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Teachers' Challenges with Implementing Curriculum-Based Assessment in Secondary Students with Disabilities

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Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Kim D. Welch

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Teachers' Challenges with Implementing Curriculum-Based Assessment in Secondary
Students with Disabilities

by

Kim D. Welch

MA, Manhattan College, 2005

BS, York college, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Abstract

This qualitative research study was an investigation into teachers' challenges for not consistently using curriculum-based assessments to assess 9th and 12th grade students with disabilities. The conceptual framework of the study was guided by Nitko's curriculum-based criterion-reference practices theory, which posits that curriculum-based assessment should be the basis for assessing student learning, especially in high-stakes evaluation. The research questions addressed: 1) Special and general education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessments for 9th and 12th grade students with learning disabilities, and 2) Special and general education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for 9th and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. Data analysis from 10 participants utilized open and axial coding and thematic analysis. Results revealed that even though both special and general education teachers agreed upon the value of curriculum-based assessment for evaluating the achievement of 9th and 12th grade students with learning disabilities, many teachers experience barriers in the implementation of curriculum-based assessment. Barriers included: 1) Significant differences in teaching roles and fairness and equality in the classrooms, 2) Lack of collaboration between the special education and general education teachers, and 3) Teachers with less than 5 years teaching experience were hesitant to try new ideas. This study may contribute to social change by enhancing teachers' perceptions about using curriculum-based assessments and may ultimately improve the academic experiences of students with learning disabilities.

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Dedication

“Follow your passion, know your purpose, and most of all, don’t let anyone ruin your dreams.” Writing, from since my infant days was my passion. All throughout elementary, middle, and high school, I was a silent speaker, but an outspoken writer. For the most part, I was considered a “loner” to some, and a “loser” to others. However, my passion for writing only intensified into a very empowering concept which exploded into my hunger for journaling. Every night, I would feed my hunger with diary writings and journal entries. It was my second year of undergraduate studies when I was mourning the loss of my brother, I experienced my catharsis through writing. Amazingly, just like a rainbow after a rainfall, there is something majestic about writing your thoughts down that change things. For as I released my emotions through writing, my college professor read my words as she gleefully said, “My, you have a gift.” Those simple words gave me the courage and motivation to keep on writing. Writing this dissertation not only allowed me to take stock of my assets but to trust in self and to know my purpose. It also allowed me to identify my strengths and weaknesses and to go beyond them to deepen the magic. That same passion and purpose is what I want my students to experience, and always strive to achieve. Most importantly, they should always keep moving and never remain in that “same old spot” of defeat. I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter Vanessa, and my granddaughter Kireina. To be the best that you can be, begin with the good, then become better with the good that you do. Finally, at the end of each day when you are satisfied by your efforts to do good and you can detach with results, then you have done your best. Thank you both for the late-night treats, words of encouragement, and my solitude while I worked to achieve my degree.

Eskimos and butterflies!

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to keep, and no one can take it away from you,” were like fire burning through the doldrums of my soul that kept me standing tall during those times when I struggled with writing my dissertation, and I felt like quitting. Never wavering, enduring to the end, your words stuck with me. Thank you both for believing in me when no one else did. I love you both!

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To Dr. Ross, Dr. Beth Jo DeSoto, and the rest of the research committee: The doctoral process was certainly a marathon. Thank you for helping me every step of the way. Your expertise was evident in your critical evaluation of my research and to ensure the outcome produced scholarly work indicative of Walden University's caliber of students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2010) defines a specific learning disability as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. According to the (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities [NICHCY], 2015), specific learning disabilities commonly affect skills in the areas of reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia), speaking, reasoning, and math (dyscalculia). Under the (Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA], 2015), students with disabilities (those covered under IDEA, 2004 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973) must participate in curriculum-based assessment that determine adequate yearly progress toward meeting expectations associated with state academic content and achievement standards.

In the past, routine classroom testing had often involved traditional academic testing methods that relied on norm-referenced tests, also known as standardized testing (Patton, Reschly, & Appleton, 2017). This means that the “normal” skill levels of students with disabilities were compared to those of individual students of the same age and ability (Lloyd & Lloyd, 2017). Currently, teachers use these same traditional methods of standardized tests to assess students with disabilities (Hensley, Rankin, & Hosp, 2017). According to Venn (2016), students who have special needs, learning disabilities, or have other challenges that are addressed by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may be at a disadvantage when taking standardized tests in order to assess

instructional gains. For example, some students with learning disabilities might have test anxiety, reading difficulties, or perceptual problems that can lead to underperformance on standardized tests (Lufi, Okasha, & Cohen, 2016). Students who are performing poorly on testing simulations receive a majority of the attention from the teacher, leaving good students to fend for themselves (Lewandowski et al., 2016). Teachers then begin to “teach to the test” instead of teaching the appropriate curriculum content (Posner, 2017). This creates a reduction of higher-order thinking, reduces complex assignments, and prevents cognitive understanding (Sena, Lowe, & Lee, 2017).

Many school districts, especially those with lower test scores, spend more classroom time on test preparation than teaching curriculum content. According to the Center on Education Policy, from 2010–2018, school districts in the United States reduced the amount of time spent on social studies, creative subjects, and science by over 40%. This results in the average student losing more than 2 hours per day of instruction time in these areas so that they can focus on subjects that are on standardized tests. The amount of time that is wasted on test preparation for standardized test preparation could be spent on a simple, statistically reliable, and practical alternative approach to academic assessment that allows teachers to closely monitor the rate of student educational progress. In this approach, curriculum-based assessment such as portfolios, fluency measures, and other performance-based assessments are direct measures of assessments that can be used by classroom teachers when they want to find out how students are progressing in basic academic areas, such as math, reading, writing.

Curriculum-based assessment should be a collaborative team effort of both general education and special teachers, administrators, related services providers, and parents. Curriculum-based assessment provides a direct assessment of a child's skills upon entry into a curriculum; guide development of individual goals, interventions, and accommodations; and allow for continual monitoring of developmental progress (Bagnato & Neisworth, 2017). Curriculum based assessment should be conducted as an ongoing process of gathering information regarding children's strengths, interests and emerging abilities related to important skills across all content and developmental areas for planning instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Curriculum-based assessment is a means of tracking educational progress through direct assessment of academic skills in reading, mathematics, writing, and spelling. According to Alkharusi (2016), curriculum-based assessment should not represent a single point in time and ongoing decisions should be continuously made based on data when monitoring students with disabilities. With collaboration and increased professional development on the implementation of curriculum-based assessment, teachers will likely increase the use of curriculum-based assessment (Polly et al., 2017).

In this study, I explored how high school general education and special education teachers implement curriculum-based assessment. I based teachers' perceptions on their implementation of curriculum-based assessment in Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classrooms. By analyzing those perceptions, I was able to understand how the implementation of curriculum-based assessment can help students with disabilities who are classified with learning disabilities can receive on-going direct measures of

assessment within the general education classrooms. Sections of Chapter 1 contain descriptions of the conceptual basis for the study. The chapter includes background information, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance.

Background

Over the past few decades, standardized testing has increasingly become the norm in the U.S. educational system. These tests are used to evaluate school systems, maintain accountability, inform instructional decisions, promote or retain students, and in some states and school districts, to evaluate teachers' performance (Damsa & Ludvigsen, 2016). By using standardized testing, local school districts and teachers may have a vested interest in the outcomes of testing; however, the desire to produce favorable results can create questionable test results. When classroom teachers opt to use only standardized testing to assess students with disabilities, these students will not be given opportunities to increase their academic growth, read on grade level, regularly attend school, and graduate on time (Issacs, 2017).

In recent years, student performance has been assessed using standardized tests, but these measures do not provide useful data for instructional planning. Students learn in a variety of ways, and they could have many different strengths that may not be reflected in the context of a standardized test (Davis, 2017). According to Reeves and Chiang (2017), standardized tests may allow for a direct comparison of data, but they do not

account for differences in the students who are taking the tests. Curriculum-based assessment provides a way of matching student ability to instruction, thereby reducing low achievement and poor student-behavior responses in the school setting (Damsa & Ludvigsen, 2016).

Students who have special needs, learning disabilities, or have other challenges addressed by an IEP may also be at a disadvantage when taking a standardized test compared to general education students. According to Gusky (2017), when educators can quantify the achievement of students, they are able to identify proficiency levels. As such, they can easily identify the students who need remediation or advancement. If deemed eligible for remediation, those students will receive the help needed to succeed through an IEP. However, one of the major drawbacks about standardized tests is that they truly do not measure the actual skill of a student in a given subject area which makes it difficult for progress monitoring of the IEP goals for students with disabilities (Salle, Roach, & Mc.Grath, 2017).

The heavy reliance on standardized tests to assess the academic abilities of students with disabilities may provide special challenges for them, including stress, decreased motivation, and increased retention rates (Goldstein & Behuniak, 2017). Teachers then begin to “teach to the test” instead of teaching subject materials to obtain needed results. This creates a reduction of higher-order thinking, reduces complex assignments, and prevents cognitive understanding (Zohar & Agmon, 2018). Curriculum-based assessment is beneficial to all students and can help teachers plan

effective instruction, estimate student progress, document student progress, and communicate with parents or other professionals about student progress.

Under ESEA (2015), states are required to implement an accountability system with differentiated recognitions, interventions and supports. One component of this system is the calculation of progress targets for each district school that participates in the state's assessment system. A school is determined to meet the state's expectations if it either meets its designated progress target or the state proficiency goal. Under ESEA (2015), any school that does not meet the identified annual progress targets and/or the state proficiency goal in any one subgroup or more, is required to be represented on a district/school action plan that articulates how it will address the needs of student populations that fell below the target. The utility of a curriculum-based assessment is that it provides an effective way for teachers and school districts for data collection and decision-making in developing an action plan that addresses the needs of a target population (Damsa & Ludvigsen, 2016).

Theoretically, curriculum-based assessment can be advantageous to classroom teachers, because it has the potential to provide the necessary academic assessments and implications for immediate interventions for students with disabilities in major academic subject areas from elementary school to high school. By implementing curriculum-based assessment, educators can collect data and create individualized instruction that target a student's area or areas of weakness (Kennedy et al., 2016). Individualized instruction is designed to meet the educational needs unique to all students and focuses on the individual student (Barieva, 2018). The data that are obtained from curriculum-based

assessment can help teachers to improve the academic growth of students with learning disabilities who may need a change of instruction or additional services. According to Tomlinson, Moon, and Imbeau (2017), curriculum-based assessment should reveal how well students with disabilities have learned and what classroom teachers want them to learn while instruction ensures that they learn it. For this to occur, these three elements of curriculum, assessment, and instruction (CAI connection) must be closely aligned so that they reinforce one another for effective curriculum-based assessment implementation to successfully meet the needs of students with disabilities.

1. Curriculum: Subject area, knowledge, skills, ways of thinking, and outcomes must be research-based and connected with the mandated state or district curriculum.
2. Assessment: Administered several times a year using district and grade level tools to determine student strengths, weaknesses, and progress.
3. Instruction: Using the collected data, classroom teachers should arrange various groupings, pairs, or independent work to facilitate acquisition of content and skill.

Successful implementation of curriculum-based assessment also includes a classroom environment that is conducive to learning, curriculum evaluation to determine areas of strength and weakness for students performing below grade level, monitoring student progress throughout the school year, and implementation of strategies with a foundation in research (Patton, Reschly, & Appleton, 2017). However, challenges to the

implementation of successful curriculum-based assessment exist among many schools today. Marchand and Furrer (2017) reported that obstacles include both personal challenges, such as teachers' perceptions of curriculum-based assessment, and practical challenges, such as policies and practices among school districts that can significantly derail reform efforts if not addressed. Curriculum-based assessment is often viewed as not being quantifiable, requiring more time to use and score, and being designed for academically high-functioning students who will only succeed in general education classrooms (Izmirli & Yurdadul, 2016). Often, teachers assume students who do not meet grade level expectations and need academic interventions would be better served in a special education setting as opposed to the general education classroom (Van Norman & Christ, 2017). Furthermore, teachers may believe that implementing curriculum-based assessment in the classrooms will slow down the process of delivery of instruction (Blankenship, 2017). In such cases, educators are more likely to devalue recommended strategies and interventions and ultimately not implement them in the classroom, resulting in student failure and a widening the gap in academic achievement (Kinray & Bağçeci, 2016). Practical barriers such as time, professional development, shared vision and goals, training, and administrative support, impede the implementation of curriculum-based assessment. (Alkharusi, 2016). Challenges with conducting the implementation of curriculum-based assessment are important to note because data collection will reflect the challenges that teachers face with implementing curriculum-based assessment in assessing the academic abilities of students with disabilities.

In this study, a summary of the literature will show that implementing curriculum-based assessment is more appropriate for evaluating academic gains for students with disabilities. However, a gap in practice exists between standardized assessment that already exists in the classroom and curriculum-based assessment that is not regularly used to assess students with disabilities (Glicking & Thompson, 2017). According to Palmer, Elliott, and Cheatham (2017), successful implementation of curriculum-based assessment needs high-quality classroom instruction, curriculum-evaluation, progress monitoring, implementation of research-based strategies, and on-going instructional interventions.

Problem Statement

A critical problem of special education is that teachers are not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Instead, teachers are using standardized tests to assess students' academic abilities (Hensley, Rankin, & Hosp, 2017). In a large Eastern U.S. city, even though classroom teachers can use curriculum-based assessment or standardized assessment to identify students' current level of skills and to evaluate instructional goals, according to the principal at the study site, classroom teachers are often using standardized tests to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Curriculum-based assessments such as portfolios, observations, and other performance-based assessments are direct measures of assessments that can be used by classroom teachers when they want to find out how students are progressing in basic academic areas, such as math, reading, writing, and spelling (Izmirli & Yurdadul,

2016; Yarbrough, Cannon, Bergman, Kidder-Ashley, & McCane-Bowling, 2016).

Currently, there are few studies that include compared data gathered from curriculum-based assessment against data collected from standardized assessment to show the effectiveness of assessment of academic abilities of students with disabilities. Therefore, this study will fill a gap in the literature between curriculum-based assessment and standardized assessment to show the effectiveness of curriculum-based assessment to assess the academic abilities of students with disabilities

Standardized tests such as multiple choice, true-false, and matching items involve pen and paper testing that measures content which might not be related to classroom instruction or even curriculum (Palmer, Elliott, & Cheatham, 2017; Tetzloff, & Obiakor, 2017). Because standardized tests do not allow for the direct assessment of classroom instruction, they create further problems for students with disabilities who experience more serious cognitive and learning aptitude weaknesses and can only be fully assessed with curriculum-based assessment (Damşa & Ludvigsen, 2016; Yarbrough, Cannon, Bergman, Kidder-Ashley, & McCane-Bowling, 2017). As a result, the heavy reliance on standardized tests to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities will continue to limit their ability to demonstrate what they learn about the curriculum, reduce their reading skills, increase high school drop-out rates, and decrease the number of high school graduates (Kennedy et al., 2016). If the problem of classroom teachers opting to use standardized assessments to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities remains unsolved, these students will not be given opportunities to increase their academic growth, read on grade level, regularly attend school, and graduate on time.

Currently, limited studies that connect curriculum-based assessment based on teachers' challenges conducting the implementation of curriculum-based assessment represent a gap in available literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. In this study, I identified the challenges teachers faced when attempting to use curriculum-based assessment for assessing specific incremental gains of classroom instruction. The results from this study can be used to identify trends in teachers' perceptions and options and further explore the problems that result when teachers opt to use standardized assessment over curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. By gathering teacher input, I identified gaps that may occur throughout the process of implementing curriculum-based assessment. Examining current research on implementation of curriculum-based assessment that focus on policy, a comprehensive framework, and procedural steps, provided the structure for collecting data on teacher's perceptions with curriculum-based assessment implementation. I explored curriculum-based assessment implementation through data collection in face-to-face semi structured interviews of teachers to understand their perceptions based on their use of curriculum-based assessment and the perceived effects on students' academic functioning. Components for effective curriculum-based assessment implementation included content

and skills (research-based curriculum), evidence-based interventions, instructional arrangements, class and instructional management procedures, and progress evaluation. Based on the analysis of teachers' perceptions, I determined the most effective means of curriculum-based assessment implementation to help students achieve success. Ultimately, this may influence the way classroom teachers are assessing students' academic abilities.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2012), the central issue in basic qualitative research is the concept or process examined in a study. The central issue of this qualitative study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, challenges, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to evaluate classroom goals and instruction, or to assess the academic deficits of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. The results from this study were intended to help educators better understand the importance of implementing curriculum-based assessments for ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. For districts with a special education population below the state average, such as the one in the research site, exploring curriculum-based assessment implementation will help school districts increase student achievement to potentially give students with disabilities opportunities to increase their academic growth, read on grade level, regularly attend school, and graduate on time. I addressed the gap between the proposed implementation of curriculum-based assessment and implementation of standardized assessments that exist in the classrooms. Classroom teachers will be able to use the findings of this study to guide them with the implementation of best practices of curriculum-based assessment to help ninth and 12th

grade students with disabilities who are “at risk” of failing reach grade level with the appropriate interventions.

Research Questions

I designed the questions in this study to examine a potential gap in practice between standardized assessment that is already implemented and curriculum-based assessment that is not implemented in the classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. In this study, I conducted interviews with teachers in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city in order to collect data through identifying challenges in conducting curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities who are academically behind their nondisabled peers. The general education and special education high school teachers who participated in the study provided insight into the components of effective curriculum-based assessment implementation and how these components work in assisting ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities who were at risk for failing. I used the conceptual framework of this study to develop the research questions. I used the following research questions to analyze teachers’ perceptions about curriculum-based assessment implementation:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are special education teachers’ perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are general education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are special education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What are general education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Conceptual Framework (Qualitative)

The conceptual framework of this study was curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment practices based upon Nitko's (1995) research. The importance of using curriculum-based assessment to assess students with disabilities has been specifically emphasized with special education populations and is consistent with Nitko's theory (Palmer, Elliott, & Cheatham, 2017)). Nitko (1995) argued that curriculum-based assessment should be the basis for assessing student learning, especially in a high-stakes evaluation. Nitko (1995) developed a framework to examine effective implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment. Nitko (1995) termed the implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment as curriculum-based criterion-referenced continuous assessment. Curriculum-based criterion assessment is used to focus on the

implementation of ongoing assessment, which means that curriculum-based continuous assessments are aligned with and organized around the learning targets specified in classroom instruction (Van Norman & Christ, 2016). This framework predicts challenges for implementing this type of assessment such as teachers' perceptions of using curriculum-based assessment in assessing ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities in high stakes evaluation, they are ongoing and allow for teachers' frequent use, and they require more time to use and score than traditional assessments (Hosp et al., 2016). The framework operationalizes the problem by having the participants identify and explore how assessment measures are used to assess their students (Hensley, Rankin, & Hosp, 2017). Using analytical memo, categories, thematic analysis, and open coding, I used this framework to guide my data collection and analysis by exploring teachers' experiences and challenges for implementing curriculum-based assessment.

Nature of the Study

I based this basic qualitative study on qualitative methods that involved an in-depth understanding of using curriculum-based assessment in assessing ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities in high stakes evaluation. I conducted individual interviews with general education and special education teachers in ninth and 12th grades in a high school in a large Eastern U.S. city. The school serves students in ninth through 12th grade. I collected data for this study from teachers in ninth and 12th grades. The participants in this study were teachers who have had experience with curriculum-based assessments. I created interview questions to focus on special education and general

education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment as well as their challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. Questions were open-ended, and I transcribed interview data for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). With participant permission, interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. I transcribed and coded information to prepare for data analysis. I sorted collected data in order to identify common themes.

Definitions

The definitions listed in this section were relevant in the context of the study. The purpose of these definitions is to provide clarity to the application of the terms in the research. While some of these terms may have multiple meanings, the definitions below were specific to this study.

Standardized tests: Also known as norm-referenced tests are designed to measure the “normal” skill levels and standards of test takers against each other and compare them to those of individual students of the same age and ability. Standardized tests are used to assess progress in schools, ability to attend institutions of higher education, and to place students in programs suited to their abilities (Kinray & Bagceci, 2016).

Curriculum-based assessment: Also known as (CBM) is the repeated, direct assessment of targeted skills in basic areas, such as math, reading, writing,

and spelling, using materials taken directly from the teaching curriculum (Wagner et al., 2017).

Students with disabilities: Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students between the ages of 3 and 22, inclusive, with educational disabilities as established by federal and state regulations (orthopedic impairment or other physical impairment, hearing impaired, visually impaired, intellectually disabled, emotionally disturbed, specific learning disabled, speech/language disabled, developmentally delayed, autistic, or multiply disabled)

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that the participants will provide honest responses to the research questions. This is meaningful to the study because data collection is based on teachers' experiences with curriculum-based assessment implementation. Teachers with limited or no experience with the implementation of curriculum-based assessment might provide limited information. It is also assumed that participants have some understanding of what curriculum-based assessment is. It is further assumed that participating teachers will understand the questions presented to them and will feel comfortable asking any clarifying questions.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was limited to general and special education teachers in a high school in a large Eastern U.S. city. Participant selection was limited to both ninth

and 12th special education teachers. Ten to 12 special education teachers met the participant criteria and were chosen through a purposeful sampling selection to participate in the study

Limitations

Researchers must be cognizant of limitations in a study to reduce threats to internal validity and provide protection of participants (Lastrapes & Mooney, 2019). Qualitative research is not without limitations. Since the study will focus on teacher experiences, identifying limitations will increase internal validity (Rumrill, Cook, & Wiley, 2011). Nevertheless, data may be misinforming in that the interviewee may give answers they think the researcher wants to hear, and misinterpretation can inadvertently lead to biased results or errors in the data (Roberts et al., 2019).

Furthermore, there is always the potential of bias from the researcher. I helped reduced bias when reviewing and interpreting data by including all information and not ignoring unwanted statements or embellishing others to achieve anticipated results from the study. To yield unbiased outcomes, data must be coded without favoritism or misinterpretation of meaning. I did not interject my own thoughts or perceptions during the interview or during data. I reduced potential bias in the study by demonstrating respect and sensitivity to the participants' gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age or sexual orientation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Additional limitations also include variables related to the participants in this study. While all the teachers participated in the implementation of curriculum-based assessment, each participant had a varying degree of experience. A veteran teacher could

have different preconceived notions about implementing curriculum-based assessment as opposed to a newer teacher in the field. Furthermore, I conducted this study in ninth and 12th grade classes in the same school district. The small sample size could reduce the ability to transfer the findings to other settings, but it can still provide insight into curriculum-based assessment implementation in other similar districts.

Significance

To advance knowledge of curriculum-based assessment implementation, contributions from the study based on how teachers implement curriculum-based assessment will help to better understand and facilitate successful curriculum-based assessment implementations to potentially influence how classroom teachers assess the academic abilities of students with disabilities. By collecting and analyzing data about the challenges that general education and special education teachers experience in conducting the implementation of curriculum-based assessment, other educators can learn from the findings of the study and use the data to implement curriculum-based assessment in their schools. The results from this study may influence social change for education practices on several levels. By implementing curriculum-based assessment, the assessment of students with disabilities will be more directly reflective of actual classroom instruction. Teachers might become better informed on the use of curriculum-based assessment and ultimately might employ curriculum-based assessment over standardized testing to assess instructional gains of students with disabilities which might translate into increased academic growth and regular school attendance.

Summary

Rooted in the conceptual framework of curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment practices based upon Nitko's (1995) research, effective curriculum-based assessment can be implemented to meet the individual needs of the learner. The central issue of this qualitative study is how teachers perceive the implementation of curriculum-based assessments and the challenges of teachers conducting curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. The results from this study are intended to help educators better understand the implementation of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Two research questions in this study addressed teachers' feedback and experiences on curriculum-based assessment implementation. Teachers shared their experiences related to the challenges with conducting implementation of curriculum-based assessment through a face-to-face semi structured interview.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Curriculum-based assessment should be a collaborative team effort of general education and special education teachers that involves on-going assessment of students with disabilities who struggle with academics in school. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessments to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. When curriculum-based assessments are implemented properly based on individual needs, students can achieve both academically and behaviorally in school (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2017). Upon the successful implementation of curriculum-based assessment, students with disabilities will be exposed to high-quality classroom instruction, curriculum evaluation to determine areas of strength and weakness for students performing below grade level, monitoring student progress throughout the school year, and implementation of strategies with a foundation in research (Patton, Reschly, & Appleton, 2017).

I will identify in the literature review the components of curriculum-based assessment to help students with disabilities succeed in school as well as to bridge the gap between what should be implemented and what is being implemented. I used current literature to establish the relevance of curriculum-based assessment implementation that will include data and assessment and structured components. The literature review will begin with the conceptual framework and curriculum-based historical significance and legislation. The components necessary for effective curriculum-based implementation are based on curriculum-assessment use and data-instruction (CAI connection

framework) as supported by Tomlinson, Moon, and Imbeau's (2017), assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom (ASCD) model. In Chapter 2, I will also describe the components for effective curriculum-based assessment implementation structure. These components include curriculum, instruction, and assessment and use of data. I will also include in the literature review the challenges in conducting the implementation of curriculum-based assessment and its effects on the academic abilities of students with disabilities. Contrasting views of standardized assessment implementation will provide an alternative perspective along with a presentation of gaps in the practice regarding curriculum-based assessment implementation.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted a literature review using a comprehensive literature search strategy including peer-reviewed journals, books, and government documents from the Walden University database will form the basis for the literature review. I have provided research-based scholarly articles for the literature review by gaining access to the Walden library database, as well as searches through Google Scholar. The key terms that I used to search for literature were **curriculum, instruction, assessment and use of data, implementation, positive classroom environment, and leadership**. In Appendix A, I have listed a detailed description of the search terms. I used an iterative search process to determine selection for each article. I used Walden database and Google Scholar to search for each key. Matching articles were selected based on authentication through a peer review. I selected scholarly articles written in the past 5 years for the literature

review. In certain cases, I incorporated articles written beyond 5 years based on pertinent information. While conducting the literature search, I found a limited amount of studies on teachers' challenges conducting the implementation of curriculum-based assessments. The lack of existing relevant literature established the need for further research in this study; this is further described in Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation

I have used the conceptual framework of a study to address the assumptions, beliefs, expectations, and theories that support the research. The conceptual framework of this study was curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment practices based upon Nitko's (1995) research. According to Nitko (1995), curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment practices involve moving away from norm-referencing (standardized assessment), to a system of criterion-reference assessment (curriculum-based assessment) which describes what students know, understand, and can do, and those assessments can be used to provide feedback and to inform future teaching and learning. This assumption shows that curriculum-based assessment is an integral part of instruction (Nitko, 1995), in that curriculum-based assessment is individualized to the learner, tracked in phases, follows a systems approach, and holds a foundation in human learning. Therefore, those involved in assessment, test development, teaching and curriculum development need to understand levels of performance and the nature of progression in the curriculum and to develop an understanding of standards of performance within a community of practice. According to Nitko (1995), through effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment, students with disabilities will

receive an individualized plan of instruction based on a framework that fits student needs for them to be successful and in achieving grade level standards.

Because Nitko's (1995) condition of learning is based on a systemic approach to support each learner's individual needs, Nitko's theory will contribute to this study. Based on Nitko's (1995) theory, I relied on the research questions of this study to help me gather the experiences of high school general education and special education teacher's implementation of curriculum-based assessment. A gap in practice exists between the proposed implementation of curriculum-based assessment and what is currently being implemented in the classrooms. I have provided a literature review that provides a summary related to the research questions. Based on the research questions, I have determined why curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment selected was meaningful to the study.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

Historical Significance and Legislation

A major responsibility of schools is to teach children the academic skills that they will eventually need to take their place as responsible members of society. Schools are not only required to teach crucial academic skills, but they are also required to measure individual children's acquisition and mastery of these skills (Stahl, 2016). (The No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2002) was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. Under the NCLB law, states must perform standardized testing of students in reading and math in Grades 3–8 and once in high school. According to NCLB (2002), states and school districts must report the results, for both the student population

and for particular “subgroups” of students, including English-learners and students in special education, racial minorities, and children from low-income families. On December 10, 2015, under the Obama Administration, changes to education regulations in NCLB created amendments that formed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015).

Under the provisions of (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015), students with disabilities (those covered under IDEA, 2004 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973) must participate in curriculum-based assessment that determine adequate yearly progress. ESSA (2015) ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through curriculum-based assessment that measure students' progress toward high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers. Under (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015), educators are mandated to implement curriculum-based assessment as an ongoing process of gathering information regarding children's strengths, interests and emerging abilities related to important skills across all content and developmental areas for planning instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities. (Rayan et al., 2019).

(Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015) maintains an expectation that with the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment, there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in schools where students with disabilities who are not making progress and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time (Cuticelli et al., 2017). Through direct assessment of a child's skills upon entry into a curriculum, legislation mandated schools to assess students with disabilities in ways that they can best learn throughout the child's IEP from first grade through high school

(NCLB, 2001). Under the ESSA (2015) law, support for effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment includes professional development for general education and special teachers at all grade levels and for other service providers, such as therapists and guidance counselors.

Curriculum-based Assessment and Special Education

In an educational system that has placed a strong emphasis on individual student growth, the use of effective and efficient assessment tools is no longer optional but is necessary to effectively monitor progress and make instructional changes for students with disabilities (Wang, 2015). (Under No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002), as the accountability for student progress has increased, schools have progressively implemented curriculum-based assessment to monitor individual growth and make adequate instructional changes for students with disabilities. In classrooms where students with disabilities are being educated alongside their nondisabled peers, classroom teachers can use curriculum-based assessment to provide a way for them to collect data regarding their academic progress on curriculum areas (Stecker & Fuchs, 2016).

Classroom teachers can use curriculum-based assessment to make rational decisions about programs or student placement or current needs for students with disabilities (Hosp, Hosp, & Howell, 2016). Special education teachers can use curriculum-based assessment to assess intervention strategies within a response-to-intervention (RTI) framework (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2016). According to Deno (2017), special education teachers can use curriculum-based assessment to assess specific content-area skills, measure the mastery of individualized

education program goals, and predict the rates of success for high-stakes assessments. When helping students with disabilities, curriculum-based assessment allows for the IEP's to be reasonably calculated to enable them to make appropriate progress considering their circumstances, and that while the child's goals may be different, every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives (Lemons, Fuchs, Gilbert, & Fuchs, 2017). However, gaps exist in practice between the proposed implementation of curriculum-based assessment and standardized assessment which is currently implemented in the classrooms. Varying policies, frameworks, and protocol can lead to confusion and frustration in schools which can create challenges to the implementation of curriculum-based assessment (Hensley, Rankin, & Hosp, 2017).

If more teachers opt to use curriculum-based implementation effectively, it can overcome the divide which will deemphasize the need for standardized assessment (O'Connor et al., 2017). Without effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment students with disabilities will not be given opportunities to increase their academic growth, read on grade level, regularly attend school, and graduate on time. For students with disabilities, it is highly unlikely they will receive support in the general education classroom if all the necessary components of effective curriculum-based assessment are not in place (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2017). As a result, this might create a gap in achievement between where students perform and where they should be performing. As this gap grows, the need for alternative programs and interventions may become increasingly evident.

With the implementation of curriculum-based assessment, interventions can meet the needs of individual students to ensure academic success. According to Ado (2017), in secondary schools where high school teachers experience challenges in conducting the implementation of curriculum-based assessment to assess students with disabilities, classroom teachers can implement Design Your Own (DYO) periodic assessments. DYO periodic assessments are assessments developed by teachers, which correspond to schools' instructional and curricular values and approaches. DYO provides a systematic approach for implementing curriculum-based assessment and helps to measure student progress in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics as well as to provide information to inform teachers' instruction. Ado (2017) showed that after the second year of DYO implementation, schools can increase their graduation rate, be successful in navigating the state's evaluation system which can earn them grades of "A's" on their school report cards and earn extra points for supporting their students with disabilities.

Curriculum-based Assessment Components

Amendments to the (Individuals with Disabilities Act [IDEA], 2010) addressed the need for data to drive instruction and monitor progress. Through effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment, classroom teachers can successfully collect data to drive instruction, monitor progress, and identify the current academic levels of students with disabilities (Germann & Tindal, 2017). According to Tomlinson, Moon, and Imbeau (2017), the assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom (ASCD) model of differentiation serves as a framework for effective curriculum-based assessment implementation. Researchers have indicated that

curriculum-assessment-instruction (CAI connection) supports the assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom (ASCD) model. Therefore, the rationale for selection of curriculum-assessment-instruction (CAI connection) is that it supports the assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom (ASCD) Model. In addition, the ASCD model lays the foundation for teachers to understand and plan wisely for five key classroom elements: learning environment, curriculum, assessment and use of data, instruction, and classroom leadership/management. The three elements of CAI connection, curriculum, assessment and use of data, and instruction interrelate and are interdependent with the five key classroom elements of the ASCD model (Tomlinson, Moon, & Imbeau, 2017). These three elements of CAI connection are supported by the literature and form a framework of successful curriculum-based assessment implementation based on the outcome of the study. The three elements of CAI connection of ACSD model for an effective curriculum-based assessment implementation structure include.

1. Curriculum: Subject area, knowledge, skills, ways of thinking, and outcomes must be research-based and connected with the mandated state or district curriculum.
2. Assessment and use of data: Using the collected data, classroom teachers should arrange various groupings, pairs, or independent work to facilitate acquisition of content and skill.

3. Instruction: Researched-tested and validated teaching practices should take place several times a year using district and grade level tools to determine student strengths, weaknesses, and progress.

Curriculum. Curriculum refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. (The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004) defines the general education curriculum for students with disabilities as the “same curriculum as for nondisabled children” (34 CFR § 300.320(a)(1)(i)). The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2015) has further clarified that the “same curriculum” is the curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled. IDEA (2004) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) require schools to ensure that students with disabilities have access to and make progress in the general education curriculum. Furthermore, IDEA also states that schools should ensure that access occurs in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible where students with disabilities are educated alongside their nondisabled peers (20 U.S.C. § 1400(c)(5)(A)). This includes learning standards students with disabilities are expected to meet, the units and lessons that teachers teach, the assignments and projects given to them, the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course, and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate the academic learning of students with disabilities (Costa & Kallick, 2017).

To address the requirements of IDEA (2004) and ESSA (2015), each state is responsible for developing a set of educational standards that serve as a foundation for curriculum development. According to Bouck (2017), most recently, leaders across the

United States have worked together to develop a set of standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. These standards, known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), have been adopted in most states. State standards including the CCSS have raised academic expectations for students with disabilities, potentially ensuring that this population will not be excluded from the same learning opportunities that students without disabilities are afforded (Cameron & Cook, 2017).

Effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment will establish a more flexible, consistent, and personalized approach to academic curriculum design, instruction, and assessment. According to Patton (2017), with effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment, teachers will have robust and adaptive tools to customize the instruction for students with disabilities to ensure relevance and deep understanding of complex issues and topics. Further, by providing multiple sources of high-quality academic content, students with disabilities will be exposed to much greater opportunities to personalize learning and reflect on their own work, think critically, and engage frequently to enable deeper understanding of complex topics (Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2017).

IDEA (2004) requires that each IEP for a student with a disability include, among other things, a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed to meet the student's needs that result from the student's disability and enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (20 U.S.C. § 1414). According to Hallahan and Mercer (2017), the first step in implementing an effective curriculum-based assessment occurs when special education

and general teachers begin to map out curriculum. Hatch (2017) stated at that point when the teachers begin to map out curriculum, the special education teacher should ask the pivotal question, “What is most important for students with disabilities to Know, Understand, and be able to Do as a result of this segment of learning?” With clarity about Know, Understand, and Do (KUD), the special education teacher can focus curricular decisions squarely on what matters most for students with disabilities to academically succeed. For example, the teacher’s curriculum would be the specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and effectively implement curriculum-based assessment.

The general education curriculum can be used as the reference point for IEP goals in maintaining high expectations and setting ambitious, meaningful, and achievable goals for students with disabilities, considering their unique circumstances (Roberts et al., 2019). In developing an IEP, the IEP team can use curriculum-based assessment when they want to consider how a student’s disability impacts their ability to make progress toward grade level standards during the period covered by the IEP. If a student is performing significantly below grade-level, the IEP team can also use curriculum-based assessment in determining annual goals that are ambitious but achievable for that student. According to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS, 2015), the general education curriculum is the curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled. With this, the IEP Team must also, when appropriate, consider goals that target critical age/grade appropriate skills essential to facilitate student independence

and enable them to access and participate in grade-level instructional and social activities, and make progress toward achieving grade level standards. Curriculum-based assessment can help the IEP team target those goals that will be aligned to the student's present level of performance that is appropriate for the grade that the student is enrolled in.

To prepare students for success in life and to be competitive in the twenty-first century, all high school students with disabilities should be ready for career and college when they graduate from high school. A critical call to action has been made by the US President and the US Secretary of Education to rigorously prepare students to be college and career-ready upon high school graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). As a major part of this effort, the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) called for all states to adopt state developed standards in English language arts and mathematics that build toward college and career readiness (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). According to this Act, states can either develop College and Career Readiness Standards or upgrade their existing state standards to ensure that all students graduate from high school college- and -career-ready. With this, each state is responsible for creating and delivering standards that will ultimately prepare students for a path in college or career after graduation. How those standards are delivered depends on the curriculum written by each school district. However, the methods of how those standards will be delivered to help students with disabilities succeed may differ based on individual interventions that best match how each student learns (Rayan et al., 2019). For students with disabilities, instructional emphasis should be placed on judiciously incorporating a

curriculum and delivery of content and standards to help them reach their full potential (Clarke, Doabler, Nelson, & Shanley, 2017). Students with disabilities need to be exposed to the depth and breadth of the knowledge and skills presented in the curriculum based on the same standards implemented for all students (Wixson & Lipson, 2018). Effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment in the classrooms can assist classroom teachers in raising standards to ensure that all students with disabilities graduate from high school college- and -career-ready as well as delivery of standards based on individual needs.

Assessment and use of data. In the past, routine classroom testing has often involved the use of traditional academic assessment methods such as standardized testing. Traditional academic testing methods often rely on norm-referenced tests. Norm-referenced tests are designed to measure skills across a national population, and the skills that they measured were not always completely accurate (Browder et al., 2016). An alternative approach to standardized academic testing has recently become available that allows teachers to closely monitor the rate of students with disabilities' educational progress (Clark, Doabler, Nelson, & Shanley, 2017). Educational researchers have devised curriculum-based assessment which is a simple, statistically reliable, and practical means of measuring student skills in basic subject areas such as reading, writing, and arithmetic (Fletcher, Denton, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2017). In this approach, students with disabilities are given brief, timed exercises to complete, using materials drawn directly from the curriculum (Detgen & Yamashita, 2016).

Assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether the goals of education are being met. Assessment affects decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, curriculum, and, in some cases, funding (Cook & Odom, 2014). According to Van Norman and Christ (2016), assessment should inspire classroom teachers to ask these difficult questions: "Are we teaching what we think we are teaching?" "Are students with disabilities learning what they are supposed to be learning?" "Is there a way to teach the subject better, there by promoting better learning?" Curriculum-based assessment is a valuable tool for measuring current academic achievement and can play a pivotal role in the selection of effective interventions for students with disabilities (Fan & Hansmann, 2017). As part of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), all students must make adequate yearly progress (AYP), including students with disabilities (NCLB, 2002). AYP is determined in part by a year-end state standardized test of grade-level content in reading and mathematics for elementary school student. Districts and schools are accountable for students meeting state standards on these tests. Curriculum based assessment can be used to help predict student proficiency and identify students with disabilities who are not passing these "high-stakes" tests. In addition, curriculum-based assessment data can provide an overall measure of specifically which students with disabilities who are not meeting grade-level benchmarks. According to Jordan, Brown, Revino, and Finkelstein (2017), many schools can administer curriculum-based assessment at the start of the school year so that they can use data that they collect from the curriculum-based assessment to predict performance on state assessments which are usually administered at the end of the school year.

Data collection is a regular activity in the special education classroom, and it requires assessing the student's success on individual items in his or her goals on a regular basis (Burr, Haas, & Ferriere, 2017). Curriculum-based assessment data can provide an overall measure of specifically which students with disabilities who are not meeting grade-level benchmarks. One of the final regulations under IDEA (34 C.F.R. § 300.347) requires that students' IEPs consider how the students will access the general education curriculum. This regulation further requires that all students with disabilities participate in statewide and districtwide assessments, and they have opportunities and instruction that allow them to make progress toward state and district academic standards. Additionally, all students with disabilities must be included in all general state and local assessments with appropriate accommodations and supports, as necessary, as indicated in their IEP (34 CFR § 300.160(a)). If the IEP team determines that a student can participate in the general assessments, then it must determine what, if any, accommodations may be necessary to meet that student's individual needs and must include a statement of any appropriate individual accommodations that are needed to measure the student's academic achievement and functional performance (COMAR 13A.05.01.09A(1)(f)). However, poor performance on the general assessments, by itself, does not make a student eligible for the alternate assessments (Newkirk-Turner & Johnson, 2019). Curriculum-based assessment and use of data, students with disabilities who need academic assistance in the classrooms can benefit from the implementation of curriculum-based assessment. Through data collection from curriculum-based assessment, if the IEP team determines that a student cannot participate in the general

assessments, even with accommodations, only then should the IEP team consider that student for the alternate assessments. By using data from curriculum-based assessment, the IEP team can determine appropriate interventions for students with disabilities as well as give a written explanation in the IEP document why the general assessments are not appropriate for the student, how the student will be assessed, and why the alternate assessments are appropriate (COMAR 13A.05.01.09A). Curriculum-based assessment can help school districts target and identify those students who needs to be alternate assessed.

Curriculum-based assessment has grown into a systematic tool for applying interventions based on close monitoring of that student's progress (Björn, Aro, Koponen, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2016). According to Burns and Gibbons (2017) the information obtained from curriculum-based assessment can support better decision-making when determining individual interventions for students with disabilities. Through a system of frequent assessment and data collection, the data can be used to evaluate students with disabilities to help them succeed. Data on an individual student's strengths and weaknesses determine a plan of action. Delivery of curriculum-based assessment should occur several times throughout the school year. Districts can create implementation timelines to guide universal measurement procedures for data collection to determine each student's progress. According to Crawford (2017), curriculum-based assessment should be carried out each quarter during the school year and students with disabilities who are performing below grade level should be monitored monthly. When special education teachers use curriculum-based assessment to monitor progress frequently,

students with disabilities demonstrate more improved performance (Goodman, McIntosh, & Bohanon, 2017).

Curriculum based assessments can be used to track the academic progress of students with disabilities frequently during instruction. Curriculum-based assessment provides teachers with a quick and simple assessment tool for frequent progress monitoring (Fan & Hansmann, 2017). Curriculum-based assessment focuses on a specific skill and allows for the teacher to determine a student's progress over time based on how that student is responding to interventions (Buffum et al., 2017). By tracking student learning through growth on subsequent benchmark assessments or specific progress-monitoring tests will provide an additional source of information useful for identifying students whose progress is likely to be insufficient to meet state expectations by the time the end-of-the-year large-scale assessment is administered. According to Koelsch (2016), progress monitoring is a research-based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring combines assessment and evaluation to determine a student's progress (Christ et al., 2017). Progress monitoring is the special-education teacher's responsibility to track the progress of a student with disability towards achieving a specific set of academic goals (Lemons et al., 2017). By monitoring progress through curriculum-based assessment, special education teachers can create and adjust modifications to instruction to meet individual needs of students with disabilities based on a student's demonstration of strengths and weaknesses

Instruction. The hallmark of special education is specially designed instruction. IDEA defines specially designed instruction as adapting, as appropriate to the needs of a student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to: address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability; and ensure access to the general education curriculum so that the student can meet the educational standards that apply to all students (34 CFR § 300.39). The IEP identifies accommodations that are needed by the student to access general education environments and activities. A focus on the use of evidence-based practices and supports is also emphasized in ESSA (2015) which requires the implementation of evidence-based practices, strategies, and approaches that have proven to be effective in leading to desired outcomes, namely improving student achievement. Many states may have adopted rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or developed state education standards. These standards serve as goals for what students with disabilities should know at the end of each grade level from kindergarten through high school (Common Core State Standards, 2017). Students with disabilities benefit from a curriculum that meets their individual needs through dynamic instruction using strategies that incorporate varied instructional methods (Little, 2017). This involves implementation of curriculum-based assessment, content taught, the process in which it is taught, the product derived from what is taught, and the effect on the student. With this, the best-known and most-applied systematic assessment of students' performance is curriculum-based assessment, an evidence-based approach used to measure students' academic status and progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2017). Curriculum-based assessment provides a method to measure student

achievement using both screening and progress monitoring assessments and helps guide teachers' instruction by identifying students' specific academic deficits.

Differentiation is a way of teaching that allows teachers to know their students well, so they can provide each one with experiences and tasks that will improve learning. Differentiating instruction means giving students multiple options for taking in information while teachers observe and understand the differences and similarities among students, and they use this information to plan instruction (Thapa et al., 2017). According to Tomlinson and Imbeau (2017), differentiating instruction occurs when instruction and classroom practices are modified based on a student's individual learning profile. For students with disabilities, classroom teachers can use curriculum-based assessment to differentiate instruction to provide them with every opportunity to learn.

Curriculum-based assessment provides feedback to help teachers to align their instruction with the standards and, at the same time, to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and identify those students with disabilities who are struggling so that they can be able to master those state standards (Castillo et al., 2017). Not only must schools teach academic skills, but they must measure how successful each child is acquiring these skills. When it comes to failing readers, ordinary class teaching is not enough, and specialist interventions are required (Thornblad & Christ, 2016). One way to do this is through curriculum-based assessment which uses brief, timed tests made up of academic material taken from the child's school curriculum (Ardoin et al., 2017). According to The National Reading Panel (2016), most reading problems can be prevented by providing effective instruction and intervention in preschool and in the primary grades. In some

cases, there may be schools where there is an effective classroom reading instruction, and students receive regular brief reading assessments so that their reading growth can be monitored. On the other hand, there may be schools where there are struggling readers, and for some students, quality classroom reading instruction is not enough. When such is the case, classroom reading teachers can implement curriculum-based assessment to adjust their instruction accordingly to try to accelerate student progress (Roberts et al., 2019). For example, if a student with disability lags significantly behind in reading, an assessment of decoding measures can determine if the student is weak in decoding skills. This can be assessed through a district curriculum-based measurement reading assessment performed in the classroom.

Lloyd (2017) stated that effective reading teachers adapt their instruction by implementing curriculum-based assessment which will allow them to making changes designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Therefore, by implementing curriculum based assessment, differentiated instruction, and progress monitoring to evaluate their reading instruction, students with disabilities who are not making enough progress with quality classroom reading instruction alone, schools can provide extra small-group reading intervention to ensure that students with disabilities are reading on grade level (Denton & Mathes, 2017; Fletcher, Denton, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2017; Vaughn, Wanzek, Woodruff, & Linan-Thompson, 2016).

The purpose of curriculum-based assessment is to provide teachers with information on student progress to guide future decisions for instruction (Lastrapes & Mooney, 2019). An example of a curriculum-based assessment is the DIBELS Oral

Reading Fluency (DORF) assessment. This assessment measures a student's overall reading competence through a timed, grade level reading passage. The DORF is a curriculum-based assessment because a few questions are given in a short, measured period of time to assess for fluency. Responses are recorded, graphed, and analyzed to determine strengths and weaknesses. Curriculum-based assessment provides valuable data for classroom teachers and school districts because the assessments are given often throughout the school year. Table 1 differentiates standardized testing in classrooms as compared the curriculum-based measurement that monitor student progress over time (Crawford, 2017). However, the methods of how that instruction will be delivered to help students with disabilities succeed may differ based on individual interventions that best match how each student learns. For students with disabilities, instructional emphasis should be placed on judiciously incorporating instruction and delivery of content to help them reach their full potential (Clarke, Doabler, Nelson, & Shanley, 2017).

Table 1

Comparison of Standardized Testing Versus Curriculum-Based Measurement

Question	Standardized testing cycle	Curriculum-based measurement
When do you test?	Immediately after content has been taught (teach-test-teach)	Probe weekly or monthly
Which items are included?	Open or closed-ended test questions from a particular lesson or unit	A selection of random items chosen to represent an entire year's (or an entire semester's) curriculum
How long are the tests?	Often untimed; might include a time limit	Timed probes of 1 to 5 minutes
Why do you test?	Test because you want to know if students learned what was taught during a particular lesson or unit	Probe to see if students are showing progress over time
How does graphing help with data analysis?	Graphing of students' scores provides no new information	Graphing of students' scores reveals positive or negative trends over time

Note. Adapted from Crawford, L. (2017). The role of assessment in a response to intervention model. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 58(4), 230–236.

Through analysis of curriculum-based assessment measures, classroom teachers can create a comprehensive analysis of the academic achievements of students with disabilities. Teachers can provide additional information through behavior logs, grades, homework, and classwork. Interventions can be determined based on current levels of performance in the classroom based on the data collected. By implementing curriculum-based assessment, teachers can use data to drive instruction for students with disabilities.

Summary and Conclusions

The importance of curriculum-based implementation through a structured framework as evidenced by the three elements of CAI connection of ACSD model for an effective curriculum-based assessment implementation structure is outlined in Chapter 2. Curriculum-based assessment implementation creates opportunities for students to grow both academically and behaviorally to achieve grade level success. However, there is a gap in practice between expected practice with curriculum-based assessment and what is implemented in the classrooms. The literature in Chapter 2 will establish the relevance of curriculum-based assessment policy as well as the implementation process. The present study will analyze teachers' implementation of curriculum-based assessment to determine if practice is matching the research. It will be shown through the research how teachers can overcome challenges to conducting curriculum-based implementation. To close the gap between what should be implemented in the classroom and what is currently being used, the following study will address the gap in practice regarding the teacher's experiences as well as the challenges with curriculum-based assessment implementation.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. I investigated and explored the implementation of curriculum-based assessment through a collection of teachers' experiences based on the components of curriculum-based assessment. I also investigated and explored the perceived effects of the special education and general education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. Components of an effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment included curriculum, assessment and use of data, and instruction. I described the role of the researcher, methodology that were used to select participants, and data collection. This chapter includes an explanation of trustworthiness and ethical procedures to protect the participants.

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, general education and special education teachers provided insight into the implementation of curriculum-based assessment for students with disabilities. Educators can use the collected information to better understand and implement effective curriculum-based assessment in their schools. I intended for the critical questions in this study to disclose a gap between standardized testing that already exists in the classroom and curriculum-based assessment that is not regularly used to assess students with

disabilities. Creswell and Poth (2017) stated that the central phenomenon in qualitative research is the concept or process. The central concept of this qualitative study was to analyze teachers' perceptions of implementation of curriculum-based assessment for students with disabilities in ninth and 12th grades. I used the three elements of CAI connection of ACSD model for an effective curriculum-based assessment to inform the research questions in this study. The following research questions addressed the purpose of the study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are special education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are general education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are special education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What are general education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Qualitative research designs include case study, ethnographic study, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Rayan et al., 2019). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined basic qualitative design as focused analysis of a situation or issue which includes detailed

interviews of the participants. Therefore, I aligned this study as a basic qualitative study design. The research questions focused on teacher implementation with curriculum-based assessment. I collected data through teacher interviews which provided a wide range of responses regarding experiences as well as the challenges with curriculum-based assessment implementation. I provided answers to the research questions. Teachers can use the results from this study to improve future curriculum-based implementations by identifying trends in their perceptions and options and further explore the problems that result when they opt to use standardized assessments over curriculum-based assessments to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. In this basic qualitative study, I bound the research study to a high school in an Eastern U.S. school district.

I did not choose other qualitative designs, such as grounded theory, ethnographic, and historical study. A qualitative grounded theory design will not match this study because I am not developing a theory or explaining a process. An ethnographic study explores cultural groups and their interactions and influences by the greater society (Rayan et al., 2019). Because, I did not focus this study on a cultural group, an ethnographic study was not appropriate. A phenomenological study is like a case study as it allows the researcher to learn about phenomenon through the eyes of participants over an extended period (Creswell, 2017). Due to time constraints with this study, a phenomenological study was not used. Based on the various criteria of each study type, I have considered a basic qualitative study design to be the best design choice.

Quantitative designs such as experimental, correlational, and survey, were not applicable to this study as they would have yielded numerical results. Neither numerical

data nor statistical analysis were used for data analysis in this study. I used only narrative data that I collected through interviews. Based on the narrative data collection, a qualitative design was appropriate because data collected from this study were presented through narrative descriptions.

Role of the Researcher

During the time of this study, I was an employee in a high school in a large Eastern U.S. city since 2000. Since that period, I taught general education and special education from ninth through 12th grade. Currently, I am an Instructional Support Special Education teacher for ninth through 12th grades. Throughout my employment in a high school in a large Eastern U.S. city, I sought to build trusting collegial relationships throughout the school district with both teachers and administrators. My credibility was established through various leadership roles, such as principal designee of special education, and by also serving on numerous committees in my school district. Because of my position as a special educator, I may have had bias towards special education teachers implementing curriculum-based assessment in helping students with disabilities achieve academic success. Potential bias included my own perceptions on what an effective curriculum-based implementation should look like and how it should be implemented. I refrained from showing any emotion or expression when gathering data from participants.

In this basic qualitative research study, I took the role of the interviewer. I conducted face-to-face semi structured interviews with a total of five general education

teachers and five special education high school teachers. My goal was to remove myself from any actual experiences and focus only on the data that were presented to me during the interviews. I do not hold a supervisory role in the district, and my relationship with the participants is on a peer-to-peer colleague level. The absence of any supervisory relationship with the participants with the participants minimized any influence on their participation in the study.

I refrained from interjecting my own personal views during participant interviews to reduce bias from personal beliefs and strictly adhered to the information each participant had provided. To guard against bias in my data, I took copious notes and cross-referenced those notes with the digital recordings during the interviews. This reduced any temptations to interject my opinions regarding what I thought the participant will say. I relied strictly on the information that was given to me. If I was unclear about a participant's response, I asked for clarification to avoid adding my own interpretations

Methodology

Participant Selection

I used the purposeful sampling strategy. Participants in this study were high school general education and special education teachers in ninth and 12th grades. These general and special education teachers have experience working with implementation of standardized assessment and curriculum-based assessment in the classrooms. I did not select teachers without curriculum-based assessment implementation experience for the study.

The high school contains 20 general education and five special education teachers. If I did not get 10 teachers to participate with my initial selection attempt, and I ended up with an inadequate sample size, I may have had to sample more of my population, increase the number of interview questions, contact more potential participants, or consider widening the population. I did this by staying within the bounds of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (Approval Number 08-02-19-0595374). Wagner (2016) stated that when the sample size of a research study is inadequate for the alpha level and analyses that a researcher has chosen, the research study will have reduced statistical power, which is the ability to find a statistical effect in the sample if the effect exists in the population. To maintain confidentiality, I attached an envelope for participants to seal the questionnaire and place them in my teacher mailbox. I asked teachers to provide contact information on the questionnaire. I retrieved the sealed envelopes from my teacher's mailbox when each teacher had completed the demographic questionnaire. Teachers who had completed the questionnaire and had implemented curriculum-based assessment in the classroom, I placed them in a participant pool. I did not choose this sample size because it allowed for ample representation for each grade level while keeping the number of participants to a manageable number. If any participants decided not to participate, I chose the next volunteer. I notified all teachers who responded to the demographic questionnaire via their preferred method of contact (obtained through the questionnaire) regarding their selection or rejection to participate in the study. I gave participants 2 weeks to respond to

the demographic questionnaire, and I notified them of their selection or rejection a week after the questionnaire deadline.

Instrumentation

I referred the instruments in this study to the interview questions. To test for content validity and assess the instruments used, I sought the expertise of both a special education teacher and literacy coach. The special education teacher was an expert in differentiation and interventions while the literacy coach was an expert in curriculum, instruction, and assessment implementation.

The interview questions that I used for this study reflected the three elements of CAI connection of ACSD model for an effective curriculum-based assessment (Appendix C). Participants shared their personal views regarding curriculum-based assessment implementation in the classroom.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

After taking the demographic survey, I selected teachers by notifying them by an email of their participation in the study. At that time, educators who I did not select for the study were also notified. I collected initial email addresses through the demographic survey. The email contained an attachment with a letter of consent to participate in the study. I instructed participants to reply to the email with "I consent" if they had agreed to participate. I informed participants in the e-mail that I would provide hard copies at the interview if they wanted a hard copy of the consent form. I provided compensation in the form of a \$10 gift card to thank the participants for taking part in the study. If a

participant chose to withdraw at any time throughout the study, he or she received a thank you card.

The email had a link to a Doodle Poll to schedule their interviews. Participants had 1 week to schedule their interviews. By using a Doodle Poll, participants had the option of selecting from several interview dates and times that fit my schedule as well as theirs. If the listed dates and times on the poll were not convenient for the participant, I reached out to the participant in-person and scheduled a date and time for the interview. I offered as much flexibility as possible to allow for convenient scheduling times. If a participant did not schedule the interview by the 1-week deadline, I followed up with a phone call. I conducted interviews in a location comfortable to the participant. The time of the interview varied based on participant availability. I conducted interviews during instruction times, but they occurred during a participant's break period. I also conducted some interviews before or after school. The interview settings were in a school setting, such as an empty classroom or in the teacher's lounge. When using an empty classroom, I posted a Do Not Disturb, Interview in Progress sign on the door. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes, and the total data collection period took approximately 1 month. I gave ample time to allow for all participants to be interviewed.

According to Saldana (2016), in qualitative research, the researcher uses interviewing as a way to seek to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. Because the main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees report, prior to the start of each interview, I discussed with each participant the expectations and purpose of the study as stated in the interview protocol

(Table 2). I reminded the participants that their responses would be held in strict confidentiality. I also reminded the participants that their participation in the interviews was voluntary and will be recorded; however, they could have declined to answer questions or cease participation at any time. If a participant decided to cancel his/her participation, I would have selected the next participant that had submitted his/her demographic questionnaire and then followed the same procedures for notification and scheduling. I recorded interviews using an iPad voice recorder to ensure that my interview notes were accurate. When transcribing, I cross-referenced my notes and compared those notes to what the participant stated in the audio file. I also use the digital recording to ensure that I had captured all the participant's responses in my notes, and I have not missed any information. Recording also ensured credibility as it provided a reliable source of information. During the interview, I asked participants to expand or clarify information they were going to provide. The chart below lists the interview protocol that were followed for all participants.

Interview Protocol

Step	Procedure
1	Introductions of researcher and participant
2	Discussion of expectations and purpose of the study
3	Review of confidentiality
4	Review of recording policies and ability to cancel interview
5	Participant questions/clarifications
6	Interview questions given in order

- 7 Open for additional participant discussion
 - 8 Thank the participant for their time
-

In any study, participants have the right to receive the findings upon completion of the study (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016). Debriefing procedures for this study provided participants with a disclosure of the findings. An exit email was sent to the participants. The email contained a summary of the findings along with a note thanking the participant for their willingness to serve in this study.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis refers to the process of collecting and collating the gathered data to allow the researcher to produce findings from the study (Bouck, 2017). The research questions developed for this study provided a focus for the data collection and it helped to organize the interview questions. By using the research questions as a framework to guide the interview questions, a connection was made between the framework theory, data collected and the research questions. The interview questions for this study focused on teachers' implementation of curriculum-based assessment and its components.

In qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to avoid any misrepresentation or misunderstanding of the data collected (Hallahan & Mercer 2017). To avoid misrepresentation, member checking helped established validity (Cho & Trent, 2016). Often through interview summaries, a member check allows participants the opportunity to check the data or findings provided by the researcher to assure accuracy (Regan et al., 2017). After each participant had completed the interview, I transcribed the

digital recordings, and note-taking protocol checklists. Each participant received the findings from their interview to check for accuracy. The findings were sent via e-mail. I asked the participants to review the findings and comment on any missing or inaccurate information. Teachers had 2 weeks to review the findings and reply to me via e-mail. The process of member checking helped me validate the themes which emerged from the data collection (Saldana, 2016).

When analyzing data, a descriptive qualitative study begins with a detailed description of the participant, grade level or school, which is then followed by an analysis of the themes uncovered in the coding process (Creswell, 2017). Since the interviews produced a large quantity of descriptive information, the information needed to be organized (Mandinach & Gummer, 2017). I used thematic analysis to identify patterns in the data that related to the research questions (Braun & Clark, 2014). In the thematic analysis, open, axial, and thematic coding strategies were used to analyze data thematically. Key words or phrases that represented the concepts in the initial review of the data were organized (Bal, Sullivan, & Harper, 2015).

For this study, I used thematic analysis of the transcriptions and assigned codes without the use of computer software. Since I only interviewed 10 participants, the sample size was small enough so that I could have reviewed the data personally without the assistance of a computer program. Based on the coding methods by Creswell (2017), I followed these steps to code and analyze the data using open, axial, and thematic coding strategies. First, I organized the data and compared the notes that I had taken during the interviews to the digital recordings. Next, I reviewed all data to become familiar with it

and reflected on the information that was collected. In the next three steps, I began to conduct open, axial, and thematic coding strategies. In open coding, data were placed in broad categories and the categories were condensed into subcategories. In axial coding, similar categories were combined to further reduce the data. Finally, in thematic coding, emergent themes were identified from the axial codes. Those key words and phrases that emerge often in the data were noted as possible themes. Themes were separated into categories and those categories helped me to sort the data, which were then physically separated and analyzed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2015)

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is necessary in qualitative research because it supports that the findings of the study are credible (Rayan et al., 2019). In qualitative research, strategies to evaluate procedures build the credibility of the results (Lastrapes & Mooney, 2019). Rigor, integrity, and validity of this study were increased by examining the procedures conducted for evidence of reliability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability

Credibility

Throughout the data collection process, the information gathered must demonstrate accuracy (Creswell, 2017). The process of ensuring validity examines any threats that would affect the researcher's ability to accurately draw conclusions from the data obtained from the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants are reliable judges when determining the credibility and validity in a qualitative study (Skiba et al., 2016). Member checks were utilized to reduce internal validity threats. This procedure ensured credibility because participants were given opportunities to review the findings

and check for data accuracy. The findings for each interview were sent to the corresponding participant, via email. Participants checked the findings for accuracy and emerging themes. Teachers had two weeks to review the findings and reply to me via email. If participants had agreed to the accuracy of the findings that were presented to them, then it was concluded that the information was credible.

Transferability

To determine if the findings in a study have a larger significance, those findings need to be transferable to other contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Transferability presents challenges in qualitative research if external validity is not established. External validity is established if the findings in a study are applicable to other situations or people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One way to increase the potential for transferability is to provide a thick description of the findings. A thick description in qualitative research provides the reader with detailed information describing what has been explored and to what extent within those specific contexts (Frankfort-Nachmias, & Leon-Guerrero, 2018). By providing as much detailed information as possible, connections can be made between curriculum-based assessment implementation at this district and possibly other similar districts.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research is important because it ensures constancy between one researcher's methods as compared to other researchers (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). To establish dependability, records of the research will provide audit trails in a study. Audit trails are records kept by the researcher in a qualitative study

(Ven, 2016). To create my audit trail, I kept notes throughout my research and data collection process. I documented each step in my research regarding my study. My notes gave an accurate description of what I was experiencing during the interviewing process. I took notes of the decisions that I made based on participant sampling, ethical concerns, and other questions that had arisen throughout the study. The audit trail also included the research design and decisions that I made when I analyzed the data as well as decisions on coding and categorizing the data. I included an external auditor to examine both the process and product of the study. External audits involve having a researcher not involved in the research process. The purpose of an external audit is a way of assessing the trustworthiness of a study, attesting to its dependability from a methodological standpoint and to its confirmability by reviewing the data, analysis, and interpretations and assessing whether the findings represent the data accurately (Frankfort-Nachmias, & Leon-Guerrero, 2018).

Confirmability

In qualitative analysis, confirmability validates that the findings reflect the conditions of the inquiry and the inquirer (Patton, 2015). To establish confirmability, I used a reflexive journal to explicitly detail my own assumptions and biases throughout the duration of the study. A reflexive journal allowed me to document my experiences as the researcher, including my personal reflections (Anney, 2017). By documenting my experiences, I reflected on my own influences, perceptions, and background knowledge. I described each step of the study based on credibility based on the consistency and insight to verify the processes that I had used throughout the study (Creswell, 2017). By

using a reflexive journal, I confirmed the decisions that I made throughout the study and documented justification for those decisions. The journal also helped me to document my values and beliefs to confirm how my background and experiences in the research have shaped the direction of the study.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical Procedures

As a researcher, I abided by ethical research methods and anticipated any issues that arose throughout the study, especially while collecting data and presenting the results (Creswell, 2016). Following Walden University's policy, I completed The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research Web-based training course, Protecting Human Research Participants. By taking this course, I ensured that the research methods used in this study were ethical and provided exemplary protection to the participants. Ethical concerns that relate to participation volunteerism might include participants refusing to participate or withdraw early from the study. Since I let the participants know that they could withdraw at any time from the study prior to starting the interview, I did not foresee any adverse ethical concerns. If a participant removed him or herself, I would have selected the next participant that had submitted the demographic questionnaire from those grade levels and then I would have followed the same procedures for notification and scheduling. To provide fair and ethical treatment of the human participants, I followed IRB protocols and procedures to receive permission to conduct the study. The permission will be granted by the participating school district.

Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. Participants were made aware of their participation via a letter sent through electronic mail and acknowledged their voluntary participation by a signed consent letter. All collected data will be held in the strictest confidence and participants' identity will remain confidential. Storage of confidential participant information will be kept in a secure folder on my password-protected computer. Data will be destroyed after 5 years after the study is completed. At that time, any electronic data will be removed and erased securely from the computer and hard copies of data will be shredded.

Summary

The central elements of Chapter 3 include the research design, the rationale for the design, the role of the researcher, methodology, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations when using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. A purposeful random sampling strategy was used to select participants in this study. After data collection through interviews, the data were coded and categorized into themes. Discrepant cases were noted and included in the data. Based on the information presented in Chapter 3, the following chapter addressed the results of the data collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 described the setting, which included participant demographics and characteristics relevant to the study, as well as data collection and analysis. The chapter also included results from the data and how it

will address each research question. Evidence of trustworthiness has shown the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as it was described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Teachers can use the results from this study to help them identify trends in their perceptions and further explore the problems that result when they opt to use standardized assessment over curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. I used the critical questions in this study to help identify gaps that may occur throughout the process of implementing curriculum-based assessment. I developed the four research questions for this study to gather special education and general education teachers' perceptions and challenges on curriculum-based implementation in the classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students in their respective schools:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are special education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are general education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are special education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What are general education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

The conceptual framework of this study and the basis for the research questions was curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment practices based upon Nitko's (1995) research. Nitko (1995) argued that curriculum-based assessment should be the basis for assessing student learning, especially in a high-stakes evaluation. Nitko's conditions of curriculum-based criterion-reference assessment practices were appropriate for this basic qualitative study because curriculum-based assessment focuses on continuous assessments that are aligned with and organized around the learning targets specified in classroom instruction that is tailored specifically to address the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. I used the framework to support the research questions because Nitko's theory supports instructional design prior to classroom implementation as well as instructional events in the classroom.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss the data collection and analysis procedures throughout the course of the study. I will explain the participants and setting, the method in which data were generated, collected, and recorded. I will describe any unusual circumstances that I have encountered throughout the data collection process. In Chapter 4, I will explain how thematic analysis and open, axial, and thematic coding strategies were used to analyze the data. I will also address each research question with data to support each finding. I will provide evidence of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, followed by a summary of chapter 4.

Setting

Conditions

On February 4th, 2020, Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved my application (Approval Number 08-02-19-0595374) to conduct my research study at a high school in a large eastern U.S. city. The following week, I began collecting data through questionnaires and face-to-face semi structured interviews of special education and general education teachers of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. This data collection resulted in teachers' responses regarding their challenges and perceptions with curriculum-based assessment implementation as well as their number of years teaching experiences.

Participant Demographics

To determine participant eligibility, I attended one of the weekly faculty meetings. In the last few minutes of the meeting, I introduced my study and distributed the materials such as the demographic questionnaires (Appendix B) and consent forms to all teachers in grades 9–12. At this meeting, I did not request for participants nor otherwise asked teachers to raise their hands to volunteer for the study. I explained to the teachers that they can take their time to decide about participation and if they were interested in participating to contact me after the meeting. However, I did inform teachers that there was a deadline that questionnaires had to be returned to me. I obtained each teacher's email address from the demographic questionnaire along with a signed consent form that they had to fill out and return to me in sealed envelopes. I placed in participant

pools those teachers who completed the questionnaire and who had implemented curriculum-based assessment in integrated collaborative teaching classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. The selection of participants across grade levels contained two ninth grade general education teachers, three ninth grade special education teachers, two 12th grade general education teachers, and three 12th grade special education teachers. The participant number and their years of experience of teaching are presented in Table 3. To ensure confidentiality, grade levels were not identified with the corresponding participant.

Table 2

Participant Number and Years' Teaching

Participant	Teaching experience
1	5+ Years
2	1-5 Years
3	5+ Years
4	5+ Years
5	1-5 Years
6	1-5 Years
7	1-5 Years
8	5+ Years
9	5+ Years
10	5+ Years

Data Collection**Participants**

Within 1 week after the survey deadline, I notified a total of 19 teachers who had responded to the demographic questionnaire via alternate email (obtained through the questionnaire) regarding their selection or rejection to participate in the study. From this pool of 19 teachers, I randomly selected 10 participants, and each of them received a

demographic questionnaire form (See Appendix B). I asked the participants to sign a consent form and keep a copy for themselves to indicate their consent to participate in the study. All 10 participants gave consent with the understanding that participation was confidential and voluntary. If any participant decided to participate but changed their mind later, the teacher could stop at any time without any penalties.

Data Collection

Participation in this study included a semi structured, face-to-face interview and participant review of the findings. Via email, participants received a link to a Doodle Poll to schedule their interviews. Other participants were not able to see the responses to the Doodle Poll. I followed the interview protocol identified in Chapter 3 for every interview. I did not schedule any interviews during instructional time, except during a free period such as lunch period. All interviews were held either before school, during a free period, or after school hours so that research activities were kept separate from participants' regular activities. Participants had 1 week to schedule their interviews. If a participant did not schedule the interview by the 1-week deadline, I followed up with a phone call. Each interview took approximately 40–45 minutes. The time and location of the interviews were left to the discretion of the participant. All participants had a choice to conduct the interviews either in their classrooms or in a quiet room in their school. A “Do Not Disturb” sign was posted on the door to limit interruptions during the interview. With participant permission, I used a voice recorder on my iPad to digitally record the interviews while I also typed the information on my personal, password-protected computer. I transferred the digital recordings to my personal computer and deleted from

my iPad. When transcribing, I cross-referenced my notes to the participant's recording so that my notes accurately reflected what the participant stated in the interview, and my own biases were not reflected in the data. I used the digital recording to help me to capture all of the participant's responses in my notes so that I did not miss any information.

Variations in Data Collection

There were no variations in the actual data collection from the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3. However, I did have to make one adjustment to the participant pool and the interview scheduling. I only had one special education teacher participant volunteer from the 12th grade. To compensate for this variation, I randomly selected two additional teachers from the pool of eligible participants to keep the number of participants to 10 teachers. I selected two special education teachers from the twelfth grade. This increased the number of participants in the twelfth grade from one to three.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis

Interviews

I used thematic analysis to analyze the data with open, axial, and thematic coding strategies. Because I only interviewed and observed 10 participants, the sample size was small enough so that I could analyze the data without the assistance of a computer

program. Based on the qualitative analysis methods described by Creswell (2014), I followed these steps to analyze the data:

- Step 1: I organized the data collected by transcribing the interviews based on the digital recordings and the notes I took throughout the interviews. I compared the notes and recordings to make sure that I did not miss any information shared during the interview in my notes.
- Step 2: I reviewed the data to become familiar with what the participants were trying to convey and to provide an overall reflection on the information presented. According to Creswell (2014), taking notes on overall impressions of the data can help shape ideas about the data presented. My thoughts were recorded in the reflexive journal.
- Step 3: In this phase of the data collection, open coding segmented the data into broad categories. This process was done in Microsoft Word. I color coded each code and gave it a category title. I sorted the data in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with each column containing a separate code. I placed the color-coded data under the matching column. In these broad categories, I created subcategories to provide more detail in the broad category.
- Step 4: The next step in the data analysis used axial coding to relate the categories developed during open coding. I conducted axial coding to confirm and explore the concepts and categories. I merged into one category those categories that were similar in nature which required further reduction of the

data. For example, the code “insufficient time” and “needed resources” were combined under the code of “challenges.”

- Step 5: Using thematic coding, I then looked for the interrelationships that emerged from the categories developed during axial coding. Through this analysis, I identified emergent theme. I examined each of the codes and generated the themes that appeared to encapsulate the major findings from the data.

Once thematic data analysis was completed, I asked the participants to provide a member check to review the findings. Member checking is considered an important process in the credibility of a qualitative study (Rumrill et al., 2011). To complete the member check, participants received the results of participant data to analyze via email. Participants were given 1 week to review the findings for accuracy of their data. As a researcher, member checking helped me to include the voices of the participants in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Participants replied to the email with any additional comments or clarifications, or to ensure that the information was presented correctly. Only two participants added additional information to their findings and those data were inserted into the findings.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant information adds to the credibility of the data (Creswell, 2012). All participant perspectives are important in basic qualitative research and all data were included during data analysis. I did not find any discrepant data.

Results

Interview Results

I used thematic coding analysis to identify the main themes in the study. Eight themes from the research questions emerged from the thematic analysis.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are special education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Theme 1: Special education teachers need time, information, and necessary skills, to invest in the implementation of curriculum-based assessment.

Special education teachers expressed concerns over a number of limitations to properly implement curriculum-based assessments. These concerns included: time, necessary skills, and information needed for the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. Special education teachers stressed the need for more time needed for the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. Ninety percent of special education teacher participants discussed the fact that there was not enough time in their schedules to invest in the implementation of curriculum-based assessment even if it would lead to the improvement of the academic learning and development of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. As participant 1 stated: "We won't have time to analyze the data properly." Participant 1 added: "Relief time would be needed for thorough implementation of curriculum-based assessments so that immediate academic interventions can be established to remediate any academic deficits for ninth and 12th grade students with learning." Participant 3 stated,

“I am already overwhelmed with the amount of ninth grade students with IEPs on my caseload and not having enough time to do their annual reviews before the go out of compliance. Now, where would I find the extra time to use curriculum-based assessments to assess them?”

It was unanimously agreed by all special education teachers that it is a time-consuming process to adapt a new initiative and as they become familiarized to the changes, more information is needed. Participant 3 stated: “Although change is good, too many changes become confusing and lead to too much administrative work.” Participant 3 added: “Why should I take so much time away from teaching to assess and do even more paperwork? I am already overwhelmed with the amount of time spent collecting other assessments in preparing IEPs.” Participant 5 stated: “Whenever there is a new initiative, it seems like we must learn the hard way, trial and error. I remembered the last time we tried to implement a new initiative, it was horrible and even when you went to other teachers, they did not know what to do. It was as if the blind leading the blind.” Participant 5 added: “If I am going to implement curriculum-based assessments to assess ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities, then I need to know where to start. I need ongoing information.”

Another task concern expressed by most of the special education teachers was the need to be equipped with necessary skills to implement curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. Participant 7 stated: “As a first-year special education teacher, I need to be equipped with the necessary skills. I need training on how to implement curriculum-based assessments.” Participant 9 stated:

“I don’t think any of the special education teachers are equipped with the necessary skills needed to implement curriculum-based assessments. Therefore, I think we all need to be trained with the necessary skills.” Participant 10 stated: “Conducting curriculum-based assessment on a regular basis for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities sounds good, but it’s not going to work if we are not equipped with the necessary skills.” Additionally, participant 10 added: “For the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments, the principal needs to devise a plan which will allow all of the teachers to devote more time to the planning and initiation of curriculum-based assessments.” At the planning stage of any new project, before the project starts the school leader must make sure the project goals, objectives, scope, risks, issues, budget, timescale and approach have been defined. This must be communicated to all the stakeholders to get their agreement, and any differences of opinion or conflicts must be resolved before work starts.

Theme 2: Special education teachers don’t receive enough support from the general education teachers to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.

Eighty-five percent of the special education teachers expressed a level of frustration with the lack of support that they received from the general education teachers. Participant 1 expressed: “Whenever I am administering vocational assessments to collect data for my IEP reviews, the general education teachers take days, sometimes weeks, in giving me the data. Therefore, if curriculum-based assessment is implemented, then they have to support me by giving me the data in a timely manner.” According to participant 3: “I have a problem with the general education teachers not sharing student

data with the special education teachers after they conduct their classroom assessments. If we are to implement curriculum-based assessments, then the general education teachers need to support us by sharing and discussing the data with us.” Participant 5 expressed: “Special education teachers are more than just disciplinarians. We are certified teachers too. If we are going to implement curriculum-based assessments in the classroom, then I would need the general education teachers to support me in giving me the lesson plans beforehand so that I can modify them.” Participant 7 added: “I need the general education teachers to understand what testing accommodations mean. If the students with IEPs get time and a half for classroom assessments, then they need to support me more in honoring those services if we do implement curriculum-based assessments.” Both special education and general education teachers need to support each other and be more compatible in the classroom for the curriculum-based assessment to be implemented effectively. Murawski and Spencer (2017) identified compatibility and mutual support between general education teachers and special educators as critical for successful implementation of curriculum-based assessments.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are general education teachers’ perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

Theme 3: General education teachers have limited resources in addressing the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.

A lack of resources to help with the implementation of curriculum-based assessments was a major concern from teachers. The availability as well as the accessibility of resources were the unanimous belief of all the teachers and clearly articulated by participant 2 who stated: “While my ninth-grade students with learning disabilities are given the opportunity to use the same curricula as their non-disabled peers, they are not able to keep up with the work.” Additionally, participant 2 stated: “If we are to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments, then we need more resources in the classroom to help my ninth-grade students with learning disabilities keep up with the work.” Participant 4 stated: “More and more students with learning disabilities are being placed in my classroom, and as a result, this placement comes with a lot of work for me. Participant 6 stated: “The extra effort that I have to put into ensuring my ninth-grade students with learning disabilities understand the work takes away from the rest of the classroom because they can’t keep up with the pace.” Participant 6 added: “For curriculum-based assessment to be successful, my students with disabilities need to be carefully monitored. Careful monitoring of my students with disabilities require additional resources than what they already have.” Participant 8 stated: “We just need to develop more ideas and strategies on how to effectively implement curriculum-based assessment so that students with learning disabilities can show levels of mastery on the assessments.”

A suggestion made by one of the general education teachers was to develop Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the school where the teachers would work collaboratively to develop ideas and strategies to have more resources that relate to

curriculum-based assessments. Participant 6 stated: “Whenever it comes to assessing my ninth-grade students with learning disabilities, I am always looking for ideas on how I can find resources to keep track of their progress. Participant 8 stated: “If the school principal mandates us to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments, then we should be supplied with the resources.” Schools in the improvement process often examine the various leadership factors that play a substantial role in school effectiveness (Roberts et al., 2019). For the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments, school staff needs to be motivated by transformational leadership. Burns (2015) defined transformational leadership as a person’s ability to engage others for the purpose of building motivation. By having transformational leadership, teachers would be supplied with whatever resources and materials that they need to address the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. Given that transformational leaders generally have staff members who are committed to a shared goal or vision and are more satisfied in their positions, this type of leadership has the potential to greatly impact the successful implementation of curriculum-based assessments (Brown, Anfara & Roney, 2016).

Theme 4: General education teachers must accommodate needs daily for various diverse group of students in oversized classrooms to effectively implement curriculum-base assessments.

As evidenced by the general education teacher participants, the number of students in the integrated collaborative classroom is too large to help students with learning disabilities. Participant 8 expressed: “This school year, in all of my ninth-grade

classes, I have students with different needs. I have high performing students, low-performing students, the ELL students, and the ninth grade students with learning disabilities.” Participant 2 stated: “Sometimes I feel overwhelmed while trying to provide differentiated instruction that caters to the low-level students, challenging work for the high-level students, and extra language support for the ELL students, all while making sure that needs are accommodated.” Participant 4 stated: “When I have to accommodate needs daily for various diverse group of students in an oversized classroom, it’s just not practical to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments only to assess ninth grade students with learning disabilities.” Participant 4 added: “Because there are so many students with such varying needs, I would have to accommodate for all types of learners, so I would definitely need assistance from administration if I am going to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.” According to Fox and Ysseldyke (2017) administrative leadership is paramount in the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments in integrated collaborative teaching (ICT) classrooms. Vaughn, Schumm, and Anney (2017) found that working with students with learning disabilities in large classes in high school settings to be specifically challenging. For the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments to occur class sizes need to be smaller.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are special education teachers’ challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Theme 5: Special education teachers do not receive data-based assessment results in a timely manner so that decisions can be made about early interventions.

Special education teachers shared that they do not receive data-based assessments in a timely manner so that decisions can be made about early interventions. Participant 1 stated: “Just recently, at the start of this school year, the general education teachers administered baseline assessments. I had to do annual IEP reviews for the ninth-grade students with learning disabilities. I was late in finalizing their IEPs because I did not receive the results from those baseline assessments until a month later.” Participant 3 shared: “I have to use the data so that I can see what additional academic supports that I can offer my 12th grade students with learning disabilities. I never receive assessment results in a timely manner.” Additionally, participant 3 stated: “Data collection is a major part of special education. If curriculum-based assessment are valuable tools to track goals, then I need the general education teachers to give me the results from the assessments in a timely manner.” Participant 5 stated: “ By using the data and assessment, it makes it easier for me to pull out my students individually and give them what they need, but I don’t get the assessment results quickly” For the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments, special education and general education teachers need to resolve the conflict of not receiving data-based assessments in a timely manner so that decisions can be made about early interventions and devise a consensus. Consensus building (also known as collaborative problem solving or collaboration) is a conflict-resolution process used mainly to settle complex, multiparty disputes (Fixsen et al., 2017). When planning the implementation of curriculum-based

assessments, it is important to avoid any type of conflicts, for many people fail to realize the value of a project plan in saving time, money and for avoiding many other problems (Fixsen et al., 2017). If conflict should arise at any of the project phase, there should be a consensus, and a strategy that can be used is consensus building. Consensus is a group process where the input of everyone is carefully considered and an outcome is crafted that best meets the needs of the group.

Theme 6: Special education teachers don't share equal roles in teaching in integrated collaborative classrooms to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.

Special education teachers disclosed that they did not share equal roles in the classrooms working alongside the general education teachers. Participant 9 stated: "Both special education and general education teachers need to know all the curriculum so that they can switch back and forth and support each other's efforts. If a special education teacher doesn't know the curriculum, then she is not a co-teacher, she is just an assistant." Participant 9 added: "I spend time daily familiarizing myself with the curriculum, therefore I should have an equal role as the general education teacher, but I don't." Participant 3 stated: "General education teachers need to realize that we are licensed professionals and the various roles of special education specialist are very important. For, example, besides our teaching role, we play another role in collaborating with stakeholders to improve programs, services and outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families."

Participant 7 stated: “I think some general education teachers feel like we are intruding in their space, and sometimes, I really don’t want to be in those classrooms.” Participant 1 stated: “General education teachers need to change their attitudes towards special education teachers.” The general educator’s attitude is endorsed by many as a crucial component in the success or failure of curriculum-based assessment implementation (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer, 2017). Changing the attitudes of general education teachers towards special education teachers was related as essential to the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. This change in attitude will prompt more solicitation of collaborative exchanges between special education and general education teachers (Newkirk-Turner & Mooney, 2018). This, in turn, will lead to an increase in trust and more positive perception of special education teachers as true professionals. The key to making the implementation of curriculum-based effective is equity in the classroom. Promoting special education teachers as sharing equal roles in teaching in integrated collaborative classrooms should be a positive move towards improving relations among all staff, achieving academic success for ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities, and implementing curriculum- based assessments effectively.

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What are general education teachers’ challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

Theme 7: General education teachers don’t have enough preparation time to complete paperwork to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.

General education teachers shared that they didn't have enough preparation time to complete paperwork that connects to curriculum-based assessments. Participant 2 stated: "Since teachers are constantly documenting student progress and filling out reports, it is going to be very difficult to find time during the day to complete any extra paperwork that comes from curriculum-based assessments." Participant 8 stated: "Sometimes, I feel I have no time to teach because I am dealing with paperwork and meetings. That takes time and a tremendous amount of consideration." Additionally, participant 8 stated: "We have our lesson planning, report cards, progress reports, and so much more, conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities would be more of a challenge for me." Participant 4 stated: "Every day I am assessing my students to see what they need. Not everyone needs the same thing." Participant 4 added: "These assessments include running records, guided reading groups, student conferences, portfolios, anecdotal records, tests, quizzes, formative assessment techniques, fluency passages, and writing samples, curriculum-based assessments won't be any different." For the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments, the school leader needs to develop a school team. The school could assist with the conflict of the lack of preparation time to complete paperwork. Teams must work together to develop a plan for implementation and ongoing evaluation. Throughout the process of creating, implementing, and evaluation, strong leadership is needed to help guide teams through conflict and to ensure the curriculum-based assessment is being implemented and monitored effectively (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016).

Theme 8: General education teachers do not receive enough training in curriculum-based assessment to effectively implement it.

General education teachers do not receive enough training in curriculum-based assessment to effectively implement it. Participant 4 stated: “As teachers, we have so many tools at our disposal that it can become overwhelming to sort through all the items in the toolbox and select the one that will most benefit our students. We need to be trained in using the right tools.” Participant 6 stated: “Often times I have found myself planning that perfect lesson for my students only to get sidetracked by over-analyzing the best tool to use for a given task. To help me to better assess the ninth and 12th grade students using curriculum-based assessments, I need training.”

Participant 8 stated: “As a new teacher, I am teaching diverse groups of students than ever before and as a result, I do not feel adequately prepared for being held accountable for the achievement of ninth and 12th grades students with disabilities. For this, I need some type of professional workshop or training.” Lack of training and materials are two of the numerous professed barriers to the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments (Bjorn et al., 2017). General education teacher participants shared that they did attend some training workshops such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and iLit Pearson workshops, but they felt that they needed specific training workshops related to the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. For curriculum-based assessments to be implemented effectively, staff needs to receive additional training in curriculum-based assessment implementation.

Evidence of Trustworthiness (Qualitative and Mixed Methods)

Throughout this study, several procedures were employed to help ensure credibility. Those procedures were conducted for evidence of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Trustworthiness is necessary in qualitative research because it supports that the findings of the study are credible (Elo et al., 2017). The strategies used to build upon the credibility of the results included member checks, a thick description of the results, and a reflexive journal.

Credibility

Member checking was used to ensure credibility and internal validity because I included their input regarding data analysis (Anney, 2017). By conducting a member check, participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback to ensure accuracy of the emergent themes (Roberts et al., 2019).

Transferability

External validity is established if the findings in a study are applicable to other situations or populations (Merriam, 1998). To help establish transferability in this study, I provided a thick description of the findings to determine if the findings of the study have a larger significance and are transferable to other contexts (Miles & Huberman, 2017). A thick description in qualitative research provides detailed information describing what has been explored and to what extent within each context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this study, I applied a thick description of the findings and provided excerpts from transcripts to support the findings, data interpretation, and explanation of

the findings. By providing information of the context, participants and other audiences can understand the relevant issues that will allow them to transfer the findings to their settings. This means that the findings could be transferable to general and special education teachers in a high school in a large Eastern US city. There were no adjustments or changes to the transferability strategy stated in Chapter 3.

Dependability

Dependability in a study is important because it ensures constancy between one researcher's methods as compared to other researchers (Creswell, 2017). To establish dependability in this basic qualitative research study, I kept records of the research using audit trails (Cho & Trent, 2016). I created my audit trail by keeping notes throughout my research and data collection process. Each step in my research was documented and my notes became an accurate description of what I observed and learned from the interviews.

Confirmability

In addition to an audit trail, I also kept a reflexive journal to document my experiences as a researcher, including my own personal reflections (Anny, 2017). Through documentation of my experiences, I reflected on my own influences, perceptions, and background knowledge. By describing each step of the study, I built credibility-based consistency and insight to verify the process (Creswell, 2017). The journal also documented my values and beliefs to confirm how my background and experiences in the research shaped the direction of the study.

Summary

From the data collected through face-to-face semi structured interviews in this basic qualitative descriptive research study, eight themes were identified. The information in Chapter 4 included the data collection process and analysis including participant information, the setting, data collection procedures, results from data collection, and evidence of trustworthiness. A discussion of the findings will be presented in Chapter 5 along with interpretation of the findings and limitations to the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The problem that I addressed in this basic qualitative research study is that teachers are not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Instead, teachers are using standardized tests to assess students' academic abilities in a large Eastern U.S. city. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities.

The nature of this basic qualitative research study was based on qualitative methods that involve an in-depth understanding of curriculum-based assessment implementation for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities on the secondary school level. I used teacher interviews as data sources. I used the information that I gathered to analyze for common themes. In Chapter 5, I will discuss an interpretation of the findings with a comparison to literature related to curriculum-based assessment implementation, limitations to the study, recommendations based on the findings, and implications for positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

I intended for the research questions that I developed for this study to investigate a potential gap in practice between existing standardized assessment and curriculum-based assessment that is not implemented in the classrooms of ninth and 12th grade

students with disabilities. I used the findings in this study to answer the research questions.

1. Special education teachers need time, information, and necessary skills, to invest in the implementation of curriculum-based assessments.
2. Special education teachers don't receive enough support from the general education teachers to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.
3. General education teachers have limited resources in addressing the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.
4. General education teachers must accommodate needs daily for various diverse group of students in oversized classrooms to effectively implement curriculum-base assessments.
5. Special education teachers do not receive results data-based assessment results in a timely manner so that decisions can be made about early interventions.
6. Special education teachers don't share equal roles in teaching in integrated collaborative classrooms to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.
7. General education teachers don't have enough preparation time to complete paperwork to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments.
8. General education teachers do not receive enough training in curriculum-based assessment to effectively implement it.

I allowed the research questions to provide the impetus to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities in their respective schools. The conceptual framework of this study was curriculum-based criterion-referenced assessment practices based upon Nitko's (1995) research. Nitko argued that curriculum-based assessment should be the basis for assessing student learning, especially in a high-stakes evaluation. Nitko developed a framework that helps examine effective implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment. Nitko termed the implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment as "curriculum-based criterion-referenced continuous assessment." Teachers can use this framework to predict challenges for implementing this type of assessment such as their perceptions of using curriculum-based assessment in assessing ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities in high stakes evaluation (Hosp et al., 2016).

Findings

Every special education teacher whom I interviewed reported that they did not share equal roles in teaching in integrated collaborative teaching classrooms to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments. Collaborative teaching happens when two or more educators take responsibility for planning, teaching, and monitoring the success of learners in a class (Kinray & Bagceci, 2016). Special education teachers felt that because general education teachers and special education teachers share many of the same duties including the sharing of many of the same students, there should be no significant differences in teaching roles and fairness and equality in the classrooms.

Kalberg, Lane, and Menzies (2016) stated that in order for the implementation of curriculum-based assessments to be effective, school personnel must work together as teams, and each team member must be able to (a) work to divide tasks equitably and fairly, (b) perform duties associated with assigned roles, (c) assist others who express a need for help, and (d) promote a positive atmosphere for group work. The special education teachers also felt that for curriculum-based assessment implementation to be effective in the classroom, the general education teachers should be trained in the different types of co-teaching styles. According to Tezloff and Obiakor (2016), collaborative teaching provides teachers with opportunities to be engaged in more philosophical discussions and to learn from each other's experiences and teaching styles. Given the increasing diversity in American schools, educators who came from different disciplines and differ in cultural backgrounds and research expertise need to teach together for the implementation of programs to be effective (Murawski & Swanson, 2017). When a school district decides to adopt curriculum-based assessment as a measurement procedure, impacts are anticipated on the service delivery method, accountability procedures, and role functions within that school district (O'Connor et al., 2017).

Both special education teachers and general education teachers agreed that in order to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments in the classroom, it would have to be a shared investment for success which can only happen with teacher collaboration during common planning. All participants shared their frustrations about not having enough time for teacher collaboration to common plan. Deno (2017)

identified time as a primary barrier for teachers at the initiation stage of implementation of curriculum-based assessments. The initiation stage is the most important stage for implementation of any new program as it sets the terms of reference as to how the program will be run (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). One interesting finding of the study was that the teacher participants with less than 5 years teaching experience identified resistance to change as a barrier to the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment. This finding also suggests that teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience are hesitant to try new ideas.

Collaboration among team members is mutually beneficial for teachers as well as administration because when they work together, interact and share ideas, everyone sees and understand how others work, think, negotiate and operate (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2017). Participants reported that time to sit and plan for the activities surrounding the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment would take them away from instructional time, and they were uncertain if the new changes would improve the academic learning and development of the ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. According to Fixsen et al. (2017), as soon as a new idea is introduced, the compelling forces of fear of change, inertia, and investment in the status quo emerge and block the way. For schools that are planning on implementing any programs, successes and failures should be acknowledged during the implementation phase (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016).

Every general education teacher whom I interviewed expressed frustration when I asked the question: How often do you use curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth

and 12th grade students with disabilities in the integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms? During interviews, general education teacher participants expressed their concerns about having limited resources and in addressing the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, the high level of frustration expressed by the general education teachers strongly suggests that curriculum-based assessment is not being used at the research site. The effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment allows for an educator to tackle differing levels of intervention specific to each student to address individual student needs (Hunter et al., 2017). At the research site, there seems to be an issue over the quantity of work, rather than the quality of work. If the use of curriculum-based assessment is implemented, students with learning disabilities can receive targeted, specific interventions that would address specific needs (Lloyd & Lloyd, 2017).

Teachers can use Nitko's (1995) framework as an effective implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment which, ultimately, can be used as an effective tool for them to differentiate their instruction to fit each learner's needs. Curriculum-based assessment implementation follows Nitko's framework that regularly and frequently measures a student academic performance. For example, when implementing a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), teachers can use Nitko's framework to regularly and frequently measure a student's academic performance across the tiers (Gilbert et al., 2017). According to Barrrio and Combes (2017), successful implementation of curriculum-based assessments requires that school administrators take responsibility in providing their staff with whatever resources and materials they need. Throughout the

process of creating, implementing, and evaluation of curriculum-based assessment, strong leadership is needed to help guide teams through conflict and to ensure the system is being implemented and monitored with fidelity (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). It would be helpful for teachers to receive curriculum-based assessment implementation resources and material because curriculum-based implementation produces favorable outcomes in student achievement with effective teacher preparation (Barrio & Combes, 2017).

Professional development training such as workshops, mentoring in the classroom, or turnkey training are beneficial to teachers because learning the specific directions on curriculum-based assessment implementation procedures will help teachers in the classroom (Björn et al., 2016). During the interviews, general education teachers revealed that they did not receive enough training in curriculum-based assessment to effectively implement it. Shapiro (2017) stated that as part of professional development, it is necessary for teachers to be trained well and to adhere to the specifics of instructional programs. If this does not occur, it is virtually impossible to determine whether the implementation of curriculum-based assessment is failing due to the way in which curriculum-based assessment is being implemented, or because the students are not responding to the curriculum-based assessments. According to Alkharusi (2016), if professional development training for the implementation of curriculum-based assessments is lacking in schools, this helps confirm that training in curriculum-based assessment is needed. In addition, professional development should accommodate the needs of both teachers just initiating curriculum-based assessment implementation as well

as teachers who have some experience with it (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2017).

Teacher frustration was evident during the interviews when discussing teacher and staff supports. The majority of the general education teachers expressed frustration because specialists are often pulled from the classrooms to cover other classes when there is a shortage of substitute teachers. Meyer and Behar-Horenstein (2017) stated that teacher frustration increases with limited support for any intervention implementation. According to Schien (2017), leaders may communicate their commitment to specific initiatives through explicit and implicit messages. Leaders' allocation of resources, including their time and effort, suggests to workers which activities are valued (Garbacz, 2016). If a school principals' goal is to implement a new innovation, one way to make it successful is to think about how to help teachers move through that cycle of iteration and innovation more effectively, more efficiently and more joyfully (Hatch, 2017).

During interviews, I asked participants, what are teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in high school in a large eastern U.S. city? Most of the participants reported that the school administration did not support them well enough to motivate them to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments. The minimal support from school administration contributes to the teachers' frustration and lack of motivation with effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. According to Hallinger and Heck (2017), school administrators who communicate a clear commitment to new programs and are responsive to teacher feedback may be met with teachers' trust and

motivation to follow their initiatives. If teachers are to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments, then school administration must work together with their teachers in developing a plan for implementation and ongoing evaluation.

Throughout the process of creating, implementing, and evaluation of a new program such as the implementation of curriculum-based assessment, strong leadership is needed to help guide teams through conflict and to ensure the program is being implemented and monitored effectively (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). Positive teacher perceptions of administrative climate predicted improved implementation over time (Adelman & Taylor, 2017). Of the 10 teacher participants, six were veteran teachers and the other four were new teachers. At the research site, the new teachers had more positive teacher perceptions of administrative climate than the veteran teachers. Fixen (2016) stated that schools with positive social climate for teachers may be better positioned to take on new initiatives like curriculum-based assessments. This shows that teachers' perceptions of a positive school climate, especially perceptions of support and administrative leadership, may contribute to the successful implementation of curriculum-based assessments.

In many school systems, assessment data from district, school, classroom, and individual levels are not used effectively to improve outcomes (Gersten, Keating, & Irvin, 2017). Effective implementation of curriculum-based assessment is important to ensure that student outcome data are accurate measures of student proficiency (Newkirk-Turner & Johnson, 2018). Because teachers can use Nitko's (1995) framework of learning to examine effective implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment, it

is essential to have assessment that involves the ongoing collection and use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of curriculum-based assessments. At the research site, if curriculum-based assessment is implemented effectively by well-trained teachers who share and discuss the data-based assessments in a timely manner, the expectation is that ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities can receive targeted, specific interventions that would address specific needs.

For the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments, teachers can use progress monitoring techniques to monitor the academic progress of students with learning disabilities. Student progress is important to monitor because the data are needed to make important educational decisions (Brown et al., 2017). Progress monitoring methods can give teachers data to determine the effectiveness of curriculum-based assessment implementation. Schools that effectively implement curriculum-based assessments can use progress monitoring as a tool to monitor academic progress and make educational decisions about the academic and development progress of students with learning disabilities.

Effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments allows teachers to align their instruction to state standards so that students with disabilities have access to rich and challenging content daily. School improvement processes must look at classroom and schoolwide curriculum-based assessment data to determine research-based practices that can improve outcomes for students with disabilities. According to the National Research Council (2016), any school district that hopes to use progress monitoring as a tool to ensure the highest possible outcomes for every student with a

learning disability needs to ensure that curriculum-based assessment is aligned, coherent, and focused on ensuring that every student is being taught and is learning the grade-level content. Johnson et al. (2017) stated that in a multi-tiered support system (MTSS), progress monitoring can serve different functions at the various tiers. For example, with Tier 1, universal screening and progress monitoring are very similar in that screening of all students in the school can be used to determine which students are not performing at grade level (by comparing their performance relative to a norm-referenced benchmark). Once students have been screened, students who are considered “at risk” are progress monitored more frequently (i.e., multiple times between benchmark periods).

Universal screening and progress monitoring can occur if curriculum-based assessments are being used effectively to collect data. During interviews, a few general education and special education teachers mentioned that if an MTSS was already in place at the school, then it would have been easier to implement curriculum-based assessments more effectively. Additionally, participants shared that MTSS and curriculum-based assessment implementation should go hand-in hand because it would allow for progress monitoring which can be used to show individual student growth over time to determine whether a ninth or 12th grade student with a learning disability is progressing as expected in the general curriculum. Participants who felt that an MTSS and curriculum-based assessment implementation should occur simultaneously indicated that those ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities who are found to be “nonresponsive” (i.e., when their data do not meet the norm benchmark) will be provided with support in Tier 2 interventions. School improvement teams, intervention specialists, those involved in pre-

referral processes, and IEP teams must have access to and an understanding of research-based practices to effectively use all available data to make empirically based decisions about instructional programming (Kalberg, Lane, & Menzies, 2016). If teachers are using data obtained from curriculum-based assessments, then the data will be meaningful, understandable, and useful in making those empirically based decisions.

Participants reported that the student demographics in their classrooms are rapidly changing and that their classroom demographics are reflecting more culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Participants disclosed how frustrating it was having to accommodate needs daily for these diverse population of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in classrooms that are oversized. According to Murawski and Spencer (2017), due to oversized classrooms and a wide range of abilities in the classrooms, the manner in which the school enacts its values about diversity through curriculum-based assessments creates equity in the classrooms.

During interviews, general education teacher participants noted that they had already been using formative assessments such as student conferences, portfolios, anecdotal records, teacher made tests and quizzes, and formative assessment techniques to assess ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities, but they were all time consuming. Participants shared that even though they were using those assessments to measure the academic progress of the ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities, those students were not showing academic growth. Curriculum-based assessment is used to track both long-term goals that are specific to the instructional content (Hosp, 2017). Because these measures will often be given by teachers, they must

be capable of being administered repeatedly (using multiple forms) over short periods. Nitko's (1995) framework helps examine effective implementation of ongoing curriculum-based assessment which can be used as effective and efficient means to meet the learning needs of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities.

Teachers must be proficient at using data to evaluate the effects of instructional strategies and interventions (Christ, 2016). Teachers must also be able to make, describe, justify, and validate their data-based instructional decisions to parents, students, and educational colleagues (Ardoin, Christ, Morena, Cormier, & Klingbeil, 2017). During the interviews, participants shared their complaints about not having enough preparation time in their schedules to include the implementation of curriculum-based assessments.

Curriculum-based assessment is a progress monitoring system that is flexible enough to be used across multiple learning areas including reading, math, and writing (Ardoin, et al., 2017). Because of its flexibility, curriculum-based assessment can be used not only to evaluate and improve instruction for students with learning disabilities, but also to predict performance on important criteria such as high stakes tests. Given the importance of using curriculum-based assessments to make instructional decisions, it is essential that the teachers at the research site invest enough time in preparation of completing paperwork so that they can make these important decisions concerning the academic progress of ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities.

Participants noted the role of the school leader as being effective and instrumental in identifying, addressing, and implementing curriculum-based assessments. Participants felt that in order to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments, school

leadership had to devise schedules where teachers would be able to set aside time to prepare their paperwork. Brown-Chidsey & Bickford (2016) stated one way to make initial implementation of a program successful is to let all stakeholders know what the schedule will be. Having a schedule and sticking to it will create a sense of trust that the change will happen in a predictable and orderly manner (Brown-Chidsey and Bickford, 2016).

Whether individual schools are just beginning to implement curriculum-based assessments or are working to sustain successful implementation efforts, the quality of coordination and support provided by school leadership and the procedural structures in place will have a large impact on the overall improvement of student performance of students with learning disabilities in that individual school (Grosche & Volpe, 2017). Without effective school leadership, the efforts for educators who are willing to effectively implement curriculum-based assessments to measure the academic progress for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities will become fragmented and unfocused, and thereby unsustainable (Jordan et al., 2017).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative data collection can pose limitations because the data are based on narrative feedback from conversations between participants and the researcher. These conversations may inadvertently sway interviewees to give answers they think the researcher wants to hear (Creswell, 2016). Any misinterpretation can result in biased data. To minimize researcher bias, I included all information, did not ignore unwanted

statements, and did not embellish answers to achieve anticipated results in the study. Interpretation of the data was objective, not subjective, and I did not interject my own thoughts or perceptions during the interviews or classroom observations. Bias was minimized by conducting member checks, reviewing the recorded sessions, and adhering to the interview protocol. By adhering to the protocols, I was able to keep each interview consistent, and I did so in a neutral manner. By adhering to the protocol and remaining neutral, my own biases were minimized, and I did not influence the participants' views which could have affected the data.

Limitations of the study can include participant experience, participant size, and setting of the study. The study required that all teachers have a minimum of one year of experience with curriculum-based implementation, and participant experiences did vary. All the teachers who participated in the study had varying degrees of experience with the implementation of curriculum-based assessment implementation, but they were not using them. Four teachers had between 1-5 experience, while six teachers had more than 5 years' experience. Varying degrees of experience may give different opinions on curriculum-based assessment implementation and alter the degree to which other audiences relate the findings in their own settings. As participant 9 stated in the interview: "A lot of how I differentiate instruction in the classroom comes down to common sense. After doing this for so long, you just know what to do." Not all teachers may have that experience and be able to apply the common sense that Participant 9 discussed. Thus, transferability may be affected as it relates to teachers' experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, data analysis, and current literature, I am recommending additional research within this scope of study. Recommendations for further investigation are as follows:

1. This study was limited to ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school setting. It is recommended that a study to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess students with disabilities be expanded into middle schools, and elementary schools. Focusing on barriers to the effective curriculum-based implementation, educators may provide data that could contribute to an improvement in service delivery and potentially positively impact the overall academic performance of students with learning disabilities.

It is recommended that studies of this nature be replicated to contribute to the breadth and depth of this topic and for comparative analysis. This could be accomplished through qualitative studies focusing on the perspective of general educators, administrators, and/or students and by expanding the study to special education and general education teachers in other school districts. A quantitative study might expand into multiple regions measuring the prevalence of both special education and general education teachers' perspectives regarding the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Data collected from this study allowed me to explore four research questions posed in this study and the findings can contribute to the current literature on curriculum-based assessment implementation. The findings of this study revealed both positive and negative components to current curriculum-based assessment implementation at the research site.

The first element of social change is to embrace teachers' perceptions about the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. This study has the potential to promote positive social change among school districts, administrators, and teachers to help promote the use of curriculum-based assessment in the ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. By studying the experiences of both special education and general education secondary level teachers, the problem of not using curriculum-based assessments to assess ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities could be examined in other school districts and lead to more effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments in the high schools.

The second element of social change is to bring awareness to teachers about the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments in assessing ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. The intent of the present study is to bridge the gap between what should be implemented and what is being implemented. By increasing

teacher awareness, both special and general education teachers could use the data from this study and become more motivated into bridging the gap between what should be implemented and what is being implemented.

The third element of social change is to help teachers overcome challenges to the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments. At the local level, both special education and general education teachers will be provided with information to help them address their concerns and challenges about the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments that they shared during the interviews. Ideally, this study will inform and influence administrators and teachers about the benefits of understanding the concerns related to the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments in hopes that trainings will be provided.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate and understand teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, motivations, and challenges for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Results illustrated how the challenges and teachers' perceptions about the effective implementation of curriculum-based assessments inhibited them from not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities. The analysis of teachers' underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities suggested a greater need for the implementation of curriculum-based

assessments, increased support for teachers in the classroom, and the need for a shared vision among educators.

The problem in this basic qualitative research study is that teachers are not using curriculum-based assessment to assess ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities. Instead, teachers are using standardized tests to assess students' academic abilities in a large Eastern U.S. city. In addressing the problem, I learned that curriculum-based assessment implementation at the research site has weaknesses in the process, not the product. The teachers work tirelessly with limited materials and resources in order to ensure that those students are receiving maximum support.

The nature of this basic qualitative research study was based on qualitative methods that involved an in-depth understanding of curriculum-based assessment implementation for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities on the secondary school level. During face-to face semi structured interviews, I was able to witness how inconsistencies and unstructured programs increased teacher frustration and hindered their ability to effectively use curriculum-based assessment to assess each ninth and 12th grade student with a learning disability. Positive social change will be realized as the findings of the study will produce a greater understanding of teachers' perceptions with curriculum-based assessments and will ultimately help improve the academic experiences of students with learning disabilities.

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Appendix A: Search Terms

Term	Description
Curriculum	Alignment to curriculum, assessment, and state standards to increase student achievement.
Assessment and Use of Data	Occurs throughout the year to determine student strengths, weaknesses, and progress.
Instruction	Designing assessment to engage students in learning.
Implementation	The process of putting a decision or plan into effect
Positive classroom environment	1. Using research-based teacher practices and assessment to manage classroom procedures.
leadership	Leadership with a clear vision will help establish cohesion and a common goal.

Appendix B: Participant Demographic Questionnaire

1. Name
2. Home E-mail Address
3. Home or Cell Phone Number.
4. Preferred method of contact (Home E-mail/Home or Cell phone number)
5. Grade Level
 - a. 9
 - b. 10
 - c. 11
 - d. 12
6. Number of years' experience with the implementation of Curriculum-based assessment in the inclusion classrooms with 9th and 12th grade students with disabilities?
 - a. 0-less than 1 Year
 - b. 1-5 Years
 - c. 5+ Years

Thank you. You will be contacted with more information regarding the research study.

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are special education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

- Describe the process of creating curriculum -based assessments to meet the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms?
- How do you use the results of curriculum-based assessments to differentiate instruction for ninth and 12th grade students in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms?
- After you have obtained results from curriculum-based assessments, how often do you use the data to evaluate the academic progress of ninth and 12th grade students in integrated collaborative classrooms integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms?
- How do the data from curriculum-based assessments play a role in creating, monitoring, and accomplishing classroom goals?
- Describe how the use of curriculum-based assessment creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport in ninth and 12th grade integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) Classrooms?
- Describe how curriculum-based assessment is used to monitor the progress of 9th and 12th grade students with disabilities in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms and how is it use to give them feedback?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are general education teachers' perceptions of the use of curriculum-based assessment for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities in a high school in a large eastern U.S. city?

- Describe the process of creating curriculum -based assessments to meet the academic needs of ninth and 12th grade students in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms?
- How do you use the results of curriculum-based assessments to differentiate instruction for ninth and 12th grade students in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms?
- After you have obtained results from curriculum-based assessments, how often do you use the data to evaluate the academic progress of ninth and 12th grade students in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms?
- How do the data from curriculum-based assessments play a role in creating, monitoring, and accomplishing classroom goals?
- Describe how the use of curriculum-based assessment creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport in ninth and 12th grade integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) Classrooms?
- Describe how curriculum-based assessment is used to monitor the progress of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms and how is it use to give them feedback?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are special education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

- What challenges have you encountered when implementing curriculum-based assessment in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms with ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities?
- What supports do you receive to help implement curriculum-based assessment in the integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities?
- What supports do you need to receive to better implement curriculum-based assessment in the integrated collaborative classroom (ICT) classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What are general education teachers' challenges to conducting curriculum-based assessment with fidelity for ninth and 12th grade students with learning disabilities?

- What challenges have you encountered when implementing curriculum-based assessment in integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms with ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities?
- What supports do you receive to help implement curriculum-based assessment in the integrated collaborative classrooms (ICT) classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities?
- What supports do you need to receive to better implement curriculum-based assessment in the integrated collaborative classroom (ICT) classrooms of ninth and 12th grade students with disabilities?