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Will defend the dissertation

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Time: 9:00 A.M.

Locations: TriCities - Floyd 207L

Vancouver - VUB 331

Pullman - Education Addition 202

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend.

PERCEPTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES REGARDING RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Chair: Yun-Ju Hsiao

Schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) depend on the discrepancy model to identify students with learning disabilities (LD). Recently, research in the field of LD in the KSA has raised a plethora of problems faced by educators, which may have emerged from utilizing the discrepancy model. These problems can be addressed by adopting a pre-referral model such as response to intervention (RTI), but before shifting from the discrepancy model to RTI, teachers' RTI knowledge should be studied. This qualitative study was conducted to identify in depth how teachers of students with LD perceive their knowledge of RTI as a pre-referral model that can be implemented to identify students with LD in public schools in Riyadh, KSA. The study also aimed to identify how institutions of higher education in Riyadh, KSA, prepare teachers of students with LD in RTI. The data of this study were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews with 16 teachers of students with LD, in addition to document analysis of 27 syllabi of LD courses provided by three institutions of higher education in Riyadh, KSA. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The results of this study reveal four major themes: (a) Current Challenges, namely, the increasing number of referrals to LD evaluation, inadequate diagnosis process, inefficiency of general education teachers regarding working with students who have LD, and ineffective educational leadership practices; (b) Familiarity with RTI/MTSS, which indicated that RTI has not been incorporated into university courses' syllabi and that teachers lack knowledge of RTI; (c) Professional Development, which highlighted the low quality of obtained professional development programs and teachers' utilization of lower-quality resources to develop their knowledge; and (d) School Reform, which confirmed the need to reform schools to enhance the LD program and promote all students' academic and behavioral outcomes. The findings in these areas support issues raised in the literature regarding the challenges confronting the LD field in the KSA and regarding teachers' knowledge of RTI. Implementation of practices and future research are discussed.