A Collaborative Approach Between SLPs and Paraprofessionals on Data Collection

Rusmi Ramli Soewignjo, M.S., Diana Sánchez, M.S., CCC-SLP
Long Island University - Brooklyn

ABSTRACT

The word "TEAM" as "Together Everyone Achieves More" resonates in the practice of speech-language pathologists. The speech pathologist often collaborates with educators in the school setting, including paraprofessionals, teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and guidance counselors. The collaboration with educators is within the Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs in Schools (ASHA's Ad Hoc Committee, 2010).

Students in the school setting are given carryover assignments, but the paraprofessionals often do not have the training to ensure generalization of skills in the students' natural setting or collection of data to monitor progress. Despite the amount of time paraprofessionals interact with their students, little is utilized to generalize the speech and language skills of students. Additionally, limited research has been reported on how paraprofessionals can join the transdisciplinary model to facilitate the generalization of skills and documentation of progress on the implementation of speech/language skills.

The collaboration between SLPs and classroom educators offers multiple opportunities to expand and reinforce communication skills (Archibald, 2017). Such collaborative efforts benefit speech pathologists in obtaining data and monitoring progress on the generalization of skills. The more "practice time" and consistent modeling of strategies/foundation skills benefit students with increased opportunities to apply and generalize these tools within their natural setting. "It is essential to provide individuals with necessary knowledge and skills to work with the child in the classroom to apply the speech strategies in eliciting the target skills (Archibald, 2017)."

Paraprofessionals can assist in the generalization of skills and progress monitoring.

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the impact of the transdisciplinary model between the speech-language pathologist and the paraprofessional.
- Explain the benefits of paraprofessionals' collaboration in collecting data.
- List the benefits of collaborating with paraprofessionals to generalize speech and language skills.

METHOD

- Distribute surveys to assess the perspective of paraprofessionals in collaborating with SLPs – collecting data in the classroom, assisting in delivery of goals.
- Provide 1:1 training and ongoing support for participants on the delivery of strategies/goals and collection of data.
- Provide materials that aid in generalization – picture stimuli, visual cues.
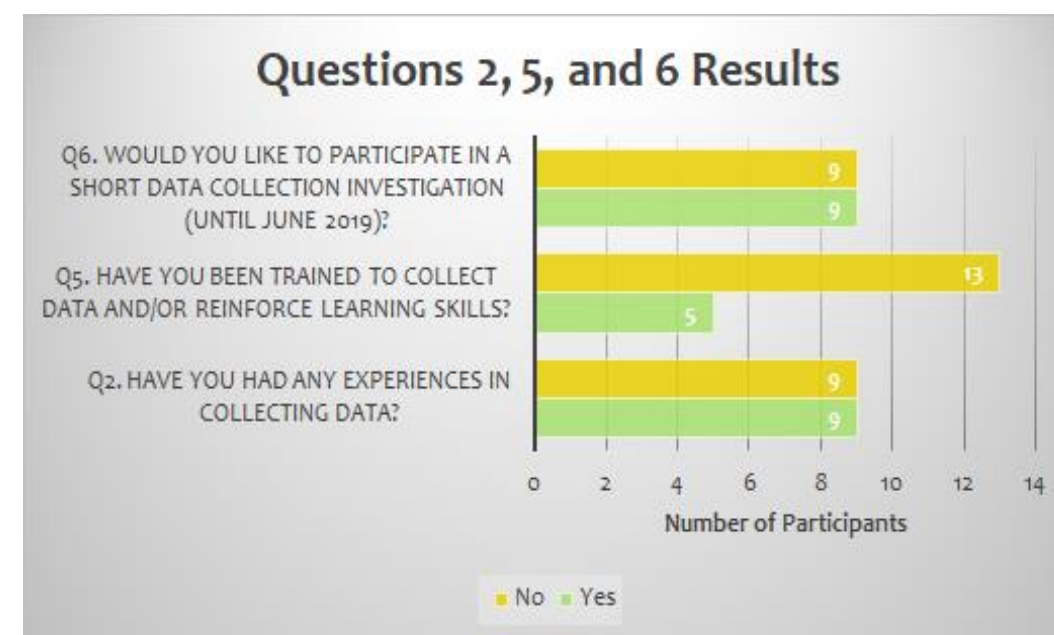- Monitor and collect data to track the target communication skills.

PRE - SURVEY

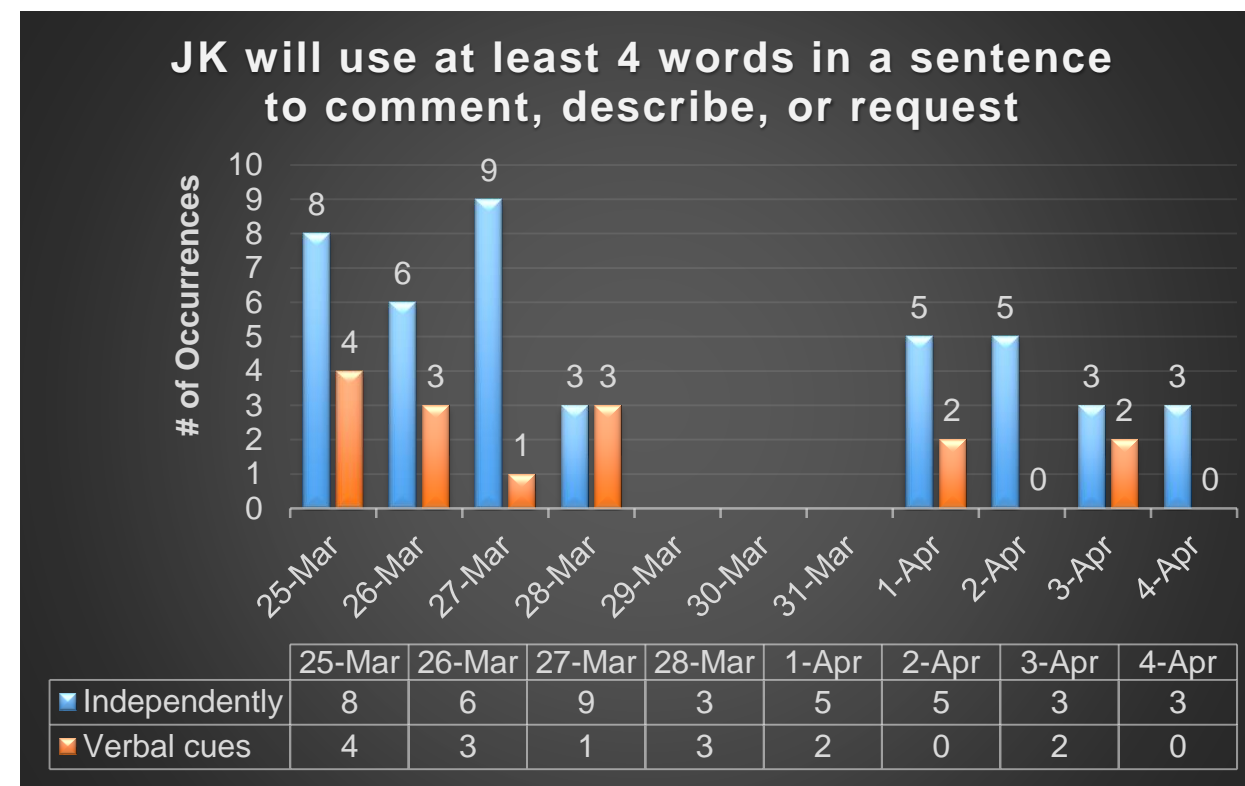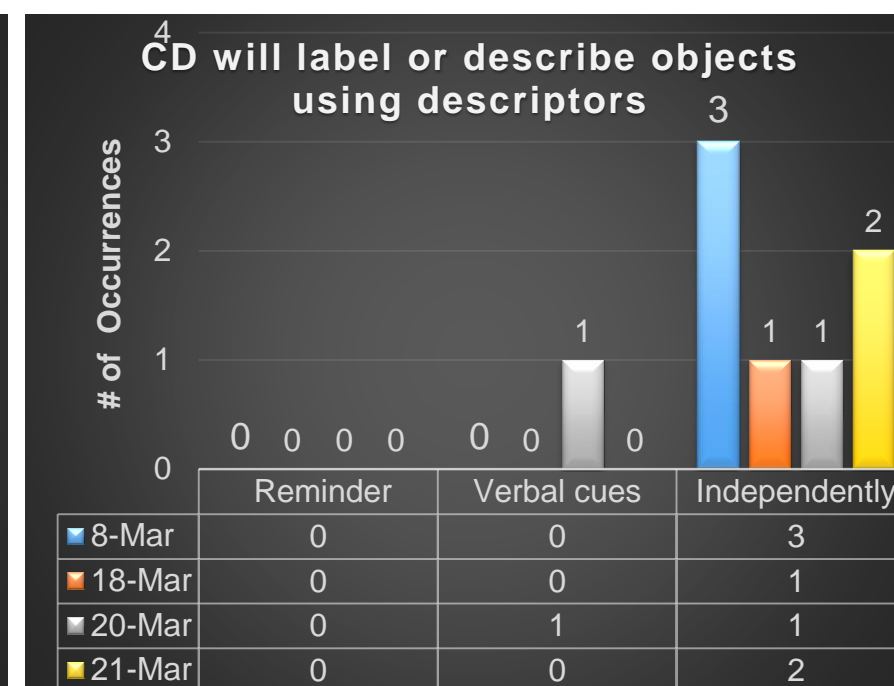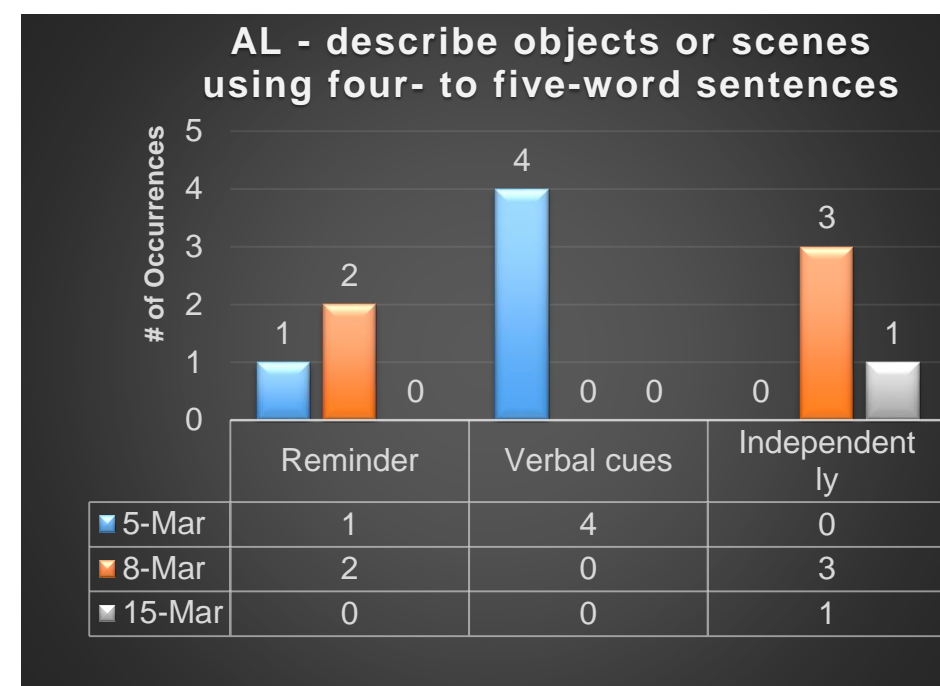### Q1. What is your perspective on data collection?
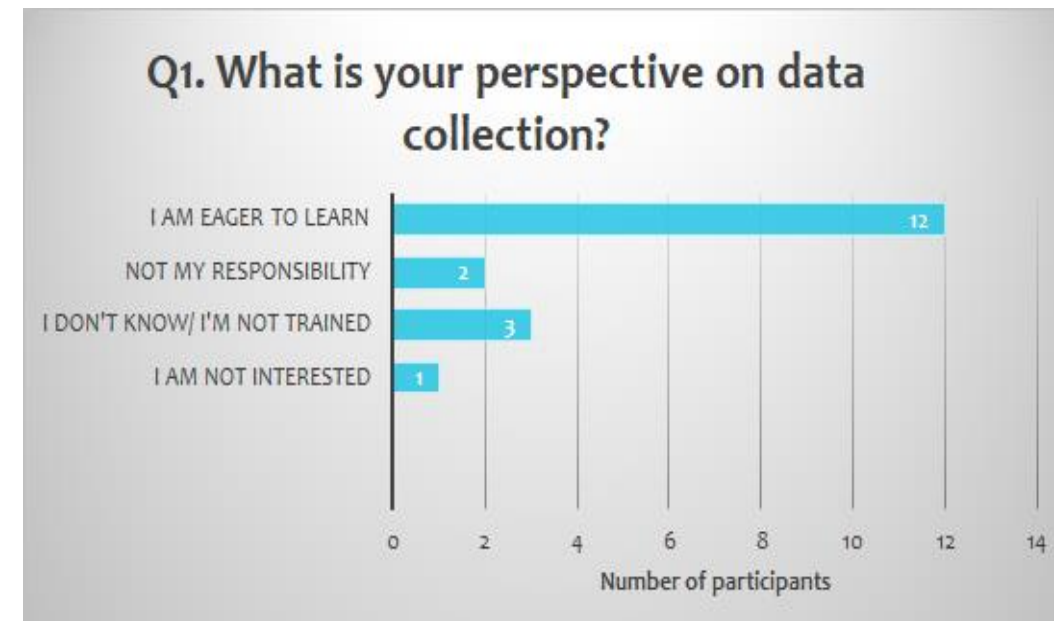
- 90% response – 18 out of 20 responded.
- 60% of participants were eager to learn about collecting data.
- 50% of participants had previous experience in collecting data.
- 65% of participants were not trained on data collection and/or generalization of desired learning skills/strategies.
- 60% of participants do not meet regularly or collaborate with SLPs.

Questions 2, 5, and 6 Results

Paraprofessional Perspective on Data Collection

- ✔ "Collecting data can be useful for planning but when too much is required, it can take away from valuable time that can be used to plan and work with students."
- ✔ "I have never seen paraprofessionals collect data."
- ✔ "I have only written anecdotal for behavior purposes."
- ✔ "The Speech Teachers will usually let me know how to help the student with on a continual basis. I do not collect data, unless it's for behavior purposes, however, all paras reinforce learning skills (or should be)."
- ✔ "I had to collect and use data, but learned how to do this from colleagues. I never had formal training."

DATA TRACKING

AL - describe objects or scenes using four- to five-word sentences

	Reminder	Verbal cues	Independently
5-Mar	1	4	0
8-Mar	2	0	3
15-Mar	0	0	0

CD will label or describe objects using descriptors

	Reminder	Verbal cues	Independently
8-Mar	0	0	3
18-Mar	0	0	1
20-Mar	0	1	1
21-Mar	0	0	2

JK will use at least 4 words in a sentence to comment, describe, or request

	25-Mar	26-Mar	27-Mar	28-Mar	1-Apr	2-Apr	3-Apr	4-Apr
Independently	8	6	9	3	5	5	3	3
Verbal cues	4	3	1	3	2	0	2	0

ANALYSES

1. JK – can meet goals with minimum to no support.
2. AL – can use descriptive words mostly during iPad time or in the meeting area.
3. CD – can use descriptive words with minimum to no support during classroom instruction.

POST-SURVEY

- All participants found the "Data Tracking" training useful.
- Only 1 out of 3 participants felt the training was sufficient.
- All participants agreed that collaborative efforts between SLPs and paraprofessionals can lead to positive and improved speech/language skills for students.

Paraprofessionals' Reflections

- ❖ "Training needs be more specific and more frequent in order for students to reach maximum goals"
- ❖ "Data collection can definitely be useful to achieve academic goals, as this shows us what students need to improve."
- ❖ "The generalization and data collection can yield better results when sufficient time is provided in the daily routine of the classroom."

MATERIALS

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- Data tracking forms – relevant and specific. They targeted the student's goal and ensured "easy use" by the professional.
- Increased paraprofessionals' knowledge of speech and language goals.
- Motivation – Paraprofessionals were indirectly motivated by students' progress and usage of communication skills. Also, saw the benefits of the collaborate model.
- Greatest challenge for the professional was the reliability of the recorded data.
- Reinforcement - The paraprofessionals' continuous effort to reinforce desired skills were difficult to monitor.
- Transdisciplinary collaboration - ASHA and the city.
- Discrepancy – expected to deliver and done at the school setting.

NEXT STEP

- Generalization of skills. Continuous usage of record data, effective application of strategies, and routine trainings via the "Train the Trainers" model.
- Paraprofessionals involvement during data design. Creating forms that meet the unique needs of the professionals within their work environment.
- Ongoing shared data collection between the paraprofessional and the speech-language pathologist to ensure validity of data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONTACTS

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