

A Case Study of Harmony Third Edition Across Four Districts

Appendix: Case Study Methods

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Contents

Overview	3
Methods	3
Analytic Approach	5
References	5



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Overview

As part of the Harmony Third Edition development process, Harmony Academy partnered with four districts—two midsize districts in the Midwest (Iowa and Wisconsin), one midsize district in the South (Texas), and one midsize district in the Southwest (Arizona)—to receive early access to the refreshed Everyday Practices (Meet Up and Buddy Up) and to

Units 3 and 4 of the Units, Lessons, & Activities, and Storybooks. Educators received two district-specific trainings—January 2022 focused on the refreshed Everyday Practices, and February/March 2022 focused on the Units, Lessons, & Activities. Educators had opportunities across five months (January through May 2022) to pilot the Third Edition.

¹ This report is a series of papers that provide critical insights into how Harmony Third Edition has been used across four districts. The series of papers includes: (1) Executive Summary, (2) Getting Started with Harmony, (3) Student Outcomes, (4) Everyday Practices—Meet Up and Buddy Up, (5) Units, Lessons, & Activities, (6) Storybooks, and (7) Appendix. We want to thank the educators, students, and district leaders who participated in piloting Harmony Third Edition, as well as the Harmony staff and partners who worked on supporting the refresh of the program.

Methods

Participants. Harmony Academy partnered with 3–6 schools per district, for a total of 17 schools and 88 educator volunteers for the case study. We were able to obtain demographic information from those that completed the surveys. Of the educators who completed all parts of the survey (n=61), 57 were teachers in pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6 and four were educators in other roles (e.g., administrator, positive behavioral intervention specialist, SEL coordinator, or a special education teacher in K–5) (see Figure 1). In addition, 39 educators had more than 10 years of experience, and 23 educators had 1–9 years of experience. Their experiences with SEL-professional learning varied as well; for example, 24 educators had 21 or more hours but 18 had only 3–5 hours.

Focus groups. The educators were invited to participate in a 60-minute focus group conducted via Zoom and a survey through SurveyMonkey to share their experiences using Harmony Third Edition and

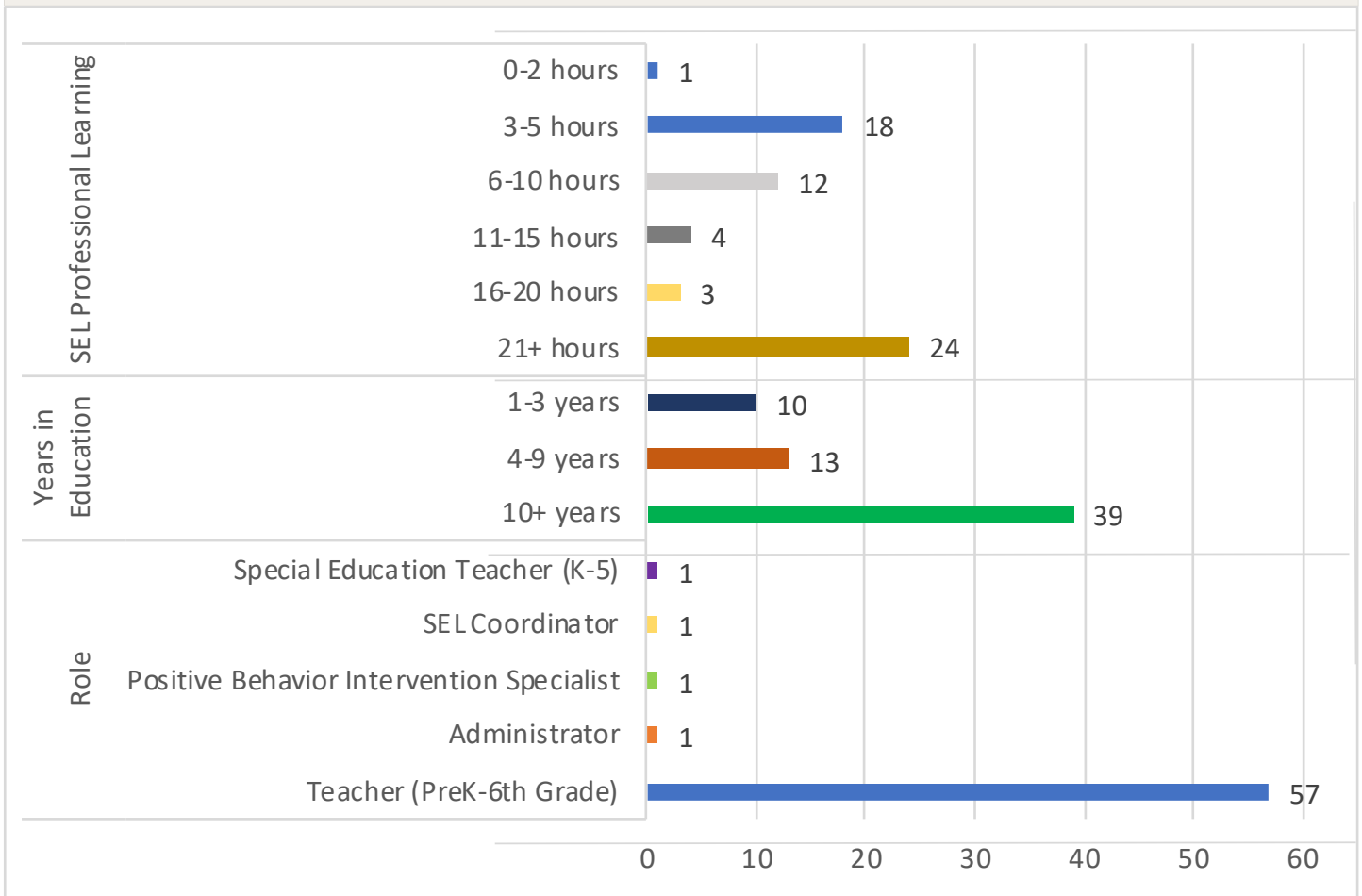
how their students' SEL needs were met. Between April 8 and May 12, 2022, 56 educators volunteered to share their experiences with the Harmony Academy research team in focus groups that were offered for each district. Our questions focused on the educators' overall impressions of Harmony Third Edition, how they used Harmony Third Edition with their students, what did implementation look like, any suggestions for improving Harmony Third Edition, and any feedback they had regarding the professional learning they were offered. The educators who participated in the focus groups included pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6 teachers, a positive behavioral intervention specialist, a special education teacher (K–5), and an SEL coordinator.

Surveys. The survey window was between April 18 and June 15, 2022, and 63 educators participated. Survey questions focused on general reactions to Harmony Third Edition; educator ratings of the overall goals of the program; educators' experiences using

specific aspects of Harmony Third Edition (e.g., Everyday Practices, Units, Lessons, & Activities, and Storybooks); educators’ views on academic integration and the educator SEL addition; student outcomes; and projections of educators’ implementation of Harmony Third Edition in the following school year. Finally, the survey invited educators to respond to open-ended questions that focused on what aspects of Harmony Third Edition most or least influenced their

instructional procedures, what are some additional supports they might need, and their suggestions for improving Harmony Third Edition. There was a section of the survey that asked the educators for demographic information, including: their role, grade(s) they teach, their years of experience in education, and previous SEL professional learning experiences. (see Figure 1 for educator demographic information).

Figure 1. Educators’ Demographics



Analytic Approach

Focus groups. Focus group transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 12 through an inductive thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) that relied on open coding methods to derive themes and patterns based on research questions 1–4. After generating initial codes, we recoded the transcripts and modified and developed new codes. Following, we examined how to group codes based on themes. Finally, we identified exemplars from the transcripts to best illustrate the themes related to the educators’ use and overall perceptions of Harmony Third Edition and provided additional support to the quantitative findings elucidated from the survey. The themes help guide our approach to disseminating the results of this multi-chapter case study.

Surveys. Survey data were analyzed using SPSS for research questions 1–4 primarily through a descriptive

research lens to identify patterns in the educators’ experiences with and attitudes toward Harmony Third Edition. We then extrapolated and generalized our findings based on the overall responses to the survey. For research questions 3 and 4, we conducted correlations to understand if there were specific aspects of Harmony Third Edition that correlated with educators’ perception of student outcomes; followed by to what extent perceiving Harmony Third Edition as trauma-informed and culturally responsive correlated with specific social and emotional competencies; and finally, we correlated multiple aspects of the Harmony Curriculum with educator excitement. We advise caution when interpreting the results given the low sample size. Of note, there was little variation among the survey respondents and educators reported toward the ceilings in several areas.

References

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 297–298.