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“Collaboration Article Review”

In the article, “Fostering Collaboration with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families of Children with Moderate to Severe Disabilities” by Edward M. Olivos, R.J. Gallagher and Jill Agular, there is a discussion on the problem of disconnectedness between culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families and the school. The article goes through three main points, the lack of proper collaboration between the school and CLD families, the responsibilities of the school in fostering collaboration, and a framework for how it is possible to foster collaboration with CLD families.

The article goes into great detail with explaining the problem of disconnectedness between CLD families and the school system. Whether the issue lies in the parents lack of confrontation about the state of their child’s position and well being in school or the school not communicating and explaining the situation properly as they are federally mandated—still there is a miscommunication from both sides that disallows the student and their family from getting the most *appropriate* education they can possibly receive. While many school employees would put the blame on the parent’s “lack of involvement”, when working with CLD families, especially in terms of special education—there needs to be an acknowledgement of and a respectful, proper approach toward the family’s culture views and perspectives of the situation. It is the school’s duty, after all, to prevent such a thing as miscommunication from occurring.

Responsibilities such as preventing miscommunication are outlined in the second main point of the article. It is explained in this section that there cannot be a one-dimensional approach to collaboration, but rather, there needs to be a multi-dimensional approach. Such an approach would allow room for a multitude of cultural backgrounds to have room for say and an opportunity for an understandable explanation appropriate for their cultural perspective. This approach does not only affect the CLD families, but all families, and all teachers and staff within the school as well. The section here also mentions the importance of being aware of one’s own biases while approaching the biases of others. Only by understanding the different sides can proper communication and collaboration be accomplished.

A framework is given, in the final section, with procedures and guidelines, for fostering the necessary collaboration with CLD families. The framework includes providing CLD families full access to the school and to the people serving their children’s needs, examining collaborative efforts and ensuring that all parties share power equally, informing parent’s of all the options available for their children and supporting family involvement in authentic decision making, and establishing general education teachers as the “point-persons” in school-family collaboration. Naturally, though options for overcoming miscommunication and misunderstanding are given in this article, it is up to the persons involved in such circumstances to utilize them.