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Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching in an Inclusive Classroom

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MA, Gwynedd-Mercy, 2004

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Classroom teachers often experience feelings of ineffectiveness and struggle to meet the needs of students in the inclusion classroom setting within the local school district. Guided by Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in the inclusive classroom. Semistructured interviews with a purposeful sample of 7 elementary inclusion teachers (3 general education teachers; 4 special education teachers) from the local district were conducted. Data analysis using open and axial coding revealed 7 emergent themes: (a) need for inclusion-specific professional development and training on differentiated instruction, (b) challenges due to large inclusion class size, (c) resources and support, (d) integration of small group instruction in the inclusion setting, (e) how teachers' experiences changed their perceptions of and practices within inclusion classrooms, (f) importance of teacher preparedness and pre-service training for inclusion, and (g) teachers' long-standing perception of low self-efficacy and lack of confidence with respect to inclusion. Results were consistent across general and special education teachers indicating that their experiences and needs for support were similar. Based on these findings, an interactive professional development program pertaining to the unique nature of delivering inclusive education and recommendations for addressing challenges was created. Implications for positive social change include helping to create an education environment in which inclusion teachers are better supported and prepared to provide services to all students in the inclusive education setting, thereby influencing students' functioning and achievement in a profound, positive manner over time.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my father and mother. They always made sure we had what we needed to be successful. They were our biggest and loudest cheerleaders. My parents made sure my siblings and I graduated from college. Since I can remember, they always said to us, “No one can take your education.” Although my father is no longer with us, I can still hear him say this to me anytime I felt like giving up.

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Section 1: The Problem

Federal mandates, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, which is a reauthorization of the Education of Handicapped Children Act (1975), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002), and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) have led to an increase of inclusion classrooms (Pierson & Howell, 2013). According to IDEA (2004), students with disabilities are to receive instruction in the least restrictive environment with the necessary supports and services. Hence, special education and general education teachers must be knowledgeable in research-based strategies, resources, and differentiated instruction to teach students with and without learning disabilities in an inclusive classroom (Allday, Gatti-Neilsen, & Hudson, 2013).

At an urban elementary school in a northeastern state of the United States, students with disabilities in Grades 3–5 underperformed on the State System of School Assessment, the state's annual standardized assessment. Students that scored in the below basic and basic range were deemed as underperformers. The school had a special education subgroup, which means at least 40 students had the same classification, in this case, more than 40 students had a disability.

The Local Problem

During the 2016–2017 academic session at the elementary school, about 219 students took the state assessment in third through fifth grades. About 13% of the students had disabilities that took the English section. About 94% of students assessed were African Americans who were considered socially and economically disadvantaged. According to the state department of education in 2017, on average, 90% of students with

disabilities attended school daily. There was a significant difference between the study site's goal and the state's goal for special education students' state assessment mathematics scores. At the study site school, 0% of students with disabilities in Grades 3 through 5 were proficient or advanced in mathematics and English.

The school district distributes an annual school progress report (SPR). The majority of the points can be earned in the following categories (following each category are the percentage points out of 100% the school earned): (a) achievement, 19%; (b) progress, 8%; and (c) climate, 46%. The SPR is divided into four tiers: (a) the lowest tier is intervene (0%–24%), (b) watch (25%–49%), (c) reinforce (50%–74%), and (d) the highest tier is model (75%–100%). According to the district's SPR in 2017, this elementary school was in the lowest achievement tier of intervention.

Rationale

According to the state department, students with disabilities at the elementary school level largely performed poorly on the state's reading and mathematics assessment, resulting in the school not meeting the state's goals. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem. The problem examined in this study was teachers' perceived inability to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. Teachers' ability to effectively engage in an inclusive classroom is influenced by the breadth and depth of student's needs and multiple factors related to the teachers' formal education, professional development, hands-on experience, and perceptions of personal confidence exhibited in the inclusion setting. A reading specialist and a teacher in the

district explained how students reading levels in a fifth-grade inclusive classroom could range from prekindergarten to seventh grade and that she does not know how to effectively teach all her students how to read. She also expressed her frustration with trying to teach mathematics and reading to all students.

According to an elementary administrator, teachers did not have appropriate materials for teaching in an inclusive classroom, such as books on different materials and computers so students could have access to evidence-based software and manipulatives, or did the teachers have thorough curriculum training that focused on inclusive practices. Another elementary administrator added that she believes that there are not enough teachers at the school to employ an effective coteacher model. Both elementary administrators noted that currently the study site district only focuses on reading as opposed to all content areas and there is no specific language, goals, or training focused on how to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom.

Although the district's focus was on reading, both students with disabilities and general education students underperformed in reading on the state assessment. Students with disabilities and general education students also underperformed on the mathematics state assessment. Since students are tested in both mathematics and reading on the state assessment, there is a necessity for the district to focus on both.

According to the network special education director, special and general education teachers expressed frustration and a lack of knowledge in differentiating reading and mathematics lessons for students whose instructional levels can range from kindergarten to seventh grade in a fifth grade inclusive classroom. To that end, the

purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem.

Definition of Terms

Differentiation: An instructional strategy used by a teacher to provide multiple ways for students to comprehend the content, process, and products dependent upon the student's previous knowledge, ability, language, preferred interests, and learning (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014).

Inclusion: Students with disabilities are taught, alongside their general education peers in the least restrictive environment (Morningstar, Shogren, Lee, & Born, 2015).

Students with learning disabilities: Students who are identified as having a disability and need special education programming and services (IDEA, 2004).

Teacher's self-efficacy: The level of confidence a teacher has in their ability to obtain the expected results regardless of the student's skill, behavior, or motivation (Bandura, Freeman, & Lightsey, 1999).

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because the participating school did not meet the state's goals on the standardized assessments in reading and mathematics for students with learning disabilities. These students were taught in inclusive classrooms, and Gaines and Barnes (2017) found that many teachers feel unprepared to teach students with disabilities alongside those without disabilities. The problem under study was teachers' perceived inability to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. The data from this study could provide the school district insight on teachers' inability to

meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom (see Gaines & Barnes, 2017). An examination of teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy for teaching students with disabilities could help the district understand areas of instructional weaknesses.

In this study, teachers also had an opportunity to share their opinions about their preparedness to teach in an inclusive classroom. Research has shown the importance of inclusive preparation because most teachers, both general and special education teachers, are unprepared to teach in inclusive classrooms (Zhang, Wang, Losinski, & Katsiyannis, 2014). Jenset, Klette, and Hammerness (2018) explained preservice teachers should not be restricted to intern at only schools for their field experiences.

Carrington, Mercer, Iyer, and Selva (2015) investigated how a critical service-learning program could influence preservice teachers' instructional and social-emotional teaching techniques for all students in an inclusive classroom. In their study, the participants' experiences went beyond mandated special education courses that usually focus on theory and pedagogy. Their participants explained an atypical field experience of critical service-learning program interning; they were interns at a homeless shelter, homework club for refugee students, rehabilitation centers for the elderly and people with brain injuries, which increased their respect, empathy, and ethic of care for others. The participants believed these experiences equipped them with skills to teach an inclusive classroom and embrace diversity (Carrington et al., 2015).

Preservice programs should be structured to allow preservice teachers the opportunity to be reflective practitioners on their inclusive practices and challenge their beliefs about certain students (Carrington et al., 2015). In addition, preservice programs

should consider restructuring their programs with a focus on learning grounded in practice (Jenset et al., 2018). Jenset et al. (2018) examined preservice programs around the world, in Finland, Norway, and California, to try to understand the gap between theory and practice as well as the challenges and benefits of focusing on more practice in preservice programs. Preservice programs with a focus on teacher practice can increase teachers' competency and retention (Jenset et al., 2018). Lastly and just as importantly, preservice programs should create and mandate preservice teachers take courses that focus on differentiation. Brigandi, Gilson, and Miller (2019) explained that differentiation allows teachers to meet the needs of all students. Because students come from various backgrounds, teachers should be equipped with several differentiation techniques.

Teachers' perceptions influence their instructional practices (Gaines & Barnes, 2017). Therefore, the findings of this study could equip the school administrator with the knowledge to adopt appropriate professional development (PD) sessions and trainings. In turn, the school administrator can possibly increase the confidence of all teachers who teach in inclusive classrooms by providing them with evidence-based inclusive practices. Subsequently, teachers can improve the learning and achievement of all students. Students with learning disabilities can not only be included in all general education classrooms but can receive higher quality instruction in the inclusive setting. Improving teachers' inclusive instructional practices may lead to an increase in test scores for students with disabilities (McMaster, 2013).

In fact, inclusion should mean all factors should be considered and addressed that contribute to student learning, such as love, safety, the school's facilities, the school's neighborhood, parents, nonprejudiced settings, healthy food options, and a safe environment (Farooq & Rafiq, 2019). In essence, students' social-emotional and academic needs should be met (Farooq & Rafiq, 2019). Students who attend successful, inclusive schools are more likely to come to school, love school, and have positive relationships with their peers regardless of whether they are classified as general education or a student with a disability (Young et al., 2019).

Research Questions

Teachers' perceived inability to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom has a significant influence on their ability to teach, the children's academic success, and the institution's perceived preparedness (Hamman, Lectenberger, Griffin-Shirley, & Zhou, 2013). Ricci and Fingon (2017) reported that teachers are not prepared to address a number of factors that contribute to student learning, especially planning for and teaching students with disabilities. The problem under study was teachers' perceived inability to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. Teachers' ability to effectively engage in an inclusive classroom is influenced by the breadth and depth of student needs and multiple factors related to the teachers, including their formal education, professional development, hands-on experience, and perceptions of personal confidence in the inclusion setting. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem.

To comply with federal mandates, students with learning disabilities are to receive special education and related services in the least restrictive environment, which now means students with disabilities are taught in general education classrooms (ESSA, 2015; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001). In this qualitative study, I examined preservice training and its influence on teachers' confidence and ability to engage all students in an inclusive classroom. The two central research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1: What are the general education teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive setting?

RQ2: What are the special education teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive setting?

Review of the Literature

I used several databases, including SAGE, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and ERIC, to gather information from peer-reviewed journals and dissertations for this literature review. The following keywords were used: *inclusion, inclusive classrooms, self-efficacy, special and general education, learning disabilities, teachers' preservice programs, education acts, differentiated instruction,* and *collaborative teaching*. The selection of articles used as sources in this study was based on beliefs, perceptions, and self-efficacy of both special and general education teachers when teaching in an inclusive classroom.

Conceptual Framework

I used Bandura's theory of self-efficacy as the conceptual framework for this study. According to Bandura et al. (1999), self-efficacy is not innate; in fact, self-

efficacy can be created, changed, and improved. Bandura (1999) maintained there are four ways a person can develop self-efficacy. First, through a notion that success breeds success, which Bandura et al. described as a mastery experience. In other words, the more success a person has with completing tasks, the more their self-efficacy increases. Second, it can be developed through an individual having a vicarious experience of seeing someone else that is similar to them that is successful, makes the individual believe they can successfully complete the task. Third, social persuasion occurs when a person is verbally encouraged to complete a task. Finally, physiological and emotional states where a person is able to minimize their stress level and their emotional reaction to situations (Bandura et al., 1999).

A person's efficacy can determine what they choose as a career, their effort, and the amount of time they will spend on stressful tasks (Bandura et al., 1977). Bandura et al. (1977) maintained that a person's beliefs are a predictor of their effort or goals, not past experiences. Perceived self-efficacy is an individual's belief that they can successfully complete a task (Bandura et al., 1977). A person with high self-efficacy is not discouraged when confronted with a difficult task, even if the individual is not successful, so failure does not have a long-term effect; with regard to personal health, people with high self-efficacy are less likely to suffer from depression or stress (Bandura et al., 1977).

Bandura extended this theory to include teacher's self-efficacy. Bandura et al. (1999) defined teachers' efficacy as the teacher's belief that they can get students to learn desired objectives regardless of whether the student has disabilities. Zhang, Wang,

Stegall, Losinki, and Katsiyannis (2017) created a survey scale, the Teaching Students with Disabilities Survey Scale, which they used to evaluate teachers' efficacy with teaching students with disabilities. The survey considerably predicted student teachers' desire to teach students with disabilities. The researchers highlighted the importance of engaging, both general and special education teachers, with high self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities due to the discussed education acts that included inclusive mandates. When teaching students with disabilities, the instructional practices of teachers with low self-efficacy are limited compared to teachers with high self-efficacy (Zhang et al., 2017). Carney, Brendefur, Thiede, Hughes, and Sutton (2016) investigated a state that required K-12 mathematics PD, looking at data from 4,000 teachers concerning their knowledge, self-efficacy, and beliefs. Carney et al. found that teachers with high self-efficacy were more likely to implement and stick with new school initiatives.

The relationship between self-efficacy and self-confidence. There is a tension between self-confidence and self-efficacy, and the tension lies in an individual's belief in their capacity (Bandura et al., 1999). Self-confidence and self-efficacy are interrelated; the link between the two stems from belief (Bandura et al., 1999). Whether an individual believes in their skills, talents, and abilities is what gives them confidence (Maclellan, 2014). Carrying out that belief and successfully applying it to the achievement of a set of goals and certain behaviors that a person has set for themselves is self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 1999). Individuals with high self-confidence are more likely to amend their goals as opposed to lowering their confidence by aborting their goals (Bandura et al., 1999).

Similarly, Bandura et al. (1977) noted that people with high self-efficacy are persistent and do not give up when faced with a challenging task. In this study, I looked at how teachers' self-confidence influences their self-efficacy concerning teaching students in an inclusive classroom and explored self-efficacy in greater detail to gain a better understanding of how teachers' beliefs influence their ability to meet the needs of all students.

Acts that shaped special education. In the early 1970s, a small number of students with disabilities attended public schools. In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 was enacted, that led to a large number of students with disabilities attending public schools (Muller, 2015). Mueller (2015) explained that EAHCA in 1975 was the first special education act that was created by parents and organizations through lawsuits. This act permitted all students with physical and mental disabilities that attended a public school should have the same access to the curriculum as their general education peers and receive a free lunch. The EAHCA was amended to the IDEA (Mueller, 2015). Although, the IDEA has been changed four times, the purpose of IDEA has always been to ensure that students with disabilities have a free and appropriate education (Muller, 2015). According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, IDEA requires that students with disabilities have equal access to the same curriculum as their general education peers. Subsequently, students with disabilities should learn in the least restrictive environment. IDEA was also developed to ensure that services should be provided to students with disabilities in their general education classrooms. Therefore,

one of the principles of IDEA is free, appropriate public education. Lastly, another principle was students and parents were included in the decision-making process (IDEA, 2004).

In 2004, IDEA was amended to enhance federal mandates to increase local and state accountability when educating students with disabilities. The IDEA (2004) amendments enabled local and state administrators to increase their approaches (e.g., the response to intervention (RTI) framework to identify students with certain disabilities). RTI is also a process for students that struggle academically or have behavior problems who are given research-based interventions and their progress is monitored (IDEA, 2004). The students' interventions are adjusted based on their responses to given tasks and questions (IDEA, 2004). Students with learning disabilities can be identified through the RTI framework.

No Child Left Behind Act (2002) and Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). There have been several federal mandates that have led to the development of other special education laws. Davidson, Reback, Rockoff, and Schwartz (2015) explained that the NCLB Act was a renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Act that was authorized in 1965. The NCLB Act was different from the Elementary and Secondary Act in that the amount of Title I funds allocated was determined based on students' performance and states were allowed to set proficiency scores while selecting or creating the standardized test to be given to determine proficiency (Davidson et al., 2015).

The NCLB Act (2002) was developed to ensure that all students meet academic standards. Students with disabilities were noted as a subgroup of students that required

special attention. The national data revealed that these students usually lagged behind their general education peers; consequently, this led to an achievement gap (NCLB Act, 2002). According to Van Gronigen and Meyers (2017), the NCLB Act requires that every school must meet the same targets regardless of whether the school was categorized as a low or high performing school. All students had to be proficient in reading and mathematics on their state assessments (Van Gronigen & Meyers, 2017). Congress set several targets; one of them was every student had to be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014 (NCLB Act, 2002).

Not all legislation has been the same or achieved the same results. According to Russell and Bray (2013), contradictions were found in the NCLB Act and IDEA related to the language used that leaves room for interpretation by the readers (e.g., educators). Russell and Bray found that the interpretations of both acts determined how educators effectively implemented aspects of the acts. There are notable differences between NCLB Act and IDEA (e.g., the focus of the NCLB Act is on improving all the students' achievements by having all students meet predetermined levels, while the focus of IDEA is on students with disabilities receiving a mandated free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment; Russell & Bray, 2013).

Van Gronigen and Meyers (2017) examined what each state did to improve achievement and found that most schools hired support and paid for additional resources supplied by external providers to enhance their low-performing students. Van Gronigen and Meyers also examined the effects that the NCLB Act had on the ESSA. President Obama replaced the NCLB Act in 2015 with the ESSA, expanding some components and

easing others of the NCLB Act (see ESSA, 2015). The significant differences were that the ESSA did not rely solely on standardized assessment scores to determine student success and that schools had more autonomy (VanGroningen & Meyers, 2017). Both the NCLB Act and ESSA were developed to ensure that the typically underserved populations, such as students with disabilities, students in poverty, racial minorities, and students with limited English language skills, receive the same education as their peers (ESSA, 2015). Under ESSA (2015), each state had to create and get approval of a plan that showed how they would use federal funds to ensure impartiality and transparency. The plan should have a system of accountability and academic goals, identify schools that needed to show gains, provide technical support for those schools, and hold some type of annual testing. As previously mentioned, student groups that are typically underserved and underperform should have equal access to the same educational opportunities as their other peers. Students' data about their academic and other measures should be collected and shared with their families and communities. Parents are required to be a part of the accountability process for all schools (ESSA, 2015).

Inclusion

Inclusion is an educational practice that supports students with and without learning disabilities to learn alongside one another in a general education classroom (Pierson & Howell, 2013). Inclusion is a practice where students should not be taught separately based on their learning needs, and adaptations to instructional strategies should occur so that all students can learn simultaneously (Alquraini, 2013). Barth, Florescu, and Ciobanu (2019) found Romanian teachers' attitude towards students with disabilities

was influenced based on the number of students with disabilities in their classroom. Barth et al. cautioned inclusion education is more than students with disabilities learning with their general education peers in a general education classroom, it is taking away the challenges that have prohibited students with disabilities from having equal access to the same curriculum, materials, and social resources as their general education peers. Inclusion affords all students equal access to their curriculum and other necessary resources (Farooq & Rafiq, 2019).

Morningstar et al. (2015) conducted a descriptive study at six schools that had inclusive classrooms and maintained that in order for special education students with disabilities to be enrolled in an inclusive classroom, the assumption is that they can be taught and learn in a general education classroom. Kurth, Morningstar, and Kozleski (2014) examined the least restrictive environments in the states and U.S. territory schools and discussed the placement of students with disabilities in the most restrictive settings. Kurth et al. highlighted research that says students with mild learning disabilities can be successful in effective inclusive classrooms. Young, de Lugt, Penney, and Specht are editors of the journal, *Exceptionality Education International*, and in a 2019 article, addressed changes to policies and practices regarding inclusion and the changes made to the journal as a result. Young et al. pointed to research noting there are no disadvantages for general education students learning in inclusive classrooms. In other words, general education students' social and academic growth are not hindered by students with disabilities being their class.

Researchers have found several factors that contribute to successful inclusive environments. McLeskey, Waldron, and Redd (2014) noted the importance of adhering to the federal mandate to include students with disabilities, when possible, in general education classrooms. McLeskey et al. found several positive characteristic of inclusive classrooms, including the classrooms were friendly environments, all the teachers knew that teaching students with disabilities and improving all students' achievement was everyone's responsibility as wasmonitoring all the students' progress, and the teachers used differentiated evidence-based strategies and resources that were readily available. Reis and Renzulli (2015) cautioned differentiated instruction is most effective when teachers assess students' abilities before teaching a new concept or topic so they can plan accordingly based on the students' abilities and interests. Allday et al. (2013) concurred and noted that teachers who understand how to use various instructional strategies to meet all learners' needs had successful inclusive classrooms.

In conclusion, there are multiple benefits of inclusive settings. In their study of students with and without disabilities in an inclusive classroom, Shogren et al. (2015) revealed that the students having a sense of belonging, the benefits of inclusion, and positive teacher practices made their school successful. More than 90% of the preservice teachers stated that inclusion created positive peer interactions, and students with disabilities could meet academic standards with support (McHatton & Parker, 2013). Effective inclusive practices can enhance a school's culture; the basis of inclusion is the acceptance of students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles and needs (Barth et al., 2019). As a result of learning in an inclusive classroom, students without disabilities

stated that they learned to develop relationships with peers who are different and gained a greater understanding of people with disabilities and their educational journeys (Shogren et al., 2015).

Benefits of inclusion. Federal mandates (e.g., IDEA, NCLB, and ESSA) have led to an increase in inclusive classrooms (Pierson & Howell, 2013). Conversely, before IDEA students with disabilities were separated from their general education peers, this structure was considered a restrictive environment (IDEA, 2004). Ricci and Fingon (2017) noted the reauthorized IDEA Act of 2004 as the act that pushed inclusion to the forefront to ensure students with disabilities are not segregated to learn in a self-contained special education classroom. Inclusive classrooms offer a more positive learning setting than self-contained special education classrooms (Young et al., 2019).

Bemiller (2019) examined via a commissioned assessment, a set of teachers from two elementary schools understanding and perception of inclusion and training available for the teachers of students with disabilities. Bemiller explained that because of acts such as, IDEA (2004), students with disabilities are no longer segregated to a special education classroom to receive their instruction. Special education teachers were responsible for delivering instruction to students with disabilities; likewise, general education teachers were accountable for general education students in separate classrooms.

In years past, special education was thought to be a placement, whereas, in reality, it is a process and services are provided to students with disabilities via their individual education plan (IEP; Rotter, 2014). An IEP is a legal document comprised of the student's disability, current academic achievement levels, functional performance,

services that will be provided by the school, assessments that will be used to assess learning, educational or behavioral goals, accommodations, and student and parental input. Also, an explanation is required about how the student's disability will affect the student's ability to access the general curriculum (Marx et al., 2014). Those above are all considered when determining the student's least restrictive environment (Marx et al., 2014). An IEP is the most crucial document under IDEA since it is a legal document, it can be viewed as the blueprint for students with disabilities to receive their mandated free appropriate education (Rotter, 2014). An IEP is a requirement for all students with disabilities under IDEA, which means students with disabilities have an individualized plan, so students learn at their present level. Conversely, NCLB Act targets were based on standardized tests that were given on student's grade level regardless of whether the student has an IEP (Russell & Bray, 2013). According to Russell and Bray (2013) neither document mandates that students with disabilities be placed in the least restrictive environment. The least restrictive environment is considered to be the general education classroom where students with disabilities are allowed to learn, as well as receive their needed services (Marx et al., 2014). Inclusive learning environments were designed to improve student achievement for both students with disabilities and general education students because both groups of students are allowed to work together via heterogeneous grouping (Bemiller, 2019). Cameron and Cook (2013) researched general education teachers' goals and expectations for their included students with mild and severe disabilities and discovered that general education teachers believed that students with mild learning disabilities would make academic growth. Cameron and Cook explained

mixed grouping provided the opportunity for high-performing students to assess and evaluate their knowledge by assisting students with disabilities students with disabilities c learned from and interacted with their general education peers. Shogren et al., (2015) added students with disabilities explained that they like learning alongside their peers; they felt like they are missed things when they were assigned to a self-contained special education classroom.

General education teachers in Cameron and Cook's (2013) study set goals for their students that included being socially accepted by their peers so that students could learn about and accept differences amongst them. Cosier, Theoharis-Causton, and Theoharis (2013) researched the amount of time elementary special education students spent in general education and their standardized assessment scores in reading and mathematics. The researchers found that students with disabilities who had access to the general education curriculum had slightly higher mathematics and reading standardized test results for each hour spent in general education classes than their peers who did not have such access. Kurth, Lyon, and Shogren (2015) examined inclusive social and academic practices at six elementary schools. Kurth et al. argued that inclusive settings are beneficial for both students with mild and severe learning disabilities. Similarly, Kurth et al. maintained inclusive settings can improve learning for both general education and students with disabilities.

Inclusion is an approach that honors the abilities of all students (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Woodcock and Hardy (2017) sought to understand how 120 Canadian teachers defined inclusion and whether they believed inclusive practices benefitted all

students. The researchers revealed 85% of their participants had a positive attitude about inclusion, and 92% positively felt inclusive settings befitted all students. The traditional approach was self-contained special education classrooms, which fed the belief that students with disabilities are not normal (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Pierson and Howell (2013) added that the high school students that participated in their study preferred learning in inclusive classrooms because they had access to the same curriculum as their peers. In addition, the high school students noted they did not feel different because the co-teacher assisted all the students; therefore, no one was aware of their mild-to-moderate learning disabilities.

Barriers to inclusion. There are several possible reasons why most schools do not have successful inclusive classrooms. McCall, McHatton, and Shealey (2014) reviewed research over a 13-year span on special education teachers' preservice programs and these three components; core knowledge, dispositions, and applied experiences. Historically preservice training for special education teachers was conducted with the belief that teachers will work individually in their classroom. However, after the implementation of the federal mandates mentioned, special education teachers are now placed in the role of co-teachers, support facilitator, or an intervention specialist (McCall et al., 2014). Woodcock and Hardy (2017) added and highlighted a lack of defined structure of how to create successful classrooms and schools as a challenge.

Other possible reasons are teachers are being asked to develop effective inclusion classrooms. However, teachers have different experiences, years of experience and

attended different preservice programs. Teachers, especially novice teachers tend to rely on how they were taught and what they learned in their preservice program (Bialka, Hansen, & Wong, 2019). Consequently, leading to inclusion classrooms to be ineffective and structured differently even at the same school (Bialka et al., 2019). In addition, teachers must know all students' academic levels and needs and know how to appropriately plan, as well select the appropriate instructional strategies to use meet the needs of all students in their classroom (Farooq & Rafiq, 2019).

Minimum preservice training on inclusive practices is also a barrier cited. McCall et al. (2014) stated there needs to be a shift in teachers' preservice programs and cited student achievement gaps as call to action to change teachers' preservice programs. A sample of Canadian teachers explained that they had minimal preservice training on how to alter lessons for students with disabilities and this negatively influenced their confidence with regard to teaching students with disabilities (McCrimmon, 2015). Sledge and Paley (2013) found a positive link between special education teachers and special education students' achievement, citing "preservice training, special education course hours, a special education degree and certification in special education" as particularly significant (p. 241). Presently, most general education teacher preservice programs offer only one course on diversity and inclusive practices (Allday et al., 2013). Reis and Renzulli (2015) stated most teachers want to meet the needs of all of their students; they are not prepared or supported enough to adapt the curriculum daily. Plus, teachers need ample training on how to employ differentiated practices, which is not frequently offered in preservice programs for general education preservice teachers

(Bondie et al., 2019). Reis and Renzulli listed lack of time, managing differentiation, state assessments, administration support, organization structure, and a large number of objectives to teach as other barriers to developing successful inclusion classrooms. Farooq and Rafiq (2019) added lack of needed resources have a negative effect on student learning.

Zagona et al. (2017) conducted a mixed-method study to gain an understanding of experience and method used to teach students in an inclusive classroom. The study yielded results that support the notion that there is a necessity for general and special education teachers to be adequately prepared while taking university education courses. Pugach and Blanton (2012) suggested that preservice programs should have a collaborative structure, meaning general and special education teachers would learn together. Thus, both the general and special education teachers would graduate from the preservice program with dual certificates, and as a result, both the general and special education teachers would be prepared to teach general students and those with disabilities (Pugach & Blanton, 2012). Both general and special education teachers need the same preparation in preservice programs to teach in an inclusive classroom (Zagona et al., 2017).

PD is essential for changing teaching practices. Patton, Parker, and Tannehill (2015) explained that PD is needed to bring about changes in teaching practices. Sun, Penuel, Frank, Gallagher, and Youngs (2013) pointed out most PD is a 1 day event, consequently this approach does not lead to change because PD should be continuous. Most school districts do not plan PD sessions based on individual teachers' needs (Sledge

& Paley, 2013). Time should be allocated for teachers to have group discussions with their colleagues and examine student work during PD training, in lieu of a lecture format (Sun et al., 2013). The chances of a special education teacher actually implementing new strategies learned during PD training was dependent on the amount of time they were allocated to plan lessons (Bettini, Crockett, Brownell, & Merrill, 2016). A lack of planning time affects special education teachers' ability to plan lessons that are specially designed for each student. Bettini et al. (2016) explained that special education teachers reported that the majority of their planning time was spent completing and updating mandated documents.

Teacher's self-efficacy is the educator's belief in their ability to foster student learning and achievement (Dixon et al., 2014). Dixon et al. (2014)]explained Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy as "an assessment of one's capabilities to attain the desired level of performance in a given endeavor" (p. 115). A teacher's self-efficacy influences their willingness to try new strategies, use various materials and also affect their commitment to their profession (Senler, 2016). Lomabardo-Graves (2017) concurred and added a teacher's self-efficacy can be a predictor of whether they employ certain practices or interventions and their expectations of their student's work. Teachers are less likely to spend time teaching content they are proficient at teaching (Cameron & Cook, 2013). Zhang et al. (2014) added that teaching efficacy is the confidence a teacher has in their ability to obtain the expected results regardless of the student's skill, behavior, or motivation. Teachers with high self-efficacy are dedicated and enthusiastic;

whereas, teachers with low self-efficacy are the opposite, which causes a barrier when implementing inclusive practices.

Elements of successful inclusive schools. Administrators at successful inclusive schools developed a culture among teachers in terms of playing a role in ensuring that students with disabilities do not perform poorly. Moreover, they are tasked with achieving the same high standards as their general education peers (Bettini et al., 2016). According to Pierson and Howell (2013), lack of administrative support and unfavorable school climate are key factors that influence a special education teacher's decision to leave the profession. McLeskey and Waldron (2015) conducted a review of other researchers' case studies that were about several schools where evidence-based inclusive practices were investigated.

According to McLeskey and Waldron (2015), an administrator is essential in developing and maintaining an effective inclusive school. Principals should create a positive school culture. As mentioned, inclusion is more than placing general education students and students with disabilities in the same classroom. An effective inclusion classroom is facilitated by a teacher that creates a safe and nurturing environment for all students (Bialka, Hansen, & Wong, 2019). Positive school culture is essential to the promotion of the learning of all the students because approximately 70% of general education teachers do not believe that they are prepared to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015). The school administrator is responsible for ensuring collaboration between teachers and staff (Martin et al., 2019). In

addition, school administrators are tasked with establishing PD that aligns with the district and school initiatives and goals, as well as state and federal initiatives.

Administrators can influence the special education program because they are responsible for ensuring that special and general education teachers engage in collective planning, as well as for selecting or delivering the teachers' PD sessions, and their daily classes and planning schedules (Bettini et al., 2016). Bondie et al. (2019) highlighted the role of a school administrator and how they can influence teachers' instructional practices. In fact, teachers are more likely to implement differentiated practices based on the support of the school administrator (Bondie et al., 2019). In addition, administrators who participated in McLeskey and Waldron's (2015) research explained that trust was essential for creating and maintaining a successful inclusive school. School leaders can establish trust by listening to staff members, being fair, and delegating leadership.

Although inclusion can be a difficult process to implement in schools, it is a worthwhile undertaking that can lead to positive results. Pierson and Howell (2013) found that the two suburban high schools that participated in their study achieved success with inclusion because the administrators did more than mandate inclusive practices. School-wide systems were implemented, and the staff and administrators received training and support prior to developing inclusive classrooms. The staff members who taught inclusive classes had access to ongoing training and support (Pierson & Howell, 2013).

Administrators who are responsible for inclusive classrooms should choose appropriate coteachers, provide PD on differentiation, examine coplanning time, and

ensure that all the stakeholders are familiar with the focus of the school (Pierson & Howell, 2013). Coteaching can be beneficial for students in an inclusive classroom because the students will have two teachers with expertise in numerous areas. Nevertheless, before implementing a coteaching model, an administrator should consider whether the teachers are suited to work and plan together, as well as have PD sessions tailored to their needs (Shepherd et al., 2016).

Teachers' perceptions about inclusive practices. Just as administrators, teachers' perceptions have an influence on the development of effective inclusive classroom, and how it is maintained. Farooq and Rafiq (2019) examined the effects of 120 Pakistan teachers' perception on inclusive education, and the researchers identified factors associated with inclusive learning that influences student learning. Most of their experience participants who had more than five years of experience compared to novice teachers had a more supportive perspective of the benefits of inclusion. Everling (2013) investigated teachers' beliefs about the inclusion of special education in a general education classroom. Also, the supports needed to create an effective inclusive classroom was also investigated. General education teachers stated that students with disabilities should be taught in an inclusion classroom. However, they did not believe they could meet the needs of both the students with disabilities and general education students (Everling, 2013). Most general education teachers are confident in their ability to teach general courses; however, general education teachers lack the same confidence or self-efficacy to teach and work with students with disabilities (Everling, 2013).

Teachers' attitudes about inclusion influence teacher practices (Swain et al., 2012). Mosen, Ewing, and Kwoka (2014) found out that teachers' attitudes had a significant influence on how teachers supervised students and perceived support. McMaster (2013) examined recultured schools that use evidence-based inclusive practices from around the world. McMaster noted teachers' negative attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions as barriers militating against creating an effective inclusive classroom. Teachers with positive attitudes were more successful in inclusive classrooms because they were more likely to implement inclusive practices (Mosen et al., 2014). Swain et al. (2012) added teachers with a positive attitude towards inclusion, are more likely to adapt the curriculum, as well as their instructional practices. Also, students who were taught by teachers with positive attitudes described positive learning experiences and a nurturing inclusive environment. Adversely, teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusion students reported divided, nonnurturing environments (Mosen et al., 2014).

General and special education teachers who teach in inclusive classrooms are expected to use various evidence-based materials, best practices, and resources to accommodate all learning styles (Morningstar et al., 2015). However, Dixon et al. (2014) noted that educators who lack high self-efficacy will not make the necessary instructional adjustments. Allday et al. (2013) underscored the importance of high self-efficacy. Allday et al. explained that in order to accommodate the needs of all the students, teachers should be creative and knowledgeable about instructional methods used to teach students, and possess high self-efficacy and a positive attitude towards students with disabilities.

The Influence of Preservice Training on Self-Efficacy

Preservice programs have been shown to have an influence on teachers' practices and beliefs. Ricci and Fingon (2017) studied the experiences of two college professors at a large Southern California university that modeled coteaching and collaboration practices. Ricci and Fingon referred to the increase of students with disabilities learning in general education classrooms as a factor for examining how teachers are being prepared. Dalinger, Thomas, Stansberry, and Xiu's (2020) examined the effect of mixed reality simulations as part of their preservice program and whether it had an influence on preservice teachers' learning, confidence, and in-person field experiences noted several nonbeneficial components associated with traditional preservice programs. Preservice teachers are not afforded the opportunity to practice their instructional practices until they become student teachers, which usually does not occur until the last year of their preservice program. Preservice teachers are usually bystanders during their field experiences and all field experiences are not equitable (Dalinger et al., 2020). However, there was a positive relationship between teachers who took university inclusive courses and their readiness and skills needed to teach in an inclusive classroom (Zagona et al., 2017). Lomabardo-Graves (2017) found there was not an instrument to measure preservice special education teachers' self-efficacy during their preservice program. Thus, Lomabardo-Graves developed an instrument, that was examined in this study. Teachers' self-efficacy influenced several factors such as motivation, confidence, resiliency, and instructional practices. Teachers with high self-efficacy believe they can meet the needs of any student.

Gehrke and Cocchiarella (2013) examined the importance of preservice coursework and teachers' ability to effectively teach an inclusive class effectively. He found out that preservice teachers believe that more field experience enhanced their instructional abilities, as opposed to the theoretical content that was taught during their preservice training. Preservice teachers' field experience is a way for preservice teachers to connect teaching and learning theories they learned in their required courses to real-life experiences. In other words, connecting theory and practice (Jenset et al., 2018). Nargo and deBettencourt (2017) reviewed the literature on special education teachers' field experiences. Nargo and deBettencourt highlighted several benefits of field experiences for special education preservice teachers: preservice teachers are allowed to connect theory to practical experiences, opportunities to practice and use effective evidence-based instructional techniques for students with both academic and behavioral disabilities, and become critical thinkers while dealing with real-life situations. Moreover, preservice teachers are allowed to learn other aspects of the teaching profession outside of practicing how to teach such as collaborating with different teachers and staff (Nargo & deBettencourt, 2017). Dalinger et al. (2020) offered preservice programs can be structured to promote self-reflection by requiring preservice teachers to do their field experiences before their mandated theory and pedagogy courses. Traditionally, teaching preservice programs require courses that are taught in isolation with no connection to the students' field experience (Dalinger et al., 2020).

Teachers with dual certifications in both elementary and special education feel more prepared to teach an inclusive class (Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2013). Preservice

special education teachers field experience can be completed in a general education classroom with students with disabilities or a self-contained special education classroom (Nargo & deBettencourt 2017). Hamman, Lechtenberger, Griffin-Shirley, and Zhou (2013) highlighted the importance of effective training. Both general education and special education teachers are being tasked with planning and teaching students with not only disabilities but a number of other factors that influence students' learning such as poverty, English Language Learners, they lack access to equitable resources, and have minimum training of how to address all of these factors (Ricci & Fingon 2017).

Hamman et al. (2013) study examined general education preservice training, practicum, and cooperating teachers' relationships affect teacher candidates' efficacy. The researchers explained that teachers with appropriate training were found to have high self-efficacy. Able, Sreckovic, Schultz, Garwood, and Sherman (2015) underscored the lack of training for general education teachers on how to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom as a factor for low self-efficacy. Also, Carrington et al. (2015) noted preservice teachers' efficacy did affect their assumptions of students and students with disabilities. Bialka, Hansen, and Wong (2019) noted a positive link between preservice teachers' negative feelings about inclusion and low self-efficacy with teaching students with disabilities. A teacher's perceptions, attitude, and feelings about inclusion are considered major influencers on the success of an inclusion classroom. Since preservice program requirements influence teachers' perceptions, attitude, and feelings should be structured so preservice teachers are offered and mandated to take more than one special education course and have field experience in an inclusive environment.

Subsequently, this can lead to preservice teachers having positive attitudes towards inclusion, as well as high self-efficacy about teaching students with disabilities (Bialka, Hansen, & Wong, 2019).

Most preservice teachers programs only require general education teachers to take a basic special education course (Zhang et al., 2014). However, general education teachers warned that one inclusion course during preservice training was not sufficient because they still lacked needed instructional techniques to teach students with disabilities (Able et al., 2015). Bialka's (2016) article focused on the role preservice programs play in shaping teachers' dispositions and self-efficacy. Teachers' dispositions are characterized as their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching students. Thus, if preservice programs are not structured to address and confront teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs teachers' instructional practices can be adversely influenced. The gap between theory and practice concerning inclusion needs to be bridged for preservice teachers to gain meaningful experience that will enhance their pedagogy concerning inclusion (Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2013). Swain, Nordness, and Leader-Janssen (2012) examined preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes about inclusion after the preservice teachers received a course and practicum experience about inclusion. Much like, Carrington et al. (2015) study Swain et al. founded both a course and practicum experience that focused on teaching students with disabilities positively altered preservice teachers' attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in a general education classroom. Carrington et al. maintained a field experience that focus on diversity and reflective practices to compare and contrast what they learned in their

mandated courses with fieldwork experience of working with people from diverse backgrounds who needed various levels of support will allow preservice teachers to learn instructional strategies to service all students in an inclusive classroom. Nargo and deBettencourt (2017) explained that 78% of preservice teachers in the studies they reviewed said they benefitted from their field experience despite the structure of the field experience.

Consequently, preservice training programs should be designed to include training for teachers on evidence-based inclusive practices. Thus, preservice programs should be designed to provide training for preservice teachers on how to meet the challenge of providing instructional practices to meet the needs of all students (Rakap, 2017). Shepherd, Fowler, McCormick, Wilson, and Morgan (2016) explained amended and new special education mandates have led to a lack of clarity on how to structure preservice programs for special education teachers. In the past, preservice programs prepared teachers on how to provide students with certain services in a restricted environment. deBettencourt, Hoover, Rude, and Taylor (2016) discovered that there was a shortage of faculty members at the higher education level who had doctorates in special education to help prepare special education teachers in preservice programs. This has led to a shortage of capacity in the special education department at colleges and universities that are needed to provide the necessary instruction.

Instructional strategies. As stated, many teachers do not feel like they are prepared to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. Differention is a strategy that can help a teacher service all students in an inclusive class. Differentiation

occurs when students are assigned different learning tasks and assessments and the lesson is delivered through different methods (Tomlinson, 2014). Tomlinson (2017) maintained that a one-size fits all lesson plan will not allow a teacher to engage the many diverse learners in their classroom. Students possess various levels of knowledge. However, teachers tend to teach all students the same way with the same material. NCLB Act highlighted subgroups: students from major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency (NCLB, 2002). Consequently, bringing achievement gaps amongst the subgroups to the forefront, led to the need for more training and PD on differentiated instruction (Bondie et al., 2019). It should be noted that differentiated instruction was a practice used by teachers before the NCLB Act. Bialka, Hansen, and Wong's (2019) article was written to provide research on the topic of how to discuss disabilities with students; there is limited research on this topic. Bailka et al. provided activities, assessments and materials that could be used by preservice teachers to discuss disabilities with their students. Not all general education teachers and students are proponents of inclusion; several factors such as students may not know how to develop relationships with students with disabilities. Staff and students have misconceptions about students with disabilities. Thus, differentiated instruction was cited as a strategy to increase student learning and relationships (Bialka et al., 2019).

Teachers understanding of inclusion influences their practices. Bondie, Dahnke, and Zusho (2019) conducted a study on many definitions of differentiated instruction and how teachers employ differentiated practices based on their understanding. Teachers'

understanding of differentiated instruction influenced three major factors how they developed goals, teacher decision making, and how they selected or created materials. Shaunessy-Dedrick, Evans, Ferron, and Lindo (2015) investigated whether a differentiated reading technique altered elementary students' attitudes about reading and their reading comprehension skills. Students' attitudes about reading did not change; students' reading comprehension did improve. Teachers felt unprepared to adapt lessons and the curriculum based on individual student's needs (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2015). In addition, teachers stated that it is challenging to differentiate instruction daily. Teachers cited misunderstandings, lack of confidence and training, knowledge, and time that affects their ability to properly plan daily differentiated lessons (Brigandi et al., 2019). Rubenstein, Gilson, Bruce-Davis, and Gubbins (2015) highlighted standardized tests a reason why most teachers do not differentiate lessons. Teachers believed that they have to teach all students the same in order to prepare them for the test.

Thus, Allday et al. (2013) maintained preservice programs should integrate courses on differentiation. Dixon et al. (2014) argued for all students to learn, the educator must examine and adjust the curriculum to fit all the students' needs, as opposed to having one curriculum and set of instructional strategies to reach all students. Required differentiation courses during preservice program will offer teachers the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to deliver lessons that meet the needs and learning styles of all students (Allday et al., 2013). An ideal preservice program would have a curriculum that will aid in assisting preservice teachers with understanding the conceptual approach to teaching and learning, inclusive of analyzing learning goals,

continuously assessing student needs, and instructional modifications (Dixon et al., 2014).

All teachers both novice and experienced should have continous PD development on inclusive practices and current research (Petersen, 2016). Regardless of teachers' preservice experience PD can fill in those gaps of learning and understanding of inclusive practices (Brigandi, Gilson, & Miller 2019). Inclusive PD should focus on differentiation practices, instructional techniques, and coaching on how educators can examine and alter the curriculum and assessments in order to ensure that they are planning to meet the needs of all their students (Brigandi, Gilson, & Miller 2019). A study was conducted by Brigandi et al. they examined one in-service gifted teacher's experience of PD based on Renzulli's enrichment triad model. The researchers sought to see whether PD specifically on differentiation would influence the teacher's instructional practices and perception of differentiated instruction. PD is considered an approach to enhance teachers' skills, knowledge, and keep teachers up to date on current research and practices. Besides, teachers are provided the forum for collegial dialogue, as well as have time to reflect on the effectiveness of their practices (Brigandi et al., 2019).

Vygotsky (1980) explained that the learning process relies on the child's social environment; inclusive settings consist of students with disabilities and students without disabilities learning together. Moreover, Vygotsky (1980) explained within the zone that the educator or person with knowledge provides instruction and support that enables a student to complete a learning task. Whereas, without the support, the student cannot successfully complete the task but they are close to mastering the concept. With

appropriate instructional techniques the students will not need support and can complete the task (Vygotsky, 1980). Thus, both the general and special education teachers can meet all their students' needs when they are in their learning zone and then encourage progress from that point (Dixon et al., 2014).

Small-group structured lessons were noted as another beneficial strategy that is also a way to differentiate instruction. Bettini et al. (2016) found that a structured curriculum was useful. Bettini et al. demonstrated that special education students performed better when they received daily interventions in smaller instructional groups with students who have the same instructional needs. Reis and Renzulli (2015) cautioned before placing students in homogeneous groups the teacher should make their decision after analyzing data from formal and informal assessments. According to Rakap (2017), within these small groups and inclusive classrooms, embedded instruction (EI) can be used as an instructional strategy to improve student participation and achievement. Aspects of EI involves students learning indirectly via various learning tasks, instruction is based on the students' interests, and direct instruction is provided to target students' specific needs. Rakap asserted that students benefit from EI because it enables them to generalize newly acquired skills in other content areas. Reis and Renzulli suggested other ways teachers could differentiate and alter the curriculum to accommodate all students' skills, interests, and abilities. Renzulli's five dimensions of differentiation have components of Tomlinson's dimensions, which are content and product. Renzulli's other three dimensions are instructional strategies, the classroom, and the teacher (Reis & Renzulli, 2015). The content can be adapted based on students' abilities and interests.

Similarly, how students learn, the content should be delivered through various approaches such as small grouping, technological devices, etc. The classroom can be structured to allow for easy grouping, individual work, organized library, etc. Students can submit products to show they understand the work in various formats, as opposed to just a written response. Lastly, the teacher and their planning style are imperative because the teacher is expected to create differentiated lessons to service all students (Reis & Renzulli, 2015).

Implications

Teachers' perceived inability to effectively engage in an inclusive classroom will be influenced by the breadth and depth of students' needs, and multiple factors related to the teachers including formal education, PD, hands-on experience and perceptions of personal confidence in the inclusion setting. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem. Currently, the study's site school district offers inclusive classrooms for students with disabilities; therefore, it is necessary to gain insight into general and special education teachers' perceptions about working in an inclusive classroom. The outcome of this study could create awareness concerning how to plan training and PD that focuses on effective inclusive instructional strategies. As a result of this study, a project was created, which was PD. The purpose of the PD sessions would be to provide, both general and special education teachers, with evidence-based inclusive instructional strategies. A possible outcome of the PD sessions would be

teachers will be able to create lessons that address all students needs and are aligned to the state and district's standards and goals.

Summary

In summary, the development of effective inclusive classrooms can help to decrease discrimination and isolation because students with disabilities are allowed to learn alongside their general education education peers. Students with disabilities have a right to be educated in the general education classroom alongside their nondisabled peers, which is the fundamental principle of the least restrictive environment. Research revealed that general and special education teachers' self-efficacy does influence the creation of an effective inclusive classroom. Preservice training for, both general and special education teachers, in the area of inclusive practices, is imperative. Based on research revealed in this section preservice training programs are not aligned with federal mandates, that require schools to have inclusive classrooms.

In SSection 1 I introduced the local problem and provided the rationale for investigating the problem that the study might benefit was discussed, as well as the research questions. Also, included in Section 1 is Bandura's conceptual framework and the literature review included education acts, research on the development of effective inclusive classrooms and barriers, as well as evidence-based instrutional practices . Next, in Section 2 I provided a comprehensive discussion of the research design that was used for this study. In Section 3 I presented the project for this study. Lastly, in Section 4 are my reflections and conclusions.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The problem examined in this study was teachers' perceived inability to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. Teachers' ability to effectively engage in an inclusive classroom will be influenced by the breadth and depth of students' needs and multiple factors related to the teachers including formal education, professional development, hands-on experience, and perceptions of personal confidence in the inclusion setting.. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as a contributing factor to the local problem.

In this section, I detailed the selected methodology and purpose for the qualitative research design. An explanation of the number of participants, how participants were selected, and how their privacy was protected is provided. A description and justification for data collection and identification of the data collection instruments used in the study is explained in this section. I also discuss the process of how and when data were collected, the system used to track and analyze data, procedures to gain access to the participants, and the role of the researcher.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

I employed a qualitative case study research method for this project study because the purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem. Specifically, a case study allows the researcher to examine an individual, a group of

people, procedures, or an activity (Creswell, 2009). A case study grants the researcher the opportunity to understand a phenomenon in a bounded system (Creswell, 2012*b*). A case study allowed me to gather a detailed description of inclusion, which was the phenomenon being studied within the bounded system of the participants' school (see Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) noted that employing a case study allows the readers to feel like they are part of the situation because of the elaborate, descriptive details, which allow the reader to learn without really going through the experience. For this case study, I collected data using semistructured interviews and field notes to get an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions of teaching in an inclusive classroom.

Merriam (2009) noted that there are several ways of formatting qualitative research. Two common forms of qualitative research are (a) phenomenology and (b) ethnography. Phenomenological research focuses on the examination of a phenomenon as depicted by the participants (Creswell, 2009), while an ethnographic researcher concentrates on the culture of the participants (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). A phenomenological design was inappropriate for this study because phenomenological theory focuses on explaining a lived experience, which did not align with the purpose of this study. I was not interested in the study of a certain ethnic group or culture; therefore, an ethnography was not suitable for this study (see Lodico et al., 2010). Grounded theory is another type of qualitative research design, and it allows the researcher to create a theory based on data (Merriam, 2009). A grounded theory approach includes systematic inductive methods for administrating qualitative research in order to develop a theory

(Creswell, 2009); however, developing a theory was not the purpose of this study, so the design was inappropriate.

I considered a quantitative method, but this approach was not appropriate for this study because quantitative designs are used to assess hypotheses and theories (see Lodico et al., 2010) and this study was conducted to gain knowledge about teachers' perceptions on teaching in an inclusive classroom. Quantitative researchers investigate any relative correlation among variables (Lodico et al., 2010). In other words, a quantitative study does not allow the researcher to have an in-depth examination of individual or group experiences (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative researchers usually make comparisons, generalize, and test hypotheses (Lodico et al., 2010). Quantitative studies are focused on numeric conclusions, and once the data are analyzed, they facilitate the researcher in testing a hypothesis (Creswell, 2009).

I also considered a mixed-method approach and determined it to be inappropriate for this study. A mixed-method approach includes both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2009). Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods enables the researcher to give a thorough explanation of the procedures, environment, and interactions; nevertheless, the disadvantages are loss of valuable time and resources (Lodico et al., 2010). Creswell (2012*a*) explained that the researcher must have enough time to gather a vast amount of information in a particular timeframe.

The mixed-method approach consists of explanatory and exploratory designs. The explanatory design allows the researcher to report their findings in categories; therefore, the researcher gathers quantitative data initially, followed by qualitative data

thereafter (Creswell, 2012*b*). Lodico et al. (2010) explained that the qualitative data are used to explain the quantitative data. Lodico et al. described the other mixed-method design, exploratory, as the opposite; therefore, quantitative data are collected first, followed by qualitative data. A mixed-method approach provides in-depth information; however, Creswell (2009) noted that it is most appropriately used when a qualitative or quantitative design alone will not provide sufficient information about the problem being examined. I decided not to use a mixed-method approach because I believed a qualitative design allowed me to gather sufficient data in the given timeframe and provided me with rich insight into the problem understudy. A case study was the most suitable qualitative design because I was able to use it to understand the influence of intervention in the study (see Merriam, 2009).

Participants

The site selected for this study was an inner-city elementary school located in a northeastern state. I selected this elementary school for this study because approximately 24% of the student population is comprised of students with learning disabilities. All students with learning disabilities were taught in inclusive classrooms; consequently, all teachers, both general and special education teachers, taught students with disabilities at some point during the school day.

A total of 27 teachers worked at the study site school. I asked all teachers to be a part of this study. Ultimately, the sample used was seven teachers from the elementary school. The participants all attended a traditional college or university; possessed a state teaching certificate; and taught mathematics, reading, or both.

Sampling allows the researcher to study a specific group or organization and limits the population (Long, 2009). I used purposeful sampling because it is a sampling procedure that allows qualitative reseachers the opportunity to intentionally choose certain individuals or data to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (see Creswell, 2012*b*). Seven teachers were selected through purposeful, homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling allows the researcher to select similar participants to explain a certain subgroup in detail (Glesne, 2011). This sampling technique allowed me to collect comprehensive data on teachers' perceptions about their prepartion to teach in an inclusive classroom. The participants were homogeneous in the sense that they all had taught students from kindergarten to fifth grade who were assessed in reading or mathematics on the state's annual standardized test. Similarly, all participants had taught students with disabilities in an inclusion setting. The intention was to have an equal number of special and general education teachers to participate in the study; however, that was not accomplished.

This study included seven participants; this sample size allowed me to collect enough data to reach saturation of the data (see Merriam, 2009). I chose this number of participants because it was controllable in the given timeframe and provided me with adequate information about the problem under study. Merriam (2009) stated that there is no specific number of participants that should be used in the qualitative method, and the problem under examination usually determines the size of sample. Creswell (2012*b*) concurred and explained that the number of participants varies depending on the study being performed. There is a wide range in the number of participants who can participate

in a case study, such as one up to 40 people (Creswell, 2012*b*). For case studies, Creswell suggested that a study should include four or five participants because large numbers of participants could provide false perceptions. Glesne (2011) added that the researcher must decide between depth and breadth when deciding on the number of participants for a qualitative study. An in-depth study requires fewer participants and allows for more time with each participant and more interviews or observations, whereas studies that have a larger number of participants and site visits tend to yield surface findings (Glesne, 2011).

Gaining Access to Participants

Some steps need to be followed to gain access to the participants (Glesne, 2011). The first step taken in this study was to gain the approval of Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB; IRB Approval Number: 10-30-18-0260337). I needed access to teachers at the potential study site; therefore, I sought approval from people who had the authority to grant a researcher permission to enter the site. To that end, the first person I asked for permission was the school administrator, providing them with a short but detailed description of this study. Creswell (2009) noted that district administrators might require the researcher to complete a short proposal, and this is exactly what was required by the district where this study was conducted. The qualifications for the district's short proposal was listed on the school district's website. After completing the proposal and gaining Walden IRB approval, I was granted permission from research and evaluation administrator.

I asked the school administrator for a list of teachers along with their contact information, current teaching assignments, and certifications. I also asked the principal if I could place a flyer in the mailbox of all teachers that invited them to informal meetings. Glesne (2011) maintained that potential participants are more likely to participate if the school administrator is aware of the study. After meeting with all the teachers, I sent them a formal message through e-mail, in which their participation in the study was solicited and a brief description of the study and consent form were provided. The teachers that decided to participate and met the criteria for the study were asked to return a signed copy of the consent form through e-mail. After obtaining the signed consent forms back, I e-mailed each participant to schedule a date and time for the initial interview.

Protection of Participants

Critics of qualitative research argue that a researcher's bias could skew the data (Lodico et al., 2010). According to Glesne (2011), the field relationship between the researcher and participants can influence the researcher's findings. Lodico et al. (2010) noted that qualitative researchers are usually participant observers, meaning that they engage in activities and interactions with the participants. Yin (2016) cautioned against data exculsion, which is the researcher intentionally excluding data that does not match their presumption. Merriam (2009) explained that qualitative researchers decrease biases by including all the gathered information as opposed to omitting differences and ideology. I employed several of these strategies to minimize bias and increase the validity of this study.

I avoided biased language and used an auditor in order to decrease bias and increase validity. First, I ensured that biased language was not used by creating questions that were not leading or written with bias words (see Creswell, 2012*a*). Second, I shared my study with an external auditor who signed a confidentiality agreement. Glesne (2011) suggested researchers use an external auditor, an outside person who is not involved in their study, to inspect the researcher's process and data. I did not identify the participants to the auditor, only referring to them by number and not by name. Last, I subjected the data to member checks. Member checking allows the participants to view the researcher's interpretation of their data transcription and involves inviting the participants to provide some response to the preliminary interpretations and findings (Lodico et al., 2010). After I had finished interviewing the participants and the information was transcribed, I provided each participant with a copy of their transcribed interview and my initial analyses so that they could give any needed feedback before I wrote the final interpretations and findings.

Data Collection

I used the data collected for this study to answer the two research questions. Merriam (2009) explained that the data collection process is inclusive of the researcher choosing certain data to be used and the methods used for collecting the data. I used an interview protocol to conduct each interview. The interview questions asked of each participant are included in the interview protocol.

I obtained written permission from each participant to record the interview sessions. Notes and interviews were recorded on iVoice, that is, a digital recording

device on my Apple iPhone. I ensured that the phone was visible. The audio was transcribed from the recordings using an application on my iPhone called Transcribe Me. After I uploaded my recordings, PDFs of the transcriptions was generated and sent to my e-mail address. I used open coding once I received the PDF transcriptions during the analysis process. The documents are stored in a locked file cabinet, which will be stored in a room in my house for at least 5 years in accordance with the requirements of Walden University. The recordings were uploaded to the Transcribe Me application on my personal computer.

Interviews

The manner in which the interviews should be organized should be planned at the beginning of the study (Lodico et al., 2010). Lodico et al. stated researchers need to determine how the interviews will be structured. There are three ways to conduct an interview: structured, semistructured, or nonstructured. Researchers conducting semistructured interviews can deviate from the predetermined questions (Lodico et al., 2010). I conducted semi-structured interviews, and additional questions was asked based on the participants' responses. I developed the interview protocol based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory; therefore, some of my questions focused on teachers' confidence. Lastly, I asked a former colleague who has a doctoral degree and who oversees schools to review the interview questions to ensure alignment with the study's purpose and research questions. General and special education teachers were asked questions about their preparation and perceptions of educating all students in an inclusive environment. The

interview data were logged in my field notes and the transcribed interviews were coded for themes in order to determine the results.

I used a semi-structured one-on-one format. During a one-on-one interview, only the participant is asked questions by the researcher (Creswell, 2012*b*). I conducted one-on-one interviews with general and special education teachers in order to gain their perceptions, feelings, and attitudes about inclusive classrooms, as well as the types of training and PD they attended on evidence-based inclusive instructional strategies.

During the initial interview, I asked 10 open-ended semistructured interview questions. All general and special education teachers were asked the same questions during their initial interviews. The following are three of the interview questions that were asked of both general and special education teachers: (a) I would like to have a better understanding of your teacher preservice training. Can you tell me about your preservice training?; (b) Could you share some of your preservice coursework with me? Did any of your courses focus on inclusive practices?; (c) What do you see as the special challenges to teaching in an inclusive setting? What has helped or hindered your ability to deal with these challenges? Also, I asked additional probing questions to gather in-depth explanations during the initial interview. This reduced the need for scheduling follow-up interviews.

I planned for follow-up interviews in the event. I needed to gain clarity or elicit more information about a previous reply given at the initial interview, I anticipated that a follow-up interview would be conducted after reading the transcripts and realizing questions were not completely answered, or malfunction occurred when recording.

However, follow up interviews were not needed. All interviews were conducted during their personal time meaning outside of their work day. Lastly, the participants were asked to meet at a neutral agreed on location.

I made field notes during all the interviews. Creswell (2012*a*) explained that a researcher should take notes during interviews because recorders can stop working. Specifically, I recorded information about the participants' reflections, feelings, and body language. I noted the environment and anything that occurred that might be unusual (i.e., interruptions). Furthermore, I noted the participants' body language (i.e., facial expressions, posture, and hand gestures). Moreover, I used the field notes in conjunction with the recordings to identify specific hot topics for each participant. Glesne (2011) identified the researcher's notebook or log as one of the most significant tools because the researcher can record an array of information in the notebook, such as rich detail about the participants, the location, interactions, and reflections. Glesne added that bias is controlled by the researcher, focusing on recording precise, detailed information, as opposed to judgmental information. I did find it necessary to expand upon my notes at a later time (see Glesne, 2011).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher should be acknowledged from the beginning of the study. Creswell (2009) highlighted the importance of the role of the researcher, their presence, as well as how data that are collected and analyzed has an influence on the findings. I am a middle school administrator in the district I conducted the study. Specifically, I was in the same learning network as the proposed case study site.

Nevertheless, I did not work at the site, nor have I ever worked at the site. Learning networks are clusters of schools in the same neighborhood. Thus, I had worked with and observed the study site several times as an administrator in the learning network. I have never formally observed any of the participants. I realized that my role as an administrator in the district the participants work in might have led them to be less forthcoming. The role of the researcher should be clearly defined (Glesne, 2011). Glesne (2011) stated that a researcher has two roles: a researcher and learner. As the researcher, I made sure that I was conscious of my role as a researcher in all settings and conducted myself accordingly. Glesne described that the role of a learner is someone who is constantly learning and adopting findings on the basis of new knowledge. Consequently, as a learner while collecting and analyzing the teachers' perspectives, I formulated my findings and project based on knowledge gained during the study.

Data Analysis Results

Data analysis was completed simultaneously as the data were collected; this gave me the opportunity to focus on certain aspects of the study (see Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2009) explained that during the data analysis process, the qualitative researcher searches and identifies patterns and codes to form themes to delineate a phenomenon or problem. All participants were asked the same initial semistructured open-ended questions, which were created to gain an in-depth understanding of their feelings, beliefs, and perceptions about their preparedness to teach in an inclusive classroom. Participants were also asked what could be done to improve academic achievement for all students. Some participants were asked follow-up questions if I needed them to clarify a statement,

program, or acronym. Participants were asked follow-up questions only if they needed to elaborate on an answer. All interviews conducted were recorded for the aim of transcription. To protect the participants' identity, two letters, and a number were used as their pseudonym. All recordings were transcribed via Transcribe Me, an audio transcription software.

The data were analyzed using Yin's (2016) five recommended sequential phases to analyze my data: (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling (arraying), (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding. First, I compiled the data by separating the notes and participants' interview transcripts into separate two-pocket folders. Doing this gave me easy access to information when I needed them about certain participants. The folders were categorized based on the participants' teaching certifications and inside each folder is interview transcripts and field notes gathered during each interview. Also, a list of glossary terms specific to the school was created and kept in my notebook.

The first level of coding was completed during phase two. Consequently, the data were disassembled into smaller sections. I listened to each recording after each interview. Initially, I took notes as I listened to the participant. After I downloaded the transcripts from the Transcribe Me software, I listened to the recording again and compared what I heard to what was on each transcript, made changes, and recorded additional notes. After all interviews was completed and transcribed; using open coding, I categorized the data according to common coding terms and phrases.

During the third phase, reassembling, some of the initial codes were found irrelevant and subsequently deleted. Once no more codes could be generated, I assessed

whether or not the patterns were relevant to my research questions. The data were reassembled based on the codes and patterns into a list of main ideas and possible themes. Four lists were created before the final list of seven themes were created. Subsequently, saturation was reached, no other themes emerged and data collection had ceased (Merriam, 2009). The 7 themes that emerged were: (a) need for inclusion-specific professional development and training on differentiated instruction, (b) challenges due to large inclusion class size, (c) resources and support, (d) integration of small group instruction in the inclusion setting, (e) how teachers' experiences changed their perceptions of and practices within inclusion classrooms, (f) importance of teacher preparedness and pre-service training for inclusion, and (g) teachers' long-standing perception of low self-efficacy and lack of confidence with respect to inclusion.

After the data were compiled, dissembled, and reassembled, I interpreted the data. The final themes are the interpretation of the data collected. The interpretation of the data was shared with each participant. This process is referred to as member checking. This allows each participant to review the data to check for accuracy. Once the accuracy of each transcript was confirmed, the data were included in the study (see Creswell, 2009). After interpreting the data overall conclusions were drawn in the final stage of the data analysis process. I reviewed the themes to ensure they were in alignment with the research questions. Implications and recommendations for further research were presented in the conclusion section.

During dissembling and resembling stages, I used the open-coding process, and I used descriptive words or a phrase to describe certain sections of the transcribed

interviews and identified the initial possible emerging themes (see Creswell, 2012*b*; Yin, 2016). Making use of axial coding during the next stage allowed me to look for any and all correlations between the codes that were discovered (see Merriam, 2009). During the third stage, selective coding, I identified main ideas that answered the research questions (see Merriam, 2009). The 10 open-ended questions that I asked during each interview allowed me to gather ample data. I coded or highlighted attitudes about PD, background, and training, what was desired, reasons for feeling under-trained, belief about whether they felt trained. The codes and themes, along with some of the interview questions and segments of the participants' responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Interview Questions and Segments of Participants' Responses

Interview questions:	Interview Responses	Key words and phases: open codes	Themes
What do you see as special challenges when teaching in an inclusive setting? Based on your experiences and training as an inclusion teacher, what do you think can help improve students' achievement for both students with disabilities and general education students in an inclusion classroom?	"Any type of PDs." "…more training…" "…training is needed…" "PDs on…best practices to use…" "PD on how to differentiate instruction…differentiate assessments. " "…math and reading programs will allow teachers to differentiate their instructional delivery and learning tasks…"	Professional Development training Additional Training Differentiation Ongoing Instruction	Need for professional-development or training on differentiated instruction
What do you see as the special challenges to teaching in an inclusive setting?	"to large…you struggle to meet needs. " "…challenge is the class size…they don't get the support that they need…" "…if it is 30 kids, as opposed to 22-25…you don't feel the kids would get enough if there are too many…"	Large Too many students Can't reach all Overwhelmed	Challenges due to large inclusion class size
What do you see as the special challenges to teaching in an inclusive setting?	"an assistant … because when they [students with disabilities] work on their own they get stuck…" "…make sure they have the materials…" "…lack of resources." "…extra people to assist…"	Lack materials Need another adult Leveled material Assistances	Resources and support
What has helped or hindered your ability to deal with these challenges?	"…tap into their goal [IEP] during that time…" "…get a chance to work with students where they are…" "…meet with students daily in small groups" "…I do small groups…students in groups usually have the similar goals…"	Goals Differentiation Small groups	Integration of small group instruction in the inclusion setting

(*table continues*)

Interview questions:	Interview Responses	Key words and phases: open codes	Themes
Since becoming a teacher, have your ideas and perspectives changed with regard to teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom.	"…I learned over time they [students with disabilities] can learn…they may need additional time or supports…" "…a part of me thought they [students with disabilities] would never catch up…after having several students with IEPs…" "yes, changed…when I was in school they [students with disabilities] were kept separate…now they are included…they shouldn't have to be in a room by themselves…" "when I started we didn't have inclusion…now I see it from both sides why it is needed…student felt left out…"	Experiences Student growth Beliefs Perceptions changed	How teachers' experiences changed perceptions of and practices within inclusion classrooms
What was your student teaching experience like? Were there other practicum or fieldwork experiences in your program? Describe how your preservice training has influenced your instructional techniques.	"…student teaching allowed me to see different teaching styles…" "…a lot of theory…my experience actually came from being the classroom…" "teaching can be overwhelming…more practice should be done in an actual classroom…" "…undergraduate I can say no…I was not taught how to differentiate for kids or kids with IEPs…"	Visual learners Actual practice Learned from co-op teacher Undergrad vs. Graduate school with a special ed. focus Training Felt undertrained	Importance of teacher preparedness and pre-service training for inclusion
Explain whether or not you feel adequately prepared to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom? On a scale from 0 to 5 with zero being the lowest, and five being the highest, how you would rate your confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom? Explain your rating.	"I would say a 3. Over the years, after working with specialized teachers, other teachers…I learned how to adequately differentiate…" "…I am a 3.5…there is always something new to learn…" "…a 4.5 because of my teaching style [inquiry-based] and I am aware of the multiple intelligence…" "I would say a 5…because of my many years of experience… and with the right supports…"	Students Experience Results Confidence	Teachers' long-standing perception of low self-efficacy and lack of confidence with respect to inclusion

The following data sources were used: interviews and field notes. IVoice, application on my phone, was used to record the interviews. As mentioned, an application, Transcribe Me, was used during the transcription process. These applications were used on my mobile phone because a password is required to access any information on my phone, and an additional password was required was to access these applications. The transcripts were downloaded onto my personal laptop computer and password is required to gain access to all information stored on the laptop. The data and field notes are locked in a locked cabinet in my home. All recordings were saved with the participants' pseudonym.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem. Two research questions were created: (a) one for general education teachers, and (b) one for special education teachers. The research questions were developed to address both the problem and purpose. The following research questions were addressed based on the participants' responses to 10 open-ended interview questions:

RQ1: What are the general education teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive setting?

RQ2: What are the special education teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive setting?

After the data analysis process seven themes were developed: (a) need for inclusion-specific professional development and training on differentiated instruction, (b)

challenges due to large inclusion class size, (c) resources and support, (d) integration of small group instruction in the inclusion setting, (e) how teachers' experiences changed their perceptions of and practices within inclusion classrooms, (f) importance of teacher preparedness and pre-service training for inclusion, and (g) teachers' long-standing perception of low self-efficacy and lack of confidence with respect to inclusion. All participants were asked the same interview questions, which yielded similar responses from general and special education teachers. Consequently, the themes listed below were derived from the common responses of all of the participants.

Theme 1: Need for Inclusion Specific Professional-Development and Training on Differentiated Instruction

All the participants expressed a need to have ongoing and interactive PD and training sessions for teachers, as well as all staff members that work with students with disabilities. Petersen (2016) qualitative study investigated special education teachers' perceptions of students with cognitive disabilities and how students with disabilities access the general curriculum. Special education teachers in Petersen's study highlighted that ongoing PD has a major component for them to understand how to integrate the general curriculum. Effective PD will allow for the development of effective inclusive classrooms (Royster, Reglin, & Losike-Sedimo , 2014). Some participants requested any type of PD or training, others were specific about the types of trainings and PD sessions they believed would be beneficial to them. Participant TB2, a certified elementary teacher was not specific about the type of inclusive training that is needed, "Any type of PDs…PD from teachers who have been trained or certified…strategies that they use."

Participant TG7, a certified elementary teacher with a master's degree in reading specialist and educational leadership, felt the same, "I definitely wish there was more training because I know a lot of educators want to know how to work with all the students within their class."

Of the seven participants, three of them that had a special education certification specifically said they wanted ongoing training on how to employ evidence-based differentiated instructional techniques to benefit students with and without disabilities. Although, participant TA1, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification was specific and expressed a specific need for PD that focuses on, "…how to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting…and what to use in the classroom depending on the student's particular disability." PD in the area of differentiation is needed to address all learning styles in a classroom (Yuen et al., 2018). Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, believes that trainings on how to integrate computer based instructional programs on mathematics and reading programs will allow teachers to differentiate their instructional delivery and learning tasks. Participant TF6, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, added,

> I think more training is needed. I am dual certified, so I have a lot of experience with special education students. A lot of my colleagues don't know what to do with them [students with disabilities] …they are stressed out…PD on how to differentiate instruction…differentiate assessments.

Three participants expressed a specific need for interactive PD sessions. They pointed out that PD sessions were done in a lecture format. As a result, they were not given a chance to collaboratively review and discuss best practices during the PD sessions. Collaboration with grade or content peers between teachers during PD increased the chances of teachers implementing strategies learning at PD (Burke, 2013).

Participant TB2, an elementary certified only teacher, likes to be shown best practices, so TB2 would like PD sessions that are conducted by a certified special education professional. The participant believed this format will allow teachers that don't have a special education certification to speak with and learn the best practices from a certified special education professional. Participant TC3, a certified elementary and special education teacher, agreed and added, PD sessions on inclusive practices should be conducted by teachers who are or have used effective inclusive practices, and participants should be allowed to read and discuss case studies about inclusive practices. After reading the case studies, participants should be able to discuss the pros and cons associated with the case study, as well as discuss best practices with their colleagues so teachers can know what is working in other inclusive classrooms.

Participant TF6, an elementary education certified, and a master's degree of special education extended the participants beliefs. The participant explained that someone like a special teacher, administrator, or professor with knowledge of effective inclusive practices should facilitate the PD so that teachers can ask them questions and have discussions on how to differentiate assignments and assessments. The participant also said, "most PD sessions are done in a lecture format, …they just tell you stuff but

don't give you time to talk and practice with the material." Sun, et al. (2013) explained time should be allocated for teachers to have group discussion with their peers and examine student work during PD, instead of a lecture format.

Theme 2: Challenges Due to Large Inclusion Class Size

Five participants believed that a large inclusion classroom is a challenge. Participant TA1, a certified elementary and special education teacher believes that students with disabilities who are quiet are often overlooked in large inclusive classrooms and may miss out on required attention and support. Participant TF6, an elementary education certified and a master's degree of special education, said, "Class size is the biggest challenge. If it's too large…you're struggling to come up with different ways to meet everybody's needs." Participant TF6, noted the difference in the class sizes in this current school compared to their student teaching experience in the suburbs. The inclusion classes in the suburbs had 19-20 students as compared to the 30 students at this school. Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, concurred and explained that an inclusion class should have 22-25 students, as opposed to 30 or more students.

Chingos (2013) reviewed various experimental and quasi-experimental studies about the effect of class size on student achievement and concluded that there is no optimal class size number supported by research, nor is there ample research that shows a direct effect on student achievement. Contrarily, Schanzenbach (2014) argued that class size does matter; in fact, smaller classes has been identified as having a positive influence on student achievement. Participant TB2, an elementary certified teacher, highlighted

that a large class size prohibits the participant from equally dividing their time with the general education students and students with disabilities. The five participants perceived large class sizes as the reason why they needed more time in their instructional blocks for reading and mathematics, which were 90 and 120 minutes. Participant TD4, an elementary certified only teacher, maintained there was not enough time in the instructional block to teach a large class of students with a large range of educational needs in what is considered a short amount of time.

Theme 3: Resources and Support

Most of the participants felt like it is difficult to reach all students in an inclusive classroom especially without the appropriate resources (i.e., materials and classroom assistant or co-teacher). Everling (2013) noted additional personnel and equipment, along with training and time as factors for developing and maintaining successful inclusion classrooms. Four participants believed adequate and appropriate resources will allow them to differentiate learning tasks and assessments for all students. Students with disabilities are not the only students that should have differentiated learning tasks and assessments (Weber, Johnson, & Tripp, 2013).

Participant TF6, a certified elementary teacher with a Master's degree of special education, said there should be ample materials and equipment provided to inclusion teachers, so they have the appropriate resources to teach all students regardless of their academic need. Participant TG7, an elementary certified teacher with a master's degree in reading specialist and educational leadership, felt the same,

> A lot of times we don't have materials to make sure that the students are getting what they need as well. I know we always have maybe the general education materials and some challenging materials but making sure we have materials that are a couple of levels below what they need."

Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, believed inclusion only works if the teachers have the appropriate resources and support, in fact, this individual said the lack of appropriate resources and support is having a negative influence on the effectiveness of the teachers. Participant TB2, an elementary certified only teacher, struggled due to the lack of resources, TB2 only had grade-level materials, and it was difficult to support students that are not on grade level.

Six participants listed an additional adult as a needed resource. The participants believed that an additional adult in an inclusive classroom would ensure that all students' needs are met, especially in a large class. Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, explained, "I think having resources of specialists, like a reading specialist or a one-on-one; basically, extra people that can assist you [the teacher] …to differentiate and meet the needs of all the students." Participant TG7, a certified elementary teacher with a master's degree in reading specialist and educational leadership, said an assistant or another adult could work with students when TG7 could not. The participant explained that their students with disabilities can do work with their assistance but tend to get "stuck" when this individual leaves them alone. Participant TB2, a certified elementary teacher said, "Definitely, two heads are better than one." Collaboration amongst general and special education teachers allow both to learn how to

adapt and differentiate lessons, instead of teachers working in isolation to figure out how to adapt the curriculum (Petersen, 2016). Participant TA1, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification and Participant TC3, an elementary and special education certified teacher welcomed the support of an additional adult. Participant TA1 warned that the additional adult should be careful not to "single out" students with disabilities. Participant TC3 said the other adult should be trained on how to work with students with disabilities and make sure they "build a rapport" with the students.

Theme 4: Integration of Small Group Instruction in the Inclusion Setting

All, with the exception of two participants, spoke about how small group instruction was used in the inclusion classroom as a means to combat the challenges of having a large class and the lack of an additional adult in the classroom. The participants also said this strategy allowed them to give differentiated assignments in order to meet all students' academic needs.

Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, described blended learning station model. In this model, students rotate stations and one of the stations includes computers so students can work on an educational software program, that are tailored to individual students' academic needs based on a diagnostic test. Participant TE5 added that students rotate to a station with their teacher, and this would allow the teacher to meet with a small group of students with similar academic needs. Rubenstein et al. (2015) noted differentiated lessons should be taught to groups of students that have the same academic need, not in a whole group.

Participant TB2, an elementary certified only teacher, also believed small groups allows for students to be grouped together based on their academic need regarding a particular topic; thus, the groups are not always the same. Participant TB2 noted that a group or two would have students with similar IEP goals. Participant TG7, a certified elementary teacher with a master's degree of reading specialist and educational leadership, noted similar reasons why this individual used the small group model, along with being able to group students based on academic need and IEP goals. Participant TG7 added students who need challenging assignments were afforded this opportunity during small group time.

Theme 5: How Teachers' Experiences Changed Their Perceptions of and Practices Within Inclusion Classrooms

The participants noted that their perspective changed regarding inclusion based on their experiences, and they noticed throughout their career when certain strategies and programs were employed, students with disabilities made academic growth. General education teachers who are effective have positive perceptions and high expectations about students with disabilities and what the students are capable of doing (Royster et al., 2014). Participant TB2, a certified elementary only teacher perception changed after years of doing the inclusion model and saw how most students with disabilities usually were at grade level by the end of the year because of the strategies that were used to ensure students with disabilities received the appropriate support such as additional adult of a special education, computer software for appropriate interventions, and the usage of small group instruction. Participant TC3, a certified elementary and special education

teacher, spoke explicitly about a summer program for students with disabilities as a contributing factor for changing their perception about teaching students with disabilities. The participant said during this experience; the individual realized that different strategies had to be used in order to engage and teach students with disabilities.

One participant with dual certifications and a master's degree noted their graduate courses as what changed their perception. Participant TA1, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, said they were often "frustrated" teaching students with disabilities because "they appeared to be lazy." After some years of teaching and after taking graduate courses, this individual admitted their former beliefs about students with disabilities were not accurate, "I look at them differently now."

Participant TB2 reflected on times when the school did not have inclusion, and students were removed from the general education setting and sent to a self-contained special education classroom for their specialized services. Similarly, Participant TD4, certified elementary teacher and Participant TG7, a certified elementary teacher with a master's degree in reading specialist and educational leadership, highlighted how the schools they attended as kids were structured. Participant TG7 explained that students with disabilities were taught in a separate self-contained special education classroom, and as a result, they assumed this model was appropriate.

However, two other participants with dual certifications: Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification and Participant TF6, a certified elementary teacher that has a master's degree of special education both explained they always believed students with disabilities should be included in general education classes.

Participant TE5 noted personal beliefs as a major reason why this individual decided to major in special education because this person always believed both students and adults with disabilities should be treated the same as people without disabilities. Participant TF6 explained the world we live in is composed of all types of people so students should not be separated in school.

Theme 6: Importance of Teacher Preparedness and Pre-service Training for Inclusion

All of the participants, except the two participants that majored in special education as undergraduates, said they did not have a course that focused on inclusion in their undergraduate preservice program. Most preservice teachers graduated from their teaching programs, having taken one required special education course. As a result, they have minimum instructional strategies to teach students with disabilities (Zhang et al., 2014). Participant TD4, an elementary certified only teacher, explained when the individual was in their preservice training, inclusion was as not the focus like it now. The participant noted, as a result, this person did not believe the required courses were effective, and the courses focused more on the different philosophies associated with education.

Participant TB2, an elementary certified only teacher, voiced a similar response and said the courses "focused on pedagogy." Consequently, the individual had minimum knowledge about inclusion and how to teach students with disabilities was learned after TB2 became a teacher by attending PD sessions, working with their colleagues, and administrators throughout their career. Whereas, participants with a master's degree or a

certification in special education noted they had several courses on how to teach students with disabilities and differentiated practices these courses were cited as having an influence on their confidence to teach an inclusive classroom because they learned how to meet the needs of all students.

Yuen et al. (2018) stated that teachers who had one course on differentiation in preservice programs felt more confident than their peers who did not have any differentiation training. Participant TA1, a dual certified teacher with special education and administrative certifications, listed several courses this person completed that focused on inclusive practices: (a) differentiated teaching, (b) teaching students with disabilities, and (c) how to recognize students with both severe and mild learning disabilities. Participant TC3, an elementary and special education certified teacher, also highlighted their courses during their graduate studies as having an influence on their practices and their ability to seek the appropriate strategy to use with students with disabilities. Participant TF6, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, added, "My professors and the teachers I worked with [practicum experiences]…showed me how to differentiate certain assignments, tests, and the process of how kids learn."

After reflecting on their preservice training, all participants believed that their student teaching experience was more effective than their required coursework. Participant TD4, an elementary certified only teacher, said, "I loved that because I really got to feel what it was like to be a teacher." Participant TF6, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, described their experience as useful because their

practicum hours were evenly divided where the same amount of time was spent in general classroom as in a special education classroom. The same participant also said their practicum hours were spent in an inclusive classroom of autistic and general education students. Participant TG7, a certified elementary teacher with a master's degree of reading specialist and educational leadership, said,

> My student teaching experience, I am grateful for. It allowed me to see different teaching styles, and some that I could relate to…a lot of times with a course where you can read it, read it, read it, read it, read it, but during student-teaching, you actually experience it…being able to actually experience those things happening, I think, really resonated with me more.

Theme 7: Teachers' Long-Standing Perception of Low Self-Efficacy and Lack of Confidence with Respect to Inclusion

All the participants did not believe they had the ideal undergraduate preservice training regarding being prepared to teach in an inclusive classroom. However, none of the participants noted that their undergraduate preservice training influenced their confidence. Confident teachers were more likely to stay in the teaching profession and were comfortable with teaching students with disabilities (Zhang et al., 2017). When asked to informally rate their confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom their ratings ranged from 3.0 -5 on a scale of 0 to 5 of their confidence. Zero is the lowest, the participant had no confidence with teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. A rating of a 5 represented participants who were very confident they can teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. The participants

discussed their years of experience, knowledge, abilities, creation of inclusion classrooms, and teacher collaboration for their medium to high confidence level with teaching in an inclusive classroom.

Participant TB2, a certified elementary only teacher, stated, “Let’s say maybe a three. Over the years, after working with specialized teachers, other teachers and learning things from them, I feel like I can more adequately differentiate for them in a classroom.” Participant TA1, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, rated themselves a 4. The person said, “I'm very good at getting to know the kids…meeting the kids where they are to build them to where they need to be. I have the patience for that.”

Participant TG7, a certified elementary teacher with a master’s degree in reading specialist and educational leadership, highlighted their teaching style, which is inquiry based, as well as having knowledge of the multiple intelligence to explain their rating of a 4.5. Participant TE5, a dual certified teacher with a special education certification, referenced years of experience, “Right now, I would say a 5 just because I have many, many years of experience.” The participant did add that their rating was dependent on having access to the appropriate resources and support. High self-efficacy is imperative for, both general and special education teachers, because 62% of students with disabilities spend more than 80% of their time in a general education classroom (Zhang et al., 2017).

Summary of Findings

I conducted a qualitative case study to determine if, both general and special education teachers, felt prepared and confident to meet the needs of all students in an

inclusive classroom. My research findings were similar, as well as different than some research presented in Section 1. Most of the participants in this study said they were not provided courses on inclusive practices in their preservice training programs. Additionally, the participants mentioned that their preservice training programs did not adequately prepare them to teach in an inclusive classroom. Singh and Glasswell (2013) maintained and highlighted the importance of preparation for, both general and special education teachers, to have an effective inclusion classroom. Preservice teachers should be given ample learning tasks that require them to reflect on their preconceptions, beliefs, morals and ideas; in turn, preservice teachers' dispositions can be altered (Bialka, 2016). There is a minimum chance that they will change their dispositions after they graduate from the preservice program. This can affect student learning if they are deficit laden (Bialka, 2016). Moreover, opportunities for self-reflection in preservice programs was cited as a practice that will encourage the preservice teacher to become critical thinkers (Jenset et al., 2018).

Everling (2013) added the lack of training has a negative influence on general education teacher's confidence to teach students with disabilities in the inclusion classroom. However, in contrast, to these findings, all participants believed their confidence was not negatively influenced as a result of the lack of training in their undergraduate preservice programs. The participants underscored the importance of continuous PD and training on evidence-based instructional inclusive practices used in successful inclusion classrooms. This belief is aligned with Petersen (2016), Sun et al. (2013), and Sledge and Paley (2013) findings about the effect, frequency and structure of

PD for teachers. Petersen and Sun et al. highlighted the importance of ongoing PD, as well as allocating time for teachers to collaborate and discuss the topic and work with their colleagues. Sledge and Paley explained the effect of PD being tailored to teachers' needs.

When asked about their preservice programs, all the participants preferred their undergraduate student teaching experience as opposed to their course work. Gehrke and Cocchirella (2013) presented comparable results; participants in their study shared the same perspective that field work was favored over course work. Zhang et al. (2014) and Able et al. (2015) added that most preservice programs only offer one special education course, and they did not have inclusion courses. Consequently, preservice teachers were not equipped with the necessary instructional strategies required to meet the needs of all the students. Two participants in this study with over 20 years of experience and a general educational certification said they did not have one special education course. Three participants said they had one special education course in their undergraduate preservice programs, and the other two participants attended special education undergraduate preservice programs, but only one of them had inclusion courses. All participants did state the lack of inclusion and special education courses in their undergraduate programs as a possible reason, along with the fact that inclusion was not a part of their personal childhood school experience or when they first started to teach that changed their perception about inclusion. The participants also noted that their perspectives had changed about teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive

classroom as a result of experiences, some training, additional certifications, and collegial support.

Zagona et al. (2017) revealed a positive correlation with teacher's skill set that attended preservice programs that had more than one inclusive course. Also, teachers with dual certifications or a master's degree in special education spoke of different experiences and all said their additional focus was the only training they received on inclusion and how to teach students with disabilities. This aligned with Gehrke and Cocchirella's (2013) conclusions that teachers with dual certifications believed they were prepared to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. The researchers also noted that teachers preferred field experience instead of course work.

The participants did not believe their lack of preparation influenced their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom; they did note large class size as a factor that has a significant effect on their confidence. The participants explained that sometimes when they had large inclusion classes, they did not believe they could adequately meet the needs of all students. Chingos (2013) made the argument that there is no ideal number or range for the perfect class size, the participants presented an argument for an optimal number with Participant TE5 suggesting 22-25 students in a classroom.

Five participants believed that small group instruction is a strategy they used in large classes as a means to meet all students' needs, as well as work with students on their IEP goals. Similar to Bettini et al. (2016) and Rakap (2017), examined the effectiveness of small group instruction as a useful strategy to reach the needs of all

students. This strategy provides teachers the opportunity to address the interests and needs of students in an intimate group versus a whole-group format (Bettini et al., 2016; Rakap, 2017). The participants also believed small groups gave them the chance to differentiate their instructional strategies and learning tasks. This is the reason why most of the participants desired ongoing, interactive PD that focuses on evidence-based differentiated instructional strategies.

All of the participants with a special education certification or master's degree in special education noted how simple instructional strategies they learned in their graduate or preservice programs on how to differentiate learning tasks could help general education teachers. Allday et al. (2013) and Dixon's (2014) studies focused on the importance of offering differentiation courses in order to equip preservice teachers with differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. Some type of differentiated technique is recommended to address the needs of all students (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2015). According to all participants, regardless of class size, there should be at least two adults in an inclusive classroom, and teachers should have appropriate and ample materials on various levels so they can accommodate the entire class.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases are described as patterns that are opposite to the themes that emerge during the data analysis (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009), participants can have different perspectives, and by the researcher, recognizing those perspectives, rather than excluding them, increases validity of the study. The participants followed a similar pattern of responses. Thus, no discrepant cases were found.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is not something used to increase reliability or credibility; however, it should be embedded in the methods that were used to get the data; this ultimately leads to credibility (Yin, 2016). In order to ensure trustworthiness, I stated who the participants were and clearly explained how the data were collected and analyzed, as well as my role as the researcher. A researcher develops a credible study by employing proper procedures to collect data and report unbiased interpretations of the findings (Yin, 2016).

Merriam (2009) explained there are reliability and validity procedures that are used to strengthen a study's credibility. I used member checking to ensure reliability. Member checking allows the participants to view the researcher's interpretation of their data transcription and allows the participants to provide some feedback on the preliminary interpretations and findings (Lodico et al., 2010). The participants were e-mailed their transcribed interview responses to review for any discrepancies, as well as my interpretation of the information before it was included in the final study.

Confirmability refers to validity of the findings. In other words, the findings are not based on the researcher's beliefs and experiences in order to make the data align with what the researcher believes. In fact, the data can be corroborated and are based on the participants' experiences and responses (Creswell, 2012*b*). Dependability is viewed as if another researcher conducted the same study; their findings will be the same (Lodico et al., 2010). To establish confirmability and dependability, I shared my study with an external auditor who signed a confidentiality agreement. The auditor did not know the

participants' names or where the study was conducted (see Lodico et al., 2010). Glesne (2011) suggested using an external auditor, a person who is not involved in one's study. The auditor inspects the researcher's process and data.

The transferability of research findings is the notion that the findings can be generalized to similar contexts or populations (Yin, 2016). Merriam (2009) added that qualitative researchers find it difficult to generalize their findings because the data gathered is from a small number of participants that were purposefully selected to discuss a specific phenomenon associated with a specific group or setting. Nevertheless, the reader can determine whether some or all of the findings can be generalized to their individual situation (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, some or all of the findings may be transferable to the reader's situations, but the findings were not generalized to similar contexts or populations. The findings came from a small group of teachers from one school and may not be explicable to other teachers within the same district as well as nationally; therefore, it is difficult to generalize the findings. None of the methods of trustworthiness were different than what was stated in Section 1.

Limitations

According to Glesne (2011), the researcher must detail the limitations of the individual study. There are limitations associated with this study. This case study investigated the perceptions of teachers at a particular inner-city elementary school; this limited me to a small population to get participants. This study was conducted with only seven participants from the same school. With only seven participants from the same school, there were not enough participants to generalize the findings. Location was also a

limitation, which was a small elementary school. Findings may have been different if multiple elementary schools of different sizes, as well as middle and high schools, were included in this study. Additionally, time was limited; this study was conducted during the fall of 2018-2019. If study was conducted over a longer period of time, this could have changed the study's findings. Lastly, the study only included teachers who taught or teach mathematics and reading in inclusive classrooms, as opposed to all content teachers (i.e., gym, art, science, and music).

Summary

I discussed the methodology and research design in detail in Section 2, as well as, the following topics: (a) criteria and justification for selecting participants, (b) gaining access to the participants, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) validity and reliability procedures, and (f) limitations. I also, included my findings; based on the participants' responses, PD on differentiation was desired to enhance their instructional practices in order to teach all students in an inclusive classroom. The participants highlighted class size as a challenge on many levels; therefore, general education students may exhibit below grade level, grade level, or advanced competencies at any given time. The participants who were dual certified with a special education certification or master's degree in special education had courses that focused on inclusive practices. Lastly, the participants that perceived their self-efficacy to be high regarding teaching students in an inclusive class was based on, their years of experience, collegial support, and knowledge. In Section 3, I described the project that was created, which was based on the findings.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The problem examined in this study was teachers' perceived inability to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom. Teachers' ability to effectively engage students in an inclusive classroom was influenced by the breadth and depth of the student needs and multiple factors related to the teachers (i.e., formal education, PD, hands-on experience, and perceptions of personal confidence in the inclusion setting). The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom as contributing to the local problem. I used semistructured interviews as a method of data collection. The teachers who took part in this study had taught or were still teaching in an inclusive classroom at the time of the study. Seven themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) need for inclusion-specific professional development and training on differentiated instruction, (b) challenges due to large inclusion class size, (c) resources and support, (d) integration of small group instruction in the inclusion setting, (e) how teachers' experiences changed their perceptions of and practices within inclusion classrooms, (f) importance of teacher preparedness and pre-service training for inclusion, and (g) teachers' long-standing perception of low self-efficacy and lack of confidence with respect to inclusion. The first theme, the need for inclusion-specific PD and training on differentiated instruction, was the major theme discovered. This was theme that all of the participants cited as an approach they thought could help improve students' achievement for both students with disabilities and general education students in an inclusion classroom.

Rationale

Some of the literature I cited in Section 1 highlighted the increase in the number of students with disabilities that received their instruction in a general education classroom, which led to the creation of large numbers of inclusion classrooms; however, there is no formal or mandated structure for inclusive classrooms (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). The benefits to students with disabilities learning within inclusive classrooms were cited in the literature. Royster et al. (2014) found that students in inclusion classrooms scored better report card grades than students that transferred from their general education classroom into a special education classroom. The researchers also reported that students in inclusive classrooms were less likely to be suspended for behavioral issues as compared to students who were transferred out of general education classes to receive special education services.

Special education acts and federal mandates were cited in Section 1 as reasons that led to more students with disabilities being educated in general education classrooms. All the participants agreed with the literature that supports inclusion and maintained as challenging as it can be at times, inclusion classrooms should continue to be developed. Five of the 7 participants explained that their perception changed after years of experience and working in an inclusion classroom. They believe that students with disabilities should be taught in an inclusive classroom. The other two participants with undergraduate degrees in special education also support inclusive classrooms. While all participants recognized the importance of inclusive classrooms, they expressed the need for inclusion of specific PD or training on differentiated instruction. Badri,

Aluaimi, Mohaidat, Yang, and Rashedi (2016) explained the commonly held belief is that teachers know all they need to know when they entered the profession, whereas the truth is there are many unknowns, and this is why PD is imperative. Traditionally, PDs were conducted by using a lecture format, done once, and were not individualized or relevant to the needs of the staff (Badri et al., 2016). Conversely, effective PD is structured opposite of the traditional approach, meaning participants are consistently involved in relevant PDs that allow time for reflection, professional discourse, and collaboration to critically assess current research and practices (Brigandi et al., 2019). Effective PD sessions enable teachers to stay abreast of new policies, mandates, and instructional best practices, teaching them what they do not already know (Badri et al., 2016).

Review of the Literature

The results of this study indicated that teachers need PD in the areas of inclusion and evidence-based inclusion practices. For this review of the literature, I used recent, relevant research from peer-reviewed journal and databases, such as SAGE and ERIC. The following terms were searched: inclusion, *inclusive classrooms, mainstream, special education, evidence-based inclusive practices, teachers' perceptions,* and *PD*. After the review of literature, I created a cohesive, 3-day PD that will expose teachers to an IEP, the components of an IEP, the historical foundation of inclusion, and differentiated practices. In addition, I will allocate ample time for the staff and teachers to collaborate.

Transformative Learning for Adults

Confusion occurs when individuals are unable to achieve immediate understanding (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow (2000) maintained that when a person does

not understand something, the individual usually relies on those considered to be experts or an authority figure to guide them. Transformative learning is focused on adult learners. Mezirow and Taylor (2009) defined transformative learning as a process when a person can transform challenging structures of reference in order to ensure completeness while being thoughtful, open, and emotionally able to change if needed. Transformative learning works best for an individual who has the ability to transform information into meaning and is premised on the belief that adult learners are cognizant of how they learn and why (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Illeris (2014) defined Mezirow's transformative learning "as the transformation of the learners' meaning perspectives, frames of reference, and habits of mind" (p. 148).

Mezirow et al. (2000) maintained that learning happens in 1 of 4 ways: (a) an individual elaborates on existing meaning schemes, (b) an individual learns new meaning schemes, (c) the learner integrates the new meaning schemes with existing meaning schemes, and (d) the learner transforms their beliefs to accommodate the new meaning schemes. The first stage of learning enables learners to start with what they know and then build on and revise that knowledge (Mezirow et al., 2000). The second stage permits learners to match existing schemes with their current points of view (Mezirow et al., 2000). Stages 3 and 4 occur when learners cannot solve a problem or gain understanding through existing or new meaning schemes (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

In addition to the learning process, Mezirow et al. (2000) explained that transformation occurs after some variations of the following 10 stages become clarified:

Stage 1: A disorienting dilemma.

Stage 2: Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame.

Stage 3: A critical assessment of assumptions.

Stage 4: Recognition that an individual's discontent and the process of transformation are shared.

Stage 5: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.

Stage 6: Planning a course of action.

Stage 7: Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing their plans.

Stage 8: Provisional trying of new roles.

Stage 9: Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.

Stage 10: Reintegration into an individual's life based on conditions dictated by their new perspective (p. 22).

The first phase leads to learning because people experience a disorienting dilemma when a new experience or knowledge does not fit into their preexisting meaning schemes, leading them to examine their feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame as well as critically assessing previously held assumptions (Mezirow et al., 2000). The first three phases of transformative learning lead to rational discourse and reflection. Two critical aspects of transformative learning, highlighted by Ginsberg, Knapp, and Farrington (2014), are reflection and discourse. Reflection allows for a learner to access understanding from previous experiences that lends to making the best decision (Mezirow et al., 2000). Rational discourse allows learners to examine their perspectives and those of others while being honest about their assumptions without being judgmental of others (Mezirow et al., 2000).

The Purpose and Structure of PD

As previously stated, all participants expressed a need for some type of PD. Several participants were specific on what type of PD they desired. Martin, Kragler, Quatroche, and Bauserman (2019) looked at three factors that contributed to improving and changing teachers' practices: (a) school context, (b) role of the administrator, and (c) cohesion between PD and needs of students and teachers. Martin et al. referenced Mezirow's adult learning theory during their examination of transformation of teachers' instructional strategies and explained they cannot be easily altered.

Kennedy (2016) found that practicing teachers find it difficult to implement what is learned at PD sessions. Teachers, especially veteran teachers, already have the strategies they believe work best, so they do not want to stop using their strategy for another that is unfamiliar. Patton et al. (2015) stated that PD is effective when teachers alter their current practices and that all PD should have the input of the: (a) subject matter coordinators, (b) school administrator, (c) district curriculum coordinators, and (d) superintendent. These stakeholders have both the power to ensure funding for initiatives and the leadership skills to promote collaboration amongst educators (Patton et al., 2015).

In addition to input from the subject matter coordinators, school administrator, district curriculum coordinators, and superintendent. Badri et al. (2016) stated teachers should be asked what type of PD they would like. Successful inclusive schools have a school-based process of learner-centered PD (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015). Royster et al. (2014) maintained that PD should be aligned to the needs of teachers and students in

the inclusive classroom. Patton et al. (2015) offered eight core features that administrators should consider in order to develop effective PD:

> (a) it is based on teachers' needs and interest, (b) acknowledges that learning is a social process, (c) includes collaborative opportunities within learning communities of educators, (d) ongoing and sustained, (e) treats teachers as active learners, (f) enhances teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge, (g) facilitated with care, and (h) focuses on improving learning outcomes for students. (pp. 29-35)

Patton et al. divided these core features into three categories of effectiveness: (a) teacher engagement (Core Features 1–4), (b) teaching practice (Core Features 5-7), and (c) student learning (Core Feature 8). These eight core features were based on the belief that teachers should be active participants in ongoing, interactive PD, and they should have a say in what and how they learn.

Allen and Penuel (2015) explained planned PD sessions should be presented clearly and should have a specific focus. Furthermore, they examined how teachers decide what they will use from PD sessions and found teachers process information through a sense making method. If there is any uncertainty or the information presented at the PD is not clear, teachers are less likely to use the information (Allen & Penuel, 2015). Information presented in PD sessions should be clear and concise. Allen and Penuel said teachers should have an understanding of how the new information is aligned with the curriculum, their instructional objectives and goals, materials and supplies, and time to collaborate with colleagues. If there are no conflicting issues with any of the

aforementioned, teachers will have a better sense of how to use the new information (Allen & Penuel, 2015).

PD that is effective and frequent means that more than one PD can positively influence teachers' attitudes, perceptions, self-efficacy, and confidence about teaching students with disabilities. Royster et al. (2014) explained and highlighted teachers' attitudes as being influential in the success or failure of an inclusive classroom and found that teachers were positively motivated after engaging in an effective PD session. Gaines and Barnes (2017) found that there are similarities and differences in teachers' perceptions and attitudes about inclusion across all grade levels and teaching experience. The researchers identified PD as the approach that should be used to equip general education teachers with the skills and strategies needed to teach students with disabilities.

PD should not be done all at one time. According to Gaines and Barnes (2017), more than one PD is needed for both novice and veteran general education teachers. The researchers explained that the teaching profession is ever changing; therefore, school administrators cannot rely on the experiences of a veteran teacher or the knowledge of a novice teacher. Martin et al. (2019) added that just like students, not all teachers are the same. The goal of PD is to help teachers build on their strengths and develop new skills, and PD will ensure that all teachers are aware of educational acts, laws, policies, and evidence-based practices (Gaines & Barnes, 2017; Martin et al., 2019).

PD and Teacher Collaboration

PD should specifically be considered and planned for both the general and special education teachers of inclusion to allow the teachers time to work together.

Patton et al. (2015) and Allen and Penuel (2015) underscored teacher collaboration as being an important component of an effective PD session. Petersen (2016) added PD should not focus on compliance but more on planning, teaching and making time for general and special education teachers to collaborate with one and another.

Weiss, Pellegrino, Regan, and Mann (2015) found that in a mid-Atlantic state that not one of the universities or colleges offered a collaborative or coteaching course. In the era of teacher accountability due to federal mandates that teachers are tasked with many responsibilities, the researchers said collaboration amongst colleagues should be a priority. As more inclusion classes were created, Bondie et al. (2019) noted an increase in teacher collaboration because, both general and special education teachers, had to work together to determine the most effective way to differentiate instruction to meet all students' needs. However, many believe that all teachers know how to collaborate; however, Weiss et al. stated that collaboration is a skill that should be fostered in preservice programs or PD.

Able et al. (2015) listed insufficient planning time given to general and special education teachers to collaborate as a factor that causes ineffectiveness in inclusion classrooms. Collaboration among teachers and staff are noted as an approach that leads to positive school culture (Martin el al., 2019). Collaborative discourse during PD allows teachers to learn from one another (Frankling et al., 2017). Dixon et al. (2014) suggested an effective strategy for PD that would accommodate the various needs of teachers, is a workshop format, structured so that teachers can collaborate to create tiered lessons.

PD on Differentiated Practices

PD should specifically be offered on differentiated practices. Frankling et al. (2017) examined teachers understanding, use of various instructional practices, and PD strategies. Frankling et al. found that teachers feel prepared and eager to apply learned practices, as a result of learned PD strategies and ongoing support. Differentiation affords students the opportunity to access their curriculum regardless of their academic levels (Frankling et al., 2017). The use of differentiation methods allows teachers to learn more about their students' interests and academic needs (Frankling, et al., 2017). When differentiated instruction was the common instructional method used by teachers, students showed academic growth and higher motivation (Turner & Solis, 2017). Frankling et al. concurred that differentiation will allow all students to have some type of academic growth. According to Tomlinson (2014), student growth should be determined individually as opposed to the class as a whole.

Turner and Solis (2017) acknowledged that more time has to be devoted to developing differentiated lessons and learning tasks for large classes. However, Yuen et al. (2018) found that differentiated instruction affords the teacher the opportunity to reach both struggling and advanced students in an instructional period. Tomlinson (2014) stated that there is more than one way to create an effective differentiated classroom. There are three areas the teacher can differentiate to improve student learning: (a) content, (b) process, (c) products, and environments of student learning. The curriculum content, students' interpretation, and student outcomes demonstrates the effectiveness of the teacher's strategies and the students learning capacity (Tomlinson, 2014).

Based on the literature, there is a need for differentiation in inclusive classrooms because there is a constant influx of students from various backgrounds, socio-economic levels, various levels of social, emotional, and academic needs entering schools daily. Therefore, there is a need for differentiated practices (Turner & Solis, 2017). It is the belief that general education teachers know how to differentiate lessons daily (Rubenstein et al, 2015). Turner and Solis (2017) found there were many inaccuracies about what differentiation is and how to differentiate lessons.

Similarly, Yuen et al. (2018) found through their project to determine the best ways to facilitate PD on differentiation for gifted learners. PD in the area of differentiation is needed to address all learning styles in a classroom. Effective PD leads to improved teacher knowledge and instructional practices. Specifically, targeted PD provided teachers with a better understanding of differentiation and how to apply their practices (Frankling et al., 2017).

PD in differentiation provided teachers with a better understanding of the curriculum, students' needs, and their teaching practices. Also, there was an increase in teachers' confidence regarding the application of differentiated practices as a result of PD (Frankling et al., 2017). PD should not be a one-time event. Dixon et al. (2014) found that the amount of PD on differentiation determined its implementation. Lastly, PD done in isolation or PD done once was not useful (Frankling et al., 2017).

Project Description

PD is defined as a professional learning opportunity structured to enhance a person's skills as it pertains to the individual's job (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). I

proposed PD titled: Inclusion Boot Camp. The following topics will be covered in the proposed PD sessions: (a) the purpose of inclusion, (b) how to read and understand students' IEPs, (c) meaningful accommodations and modifications, (d) collaborative planning with general and special education teachers, (e) direct instructional strategies, (f) differentiated instruction, (g) collaborative grouping, and (h) provide evidence-based instructional practices to develop and maintain an effective inclusive classroom (see Appendix). As noted, many of the participants specifically noted that they did not like "lecture format" PD sessions; this format did not allow for interaction, discussion, and collaboration with their colleagues. Therefore, the interactive PD sessions will last for 3 days and will be structured so that teachers are allocated time for professional, analysis, discourse and planning. The PD will be at the elementary school where the participants work. All teachers, not just the participants will be invited to attend.

I planned a 3-day PD, the time will be from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. McLeskey and Waldron (2015) stated that PD on successful inclusive school were more than 20 hours. Thus, the total amount of hours for the 3-day PD will be 22 hours and 20 minutes. Each day the sessions will start at 8 a.m., participants will have one ten-minute break and a 30 minutes lunch. Each day PD sessions will conclude at 4 p.m. The PD sessions will be facilitated by current and former special education teachers, teacher leaders, district special education directors, as well as current and former inclusion education teachers. Since most of the participants asked for time to collaborate with their colleagues, there will be at least 2 hours per day for discussion, planning, collaborative analysis, and interactive activities.

The first day will consist of the history of inclusion, education acts, and policies, and types of disabilities. Lastly, participants will gain an understanding of the purpose of an IEP, what to include in an IEP, and how to do progress monitoring of IEP goals. The second and third day will consist of reviewing evidence-based inclusion practices and planning. Specifically, on the second day, participants will review the multiple learning intelligence. In addition, participants will begin to review differentiated practices and begin planning. On the third day, there will be a review of the first 2 days. Participants will continue to review evidence-based inclusion instructional practices, plan for the upcoming school year, and complete an evaluation of the PD.

Resources and Existing Supports

The resources needed for these PD sessions will consist of technology and printed text. As stated, the sessions will be interactive. Thus, I will use a Smart Board to project the PowerPoint. Participants will be asked to use their phones or laptop computers to download apps that will allow them to respond to surveys, polls, and games about inclusion. Participants will be asked to read research about inclusion and annotate the documents in order, to participate in discussions. In addition, I will need access to a room with a Smart Board large enough to accommodate all the participants.

Administrators of effective schools will provide the staff with the necessary resources (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015). The site administrator offered support me in any way when I asked, and was granted permission to conduct the study. I have the support of the study site's administrator, site special education liaison, and the learning network special education director.

Potential Barriers and Potential Solutions to Barriers

There are several barriers: as stated, the PD sessions will be open to all of the staff; however, they will not be mandated to attend. Participants will attend on a volunteer basis. Consequently, this limit school-wide learning is in support of a school and district initiative. Another barrier of the voluntary participation is that a participant may decide not to attend all three days. This will not only limit what the participant learns but as the facilitator, I may have to work with different participants every day or for only part of the day. I do not have the funds to compensate teachers that attend. Teachers are only at work five days before students return, so the PD sessions could only be 3 days. Also, due to other district initiatives, staff maybe mandated to attend other PD sessions during the same days and times as my sessions. Lastly, the PD sessions are planned for more than twenty hours, and it is limited to just 3 days at the beginning of the year.

The ideal solution for the aforementioned barriers would be to mandate the PD sessions for the entire staff. In addition, the entire staff should be required to attend all three of the PD sessions. The staff that attends should be compensated and given continuing education credits. These sessions will expose the entire staff meaning not just teachers to the many ways to reach a student. After all, students' academic performance in the existing inclusion classes is what provoked this study.

Proposal for Implementation and Timeline

The proposed plan will be presented to the site administrator in May 2020 and presented in August 2020. I will meet with the administrator, school special education

liaison and learning network's special education director one time in June to thoroughly plan the 3-day PD sessions. The sessions will be offered when the teachers return to school from summer break in August. Since teachers work for a week in August without students, the PD sessions with be held during this time to accommodate their schedules. During our meeting, they will view the PowerPoint and resources. I will also meet with the administrator, school special education liaison, and learning network special education director one hour before the start on the day of the first presentation. The aforementioned people will be debriefed each day at the conclusion of each session to ensure understanding of the topics addressed on each day.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school administrator, school's special education liaison, district network, and special education director were listed as the individuals needed to support this project. However, I will act as the creator and facilitator of the project. As stated, I created the project based on data collected from the interviews. I will be responsible for contacting and coordinating meetings with the school administrator, school's special education liaison, and district network's special education director. I am also responsible for creating the agenda for our meetings, following up with deliverables discussed at the meetings, and creating an evaluation to determine the usefulness of the PD session. Lastly, I am responsible for ensuring the participants have what they need.

The school administrator is essential for determining the success of the staff and is tasked with developing PD that are aligned to district and school initiatives and goals, as well as state and federal initiatives (Martin et al., 2019). Bai and Martin (2015)

conducted a quantitative study on school administrators to determine what they need to appropriately educate students with disabilities. All participants identified PD on how to teach and provide services to students with disabilities was identified by all participants as something they need in order to effectively educate students with disabilities.

Moreover, school leaders' attitudes and perceptions were cited as being influential with the development of effective inclusion classrooms (Bai et al., 2015). Thus, the primary role of the administrator will be projecting a positive attitude about the project and encouraging the staff to attend the PD sessions. The administrator will also be asked to help me ensure all logistical things are done (i.e., ensuring the classroom is readily accessible with the needed technology).

Lastly, as mentioned the administrator will meet with me to review the project. The school's special education and learning network's special education director will be responsible for reviewing the project and offering any necessary information to add to the project. They will also be responsible for informing me of school and district initiatives about inclusion.

Project Evaluation Plan

Type of Evaluation

I will use formative evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the project. The participants will be asked to do exit questions throughout the 3-day PD. The participants will be asked to do daily exit tickets about the day's presentation about what they learned and will use during the upcoming school year. On the third day, in addition to the

question's participants will be asked what they would keep or change about the PD in regard to time and activities.

Overall Evaluation Goals and Stakeholders

The goal of using formative evaluations is to gather immediate feedback about the information that is being presented. This feedback will be help in assess whether or not the goals were met. Additionally, it will allow me to see what instructional practices presented were most beneficial to the participants (i.e., they can use in their classrooms the upcoming school year). Lastly, the formative evaluations will allow the participants to reflect on what they learned, as well as their instructional practices.

The key stakeholders for this project are the school administrator, teachers, support staff, and the school's lead teachers. The administrator will gain an understating of what is needed at the beginning of the year to make their inclusive classrooms successful. The teachers will directly benefit by learning about inclusion, evidence-based instructional strategies, time to collaborate, and plan with their colleagues. Similar to the teachers, the support staff will learn about inclusion, evidence-based instructional strategies, ways to support the teachers, and time to work with the teachers. The school's lead teachers will have strategies they can explore further to continue to assist the teachers throughout the school year.

Project Implications

Social Change Implications

The project was created to facilitate positive social change for teachers and students in the classrooms. The project was developed to provide teachers the

opportunity to collaborate and plan, as well as have an understanding of the purpose of inclusion. The participants will be given several evidence-based strategies that they can employ. The study and project could be used as the foundation for planning ongoing, interactive inclusion PD sessions throughout the school year. A similar PD can provide novice and veteran teachers with instructional practices to eliminate or decrease some of the challenges cited in this study and others associated with inclusion classrooms. The overall effect of PD teachers will feel more prepared to teach all students regardless of the class size since the teachers or principal cannot control the size of each class.

Importance of Project

The project was created as a response to the participants' requests and what they believed they need to be effective. The project was developed after a qualitative case study was conducted to address the local problem. Subsequently, the project was designed to provide teachers time to collaborate, plan, and learn evidence-based inclusion strategies. Additionally, participants will gain an understanding of the need for inclusion, research that supports inclusion, and the components of an IEP.

Summary

In Section 3, I discussed the rationale, timeline, existing supports, barriers, project evaluations pertaining to the proposed PD project, and the social implications of the project and the importance of the project. In Section 4, I explained my project's strengths and limitations. The following was also discussed in Section 4: (a) scholarship, (b) project development, (c) leadership, (d) change, (e) reflection of the importance of the work, (f) implications, (g) applications, and (h) direction for future research.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Prior to the study, several education acts and policies led to the creation of inclusive classrooms, which I researched and used during data collection. During this study, many challenges and unknowns about how to create an effective inclusion classroom were revealed. In addition, the extant research consisted of how teachers' attitudes and perceptions can influence the success of an inclusion classroom and student achievement. The findings of this study are similar to much of the research I reviewed that indicated the importance of field experience, lack of a defined structure of an effective inclusion classroom, and lack of courses offered that focuses on inclusive practices in their preservice programs. While I cited research about how teachers' attitudes and perceptions about inclusion were influenced by the lack of inclusive training they received in their preservice programs. Contrarily, the participants did not cite a lack of preservice training on inclusive practices as a challenge or factor that influenced their attitude or perceptions about inclusion; however, they said they did not receive inclusion training in their general education preservice training.

The participants cited large inclusion class size as a challenge that affects their confidence. All the participants believed they should have more than one PD session on inclusion and instructional practices and that the sessions should be interactive. Subsequently, I created a project to address the participants' desires for PD on inclusion and evidence-based strategies that can be used regardless of the class size.

In this qualitative study, I conducted interviews as part of the data collection process. A second literature review was completed after my data analysis that focused on

the PD project. The project is planned to be delivered over a span of 3 days. To address participant requests, I developed several PD activities to allow teachers time to collaborate over the 3 days. The structure of this study in sections provided me with several opportunities to reflect over the course of its development. In this section, I present my reflections and conclusions.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The project, a PD on inclusion, and the effective inclusive practices it provides training on was the major strength. Frankling et al. (2017), Turner and Solis (2017), Yuen et al. (2018), and Dixon et al. (2014) stated that PD on inclusive practices are essential for the development and success of inclusive classrooms. Other strengths of this project that are crucial to the success of inclusive classrooms are: (a) understanding the components of an IEP, (b) education acts, (c) the policies and historical foundation of inclusion, (d) a list of evidence-based instructional practices given, and (e) time to collaborate and plan with colleagues.

The first strength is understanding the components of an IEP. Since participant general education teachers noted they only had one required course during their preservice training about special education, I felt that participants should know and understand the purpose of and what should be included in an IEP, especially because the IEP is comprises the legal documents that generate the academic programming for students with disabilities.

The second strength of the project was the historical foundation of education acts and policies that is included in the PD, so participants can see a timeline of legal cases

and education acts that led to inclusion. I felt this was important to do on the first day to set the foundation for other topics that will be presented. I thought it was also important for the participants to have an understanding that inclusion is not a local practice by seeing how legal rulings across the nation led to schools having some type of inclusion classrooms.

The third strength is that a list of evidence-based instructional practices for differentiation was provided to the participants. I felt it was important to give teachers a list of evidence-based practices because some participants specifically asked for evidence-based strategies to ensure they were reaching all the students in their inclusion classroom. The list also allowed teachers to see if they used some of the evidence-based practices and see other strategies they may not have tried so they can select ones to employ during the upcoming school year.

The last strength was allocating ample time for the participants to collaborate and plan for the upcoming school year. Some participants in the study felt like they could benefit from working with the special education teachers and vice versa. During the collaboration time, teachers review scenarios, acts, policies, components of an IEP, and evidence-based strategies with one another. This will permit the participants to learn from and problem-solve with each other.

I also identified several limitations to this project. The first is that I would be the only facilitator; therefore, participants cannot learn from and hear the experiences of other professionals. The PD was created only for the staff at the study site rather than other elementary schools in the district or learning network. Lastly, the project was

restricted to 3 days in length as opposed to being provided continuously throughout the school year; therefore, other PD on inclusive evidence-based practices will have to planned throughout the school year.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

It could be beneficial to examine the problem through other people associated with the development of inclusion programs, such as school administrators. Martin et al. (2019) highlighted that school administrators play a pivotal role in the development of an effective inclusion classroom and PD for the staff. Able et al. (2015) revealed, both general and special education teachers, reported a lack of support from staff and school administrators within their schools as well as insufficient planning time to ensure collaboration. Patton et al. (2015) added school administrators should provide a forum where teachers can discuss, analyze, and reflect on their practices with one another. Murphy (2018) offered nine tips and 11 useful instructional strategies that school administrators can employ to enhance their inclusion programs, explaining that school administrators do not feel prepared to create effective inclusion classrooms. Therefore, future researchers could seek to understand the challenges administrators have with structuring and staffing inclusion classrooms, their inclusion training and preservice experiences, as well as creating rosters that will allow, both general and special education teachers, adequate time to plan differentiated lessons.

Instead of using a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach can be employed to this topic. A qualitative approach limited this study to a small elementary school, whereas a quantitative approach would enable researchers to have a larger sample

population because unlike in a qualitative approach, the researcher would be looking for statistical significance (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). Both qualitative and quantitative studies allow researchers to explore participants' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, but a quantitative approach allows the findings to be generalized to a larger sample population (Lodico et al., 2010). In addition, this approach would enable researchers to use more ways to gather data, other than interviews, observations, and document reviews, such as online surveys, online polls, paper surveys, telephone surveys, etc. (Creswell, 2009, 2012*b*; Lodico et al., 2010).

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

I learned several things as a result of conducting this study and developing the subsequent project, including how to effectively research and apply what was learned to assist the participants in this study and how to effectively analyze data. In other words, I no longer review data from one prospective or am I biased when analyzing data. Subsequently, excuses are no longer made when I review data. Now, I analyze data to find trends and develop possible solutions. Through this process, an understanding of the importance of using current research and reviewing an abundance of literature was reached. Moreover, I learned that being a researcher is an ongoing progression, meaning I learned I am a forever learner.

This particular journey made me a better school administrator because of the things learned during this process. The same due diligence I used to research my topic and project is what I now devote to finding solutions at work when presented with a problem. Now, I constantly ask teachers to speak using data instead of only their

opinions. I have conducted or developed PD on how to analyze data, inclusion, and inclusion evidence-based practices. Numerous times, I have had members of my leadership team investigate certain topics and support their ideas for solutions with current research. I never did these things before this project and study.

As a school administrator for 10 years, I have been tasked with developing projects and PD sessions on numerous topics; however, this study was a totally different process. As previously stated, this project was derived after completion of a data analysis process. The other projects and PDs I have developed or set up were not conducted for personal research. Some projects or PDs were created based on my observations of the teachers and staff; however, most were mandated by district officials, and I did not know why they were necessary. Consequently, this was my first time creating a project after I conducted interviews and reviewed research, which created challenges such as what to include, how much to include and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. These challenges led me to do additional research to find solutions.

Going through the process of creating and conducting this study, I learned several things as an administrator and school leader. First, I learned the importance of being prepared. This was the participants first time being a part of a study; therefore, my preparation for how to conduct a study and being aware of certain things that could skew the data made me successful in conducting the study without making any major mistakes. Additionally, being flexible was another skill that was enhanced by being the leader conducting this study. Participants had to change dates, times, and locations of the interviews, sometimes on the day of the scheduled interview, and some participants gave

more in-depth answers than others. However, being prepared allowed me to be flexible and able to ask follow-up questions to get complete, detailed answers.

As a current school leader and administrator, conducting this study illustrated the importance of PD. As a leader, I agree with the literature presented in the previous section that not all teachers are the same. Specific to inclusion, the assumption cannot be made that all teachers know how to serve all students in an inclusion classroom; therefore, PD on inclusion and evidence-based strategies should be ongoing. I now also have a better understanding of the importance of scheduling time for teachers and staff to collaborate during PD sessions and at least once per week. This will prevent teachers feeling like they have to work and solve problems by themselves. Overall, I learned from this process that an effective leader facilitates positive change.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

This was not a large study regarding the number of participants; however, I do believe the data collected will be beneficial for the participants, their colleagues, and the study site school administrator. The project was developed based on the participants' desire to have an ongoing, interactive PD on inclusion and effective inclusion practices. The most important thing I learned is to ask teachers what they want, listen, and use their responses when applicable to develop PD sessions. Lastly, I found that teachers know what they want and recognize when they need help.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications for Social Change

Current and previous federal and state mandates for students with disabilities were enacted with the goal of providing a fair and appropriate education for all students. As a result of these mandates, the number of students in inclusion classrooms increased. In this study, I provided accounts of teachers' perceptions of their confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom based on their preservice and current training. There are positive implications for social change for general and special education teachers, as well as all students in an inclusive classroom that will facilitate their academic growth.

If teachers were able to meet the needs of all students, they could all be more successful. For example, teachers feeling more confident and with a higher level of self-efficacy as a result of more PD may remain in the teaching profession longer, having a positive influence on, both general and special education teachers, and students (Able et al., 2015). Moreover, an increase of adequate PD could lead to teachers feeling more confident with larger class sizes, resulting in them being less likely to leave the profession.

Positive social change could occur on the school level by the implementation of the ongoing, interactive PD sessions. PD sessions such as: (a) a focus on evidence-based inclusive practices, (b) how to differentiate learning tasks, and (c) how to use given materials to meet the needs of all students. Sessions that granted general and special education teachers the opportunity to collaborate and plan based on the evidence-based instructional strategies given at the PD. These types of PD sessions will allow teachers

an opportunity to gain the desired evidence-best instructional inclusive strategies (i.e., how to differentiate lessons and learning tasks to meet the needs of all students in an inclusion classroom; Allday et al., 2013; Dixon, 2014).

Furthermore, the results of this study could give the school administrator and other administrators the type of PD sessions to develop for their staff. Therefore, school administrators will benefit by having an informed, knowledgeable, and trained staff. Lastly, undergraduate preservice programs can develop programs that are comprised of more than one special education course and mandate that all students take inclusive courses. Zagona et al. (2017) added that preservice programs should require field experience in successful inclusion classrooms. As a result, the inclusive classroom experience will improve and ultimately lead to increased student achievement for all students.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the participants' responses and themes, it was imperative that additional inclusive PD is conducted. This study findings revealed veteran teachers' confidence had not been negatively influenced although, they lacked inclusive training in their preservice undergraduate courses. The participants believe that ongoing, interactive inclusion PD can enhance their instructional practice, as well as their colleagues, especially the general education teachers that do not have a special education certification or college degree in this area. Future research should examine the various types of ongoing PD (i.e., evidenced-based inclusive PD along with a coach that assists teachers after each PD

session). Differentiated PD should be offered, meaning teachers are assigned to PD sessions based on their individual needs.

I recommend that future inclusion studies be conducted on a larger scale at middle and high schools since this one was done at a small elementary school and seven participants findings cannot be generalizable. There should be more than seven participants that focused on various content teachers (i.e., art, gym, music, linguistic, and computer science). I would like to see their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of teaching both students with disabilities and general education students in an inclusive setting and whether their experience is similar to reading and mathematics teachers.

This study contains a purposeful sampling of, both general and special education teachers. However, further studies can be conducted with just special education teachers in order to get their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about inclusion and working with general education teachers in an inclusion classroom. I would also like for them to share what their preservice training was like. Their attitudes about students with disabilities taking standardized assessments on grade level instead of the level stated in their IEP. Also, future studies with just general education teachers with 20 and more years of experience. I would like to see what they remembered about their preservice programs and their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about inclusion.

Research should be conducted in affluent and high-poverty neighborhood schools in order to gain an in-depth view of the number of inclusive classrooms and students, how the inclusion classrooms are structured, programs used, types of technology used, and whether there is a special education teacher or a classroom assistant in each inclusion

classroom. Qualitative data collected can be similar to the aforementioned: their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about inclusion and their preservice training.

Class size was also a challenge in this study; however, after a review of current literature, I found that this needs to be explored further. Although research in this area is limited, further research is recommended to determine the effect of large versus small inclusion class size. Furthermore, research should also be conducted on the effect of the physical environment on inclusive classrooms. In addition to the ideal class size, how many adults should be assigned to an inclusion classroom and how should small groups be organized (i.e., with students on the same levels or homogeneously). Furthermore, a study with just classroom assistants to gain understanding of their training on the implementation of effective instructional strategies that can be used to assist their general and special education colleagues and their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about inclusion.

Conclusion

Research cited in this paper noted that the percentage of students with disabilities who are receiving their daily instruction in general education classrooms alongside their general education peers has greatly increased (Pierson & Howell, 2013). As a result, teachers who may not have any preservice training are being tasked with teaching both students with disabilities and general education students, simultaneously. The district and school have implemented required district and federal mandates, as well as the suggested best practices of inclusive classrooms. Students with disabilities are permitted to learn in the least restrictive environment (IDEA, 2004); however, students at the study

site school that were in the inclusive classrooms underperformed according to the district and state's annual school's report card. The findings presented in this study showed all the participants had a positive attitude toward inclusive classrooms. Although, all participants stated they did not require adequate special education or inclusion training in their undergraduate course, it did not have a negative influence on their confidence or self-efficacy. Contrary to Able et al. (2015), who maintained that teacher's self-efficacy is negatively manipulated if they do not receive adequate training in their preservice program.

Both general and special education teachers, expressed a desire for ongoing, interactive, and collaborative trainings and PD sessions on research-based inclusive practices. Although Hill, Beisiegel, and Jacob (2013) findings showed for years district officials and schools administrations have allocated a large number of funds for PD; however, there is not a lot of evidence that shows PD sessions are useful. Brigandi et al. (2019) agreed that there is no conclusive evidence of the effectiveness of PD. However, the participants believe that ongoing PD will afford them the opportunity to learn and collaborate on current and all best practices. Thoughtful, ongoing, and meaningful PD should be provided, it should be required of educators to be active, reflective participants with their pedagogy in order to improve student learning (Patton et al., 2015).

Based on the data I collected, teachers want interactive PD sessions on evidence-based inclusive with a focus on differentiated instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of all students. As noted by Rubenstein et al. (2015), the assumption is often made that teachers know how and do differentiate the delivery of a lesson and create

differentiated learning tasks. Where, in fact, not all teachers know how to differentiate the delivery and create differentiated learning tasks. Factors that may contribute to teachers lacking the ability to adapt lessons other than adequate training; data is not collected and used to create lessons, learning tasks are designed to mirror the state's standardized assessments. Subsequently, students' learning processes are not the focus of this approach; students' work products are the focus (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2015). Participants in this study believed being knowledgeable of how to differentiate would enable them to enhance their small instruction groups. Acquiring these skills can have a positive influence on teachers' confidence to meet the needs of all students. Although, the participants said they believed in the concept of inclusion and their abilities to teach all students they believe they need to constantly learn and review evidence-based inclusive practices.

The majority of the participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy was based on how previous students with disabilities performed in their class and if they made significant improvement within an academic year according to the students' IEP goals. As mentioned, this did not support initial research presented in the study. The participants noted another challenge, class size as influencing their consciousness more so because they often felt like they did not have the training, resources, and support to address the needs of all students. As a result of this study, positive social change could facilitate the implementation of ongoing, interactive, effective PD sessions, appropriate support, resources and materials for both students learning in inclusion classrooms. Lastly, a close examination of preservice programs will allow future teachers to meet the

needs of all students, subsequently ensuring that all students benefit from learning in an inclusive classroom.

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Appendix: The Project

The project is a three day professional development titled : *Inclusion Boot Camp.* The agendas are listed below:

Agenda Day 1

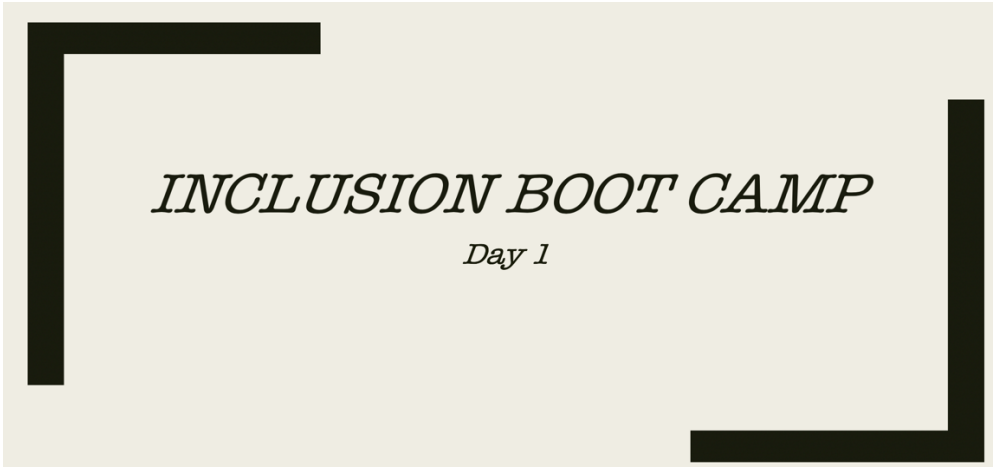
Ice Breaker
What is Inclusion?
Special Education Acts
Least Restrictive Environment
Special Education Services
Break
Individualized Education Plan
Lunch
Academic Modifications
Exit Evaluation

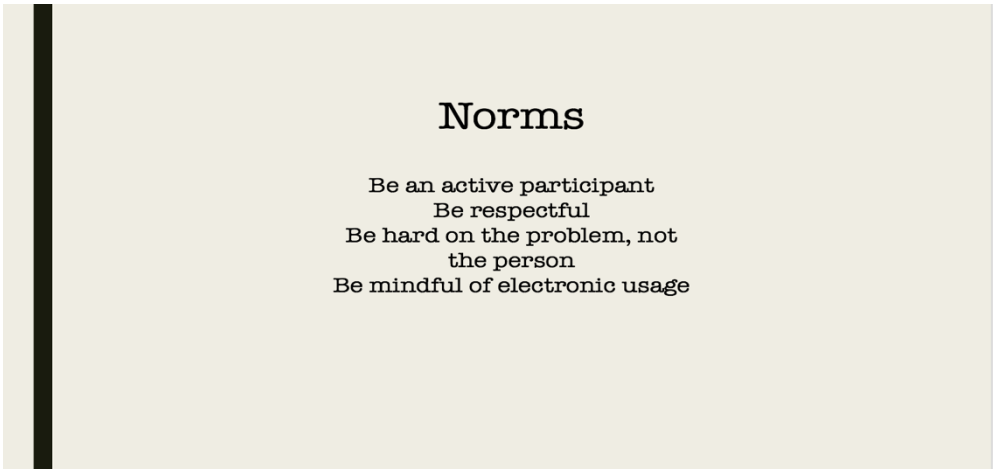
Agenda Day 2

Team Building Activity
Review of Yesterday
Differentiated Instruction
Break
Differentiated Instruction Strategies
Lunch
Multiple Learning Styles
Exit Evaluation

Agenda Day 3

Ice Breaker
Review Activity
Break
Lesson Plan Activity
Lunch
Individual Lesson Planning
Exit Evaluation


INCLUSION BOOT CAMP
Day 1


Norms
Be an active participant
Be respectful
Be hard on the problem, not the person
Be mindful of electronic usage


Agenda
Ice Breaker
What is Inclusion?
Special Education Acts
Least Restrictive Environment
Special Education Services
Break
Individualized Education Plan
Lunch
Academic Modifications
Exit Evaluation

Ice Breaker
"Huggy Bear"

The facilitator will say a number from 1-9, the participants will have to get in a group based on the number said. The last person that doesn't make it into the group is out of the game.

Jot & Chat

What does inclusion mean to you? Write about a time you were or felt excluded from your peers or family. After three minutes, you will turn and chat with someone at your table.

What is inclusion?

- All students learn alongside one another in a general education classroom.
- Students with an IEP still receive their services in the general education classroom.

Benefits of Inclusion

- All students have access to the same curriculum
- Students learn about and accept differences in one another
- Encourages a positive school culture of acceptance
- Students with disabilities are restricted to one class

Timeline of Special Education Acts

1975 — The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)

- All students with physical and mental disabilities that attended a public school
- Have the same access to the curriculum as their general education peers
- Receive a free lunch

1997 — Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The EAHCA was amended to the (IDEA)

2002 — No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- This act set a criteria that all students would be proficient in reading and math on their state assessment by 2004.

2004 — Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

- Requires that students with disabilities have equal access to the same curriculum as their general education peers known as FAPE, which is Free Appropriate Public Education.
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Amended to enhance federal mandates in order to increase local and state accountability when educating students with disabilities

2015 — Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- ESSA did not rely solely on standardized assessment scores to determine student success and schools had more autonomy
- Each state had to create and get approval of a plan that showed how they would use federal funds to ensure impartiality and transparency

Jigsaw of Special Education Acts

Participants will count off numbers from 1-5. Each group will read the actual act: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Participants will summarize their act for the entire group.

Jot & Chat

Summarize the educational acts we just reviewed. Do you think the current act ESSA is being implemented appropriately at the school and the district? After three minutes, you will turn and chat with someone at your table.

What is the least restrictive environment? (LRE)

Time to Talk

Discuss with someone wearing the same colors as you discuss what is the least restrictive environment? Also, how does the staff determine what students can learn in the least restrictive environment? You have five minutes to discuss.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Where possible students with disabilities learn alongside their non-disabled peers.

Types of Special Education Services

according to IDEA

Autism
Blindness
Deafness
Emotional Disturbance
Hearing Impairment
Intellectual Disability
Multiple Disabilities

Orthopedic Impairment
Other Health Impaired
Specific Learning Disability
Speech or Language Impairment
Traumatic Brian Injury
Visual Impairment

Jot & Chat

Think about a student that you taught or worked with that had one of the aforementioned disabilities and how you provided their academic services. After three minutes, you will turn and chat with someone in the room that you haven't spoke to today for three additional minutes.

Break Time

Individualized Education Plan
What is an IEP?

An IEP is a legal document comprised of the student's disability, current academic achievement levels, functional performance, services that will be provided by the school, assessments that will be used to assess learning, educational and/or behavioral goals, accommodations, and student and parental input. Also, an explanation is required about how the student's disability will affect the student's ability to access the general curriculum.

Main Components of an IEP

Main Components of an IEP

1. Present levels-record students current academic and functional levels. Determine a baseline score because this will help determine the student's goal.
2. Annual Goals-a measurable goal is required for every cited need.
3. Services and support-what supports will be provided so students can access the general curriculum and make progress towards their IEP goals.

Think-Pair and Share

Review six types of excerpts of IEPs of students that were placed in general education classrooms. Review the IEPS and categorize the IEP clearly understand what is expected (clear and precise), have some understanding (not sure), and not sure at all (no clarity).

Lunch Break

What are academic modifications?

Adapt instructional delivery and/or learning tasks to assist students with accessing the general curriculum.

What types modifications have you provided?

Time to Talk

Discuss with someone wearing different color shoes the type of modification you provide or provided.

Types of modifications

- Presentation accommodations-audio, information chunking, large print, visual aids, notes, number and sequence the directions, music, videos and outlines
- Timing accommodations-rearrange student schedule, extend students' time, offer breaks, and alert student before time is up
- Response accommodations-visual aids, work with a partner, use fill-in worksheets, allow for choice, dictate answers and speech to text software
- Setting accommodations- make sure the are area is clutter free, reduce distractions, have seats separated, and sit the student in an appropriate but desired area.

Work with a partner ?

Think-Pair-Share

Select a partner review the previous list of disabilities, choose one disability, research modifications in each category that can be used to assist the student with accessing the general curriculum in an inclusion class. We will share our responses.

Exit Evaluation

Please write something new you learned today, something you can try in your class and what would you like me to discuss the next two days.

References:

Slides 6-7:
McLeskey, J. & Waldron, N. (2015). Effective leadership makes schools truly inclusive. *Phi Delta Kappan, 96*(5), 68-73.
Slide 8:
Davidson, E., Reback, R., Rockoff, J., & Schwartz, H. (2015). Fifty ways to leave a child behind: Idiosyncrasies and discrepancies in states' implementation of NCLB. *Educational Researcher*, *44*(6), 347-358
Slide 13:
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Data, (2004). *Annual report to congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Special Education.
Slides 16-18:
Rotter, K. *(2014).* IEP use by general and special education teachers, *Sage Open, 0*(0), 1-8.
Slides 21-23:
Martinelli, M. (2018, March 21). 19 Simple Student Accommodations That Work. Retrieved from https://www.weareteachers.com/19-simple-student-accommodations-that-work/
Watson, Sue. (2020, February 11). A List of Accommodations to Support Student Success. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/accommodations-to-support-student-success-3110984

INCLUSION BOOT CAMP

Day 2

Norms

Be an active participant
Be respectful
Be hard on the problem, not the person
Be mindful of electronic usage

Agenda

Team Building Activity
Review of Yesterday
Differentiated Instruction
Break
Differentiated Instruction Strategies
Lunch
Multiple Learning Styles
Exit Evaluation

Team Building Activity "What is your birthday?"

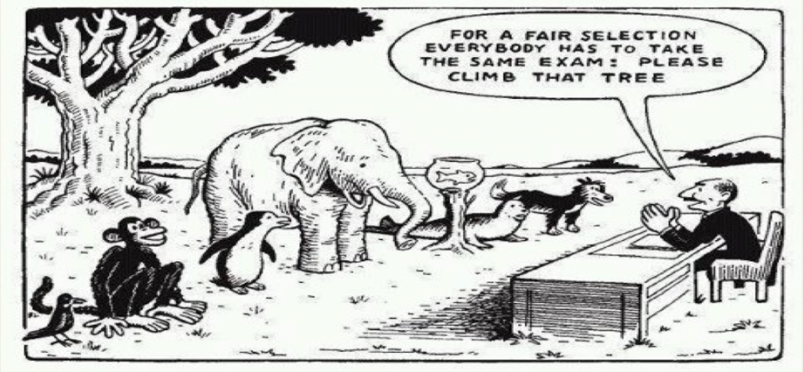
Everyone will form a straight line based on your birthday. You cannot talk while during this activity. When you think you are in the correct spot raise your hand. After everyone has their hand up, the first person will say their birthday, then the second person, this will go on until we reach the last person.

Team Building Activity
"What is your birthday?"

Everyone will form a straight line based on your birthday. You cannot talk while during this activity. When you think you are in the correct spot raise your hand. After everyone has their hand up, the first person will say their birthday, then the second person, this will go on until we reach the last person.

What is differentiated instruction?

You will be given two minutes to write your understanding of differentiated instruction.



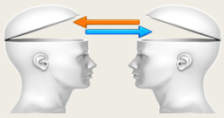
Jot & Chat

Write down possible challenges for each animal. Find someone that you have not worked with and discuss what you both wrote. As a pair discuss what could be done to allow each animal to be successful with climbing the tree. You will be given fifteen minutes for this activity.

Differentiated Instruction

"Differentiated Instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to student differences. Rather than marching students through the curriculum lockstep, teachers should modify their instruction to meet students' varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests. Therefore, the teacher proactively plans a variety of ways to 'get it' and express learning." Carol Ann Tomlinson

Compare and contrast



Take ten minutes, compare and contrast your explanation of differentiated instruction to Carol Tomlinson's explanation. Identify what is the same and different between the two explanations. Share your response with two different people at your table. You will be given ten minutes.

Ways to differentiate instruction:

- Content
- Process
- Product

Ways to differentiate instruction:

- There are three areas the teacher can differentiate to improve student learning: content, process, products and environments of student learning.
- The content is what students need to learn based on their curriculum.
- Process is how the student interprets the content.
- The product is student work; this is how students demonstrate what they learned.

Jigsaw of Ways to Differentiate

Please divide yourselves into groups of three. Count off from 1-3. The number you say is the term you will research: (1) research content, (2)process and (3) product . Use your lap top to research the term. Summarize the meaning of your assigned term, write two examples and share them with the other two people in your group.

Differentiation

- Differentiation
- Differentiation strategies
- How teachers can differentiate
- According to students interest

Benefits of Differentiated Instruction

- Increases student engagement
- Improved students' academic growth
- Improved students' conceptual understanding

Discuss

Break Time

Differentiated Instruction

"Differentiation is simply a teacher attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small groups of students, rather than teaching a class as though all individuals in it were basically alike."-Carol Ann Tomlinson

Differentiated Instructional Strategies

- Flexible small groups- create flexible small groups based on the skills being taught or the learning task.
- Questioning- ask complex tiered questions daily or as often as possible. Thus, students have an opportunity to answer simple recall questions to application questions where students apply new knowledge to answer a question to evaluative/analysis questions.
- Learning stations- stations are designed to allow groups of students to work on certain skills. You can assign students to stations or allow students to select what stations they want to work at on certain days. Examples of stations: reading, creating illustrations graphs, pictures, do puzzles, or complete writing assignment.
- Problem-based learning-students actively search for answers or solutions to a given problem, as opposed to the teacher or staff showing the students how to solve the question or problem.

Discuss

Differentiated Instructional Strategies

- Choice Boards-students are allowed to select their learning tasks from a list of options. Thus, students can choose how they want to show what they know through: drawing, writing, creating a monologue etc.
- Think-Pair Share-students are allowed to think about their answer, collaborate with someone else to discuss their answer and then share their answers with the entire class.
- Small Learning groups- students are grouped by similar learning needs and learning interests. The teacher or staff works with the group on a specific need or enrichment skill.
- Ongoing assessments-give students pre assessments so you can plan accordingly and post assessments to see what they learned. Also, give students interim assessments between the pre and post assessments such as: classwork, projects, homework, etc. to progress monitor students.

Discuss

Types of Differentiated Strategies & Resources

- Audio books
- Charts and illustrations
- Design the room for flexible grouping
- Alternative seating
- Various types of books in every genre
- Easels, computers, and other electronic devises

Discuss

Carol Ann Tomlinson

- https://youtu.be/LGYa6ZacUTM
- https://youtu.be/3TRGI3iXoAE

Jot & Chat

Write down anything new you learned from watching the video clips or something you still want to know. Discuss your response with a partner at your table. You will have ten minutes and then we will share out some responses.

Lunch Break

Multiple Learning Styles/Intelligences

Howard Gardner found that students have different learning styles. Gardner explained there are eight types of intelligence: bodily-kinesthetic, inter-personal, intra-personal, linguistic, logical-mathematic, musical, naturalistic, and spatial. Students could have more than one learning style.

Bodily-kinesthetic-students are considered athletic; they have the ability to use use their body to complete activities, learn, solve problems, etc.

Students may like to act out what their responses, dance, physical competitions, etc.

Inter-personal- students are keen to other's feelings.

Students may like working with others such as groups or pairs, helping others,

Intra-personal-students are self-aware. Thus, they have an understanding of their feelings emotions and thoughts.

Students may ask to work by themselves and are likely to set goals for themselves.

Linguistic-students are skilled at spoken and written language.

Students may like to read, writing essay, stories, poems, play word games, give oral presentations, etc.

Discuss

Multiple Learning Styles/Intelligences

Logical-mathematical-students have the ability to think abstractly.

Students may like to use numbers to solve problems, work with numbers, solve mysteries, puzzles, or devise a strategy to solve a problem, etc.

Musical-students are capable of writing, comprehending and evaluating different types of music. Process learning through beats and rhythms.

Students may like to compose songs, raps, listen to music, play instruments, perform a musical selection, etc.

Naturalistic- students are environmentally aware and can classify things like plants, animals, and other things related to nature. Students like being outside.

Students may like to start a recycling or garden club. Students may also like to observe and discuss things in nature.

Visual-Spatial-students have the ability to understand and manipulate all types of spaces.

Students may like to paint, create models, draw, interpret a painting, etc.

Discuss

Video Clips on Multiple Intelligences

https://youtu.be/UHMzELRpLr0
https://youtu.be/1wkFGXqJxas

Jot & Chat

Write down anything new you learned from watching the video clips or something you still want to know. Discuss your response with a partner at your table. You will have ten minutes and then we will share out some responses.

Work with a partner ?

Think-Pair-Share

Select a partner review the previous list of intelligences, select four leaning styles you both would like to learn more about, research and summarize each one. List two activities students can do that was not previously listed and discussed for the four learning styles you selected. Record your responses on a chart paper and hang the chart paper on the wall. Everyone will present their responses. You have 30 minutes.

Exit Evaluation

Please write something new you learned today, something you can try in your class and something you would like me to discuss tomorrow.

References:

Slides: 35, 37-38, 40-41, 43-46:
Tomlinson, C.A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Tomlinson, C.A. (2017). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms*, (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Slides: 50-52
Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice.* New York: Basic Books.

INCLUSION BOOT CAMP

Day 3

Norms

Be an active participant
Be respectful
Be hard on the problem, not the person
Be mindful of electronic usage

Agenda

Ice Breaker
Review Activity
Break
Lesson Plan Activity
Lunch
Individual Lesson Planning
Exit Evaluation

Ice Breaker "Rock-Paper-Scissors"

You will play rock, paper, and scissors with the person to your left. You will play three rounds. Once a winner is established, the loser becomes the cheerleader as the winner goes on to compete against other winners. We will play until there is one winner. The last two players will compete in front of everyone.

Review Activity

You will spend the morning summarizing what you learned the last two days about the following topics:

- Review inclusion, its historical foundation
- Components of an IEP
- Differentiated Instruction
- Evidence-based differentiated instructional practices
- Multiple intelligences
- Learning tasks for multiple intelligences

Discuss

Summarize What You Learned

Count from 1-3; you will be separated into groups based on your number. Your group is responsible for summarizing what you learned the last two days by creating: two graphic organizers or outlines, a eight line rap or song, or a skit. All groups will present. You have 30 minutes to create your presentation. All groups will have 2-4 minutes to present.

Break Time

Create a Lesson

In the same groups you were in before break, you will create a 7-10 minutes lesson. The lesson delivery should be differentiated, as well as the learning tasks you create. The learning tasks should be designed to address at least four learning intelligences. Each group will present. The audience will try to determine what differentiated techniques were used and what intelligences were addressed. You will have 45 minutes to create your presentation.

Lunch Break

Lesson Plans

You will have the afternoon to create lesson plans for the beginning of the school year. Use your lap top to access the district's web site for your grade's curriculum and resources. You can work with a grade partner, special education teacher or classroom assistant. Using what we learned these last two days create lesson plans for the content area you will teach or assist with this coming school year. Below are things that should be included:

- Objective(s)
- Standard(s)
- Length of lesson
- Four sample questions you will ask
- Activities (Guided and Independent)
- Differentiated techniques or activities
- Multiple Intelligences Addressed

Exit Evaluation

Please share three strategies you will use this coming school year. Also, write what you would change and what should stay the same about this professional development regarding time for each activity and the types of activities we did? Lastly, write any questions you still have.