC will be virtual and digital via Google Classroom.

<div align="center">**Project Description**</div>

Existing Supports and Resources Needed

The existing supports needed for this PD will come from the county AD, local school ADs, principals, and district-level special education directors. Support at the district level will be important for the success of the PD. Principals and ADs encouraging their coaches' attendance and allowing them to attend will help in the success. Coaches of all sports for extracurricular activities should have an opportunity to attend. Incentives should be offered to receive professional learning units (PLU's) for attending and completing the training. The PD will originally be designed to be held in person at the district office or the district-determined location for summer PD. If COVID-19 restrictions are still in place, alternative digital learning can meet district guidelines during COVID-19.

Resources needed include laptops and access to the internet for attendees. The presenter will also need the Internet, a copy machine, copy paper, chart paper, folders, notepads and pens, HD cords and hookups for laptops, and PD handouts. A designated location for the training must also be assigned. If COVID-19 restrictions are still in place,

Google Meet will and can be used for the training. A discussion and plan with the ADs

that works best for their coaches will be important.

Potential Barriers

Organizing and executing PD like the one proposed in this doctoral project study

will require all stakeholders and district personnel. All financial restrictions, monetary

support from the state, and changes proposed by the PD could be met with many

challenges if there is any cost associated with the PD that may be met by resistance in the

participating districts. All trials, any potential policy and procedure changes, and

opposition from the district can be obstacles to the proposal of any new initiative. A

potential barrier may be getting all coaches, during or before their season, in one place

together for a PD. Using Google classroom, multiple offerings, and online options may

be a method to assure more coaches can attend. A fall, winter, and spring session may be

necessary to allow coaches to attend off-season, so it does not conflict with the coach's

season. If it is held during mandatory summer PD by the district, this would hopefully

allow for all coaches to attend.

Another barrier may be teachers missing three days of class instruction if held

during school days. The summer PD time may be the most feasible option to ensure

teachers have a chance to attend and not miss valuable class time if done in person or

virtually. PLU's will also be important in assuring teachers to meet their required PLU's

by the district. Support and unity between the county AD and special education director

will also create the importance of attendance and assure coaches realize the importance

and value of the training. Lastly, the district guidelines and procedures during COVID-19

may present a barrier and a need for the training to be held digitally because the district is

not allowing in-person training sessions. If this needs to take place, the PD has been

designed in a way to meet those barriers.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The goal will be for session one to be implemented in the spring of 2021 and the

2nd session to be offered in the summer of 2021. This timing allows coaches to attend out

of season at a time that best matches their schedule. See the timeline in Table 2.

Table 2

Proposed Timeline for PD

Date	Task	Person	Deliverable
January 2021	Meet with stakeholders to review study	County AD, area superintendent	PowerPoint Presentation
February 2021	Create invitation, send to school's AD and principals to distribute to coaches via emails with response to researcher	Researcher, school principals, and ADs at each school	E-mail
February/March 2021 1st Session	Develop master list of participants/coaches	Researcher	E-mail
	Obtain start date from district	Area superintendent, county AD	E-mail
	Share presentation and all components with stakeholders, area superintendent, county AD		
April 2021	Begin PD on dates acquired from district	Researcher	Virtual (during COVID-19), face-to-face when given permission
Summer 2021 2nd Session	Develop master list of participants/coaches	Researcher	E-mail
	Obtain start date from district	Area superintendent, county AD	E-mail
	Share presentation and all components with stakeholders, area superintendent, county AD		

Roles and Responsibilities of the Researcher and Others

The PD will be designed to help teachers become proficient in working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. My role and responsibilities will include helping to facilitate and implement the 3-day PD. It is my responsibility to implement the PD effectively and completely for an understanding by all that attend. My duty will be to communicate with district and school-level personnel and get permission from the district and school-level administrators. This project will require the acceptance of all the stakeholders, district personnel, county and school ADs, and coaches. The county and school ADs will make the PD available to their coaches and stress the importance of the learning opportunity for their coaches and the chance to better their students. The sponsor and coaches' role will be to attend the PD sessions and actively participate by providing their input. The coaches will be responsible for implementing the PD strategies, and the students will be the recipients of the new knowledge and skills.

<div align="center">

Project Evaluation Plan

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Formative Evaluation

Evaluation of a project will enhance the quality, and using summative and formative assessments will assist in the review of the PD (Bailey et al., 2017). The evaluation plan for this project will be both formative and summative. Evaluation of PD should be formative and summative so that evaluation findings can inform the ongoing improvement of PD practice, leading to increased heights of influence on teaching and learning (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). Formative assessments are applied to measure a student's understanding during the lesson while giving feedback to help students with

future learning (Houston & Thompson, 2017). Formative evaluation will be a google

form called an Exit Ticket, to be completed at the end of each session by each participant.

The information obtained through this evaluation will be used to improve the

effectiveness and quality of the PD. When the researcher–participant partnerships work

well, they can enhance both evaluation practices, and the knowledge and skills learned

through PD (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). The PD evaluation method for each session

has one section requiring the coaches to rate their experience. The responses given by the

coaches will provide feedback on their experience and perspective on what knowledge

they gained and learned during the PD session. The information can also be used to make

modifications or address any concerns for the upcoming days.

The goals for evaluation for the proposed PD are put in place to affect the design

and benefits of the PD positively. During PD, coaches may have pre-set plans to achieve

the targets set by the educational standards, services, and expectations of the PD

(Vangrieken et al., 2017).

The goals for the proposed PD design are as follows:

- Goal 1: Coaches and ADs will become informed about UDL and research-based practices for coaching SWD.

- Goal 2: Coaches and ADs will collaborate amongst one another to discuss experiences and knowledge of working with SWD and identify positive and negative results for future implementation of UDL principles.

- Goal 3: Coaches and ADs will learn how to apply UDL and research-based best practices for coaching SWD.

- Goal 4: Coaches and ADs will learn how to overcome challenges when coaching SWD.

- Goal 5: Coaches and ADs will provide feedback on the PD application and identify its use for future coaches and ADs while designing a plan for distribution and execution for new coaches.

Summative Evaluation

Summative assessments cause participants to reflect upon their learning and providing the instructor data regarding the effectiveness of the PD (Durga & Kumar, 2020). The summative evaluation will be completed after the participants have had time to implement what they learned in their coaching. Summative assessments compare what was learned against what is implemented by evaluating the mastery the coaches gained during PD and implemented with their athletes (States et al., 2018). Giving the coaches time to implement what was learned is necessary to ensure the PD was effective and useful in the coaching of SWD. States et al. (2018) also explain that summative assessments are important in improving future training by providing educators with data on the PD's effectiveness. Goals one through five will be evaluated using a google form (See Appendix C) to be completed by each participant after participating in PD and having an opportunity to implement what they learned. This evaluation will be in the form of open-ended questions for effective feedback. Summative assessments can offer input to improve PD or instruction (Durga & Kumar, 2020). Summative assessments facilitate a conversation with open-ended questions, concurrently discussing targets for the development of future PD (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017). The evaluation will be focused

on obtaining coaches' and ADs' perspectives to evaluate their level of agreement as to whether the PD goals were met and to assess the effectiveness of the information learned in the PD.

Through these evaluations and the goals, the county ADs and district personnel can provide the coaches and ADs with effective PD and practices that they can benefit from in their working with SWD. Benefits for the students, coaches, and ADs will be a direct result of achieving the goals of the PD. The students will benefit from quality coaching and considering their IEP and disability when participating in extracurricular activities. Overall, the development of this proposed project implies to effect possible changes. One of the most enduring frameworks to define what makes a good assessment is van der Vleuten's notion of assessment utility, which he described as the product of reliability, validity, feasibility, cost-effectiveness, acceptance, and educational impact (Kibble, 2017, p. 110).

<p align="center">**Project Implication and Social Change**</p>

Local Community

Providing and bringing about social change within a community of coaches and players is a major goal of this study. Improved understanding by coaches and ADs of SWD is the basis for this project's social change contribution. When a coach can understand why a student is struggling to learn what the coach is asking or perform in a way they expect, then the experience of the coach and the student will improve and change. By giving the coaches a greater understanding of UDL, they can be provided with the resources to accommodate better and work with SWD. When the coach can

better explain and work with a student, they will be more successful and have a more positive experience. ADs have the opportunity and understanding to provide their coaches with training and guidance when working with SWD will also offer social change within a school. Coaches who are knowledgeable about SWD will promote student learning to the benefit of the community.

Larger Scale Change

Walden University is committed to social change on a large scale through its education of lifelong learners. The results of the PD and working with coaches within my district would hopefully prepare me for larger change. Yearly seminars for coaches could be a great opportunity to provide teaching and education for coaches when working with SWD. If it is a problem in my district, then there are surely districts across the country that need assistance working with SWD participating in extracurricular activities. By providing seminars, literature, writing studies, and even a book to educate the coaches, a whole new level of coaching across all levels could be created. Many SWD that are now grown tell me instances and stories of how their college or high school coach approached the coaching style for them specifically. Thus, I realize that coaches everywhere and at all levels can benefit from learning about UDL and how to better work with SWD.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

In Section 3, the reasoning and understanding of why a 3-day PD was chosen along with the project goals were discussed. The literature review examined the themes that emerged from the data collected during the coaches and AD interviews. A detailed description of the training and proposed PD was explained in detail. A model of a 3-day

PD was put in place that would educate and inform coaches and ADs on UDL and working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. A detailed description of the goals, the project, and a method for project evaluation were discussed in detail.

The goal of Section 4 will be to discuss the project's strengths in building coaches and ADs' knowledge of working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. A reflection on the development of the project and how an increase of knowledge developed during project development. The journey in writing this study and how it will assist me in making greater change and become a better leader will also be discussed.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine how coaches and ADs at the high school level provide accommodations for SWD and the perceived needs of the coaches and ADs to improve inclusion for student-athletes with disabilities. The findings of the data analysis in Section 2 revealed a need for PD to increase the understanding of working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. PD should stimulate and inspire coaches' knowledge and preparation and, in turn, student-athlete learning and play (Bates & Morgan, 2018). The PD focused on the themes that emerged from the interviews to answer the data analysis barriers. The themes were large participation numbers, positive experience, little to no training, little knowledge of IEPs, no written policy in place, advantages to further study, and coaches who work in special education are an advantage for SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. I created a PD titled *Coaching Students with Disabilities* after analyzing the data of the study. The PD will be supported with PLCs and assistance in educating coaches and ADs at the district level.

Project Strengths

The goal of this project is to use the results of the data to provide a PD for coaches and ADs to be able to offer and work with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. Findings showed that although coaches and ADs were aware SWD were participating in extracurricular activities, they have not had any training or procedures for working with these students. Coaches often stereotypically receive

inadequate PD in the coaching practices and other supports targeting the unique needs of SWD (State et al., 2019). One way to improve upon the experience and educational outcome for SWD is to train and educate coaches on working with a diverse student population (Cunningham et al., 2017). Participants in this study did not have a lot of experience reviewing IEPs or understanding a student's disability. Previous research has shown that either a seeming lack of academic training or lack of experience at the preservice level has added to a sense of unease and shortfall when teaching SWD (Block & Obrusnikova, 2017). The strength in this idea is that the coaches and ADs were willing to discuss these experiences and give real-life examples of students they have worked with within their sport who had a disability. The creation and possible implementation of PD can improve consistency in the district when working with SWD. These factors can help reach the goal of SWD having a positive experience and success when participating in extracurricular activities and creating social change within the district.

Project Limitations

As in all research, this research had limitations. The project study is designed to have an opportunity to make a difference within my district and state. The change will be difficult because not all coaches may be willing to change how they coach to make special accommodations for SWD. As Wareham et al. (2017) explained, it is not uncommon for coaches to embrace the view that coaching an athlete with a disability may harm their reputation as an elite coach. Individual contact is vital to community acceptance and combination, and yet many people without a disability seem unwilling to interact equally with people with a disability (Wareham et al., 2017). Buy-in by all

coaches and ADs may not be prevalent. Two aspects that were largely cited in Wareham et al. (2019) as the cause of this unwillingness to coach SWD were the perceived stigma relative to disability and the lack of knowledge of the physical aspects of the disability. Barriers for coaches exist in their reluctance to understand and work with SWD. Obstacles included unpreparedness to work with SWD, no previous exposure or experience working with SWD, and not being familiar with specific disabilities and students' IEPs (Lirgg et al., 2017). The promise that can be established is that PD and PLC can and will create the buy-in when coaches and ADs hear success stories from myself during the PD and their peers in the PLC. When coaches believe their actions are based on their real understandings and interpretations rather than political rhetoric, it can give them personal meaning within a professional context (Hargreaves & Elhawary, 2019). Ely (1990) found in his conditions of change that for a change to occur, one must have the availability of resources and time. An additional limitation is finding a suitable time and place to host the PD so that large numbers of coaches and ADs can attend.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

There could be many alternative approaches to presenting the ideas and teaching to the coaches and ADs. One way may be video training sessions required during preplanning for the coach's review and learning. Video training would require approval by the district. A different approach may be to speak at sports clinics within the state and the district and present to coaches the research findings and the ideas that could help them be more successful in working with SWD. Most coaches are interested in mentoring programs that include coaches education and development, sharing with other coaches,

and creating relationships for collaboration with other coaches to talk about their knowledge and experiences (Swanson & Deutsch, 2017). Smaller sessions within each school in the district where the AD allows me to provide PD for all the coaches at their school may be an alternative approach (see Woods, 2015).

Additionally, I could attend district AD meetings to provide them with the training, which could lead to an opportunity for me to present to their whole staff at their school. Governing state associations and local school districts are accountable for developing and executing their coach education curricula and requirements, which leads to the lack of uniformity and consistency throughout the assigned programs (Peek, 2016). Educating coaches continues to be a main concern worldwide; however, there is an absence of standardization throughout coach education programs within the United States, and particularly at the high school level (Woods, 2015). A book study, shared articles, bringing in an expert presenter, and even providing a training manual aimed to provide more guidance and ideas to coaches and ADs could prove to be helpful. Coaches can use online materials, videos, social media, books, and national sports publications to gain more information on working with SWD (Woods, 2015). These methods could be alternative or additional approaches to achieve success within the district in teaching other coaches and ADs.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

The journey in reaching my doctoral degree and throughout this study of SWD participation in extracurricular activities has offered me the opportunity to reflect upon myself as a scholar-practitioner. My knowledge of the content on this subject has

increased substantially and caused me to challenge myself as a current coach of SWD. I have become more aware of my implementation of coaching and teaching SWD and how other coaches and I can better approach the challenge they present. I have realized that we always say that not all players or students can be taught the same way, but this study brought those thoughts and facts to a new level. I know now that I can be an agent of change within my district and state and help other coaches and ADs create an enjoyable and satisfying experience when working with SWD.

When beginning this journey, I was not sure where it would end, but my experience coaching and working with SWD has provided a passion for delivering them the best experience possible by providing the proper instruction practices when they are participating in extracurricular activities. It also created a desire to help my colleagues and peers understand and know how to work with these students when participating in their activities. The need for coaches and ADs to understand the process and methods to assist SWD was easy to identify, but they need to provide PD to educate them has grown through the study process.

The 3-day PD has five goals focused around the coach's understanding and learning procedures and methods to teach and coach SWD when participating in their activity. The implementation of the 3-day PD provides an opportunity to offer coaches and ADs something they can use and implement at their school and with their students. The idea that PLC could emerge from my study and allow other coaches and ADs to collaborate is encouraging future success. Having coaches and ADs discuss aspects of my research and findings would satisfy other coaches and AD's desire to work with SWD.

The project evaluation will be both formative and summative. Each day's PD session will be evaluated using a checklist of two parts: a rating scale to rate the participant's experience and short, open-ended responses from each participant provided via a google form. Each participant will answer the questions about their PD experience and the content of the PD.

Walden University has prepared me and helped me understand the opportunity to provide social change within my district. The idea that I can give something that coaches and ADs can learn from provides a focused desire to succeed. The opportunity to provide academic and life success to SWD can motivate coaches and ADs to learn and grow their knowledge to support all students.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

This work is very important to provide guidance and instruction to coaches and ADs in the implementation of SWD accommodations during their participation in extracurricular activities. My passion is enormous for SWD who participate in extracurricular activities. This, along with my passion for coaching, has created a desire to assure that coaches think about and are aware of SWD when participating in their training. ADs should also be mindful of SWD and want their coaches to be knowledgeable in implementing a student's IEP as it extends to the field and after school.

The work that I have done is only the beginning of developing research-based strategies that can assist coaches and ADs in the proper implementation of accommodations for SWD. When the process and journey started to complete this doctoral study, I had no idea of the importance of this knowledge for coaches. As I

continue to work with my current players, I have realized how important it is for coaches to be aware of SWD and make sure they are taking the proper steps to accommodate them when they participate. Understanding the positive experiences that can stem from athletics has amplified my passion for this study and the importance of providing this information to coaches and ADs.

Now, as a scholar-practitioner, it is my focus and duty to provide this information to those who need it and can benefit from it. The desire to provide SWD the best possible experience drives the need to educate our coaches. Through this work and study, I will have endless opportunities at even the highest level of sports. I am helping and assisting others through the knowledge gained in this study has now become a new passion.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications for social change are a big part of the curriculum at Walden University. Based on the completed project study, the opportunity is there to change processes and methods for coaches when working with SWD. I have the chance to improve coaches' and ADs' education programs and create PD for working with SWD. As a result of the research and data gathered and the emerging themes, it was evident in a large school district in Georgia that further education of the coaches and ADs could only help SWD. It may be helpful during teacher preparatory classes to educate potential coaches on the knowledge needed to work with SWD when participating in activities and sport.

UDL can provide a road map for coaches and ADs when working with SWD. By understanding that SWD, and even all participants, learn differently, coaches can and will

be prepared to provide proper instruction for their participants. Providing the tools and the methods will allow SWD to succeed and accomplish desired results for both themselves and the coaches. A positive experience through extracurricular activities for SWD can lead to much greater things for those students. Having coaches and ADs think outside the box and using more contemporary instructional strategies will make them more productive and successful.

Conclusion

SWD deserve the same opportunity, as stated by the law, that all other students deserve when participating in extracurricular activities. Coaches and ADs must have the knowledge and ability to differentiate instruction for SWD. Without the background of a student's disability and any challenges they may face when participating in an activity, it is hard to get the maximum result from that student and receive maximum enjoyment. Helping and providing a way for coaches in a large school district in Georgia to better be equipped to work with SWD will make for a better experience for all involved. Whether it is pre-service education or local district PD, the coaches and ADs should be provided with the knowledge of working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities. Coaches and ADs understanding SWD is a critical factor in success and student achievement because coaches are a pivotal element in student success.

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Appendix A: The Project

Day 1 Schedule
"Coaching Students with Disabilities"

Time	Activity	Notes
8:00-8:45	Arrival and Continental Breakfast	
8:45-9:00	Introductions and Table Name Tents	Each coach will introduce themselves and put up a name tent
9:00-9:15	Meeting Expectations and Standards	
9:15-9:45	Goals & Objectives of the Training	Establish expected goals to be reached through the training
9:45-10:45	Coaching Students with Disabilities	Establish who we are talking about with definitions and descriptions & Laws
10:45 – 11:00	Break	
11:00-12:00	What can we do for SWD	Challenges and obstacles, experience and understanding
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	
1:00 – 2:00	Group Activity and Discussion	Coaches divided into groups to discuss and bring ideas and questions to the whole group
2:00 – 2:45	Facilitator Discussion of Groups Results	Total group discussion of individual group ideas
2:45 – 3:00	Completion of Google Form & Closing Remarks	

Day 2 Schedule
"Using UDL for Coaching SWD"

Time	Activity	Notes
8:00-8:45 – Arrival and Continental Breakfast		
8:45-9:00 – Review of Previous Days Class		Reminder of meeting expectations and standards
9:00-9:15 – Ice Breaker		Who did you think about?
9:15-10:30 – Universal Design for Learning		What is it and how is it used
10:30-11:00 – Break		
11:00- 12:00 – UDL and its Uses for SWED		
12:00-1:00 – Lunch		
1:00 – 1:15 – Review of the Morning		
1:15-2:15 – Class Activity		
2:15-2:45 – Instructor's Comments		
2:45 Completion of Google Form and Release		

Day 3 Schedule
"Setting up your organization up to successfully work with SWD"

Time	Activity	Notes
8:00 - 8:45 – Arrival and Continental Breakfast		
8:45 - 9:00 – Review of Previous Days Class		Reminder of meeting expectations and standards
9:00 - 9:15 – Ice Breaker		Kahoot "Review of UDL"
9:15 - 9:45 – The IEP		
9:45 – 10:00 – Team Liaison		
10:00 – 10:30 Setting up your organization		
10:30 -11:00 – Break		
11:00 - 12:00 – Resources and Professional Learning Communities		
12:00 -1:00 – Lunch		
1:00 - 1:15 – Review of the Morning		
1:15 - 2:15 – Class Activity, Sharing Ideas for your Team and Organization		
2:15 - 2:45 – Instructor's Comments		
2:45 Completion of Google Form and Release		

COACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Coaches and Athletic Directors Professional Development

- Presenter: Jason Carrera
  - 20 years as a coach and 6 years in the district
  - Specialist and Doctoral Degree in Special Education
  - Passion for raising great fathers, great husbands, and great contributors through sports
- Participants – Place table tent with name on desk
  - Name
  - Sport
  - Years of Service

INTRODUCTIONS

▶ **Leadership Norms-**

  ▶ *Respect and Trust Each Other*

  ▶ *Honor Time*

  ▶ *Maintain Confidentiality*

  ▶ *Practice Flexibility*

  ▶ *Listen Actively*

  ▶ *Share Our Talents*

  ▶ *Demonstrate Integrity*

MEETING EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS

▶ Goal 1: Coaches and athletic directors will learn how to overcome challenges when coaching students with disabilities.

▶ Goal 2: Coaches and athletic directors will provide feedback on PD application and identify its use for future coaches and athletic directors while designing a plan for distribution and execution for new coaches.

▶ Goal 3: Coaches and ad's will collaborate amongst one another to discuss experiences and knowledge of working with SWD and identify positive and negative results for future implementation of UDL principles.

GOALS OF TODAY'S TRAINING

- ▶ Establish an understanding with coaches of who and what are Students with Disabilities (SWD)
- ▶ What are your obligations as a coach to meet Federal Standards for SWD
- ▶ Provide guidelines for teaching SWD by understanding coaches experiences, challenges, and success
- ▶ Gain and understanding of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a method to coach and teach SWD
- ▶ Establish Professional Leaning Communities (PLC) to obtain and share ideas when working with SWD

OBJECTIVES OF THE THREE DAY TRAINING

- ▶ SWD often have disabilities that are not apparent to the average person or eye
  - ▶ These are sometimes referred to as "Hidden Disabilities"
- ▶ They include specific learning disabilities, speech and language disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism spectrum disorder
- ▶ Student's with these disabilities can face struggles in the classroom as well as on your field.
- ▶ We will talk about some of these disabilities as they are the ones we see the most in our athletes.

COACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

▸ *Specific Learning Disability (SLD)*

    ▸ Specific learning disability is defined by gadoe as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia (GADOE, 2020).

    ▸ An athlete diagnosed as SLD can have problems retaining new information, telling you their thoughts and expressing them, understanding plays or what you are teaching, following team directions or policies, bad spatial awareness and immaturity.

LEARNING ABOUT THE DISABILITIES

▸ *Speech and Language Disabilities*

    ▸ Speech or language impairment refers to a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language or voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. A speech or language impairment may be a primary disability or it may be secondary to other disabilities. [34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(11)]

    ▸ Athletes with a language disorder might have problems with team directions, understanding coaches communication through tone, posture or facial expressions. Shyness and not wanting to communicate with others may be a trait of an athlete with a speech and language disability.

LEARNING ABOUT THE DISABILITIES

- *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*
  - ADHD is when a child exhibits signs of developmentally inappropriate hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention. These characteristics are usually present before the age of 7. ADHD is similar to "Attention Deficit Disorder" except emphasis is place on the hyperactivity. The appropriate terms are ADHD-predominately inattentive type or ADHD- predominately hyperactivity type. There is no longer an ADD diagnosis (GADOE, 2020).
  - An athlete with ADHD might fidget or appear to move constantly, be distracted easily by irrelevant stimuli, shift frequently from one incomplete activity to the next, or have difficulty following instructions and demonstrating appropriate social interaction.

LEARNING ABOUT THE DISABILITIES

- *Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)*
  - ASD is a developmental disability that is normally identified before the age of three. The effects on the educational performance of a child can inhibit their developmental rates and sequences, some verbal and non-verbal communication, how they work and play with others. A child with ASD may also have sensory responses that are unusual along with resistance to activities that are repeated. Children with autism spectrum disorder vary widely in their abilities and behavior. [34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(1)(i)]
  - Athletes with ASD will struggle socially and will not do well in a team or group atmosphere. The athlete may also not understand or interpret directions like others and will not respond favorably to a change in a teams routine or structure.

LEARNING ABOUT THE DISABILITIES

- Students with disabilities are protected by both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Rehab Act")(29 U.S.C. § 794 (2000)and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327).
- Both statutes prohibit schools from excluding students from extracurricular activities on the basis of their disability. They also require schools to offer realistic accommodations to ensure that SWD have the same access as other students have to extracurricular activities.

THE LAW

29 U.S.C. § 794 (2000).
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327 (codified at 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213 (2000)).
The Rehabilitation Act applies to all educational institutions receiving federal funding, whether public or private. The ADA is modeled after the Rehabilitation Act, and both statutes contain "similar enforcement schemes" as applied to educational programs. Lakowski, supra note 3, at 289–90.

- Can you think of athletes that have participated at your school that my fall into one of these "hidden disabilities?"
  - Where you aware before the season started of this student's disability?
  - If you were not aware until later in the season, would it have been helpful to know prior?
  - If you did know, did you accommodate the athlete or offer any additional training or assistance to the athlete or coach?
- Do you recall a player you may have treated differently if you knew or you were aware of their disability prior to or during the season?

ACTIVITY & GROUP DISCUSSION

BREAK

- During tomorrow's session, we will be discussing Universal Design for Learning when working with SWD participating in your sport.
    - Variety can be a benefit to everyone participating
    - Coaching with thoughtful execution from when beginning with your players.
    - Do not to limit the access for particular individuals, participation should be offered for the broadest variability of individuals possible.
- In our next session we will talk about some steps you can take to work with SWD
    - Coaching techniques
    - Field and court set up
    - Communication

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE IS THE HIGHEST CALLING OF LEADERSHIP

~harvey s firestone

"You can't coach everyone the same way. Ask yourself: How can I reach him?"

~ NICK SABAN

Coach Corey Wayne
UnderstandingRelationships.com

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR SWD?

- Keys to a Successful Practice
  - Establish fair and simple team rules and make sure you post.
    - You may want to post in your locker room or team room
  - Allow the student to acclimate to practice and game situations and surroundings
    - New territory or setting will cause the student uneasiness
  - Provide a clear and concise practice schedules that have smooth and consistent transitions
    - Do what you do and what you know to be best to run a smooth practice.
  - Set expectations for practice and workouts and give encouraging feedback

KEYS TO INCLUDING SWD IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Ideas for a instructing SWD
  - Eye contact, checking for understanding, breaking down the instruction and information into small chunks can help
    - Same techniques used in the classroom
  - Check for understanding and repeat directions if needed
    - Give extended time for the student to answer you or respond and use repetition
  - Be consistent in your language and don't cause confusion with instruction and correct with clear and concise information
  - Consistent practice of skills to make sure the student understands
    - Repetition is good for all athletes and especially those with a disability
  - Provide meaningful demonstrations.
  - Students without disabilities can benefit from this instruction also

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO SWD

- Practice Activities
  - Set the student up for early success
    - Let the QB complete some passes or make easy reads
  - Break the skill down in movements, practice in parts the practice the whole skill together
  - Give the student a chance to perfect at the activities lowest level to show mastery then progress from there
  - Pay extra close attention to what works for your SWD and repeat with others

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO SWD

- Behavior Modifications
  - Early success in practice and in the game is important
  - Understand triggers
  - Coach every play, positive reinforcement is important
    - "Coach is always yelling at me"
  - Don't just say "be quiet", let them talk and demonstrate if they are talking when you are
  - Be quick to modify the behavior and actions

HOW DOES A DISABILITY EFFECT A PLAYERS BEHAVIOR

- Peer Acceptance
  - Give SWD the same opportunities as others to be leaders through elected positions on the team
  - Always promote and reinforce team rules and make sure punishment is equal for all players
  - Teach SWD how to be part of a team and work for team achievements not individual achievements

SOCIAL QUES AND ACCEPTANCE

LUNCH 12:00 – 1:00

- ▶ Allow the student to acclimate to practice and game situations and surroundings
    - ▶ New territory or setting will cause the student uneasiness
- ▶ Consistent practice of skills to make sure the student understands
    - ▶ Repetition is good for all athletes and especially those with a disability
- ▶ Give the student a chance to perfect at the activities lowest level to show mastery then progress from there
- ▶ Coach every play, positive reinforcement is important
    - ▶ "Coach is always yelling at me"
- ▶ Always promote and reinforce team rules and make sure punishment is equal for all players

REVIEW

- ▶ Get back in your groups and come up with one point you learned or you have used for the following:
    - ▶ Team and Practice set up
    - ▶ Instructing SWD
    - ▶ Instructing at Practice
    - ▶ Behavior Modification
    - ▶ Peer Acceptance
- ▶ One person from your group will give examples for discussions

CLASS ACTIVITY (30 MIN)

Groups present results

- What are the positives
- What can we all use
- What works for your sport or activity
- How can we assure we are working for success when working with SWD

FACILITATOR DISCUSSION

- Please complete google form before leaving session
- Day 2 starts at 8:00 – 8:45 Continental Breakfast
- 8:45 – Session 2 Begins

END OF SESSION 1

Coaching Students With Disabilities UDL for SWD

Coaches and Athletic Directors Professional Development

Meeting Expectations

- **Leadership Norms-**
  - *Respect and Trust Each Other*
  - *Honor Time*
  - *Maintain Confidentiality*
  - *Practice Flexibility*
  - *Listen Actively*
  - *Share Our Talents*
  - *Demonstrate Integrity*

"Ice Breaker"

- Each of you are to give one person, if any, you thought about yesterday during the session
  - Did you know or not if they had a disability when they played for you?
  - Did you coach that player different or the same?
  - Would you do anything different after what you learned yesterday?

Goals for Day Two

1. By the end of the day, Coaches and Athletic Directors attending will understand the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework.

2. By the end of the day, Coaches and Athletic Directors will be able to apply the UDL framework to support SWD in their coaching practices.

Why do Coaches Need Additional Education on Coaching SWD?

- Coaching effectiveness can be developed through the combination of research-validated approaches and instructional approaches

- It is important to note that there are methods that are in reality reflective of best teaching practices and could be of some use to all athletes and coaches

- Practices can be executed in a way that all athletes have access to knowledge a sport without being selected or pointed out because of different athletic learning needs.

- It is imperative that scholars and coaching education continue to bring up to date national curriculum and give coaches the tools they need to deliver a constructive, enjoyable, and successful atmosphere for all members.

- UDL is a proactive approach in which coaches anticipate diversity and plan accessible activities.

Coaches Input form Local Research on Working with SWD

- "My players don't know if a student has a disability, and often I do not think they care. I do think though my SWD prosper from working within a team. My experience has been that these students grow and mature when participating."

- "In my time as a coach, and as an AD, I have seen players with disabilities come out of their shell and become more active in school and make friends when participating in sports."

UDL Defined

- Vargas et al. (2018) established that one way for coaches to advance the learning of athletes is using UDL, which originated at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

- Teachers can address this variability by designing lessons that proactively build in flexibility and choices that can assist all students in the classroom (Cook & Rao, 2018)

- UDL is defined as an educational framework that will guide the growth and direction of flexible education settings that can accommodate all students (Griful-Freixenet, Struyven, Verstichele, & Andries, 2017)

Universal Design in Architecture

Universal Design in Architecture

- Equitable Use—works for anyone that would use it.
- Flexibility in Use—all abilities and different preferences can use.
- Simple and Intuitive Use—design is easy to comprehend.
- Perceptible Information—necessary material is clear to everyone that uses.
- Tolerance for Error—minimizes user risks.
- Low Physical Effort—easy and is not vigorous.
- Size and Space for Approach for Use—proper area and space provided for all users.

Transitioning from Architecture to Education

- UDL is
  - Adjusting the delivery and message for the student as the fix versus thinking fixing the student is the answer
  - A practical design of coaching and teaching that is educationally accessible for all students no matter how they learn
  - Using the UDL framework in your coaching assures accessibility for the majority of student-athletes without any variations or accommodations
  - UDL is a framework, not a list of boxes to check. It is the frame around which you build the structure that is to become your coaching

Answering Questions for you about UDL?

- How can the UDL framework reduce barriers to athletes learning and meeting the opportunities for success?
- How can we apply the four pillars of UDL implementation (i.e., goals, instruction, materials, and assessment) in coaching?
- What are the three principles of the UDL framework and how do they apply to coaching, working with athletes, and supporting your goals?
- How can the UDL guidelines and associated checkpoints help create a team setting that supports accomplishment?

Analogy of UDL "What is UDL"

Define the 4 Pillars of UDL
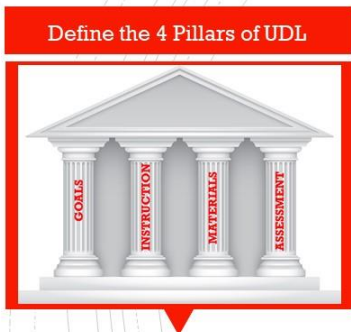
- Goals – differentiate goals so they are appropriate for a wide range of learners
- Instruction – vary your instruction and delivery for a wide range of learners
- Materials - vary your methods and materials for a wide range of learners
- Assessment – make assessments flexible enough to allow students to exhibit their learning in an precise manner

The 3 Principles of UDL

- **Engagement** - Promote engagement through active learning and give students and opportunity to develop social capital. For athletes keep them involved in the process by asking questions, giving examples, and having them demonstrate the skill

- **Representation**- Use different materials and manners of information when delivering to the student. Ex…audio, video, illustrations, and animations. For athletes draw the plays, show film and examples, and use social media

- **Action and Expression** – Uses illustrations, presentations, and multimedia, to allow the athlete to demonstrate that they understand what you are coaching. For athletes use film, scouting reports, and play cards for the athletes to demonstrate understanding of the skill

How can the UDL guidelines and associated checkpoints help create a team setting that supports accomplishment?

- Understanding ways and how to coach SWD will allow for success of the player and team

- Success by the SWD will create a sense of accomplishment and carry across the whole team

- "When SWD have success early in a game or in practice they tend to be successful throughout the period of practice or game. I have seen SWD destroy a practice when they are not successful and it creates behavior issues"

- Understanding and achieving goals must be a focal point for the coach when working with SWD

What is next?

- Now that we have a better understanding of UDL let us lay out some ideas for instruction and coaching
- Understanding the components of UDL and how your student is processing your coaching will allow for you to provide successful learning opportunities
- You know that there will be barriers how do you overcome?
- You know your expectations for excellence how do you pull that from your players?

Break

"I'm starting to think that people in this department are spending too much time at the water cooler."

Let us gain a better understanding of UDL Framework

- Now that we have a better understanding of UDL let us lay out some ideas for instruction and coaching
- Understanding the components of UDL and how your student is processing your coaching will allow for you to provide successful learning opportunities
- You know that there will be barriers how do you overcome?
- You know your expectations for excellence how do you pull that from your players?

Setting Goals for your SWD

- What is it that you want a player to be able to accomplish?
- How does that goal relate to others without disabilities and is it realistic and attainable?
- Does this goal match the goals of the team?
- Does the player meeting these goals make us successful?

- Ex: Malachi is Sr. QB with ADHD, SLD and one of his goals is to master signals for play calls to not run any wrong plays

Coach the Skill

- Use the goals and means of presentation of the skill to coach the athlete in the mastery of the skill by providing clear learning goals
  - Learn on new technique, play, strategy per day
  - Eliminate behavior issues during practice
  - Stay on task throughout the practice without distractions
- Did you reduce barriers for instruction and did you eliminate the excuses?
  - Eliminating distractions
  - Small chunks of material for learning, not overloading the student
- Employ several different coaching methods to allow the students an opportunity to learn through what works for them

Identify Barriers

- We listed barriers prior in our exercise, What are some major barriers that can inhibit the success of our players?
- Not eating before practice is hard for you to fix but may be a barrier. How can you eliminate excuses or barriers to learning or success?
- Mediating things like limited vocabulary base, number fluency, processing speed, and staying focused can be mediated through engagement, representation, action, and expression.

- Ex: Malachi doesn't process the play call quickly so do you try to make Malachi go fast or do you allow him an opportunity to process the play before running?

Apply UDL

- Engage the student athlete by applying the three principles of UDL.
- Provide multiple means of
  - Engagement
  - Representation
  - Action and Expression
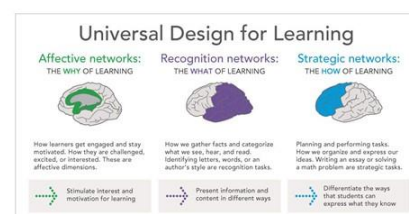
Coaching Methods to Employ "Affective Networks"
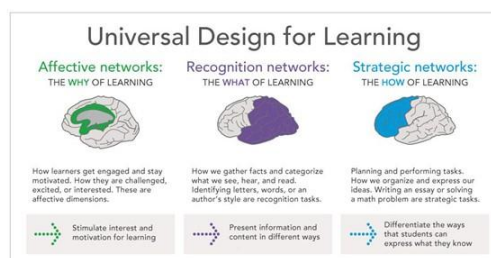
To support diverse affective networks:

- Adopt different content and tools
- Adopt variable levels of challenge
- Adopt varieties of rewards
- Adopt ranges of learning context
- The affective network, coaches plan activities that attempt to engage athletes and maintain their interest. (Vargas)
- Research participants stated that "Even though we are trying to teach players the same skill, we often have to put in place different methods for different kids, not all kids respond to the same coaching"

Universal Design for Learning

Coaching Methods to Employ "Recognition Networks"
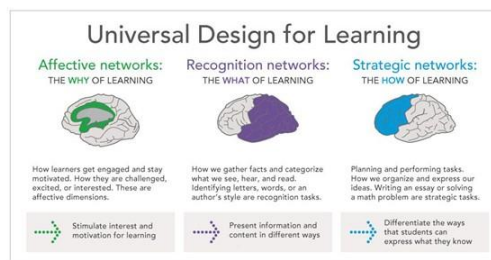
To support diverse recognition networks:

- Offer various examples
- Highlight critical features
- Offer numerous media and presentations of your content
- Support background context
- Using these principles in sports, coaches can make instruction accessible by using methods that allow athletes with a variety of learning preferences and strengths to process and understand (Vargas)
- Research respondents said "Conditioning our SWD by repeating a skill several times throughout practice has allowed that player to learn the skill through repetition"
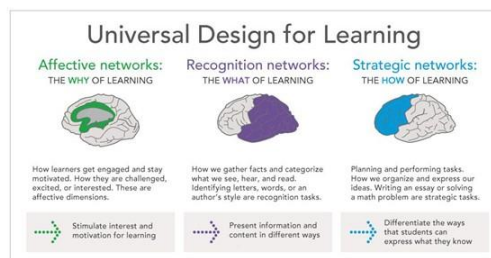

Universal Design for Learning

Coaching Methods to Employ "Strategic Networks"

To support diverse strategic networks:

- Deliver flexible models of skillful enactment.
- Deliver chances to rehearse with supports.
- Deliver ongoing, pertinent coaching.
- Provide the student with multiple opportunities to display the learned skill.
- The strategic network relays to how individuals use material and display what they have learned or taken in through the recognition network (Vargas)
- Respondents said that "Allowing SWD the opportunity to practice in the stadium prior to a game and walk through those learned skills, gave them an opportunity to be successful on game day"

Lunch Break 12:00 -1:00

Review of the Morning

- Identify the Barriers
- Coach the Skill
- Apply UDL Principles
  - Engagement
  - Representation
  - Action and Expression
- We will now do an exercise by developing a plan for a student athlete with a disability

Our Student 5 Star Felix

- Felix is a freshman football player that plays RB and has an IEP and is diagnosed with SLD and ADHD
  - Felix has trouble with executive functioning like time management, organization, preparation, focus, following directions, and emotions.
  - Felix processes instructions slowly and struggles to interpret spoken language.
- Felix is a very skilled player but his parents have expressed that he has trouble following directions from the coaches and managing his emotions on the field by getting upset really often and is not in control of his temper
- In middle school, Felix's coach said that he didn't learn the plays very well and couldn't remember alignment and assignment

Group Project and Discussion

- Follow the UDL design cycle to develop a plan for coaching Felix
- Consider what we have learned about UDL and what your group believes will work to help Felix as a new player on the team with a disability
  - Multiple means of engagement
  - Multiple means of representation
  - Multiple means of action and expression
- Use the handout with notes and highlights of UDL to make your plan
- Present your plan for Felix to the class to make him a success for your team

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

I. Provide Multiple Means of Representation	II. Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression	III. Provide Multiple Means of Engagement
1: Provide options for perception 1.1 Offer ways of customizing the display of information 1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information 1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information	**4: Provide options for physical action** 4.1 Vary the methods for response and navigation 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies	**7: Provide options for recruiting interest** 7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy 7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
2: Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols 2.1 Clarify vocabulary and symbols 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure 2.3 Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols 2.4 Promote understanding across languages 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media	**5: Provide options for expression and communication** 5.1 Use multiple media for communication 5.2 Use multiple tools for construction and composition 5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance	**8: Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence** 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives 8.2 Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge 8.3 Foster collaboration and community 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback
3: Provide options for comprehension 3.1 Activate or supply background knowledge 3.2 Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization	**6: Provide options for executive functions** 6.1 Guide appropriate goal-setting 6.2 Support planning and strategy development 6.3 Facilitate managing information and resources 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress	**9: Provide options for self-regulation** 9.1 Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation 9.2 Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection
Resourceful, knowledgeable learners	Strategic, goal-directed learners	Purposeful, motivated learners

What can you develop to assist you in coaching Felix? (Handout)

Making a Plan for an Athlete 30 min

Phase 1
What Barriers does the Athlete face for learning

Phase 2
Set Goals for the Athlete to check for understanding

Phase 3
Have checkpoints in place to determine if the goal is met

Phase 4
Develop supports for the Athlete to assure success in understanding

Phase 5
Coach the skill using UDL principles and thoughts

Phase 6
Reflect and Revise What worked to reduce barriers and created success

Instructor Discussion of Group Work

Closing Remarks and Exit Ticket

SETTING UP YOUR ORGANIZATION OR TEAM FOR WORKING WITH SWD

COACING OUR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Day 3 Schedule

"Setting up your organization up to successfully work with SWD"

Time	Activity
8:00 - 8:45	Arrival and Continental Breakfast
8:45 - 9:00	Review of Previous Days Class
9:00 - 9:15	Ice Breaker Kahoot "Review of UDL"
9:15 - 9:45	The IEP
9:45 – 10:00	Team Liaison
10:00 – 10:30	Setting up your organization
10:30 -11:00	Break
11:00 - 12:00	Resources and Professional Learning Communities
12:00 -1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:15	Review of the Morning
1:15 - 2:15	Class Activity, Sharing Ideas for your Team and Organization
2:15 - 2:45	Instructor's Comments
2:45	Completion of Google Form and Release

Agenda

Meeting Norms and Expectations

Leadership Norms-
- *Respect and Trust Each Other*
- *Honor Time*
- *Maintain Confidentiality*
- *Practice Flexibility*
- *Listen Actively*
- *Share Our Talents*
- *Demonstrate Integrity*

Review of previous days PD

Coaching Students with Disabilities

- Not every player can be coached the same way
- SWD can benefit from being a part of a team
- The law states that SWD have the right to participate
- Ideas for working with SWD

UDL for coaching SWD
- A framework for working with SWD
- Identify the barriers
- Coach a skill
- Provide multiple means of
  - Engagement
  - Representation
  - Action and Expression
- Kahoot Review

Goals for Today

- Gain a needed understanding of the IEP as a coach and what it can tell us about a SWD
- Gain ideas of what you can do to help your SWD
- Show you examples of how can you set up your organization to work with SWD
- Provide you with resources that are available to assist you when working with SWD

IF IT IS
IMPORTANT
TO YOU, YOU
WILL FIND
A WAY.
IF NOT, YOU
WILL FIND
AN EXCUSE.

InspirationalQuotesGazette.com

Understanding the IEP

How do I know if my SWD has an IEP

- There are many different ways you may come to know if you SWD has an IEP
- Your district may code or signify a student has an IEP in your student portal
- A coach on your team, who works in Special Education, may work with the student
  - "When a coach works in Special Education it is helpful when he knows and identifies our students with IEPs"
- The parent may make you aware
- You may have the student in class and you are made aware

Using the IEP to gain knowledge about the SWD

Can I use the IEP to gain and understanding of the student?

- Yes you have the ability to review a student's IEP
  - Understanding what you are looking at
- You may contact the students case manager to find out more information
- You may meet with the parents to gain feedback and knowledge from them

What can the IEP show me about the student?

- The IEP can make you aware of the disability the student may have
- The IEP can tell you about the accommodations they receive in the classroom and what the respond too
  - It is your responsibility to make sure they receive the same accommodations on the field
- You may gain insight into what the student needs to be successful

Should I look at all IEP's for my players?

Things you can learn from the IEP

- You can learn the present level of performance for a student which is their present capabilities, skills, challenges, any strengths the student may have
  - This will apply to academics and social interaction
- You may review the student's educations, behavioral, or social goals
- All special education services the student receives
- All related services the student is to receive
- Any special factors that may exist, like language or behavioral problems

How does that translate to my activity?

- Understanding the challenges a student is facing will allow you to better understand expectations for that student
- You can help a student find their strengths, develop their skills, and assist with social skills in your activity
- You may be able to provide accommodations that will allow for more student success in your sport

This seems like a lot, what can help?

Develop or Employ a team liaison through the Special Education Department

- It is helpful to work with the Special Education Department in your school when you have SWD participating in your activity
- That person can assist you in translating a student's IEP
- They may help you understand accommodations and implementing them
- They may assist in scheduling and keeping the students eligibility up to date
- They can become a part of your coaching staff and help you with all SWD on your team

Having Coaches that work in Special Education

- The special education teaching position is a crucial role for coaches
- Special education is probably the second most employed position for coaches behind PE
- Having a coach in special education gives you someone to lean on for guidance with SWD
- You may have one of your coaches be the case manager for all the players on your team

Set up Your Team for Success with SWD

9th Grade SPED Coordinator

Responsible for identifying 9th grade student-athletes that are on the team and have and IEP

12th Grad SPED Coordinator

Responsible for working with 12 grade SPED students to assure graduation plans, transition plans, and make sure coaching staff is aware for SWD and their accommodations

10th and 11th Grade SPED Coordinator

Responsible for carrying students from 9th grade to 10th and 11th modifying IEP changes and making sure coaching staff is aware of SWD and their accommodations

Athletic Department Special Education Liaison

Works with the Head Coach and Assistant Coaches to assure they have proper information on SWD including classes taking, accommodations, disabilities, and possible interventions when working with the student. Also responsible for schedule and graduation plans

How does this work for my team?

If you have a large staff and a large number of kids

- The example given is great for a staff or 6-8 coaches or more
- Assign responsibilities just like you would assign for other duties
- Use coaches that are already in Special Education to assist with the process
- Spread the work load and concentrate on the ones that need the most assistance and help
- The liaison can be your best friend and assist you tremendously with SWD

If you have a small staff or you are the AD

- Share the responsibility with those on your staff if it is small you can delegate responsibility
- The total number of SWD on a small team should be manageable by a few coaches
- In this instance it would be important for AD to use a liaison to assist with smaller teams
- Meeting with the liaison pre-season can give you all the tools you need to assure success with SWD

How has it worked for others?

For individual teams

- " I have a team liaison that adopts many of my SWD and lays out graduation plans, makes sure they are in the right classes, and includes me in their IEP meetings, this works great"
- "We have several coaches on staff that work within special education and they make our coaches aware of SWD on the team and assist with working with those students when they struggle"
- "We have a culture coordinator on our team and I lean on him to help out with behavior issues the mostly come from out SWD when they lash out because they are struggling to understand team rules ad responsibilities."

For a small staff or athletic department

- "I am the head coach of a small team so myself and my assistant coach, who is in special education, makes sure we identify those SWD and review their IEP"
- "Our Athletic Department employs a lot of special education teachers so that they have access to our athletes and teach many of them which allows us to be successful working with those students"

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

What is a PLC?

- A continuing progression in which coaches can work collaboratively in repeated phases of shared examination and action exploration to develop ideas and methods to better work and serve their student athletes
- Collaboration is a big part of a PLC. Coaches will work together to impact their students, team, school, and their own team and locker room

A PLC can create:

- Staff learning opportunities
- The promotion of learning and collaboration between coaches
- Create a culture of investigation, origination and study of working with SWD
- A system for coaches to exchange knowledge and ideas
- Learning from others experiencing the same challenges

PLC for Coaches working with SWD

A PLC created by coaches by coaches

- A continuing progression in which coaches can work collaboratively in repeated phases of shared examination and action exploration to develop ideas and methods to better work and serve their student athletes
- Collaboration is a big part of a PLC. Coaches will work together to impact their students, team, school, and their own team and locker room
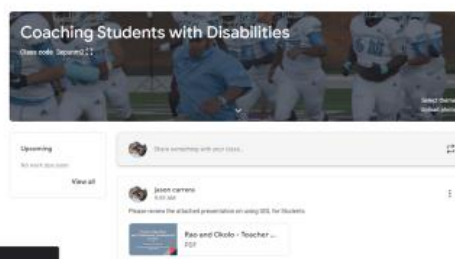
Please visit the Coaching Students with Disabilities PLC

- Created by Coaches for Coaches
- https://classroom.google.com/u/0/c/MjA0NDk4MDA3ODQ2

Outside resources available to you

- **UDL in the Classroom**
  https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.amazon.com%2FUDL-Now-Teachers-Universal-Classrooms%2Fdp%2F1930583664&psig=AOvVaw2HgoWcy4YtA9IrfBjfiJ52R&ust=160475957 8459000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAOQjhxqFwoTCPjEwLiR7uwCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAJ

- **Coaching students with hidden disabilities**
  https://doi.org/10.1260%2F1747-9541.10.5.783

- **Coaching students with disabilities**
  https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2016.1269 084

Review of the Morning

Understanding the IEP

- The IEP is an important part of us being able to help our players
- Gaining information from the IEP will allow us to be better equipped to work with our SWD
- Leaning on coaches who work and teaching within special education will give us the knowledge we need to work with SWD

Setting up my Organization and Continued Learning

- Give coaches responsibilities to manage and gain information about your players with disabilities
- Bigger teams with a larger staffs assign coaches to work with your SWD
- Smaller staffs lean on the AD to set up a team to help out
- Create a liaison to work with your team
- Join a PLC to continue to learn and grow

Afternoon Project

- Take some time within your group to design your staff or how you would set up your staff
  - Bounce ideas off of each other to develop a plan (15 min)
- Write an organization chart and give responsibilities to your staff to work with SWD (15 min)
  - How can you set up your organization to best serve SWD
- Present your ideas to the class (30 min)
- Presenter Review

Thank You

Where do we go from here?

- Your SWD need you more than you could ever know when participating in your sport
- Let us continue to collaborate together to help these athletes learn and be successful
- Promote for your staff a sense of ownership of using UDL in their coaching and help them understand that everyone does not learn or need to be coached the same
- Use or PLC for future reference and bring your successes to the group

Your Presenter:

Jason Carrera

jcXXXX@xxxxx.com

404-555-1212

https://classroom.google.com/u/0/c/MjA0NDk4MDA3ODQ2 (Professional Learning Community)

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Interviewer: _____ Interviewee #: _____

Instructions:

1. Introduce yourself to the participant.

2. Review of the purpose of the study and informed consent form.

3. Explain that the interview will be audiotaped.

4. Request written consent to conduct the interview.

5. Begin with an informal question that sets the tone as welcoming.

Accommodations:

1. Provide adequate wait time.

2. Repeat questions as needed or requested by the participant.

3. Define terminology as needed or requested by the participant.

4. Use prompts as needed to assist participants in clarifying their thoughts.

Interview Questions:

I am going to read you some questions about your experiences and knowledge of

providing accommodations for SWD and the perceived needs of the coaches and ADs to

improve inclusion for student-athletes with disabilities.

Interview Questions for Coaches:

1. As a coach, what sports are you currently working with athletes?

2. How many years have you been coaching or working with students at the high school level?

RQ1. What are the perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and ADs of one large Georgia school district on providing accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities?

3. Describe your experience with providing accommodations, as a coach, to SWD.

4. Please describe what the process looks like when you have a student athlete on your team with a disability. For example, how do you know you have a student athlete with a disability and what is your role with helping that student be successful?

5. What is your understanding of SWD and what students fall within this category?

6. Please explain any training or professional development that you have attended in the past that has assisted you when working with SWD?

7. What knowledge or experience do you have of the students on your team that have an IEP or disability when participating in your sport?

8. What are some specific things that could be done to help you better meet the needs of student athlete's with disabilities?

9. What experience do you have reviewing a student's IEP when participating in your sport?

RQ2. In a large, Georgia school district, what are high school coaches' and ADs' perceived needs to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

1. What do you feel you need to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

2. Describe any training you have been provided to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

3. Describe the support you receive to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

4. Describe the resources you are provided to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

5. Before we conclude, is there anything else you have thought of that you might need to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

Interview Questions for ADs:

RQ1. What are the perceptions and experiences of high school coaches and ADs of one large Georgia school district on providing accommodations to student-athletes with disabilities?

1. How many years have you been working with students at the high school level?

2. Describe the process of student athletes with disabilities being included on athletic teams with non-disabled peers. What does that look like at your school?

Do student athletes with disabilities receive accommodations and if so, please explain that process?

    a.   You mentioned the students get additional support if they need it. Can you explain that entire process? How is this handled, how is it monitored?

3. What is your understanding of SWD and what students fall within this category?

4. Please explain any training or professional development that you have attended in the past that has assisted you when working with SWD?

   If so, what was the focus of the training and how has it assisted you?

5. What knowledge or experience do you have of the students on your teams that have an IEP or disability when participating in your sport?

6. What experience do you have reviewing a student's IEP when participating in sports?

RQ2. In a large, Georgia school district, what are high school coaches' and ADs' perceived needs to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

1. What do you feel your coaches need to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

   a. How do those ideas assist in working with SWD?

   b. What additional resources do you believe your coaches need in order to have adequate resources to work with SWD?

2. Describe any training coaches have been provided to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

3. Describe the support coaches receive to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

4. Describe the resources coaches are provided to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

   a. Are there things like time, more coaches or learning resources that could also assist the coaches?

5. Before we conclude, is there anything else you have thought of that coaches might need to successfully include student-athletes with disabilities during high school athletics?

Appendix C: Invite Letter

Dear Invitee,

My name is Jason Carrera. I am a doctoral student at Walden University's Special Education program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled Coaches and ADs' Inclusion Practices for High School Student-Athletes with Disabilities.

As a coach or AD in this district, you have been asked to participate in this interview based on your knowledge and experience in the district. Furthermore, it is believed that you have a great deal to share about coaching and providing instruction to SWD (SWD) when participating in extracurricular activities. The objective of this research project is to help coaches and ADs improve instruction of SWD when participating in extracurricular activities using Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This basic qualitative case study will not aim to evaluate coaching or teaching ability. Rather, I am trying to illustrate coaches and ADs understanding and experiences when working with SWD when participating in extracurricular activities.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely anonymous, therefore, it does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. If you would like to participate in the study please read the Informed Consent letter below. Your participation in the research was of great importance to assist in social change in ensuring that SWD are receiving the appropriate instruction when participating in extracurricular activities.

Thank you for your time and participation

Sincerely,

Jason Carrera, M.S, Doctoral Student, Walden University

Appendix D: Code Book

Codes	Categories	Themes Emerging
Coaches too busy to train, working other duties A priori Lack of Training	Training	No training and no written policy
Unsupportive Admin A priori	Training needed	
Haven't been taught A priori		
Modeling A priori	Differentiation, and training needed	
Early recognition of SWD A priori		Need for further training
Needs a toolbox A priori		
Who is teaching A priori		
Doesn't know of SWD participanting A priori code Lack of Knowledge	Knowledge	Experience working with IEPs
Coaches or AD does not examine roster for IEPs A priori		
Doesn't know what coaches are doing A priori code Lack of understanding	Familiarity	Experience working with IEPs
Thinks coaches don't know about SWD participating , A priori code		
Knowing that SWD must be included in activities no matter the disability A priori code Lack of understanding		Large number of kids particpating
Unaware of kids receiving accommodations	Student awareness	Little knowledge of IEPs and no written policy
Did not occur to me to review IEP		
Coached the way they were taught	Differentiation & awareness	
No support for SWD		
Doesn't know SPED	Unaware	Experienced Coaches working with IEPs

Appendix E: Sample Transcript

We tell them verbally, showed them on film. You give them opportunities like a good practice, like anything else, you do a warm up, just like you classroom. You would kind of show them, talk to them about what we're going to do. Break it down step by step, like footwork or how to catch a ball or and then like it. Then you're going to add in like, oh, right now we're going to do quarterback and receiver, then quarterback receiver versus the DB and then you go step by step.

And at each step you're giving feedback and assessing and ultimately then you go seven and seven or 11 on 11 and then you have an opportunity to watch, film and review and critique over mistakes. And then you give them another chance to fix it. And that's how it goes all the time. How a great practice is the same concept going to the classroom and different kids learn at different speeds in different ways. And so I tell people that all the time, especially if they're special education or getting instruction, the same thing.

Note: This is a good example of special education teachers helping other coaches, he shows that because he has worked in SPED before he has some understanding of how to provide accommodations for students, he may just didn't realize that was what he was doing.

You differentiate a practice, you understand, and some kids are better for them on shooting free throws. Some kids need more work on their post moves or every kid has a different set of needs. And that same mentality is should be applied to the classroom. So I kind of use it as a. Reverse on coaches, I guess that never makes sense.

Note: A priori, All kids can't be taught or coached the same, differentiation

Interviewer - So kind of plays into some of the stuff that we do, we talked about again, but just wanted to ask this question what knowledge or experience do you have of of the students on your team that have an IEP or disability will participate or so do you have you review your rosters and say, OK, these kids have special needs, kids are special ed and make the coach aware of that? Or do you do anything from that standpoint?

Participant – I've never. I don't I have. Never, never really thought about it. When I was the head coach for football, I knew my kids very well and because just the coaches, like we knew some of them had behavioral issues or maybe were SLD really because we were checking on their grades. So by virtue of checking on the grades, then you knew their class. And I would say that I have a couple kids, I guess I'm aware of, and I know that they're in special education or they're in certain classes to really pay a little bit closer attention to those two or three kids in their grades.

Note: Only aware of SWD or IEP because they were in class with them, would have like to known more, county used coding system to code SWD

But it's really more of a case by case versus a team.

Interviewer - So it comes up more from an eligibility standpoint than it does from my accommodations table.

Participant – Yeah, definitely. That I don't look at it as from a combination standpoint that closely. I would definitely look it up. If I'm looking up a kid and I see their classes and I can tell it's about nine or eight or what kind of classes they may have. And I can pretty much.

Note: Has rarely looked at IEP for accommodation more for eligibility and notices student has an IEP