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Conference or Workshop Item

Title: A SENCO for all seasons

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A SENCO for all Seasons
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1. Working Title
An investigation into the impact of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) on teachers’ abilities to address Special Educational Needs (SEN) in English mainstream primary schools

2. Researcher’s Background
Pre-2009
From Kenya – heard of SENCOS for the first time when in the UK
Post-2009
MA Ed. research on SENCO challenges in Primary Schools in Northamptonshire

3. Who is a SENCO?
The role was established in the 1994 SEN Code of Practice. This stated that schools must have a SENCO responsible for:
• coordinating services around children with SEN in mainstream schools
• helping teachers to develop and implement appropriate individual education plans, resources and provisions for children with SEN.

4. Why study SENCO Impact?
• No specific documents regarding the measures of SENCO impact on teachers’ abilities to address SEN
• Increasing need for teachers to address SEN as inclusion becomes widespread

5. Research Aims
• To investigate how SENCOs are able to successfully motivate teachers to confidently manage the needs of children with SEN
• To consider the factors through which SENCOs contribute to teachers’ skills of dealing with students who have SEN and the perceived success of such skills
• To identify which elements (interventions, resources, training, etc) most impact the success of SENCO–teacher interactions

6. Research Sampling and Methodology
Phase One
Purposive, cross-sectional survey of about 200 -220 SENCOs on the Post Graduate Certificate in SEN Coordination Course

Phase Two
Data collection through semi-structured interviews of about 40 SENCOs from two Local Authorities

Phase Two
Selection of 3 schools, each with minimum 10 teachers who teach at least 1 student with SEN. Data collection through semi-structured interviews of SENCOs and teachers and headteachers; and document scrutiny of the work of students with SEN

7. Future Considerations
Research outcomes will inform the nature of support mechanisms for SENCOs, teachers and headteachers, who will be able to utilise the findings to facilitate effective initiatives and exchanges which meet the needs of children with SEN.

8. Acknowledgements
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