

INTRODUCTION

- Conjoint behavioral consultation (CBC) is a structured, indirect model wherein a consultant works with a parent and teacher together to promote collaborative, problem-solving partnerships across home and school settings (Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996).
- Goals of CBC are to address child concerns shared by parents and teachers, enhance problem-solving skills of parents and teachers, and promote future home-school partnerships.
- CBC has been shown to be effective in addressing a range of behavioral, social, and academic concerns (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Busse, 1998; Sheridan, Eagle, Cowan, & Mickelson, 2001) across home and school settings, and parents and teachers report high levels of acceptability and satisfaction with CBC (Freer & Watson, 1999; Sheridan & Steck, 1995; Sheridan et al., 2004).
- To date, no research has explored parents and teachers self-reported generalization of problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and attitudes toward home-school partnerships. In addition, there is a dearth of information on barriers that inhibit partnerships.

PURPOSE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To investigate the self-reported generalization of CBC experiences to parent and teacher practices.
- What is the extent to which parents and teachers report use of (a) problem-solving strategies; (b) partnership practices; and (c) partnering attitudes?
 - Is there a difference between parents and teachers in their self-reported generalization of (a) problem-solving strategies; (b) partnership practices; and (c) partnering attitudes?
 - What is the relationship between current partnership practices, attitudes and (a) parents' and teachers' acceptability of the model; (b) parents' and teachers' perceptions of the consultants' helpfulness; and (c) effect sizes obtained as a function of CBC?
 - Is there a difference between parents and teachers self-reported barriers related to partnering?
 - Is there a relationship between barriers reported and the degree to which parents and teachers report generalization of (a) problem-solving strategies; (b) partnership practices; (c) partnering attitudes; and (d) child outcomes?

METHODS

Participants

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

	Parents	Teachers
N	33	37
Return rate ¹	34%	24%
Mean age	45	44
Gender		
M	6%	11%
F	94%	89%
Ethnicity		
White	82%	100%
Non-white	8%	0%
Years teaching	NA	< 10 years: 19% > 10 years: 81%

¹No significant differences were found between respondents and non respondents on demographic and case outcome variables.

Measures:

- Parent and Teacher Follow Up Survey with 39 items for parents and 35 items for teachers assessing 5 broad areas: problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, partnering attitudes, barriers to home-school partnerships, and child outcomes.
- Items were scored on a 6-point Likert scale. High scores reflected high levels of frequency of use or agreement with attitude/perception statements.

Table 2

Survey Description

Outcome measures	Items	Example	Source
Problem-solving strategies	7	I have set goals for my child.	Sheridan et al., 1996
Partnership practices	4	I have called my child's teacher.	Kohl, Lengua, McMahon, & CPPRG, 2000; Berla, Garlington, & Henderson, 1993
Partnering attitudes	11	I am an expert when it comes to my child.	Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Sheridan et al., 1996
Barriers to home-school partnerships	13	I do not feel welcome.	Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998
Child outcomes	4	I was satisfied with my child's progress with the identified concern.	NA

Outcomes Assessed at Time of CBC Case Completion:

- Acceptability of CBC:** Behavior Intervention Rating Scale (BIRS-R; Elliott & Von Brock Treuting, 1991)
- Parent-Teacher Relationship:** Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS; Vickers & Minke, 1995)
- Satisfaction with Consultant:** Consultant Evaluation Form (CEF; Erchul, 1987)
- Behavioral Outcomes:** Direct observations were conducted and effect sizes calculated using the "no assumptions approach" (Busk & Serlin, 1992)

RESULTS

Parent and Teacher Generalization of Strategies, Practices, and Attitudes:

Table 3

Survey Results

Outcome measures	Mean		SD	
	Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers
Problem-solving strategies	4.26	5.04	.10	.67
Partnership practices	3.89	4.03	.95	.74
Partnering attitudes	3.70	5.33	.46	.50
Barriers to home-school partnerships	1.69	2.55	.69	.67

Note. Items reflect a 6-point Likert scale with 1 = Almost Never or Totally Disagree and 6 = Almost Always or Totally Agree.

- A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine differences between parents and teachers self-reported generalization of problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and partnering attitudes.
- Significant differences were found between parents and teachers. Wilks' $\lambda = .24$, $F(3, 66) = 68.98$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .758$, which is a large effect size. Discriminant analyses were computed.

Table 4

Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients and Structure Matrix with One Discriminant Function

Outcome measures	Structure matrix	Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients	
	Function 1	Function 1	
Problem-solving strategies	.925*	.919*	
Partnership practices	.170	-.355	
Partnering attitudes	.645*	.327*	

* Medium to high correlation on both discriminant function and structure matrix.

Relationships between Original Case Outcomes and Generalization:

- Pearson correlations were computed to investigate the relationship between original case outcomes (i.e., BIRS-Acceptability, CEF, and effect sizes) and generalization of problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and partnering attitudes. No significant relationships were found.

Perceptions of Barriers to Problem-solving Strategies and Partnership Practices:

Table 5

Barriers with the Highest Mean Differences Between Parents and Teachers

Barriers	Parents		Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Time constraints	2.13	1.38	4.00	1.12
Inflexible work schedule	1.88	1.24	3.39	1.08
Parents do not understand child's school work	1.85	1.25	3.31	1.12
Child care difficulties	1.45	.83	2.69	1.21
Parents and teachers come from different backgrounds	1.82	1.29	2.97	1.21

Note: Items are scored on a 6-point Likert scale with 1 = Totally Disagree and 6 = Totally Agree.

- Overall, both parents and teachers disagreed that barriers impeded their problem-solving strategies and partnership practices.
- A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine differences between parents and teachers in perceptions of barriers.
- Significant differences were found between parents and teachers on the presence of barriers. Wilks' $\lambda = .36$, $F(13, 46) = 6.35$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .642$, which is a large effect size. Discriminant analyses were computed, and found differences in parent and teacher perceptions regarding time constraints and child care difficulties as sources of barriers.

Table 6

Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients and Structure Matrix with One Discriminant Function

Barriers	Structure matrix	Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients	
	Function 1	Function 1	
Time constraints	.557*	.772*	
Child care difficulties	.514*	.663*	

* Medium to high correlation on both discriminant function and structure matrix.

- Pearson correlations were computed to investigate the relationship between perceptions regarding the presence of barriers and self-reported generalization of problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and partnering attitudes. Significant negative relationships were found between barriers and attitudes for parents, and between barriers and both strategies and attitudes for teachers.

Table 7

Relationship Between Barriers and Generalization of Strategies, Practices, and Attitudes

	Strategies	Practices	Attitudes	Child outcomes
Parent reported barriers	-.198	.017	-.328*	-.260
Teacher reported barriers	-.540**	-.098	-.478**	NA

*p < .05, one-tailed. **p < .01, one-tailed.

DISCUSSION

- For parents and teachers who previously participated in CBC:
 - Teachers reported using problem-solving strategies very often and partnership practices often. They mostly agree with partnering attitudes.
 - Parents reported using problem-solving strategies often, and partnership practices some of the time. They disagreed with partnering attitudes.
- Teachers appeared to generalize problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and partnering attitudes following CBC more readily than did parents. Experience in CBC did not seem to develop parents' constructive attitudes about partnering.
- Differences between teachers and parents may be due in part to differing roles that each play when addressing school-based concerns. Likewise, teachers may perceive that they are conveying positive overtures and attitudes toward partnerships; however, it is unclear whether parents perceive them as such.
- Parents report fewer barriers than teachers, but report using problem-solving strategies and agreeing with partnering attitudes less than teachers. Continued work must be done within the context of CBC to help parents develop positive attitudes about partnerships. Conditions should be created to maximize parents' opportunities to adopt a role for partnering.
- There is a significant negative relationship between barriers and attitudes related to partnerships for parents and teachers. It is possible that when barriers increase, parents' and teachers' attitudes about partnering decrease. Alternatively when attitudes about partnerships decrease, perceptions of barriers may increase.
- Additionally, there is a significant negative relationship between barriers and problem-solving strategies for teachers. It is possible that when teachers perceive more barriers they are less likely to engage in problem-solving strategies. Alternatively, when they engage less in problem-solving, they may perceive more barriers.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Self-report nature of the surveys and a lack of direct follow-up data demonstrating the generalization of CBC principles limit interpretation of the data.
- The small sample of teachers and parents limits the generalization or external validity of the findings.
- There are no evaluations of the psychometric properties (e.g., reliability and validity) of the Parent and Teacher Follow Up Surveys; thus, their ability to measure the constructs of interest consistently and effectively is unknown.
- Research is needed to identify means for increasing generalization of CBC principles and problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and partnering attitudes among parents and teachers.
- Differences were noted between parents and teachers problem-solving strategies and partnering attitudes. Future studies could examine variables that may hinder or promote these strategies and attitudes toward home-school partnerships.
- Future research is needed to assess how generalization of problem-solving strategies, partnership practices, and partnering attitudes affect students' academic and behavioral outcomes.