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Special Education Teacher Retention in the Early Years

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

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MS, Hunter College, 1989

BS, University of Central Oklahoma, 1985

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The intent of this qualitative study was to examine the impact of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences on the retention of beginning special education teachers of students with low incidence disabilities (LIDs). This study was designed in response to district leaders' shared concerns of the continuous turnover experienced annually in several districts in a region of a southern state. Two research questions were developed to gain a deeper insight into the influence intrinsic and extrinsic factors have on beginning special education teachers' decisions to stay in the self-contained, LID classroom. Ten beginning special education LID teachers participated in interviews to share their experiences of teaching in the self-contained classroom setting. Data analysis included open, axial and lean coding, which revealed a complicated cyclical pattern of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic experiences that are woven together. The initial, ingrained belief in student ability is supported by intrinsic motivators of competence, advocacy, and a sense of belonging to the school community, which are sustained through the extrinsic experiences of collaborative relationships with colleagues and leadership. These intrinsic motivators are perpetuated through the positive interactions with administrators who are trustworthy, flexible, and value teamwork and professional development. As a result of this study, a three-day workshop was developed for campus administrators. This workshop was based on the findings of this study to increase administrators' knowledge about ways to support beginning special education LID teachers that can lead to increased retention. Implications for social change include improved student outcomes that result from enhanced teacher skills due to teacher longevity in the self-contained special education classroom.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to all special education teachers of students with LIDs who continue to teach in a classroom setting, which can be overwhelming and at the same time rewarding beyond the imagination.

Acknowledgments

This has been like a marathon that has included many twists and turns, hills, and valleys. As such, there are several people who have encouraged me along the way.

To the participants in this study, thank you for sharing your experiences so openly and honestly. Your stories are essential and influential in the efforts to retain teachers and create a workforce of experienced, master teachers. Your students are lucky to have such dedicated teachers.

To Chris, this has been a marathon for you too. Thank you for running alongside me, encouraging me and taking over many side-trips so that I could finish the race.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Special education teacher resignation rates are a national concern. Special education teacher shortages have been consistently reported throughout the entire United States from 1990-2016 (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016). This study was focused on the lack of retention of beginning special education teachers of students with low incidence disabilities (LIDs) in self-contained classrooms in a region of north Texas. According to special education directors in several districts of the study region, this lack of retention had caused annual turnover and increased concern about filling LID teacher positions with people who intend to stay in the classroom where they can build relationships and improve teaching skills. For this study, the term *beginning teachers* will refer to teachers who are special education certified and continue to teach in the self-contained special education classroom for students with LIDs for 2-5 years.

In a region in north Texas, a professional development analysis system called OnTrac was used to track the attendance in a regional service center's professional development activity. This system had shown an increase of enrollment in a special education new teacher academy for LID teachers that had more than tripled over 3 years—from 10 in the first year to 50 in the third year. At the end of the 2017 LID New Teacher Academy, participants were asked about their intentions to return to the self-contained classroom. Of the 28 respondents, one-third of the participants indicated that they were most likely not returning to the self-contained setting (End of Course Survey,

2018). Additional conversations and e-mails with special education directors revealed significant losses of self-contained LID teachers in 2017-2018 that led to increased concern about the difficulty in filling those positions with highly qualified, experienced LID teachers.

Retention of these teachers is important, as students in LID classrooms have significant cognitive and multiple disabilities. Profiles of these students include substantial gaps in communication, motor, and sensory skills compared to their nondisabled peers (Erickson & Quick, 2017; Kleinert et al., 2015). Specifically, students in LID classrooms have expressive communication skills at the symbolic or presymbolic levels, which means they express their wants, needs, ideas, or knowledge through augmentative communication systems or have little to no intentional expressive communication (Erickson & Quick, 2017). Receptive communication skills are also limited and require substantial visual supports with objects, photos, or symbols and prompting or cueing to follow one- to two-step directions (Erickson & Quick, 2017). Limited motor and sensory skills can also affect student learning by impacting head mobility, leg and arm intentional movement, vision, and hearing (Erickson & Quick, 2017). In addition to limitations in these critical skills for learning, students in LID classrooms have a range of eligibilities such as intellectual disability, autism, orthopedic disability, speech and language disabilities, and vision and hearing in combinations that are unique to each student (Kleinert et al., 2015). Therefore, LID teachers must have content knowledge and highly individualized and specific instructional knowledge and

skills about expressive and receptive communication, motor, and sensory skills that are not required for other teachers (Erickson & Quick, 2017).

The continuous turnover of LID teachers was a concern for campus leaders, as the shortage of experienced, LID teachers causes a situation in which campus leaders may have to make compromises by hiring LID teachers who are inexperienced with limited knowledge of instructional strategies to successfully teach these students (Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Bettini, Benedict, et al., 2016). Continuous, annual turnover of LID teachers has resulted in the placement of teachers in the self-contained classroom who did not know or understand the students and their learning needs, which impacts student progress significantly (Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; West & Shepherd, 2016). However, the specialized knowledge and skills that teachers of students with LID require to successfully teach this group of students is increased when teachers stay in the classroom (Cowan et al., 2016; Ingersoll et al., 2014). This was the underlying concern surrounding the lack of retention of these teachers that warranted examination into the intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences that influence LID teachers to stay in the classroom.

To address this concern, an examination of current retention research was necessary. Studies in special education teacher turnover focus on the reason teachers leave the profession rather than why they continue to teach (Barth, Dillon, Hull, & Higgins, 2016; Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2016). But this focus on the reasons special education teachers leave has not led to useful changes in professional development for beginning special education teachers despite mentorship and monetary

incentives that have been used as suggested by the attrition research (Cowan et al., 2016). Thus, gathering information from beginning special education teachers who choose to remain in the self-contained LID classroom beyond their first year will contribute to current research on beginning special education teacher retention and sustainability.

Rationale

The local concern about the lack of retention of beginning special education teachers in self-contained LID classrooms is reflected in the research. According to the special education directors from five districts, in the fall of 2017, technical assistance requests for new teacher support were received that had replaced more than half of their LID teachers district wide. In addition, the enrollment of the LID New Teacher Academy increased from 25 to 50 participants in the fall of 2017. Similarly, nationally there has been an ongoing scarcity of special education teachers for several decades, with beginning special education teachers being the second highest group of teachers leaving the field (Cowan et al., 2016; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). As a result, more beginning teachers are being placed in the more challenging settings such as self-contained special education classrooms (Williams & Dikes, 2015). For several local districts, special education directors reported that this lack of retention has resulted in the continuous placement of inexperienced and untrained teachers annually, and sometimes mid-year (Williams & Dikes, 2015). This trend and its possible connection to limited progress of students in special education has contributed to statewide initiatives to improve beginning special education teacher quality and retention (Brownell & Sindelar,

2016; Texas Education Agency, 2016; West & Shepherd, 2016), which prompted the current study.

Beginning teacher growth and fidelity of practice affects student progress negatively and can only improve when teachers gain experience by remaining in the classroom (Cowan et al., 2016). Thus, induction programs for beginning teachers have been the trend for increasing retention that began with eight states in the mid-1980s and grew to 80% of new teachers nationwide in the early 2000s (Gilles, Wang, Fish & Stegall, 2018; Zembytska, 2016). Ongoing, intentional, and planned induction in the early teaching years has been identified as a promising practice for teacher retention (Sebald & Rude, 2015). Mentoring has been the primary model for induction programs that are supported in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2018). But mentoring is a local decision at the district level, which results in diverse practices that may not benefit the beginning special education teacher in a LID classroom. Because teaching in the LID classroom is highly specialized, significant turnover can occur when the beginning LID teacher is either the only LID teacher or the most experienced LID teacher on the campus, resulting in a lack of mentor support (Bettini et al., 2017). This was reflected in personal conversations with leaders in rural districts and districts with significant turnover in self-contained LID classrooms, where it has been reported that providing effective mentoring and support is difficult. Therefore, in-depth information that can be gained from beginning LID teachers who continue to teach will be helpful for administrators who want to provide meaningful, ongoing support to retain beginning LID teachers.

When exploring methods to retain teachers in special education, the research focus is on intrinsic and extrinsic factors of teachers who leave rather than those who remain. Intrinsic factors reported to contribute to teachers leaving special education include dissonance between the ideal belief of teaching and the reality of teaching, which has led to burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment, and isolation from peers (Williams & Dikes, 2015). Extrinsic, specific job-related elements that are out of the control of teachers such as the amount of paperwork that is scrutinized by local and state education agencies, the varied levels of students, and the teaching of all subjects, grade level content, and specially designed instruction for each student are also identified as catalysts for leaving (Bettini, Cheyney, Wang, & Leko, 2015; Williams & Dikes, 2015). These extrinsic factors in the workplace exist for all special educators; however, there are beginning special education teachers who remain regardless of these factors. Thus, by exploring the stories of beginning special education teachers who stay in LID self-contained classrooms, there is potential for identifying training and supports that might increase retention of these teachers.

Further, exploring the impact of extrinsic workplace experiences and the intrinsic motivations of beginning special education teachers who remain in the special education LID classroom can add insight into increasing retention and sustainability of these teachers. Sustainability requires teachers to be flexible and willing to learn new strategies when current practices are not working, which relies on a combination of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace factors (Tricarico, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Beginning teachers will most likely continue teaching if they have

adequate support that makes them feel like they are making a difference (Belknap & Taymans, 2015). Furthermore, workplace environments that promote a culture of collegial support and professional development for all teachers have a powerful effect on retention and growth of effective beginning special education teachers (Bettini, Benedict et al., 2016).

Due to the self-contained, segregated nature of the LID classroom, there is a gap in research regarding positive extrinsic workplace experiences of adequate support for beginning LID teachers. Results of studies on the retention of beginning teachers have indicated a shift in focus from teachers who leave the profession to those who stay is necessary (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017; Sebald & Rude, 2015; Tricarico et al., 2014). Further, researchers have suggested that exploration of teacher perspectives can continue to contribute to the workplace satisfaction discussion (Tyler & Brunner, 2016). There is also a gap in the research on reasons teachers stay in self-contained life skills classrooms for students with LID (Sebald & Rude, 2015; Vittek, 2015). Thus, the study of the experiences that led to the perseverance of beginning self-contained LID classroom teachers is worthwhile.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to expand the understanding of why beginning special education teachers in self-contained LID classrooms stayed in the profession in a region of a southern state. The region consists of 10 counties, 77 school districts, 66 charter schools, 70,700 educators and 578,910 students (https://www.esc11.net/Domain/3). The findings of this study were used to develop a

protocol of high-interest, specialized professional development options for this group of teachers.

Research has indicated that beginning teachers leave the field in 5 years or fewer due to a combination of extrinsic environmental factors in the workplace that are out of their control and an intrinsic belief that they are not having an impact on students' learning (Tricarico et al., 2014). It has also been suggested that special education teachers leave the field within the initial 5 years when their perception of teaching does not match their experience (Andrews & Brown, 2015; Curry, Webb, & Latham, 2016; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015; Kelly & Northrop, 2015). Further, researchers have suggested that much of the responsibility of retaining teachers falls on leaderships' ability to provide opportunities and resources to support beginning special education teachers, yet many school leaders did not comprehend the needs of special educators (Bettini, Crockett, Brownell, & Merrill, 2016; Church, Bland, & Luo, 2014; Kelly & Northrop, 2015). Discussions on specific features of being a special education teacher may develop changes in policies and procedures for retaining these teachers (Cowan et al., 2016). Thus, a look at factors that sustain and improve practice from beginning special education LID teachers' viewpoints can provide insights into supports for these teachers. Descriptions of the early experiences of teaching students with LIDs in self-contained classes were gathered via interviews.

Definition of Terms

Beginning special education teachers: For this qualitative project study, beginning special education teachers were defined as teachers with 2-5 years' experience

in the self-contained special education classroom for students with LIDs. The use of this term is reflective of terminology used in studies on teacher shortages, retention, and induction of new teachers who use the terms *new*, *beginning*, or *novice* to identify teachers who remain in the classroom for 2-5 years (Belknap & Taymans, 2015; Cowan et al., 2016; Rock et al., 2016). For this project study, teachers who may have many years' experience in general education but have been in a self-contained special education LID classroom for 2-5 years were included.

Low incidence disabilities (LIDs): LIDs describe students with significant cognitive disabilities and is defined in Texas as a student who:

- exhibits significant intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits in their ability to plan, comprehend, and reason, and also indicates adaptive behavior deficits that limit their ability to apply social and practical skills such as personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money, and other functional skills across life domains;
- is not identified based on English learner designation or solely on the basis of previous low academic achievement or the need for accommodations; and
- requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction, as well as a need for substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area (Texas Education Agency, 2019).

Self-contained classroom: A self-contained classroom is identified in Texas statute as a classroom that is "based on individual student needs that require special education and related services in a separate, special education setting for more than 50%

of the school day on a regular school campus" (Texas Education Code §89.63(c)(6), 2015). Teachers in these classrooms must teach all content areas at multiple grade levels to a group of students who have a wide range of abilities and behavior.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant to identifying professional development options that can result in the increase of retention. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is moving more policy decisions regarding teacher retention from the federal education agency control to the state education agency control (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2017). In Texas, these decisions have been given to the districts. Research has indicated an overall impact on retention of beginning special education teachers when leadership is focused on sustaining these teachers through mentoring, induction, and online collaboration (Bettini, Cheyney, et al., 2015; Bettini, Jones, et al., 2017). However, when these supports are provided in a generalized format, there have been minimal effects on retention of beginning special education teachers. (Barth et al., 2016;). Researchers have found that few leaders understand the considerable differences in special education teachers' jobs (Bettini, Benedict, et al., 2016; Bettini, Jones, et al., 2017). But when educational leaders understand the unique needs of beginning special education teachers, retention can occur and lead to substantial professional growth (Bettini, Benedict, et al., 2016; Howes et al., 2015). Thus, this study is significant because the data from the beginning teacher participants were used to develop a three-day workshop for district leadership to develop support programs that will better equip beginning special education teachers for staying in the classroom. Teachers who

continue to receive training and support to increase instructional skills and remain in the classroom may impact student achievement and reduce costs to districts.

The exploration of beginning special education teacher retention from the standpoint of teachers who stay in the classroom has potential for positive social change. Induction training and ongoing support for new special education teachers diminishes funding for training and support of returning teachers, which is costly for districts (Barth et al., 2016). Further, results of teacher retention and professional growth have been identified in reduced costs for training and improved student achievement due to continuity and increased fidelity of practice that comes with experience (Barth et al., 2016; Feng & Sass, 2013; Howes et al., 2015). Additionally, a direct link between high student achievement and teacher experience in the classroom has been reported (Feng & Sass, 2013; Molitor et al., 2014; Podgursky, Lindsay, & Wan, 2016; Shaw, & Newton, 2014). Yet the focus of research on useful supports for retention continue to be from the viewpoints of special education teachers who leave, which has had little impact on increasing teacher retention and sustainability and has led to a gap in the research on teacher retention (Tyler & Brunner, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Thus, a study of the experiences of beginning special education teachers who remain in the self-contained LID setting in the early years will fill the gap in research and impact local practice.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study was centered on the retention of beginning special education LID teachers' personal accounts of the early years of teaching. Therefore, the

research questions were open-ended, formal questions based on the conceptual frameworks on the subjects' experiences teaching students and their experiences regarding the school workplace environment (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The research questions were developed to gain a broad and deeper insight into the factors that support effective teaching and a successful work environment, which positively influences the decision to stay in the self-contained, LID classroom setting:

RQ 1: What are the intrinsic motivators that beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LIDs?

RQ 2: What extrinsic experiences do beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LIDs?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

This qualitative case study was focused on the intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace factors that impacted the decisions of beginning special education LID teachers to continue teaching. This two-pronged approach was based on Bandura's (1972) social learning theory and Saavedra and Kwun's (2000) job characteristics theory. This dual approach can enhance current retention research by providing a balanced account of beginning special education teacher retention thru intrinsic motivators and extrinsic experiences.

Social learning theory. The first approach was centered on Bandura's (1972) social learning theory as it relates to beginning special education teachers' internal

motivators of teaching students with LIDs. Social learning theory suggests that a two-way interaction of three factors—environment, personal belief, and behavior—determine a person's actions (Bandura, 1972), such as the decision of beginning special education teachers to stay in teaching. Findings of a causal comparison study indicated that when special education teachers believe they have designed a classroom where students are successful, subsequent instructional and classroom management decisions are made that continue to facilitate student learning, which leads to teachers staying in the classroom (Andrews & Brown, 2015). Other studies on the subject have similar results that support the theory of student success being an influential factor in teachers' decisions to continue teaching (Papay et al., 2017; Tricarico et al., 2015). Further, social learning theory was used to examine a beginning teacher training and induction program, revealing that teachers who did not develop survival skills in the first year of teaching did not impact student learning positively and did not return to teaching, which further supports the relationship of student results and teachers' actions in the classroom (Tricarico et al., 2015). In this case study, the examination of teachers' views of students as learners and their experiences with instructional challenges and rewards can provide insight into motivators that shaped teachers' actions and influenced their decision to continue teaching.

Job characteristics theory. The second part of the conceptual framework was used to focus on the extrinsic workplace experiences and their effects on beginning special education LID teachers decisions to continue teaching, which is essential to complete the holistic view of retention. This idea of examining workplace factors was

based on Saavedra and Kwun's (2000) job characteristics theory, which suggests that external workplace factors, which are out of control of the employee, impact the motivation to perform job duties or tasks. These factors such as school culture, class size and make-up, and training and support are shaped by district and campus leaders and can have a high impact on retention (Bettini et al., 2015; Conley & You, 2016; Vittek, 2015; Williams & Dikes, 2015). Yet many administrators have not been aware of the depth and complexity of the needs of special education teachers, especially LID teachers in self-contained classrooms (Steinbrecher, Fix, Mahal, Serna, & McKeown, 2015).

A research review of attrition and retention studies since 2004 resulted in findings that support a focus on administrative understanding that the special educator's job is necessary to develop a work environment conducive to retention (Vittek, 2015). Additional studies on the effects of the workplace environment indicated genuine involvement and interest of campus administrators in the uniqueness of the special education teacher's job resulted in less isolation and more meaningful support, which increased the possibility of retention, regardless of workplace factors that were out of the teacher's control (Belknap & Taymans, 2015; Bettini, Crockett, et al., 2016; Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2017; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015). By examining teachers' struggles and positive experiences in the workplace, insights into potential methods of training and support that will increase retention was discovered. Thus, a study on these extrinsic workplace factors and intrinsic motivators of returning beginning LID teachers revealed innovative approaches to retention for district and campus leaders.

Review of the Broader Problem

Various search engines such as ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE Premier, Google Scholar, and Education Research Complete were used to locate peer-reviewed journal articles related to beginning special education teacher retention. The search resulted in limited publications in current special education journals. General education journals contained most of the research. Search terms used in conjunction with Special Education Teacher include *retention*, *students with Intellectual Disabilities*, *self-contained classrooms*, *teacher effectiveness and student achievement*, *cost to district*, *retention and mentoring*, *new special education teacher retention*, *beginning special education teacher retention*, *novice special education teacher retention*, *teacher persistence*, *teacher characteristics*, *resilience*, *turnover*, *administrator support*, *professional development*, *induction* and *mentoring*.

Challenge of retention. The lack of retention of beginning special education teachers has led to a shortage of experienced, highly qualified special education teachers that impacts districts, schools, and students. This shortage is at a crucial stage and is anticipated to reach a critical level by 2020 in the United States (Sebald, 2015). A longitudinal study of four urban districts' turn-over rates showed the high cost to replacing teachers and providing training for new teachers as well as a negative impact on students' learning in the experience of the teacher and the organizational change of the school culture (Papay et al., 2017). In their longitudinal study, Papay et al. (2017) found lower retention rates of beginning teachers in four urban districts measuring 55% who left their district and 70% left their school (p. 437). A study of mobility of teachers

across three states resulted in findings that special education teachers had the highest mobility rate annually that remained above 20 percent over five years (Podgursky et al., 2016, p.7).

Most recently, a shortage of special education teachers has been reported in 49 states, with enrollment numbers in special education teacher prep courses being at an all-time low (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services, 2016). In a review of literature of special education teacher retention and attrition, Billingsley and Bettini (2019), identified contributing factors that lead to teachers leaving and endorsed research and practices to increase administrative support to increase retention. Based on this current research, it can be inferred that beginning special education teacher retention is critical and requires changes in administrative support, can reduce professional development costs , and affects student achievement.

Administrator support. School administrators set the culture of the school and have a substantial role regarding increasing retention thru supporting special education teachers. School administrators are responsible for developing and promoting a school environment that supports all teachers, especially beginning special education teachers (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). To do this, the administrator must understand aspects of the job. Studies on teacher satisfaction have indicated that administrators' understanding of the responsibilities and tasks of special education teachers is crucial (Bettini et al., 2017; Bettini et al., 2015; Bettini, Crockett et al., 2016; Tricarico et al., 2015; Williams & Dikes, 2015). A study to identify a relationship between special education teacher self-

efficacy and administrator supports indicated that teachers' feelings of support were relative based on their feelings of self-efficacy (Bettini, Park, Benedict, Kimerling, & Leite, 2016). Administrators often lack specific information about special educators' roles, educational practices, and other responsibilities, so instead focus on compliance activities such as paperwork and fidelity of use of required district curriculum that may not be accessible to the students (Curry et al., 2016; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Steinbrecher et al., 2015). In a constructivist, grounded theory study, principals' knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of special education teachers was lacking, and no coordinated effort of collaboration for teacher support occurred where the district director had a better understanding of the teachers' job (Bettini et al., 2017). Whereas, in a district that was highly successful in its inclusive practices, administrators reported an increase in their knowledge about special education teachers' jobs as a result of the district's priority of acclimating beginning teachers to the culture of acceptance and collaboration (Bettini, Crockett et al., 2016). While it is critical for the administrator to provide a collaborative culture and support teachers in building their skills, these are not the only factors that influence retention.

Workplace conditions, which are also the responsibility of the administrator, have an impact on teacher retention. In a literature review on supports for retention of special education teachers, a direct link to working conditions and special education teachers' sense of efficacy was found to be critical for increasing the effects of instruction and thereby student achievement (Bettini, Crockett et al., 2016). Workplace conditions included class size, ages and levels of students, classroom size and lack of teaching

resources (Bettini et al., 2015; Williams & Dikes, 2015). Additionally, findings of a study on the impact of risk and resilience revealed beginning special education teachers can increase their effectiveness over time in areas where they believe they have greater perceived control such as the classroom environment (Vittek, 2015). If administrators' actions do not support beginning LID teachers in gaining successful teaching practices or support in the workplace, retention will not occur. This will lead to a pattern of annual training of a new teacher, which can be more costly than training to improve the current teacher's skills.

Costs. The cost of beginning special education teacher turnover incurs direct costs and indirect costs. Direct costs are monetary costs, and indirect costs relate to school culture, provision of services and modified curriculum (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2019). Direct, financial costs are critical and severely impacted by the lack of retention.

Monetary costs. Currently, district and school budgets are under scrutiny and subject to a reduction of funds. Multiple considerations of the cost of replacing teachers who leave include the salary difference and the effectiveness of the new teacher; which, can cost tens of thousands of dollars for each teacher, and can lead to millions of dollars to replace multiple teachers annually and become a burden on the on the school and district budget (Papay et al., 2017). It has been suggested that when the focus is on retention, teacher shortages will decrease and allow for funding to be allocated to building teacher skills (Sutcher, et al., 2019). In addition to monetary costs, the effects on the school culture can be detrimental.

Costs to the school culture. The lack of retention and sustainability of beginning special education teachers impacts school culture. The importance of professional relationships that occur over time when teachers stay, especially the strong sense of community and connectedness that develop, have been indicated as essential characteristics of teacher retention and sustainability (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015). As the culture of the school shifts to more beginning teachers, the veteran teachers who serve as mentors are given a larger group of beginning teachers to mentor, which can lead to additional turnover and fewer veteran teachers (Sutcher et al., 2019). It has been suggested that an all-encompassing culture of support be adopted in place of the expert and novice model to provide ongoing support in a collaborative environment (Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Godden, 2017). These collaborative relationships can have an effect student achievement.

Effects on student achievement. Collaborative environments and personal characteristics of teachers who stay are essential elements to explore in relation to student achievement. Retention research indicated that beginning teachers who stayed in the classroom had more intensive collaborative experiences that lead to improved practice, which resulted in a positive impact on student achievement (Ronfeldt, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015; Tricarico et al. 2015). In a study of collaboration and student achievement, Ronfeldt et al. (2015), associated increased student reading and math skills in schools that had strong, collaborative teaching teams. Improved teaching and collaboration skills that can lead to increased student achievement are implications for retention.

Implications

The purpose of my study was to learn about beginning special education teacher retention through the lens of teachers who continue to teach. These perspectives can provide valuable information for educational leaders who are responsible for developing a school culture of acceptance and support to increase teachers' desire to stay in the profession. As such, based on the analysis of the anticipated stories and perceptions of the participants, the development of a workshop for school administrators was a possible direction for the project in order to share beginning special education teachers' perspectives and experiences. There are many types of formats, strategies, timelines and reasons for sharing information, all of which will be determined by the findings of this study.

Summary

The lack of retention of beginning special education teachers is a chronic issue that negatively affects districts, schools, and students. The challenges of retaining these teachers require administrators who understand the job characteristics and can incorporate this knowledge when developing the school culture. The effects of the lack of retention include direct monetary costs and indirect costs to the school culture and student achievement and have been a chronic issue for decades. Thus, exploration of beginning special education teacher experiences and workplace experiences that led to their decisions to continue teaching in the special education self-contained LID setting was necessary to develop better professional development and supports to increase retention and sustainability.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

This project study was a qualitative, case study that was focused on retention of beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs. Personal stories and perspectives were gathered to gain insight into beginning special education teacher retention; therefore, a case study design was relevant (Creswell, 2012; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Other qualitative designs of narrative and grounded theory were considered and ruled out due to this study's focus on a common experience among a group of people who share the characteristic of being beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012). The perspectives of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences that influenced the participants' decisions to stay in the classroom were gathered through individual interviews. The interview questions were developed based on the research questions to gain authentic, empirical answers without influencing the results (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010). Once the interviews were completed, the participants' responses were transcribed and systematically coded to identify the similarities and differences in personal perspectives and experiences that resulted in a portrayal of beginning special education LID teacher retention (Creswell, 2012). This case study occurred in a regional area of a southern state to explore the experiences of beginning LID teachers in districts that are different in size, location, and diversity.

Participants

Purposeful, homogenous sampling was used to identify a group of participants for this study. Participants were beginning special education teachers who attended regional workshops for LIDs and had been in the self-contained setting for 2 to 5 years. The region contains 77 school districts with 70,699 educators. Data on special education teachers at the regional level is not disaggregated by classroom setting or student disability codes such as self-contained, LID teachers. This made it difficult to gain contact information to invite qualifying teachers to participate in this study. But there were two academies for beginning LID teachers at the regional support center, which allowed for a sampling pool and access to contact information. The LID New Teacher Academy and LID Novice Teacher Academy both required an end of course survey that was completed by participants each year. The survey included a question about the beginning teachers' intent to return to the self-contained, LID classroom. A consortium of 52 potential participants was developed and notices to recruit participants were sent by e-mail (see Creswell, 2012), which was done after institutional review board approval (07-22-19-0416444). Ten teachers agreed to be a part of the study.

In addition to being the researcher, I am a retired regional special education specialist who provided professional development workshops and ongoing coaching support for the LID teachers in this region. But my role was nonregulatory and nonsupervisory, which allowed for a relationship of trust between the participants and myself that had been established through their participation in my workshops and onsite technical assistance. Additionally, to ensure protection from harm and informed consent,

participants received an invitation to participate and a consent form to sign and return. This consent form was approved by the institutional review board and provided assurances of voluntary participation that could be revoked at any time and confidentiality of responses in a 15-20-minute interview and a personal review of the draft findings to confirm accuracy of the transcription. The overall expected time commitment for participants to participate in an interview and complete the data checking process after the completion of the data analysis was approximately 1 hour. Interviews were conducted only with participants who returned the signed consent form.

Data Collection

Data collection included one-on-one interviews to gain a deeper understanding of responses. Open-ended questions based on the research questions were developed by me and were used in the interviews to provide opportunities for authentic, open-ended responses (see Creswell, 2012). Probes were then used for each interview question to extract more information, make clarifications of specific points, and expand ideas to gain a deeper understanding of each participant's response and reach saturation of data (Creswell, 2012). A 2-week window was open for the scheduling and completion of the interviews. At the end of this window, only seven teachers agreed to participate in the study. A second invitation to participate was sent out, and three more teachers agreed to participate.

Individual interviews occurred in a face-to-face format via an online video chat forum, though two of the participants chose to not use the video feature during their interviews. A researcher-designed interview protocol (Appendix B) and data recording

protocol (Appendix C) was used to structure the interview and delineate the interview process and data collection for consistency across interviews (Creswell, 2012). For the interviews, the audio-recording tool in the Zoom program was used to record participants' responses, which were then saved on a dedicated, encrypted hard drive and a private server. Handwritten notes were also taken during the interview as a precaution to any taping malfunctions. Participants gave consent for the audio recording of the interview and the use of pseudonyms for confidentiality in the study. The information collected during the one-on-one interviews and subsequent probes provided multifaceted information that was robust and rich with personal experiences that provided the complex data sufficient for analysis of the research questions being studied.

When all data were collected, the interviews were transcribed and checked against the audio version of each interview. The transcriptions were used for coding and theme development. After data analysis was completed, participants received a copy of the draft findings to review their own interview data for accuracy of interpretation. Participants were given the opportunity to edit and return their input or to discuss the interpretation of their information by setting an appointment for a phone or videoconference 3-5 days after receipt of the draft data findings.

Trustworthiness and credibility of the study was established through the development of an interview protocol, the use of audio recordings during interviews, the checking of the transcription against the recordings, and subsequent member checks and feedback of the draft findings for accuracy of the representation of the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Data Analysis

The interview questions included demographic data and six open-ended questions based on a holistic view of retention through a two-part theoretical framework based on Bandura's (1974) social learning theory to explore intrinsic motivators and Saavedra and Kwun's (2000) job characteristics theory to identify extrinsic workplace experiences. The focus of this framework was also the foundation of two research questions:

RQ1: What are the intrinsic motivators that beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LIDs?

RQ 2: What extrinsic experiences do beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LIDs?

The purpose of these research questions was to capture a complete picture of the participants and their experiences. The interview questions for RQ1 regarding intrinsic motivators were:

1. What are the challenges of teaching your students?
2. What are the rewards in teaching your students?
3. What do you want other educators to know about your students?

The intent of this line of questioning was to draw out deeper insights to intrinsic motivators of working with students with LIDs, focusing on factors that influence teachers' decision to stay in the classroom. The stories of challenges provided depth and meaning behind the stories of the rewards. Having teachers share what they wished other educators, their general education colleagues, other special educators, and educational

leaders, to know about their students was a reflective question to reveal the power of the intrinsic motivators that were identified.

The interview questions for RQ2 regarding extrinsic workplace experiences were:

4. What are the challenges of your work environment regarding teaching your students?
5. What are the positive attributes of your work environment in teaching your students?
6. What do you want other educators to know about working in a LID classroom?

The same process of questioning that was used for RQ1was used for this question to gain a complete picture of teaching in the LID classroom. Again, the stories of challenges added to stories about reward of the teaching environment. The question about what the participants wanted other educators to know about their classroom was also a reflective question to uncover the power of the positive experiences that may offset the challenges. Answers to this third question uncovered insights about the job of a LID teacher that contributed to the 3-day workshop development.

Open-ended clarifying probes based on participants' answers were asked to enhance authenticity by allowing the data to be guided by responses and provide the multiple forms of data necessary to discover common themes and language regarding new special education teacher retention (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012). The following probes were included in the interview protocol as considerations based on participants' answers:

- What do you mean?
- I'm not sure that I am following you.
- Would you explain that?
- What did you say then?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Give me an example.
- Tell me about it.
- Take me through the experience. (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 104)

To ensure fidelity of procedures and maintain accuracy and credibility of findings, digital audio recordings of each interview were done and saved on a dedicated, secure server. The interview protocol (Appendix B) included opening demographic questions to start the conversation and put the participant at ease, the six interview questions and a list of potential open-ended, clarifying probes for extracting deeper information throughout the interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). After all participants' responses were transcribed, each response was compared with the recording for accuracy. Member checks were conducted for accuracy of the reporting of participants' answers by providing each participant a copy of the draft findings through e-mail. Participants were asked to review the findings to approve the representation of their answers, and if needed, clarify their answers by scheduling a conference with me to discuss their input or by submitting notations of corrections or clarifications in writing within 5 days after receipt.

Coding began when transcription of all interviews was completed. The coding process included open coding, axial coding, and lean coding. During open coding

common words, expressions, behavior patterns, thinking strategies, and experiences that recurred throughout the findings were noted and an initial list of potential broad themes was created (see Bogden & Biklen, 2007). This preliminary list of coding themes was centered on settings, situations, perceptions, beliefs, processes, strategies, activities, and other principles that appeared during the review process that led to potential research topics that can deepen the understanding of teacher retention beyond this study (see Bogden & Biklen, 2007). The open coding process included highlighting and recording common words and ideas during initial reviews until no new words and ideas were identified. Once data saturation was accomplished, axial coding was conducted to identify the factors surrounding each core category (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Hoddy, 2019). This next step narrowed the random findings during open coding into broad themes of classroom, relationships, and leadership, which revealed a fuller perspective on new special education LID teacher retention.

To add depth to the information on retention of beginning special education LID teachers, the levels of information were identified as major codes that are generalized ideas and themes and subcodes that segmented the major codes into smaller categories that provided specific details, ideas, and experiences (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Mokhtar, 2018). Subcodes included situations, perspectives, social structures, and activity codes. Participants' information about the classroom were categorized as situation codes in which they described their perspectives and experiences within the classroom and the campus. The complicated perspectives about relationships were coded as either perspectives, ways of thinking about people, social structures, or activities based on the

people involved and the situation. Leadership stories were sorted as relationships, activities, and social structures in the campus community. Once subcodes were developed, data were assigned to each area. Coding was completed in a digital format and saved as the master copy (Bogden & Biklen, 2007).

Various methods were used to ensure credibility and trustworthiness in this study. Participants from rural and urban districts and elementary and secondary classrooms were invited to provide potential future comparisons across settings, increasing transferability of the findings. Further, robust descriptions of the participants' perspectives and experiences were derived from the additional questions and probes included in the interview protocols. Data reduction was achieved with systematic coding procedures that categorized core themes and their specific factors until data saturation was reached. Member checks of draft findings also provided opportunities for correction, clarification, or expansion of responses, which resulted in rich stories that described the factors identified in the coding process. These methods led to logical, credible findings.

The unique aspects of any discrepant perspectives or experiences were followed up with deeper probing questions about the contradictory experience or motivator. This process was intended to explore the uniqueness of the experience shared that did not align with other participants' experiences. The discrepant themes expressed could potentially add an unanticipated perspective of the retention problem that may lead to additional studies to gain a deeper understanding of special education teacher retention.

Data Analysis Results

Process

The lack of retention of beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs continues to be a problem in a region of a southern state. This project study was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of retention from the viewpoint of beginning special education LID teachers who continue teaching students with LIDs. To gain a complete picture of retention, Bandura's (1972) social learning theory and Saavedra and Kwun's (2000) job characteristics theory were used to form the conceptual framework for this study. When combined, these two theories provided the foundation for exploring the intrinsic motivators and the extrinsic workplace experiences that influence the decisions to stay in the LID classroom. As a result, a complicated, comprehensive picture of retention was formed through the perspectives and stories of the participants. The two research questions were:

RQ1: What are the intrinsic motivators that beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LIDs?

RQ2: What extrinsic experiences do beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LIDs?

A holistic approach was used to develop interview questions. Each research question had three interview questions focused on challenges, rewards, and reflection on what the participants wanted other educators to know about students with LIDs and working in the LID classroom. Having a background in special education, I am aware of the challenges beginning special education teachers encounter which contribute to many

teachers leaving the special education classroom. The basis of this study is to learn more about why teachers stay, when others leave. The perspectives and stories about the challenges established a background that gave substance to the core research questions about positive factors that influenced teachers' decisions to stay in the classroom. Reflective answers to the question about what the teachers wanted other educators to know provided depth and clarity to the power of the intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences that outweighed any challenges described. As a result of this line of questioning, a clear and vivid picture developed about the unique characteristics of students with LIDs and the LID classroom, how it challenged the teachers, and how the rewards outweighed the challenges. These stories of struggle, success and reflection lead to a deeper perspective of the dynamics of retention for beginning special education LID teachers. This deeper perspective resulted in the development of a 3-day workshop for administrators that was based on participants' responses.

Beginning special education teachers in self-contained classrooms for students with LID were invited via email to participate in the study. The teachers in this study were identified as beginning teachers who had participated in either a new teacher academy or a novice teacher academy for LIDs at a regional service center. Their answers were collected via personal interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded with a digital recorder for transcription, and then placed in a digital file on a dedicated external hard drive.

Findings

The answers were transcribed and coded using open coding to identify recurring terms, experiences, and behavior patterns that resulted in a list of broad coding themes (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Axial coding was used to identify similarity of answers, which resulted in three broad categories: classroom, relationships, and leadership for both research questions. Further coding of the elements within these categories identified specific themes that were different and those that overlapped each research question.

Participants' accounts of events and encounters weave an intricate story of being a beginning special education teacher in the LID classroom. The individual stories provided deep, rich illustrations of the rewards that outweigh the struggles of the day-to-day teaching of students with LIDs. The classroom experiences shared exposed a vivid depiction of the LID classroom environment, additional compulsory job responsibilities, and complicated relationships that required leadership support.

Intrinsic motivators. Participants' stories revealed a symbiotic relationship between their personal belief about students' abilities, the substantiation of that belief when they see students learning, and the collaborative relationships that developed as being the intrinsic motivators that influenced their decisions to stay in the LID classroom (Bandura, 1972). The stories that these LID teachers shared provided rich illustrations of their interactions with students and the resulting student achievement that gave them a sense of competency in the ability to positively impact students' lives. Their accounts of collaborative relationships with colleagues and the students' parents provided deeper insight into the intrinsic motivator of belonging to a community of practice. The

interactions with administrators that were described revealed the significant impact that recognition and trust from their leaders had on their decision to continue teaching in the LID classroom.

Teacher impact. Students with LIDs are defined by the ESSA (2016) as having the most significant cognitive disabilities, and who comprise the 1% of students that take alternate state assessments. As such, these students must be given access to academic content aligned with their enrolled grade level in addition to critical functional life skills based on their cognitive level. In a classroom where historically critical functional life skills and individual education plan (IEP) goals made up the student curriculum, there tends to be lower expectations for academic student learning among campus administrators (Gee & Gonsier-Gerdin, 2018). Nonetheless, academic and functional student achievement was held in the highest regard and the only intrinsic motivator that was mentioned by each participant. All the participants share a common belief that when given the opportunity, their students can progress in their learning just like their peers without disabilities, just at different rates and with different supports and outcomes. This resolute belief in their students' capabilities was the driving force behind the stories of intrinsic motivators. Several participants shared that their high expectations for student learning is not always reciprocated by classroom staff, general education teachers, or campus leaders. This desire to close the gap between this discrepancy of beliefs led to the participants sharing views on their students' capabilities that they wanted everyone to understand. Mrs. K spoke about her students and the importance of high expectations:

> I want other people looking in from the outside to know that there are a lot of times where they are very capable if you set that expectation. They will rise up to meet that expectation. I want them to realize that they can do that, you just haven't let them try, you haven't given them the opportunity to do it.

Mrs. H also reflected on looking beyond the disabilities and stretching the limits:

> Our kids are capable. I don't want anyone to say, "They can't." just because they don't speak, or because they're in a wheelchair or because they have Autism or Down syndrome. There are things they have difficulty with, but that does not limit the things that they can do.

Mr. S summarized his underlying belief about his students and what he wanted others to understand as, "They are just like any other student." Mrs. M stated, "They are more alike than different." Mrs. V shared, "They are more capable than you think, so don't baby them. Here I am trying to teach them to work, and they are used to having everything handed to them. This becomes aggravating." These reflections revealed the powerful link between participants' belief that their students could learn and their feelings of competency when they observed students' learning as a result of their instruction. This increased sense of competency led to advocacy for their students that impacted the intrinsic motivator of belonging through the development of critical relationships with the students, leaders, colleagues, and parents.

All the participants indicated that when they saw their students succeed, they felt a sense of gratification because they made a difference in each student's life. Seeing their students learn a skill or concept that increased their quality of life and knowing that their

belief in the student guided their instruction that lead to the achievement, increased the teachers' feelings of competency, which was a powerful intrinsic motivator for every participant. When asked about a positive motivator when teaching her students, Mrs. G eagerly shared this story:

> I had an eight-year-old girl who was medically fragile, tube-fed, nonverbal and much of the time nonresponsive to teaching interactions. I obtained permission from the mother for her Occupational Therapist and myself to let her try ice cream for the first time as a sensory experience to try to elicit a response. We put a little lick of ice cream on her tongue, and she just rolled her eyes back and smiled, and you could hear her vocalize 'ummmm'. I think that made all of our day last year. (Mrs. G)

The joy in seeing this student respond to any stimulus for the first time was evident as Mrs. G smiled throughout the telling of this story and ended with tears in her eyes, and an audible sigh of satisfaction and success. The joy and satisfaction felt when a student does show progress, no matter how long it takes or how minimal, causes these teachers to celebrate like it's a national holiday:

> They are amazing when they learn that first thing you've been working on that IEP goal. The joy that it brings everyone in the classroom. Clapping their hands…it took somebody two years to do that and I have never been so ecstatic about someone clapping their hands, ever! (Mrs. J)

The predominant intrinsic motivator reported by all participants was the gratification they felt when they saw the impact they had made on their students'

learning. The power of this experience was relayed with success stories that were re-counted without hesitation and with smiles as they shared their experiences of seeing a student's "lightbulb moment." When a middle school student returned to school after his birthday and told Mr. D, "I have travelled around the sun 14 times now," Mr. D was stunned at the connection that the student had made between a discussion in his general education science class about New Year's being a celebration of the earth travelling around the sun in a complete circle and his birthday. Mr. D had worked with the science teacher to plan follow-up lessons around the concept during the unit of study. They had moved on to a different concept when this interaction occurred. He shared his elation about this experience by ending the story saying, "That was exciting because we weren't on that lesson, but he remembered!" (Mr. D). The joy that he expressed in relaying this story showed the power of the intrinsic motivator of impacting students' lives and was an ideological thread woven throughout the remainder of the interview as Mr. D shared more stories about his students and classroom.

Seeing their impact on students' lives contributed to each teacher's sense of competency. "Seeing them do things that no one thought they could ever do." is how Mrs. V described the intrinsic motivation for staying in the classroom. To illustrate, she shared this story about a student in her high school class:

> I had a student who came with lots of warnings about his behavior. He was a large man and I kept getting a list of what he could not do. When I asked what he could do, no one knew. My job became, let's try. Let's try this, and he began to do stuff, and no one thought he would. I will never forget one of the first times

> when I realized how much he paid attention and was learning. We were doing a matching game about American symbols on the smartboard. We were doing a round-robin where everyone took a turn and it became his turn. He paced at the back of the room, pretty much continuously throughout the day, so I prompted him to come to the front of the room to take his turn. After further prompting, he flies up to the front of the room, which was a bit unsettling, and he goes boom, boom, boom and gets a match. "Woo Hoo!" I praised him, not thinking it was real, but rather the luck of the draw. Turned out, it was not the luck of the draw, he did it every single time. He did not look like he was paying attention, or knew what we were doing, but he was retaining it all. From that point on until he graduated, I would tell everyone that he takes everything in, he just can't get it out. (Mrs. V)

Not only was the elation of seeing this student succeed an intrinsic motivator, the resultant sharing of the student's success with others reinforced Mrs. V's decision to stay in the LID classroom. As in Mrs. V's experience, student success was not a private celebration, but rather a story that was shared with everyone. This advocacy for their students was another influential intrinsic motivator that increased the sense of belonging within the school community.

This passion for impacting their students' academic and social-emotional growth is a strong intrinsic motivator shared by all participants that molds the beginning teachers' instructional planning and actions and influences their desire to continue teaching students with LIDs. The students in the LID classroom have the "most

significant cognitive disabilities" (ESSA, 2016), so their learning does look very different from other students, which participants' shared that they felt it is not always valued in the same way as their general education peers' learning. Teachers reported the students' need for continuous repetition over potentially long periods of time; weeks, months or sometimes years to retain information can be difficult.

The pride in student learning and a desire that other educators understand that her students' learning rate is different but is just as important as every other student was expressed by Mrs. V, "They are more capable than you think, so don't baby them. Some days we may rock it [learning], and we are awesome, and the next day, we never did that." This description of how, for some students, every day is a new day for learning a skill or concept illustrates the need for extended repetition of skills and concepts that results in achievement for these students. This extended repetition results in continuous daily review of skills over days, weeks, months and sometimes years to master, which is a struggle some participants shared, but it was also the reason for immense celebration when goals are reached.

Mrs. J's example of the student learning to clap and Mr. D's story of learning the concept of the annual passage of time illustrates the wide spectrum of skills that are taught in the LID classroom. The erroneous perception of others that their students are not capable of learning concepts or skills that are aligned to grade level content was a view that all participants vehemently disputed.

Mrs. K unequivocally emphasized that her kindergarten and fifth grade students are very capable and deserve to have high expectations for learning. She stated, "They

will rise up to meet those expectations." Mrs. B explained student achievement as taking students from where they are at the beginning of the year and "seeing them grow within the year." She says that no student leaves her classroom the same way that they came into the classroom. While learning looks different in the LID classroom, all participants acknowledged that the learning is as worthy as the learning of any student without disabilities. Seeing their students learn and knowing the part that they play in that learning is powerful intrinsic motivator of competence that contributed to their decision to continue teaching these students. Mr. D relayed how the reward for him was "knowing that he made a difference." Mrs. D accentuated the learning she sees in her classroom:

> Every little step they take improvement-wise, while for the gen ed population is kind of mundane. But for us, it's absolutely huge because it takes them so much effort and so much time to accomplish. So, you get to celebrate it all, and you get to see them celebrate success. And to be able to see that and to experience it with them is an absolute thrill!

The joy and gratification of seeing students' learning success were feelings that participants wanted other educators and parents to understand and fueled their desire to advocate for their students. When sharing stories about their impact on student success, many participants expressed how many professionals and people in their students' lives did not always share the belief that the students could learn and did not see the value in even trying to teach a particular concept or skill. All participants shared stories of advocating for their students' abilities to their colleagues or students' parents, then

observed the surprised and elated looks on their faces when a student did learn a concept or skill that was never tried due to their disability. Mrs. V described her students' learning as "not typical, their brains do not learn in the same sequence as other students, but they still can learn." The experience of seeing the differences in learning is not all the participants reported. They all were adamant about how more alike than different their students were in comparison to their peers.

Participants indicated their feelings of satisfaction were validated when their advocacy attempts resulted in a change of mindset of other adults that led to acceptance of their students. This was another powerful intrinsic motivator for the participants that was reiterated by many when asked what they wanted others to know about their students. Mrs. M's response captured the sentiment, "They are more alike than different than any other student. So, if they [other teachers] are just more welcoming, they will realize that our kids are like everyone else. What they need looks a little bit different." These beginning special education teachers have strong convictions about their students' abilities and want others to see their students as they see them. While changing mindsets is not easy, the results and sense of accomplishment when it does occur is a strong intrinsic motivator that keeps these teachers in the classroom.

For these participants, the belief that their students can learn, and the subsequent student learning based on their efforts, provided them with evidence of not only impacting students' lives but also the way that parents view their children, which feeds their feeling of competency. Mrs. H recounted her experience with one of her students and the parent's expectations:

> I had a middle school student with cat cry syndrome. The doctors had told the girl's parents that she may be able to do functional things, but she would not be able to learn academic concepts. Therefore, they did not have high expectations for learning for their child. However, she is a sponge! She goes home each day and shares with her mother what she has learned that day about coins, space travel, and historical figures like Neil Armstrong and Abraham Lincoln and anything else that interests her. Her mother is elated!

Mrs. H's belief in this student's learning potential and her instruction that resulted in new learning for the student, gave the parent a new insight into her child's potential and hope for a brighter future. The experience led to increased respect and support of Mrs. H. It also fueled Mrs. H's intrinsic belief in her ability to impact students' lives that drives her to challenge her students each day. Impacting students' lives by challenging them, and seeing the learning occur are highly motivating intrinsic experiences for all the participants.

For Mrs. K and the other participants, they take the view of looking at what their students can do and build from those skills. The disability is looked upon as just another characteristic about the child much like right/left handedness, hair color, age and other types of attributes that are included in the uniqueness of each student. The learning attributes are all considered when making instructional decisions and writing IEPs. When students succeed in an area that no one thought they were able to progress, the participants expressed their sense of pride in the student as well as a strong urge to show others that do not believe in the student's capabilities that they are wrong and should give

them a chance to try. The student's success feeds their belief in their own value as a teacher. This emotion is strongly expressed by the participants in this study when asked what they wanted others to know about their students. Mrs. B's passion for her students was clear in her response to this question,

> I am working on people understanding that these are people too. I get emotional about it. So often they just treat them like they are less than us, people that are typically developing or don't have a special need. That is so sad, because they are not less because they are different, look different or act different. We all are equal. I just wish that more people would understand that.

Mrs. D also shared this fervent belief that her students are unique individuals who should be valued and respected,

> My kids are special, yes, but what child is not special? All kids have different learning abilities. All kids have different stories to tell. And all kids can be friends, Kids need to be kids, and if they don't grow and learn together, it makes for too much divisiveness verses togetherness. And everyone needs to get along and learn how to accept everybody. And what better way than to start with my kids?

Advocating about the similarities and value of their students as members of the school community and larger community was just as important to the participants because of the relationships that developed as a result.

Relationships. Relationships created a sense of acceptance and belonging in the campus community, which is another influential intrinsic motivator for the participants.

Relationships with students was identified by participants as a critical component that leads to student learning but, developing those relationships can have obstacles that require extended time. A sense of belonging resulting from relationships with other adults was also identified as being vital since the LID classroom teachers had to rely on paraprofessionals, related services personnel, general education teachers, and parents to support each student's unique learning needs. Several participant's stories revealed how the building of these critical relationships is essential, takes time to develop, and is not always easy, but worth all the effort needed to build a collaborative team.

Relationships with students. The participants in this study shared the opinion that to successfully teach their students, they must develop a relationship with each student. For their students who are nonverbal, there were many obstacles that teachers had to work around to make connections with their students. One such obstacle was having multiple students, or sometimes every student in the class who were nonverbal, which required extensive amounts of time for observation and trial and error to identify each student's likes, dislikes, and what they already know. When all of the students in the class are nonverbal and nonresponsive, it made it difficult to determine if any connections were happening. Mrs. G shared her struggle in this situation,

> When we are working on a lesson, they are staring at the ceiling or sleeping… or sometimes they are crying, and they are frustrated, and I think I have tried everything out of my Mary Poppins' hat, but I cannot just figure out what it is that is bothering them.

She continued to explain that the use of assistive technology in the form of talking switches and photographs or symbols helps her to make those connections and build positive relationships with her students. She connected how these positive relationships led to student learning and accomplishment which fed her feelings of competency in impacting her students' lives.

Communication with students who are nonverbal and who have no alternate form of communication such as sign language, visual systems or other alternative communication systems that can speak for the student was identified by participants to be complicated and time-consuming. Mrs. H described this experience of meeting and getting to know a new student who was nonverbal without an alternate communication system during a meet and greet prior to the first day of school:

> I met a student last night who is brand new to our class, and we spent some time together and I am already starting to get to know the things that make him tick. He doesn't speak, but he was bossing me around all over this room last night. We played with toys, we flipped the rain stick up and down, he unbuckled my shoes, he helped me put them back on, it was just great!

Mrs. D related her experience of how she influenced a student by teaching them new universal signs to add to their sign language repertoire. This led to the student developing spontaneous communication and building relationships using the alternate communication format:

> I had a nonverbal child that had a couple of made-up signs. We taught a few more signs in class, and he began using them spontaneously. And so, he still used

> his made-up signs, but he began to incorporate those that were taught to him. He would use his made-up signs for something he wanted to communicate frequently, so we taught him the universal sign and he began to use that. So, it became spontaneous speech for him. Instead of tapping us or tapping something he wanted; he would use those signs. It was very cool!

This experience sheds insight into the enthusiasm that LID teachers have for their students' success and how relationships and connectedness is developed with their students who are nonverbal. This interaction using objects and actions requires trial and error and much guessing to get to know students' preferences, which can lead to complicated negative or disruptive behaviors such as pulling on the adult, to aggressive behaviors such as screaming, hitting, biting, and other forms of aggression when the student's message is misunderstood. Mr. D who was hired for the LID classroom as an alternately certified teacher with no background or training in teaching students with LIDs expressed the difficulty of understanding the behaviors and how they can take away from academics:

> I don't understand why it takes so long. Something minor can lead to a full-blown meltdown which can lead to a situation where the parents, principals, everyone has to be involved, and I don't even know how it started. When you have multiple students with multiple levels of understanding and behaviors, um, it can get crazy all over.

These experiences with behavior led Mr. D in a search for information and resources on how to deal with tough situations. Once he understood how the behavior served as a

form of communication, he focused on the classroom atmosphere as being one of tolerance and understanding. He shared, "They know they are in a safe zone where they can be themselves. We have created an atmosphere of acceptance where they are growing and learning" (Mr. D). As a result, he began seeing students who were happy to be in school and to see him each day. This connection that he made with his students led to the joy that he feels when students are excited to see him is the intrinsic motivator, which outweighs the challenges of teaching in this field.

The connectedness that results from development of relationships with students is a powerful illustration of the intrinsic motivator of belonging for many of the participants, such as Mrs. D who relayed the following account of how she is greeted by one student each day:

> The way our school is set up, my classroom is the first classroom in the academic hall. Right off the main hall. Well, every morning the first thing you can hear is her yelling my name all the way to the classroom, like she hasn't seen me in a million years. And she runs in saying, 'I'm glad I'm here! Mrs. D, you're here!' She'll give me a hug and we will get started with the day. It's just the simple joy and love that they show, it just warms your heart.

These stories of the struggles and resultant delight in developing positive relationships with their students, especially those who are nonverbal, portrays the passion and belief these teachers have for their students' and their abilities. The resulting competence that teachers feel when they see the evidence of their impact on students' lives reinforces their beliefs about students' abilities and high expectations. This

reinforced belief leads to the advocacy for their students that results in the development of critically important relationships with the other adults on the campus that make up the teaching team for students with LIDs. Developing these relationships adds to the challenges of beginning LID teachers, yet when these relationships work, they become compelling intrinsic motivators.

Relationships with other adults. The sharing of student learning differences and how they, as teachers, must build relationships in non-typical ways with the students as well as build relationships with every adult who interacts with the students held many challenges for the teachers. The LID classroom requires a team approach due to the intensive support needs of the students. This team approach includes a variety of adults such as the specialized day-to-day support team of paraprofessionals and related services professionals in the classroom, general education teachers, and parents. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to manage all of the adults in the classroom and build relationships and advocate for their students with adults outside of the classroom. It was clear that the participants in this study looked beyond the disabilities and had a strong belief in their students' abilities that was not always mirrored by other adults. However, the intrinsic motivation when the people on the team meshed and worked together was powerful.

Support team. LID teachers have the additional task of managing the paraprofessionals in their classroom. For the beginning teachers in this study, it was an aspect of the job that brought unexpected challenges such as managing different personalities and working with others' beliefs about their role in student learning. This is

one aspect of teaching that many participants expressed not having any prior in-depth coursework or training, which resulted in complicated relationship-building that was overwhelming and time consuming. Mr. D described his challenges with paraprofessionals in his classroom:

> I have found that the paraprofessionals that I work with, they lack understanding, they lack training in sped and what their role is in my classroom, verses other classrooms. Sometimes they are unsure of their decisions or their place in the education setting. I totally get that it's a challenge and I look at them and say, "I don't know what the right answer is, but this is how I would do it.

Conversely, if a beginning teacher is fortunate to have paraprofessionals that have some knowledge or willingness to learn about students and the job, and with whom they connect, it results in a team that has mutual respect and works together to problem-solve for student success. Mrs. J describes how teamwork is an important intrinsic motivator for her. She says,

> I find that when you do have a good support staff; you have a family. You know, I come to work with people that I am not related to everyday, but we have the strongest bond and that is something that I cherish greatly.

These success stories of working with paraprofessionals were not the norm. Other participants in this study reported that working with paraprofessionals as a team was a current challenge. Mrs. K described her challenge that rang true for many participants:

> My biggest challenge is not having my paraprofessionals lend themselves to being there to support the student when they need the support. That really does fall

> back on the teacher, because you have to set the expectations for your paras and make sure that they are where they need to be and everything, but that has been a bit of a challenge.

Others who had challenges in this area of teamwork with their paraprofessionals shared stories of collaboration with other colleagues on the campus that outweighed the struggles with paraprofessionals in the classroom.

Another important part of the instructional team are the related service personnel, which includes occupational therapists (OTs), physical therapists, and speech and language professionals. These are professionals who have extensive expertise in specialty areas that affect student learning in very specific ways. Mrs. J shared how having related service personnel who are open to learning new strategies to help students contributed to the teamwork factor:

> We began this new strategy back in 2017 with an SLP [speech and language professional], PT [physical therapist], OT and two paraprofessionals. We were all in on it, working together on it, and then last year we lost over half of that staff. So, last year we had new speech, OT, and paraprofessionals. Nobody questioned what we were already doing, they just said, "how can we learn more? What can I do to assist in this style of teaching? I need to learn."

This experience is indicative of the desire to have team members who have some knowledge about students' disabilities and instructional strategies. Having team members who are willing to learn was reported to be the key factor to creating a team that can become like the family that Mrs. J described.

Teamwork was reported to be a very important factor related to teachers' feelings of success. Beginning special education teachers who were fortunate to be placed in a LID classroom with daily support staff with whom there was an immediate connection identified this collaborative teamwork as a factor that influenced the intrinsic motivator of belonging. Participants who were struggling with building a cohesive team with paraprofessionals expressed a desire to have a cooperative relationship with their paraprofessionals, but they did not find that the challenges outweighed other intrinsic motivators of competency or belonging in the school community. In these situations, their focus on seeing their impact on student learning and the development of collaborative relationships with general education teachers contributed to their decision to return to the LID classroom.

General educators. Inclusion of students with disabilities is a philosophy that has been adopted by the schools in this study, which resulted in opportunities for LID teachers to develop relationships with general education teachers. These relationships have been identified as another intrinsic motivator by several of the participants. Mrs. K worked on a campus that embraced inclusion for her students. As she says, "Really, the support from our teachers has been amazing. We have great support of staff that very much love having the kids included in the classroom" (Mrs. K). She attributed her students' social growth to their interactions with their general education teachers and peers as a positive outcome from the experience.

General education teachers who make an attempt to get to know the LID teachers and their students have had an impact on the beginning teachers in this study. Mrs. G

shared that they had some great teachers on her campus who do approach her medically fragile students and talk to them when they see them on campus. Mrs. J shared this encounter she had with a general education teacher that had a significant impact on her:

> So, I had a fifth-grade teacher last year come to me and say, "You don't actually teach in there, do you?" I said, "Well, how do you know? Yes, I teach every day and I'd love to share that with you." So, she got to come in and see just one interactive lesson. Her word-of-mouth to the good things that were happening in here and the things that these kids could accomplish spread throughout the whole entire campus.

Breaking the barriers of pre-conceived ideas about students' abilities can lead to acceptance of students as learners within the campus community and draw a picture of the LID classroom as a legitimate learning environment as in Mrs. J's encounter. This increased acceptance into the school community was an influential intrinsic motivator that was a common theme throughout the study.

Mrs. J's experience was unique in that she was approached by a general education teacher who wanted to know what actually happened in her classroom rather than accepting the common assumptions about students with LID. Generally, the LID teacher is the one who must reach out first and begin to develop those relationships. This is not always easy and can be met with resistance.

Mr. S had also begun to advocate for his students by talking with general education teachers in his elementary school. He shared with these teachers that his students are just like any other student and need to be included beyond specials (art,

music, PE). He advocated for his students to be included more in their grade-level activities such as field trips and musical performances and was able to get a few teachers to incorporate his ideas. These small successes empowered him to continue advocating for his students and was a factor in his decision to stay in the LID classroom.

The participants' stories illustrated the importance of advocacy for their students and the building of relationships with general education colleagues on the campus for beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs. Each encounter revealed to the teachers that they have the power to change the mindsets and misunderstandings about their students with LIDs, and as a result, create increased acceptance and inclusion in the school community which are highly influential intrinsic motivators. This is the same for the relationship between the LID teacher and students' parents.

Parents. Participants expressed that having a positive relationship with parents is critical for student success. Some participants in this study relayed that it does not always start out positively. Several reported how parents' expectations for students are not the same as the teacher's in the beginning. For example, many parents did not understand why the teachers are teaching the core subjects. The explanation of the requirement by the federal government is not enough for parents to embrace and support the teacher. However, when the parents begin to see the learning and the changes in their child, they are reported to be grateful and supportive of the teacher. Mrs. D shared her thoughts,

> For me, when the parents tell me that they see the change at home and they just thank me, I cry. It's wonderful that what they are learning in school is carrying

> over and you can see the joy in their face. You can see the joy in the parent's face, because some of these parents, their stories, they had no clue if the child would ever do anything. And now they are seeing it's not as bad as they thought. Their child can learn anything, they just learn at a different pace. They learn different things, some things will always be hard for them, but not necessarily as hard as the parents thought.

The change in parent mindsets improved the communication and relationship with Mrs. D. This was an influential intrinsic motivator because the teacher added an important member to the team, which lead to increased learning for students.

The parental paradigm shift that occurs when parents see their child succeeding at school was also motivating for Mr. S. In fact, he referred to this as "getting the parents on board" with the high expectations and learning of the student. When asked about an example, he shared this story:

> I have a fourth-grade boy who has shaken baby syndrome and he was very difficult to work with in the beginning. His mom has always been sweet and kind, and once she saw that he was making progress, the light clicked on for her too. She is willing to work with him, and now he comes in ready to work. Once his mom got on board, he excelled!

This shift of parent attitude resonated with Mrs. K. She affirmed that she has a feeling of satisfaction when parents report that their children are doing things they never have done before. She states, "those are the things that really do make a difference" (Mrs. K). Mrs. H stated "when I see the kids succeeding, even the baby steps, it is huge for them. And

when the parents are recognizing it, I cannot express how gratifying it is. What matters to me is what the parents are seeing and saying, I know that I am making a difference."

This impact on student learning by developing relationships with parents that resulted in shifting views of student ability and increased success was echoed by Mrs. K:

> We had a little boy in third grade whose parents always put Velcro shoes on him. At the beginning of the school year, I said, "send him with some shoelaces on those shoes, we are going to teach him to tie his shoes". The parent said, "We always put Velcro on him." But they did what we asked, and believe it or not, between me, the OT and everyone who worked with him, we sat down, were patient and worked and worked on it, and he met the goal at the end of the school year! That just gave him a huge sense of accomplishment that he could tie his own shoes. I liked seeing that.

Participants noted that parents' assumptions of ability can be directed by professionals such as doctors, teachers, and therapists who may focus on what the child cannot do based on their disability. In this situation, the parents made an assumption about shoe-tying based on what other professionals told them about their son's disability, rather than giving him the experience and seeing what happened.

The joy the participants' expressed when relating stories of their impact on student learning expanded to their awareness on the indirect impact on family members and other adults that resulted from student achievement:

> When the parents tell you, "Oh my gosh, I have never seen them do something" and they are doing it for them now. Seeing them interact with other adults, where

they never would before, those are the things that really do make a difference. (Mrs. K)

The collaborative, supportive relationships that resulted from advocacy for their students and themselves is a key factor to acceptance and inclusion in the school community, which is an influential intrinsic motivator for retention of the participants in this study. Teachers who had classroom teams that worked well and strong relationships with their general education counterparts found these factors to aid in the increased student achievement which feeds another influential intrinsic motivator of seeing their impact on students' lives. Having an impact on their students increased their belief in their competence and supported the driving belief that their students can learn and have the right for the opportunity to learn.

Other teachers who had challenges in building relationships with other adults also saw teamwork as a critical intrinsic motivator. However, the fact that they were not currently experiencing those relationships did not outweigh the current impact on students' lives they saw that influenced their desire to continue teaching in the LID classroom. Leadership support in building those teams and sustaining those teams is a critical factor that participants emphasized. The stories shared revealed expectations of and experiences with district and campus leaders that enhanced the influential intrinsic motivators of competence, belonging and acceptance.

Leadership. Participants expressed that their district and campus leaders' professional respect for them as educators and their students as valued learners to be an influential intrinsic motivator. Visibility of principals and assistant principals is one

aspect of respect that many participants shared as being important. Mrs. J clarified what she experienced and needed regarding leadership visibility;

> I know they [principal, special education directors and coordinators] come in for 20 seconds and say, "How's it going?" I want them to stay and see what I do. If they could do that, then maybe they would understand what I need and support me better.

Other participants relayed their experiences with administrators who did not have background knowledge or experience with students with LIDs, but who made intentional efforts to learn about them as being important. Mrs. M expressed that she did not receive much support from her administrators, not from their lack of willingness, but from their lack of experience with students with disabilities. She had some "extremely aggressive" student behaviors in her classroom, and there was no one who had a plan or idea of how to handle the behaviors. However, her campus leaders were willing to find experts in the district to learn from and brainstorm potential solutions for the situations. The fact that the leadership respected her request and did not leave her to figure it out by herself was one factor that motivated her to stay.

Administrators who prioritized getting to know the students and teachers had an impact on the teachers' sense of value and belonging to the school community for themselves and their students. This action can override other difficulties the teachers encountered and influenced the decision to remain in the classroom each year. Mrs. J shared the following experience she had with a new principal that had a significant impact on her decision to stay:

> Last year I had a brand-new principal that had never seen this population of kids, even though she works in our district. She never knew what went on. When she did my observation, she was like, "That is amazing, I had no idea that you guys could get all of that out of these kids. And that you guys were so willing to try all of those things and do them." So, I love my job most days.

Mrs. D shared similar experiences with her principal and assistant principal who will spend time in her classroom and get to know the students, not only during her required observations, but throughout the year.

Having leadership who was interested in their students, asked questions, spent time in the classroom observing instruction and getting to know the students is something not all participants experienced. However, the other relationships they had built with the classroom staff and general education colleagues outweighed the lack of administrative interaction. The power of the campus leaders' interest in the teacher and students in the LID classroom was critical to all participants. This was especially evident for those who did not have much interaction with their leadership, as they shared a hope that it would happen for them in the future.

Intrinsic motivators that impacted retention of the participants circulated around their belief in student abilities, advocacy for their students and themselves, and acceptance and inclusion in the campus community through positive relationships with other adults. Several stories were shared that depicted teachers who believe that their students are just like every other student, and they have the ability to learn if given the opportunity and high expectations. When the teachers saw the impact of their instruction

on student learning, it increased each teacher's sense of competency, which was a powerful intrinsic motivator for retention. Having a strong team that includes paraprofessionals, general education teachers, related services professionals and parents, who communicate and work together for student success was another intrinsic motivator to return to the classroom. Finally, leadership who had professional respect for the teachers as demonstrated by taking interest in the teachers, their students, and a willingness to learn more about special education and students with disabilities also had a strong impact on retention. Interestingly, many of these intrinsic motivators were intricately woven into the participants' stories about extrinsic experiences that influenced their return to the LID classroom.

Extrinsic experiences. The stories about extrinsic workplace experiences that influenced retention were intermingled and linked to the accounts of intrinsic motivators that portrayed teacher retention as having no explicit beginning or end. This intricate web reflected the conclusions of job characteristics theory (Saavedra & Kwun, 2000), which asserted that environmental workplace factors that cannot be controlled by the employee, have an impact on employees' desire to stay on the job. This is the foundation for the second research question. In the LID teacher's situation, the workplace factors that are out of their control include several unique classroom management features such as class size, range of students' needs, and the number of paraprofessionals assigned, which affects scheduling and lesson planning. These factors are based on decisions made by district leadership and campus leadership, who may not have a background or experience in special education and/or teaching students with LIDs. Thus, they may not

fully understand the impact of their decisions on the LID teacher and the instruction in the classroom. A glimpse into the participants' realities of the challenges they faced daily is necessary to fully appreciate the influential, positive extrinsic experiences that are the focus of the second research question. Stories of the challenges of class size and structure, scheduling, and lesson planning provided the depth and complexity of factors that may cause other beginning teachers to leave. These stories also serve as the basis of an in-depth exploration of the positive workplace experiences that outweigh these challenges for the teachers who stay.

Class size and adult support. LID classrooms tend to have fewer students due to the low incidence of their disabilities. These students must be given access to grade level curriculum through prerequisite skills based on their cognitive function and functional life skills that are identified in IEP goals and objectives (ESSA, 2004, IDEA 2004). The class numbers in this study ranged from 5-13 students with a wide range of cognitive levels. The participants expressed how staffing is based on the numbers rather than the intensive needs of the students that can affect quality of instruction and safety. Mrs. D had a class of 13 students at varied levels, from students with intensive behavioral, communication and health needs to students who attend general education classes with paraprofessional support for part of the day. She described the consequences that she has experienced in a situation when her paraprofessionals are out supporting some of the students in general education, leaving her in the classroom alone to instruct the rest of the class that consisted of a group of students with intensive behavioral, communication and health needs:

> With the assistants going out to all the different grade levels, I'd say we have half a day where I don't have help in the classroom, and that can be a little problematic. In the beginning of the year, I had a kindergarten student who would run around the room and hide under tables and chairs. Working on in-seat behavior with her took away from the academic lessons for the other students in the classroom. (Mrs. D)

She added that the staffing based solely on numbers not only impacted other students' learning, but can also be a danger:

> That is a big put off when you have to deal with numbers only and you need more [staff] and you don't get it. One child hiding under the desk and everyone else is behaving is not too bad. But, the one that goes running down the hall while the one is under the desk in the classroom, and it is me plus the other students, it gets a little hairy at times. (Mrs. D)

When Mrs. B was asked about the challenges in her work environment her candid response, "the typical there are not enough hands" embodied the general staffing experiences shared by the other participants.

Every participant in the study had one or more paraprofessionals assigned to their room, which added to the dynamics of scheduling and supervision that are not common in the general education classroom. The student needs that require more than one adult in the room on a consistent basis requires the scheduling of the paraprofessionals and students that is part of the teacher's responsibilities. This is a foundational piece of the story of student numbers and consequences that may not always be understood.

Scheduling. Scheduling of students and the adults in the classroom is a complicated task to ensure that all student's needs are meet. Inclusion of students in the general education setting is a situation that complicates the process. A few of the participants are in schools that practice some level of inclusion with their students. While they praise the inclusive experience, many of them shared the complications of scheduling students and paraprofessionals that are added to their job. Mrs. K explained that she must consider student support while ensuring all the adults receive their 30-minute lunches, breaks and conference periods. Mrs. K said, "sometimes you as the teacher don't get what you need, but you make sure that everything runs smoothly". Mrs. D shared all of the intricate factors she must consider when scheduling her students and paraprofessionals:

> I have to work out the schedule of all the assistants, who's going where, when and when I am going to have help. Then I have to figure out my schedule, when I'm going to teach based on who is going to be in the classroom and who is going to be out. You know, second grade may be out of the classroom and I have kindergarten, and 1st grade is coming back in 5 minutes. It is a juggling game of what I'm going to teach depending on who is where. They [students] go out to science, social studies, PE and lunch. So, somewhere in there I need to find blocks of time to teach English Language Arts and Math. Scheduling is a bear.

Academic experiences and inclusion are not the only scheduling considerations for teachers. In Mrs. G's class of students who are medically fragile, she also has to plan for

tube-feedings, diaper changes, and seizure monitoring in addition to planning academic lessons.

> It's kind of hard to lump it all together and make sure everything gets taken care of. So, that is the reason why I laugh when people say, "When did you eat lunch or get your conference period?", and my response is, "What is that?" (Mrs. G)

All the participants in this study commented on scheduling and lesson planning as being a skill that requires levels of consideration and decisions that all impact each other, making the task complicated. As mentioned by Mrs. D above, once she has the daily schedule of where the students and paraprofessionals are within the school, she must then focus on the lesson planning, which has its own intricacies to consider.

Lesson planning. Participants reported one aspect to consider in planning lessons is the ages and grade levels of their students. The range of ages results in multiple grade levels of students that makes lesson planning complicated and laborious. These age ranges can be up to 5 or more years as in Mrs. J's classroom of 12 students ages 5-11, or Mr. S's class of 13 students ages 6-11. There can also be classrooms of students whose ages have a large gap such as Mrs. K's class that has students who are 5 years-old and 11 years-old.

Subsequently, the age ranges result in multiple grade levels. This creates additional challenges to lesson development since ESSA (2016) requires students with significant cognitive disabilities to experience academic instruction aligned to their enrolled grade level. Thus, teachers must be familiar with the general education curriculum for multiple grades in all content areas when designing academic lessons that

align to the grade-level content. An additional layer to add to instruction in the LID classroom is the varied cognitive learning levels of the students, which also makes lesson planning complicated as described by Mr. D who shared the following student attributes he must take into account when designing a writing lesson for his class of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders:

> I have a student who is learning how to hold a pencil and make lines, one who is writing their name, numbers, etc., but does not have an understanding about the purpose of writing, and one who is writing small book reports. The other students also fall somewhere along this continuum of writing and I must meet all of their needs during the writing lesson block. To do this, I must write individual lessons for students based on their grade level and modified to meet their needs.

Mrs. B shared her classroom setting of varied ranges of learning levels and unique learning needs that she must consider when planning lessons for her class of seventh and eighth graders:

> I have a student who is working on reading a passage independently without pictures and then answering questions or summarizing. Then I have some students that are working on attending to an independent task. So like today, the second day of school, we were working on a grade level curriculum concept and that sitting task because I want them to be independent and motivated. I also have four students that have behavior intervention plans (BIP), so we know that if they are getting bored or are disengaged, they are more likely to have behaviors.

Mr. S summed up his lesson planning experience: “In a classroom of 13 students like ours, it is truly 13 different levels and you’ve got to learn how to teach those 13 different levels at the same time on certain things.”

Mrs. M illustrated the teaching of multiple levels at the same time as “a lot of moving parts”:

> I love teaching math. In math we could be teaching time. For some students it could be just recognizing the clock or that there are numbers on the clock or recognizing just the numbers. For some students it could be telling time to the hour, half-hour, quarter-hour. While others are working on lapsed time, and word problems with time. There are so many different spans with the students. Same thing with addition. Some students are just recognizing that there are 4 manipulatives plus 2 manipulatives, some are using numerals, some are doing 2-digit with and without regrouping. Reading is the same thing. One student may be working on identifying letters while another is reading passages of modified grade level content at the 1st grade level with comprehension questions, or just reading sentences out loud. So, there is just a lot to consider and plan in each lesson.

As these stories illustrate, lesson planning for LID teachers requires an understanding of skills and concepts taught in each grade level, plus strategies for modifying grade-level lessons to meet the cognitive levels of their students. Mrs. K is an elementary teacher in a rural school who has 5 students in Kindergarten and fifth grade, making the ages of her students five and eleven. Inclusion is an initiative in her school and district. Thus, her

students are attending grade level classes at different times during the day, and she is providing modifications for those classes in addition to designing lessons for the students when they are in her room. She described the challenge as "balancing: that little act of juggling how to make learning appropriate for them" (Mrs. K).

The planning of academic lessons is compounded by the requirement of including the teaching of functional skills based on IEP goals and objectives that must be incorporated throughout the day. This is the reality for all special education teachers; however, for LID teachers whose students are identified as medically fragile, there are additional considerations to be considered when planning.

Mrs. J, and Mrs. G both have classrooms of students who are identified as medically fragile. In their situations, students have extensive health issues that teachers and staff must maintain and address while providing access to academic lessons that are aligned to students' grade levels.

Mrs. J whose class of 12 students has several students who are tube-fed, on special diets, and who have severe seizures. She expressed that providing medical and academic needs at the same time is an aspect of her job. One of her greatest concerns is that due to the number of students, she cannot teach all she is expected to teach academically and socially each day and manage all of the "medical stuff" like tube feeding, seizure monitoring of multiple students, and monitor a special diet. She expressed that she struggles with providing medical and academic needs at the same time in addition to the emotional strain of the medical fragility of some of her students. As she

said, “You know, I didn’t go to school to do that.” Yet it is a reality of the job for her and many other LID teachers that is not always realized or considered.

Mrs. B summarized the challenges of working in the LID classroom as, “But those things, they are what they are.” This statement emphasizes that the realities of the LID classroom are accepted by the returning beginning teachers, and it provides the foundation for the stories of the positive experiences that outweigh the challenging realities of working in the LID classroom for these teachers who stay. These stories of influential positive experiences centered on administrator visibility and trust, the relationships with colleagues, and opportunities to increase professional skills through professional development.

Administrator visibility and interaction. It has been established that the LID classroom is not a typical classroom and is not comparable to other teaching situations. Mrs. D’s summation of the LID classroom as “a setting where our normal is anything but normal.” conveys how the experience does not fit neatly into the textbook descriptions of teaching that are learned in any teacher preparation program. Mrs. J described teaching in the LID classroom as, “We do all of the same things that a regular class does; science, social studies, reading, writing, math. It just looks different.” Mrs. B summed up her experiences with having to fit her classroom into the school culture and environment as, “It is what it is.” While this may sound like a defeatist statement, it was actually a statement of acceptance of her current situation.

Mrs. J described her room as a “really fun room” and wished that more of her leadership would stop in and stay for a while to see it. Administrator visibility and

interactions in the LID classroom was a predominant experience for some of the participants. For others, it was a desirable experience that teachers deemed as being advantageous for continued retention.

Administrator visibility and interaction. Visibility of campus leadership is a powerful extrinsic work experience shared by several participants. The experiences shared focused on two results of visibility; acceptance of the students, and value of the teachers. In order to gain these results, Mrs. J specified, "I know they [administrators] come in for 20 seconds and say, 'How's it going?' I want them to stay" Thus, brief check-ins are not enough for the teachers to feel valued or respected. The participants who did have the positive experiences of educational leaders that spent time in their classrooms getting to know them, their students, and watching their instruction, reiterated the powerful impact it had on everyone involved.

Mrs. H described this experience with an assistant principal who wanted to visit her classroom monthly to read to the students:

> She is incredible! When she reads a book, the students are just enthralled by her because she does all the voices. She's really engaged. She understands the students and acts out the story. She is crazy fun to watch. So, I love that my admin. is wanting to come and visit and hang out in the classroom, that is exciting to me!"

Mrs. H shared another story of a different assistant principal who was new to the campus: "I invited him to visit our classroom and join us in some activities like cooking on Fridays. His enthusiastic response was, 'Yeah, I love it! I can't wait for that!'" Mrs. H

felt that she was a valued team member and her students were also valued and accepted as a part of the school. She shared, "So, I love that my admin. is wanting to come and visit and hang out in the classroom. That is exciting to me because I did not have that last year, which made me sad" (Mrs. H). The interest that her assistant principals took in her students was genuine and beyond the brief "drop in" that many participants described. The time that was taken to visit, learn about, and share with her class sent a powerful message that they respected Mrs. H as a teacher. These extrinsic experiences fueled the intrinsic motivators of impacting students' lives thru advocacy, and the resulting relationship that developed and contributed to a sense of belonging to the campus community, which was instrumental in Mrs. H's decision to return to the classroom.

Mrs. G also shared her extrinsic experiences that promoted positive interactions with her campus leaders that indicated to her that she and her students are also valued and accepted:

> Our principals come in here, hang out, they get to know the kids. They stop us in the hall and talk to them, and they get involved with our assistive technology for communication like talking switches to communicate with them.

Mrs. D also had experiences with administrator visibility with a twist:

> The administration is very supportive of what we do and how we do it. I take my kids around the building, I can knock on a door and interrupt and ask, "may I come in?" and they say, 'Sure! Come in what do you want to do?'. They are quite understanding and loving, they really love our kids.

The participants' accounts of how the presence and interest of their administrators created an atmosphere of acceptance of their students and themselves as teachers is a thread that ran throughout each participant's interview. The link of these positive experiences and the intrinsic motivators of acceptance and being valued was revealed in these accounts and evolved through the stories of administrator trust.

Administrators trusting teachers. Many participants shared the opinion that when principals and assistant principals spent time in their classroom and asked questions, they began to understand the differences in the LID classroom. As a result, many of the participants reported being trusted to make more decisions about the curriculum scope and sequence and the pacing of the lessons. Experiencing this trust was powerful and fueled the teacher's desire to continue teaching.

The nature and severity of the disabilities of students with LID results in the need for continuous repetition for longer periods of time. Mrs. V explained how the slow retention rate, and sometimes, lack of retention affects her and other team members: "This means that teachers and paras are teaching the same thing repeatedly for weeks, months, or even years and this can lead to frustration and boredom for teaching staff." As a result, students with LID need a different curriculum scope and sequence that can only be determined by the teacher. When campus leaders trusted the teachers to design the scope and sequence and related lessons for their students, they opened the doorway for the teacher to have an impact on student success. This extrinsic experience strengthened the intrinsic motivators of competence in how they impact student learning for many of the participants.

Flexibility in managing the learning in the classroom was another influential experience for several participants. Mr. D's account shows the importance of this flexibility: "I really like the flexibility our principal has given us. He started last year, he doesn't have sped experience, so he is letting us pave the way." He expanded on the flexibility and its importance to his desire to stay:

> Flexibility as far as curriculum. I work with an awesome co-teacher and we are able to kind of do what we want. Last year we were asked about chickens, having our students raise chickens and eggs. It was pretty nontraditional, but we had the ability to do real life skills and science. On our days when it's not so great, when screams pierce the hallway, and everyone knows that something's going on in your room, there is never a run in to say here's what you should do. I just feel like the flexibility in that he is not micromanaging, he is more like, "Hey, let me know what you need and I'm here to help."

Principals' trust and allowance of flexibility in scheduling and teaching curriculum was a positive workplace experience that bolstered teachers' confidence in the ability to impact their students, which was identified as an intrinsic motivator. Mrs. M described how her principal trusted her professional decisions, gave her freedom to set the order, pace and enhance the curriculum and flexibility of scheduling as important extrinsic experiences. She shared that her principal told her, "Well you know what's best, you're taking care of the needs of your kids, do it. Just being able to do what I feel like is best for my kids is nice" (Mrs. M).

Mrs. G also shared how she is allowed to be flexible in teaching curriculum concepts to her students who are medically fragile:

> My schedule is very flexible. I like to stick to my schedule as much as possible, but if there are a lot of seizures going on that day, or if somebody just had surgery and they are super exhausted, it's ok to just focus on those other things today that are more important.

These stories exemplify how the extrinsic experiences of leadership trust and allowance for flexibility are intricately connected to the intrinsic motivators of competence as evidenced by student achievement. These motivators developed as a result of the visibility and time administrators spent in the LID classroom getting to know the teachers and students.

As the professional respect and trust of the LID teacher increased, the participants shared their success stories of requesting instructional materials. Grade-level textbooks are not effective or appropriate learning tools for students with LIDs. Students with LIDs learn through hands-on, interactive instruction with manipulatives that requires extensive repetition. Specialized curriculum tools have been commercially developed to help teachers prepare and teach grade-level content that is aligned with the students' cognitive levels. While these alternate curriculum tools help teachers bundle prerequisite learning skills that overlap at each grade level and provide lessons to address the diversity of the classroom, they are expensive. Participants in this study shared stories of a lack of these resources, requiring them to create lessons and materials. Mr. D described it as the need to "think outside the box" when designing lessons for his students using the limited

resources. Mrs. J described the materials she uses to teach academic concepts to her students:

> When we are reading a book, we are reading an adaptive book. We're reading a book that has pieces that pull off of it, that has picture choices that students are selecting from. We are using hands-on objects when we are reading stories, but we are still reading a story. A math lesson with 5+4=9 is not going to look the same. We are going to touch 5 objects, and then talk about those objects and touch 4 objects and talk about those objects and then put them in a pile and count them together. We are just not doing it on paper.

However, the expense is burdensome when school budgets are limited. Mr. S shared his experience regarding the lack of resources for his students' specific needs:

> Resources sometimes are hard to come by. You have to make do with what you have. I had a principal before who would say, "But I have to do for general ed; we'll give you what we got left". I think that we just get left out a lot, resource-wise.

This experience was not an isolated situation, it was the reality for some of the participants. While it was viewed by those participants as being unfortunate, it was an issue that they compensated for by creating their own materials with the help of their paraprofessionals and other teachers on campus. These experiences were direct results of the positive relationships that were developed and identified as intrinsic motivators.

Other participants shared experiences of being in a district or on a campus that provided the specialized curriculum materials. Mrs. B reported that her district special

education director worked with her principal to purchase appropriate curriculum tools for her classroom, which made her feel valued and respected, another intrinsic motivator:

> We have the tools that we need, if we ask for them. I mean anything that I have asked for I feel like they give me; and if not, it's because it's a want more than a need, you know, and that's ok. I get it. Like I said, any type of tools or anything that are provided, like timers, iPads and applications that my students can use. We have a touch screen in our classroom, because the district and technology understand that some students are not able to use the touchpad or mouse on a laptop. You know it's those small, little tiny things that people understand.

Mrs. H is also in a district where the special education director and her principal worked together to provide specialized instructional materials:

> I am really appreciative of the materials and the funds. The new assistant principal is working on writing a grant and he asked all teachers to tell him what they need in their classrooms. I went to him and gave my list and explained why I needed the particular resources. He said, "Yeah, yeah, tell me, get me an invoice please and I will write it up and see if we can get it for you."

Preparation of instructional materials, whether they are purchased for teachers or created by teachers is time consuming. These specialized learning materials are highly visual, hands-on and manipulative in multiple ways to meet students' unique, intensive learning needs and replace standard textbooks and worksheets that are unsuitable for these students. In addition to the hands-on aspects of these tools, they provide multiple ways for extensive repetition of concepts and skills which is crucial for student learning.

Therefore, having the necessary learning tools for the job is an extrinsic experience that positively influences teachers' decisions to stay in the classroom. In addition to having tools, knowing what types of instructional materials, using them effectively, and other aspects of teaching students with LID is not innate. Participants revealed the importance of professional development as important extrinsic experiences for retention.

Professional development. The LID teacher's job responsibilities reach beyond planning lessons, creating manipulative materials and instructing students. The LID teacher must also follow the legal requirements of special education law which includes writing individualized education plans (IEPs), data collection and grading. Mrs. M referred to all of these tasks as maintaining the "moving parts" throughout the day. Mrs. B described these responsibilities as the "everyday work" that is an unavoidable part of the job. Mr. D, who is an alternate certified special education teacher, shared that his lack of education and training about special education and students with disabilities had left him to learn about these things while also learning how to design and teach modified curriculum lessons. Mrs. H also expressed her lack of education and training about the classroom she was assigned. For her, the lack of experience in collecting IEP data and analyzing that data in order to make informed educational decisions for each student is a skill that she continues to work on mastering. An appreciation for meaningful professional development, specifically in teaching students with LID, is an extrinsic workplace factor described in detail.

Professional Development

While administrator trust was very important to teachers, many teachers expressed that they did not always feel worthy of the trust due to their limited knowledge about special education and teaching in the LID classroom when they were hired. Thus, professional development and support was another important workplace experience that was shared to be influential in their decision to stay. Many participants in this study were either general education teachers who moved into a self-contained, LID classroom or they completed an alternate certification program and were placed in the setting. Mr. D reiterated that teachers who come in on an alternate certification do not have any specialized training about their job as a special education teacher or on various disabilities and how they impact learning differently.

Other participants commented on the lack of understanding of leadership and team members regarding special education foundations in general and specifically their classroom and students. This made developing those important collaborative relationships difficult. Mrs. V described herself feeling as if she is a "little bit of an island" in relation to professional development and setting appropriate professional goals specific to her needs. She revealed that the professional goals that are set by general education teachers are not relatable to her job, and additional training would help others on her team understand the differences to help her set reasonable goals. Mrs. J described a professional development that she was sent to by her administrators as being focused on a kindergarten reading class to help her build her skills in teaching her K-5 medically fragile LID class:

> That is what they felt was appropriate for me to learn about to help better my professional side of it. I want them to be able to say that I am just as important in teaching these kids as they feel a gen. ed. teacher is, and sometimes I don't feel that way.

This story is representative of others' experiences of being placed in a professional development session that does not apply to them or help them build their skills. The lack of training that is applicable to their job puts beginning teachers in a position where they are building the plane while it is flying, with no instruction book and sometimes no-one to guide them.

Having administrators listen to their requests, trust their decisions and provide support for professional development were all important experiences that teachers shared. Mrs. K shared that her administrators approved her attending several professional development sessions that were focused on LIDs at the region service center during the school year by providing substitutes, and they let her choose the sessions that she felt were practical and meaningful for her classroom. Mrs. M also shared how she felt that her administrator trusted her decision-making regarding professional development choices when she made the request to get a substitute to attend a specific behavior workshop that she felt was necessary to attend.

Teaching in the LID classroom was summarized by Mrs. K, "It is not for the weary, but if you're organized and you put in the proper preparation, it makes for a fun time to teach". While it is critical to have applicable professional development, campus administrator visibility, trust, and support, teaching students with LIDs requires a team of

other people working with the teacher for student success. Participants shared inspiring stories describing teamwork as another experience that positively influenced their decisions to return.

Relationships with paraprofessionals. Much like the intrinsic motivators identified, the classroom team of teachers and paraprofessionals and how they work together is critical to teacher retention. Mrs. D shared this experience with her paraprofessional:

> I have one assistant who has a child on the autism spectrum. Having the exposure to a child with a disability and not coming into the job blind and not knowing what they are stepping into is helpful. I don't have to explain as much.

An additional aspect to having knowledgeable paraprofessionals was shared by Mrs. H:

> I've got a great team. I've got lots of support from my team. Of course, they get it, and they know where I am coming from whenever I'm like, "OK, this isn't working, how can I fix this?" they always have ideas for me to try.

While this experience of working with paraprofessionals who have some knowledge and understanding about the students when they start the job is preferred, it is not always possible. The participants in this study emphasized that the positive extrinsic experiences with leadership and colleagues' who made attempts to understand and support them in the classroom overshadowed the difficult times. The daily mutual respect and resultant collaboration and cooperative carrying out of job responsibilities outweighed the unique components of the LID classroom, such as teaching multiple ages and grade levels that challenged teachers.

Professional respect from general education teachers and leadership was a powerful extrinsic workplace experience for some of the participants. For other participants who did not believe they were respected as teachers, it was a prevailing desire that fueled their advocacy for their students and themselves. The experiences of collaborative teamwork illustrated the positive influence that working with paraprofessionals and general education teachers can have on the participants' decisions to stay in the LID classroom.

Paraprofessionals. Teamwork and positive relationships among classroom staff were noted to be positive experiences in the workplace by a few participants. Having paraprofessionals with some knowledge of children with disabilities and teaching resonated throughout participants' sentiments about the team that is determined by the campus administrators and summarized in Mrs. D's response,

> They are coming into a setting where our normal is anything but normal. If you've never experienced that before, it's not impossible, but it takes more time to acclimate you and get you going where we need you to be.

The participants reiterated that when paraprofessionals understand the disabilities, behaviors, instructional expectations, and additional clerical tasks such as laminating and preparing manipulative materials required for their job, it saves time and lets the teacher focus on teaching students. Mrs. M shared her experience with a "fantastic para":

> I have a data collection system for IEP goals. Each kid has a clipboard for data that we need for the nine weeks. She is really good at spotting a down time for a student, like when they've finished a lesson, are not fully engaged, or they came

> in late because they've been in a related services session and they are just jumping in the middle of a lesson. She pulls them in and begins working with them and collecting data. So, I think that having paras that are confident in their ability and are willing to take the initiative are fantastic!

While it may not always be possible to hire paraprofessionals who have prior knowledge and experience with the students and the job, Mrs. K shared a key factor that is necessary to build a good team; "If you work as a team, that is what matters. You are there for the kiddos, you are not there for you."

These stories revealed that having knowledgeable paraprofessionals as a part of the classroom team is a bonus for beginning teachers who themselves are still learning about educating students with LIDs. This extrinsic experience of collaboration with paraprofessionals was a common thread that is linked to the intrinsic motivator of belonging to a team that works together for student learning success. For several participants, it was expressed as a potential extrinsic experience that they had not experienced yet, but it would be highly influential in their decision to stay, even on their hardest days.

General education teachers. Participants in this study also worked with general education teachers to modify lessons and incorporate IEP goals or behavior goals for students who were attending general education classrooms with paraprofessional support. The biggest roadblock to building relationships with general education teachers is that there is nothing comparable to the experience of teaching students with LIDs. The

responsibility for reaching out and teaching others about their students falls on the LID teacher, many of which are still learning and building their own skills.

The time beginning teachers invest in building their own knowledge about their campus culture and classroom can lead to assumptions and miscommunications that the beginning teacher may not realize. For example, Mrs. H described her school as a "leadership school", which has classrooms that make up communities, with each class being a tribe in their community. Her class was not assigned to any communities. When she inquired about it, she was told, "Well, we don't know how to include them" [her students]. She has not given up on building relationships with her general education colleagues. She continues trying to work with general educators in finding ways to include her students beyond "showing up to a pep rally" by asking to join their classes during specific lesson activities. This extrinsic experience of advocating for her students and inclusion is a driving force for her retention as it feeds her belief that as people get to know her students, they will be less fearful and more accepting of them.

Mrs. V shared her desire for more inclusive opportunities for her high school students, but the extrinsic challenge of the coordination of schedules and curriculum planning is overwhelming. She shared an experience about when she learned about a rocket lesson in the general education science classes. The students had built rocket bottles and were going outside to blast them. She had wished that she had been informed so that she could have designed a modified lesson for her students to participate in that activity with their peers. However, this struggle did not overpower the intrinsic

motivation of advocating for her students, but rather encouraged her to build stronger relationships with colleagues that could help in finding solutions for increased inclusion.

Mr. D talked about how he must take the initiative to develop those relationships with general education teachers: “I enjoy getting to know fellow teachers, and then making connections and figuring ways that we can include and partner with the gen ed population.” When asked how he finds time to build these relationships, his response reflected back to the relationship with his administrator, “So, there is not a lot of micromanagement. He says, ‘Hey, I trust you’.”

These poignant accounts of extrinsic workplace experiences that influenced beginning special education LID teachers’ decisions to continue teaching in this setting embodied the complexity of retention. Among the stories told, there were a few discrepant cases that provided additional factors that would intensify the understanding of teacher retention thru additional research.

Discrepant Cases

The least dangerous assumption (Jorgensen, 1984) is a conceptual theory that suggests all educators must assume that students with significant cognitive disabilities can learn and therefore be given the opportunity to learn, otherwise their outcomes would be harmful (Jorgensen, 1984). Mr. D mentioned this conceptual theory during his interview and went on to talk about the importance of everyone on campus knowing about the theory;

> I would want other educators to know LDA [least dangerous assumption], that all students can learn, all students deserve the opportunity to learn. It’s going to be

> different, thinking outside of the box for these kiddos. I would love to give a PD, if we were even given 1 hour where we could say, here's what it's like in our classroom and show them that teaching does happen, life skills do happen and you find ways to mix them.

No other participants talked about least dangerous assumption, but the internalized belief and passion about their students' abilities suggested a unique characteristic of LID teachers who continue to teach in the LID classroom. The essence of this concept was summed up by Mrs. H when she said, "It's not what they can't do, it's everything they can do". Mrs. B shared that when a parent or colleague says, "They can't do anything." regarding her students, her reply is always, "Well, they can do something." This is her focus when working with students. Mr. D expressed that this internal belief and conceptual framework to be an important characteristic of teachers who continue to teach students with LID and needs to be shared with campus leadership and general educators.

A second unique experience was shared by Mrs. J about how her own children are affected by her students,

> I think with my own personal children, they have seen my classroom, which has allowed them to have more empathy and to be able to go out and spread that in the world. I can't tell you that my kids even knew that there were severe and profound students in the world, and I mean that is not something that you think to expose kids to when you are not in this and living it every day. And now that they have, my six-year-old loves it. In her kindergarten last year, she had a

> nonverbal student in her classroom. She loves to interact with them, and she tells her friends, "He's my friend, I helped him, he needed help". She was the one who sat next to him and she helped him walk in the hallway.

This unique story added a potential thread to the intrinsic motivator of impacting students' lives through facilitating relationships with their peers. This story relayed an experience that had an impact on Mrs. J, that could be explored in-depth in future studies on retention.

Several teachers in this study mentioned that they did not choose this classroom but were placed in this setting because they had the special education certificate. Of those who were placed, some had been general education teachers, and others were entering the teaching field through alternate certification. Mrs. M was the only participant who mentioned having a specific calling that resulted in getting a special education degree, and then choosing to teach in the LID classroom. Mrs. B was previously a general education teacher who felt this was her calling and moved to the LID classroom. A comparison of teachers who intentionally chose teaching LID and those who were placed in LID classrooms is an aspect to explore that could provide additional insight about retention of special education teachers.

The discussion about professional development as an extrinsic experience morphed into a discussion about the desire for administrators and colleagues to learn more about special education and what happens in their classroom. Several suggestions were made by the participants in the areas of the purpose and process of special education, the importance of technology in the classroom, and the additional stressors due

to student health issues that they believed was a lack of awareness and misconceptions that created barriers. Mr. S suggested, "A two-day session about special ed that explains how special education covers a wide spectrum, and there is a process for what we do and why we do it, which is why it is called special education." This suggestion was reiterated by Mr. D and Mrs. J.

Technology use for instruction in the classroom was another important topic the teachers wanted others to know. Mrs. J shared that she has the same equipment, such as Smartboards, in her classroom. and they use it successfully in different ways to reach and to teach their students successfully. Technology is not just used for behavior incentives, but communication and learning.

The medical aspects and the stress they add to the job are components of the job that other teachers may not realize their existence:

> My students' wellness is not always the best, so that is emotionally challenging; their health concerns being of such severity at times that they could have any kind of unfortunate, untimely deaths. We have some pretty severe students this year, and that has become an issue. The emotional toll that it takes on a teacher that has multiple medically fragile children is tough. (Mrs. J)

These additional stories of the necessity for additional professional development for colleagues on campus were shared as ways to improve team building and relationships. Further research in these topics would be worthy for expansion of the research in building a positive school culture that results in retention of special education teachers.

Discussion

This project study was an investigation into beginning special education LID teacher retention through the lens of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences that influenced decisions to stay in the LID classroom. The perspectives and stories of ten beginning special education LID teachers were gathered via online interviews and revealed a web of strong beliefs about student abilities that were the foundation of the intrinsic motivators of competence, advocacy and belonging to the school community, which were influenced by the extrinsic work experiences. The centralized focus on students that underlies the complex interdependence of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences was a phenomenon revealed in recent research (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Curry, Web, & Latham, 2016). The catalyst for retention that was revealed by participants' stories in this project study was the intrinsic motivators of competency and relationships.

Competency was identified as the evidence of positive impact on students' lives, which was defined as student academic, functional, and social achievement by all the participants. This belief in students as a primary reason to stay was reflected in a literature review of 30 articles on retention and attrition of special education teachers (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). Student achievement as an intrinsic motivator represented a sense of competency for the study's participants, which when accompanied by positive collaborative relationships, out-weighed the struggles in their classroom environment.

Positive relationships with students, support staff, general education colleagues, and students' parents that resulted from the teachers' advocacy were also identified as

strong influential motivators for retention, which was reflected in recent research. Positive collegial relationships in a school culture of collective responsibility were also identified as being influential in retention decisions in a literature review of 30 articles on retention and attrition of special educators (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). Results of a study on beginning teachers and school culture revealed that a positive work environment where beginning teachers felt their teaching philosophy aligned with the school's culture allowed for the development of professional relationships that supported the teachers during any contextual challenges in the early years (Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Godden, 2017). Participant's stories that described making connections with students, collaborative teamwork with support staff, general education teachers, and students' parents was reflective of the impact of positive relationships, which were identified as both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Administrator support, respect, and interactions was the extrinsic experience thread that appeared to bring these pieces of intrinsic motivators together.

Interestingly, the extrinsic workplace experiences were interwoven and sometimes the catalyst for the intrinsic motivators. Findings of recent studies corroborated the power that demands in the workplace have on retention (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Burke et al., 2015). Additional studies identified administrators as being accountable for developing a positive school culture that includes collective responsibility for all students and have an influence on the assimilation of beginning special education teachers (Conley & You, 2017; Ford & Ware, 2018; Vittek, 2015). Administrator respect, visibility and trust, whether they were positive experiences, or

wishlist items, were repeated themes in participants' stories of extrinsic experiences. The Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) developed professional standards for educational leaders, which indicated that principals are responsible for developing a school culture that supports all student learning including students with disabilities. Ford and Ware (2018) concluded that it is critical for teachers to be given sufficient support to match the stress factors of their job. Yet, recent research suggests that the majority of administrators do not fully understand the scope and stressors of special education teachers (Hagaman & Casey, 2018) To do this, study participants indicated that increased visibility, trust, and interaction of administrators would lead to their having a better understanding about the pressures of their job responsibilities, which could result in more effective support

The examination of both internal and external aspects of retention was to gain a holistic picture of retention and a deeper understanding of why teachers stay in the special education LID classroom. The results showed that both aspects are intricately entwined in a cyclic pattern that attempting to look at them separately is futile. This idea was supported in recent research on retention factors for beginning teachers, which revealed that teachers' senses of competency and efficacy were sustained when they were involved in collaborative relationships with peers in a school culture of acceptance and shared responsibility for all students (Belknap & Taymans, 2015; Kutsyuruba et al., 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2015). For example, the participants shared a strong belief in ability of their students that was reinforced through their advocacy and relationships they developed with the students, co-workers, and parents of students. District and campus

leaders who trusted the teachers' decisions, were responsive to teachers' needs for materials and professional development and allowed teachers the flexibility to design effective instruction for their students that led to student achievement, which reinforced their belief about their students. While everything was interconnected, the difficulty in this tightly woven, circular pattern was that there was no definitive beginning to develop a single solution to retention of beginning special education teachers.

These stories will contribute to filling the gap in special education retention research by illustrating the experiences, struggles, and ultimate rewards of teaching that inspired beginning special education teachers to remain in the LID classroom. These results were used to develop a 3-day professional development workshop for campus leaders who create the culture of the school and make decisions that affect teachers. This 3-day workshop will detail how experiences on the campus impact the dominating intrinsic motivators of beginning special education teacher retention, by gaining in-depth knowledge about how the IDEA definition and requirements for special education are accomplished in the LID classroom. It will conclude with the third day's focus on key points of retention that are linked to the research and findings of this study to enlighten school leaders in the meaningful ways that they can support beginning special education teachers through visibility, relationships and professional development.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

My project is the development of a 3-day professional development series for campus leaders that is focused on supporting beginning special education LID teachers to increase retention. The findings of my qualitative study of retention factors for beginning special education LID teachers are centered on situations within the campus culture that is the responsibility of campus leaders. All participants in the study indicated a desire for campus leaders to have a more in-depth understanding about special education and its implications in their self-contained setting. They all expressed a belief that with the additional knowledge and understanding, campus administrators would be more apt to provide the support they required, which would positively influence their decision to stay in the classroom. At the end of the 3-day professional development, campus leaders will:

- Understand how the requirements of IDEA are accomplished in the LID classroom
- Explore the characteristics of the LID classroom and teacher responsibilities
- Develop an action plan for supporting beginning LID teachers, through the development of a collaborative school community that includes LID teachers and professional development opportunities that target specific needs of the LID teachers that are identified in this study

Rationale

Based on the data analysis, retention of beginning special education teachers in LID classrooms is driven by intrinsic motivators that surround their passion for student

success and the relationships with their students and other teachers in their school communities that leads to acceptance of students and teachers. These intrinsic motivators are driven and reinforced by the extrinsic workplace experiences that involve a system of decisions about students that are made by the district and campus leaders and are out of the teachers' control. These decisions include the number of students, other adults in the classroom, learning resources and materials, and additional professional development opportunities offered. Although these factors are mentioned as struggles, the relationships developed with administrators, support staff, and general education teachers created workplace experiences that support the intrinsic motivators that influenced teachers' decisions to stay. These teachers' stories were a mixture of beliefs in student learning and experiences of professional respect, comradery, and teamwork, that positively influenced their decisions to stay in the classroom. However, other stories were shared such as specific professional development for all school staff that they wished would happen in future years and would enhance their desire to stay. These stories centered on the importance of positive relationships among the professionals and staff that result in collaboration and teamwork. This suggests that the power of intrinsic motivators may decrease over the years if the extrinsic experiences do not support teacher growth and feelings of acceptance in the school community.

The focus of this study was retention of beginning LID teachers, which was a regional concern. The positive experiences, struggles, and concerns shared by participants is supported by the current research focused on special educators as a group and educational leadership and the building of a school culture. The stories shared add a

piece to the school culture story that is missing—the story of LID teachers, students with LID, and the self-contained classroom in a general education campus community. It is the primary responsibility of educational leaders to create the campus community and sustain the members of that community. Therefore, a professional development workshop series for campus leaders will be developed to increase their knowledge and skills about the unique classroom setting and job responsibilities of beginning LID teachers. Opportunities for discussion and reflection will be provided to increase knowledge about LID teacher support and result in the development of an action plan that campus leaders can implement immediately.

Review of the Literature

The findings of this study revealed a need for professional development pinpointing special education foundations and the LID classroom to be designed for campus administrators who support beginning LID teachers. Participants' responses indicated an increased probability in teacher retention if campus administrators had a deeper understanding of special education and the unique issues special education LID teachers handle daily, which can guide their support of these teachers. An extensive literature review was conducted to search for topics in education using Education Source, ERIC, and SAGE databases. Key words of *special education*, *administrator/principal knowledge*, *perceptions*, *beliefs*, *administrator/principal professional development*, *administrators supporting special education teachers*, *preparation, professional development*, *principal or administrator training*, *attitudes*, *leadership styles*, and *instructional leaders* were used individually and in groups to gather updated information

on factors related to administrators' perspectives and needs in supporting special education teachers. Saturation was reached when multiple combinations of key words resulted in repetition of research articles, with 30 recent studies being used in this literature review. Topics of this literature review are (a) administrators as instructional leaders, (b) administrator knowledge of special education, and (c) professional development needs of administrators. A 3-day professional development workshop for campus administrators was developed to increase awareness and knowledge that will affect how administrators support beginning LID teachers, which could result in a rise in retention.

Administrators as Instructional Leaders

The role of the campus administrator has changed in recent years. This change has been described as a shift from compliance-driven leaders to instructional leaders who have the necessary skills to assist and retain teachers on their campus and who will ultimately establish state-of-the-art learning environments for today's learners and teachers (Micheaux & Parvin, 2018; Sanchez, Burnham, & Zaki, 2019). Current research corroborates that the administrator's role is key in creating schools that are effective in educating students with disabilities by cultivating a culture of high expectations for all students and supporting the cooperative efforts of all teachers to ensure that learning happens (Ballard & Dymond, 2018; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015). High expectations are relative and based on knowing students, disabilities, and effective teaching strategies. For example, in a study of administrator expectations, high quality instruction for students with LIDs was identified as good classroom management, behavior shaping, and

caretaking, and did not include instructional strategies for these students, which led to low expectations focused on keeping everyone happy and quiet being valued over effective instruction (Roberts, Ruppar, & Olson, 2018). Participants in this project study corroborated these findings and described how administrators taking an interest in their students and having high expectations for learning in their classroom was influential to their decision to return to the classroom each year. Kozleski, Yu, Satter, Francis, and Haines (2015) also found that leaders who intentionally build relationships with staff by visiting classrooms, commenting on the teaching, offering advice and providing the leadership guidance and opportunity of problem solving among staff achieved a culture of acceptance and high expectations. These key requisites for retention are the responsibility of the administrator and requires fundamental knowledge about the teachers and students on the campus.

Based on these findings, to support special education LID teachers, campus administrators may need to increase their instructional leadership skills. The expansion of required skills for high-quality instructional leaders includes skills of innovative thinking to develop and support a school environment that includes collaborative teams of teachers and support staff, allowance of pioneering thinking of staff, and provision of the development of teachers and staff to access current training and information to increase their professional skills (Lambert & Bouchamma, 2019; Phonsa, Sroinam, & Phongphinyo, 2019). Another analysis of survey results on the predominant rationales of teacher retention similarly revealed emotional and environmental support, resources, materials, and professional development to be essential for teacher retention (Podolsky,

Kini, Darling-Hammond, & Bishop, 2019). The participants in this study agreed that principal support was highly valued and also indicated that increased administrator understanding about special education and their specific needs as self-contained LID teachers was essential.

Administrator Knowledge about Special Education

Findings of this project study revealed the complexity of beginning special education LID teacher retention as a complex, interwoven circle of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic experiences within the LID classroom and the campus community that are determined and coordinated by the campus administrator. This reflects current research that validates the significant role principals play in supporting teacher effectiveness and student learning (Herrmann et al., 2019). Yet, administrator preparedness for supporting special education teachers has been found to be the largest prospective barrier as reported by school principals who have indicated not being prepared to adequately train and support special education teachers (Billingsley, DeMatthews, Connally, & McLeskey, 2018; Gee and Gonsier-Gerdin, 2018; Rodl, Bonifay, Cruz, and Manchanda, 2018; Steinbrecher, Fix, Mahal, Serna, & McKeown, 2015).

For example, results of a survey of school administrators' experience, training and support in evaluating special educators, showed that out of 929 participants, 88% reported not having any special education background and 60% of administrators reported the need for professional development and evaluation tools that were specific to a special education teacher's roles, responsibilities and specialized teaching skills (Rodl, Bonifay, Cruz, & Manchanda, 2018). This suggests that a majority of administrators

design school culture and manage the campus based on general education practices, which are not always feasible for students receiving special education services or their teachers. Participants in this project study shared similar perceptions as a part of their reflections on campus administrators' comprehension of their unique situations and provision of effective support. Teachers in this study also suggested that if campus administrators attended professional development that focused on special education and how it is implemented in the LID classroom, the administrators would be more inclined to be more visible and interactive in supporting them throughout the school year.

Administrator Training Needs

Administrator awareness of the stress factors of the LID teacher's job and the provision of effective support was identified by participants in this study to be critical for retention. It has been noted that special education teachers' jobs are impacted primarily by stress and exhaustion, which has led to dissatisfaction with job factors such as insufficient materials, being disregarded or overlooked, and continuous interaction with stressful people such as family members and managers (Bozgeyikli, 2018). Additionally, workload management of complex classroom management factors such as the unique and varied learning and health needs of students and the balance of working with paraprofessionals, paperwork, and instruction were specific workplace stressors linked to exhaustion and the need of administrator support that leads to teacher retention decisions (Bettini et al., 2017; Kebbi & Al-Hroub, 2018). While these workplace stress factors were also identified by participants, supportive actions of administrators that decreased the stressors were also described.

Positive extrinsic experiences such as administrator visibility and trust prevailed over the stressors and fed the intrinsic motivators that influenced participants' decision to stay in the classroom. Similar results were reported by Bozgeykli (2018) who determined that a supportive work environment that allowed for teacher autonomy in goal selection, classroom management, implementation of initiatives, and choosing professional development options to meet their current professional needs increased teachers' intrinsic motivators while simultaneously decreased the levels of burnout. Recent research has identified an urgent need for special education and other educational staff to have fundamental knowledge, skills and supplies to create and maintain an appropriate environment for an exceptionally heterogenous and challenging group of learners (Baglama & Uzunboyfu, 2017; Bruno, Scott, & Willis, 2018; Long & Simpson, 2017). The participants in this study consistently reiterated the belief that increased visibility of campus administrators in their classrooms would lead to higher learning expectations of students and better communication with teachers about their needed supports.

It was imperative to the teachers in this project study that administrators understand the learning potential of their students and raise their expectations so that they can better support teachers as they designed instruction. Current research substantiates the significance of principals' understanding about the development of specially designed instruction for students with disabilities in order to sustain teachers' instruction and student learning (Roberts & Guerra, 2017). In recent surveys, principals overwhelmingly indicated a lack of preparation and experiences with students with disabilities, which resulted in requests for additional training and coursework were

requested in the areas of the legal aspects of special education, instructional methods, behavior, and ways to assess children with disabilities (Bai & Martin, 2015; Schaff, Williamson, & Novak, 2015). Interestingly, a study on the self-perceptions of special education administrators revealed those who worked in inclusionary campuses felt strong about their collaboration skills, and less knowledgeable about research-based practices, and models of instruction to be supportive of special education teachers (Abbas, Almusawi, & Alenezi, 2018). These results suggest a need for transformation in leadership focus.

The shift from compliance-driven leadership to instructional leadership requires specific, overt preparation of future administrators, and modernized, specific professional development opportunities for experienced administrators (Micheaux & Parvin, 2018). Specialized professional development will provide campus administrators with the tools necessary for supporting special education teachers successfully by facilitating and building trust, providing opportunities to meet with mentors and facilitating meetings structured around the beginning teacher's experiences and concerns (Beadle-Brown, Bigby, & Bould, 2015; Hopkins, Bjorklund, & Spillane, 2019). The findings of this project study and current research revealed the need for a 3-day professional development workshop for new and experienced campus administrators, which is the culminating project of this research.

Project Description

This three-day workshop will use a discovery format that focuses on the key intrinsic motivators and extrinsic experiences of beginning LID teachers who participated

in this study. Teachers in the study expressed that the intrinsic motivators of a sense of competency and collaborative relationships were enhanced when they had campus leaders who understood special education and all that it requires, understood that their students learn differently, and provided professional development opportunities that met their needs to increase their teaching skills. Each of these areas will be the central topic over the three days. The first day will be an in-depth exploration of special education and the LID classroom, The second day will be focused on students with LID and how teachers meet their unique learning needs, and the third day will be an investigation into applicable professional development. Resources include handouts that will be provided in a digital format and a paper format, and presentations will be made available electronically to participants for reference during and after the series has ended.

A potential barrier to the project is the timeframe. Three days away from their campuses can be difficult for leaders. One solution is that the three days can be dispersed over a 6-week period, with two weeks between sessions. This would allow time for attendees to reflect on the information and implement any changes or strategies that were suggested. Another solution could be that the course is also provided in a digital format that can be taken online when it is convenient for the participant.

Another potential barrier is my proximity to the regional service center. I retired from the service center and moved to another state during the development of this project, which would require extra expense to the service center and myself for the cost of travel. If cost becomes an issue, the presentations could be done remotely through computer programs for group meetings or development of an online course centered on

the workshop. I could also conduct a trainer of trainers workshop to train current staff at the service center who would then implement and provide follow-up consultation as needed.

Implementation of the project could begin in the fall of 2020, with the scheduling of the presentation with regional directors. Upon approval, the format of the workshop; in person or remotely, and the dates for the workshop will be determined based on the needs of the regional service center schedule.

My role and responsibilities to complete this project involves the presentation of the workshop plan to the service center leadership, scheduling of the workshop and trainer of trainer session, and development of online workshop if requested. Based upon the service center leadership's decision, I would present the initial workshop series and provide follow-up consultation with the service center employees to build their capacity for implementation.

Project Evaluation Plan

A summative evaluation in the form of a survey will be used to determine effectiveness of the workshop. Participants will complete a survey at the end of each session, and a workshop evaluation at the end of the final day. All evaluations will include a Likert-scale survey about the components of each day. Open-ended questions will be included to gain detailed information to support the survey responses. A final open-ended question about future topics will be added to the final day's evaluation.

The use of a Likert scale format will provide evaluative information regarding the relevance of the course information, format and activities. The open-ended reflection

questions will provide additional information for consideration and adjustments to future workshops. The question about additional topics will provide insight into missed information that is pertinent to campus leaders.

The overall goal of this project is to increase the knowledge and understanding of campus leaders, about special education, unique elements of the LID classroom, and specialized professional development for beginning LID teachers. A summative evaluation that includes ranking of the workshop elements and reflection on learning will provide information about the effectiveness in the workshop and identify the learning and understanding occurred. The final question at the end of the series will indicate areas of additional learning that are valuable for future workshops. This workshop is designed for campus leaders, which includes principals and assistant principals of K-12 grade levels.

Project Implications

This project can lead to increased retention of beginning LID teachers that results from increased administrator support due to increased understanding of the unique characteristics of the LID classroom and LID teacher responsibilities. It is expected that when administrators have a better understanding of the intrinsic motivators of beginning LID teachers, they will be able to create and support a collaborative environment that results in comradery, a sense of belonging and increased student achievement. These are factors that teachers have reported to be critical extrinsic experiences for retention. It is also anticipated that the impact on student learning will be high when they have an experienced teacher who feels as if they are part of the campus community.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The goal of this professional development series is to fill a gap in practice by focusing on retention elements for special education teachers who continue to teach in self-contained classrooms with students with LIDs. Findings of this project study indicated that retention of LID teachers involves a web of intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace factors that recur in a perpetual cycle and influence teachers' decisions to continue teaching throughout their career. For instance, this group of teachers need to have highly specialized skills in both content and the variety of unique learning needs of each student, which is not required of other teachers, to positively impact student learning (Erickson & Quick, 2017). Participants in the study and current research both indicated that campus leaders want to support teachers, but they do not always understand the full scope of the teachers' responsibilities and struggles (Ballard & Dymond, 2018; Bettini, Jones, et al., 2018; Gee & Gonsier-Gerdin, 2018). But by visiting the classroom, principals and assistant principals can get to know the adults and the students in the classroom as well as gain insight into the additional job responsibilities of teachers. This could lead to teacher trust and open communication, which are influential factors for retention.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This professional development was designed for campus administrators who struggle with the lack of retention of beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs in self-contained classrooms. Stories of teachers' experiences revealed that intrinsic motivators are powerful, and extrinsic workplace experiences can either support

or weaken a teacher's desire to remain in the classroom. The session topics for the professional development are derived directly from the participants' stories and perspectives about the intrinsic motivators and extrinsic experiences that positively influenced their decisions to return to the classroom each year. These teachers' revelations about the power of student learning, advocacy and acceptance, and respect and collaborative teamwork with campus leaders, paraprofessionals, and general education teachers were supported by current research (Ballard & Dymond, 2018; Biggs, Gilson, & Carter, 2016; Gee & Gonsier-Gerdin, 2018; Roberts, Ruppar, & Olson, 2018; Sharp, Simmons, Goode, &Scott, 2019). This validation of teachers' experiences gives credence to the content of the workshop. However, developing a professional development workshop based on the feedback of such a small group of 10 teachers may be a limitation. There is a possibility that some administrators may see the number as too small to generalize across all schools or districts and thus dismiss the recommendations. But since the pool of beginning special education LID teachers was small, the resulting number of 10 participants is representative of the degree of the retention problem.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach for looking at ways to increase beginning special education LID teacher retention is to look at the problem from the lens of the campus leaders. By looking at the problem this way, there would be a larger participant pool contributing to the study with findings that can easily be generalized and specific to the job responsibilities of district and campus leaders. A second alternative approach would be to open the participant pool to the remainder of the state or across the United States.

A larger participant pool would add different perspectives and insights into retention based on different leadership styles and practices. A third alternative approach would be a comparative study of beginning LID teachers' perceptions and experiences and campus leaders' insights about providing supports for retention. This approach could reveal any differences in what supports teachers need and the supports that campus leaders can realistically provide given their priorities and responsibilities. This third approach could also open deeper discussions between those who make decisions and those who must abide by those decisions.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

The processes I experienced throughout the project development were complicated at each stage. I learned that it is easy to diverge when developing the problem statement and research questions; when I shared a research question I thought was clear with colleagues and my committee, everyone had different questions and angles on the generalized topic that caused me to rethink the problem and questions in numerous ways. Additionally, as I completed the literature review, I was amazed by the amount of recent research on the topic of teacher retention. I was also encouraged by the findings of several of the studies that were similar to my findings. Further, data collection through interviews was a process that took more time than I had originally planned. Due to my relocation to another state, all correspondence throughout the process from sending out the general invitation to setting interviews and completing the interviews was done via e-mail and video conferencing. This required allowing

reasonable time for the teachers to respond, and during the interviews it required a good Internet connection on both ends to complete the interview in one session.

The most challenging process was the reporting of the data. I learned that in the qualitative story-telling process, I was not just reporting the participants' words verbatim, but also extrapolating common beliefs and experiences that the participants shared in their stories. This was not as easy as I initially believed and took some time and many edits to report the results accurately, which was validated through the member checks.

I have grown exponentially through this experience as a scholar, practitioner and project developer. As a scholar, I have learned why peer-review is so highly valued in scholarly research. The countless iterations that occurred throughout the process of my project study was frustrating at times. However, with each edit, I felt that the work became more valid. In the current culture of having access to an overwhelming amount of information instantaneously, the peer review process takes time to ensure that information is based on a valid research process, rather than on speculation, opinions, or beliefs. This is critical in all scholarly fields. In the field of special education, it is especially essential when determining successful instructional strategies for students.

As a practitioner, this experience has validated my core belief that intentional preparation of special education teachers and future educational leaders to meet the needs of all students with disabilities is critical. As an educational consultant, my experience showed me that treating special education as a sink-or-swim profession is not working, and the results of my study supports this idea. This has given me the motivation to continue working with promising teachers and new teachers either through a university

program or consultation to teach special education teachers how to teach students with disabilities.

As a project leader, the most valuable lesson I learned was intentionality. I found that a general outline of a project is not enough. I learned that I must think through each step and stage, work with others to gain different perspectives and insights and work the process to the end. Projects take much longer than one semester, if they are to be done in a scholarly manner that informs effective practice. So, patience and persistence are two important traits to have for future projects.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

This project study was a deep dive into the personal experiences and beliefs of special education teachers who continue to work with the 1% of students with the most significant cognitive and complex disabilities, which are referred to as students with LIDs. These teachers' jobs are vastly different from any other teachers' jobs, yet they are expected and required to fit the mold of all other teachers. This is not possible for a variety of reasons and leads to annual turnover, which is a problem for district and campus leaders. By exposing these teachers' stories to educational leaders at the campus level, this study joins the very small group of research that validates the need for leaders to learn more about the uniqueness of the LID teacher role in order to provide the precise support needed to retain these teachers.

In the course of this project, I learned that there are specific characteristics that these teachers shared regarding teaching and their students. Knowing these characteristics, interview questions that will reveal those characteristics can be developed

and help educational leaders' decisions in hiring teachers for the classroom. Training was the prevalent topic of participants in this study. This information and the details provided will help college preparation programs, or state alternate certification program planners know the specialized training that beginning teachers in the LID classroom require to be successful, which leads to retention. As current research has shown, teacher retention is important to the school culture and student achievement (Cowan et al., 2016; Ingersoll et al., 2014). The insights and information from this study adds support and critical insight to the story of special education teacher retention.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project study is a three-day professional development series for campus leaders intended to increase knowledge and understanding about the experiences of beginning LID teachers that will result in support efforts that result in retention. The benefits of retention can include decreased costs of intensive new teacher professional development. When teachers are retained, professional development for each subsequent year becomes more explicit as the teachers continue building on the skills that they have mastered in previous years. This allows for fewer days out of the classroom, and more pinpointed training and practice while enhancing current skills. Also, when there are teachers with experience on the campus, they can then become mentors for new teachers and provide valuable training and peer support in the future.

The intent of this project study was to provide deeper insight into why certain beginning special education teachers continue to teach in the self-contained, LID setting. This is a small group of students and teachers, which results in a limited amount of

research. In this educational climate of inclusion and standards-based access and assessment, it is important that research into this group of teachers continues in the area of retention. The stories of the participants in this study and other research reveal how a lack of knowledge and understanding about the uniqueness of the LID classroom and instruction results in teachers feeling isolated and misunderstood on general education campuses. Future research into the perspectives of campus leaders in what they know about the struggles and needs of these teachers and their views on how to support them effectively will add an important perspective to the issue of special education teacher retention. This perspective paired with what is being learned about teachers' needs can highly impact social change in leadership and campus communities that can lead to quality education and inclusion of all students on campus.

Conclusion

Retention of beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs is an unremitting problem for special education directors that has led to these classrooms having inexperienced teachers over several years. The question of why teachers leave these positions has considerable research that outlines the problems, but there is very little research into why the few teachers remain in the classroom. Beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs can feel marginalized and isolated in the school community, yet the joy and excitement they feel when they see students learning in their classrooms outweighs the negative aspects of these factors. In fact, the teachers in this study reported that student success spurs them on to advocacy and sharing their stories of

increasing student potential, which has led to collaborative relationships within their schools.

There are two basic things that the teachers of this study wanted; meaningful recognition for them and their students, and training that focuses on building their instructional skills so that they can continue teaching students. The topics of the three-day professional development series were developed from these teachers' responses, and are intended to provide valuable information and insight to the campus leaders who support the teachers throughout the year. The information shared in this workshop has potential for significant impact on increasing the retention rate of this group of teachers. When teachers stay in the classroom, their skills improve, student learning increases and behaviors can decrease (Cowan et al., 2016; Ingersoll et al., 2014). The social impact of the retention of beginning special education teachers of students with LIDs can be substantial in the building of community, acceptance and inclusion within a school that can be transferred to the larger community where everyone will live and thrive together.

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Appendix A: The Project

Increasing Beginning LID Teacher Retention: Key Elements for Support

Participants will:

- Understand how the requirements of IDEA are accomplished in the LID classroom
- Explore the characteristics of the LID classroom and teacher responsibilities
- Develop an action plan for supporting beginning LID teachers

Day 1: Special Education 101

- Definition of key terms
- IEP Development – Seven Step Process
- Data-driven Process
- Specially Designed Instruction

Day 2: The LID Classroom

- Learner Characteristics
- Classroom Characteristics
- Collaborative Relationships
- Tying it All Together

Day 3: Supporting Beginning LID Teachers for Retention

- Active Leadership
- Supporting Collaborative Teambuilding
- Specialized Professional Development
- Developing an Action Plan

Title: Increasing Beginning LID Teacher Retention: Key Elements for Support	
Purpose	The purpose of this three-day workshop series for campus leaders is (a) to gain an in-depth understanding of the legal aspects of special education and the additional tasks required of teachers who have students with disabilities in their classrooms, (b) learn about students with Low Incidence Disabilities and the unique characteristics of the classroom, (c) utilize provided resources and tools to develop an action plan for providing targeted training and support for their beginning LID teachers.
Goal	The goal of the workshop series is to increase participants' knowledge and support skills about special education requirements and how they are implemented for students with Low Incidence Disabilities. The participants will reflect on their current campus community and identify the steps they will take to incorporate what was learned in the three days to ensure their campus is inclusive of all of its teachers and students.
Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of the workshop, participants will be able to: Identify key special education terms and how they impact instructional planning Explain how the LID classroom is different from the general education classroom Utilize the tools provided to design an action plan for providing ongoing training and support of beginning LID teachers
Target Audience	Campus principals and assistant principals
Timeline	Three Days
Location	Professional Development Center Any District, XX

Day One: Special Education 101

8:30 am – 9:00 am	Welcome: Icebreaker Activity
9:00 am-10:30am	Special Education Terms
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	IEP Development – The Seven-Step Process
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Data-driven Decisions
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Specially Designed Instruction

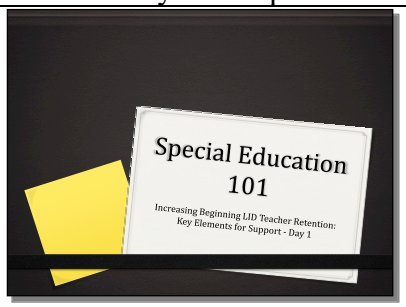
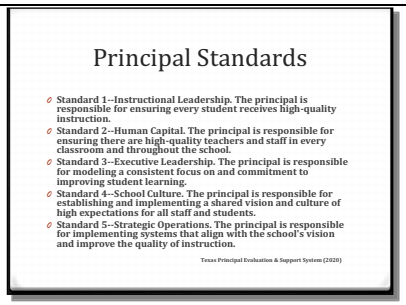
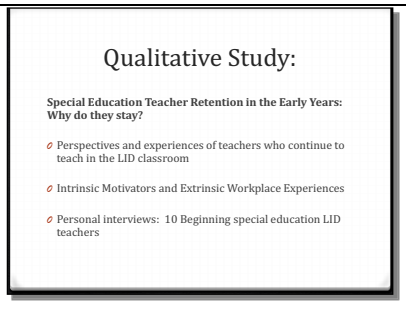
Day Two: The LID Classroom

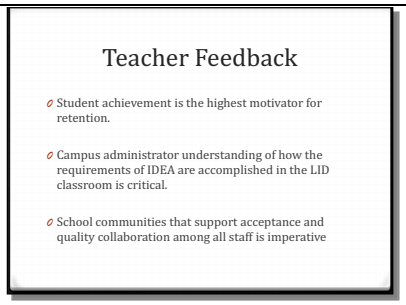
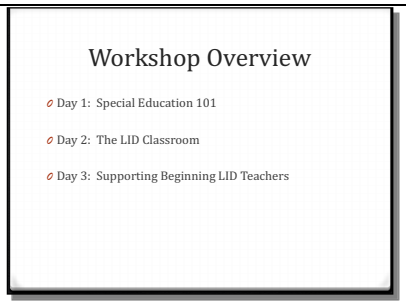
8:30 am – 9:00 am	Welcome: Icebreaker Activity
9:00 am-10:30am	Learner Characteristics
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Classroom Characteristics
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Collaborative Relationships
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Tying it All Together

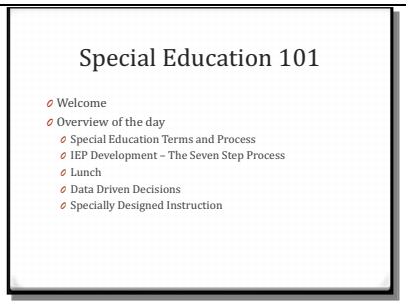
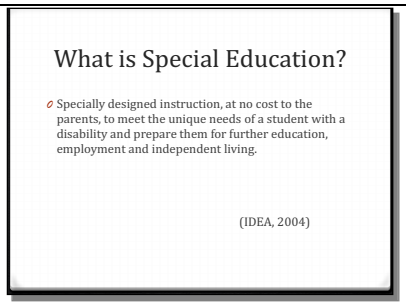
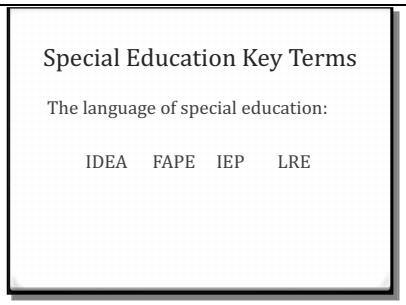
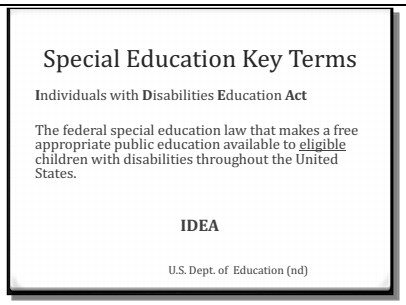
Day Three: Supporting Beginning LID Teachers for Retention

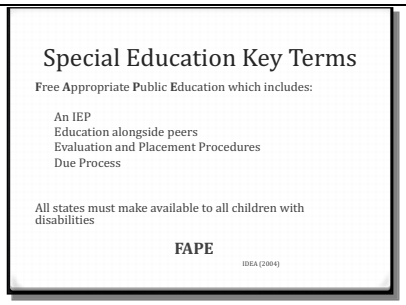
8:30 am – 9:00 am	Welcome: Icebreaker Activity
9:00 am-10:30am	Active Leadership
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Supporting Collaborative Relationships
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Specialized Professional Development
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Developing an Action Plan

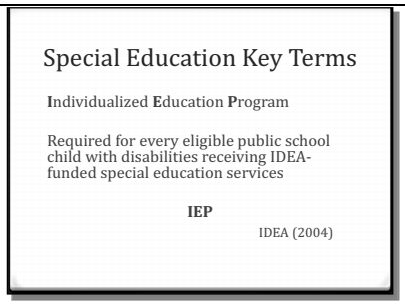
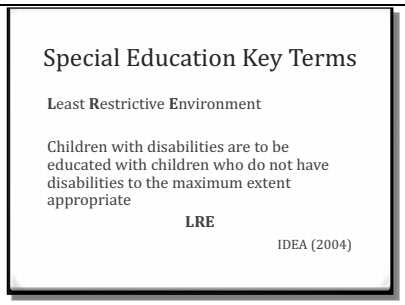
Day One: Special Education 101 Presenter Notes

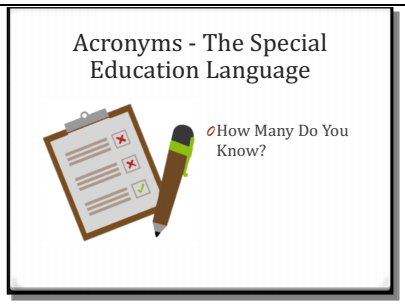
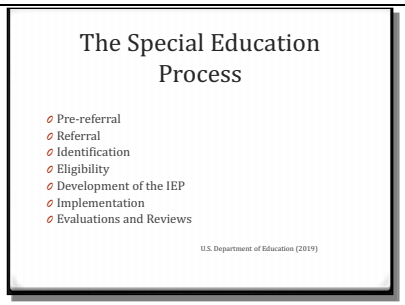
Slide 1		
Slide 2		These standards align with Chapter 149 of the Texas Administrative Code and are from the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (TPESS) on the TEA website. These standards serve as a guide for improving school productivity, increasing student learning and improving a leader's effectiveness through reflection. This three-day workshop is designed for reflection on current practice and improving practice regarding providing effective support and professional development to increase beginning LID teacher retention. References: Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 149. §149.2001. Principal Standards. Retrieved from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter149/ch149bb.html Texas Principal Evaluation & Support System (2020). Retrieved from https://tpess.org/principal/standards/
Slide 3		This workshop is based on data results of a qualitative project study on beginning special education teacher retention. The purpose of this study was to explore teacher retention thru the lens of teachers who continue to teach in the special education LID classroom. By looking at the stories and perspectives of these teachers, the goal was to learn more about the intrinsic motivators and extrinsic workplace experiences that lead to teachers' decisions to continue teaching in the LID classroom. The idea for this study came from the increased requests from special education directors and principals for new teacher training and onsite support. From 2015-2019, these requests increased, with several requests becoming annual due to the high rate of teacher turnover. In addition, the New Teacher Academy for LID teachers was a course offered at the service center during this time, and its

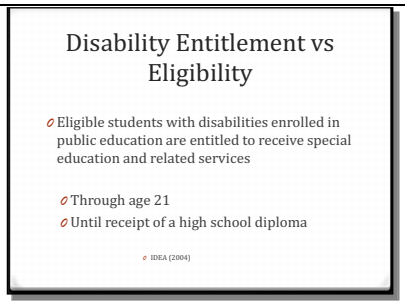
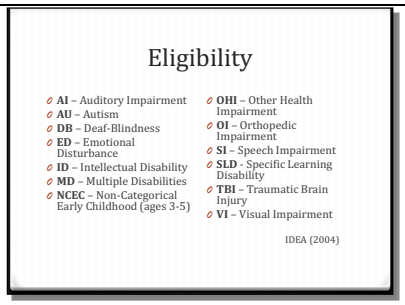
		enrolled showed marked increase each year; from 10 in 2015 to 65 in 2018. In 2019, the course was divided into 2 courses; one for beginning teachers and one for novice teachers to provide training specific to the unique needs of these teachers. In this project study, beginning teachers were defined as teachers who had two to five-years' experience in the self-contained LID classroom. Participants in the study were chosen from the rosters of participants in the new teacher academies of 2015-2019, and the novice teacher academy in 2019. Ten teachers participated in personal interviews that were based on two research questions: RQ 1: What are the intrinsic motivators that beginning teachers attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LID? RQ 2: What extrinsic experiences do beginning teacher attribute to their decisions to stay and teach students with LID? The next three days of training are based on what the data revealed.
Slide 4		The development of this three-day workshop is based on feedback from this study. Teachers spoke in detail how experiences on the campus impact the dominating intrinsic motivators of beginning special education teacher retention, by gaining in-depth knowledge about how the IDEA definition and requirements for special education are accomplished in the LID classroom. It will conclude with the third day's focus on key points of retention that are linked to the research and findings of this study to enlighten school leaders in the meaningful ways that they can support beginning special education teachers thru visibility, relationships and professional development.
Slide 5		The teacher feedback was used in the development of the three-day workshop. This workshop is designed to add depth of knowledge about special education requirements and how they affect the beginning special education LID teacher's job duty. The purpose is to provide the audience with extended knowledge and an action plan for supporting these teachers that can be implemented immediately in order to increase retention of these teachers.

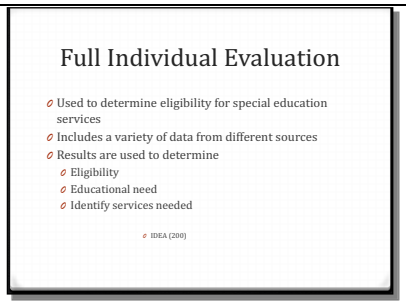
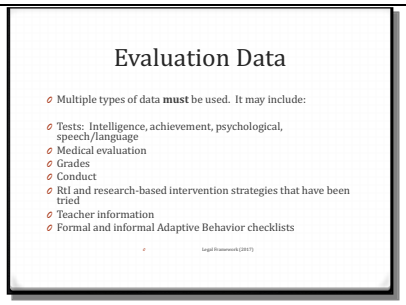
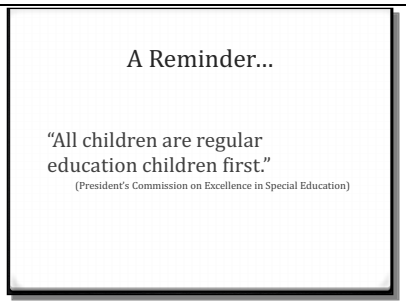
Slide 6		Today, we will be reviewing the critical points of IDEA and special education services that are required. We will begin with a review of key terms that provide the foundation for IEP development and implementation. This afternoon, we will explore data driven decisions and specially designed instruction as it relates to students with disabilities who receive special education services.
Slide 7		IDEA is the federal law that ensures children with disabilities are educated, and defines special education as… Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).
Slide 8		Sped language is full of acronyms all of which are integral to providing all aspects of IDEA. First, we will discuss 4 key elements of special ed. We will then explore additional acronyms of sped throughout the remainder of the day.
Slide 9		"The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children." Note the term "eligible" in this definition. As a principal, it is important to understand that special education is not automatic, there is an in-depth process that must be completed with fidelity to determine eligibility. This process requires a team of people who look at objective data and determines eligibility and all aspects of special education for a specific child – which you will be the leader. Teachers in the study shared a need for their administrators to understand that not all children who struggle with learning or behavior have a disability and can be placed in their classroom because general education teachers do not know how to teach them. Thus, today's in-depth focus is on the process and your role in supporting beginning special education teachers in this process.

Slide 10		Who receives FAPE? **All** students with disabilities. What is an appropriate education? "An appropriate education may comprise education in regular classes, education in regular classes with the use of related aids and services, or special education and related services in separate classrooms for all or portions of the school day. Special education may include specially designed instruction in classrooms, at home, or in private or public institutions, and may be accompanied by related services such as speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, psychological counseling, and medical diagnostic services necessary to the child's education." https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html This includes: Individualized plan that describes the unique needs of the student and outlines the supports and services required to meet those needs. This plan is based on solid formal and informal data rather than opinions. As the principal, you may need to provide supports to beginning teachers in types of data and how to collect and analyze data for decision-making. Education of the student with a disability with nondisabled students to the maximum extent possible – Key here is maximum extent possible – this is different for every student and is determined by the team using data. Established procedures for evaluation and placement – these are usually district policies that are developed by the sped director. However, it is important that the principal is knowledgeable of the districts' procedures to support beginning teachers Due Process – this ensures that if parents do not believe that the school is following the procedures and providing FAPE, they have a right to due process and legal action.

Slide 11		The definition for FAPE includes a direct reference to the IEP, which is a cornerstone in the education of each eligible child with a disability. The IEP is much more than goals and objectives. It is a document that is based on objective data derived from a variety of sources and written by a team of professionals and the parents. The plan identifies how the student qualifies for special education, the learning gaps that require accommodations and/or modifications or alternate curriculum standards, based on how the disability impacts learning. Least Restrictive Environment, how progress will be measured, state testing and transition planning as well as any additional services and supports the student may need to receive FAPE are all a part of the IEP document. IDEA 2004 requires that each public school child with a disability who receives special education and related services must have an IEP.
Slide 12		A child's LRE is the environment where the child can receive an appropriate education designed to meet his or her special educational needs, while still being educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. LRE also depends on the individual child and that child's specific needs, specific strengths, established goals, and the supports and services that will be provided to support the child in reaching those goals. Depending on the child's individual needs, the LRE could be: >the regular classroom, with or without supplementary aids and services; >a pull-out program for part of the day with the remainder of the day being spent in the general education classroom or in activities with nondisabled peers; >a special education class within the child's neighborhood school; or even >a separate school specializing in a certain type of disability. These are often referred to as the continuum of services and is a decision that is made annually when the IEP is reviewed. As with all decisions, this is individually-based on data about the specific student and not on the type or severity of the disability.

Slide 13		Now that you have the top four key terms for special education, here are a few more terms that are important to know. Working with a partner or on your own, take the next 2 minutes to complete the list of acronyms to see what you may already know. After 2 minutes: Review the form with the group to make sure everyone has a correctly completed form. Discuss any questions at this time. Allow 15 minutes for this activity Transition: As we move to the special education process, keep this form out to make additional notes.
Slide 14		There are many reasons why students struggle in school and do not make the expected progress. Not making progress does not mean that a child has a disability and should be put in sped classes. Misbehavior also does not automatically mean that there is a disability and sped placement. Special education is intended for students who have an identified disability that has been linked to the struggles and or behavior that is impeding learning. Having a disability does not automatically qualify a child for special education services. The disability must be impeding a student's access and ability to progress in grade level curriculum, thereby requiring special education services including accommodations and modifications to meet the unique needs of the student to fill the learning gap caused by the disability. This is not an easy task. The steps in the process are required to prove with substantial data that the student: ○ is eligible for special education services ○ requires specially designed instruction as outlined in the IEP ○ annual reviews to ensure that the IEP is adequate and special education services are still needed. This process is determined by the district and may consist of the seven steps on this slide, or more. It takes extensive time (weeks) to go through each step to gather the needed data to support all decisions that are made.

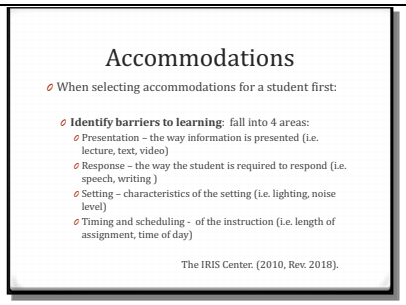
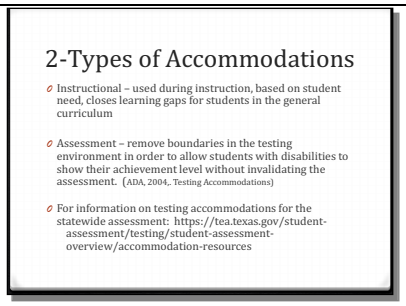
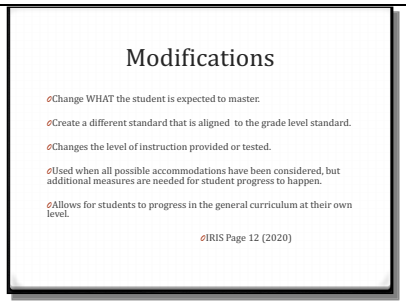
Slide 15		One of the primary principles of special education is entitlement vs. eligibility. A student with a disability who has been deemed eligible for special education services is entitled to receive those services until they no longer meet eligibility requirements, or until they graduate from high school, or until they reach the age of 22 prior to September 1. Entitlement only applies to students with disabilities enrolled in public school. Outside of the public school system, students and other individuals with disabilities are subject to a variety of eligibility requirements, availability of services, and the ability to pay for services. Also, in the public school system, local districts are required to identify students with disabilities and ensure their needs are met. After leaving the public school system, there is no special education and it is entirely up to the individual to seek out services and disclose disability information. https://transition-guide-admin.s3.amazonaws.com/files/2016/12/14/Entitlement_vs_Eligibility_Final12_2016.pdf
Slide 16		**This slide is animated**. IDEA has identified and defined 13 disability categories. Students must be evaluated by a team of professionals. The results of the evaluation will be shared with the ARD committee members who will determine if the student has a qualifying disability that is affecting learning. A student may qualify for sped services under one or more eligibility codes. **Activity** • 1. Hand out the eligibility activity and explain that IDEA identifies 13 eligibility categories that students may qualify under to receive sped services. Students may qualify with one or more of the eligibility codes. • 2. Give the group 1 minute to check what they think are the 13 categories. • 3. Click twice to reveal the answers, let them check their answers and discuss any questions

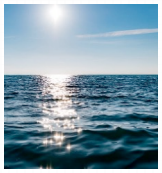
Slide 17		FIE – a mixture of formalized assessments completed by certified assessment personnel and informal assessments that are conducted by teachers, related services, that are both formative and summative are used to determine if a student's disability impedes learning to the degree that he/she requires special education services to be successful.
Slide 18		THE FIE must address all areas such as these that are listed that may be related to the "suspected" disability. Legal Timeline: SB 816 – 45 school days to write FIE
Slide 19		This is a comprehensive list, not every student will require all types of data listed.
Slide 20		Teachers in the qualitative study talked extensively about how they view their students as children first, who are like all other children. They continued on to share that their students learn differently and require different strategies to be successful learners. Finally, many shared that a school culture that accepted their students and embraced their students as a part of the collective group was a high priority reason to stay. Think about your school culture…is it reflective of this statement? In essence, as we will see in the next section, considering grade level content and developing IEP goals and objectives and specially designed instruction are a part of the responsibilities LID teachers have, just like all other teachers. It was also identified as being the most confusing and stressful part of their job where collaboration and professional development were mitigating factors for retention.

Slide 21	IEP Development The Seven Step Process for Writing Standards Based IEPs Holbrook (2007)	The U.S. Office of SPED programs (OSEP) has developed a research-based 7 step process for writing IEPS. In this section we will review the seven steps and highlight the development of 2 key elements of the IEP that are important for supporting beginning LID teachers and all sped teachers.
Slide 22	The Seven Step Process for Writing Standards Based IEPs Step 1: Consider the grade-level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled Step 2: Examine classroom and student data to determine where the student is functioning in relation to the grade-level standards **Step 3:** Develop the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) **Step 4:** Develop measurable annual goals aligned with grade-level academic content standards Holbrook (2007)	The first four steps address identifying where the student is functioning in relation to their non-disabled peers. It is critical to understand the gaps in learning in order to develop the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and functional Performance (PLAAFPs). Steps one and two provide the evidence from objective data to complete the IEP. The PLAAFPs are the foundation for the remainder of the IEP. Thus, it is important that the data that is used to write them is accurate, recent, and observable. The PLAAFPs are the story of the student –they identify the disability category, student strengths and areas of need that may be impeding learning. From this story, individualized goals that are realistic, attainable, and measurable are developed to build skills that will close the learning gaps caused by the areas of need. Annual goals and objectives are developed in the critical need areas and must be aligned to grade level standards, observable, and measurable.
Slide 23	The Seven Step Process for Writing Standards Based IEPs Step 5: Assess and report the student's progress throughout the year Step 6: Identify specially designed instruction Step 7: Determine most appropriate assessment option. Holbrook (2007)	The final three steps use the information from the PLAAFPs, goals and objectives to make data-driven decisions about the specially designed instruction, accommodations and modifications. Specially designed instruction, like the IEP, is unique to the student and designed based on the PLAAFP information and the IEP goals. The information in the IEP will lead to determining if the student will take the standard state assessment with/without accommodations or if an alternate state assessment in appropriate.

Slide 24	The IEP: Key Points • The IEP is written for 1 specific student – no two IEPs should ever look alike • The IEP is a legal document – All assessments, goals/objectives, data collection and plans must be implemented with fidelity and progress documented and reported regularly as identified in the IEP. If not, parents can file due process.	Discussion around these points focuses on individuality of the IEP , Awareness that being a legal document, it is a promise that all school personnel will implement the plan as it is written and document progress – important points for principals to understand when visiting classrooms and getting to know students and teachers.
Slide 25	The Data-Driven Decisions • Progress Monitoring - a practice that is used to assess: • academic and functional performance and • evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction As identified in the IEP goals and objectives IDEA (2004)	Progress monitoring is done on a regular basis, Progress is measured by comparing expected and actual rates of learning (graph) In order to adjust instruction as needed It is fluid process – must be planned and scheduled
Slide 26	Progress Monitoring • A scientifically-based process of ongoing assessment of students' academic performance to determine: • If a student is benefitting from the instructional programming • To adjust instruction to meet the needs of the student to enhance their learning Fuchs & Fuchs (2001)	Progress monitoring for IEPs is required to determine if the IEP is working to close the learning gap for the student. Generally, districts procedures outline how often IEP progress monitoring occurs and how it will be shared with the parents. According to IDEA (2004), this information about progress monitoring is outlined in detail in the IEP document and agreed upon by the IEP team. There are many ways to monitor progress on IEP goals/objectives.
Slide 27	Progress Monitoring • IEP goals and objectives • Checklists • Graphs • Charts • Progress Monitoring is not grading, rather in addition to grades • A process - Iris Center (2020)	While students in special education do receive grades like other students, progress monitoring is an additional responsibility for teachers of students with disabilities. Data can be collected and reported in a variety of ways including charts, graphs, and checklists. As an educational leader, one of your tasks will be to observe teachers collecting data during instruction. You may also want to ask to look at the teacher's data system to become familiar with the various ways teachers organize, store and use their data. This will prepare you to support teachers in the future. *Presenter will have examples of different data collection samples and the administrators will review, discuss, and share possible instructional decisions that could be made from the data.

Slide 28	Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) o Required by IDEA (2004). o Adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction: o To address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability **AND** o to ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards that apply to all students IDEA (2004) 34 CFR § 300.39 (b) (3)	Specially designed instruction is not the same as differentiation. SDI is based on the individual student's strengths and needs that are identified in the IEP. SDI requires both the knowledge about the general education curriculum and the accommodations and the modifications that are outlined in the student's IEP. This will require special ed teachers to know and understand the general curriculum. If they do not have this in-depth knowledge, they will need to work collaboratively with a general education teacher to adapt the lesson presentation, and to design the activities and assessments for each student with an IEP. Remember, this will be different for each student as it is based on the IEP which is individualized. Another job responsibility to consider in future discussions about the sped teacher's job.
Slide 29	Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) What does that mean? SDI includes: Accommodations – "The how" Modifications – "The what" Intensive, individualized instruction All are individual and specific to the student and based on a variety of data sources. IRISCenter. (2020) Page 8: Individualized Services and Supports	This is the overview of the elements of SDI – The following slides will address each component in depth.
Slide 30	Accommodations o Change HOW the content is taught, made accessible, and/or assessed. o Do not change what the student is expected to master. Objectives of the course or activity remain intact. o Allow the student to access the general education curriculum through SDI. o Are based on individual student need.** o Level the playing field for all students. **Student outcomes are the same as grade level peers.** The IRIS Center. (2010, Rev. 2018).	One element of SDI is accommodations. Review points on the slide. The bold statement is critical. Example: Eyeglasses – they help people complete their jobs at the same level of competence as their colleagues. Same for students with disabilities. These students can make progress in the general curriculum, they just need accommodations to close the gap. Note that the accommodations are based on student need. This means that teachers do not pick and choose accommodations from a list that they "think" will work for the student. There is a process based on data collection that IEP team members will use to consider the use of accommodations and identify specific ones that may work for that specific student. Accommodations are based on needs, which can be categorized into four areas. These areas are discussed on the next slide.

Slide 31		Iris Center (2020) Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/acc/cresource/q2/p04/
Slide 32		We have talked about the types of accommodations used in the classroom during instruction to provide the needed supports to provide a student access and the opportunity to make progress in the general curriculum. Data is collected on the effectiveness of the accommodations and the information is reviewed annually. Assessment accommodations serve the same purpose in providing a testing experience that supports the unique needs of the student so that their aptitude is fully demonstrated. However, it is critical that testing accommodations do not invalidate the test by inadvertently leading the student to the correct answer, therefore not all instructional accommodations can be used during standardized assessment. Determining testing accommodations also occurs annually during the IEP meeting and new accommodations are identified based on data. The state accountability and assessment department has guidelines for identifying testing accommodations at the website on the slide. As an administrator and a member of the ARD committee, you may need to support new teachers in understanding the differences between the accommodations and the process for determining them.
Slide 33		Modifications change student expectations. A modification is a change to the instruction or curriculum for a student in which the content of the instruction or the performance expectations are altered. Modifications are useful for students for whom all possible accommodations have been considered but who require additional measures to help them progress in the general education curriculum. Skill deficits, such as in reading or math, can make it difficult for some students to achieve the curricular goals set for all students. Carefully constructed modifications can help students with these skill deficits to progress in the general education curriculum at their own level.

Slide 34	SDI SDI is: Required Implemented in addition to DI Teaching strategies and methods used to instruct students with IEPs. SDI is **not**: A part of RTI/MTSS A part of 504 provided in place of DI A PLACE A Once Size Fits All! 	Review the information on the slide. This is a summary of what has been said. The presenter will then provide student scenarios that include the PLAAFP statements and IEP goals/objectives. Participants will identify the SDI for each student and share out.
Slide 35	Reflection  What did you already know? What was new information? How will you use what was learned today when you return to your campus?	Review day's topics: Special Education Terms and Process IEP Development Process Data Driven decisions SDI Participants will reflect and share with a partner or the whole group.
Slide 36	Resources ADA (2004). Testing Accommodations. Retrieved from https://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.pdf Fuchs, L.S. and Fuchs, D. (2001). What Is scientifically- based research on progress monitoring?. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502460.pdf Holbrook, S. (2007). The seven step process for writing standards-based IEPs. Retrieved from: https://ccrs.osepideasthatwork.org/resources/national - association-state-directors-special-education-nasdse-0 Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).	
Slide 37	Resources IRIS Center. (2010, Rev. 2018). Accommodations: Instructional and testing supports for students with disabilities. Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/acc/ IRIS Center (2020) Page 8: Individualized Services and Supports. Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/iep01/cresource/q3/p08/ IRIS Center. (2020). Page 12: Modifications. Retreived from (20https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/agc/cresource/q 2/p12/	
Slide 38	Resources IRIS Center. (2020). Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/iep01/cresource/q3/p09/ Legal Framework (2017). Retrieved from http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-Summary.aspx?FID=121&DT=G&LID=en	

Day One – Handout: Note-Taking Guide

Special Education 101: Increasing Beginning LID Teacher Retention Key Elements for Support – Day 1		
Section Title	Key Elements	Questions
Special Education Terms and Process		
IEP Development		
Data Driven Decisions		
Specially Designed Instruction		

Day One: Activity 1: Acronym Activity

1	AEP	
2	AGC	
3	AT	
4	AYP	
5	BIP	
6	ECI	
7	ESY	
8	FAPE	
9	FBA	
10	FIE	
11	IEP	
12	LRE	
13	OT	
14	PT	
15	RTI	
16	SLP	

Day One: Acronym Activity Answer Guide

1	AEP	Alternative educational program
2	AGC	Access to the general curriculum
3	AT	Assistive Technology
4	AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
5	BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
6	ECI	Early Childhood Intervention
7	ESY	Extended school year
8	FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
9	FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment
10	FIE	Full Individual Evaluation
11	IEP	Individual Education Program
12	LRE	Least restrictive environment
13	OT	Occupational Therapy
14	PT	Physical Therapy
15	RTI	Response to Intervention
16	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist

Day One: Activity 2: Eligibility Activity

Eligibility Categories

Place a checkmark next to 13 Eligibility Categories:

	Learning Disability
	Down's Syndrome
	Non-Categorical Early Childhood (ages 3-5)
	Transition
	Emotional Disturbance
	Multiple Disabilities
	Non-Ambulatory
	Dyslexia
	Orthopedic Impairment
	Non-Verbal
	Speech Impairment
	Writing Disability
	Other Health Impairment
	Visual Impairment
	Organizational Disability
	Traumatic Brain Injury
	Auditory Impairment
	Intellectual Disability
	Autism
	Deaf-Blindness
	Memory Disorder

Day 1: Reflection

1. What did you already know?

2. What was new information?

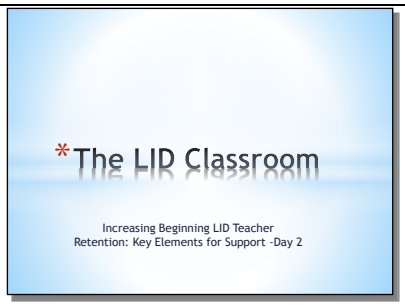
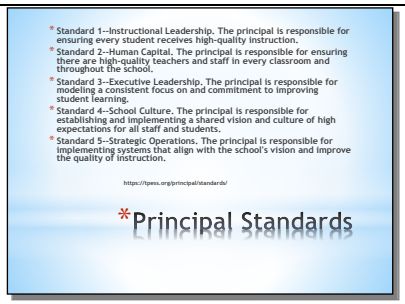
3. How will you use what was learned today when you return to your campus?

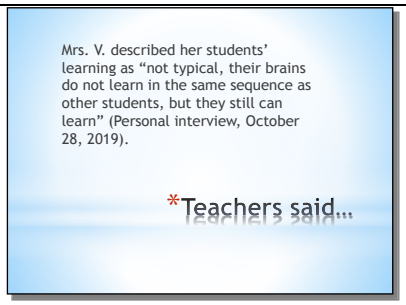
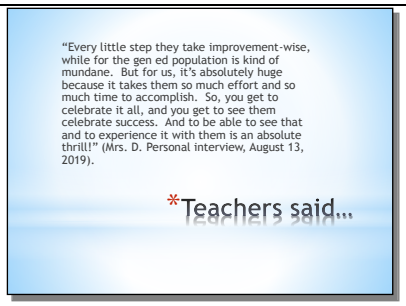
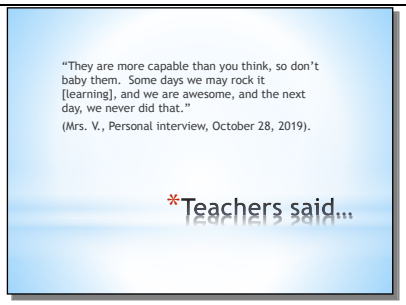
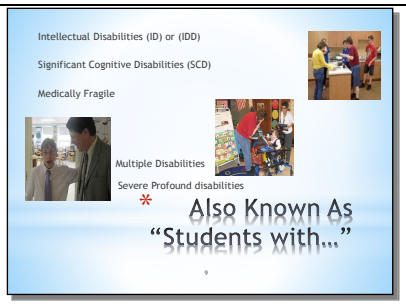
Day 1: Session Evaluation

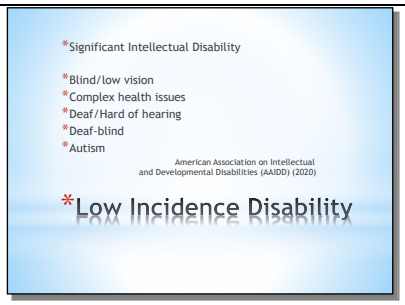
Please indicate your response about today's workshop.

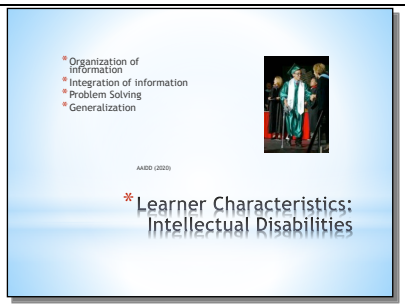
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The session was organized.					
2. The session was applicable and easy to follow					
3. The meeting room was conducive to learning					
4. The depth of the material presented was sufficient					
5. As a result of attending today's session, I have a better understanding of IDEA guidelines for creating, implementing and evaluating IEP progress.					
Please describe the part(s) of the session that were valuable.					
Please provide any suggestions for future workshops					

Day Two: Presenter Notes

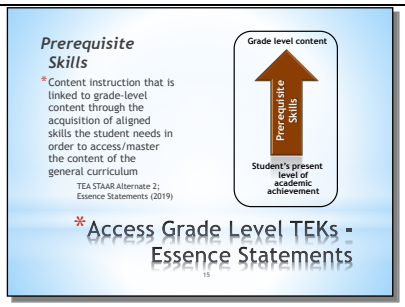
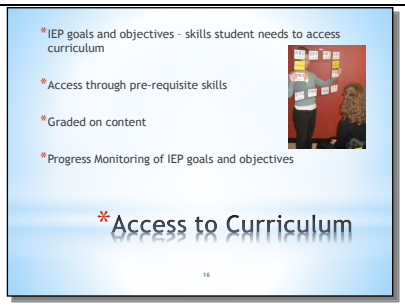
Slide 1		Welcome everyone back for day two. Do a pair/share activity and have participants pair up and discuss one thing from day 1 that has impacted their thinking or practice. Have volunteers share with large group. Ask if there are any questions or clarifications from day one to be shared before beginning the day.
Slide 2		Reminder from day one: today's focus will be on Standard four and what the principal needs to know about the LID classroom and its students in order to support the teachers and increase retention.
Slide 3		Review the day's schedule. Let participants know that today will be more reflection and interaction. Review the handouts and resources.
Slide 4		The beginning LID teachers in this study all shared stories of how their students are able to learn…that it just takes longer due to increased repletion and practice, and it looks different. A common theme among participants stories is a desire for their administrators and general education colleagues understood more about their students' unique characteristics and how learning occurs in their classrooms. Here are what some teachers said…

Slide 5		
Slide 6		
Slide 7		This description of how, for some students, every day is a new day for learning a skill or concept illustrates the need for extended repetition of skills and concepts that results in achievement for these students, which tends to widen the gap in learning rather than closing the gap to learning grade-level content. This is a very surprising and difficult reality for many new teachers in LID classrooms.
Slide 8		Slide is animated. Complete list appears all at once. ID will change color on first click. ED and LD will disappear with second and third clicks. Points: Students with Low- Incidence Disabilities will always have some level of ID and may have one or more additional eligibilities. **<u>However,</u>** a student with AI or AU or OI, etc. may not have ID. Eligibility of LD or ED (solely) are not LID – click once for each category addressing.
Slide 9		Animated slide: Terms appear with click Purpose of slide – introduce/familiarize with past terminology that they may still hear or see on paperwork. Person – first language

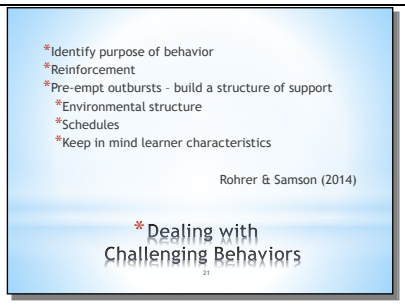
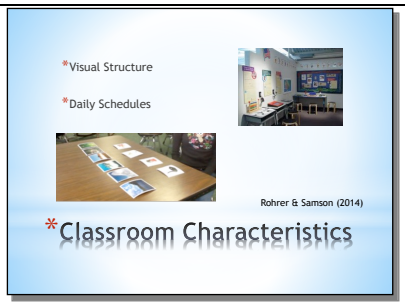
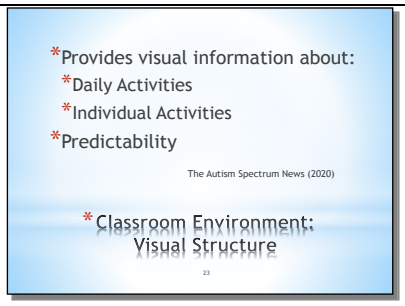
Slide 10		All students with Low Incidence Disabilities have a significant intellectual disability. In addition, they may have one or more accompanying disabilities such as (read the list) These multiple disabilities, in addition to the significant intellectual disability, affect how the person understands the world around them, accesses information and interacts with people in their world to get their needs met. No person is the same, thus requiring different interventions based on needs.
Slide 11		"Texas definition of a student with a significant cognitive disability is a student who: exhibits significant intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits in their ability to plan, comprehend, and reason, and ALSO indicates adaptive behavior deficits that limit their ability to apply social and practical skills such as personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money, and other functional skills across life domains; is NOT identified based on English learner designation or solely on the basis of previous low academic achievement or the need for accommodations; and requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction, as well as a need for substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area." Key points here: significant supports in all areas of living, condition is not temporary, not based on ELL status or low academic achievement.
Slide 12		Here are some characteristics of students with intellectual disabilities: Concrete thinkers – need visuals and manipulatives to learn concepts; they also need processes broken down into small steps (task analysis) and direct instruction of the steps. Discrimination skills – difficulty discriminating what to focus on in learning a new task. This may make them to appear to be inattentive, distractible and unable to concentrate. They need to have a clear understanding of why they are being asked to engage in a specific activity. (meaningful). They need to have a clear purpose of the task; otherwise they will focus their attention on something else. Solution: point out the important aspects of a task or materials and provide a clear purpose for their engagement.

		Memory: Memory is first stored in short term memory and then either lost or moved into long-term memory. In people with intellectual disabilities, the ability to store information in short term memory appears to be significantly impaired. They also tend not to use the same strategies as nondisabled learners to pass information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Solution: Use of visual schedules for processes and routines plus lots of repetition that is frequent and varied. Brain research has shown that people with significant intellectual disabilities may need 70 + repetitions of new information in a variety of ways to move the information into long-term memory
Slide 13		Organization of information: Learners with intellectual disabilities must have material that is reorganized for them and are encouraged to practice rehearsal strategies to help ensure long-term retention. Integration of information: process of bringing parts together to form a whole. This may not be easy for students with intellectual disabilities. Teachers need to provide instruction in an integrated manner rather than in isolation in unrealistic settings. Example: A cooking lesson for making pudding requires reading skills, math (measurement) skills and motor skills for pouring and stirring. The lesson should be done in a kitchen setting rather than in the classroom at a table to make it more meaningful. Ability to solve problems relies on our ability to either remember a solution that we used successfully in the past or to invent a new one. This requires a large amount of cognitive processing. A person first must recognize there is a problem before working on the solution. Solution: Allow learners opportunities to problem solve. Allow them to make mistakes that do not endanger their safety and general well-being. Generalization: ability to transfer skills learned in one setting to a different environment. New environment may be different in a variety of ways; different people, different cues, different materials and equipment or different expectations. All of these characteristics occur in learners with disabilities in a variety of ways. If the learner also

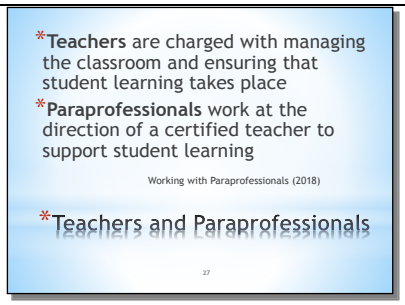
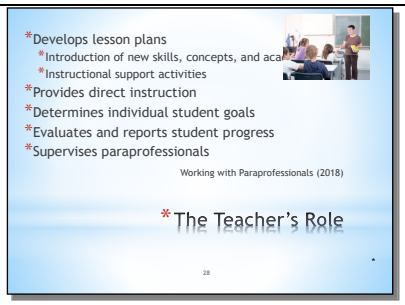
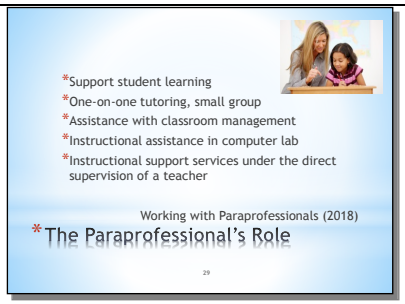
		has an additional disability that is sensory-based such as a hearing or visual impairment, the teacher must be aware of how the student perceives their world and base instruction around those additional needs.
Slide 14		First, Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means not all people with autism are are LID. Social challenges: miss social cues (body language, tone of voice, gestures, etc.); difficulty seeing things from another person's perspective; interfere with the ability to predict or understand another person's actions; difficulty regulating emotions. This can take the form of seemingly "immature" behavior such as crying or having outbursts in inappropriate situations. It can also lead to disruptive and physically aggressive behavior. The tendency to "lose control" may be particularly pronounced in unfamiliar, overwhelming or frustrating situations. Frustration can also result in self-injurious behaviors such as head banging, hair pulling or self-biting Communication Challenges: delay in speaking; significant language delays and don't begin to speak until much later. With therapy, however, most people with autism do learn to use spoken language and all can learn to communicate. Many nonverbal or nearly nonverbal children and adults learn to use communication systems such as pictures (image at left), sign language, electronic word processors or even speech-generating devices. Some go through a stage where they repeat what they hear verbatim (echolalia). Another common difficulty is the inability to understand body language, tone of voice and expressions that aren't meant to be taken literally. Conversely, someone affected by autism may not exhibit typical body language. Facial expressions, movements and gestures may not match what they are saying. Their tone of voice may fail to reflect their feelings. Some use a high-pitched sing-song or a flat, robot-like voice. Repetitive Behaviors: Unusual repetitive behaviors and/or a tendency to engage in a restricted range of activities are another core symptom of autism. Common repetitive behaviors include hand-flapping, rocking, jumping and twirling, arranging and rearranging objects, and repeating sounds, words, or phrases. Sometimes the repetitive behavior is self-stimulating, such as wiggling fingers in front of the eyes. Repetitive behaviors can take the form of intense preoccupations, or obsessions.

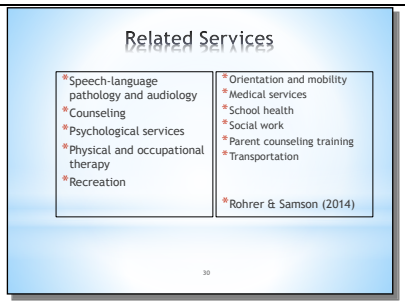
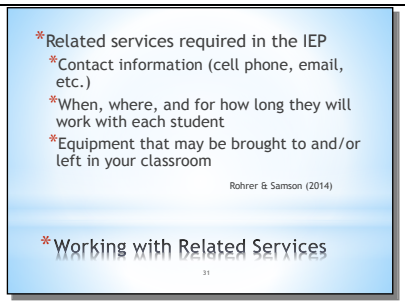
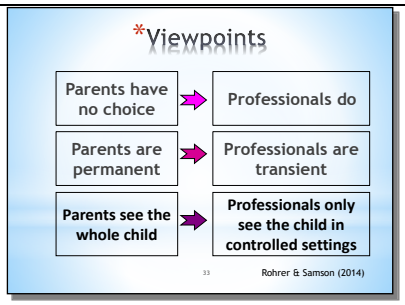
Slide 15		Challenging behaviors are not all that the LID teacher is working with. They must also provide instruction that is aligned with grade level content of their students. Due to the severe degree of impact the disabilities have on student learning, the general curriculum standards, strategies and materials are not adequate for these students. Students access grade-level content thru alternate standards (Essence Statements) and prerequisite skills. Now, we are providing access content instruction at grade level in a way that is developmentally appropriate at the student's instructional. Better to err on the positive side. Students may still be at the early childhood/elementary level, but studies have shown access to have benefits: Higher expectations result in more academic progress. Access to content results in social acceptance of peers – talk about age-appropriate subjects
Slide 16		First bullet – i.e. adapted print grade level books. Show Adapted printed text (Charlotte's Web). symbol supported text to aid in comprehension of materials Second bullet – Reading Shakespeare example – responsible for identifying main character either by name or gender, setting, prediction, sequencing (retelling of story) Third bullet – Continue with Shakespeare example, when students are answering questions about story elements, provides a grade on the content. (new for many seasoned teachers) Fourth bullet – business as usual - in the Life Skills model, this was the complete program – the IEP was the curriculum and data were collected on performance of functional life skills (i.e. hand washing, increased time on task, reaching/grasping, greeting others, etc.) – These skills now are embedded in academic lessons such as the Shakespeare lesson. (Teachers may still be struggling with this idea)

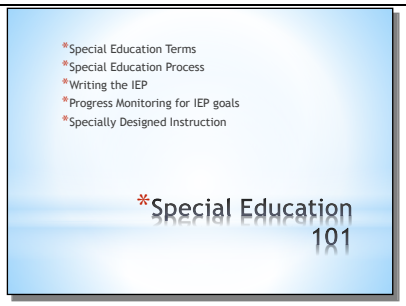
Slide 17	*Safety first *Follow established procedures for care *Ask for training if it is not provided *Let someone know if you are uncomfortable about a particular procedure or task  * Rohrer & Samson (2014) * Special Issues in the Self-Contained Classroom: Medically Fragile Students	In addition to designing lessons that are aligned to grade-level content, LID teachers have other issues that can interfere with instruction. These issues are unique to the classroom and the students' unique, significant needs that general education teachers do not have to deal with. Many teachers in the study, shared stories of these issues and a desire for their administrators and general education teachers understood better and supported them. The next few slides will show some of the issues that are typical in a LID classroom.
Slide 18	*The bodies of most students with disabilities develop like their age level peers *Motor skills and cognitive skills may be delayed or impaired *Some students have special dietary needs *Teenagers are teenagers! Rohrer & Samson (2014) * Special Issues in the Self-Contained Classroom: Physical Growth and Development 18	
Slide 19	*Schedules are critical - prepare the student for any changes that may occur *Find out if the student has a BIP (behavior management plan) *Be concrete with instructions and explanations *Break tasks down into small steps (task analysis) *Age respectful materials and activities Rohrer & Samson (2014) * Special Issues in the Self-Contained Classroom 19	These are issues/ strategies that all LID teachers must be familiar with, create, implement and monitor in their classroom. Many teachers come into the classroom with little awareness about what occurs in the classroom, let alone how to handle these differences. Many of the teachers in this study indicated that they needed additional training that pinpointed these issues and other challenges in the classroom. They also indicated that when their principals and assistant principals are not aware of the unique issues in the classroom, they do not know how to support the teachers adequately and the teachers do not know what to tell them they need. These are key talking points when you walk into a classroom or are approached by a beginning LID teacher who is struggling with students' needs or classroom management. Also, your regional service center has an instructional specialist for LID who provides professional development and consultation services.

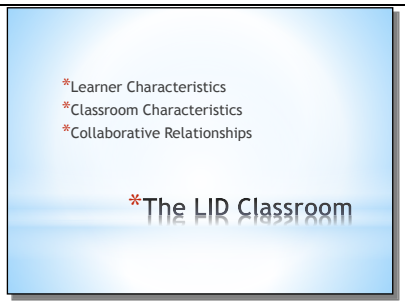
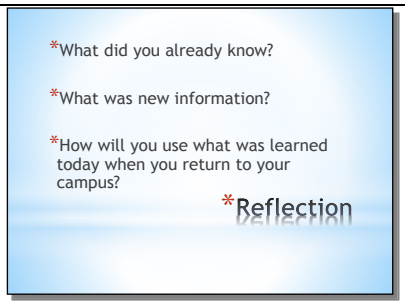
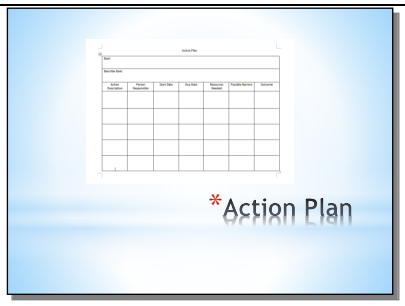
Slide 20		Have participants list challenging behaviors that they have had to deal with in the LID classroom Point: Teachers need to know what the underlying cause of the challenging behavior is, in order to create the tools, strategies for teaching replacement behaviors. This takes time and skill in data collection, trial and error and data analysis. Beginning Teachers may not have these skills mastered and will need additional learning and support.
Slide 21		Many of the strategies listed in this slide are characteristics of the elements that principals will see in the LID classroom. It is key that principals regularly visit the classrooms, observe the elements and strategies being used in the classroom, and ask questions. In the study, this is a key element that teachers wished would happen and indicated that it is a high-stakes factor in their decision to stay in the classroom.
Slide 22		We will now look at some of the unique interventions and strategies that are integral components of the LID classroom in order for students to be successful.
Slide 23		Schedules provide predictability which can alleviate stress. Once the brain is not stressed, it can focus on the learning.

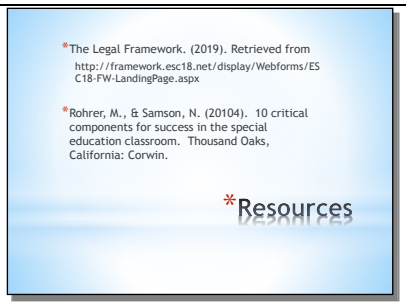
Slide 24	*For each period/time of day, include *Things beyond your control (non-negotiable) *Instructional activities and major focus of instruction (academics vs. functional skills) *Non-instructional activities (routines, recordkeeping, housekeeping, etc.) Rohrer & Samson (2014) *Providing Instruction: Daily Schedules 24	These are the elements that teachers must keep in mind when developing schedules. It is also important to note that each schedule is individualized for each student based on their IEP goals/objectives and accommodations and modifications. Another factor to be aware of is that many times teachers must teach students how to use the schedules and provide them with plenty of opportunities to practice using the schedules. This takes time to plan, as well as competing with academic instruction. However, this is a critical functional skill that many students with LID need to master in order to generalize to community living.
Slide 25	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rok1voybuMY&list=PLZsw65peHiu6jZIiiNRyrsGiwegVRU0Ue *CLASSROOM MAKEOVER 25	This video is from the Autism helper. She will give you a guided tour of her classroom and explain the critical elements and how they are used. After viewing the video, have participants reflect and share the similarities and differences they see in this classroom vs. a general education classroom…visual structure, instructional materials, etc.
Slide 26	 *Collaborative Relationships	Another factor that participants in the study mentioned being impactful to retention is the relationships with their colleagues and administrative teams. LID teachers interact with many adults throughout the day: related service personnel (OT, PT), speech-language therapist, music therapist, nurse, paraprofessionals, general education teachers. Building collaborative teams can be difficult and time consuming for beginning teachers, many of which indicated that they were not prepared for this aspect of the classroom. Beginning special education LID teachers work with multiple adults in their classroom. In this section, we will be looking at the adult interactions that occur daily. Participants in the study agreed that these relationships are critical to retention, only when they are collaborative/teamwork. However, this does not always occur naturally, due to oftentimes the adults are thrown together rather than choosing each other. This happens in a variety of ways: teacher is assigned a classroom with paraprofessionals who have been in that room for years, or new paraprofessionals are hired by you, the principal, and personalities may not always be compatible. If this happens, teachers in the study indicated that they needed support from their principals to create a compatible team. They also indicated that in order to

		be supportive, you would need to be nonjudgmental, use active listening, and ask questions.
Slide 27		Activity - Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals Participants will work together as a group using the card sort to identify which tasks are paraprofessional only, teacher only, or shared. Give them 10 minutes to look at each task, discuss, and place the task in a column until all cards have been sorted. When completed, move to the next two slides. Have participants leave the completed task in the middle of the table to review later.
Slide 28		What is the role of the teacher as defined by the paraprofessional guide? (Discuss what these include). •Develops lesson plans •Plans instructional support activities •Evaluates and reports student progress •Supervises paraprofessionals
Slide 29		What is the role of the paraprofessional as defined in NCLB? In NCLB, this is specific to Title I paraprofessionals, but it really applies to all paraprofessionals. The paraprofessional provides: One-on-one tutoring, small group tutorials; Assistance with classroom management; Instructional assistance in computer lab; and Instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher. The paraprofessional provides instructional support, such as • tutoring when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher and • organizing instructional and other materials. The paraprofessional may look different from district to district and campus to campus. Activity: Have participants look at their charts and make any changes to them based on what they learned. Allow for questions and discussions to occur.

Slide 30		Related services are developmental, corrective, or other supportive services that are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education It is important for principals to know that there are other professionals who are in the classroom and working with students and teachers. There may be times where collaboration is not working with this team and the campus administrator need to step in and help build these relationships.
Slide 31		Here are some of the expectations for related service personnel – what they will be doing in the classroom and how they will be collaborating with the teachers.
Slide 32		Relationships with parents is another area teachers' reported having difficulty. They also reported that it was more difficult when their principal did not talk with them, or assist them in building these relationships, which can be contentious at times. When relationships with parents are rocky, it could be due to parents being in one or more of the stressful periods of having a child with a disability. It is important that teachers and campus administrators are aware of these periods to help them in smoothing over any hurt feelings and help teachers build collaborative relationships.
Slide 33		Another way of looking at the parent side of the issue. Principals who use these talking points when working with teachers who are struggling with difficult parent relationships will build teacher's capacity for developing positive, collaborative relationships with parents.

Slide 34		Let's review what has been learned in the past two days…
Slide 35		In Day one, the basics of special education were reviewed. While this was not an in-depth workshop, the additional job responsibilities that teachers who have students with IEPs in their classes were outlined and introduced. The participants in this study all indicated that they were not aware of the scope of these basic responsibilities before entering the classroom. Once in the classroom, they indicated that they were immediately overwhelmed by their lack of in-depth knowledge. In addition, many of the participants described how this is not all of their job responsibilities… these are required tasks that are done **in addition** to lesson planning, teaching, grading and classroom management. The participants who were previously general education teachers were especially overwhelmed and surprised that instruction was not solely based on i.e. goals/objectives, but that curriculum lessons were also expected to be taught at the skill levels of the students. Teaching in the LID classroom was described as being very difficult due to all of the moving parts, but worth the effort when the teachers saw students learning. This was the biggest factor of retention, was student learning. Many of the participants expressed that if their professional development opportunities were more focused on each of these responsibilities, they would have a deeper understanding of the expectations under IDEA that are on them prior to their entering the classroom. This was not something they felt could be learned "on the job", but need focused instruction and ongoing support.

Slide 36		Today, the focus was on the LID classroom itself. Participants in the study all expressed a desire for campus leaders to visit their classrooms more often, and to stay a few minutes to observe all that happened in the classroom. The uniqueness of the students and the instruction in the classroom is very different from general education classrooms, or even resource classrooms. It is also something that the teachers cannot describe…it just has to be experienced. Teachers in the study indicated that the lack of visibility of their leaders, or a quick check in that lasts about a minute before the leader has moved on to another classroom made them feel like they were not considered an important part of the school community and isolated them further. Each participant described their vision that if leaders and general education colleagues took some time to get to know their students and themselves, they would be surprised by how much students with LID are like other students on campus. It was also expressed that others would see that they do teach academics, but that their instruction just looks different. Being a part of the school community was a large factor in retention for all teachers in the study.
Slide 37		Review both days' topics: Day 1: Special Education Terms and Process IEP Development Process Data Driven decisions SDI Day 2: Learner Characteristics Classroom Characteristics Collaborative Relationships Participants will reflect and share with a partner or the whole group.
Slide 38		In preparation for day 3, give participants the action plan that will be used. Explain that they will be filling it out during the next session. This gives them the opportunity to think on their reflection and make any notes if they wish.

Slide 39		
Slide 40		
Slide 41		
Slide 42		

Day Two Handout: Note-Taking Guide

The LID Classroom: Increasing Beginning LID Teacher Retention Key Elements for Support Day-2		
Section Title	Key Elements	Questions
Learner Characteristics		
Unique Classroom Characteristics		
Collaborative Relationships		
Tying It All Together		

Day Two Handout: Action Plan

Goal:						
Describe Goal:						
Action Description	Person Responsible	Start Date	Due Date	Resources Needed	Possible Barriers	Outcome

Day Two: Reflection

1. What did you already know?

2. What was new information?

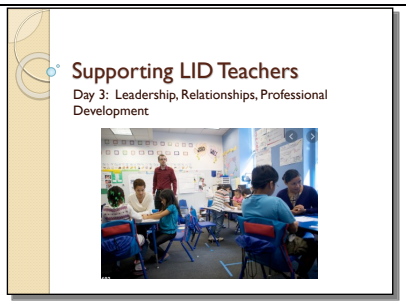
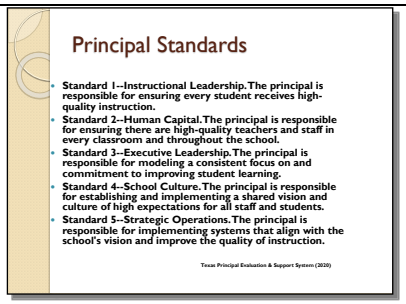
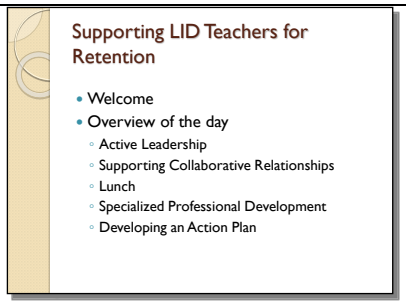
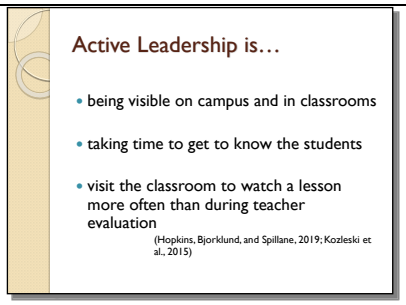
3. How will you use what was learned today when you return to your campus?

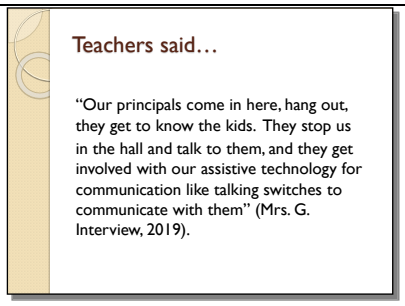
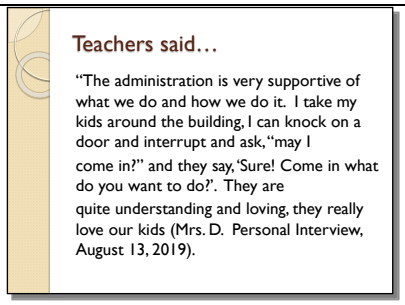
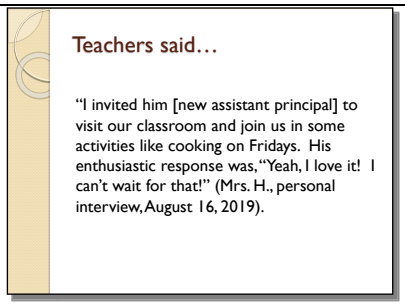
Day 1: Session Evaluation

Please indicate your response about today's workshop.

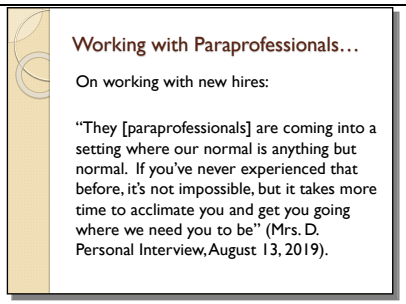
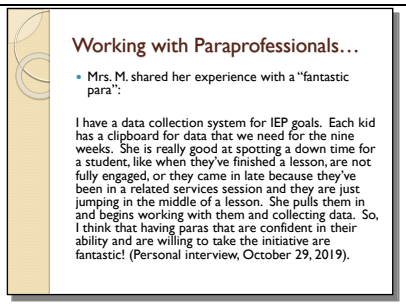
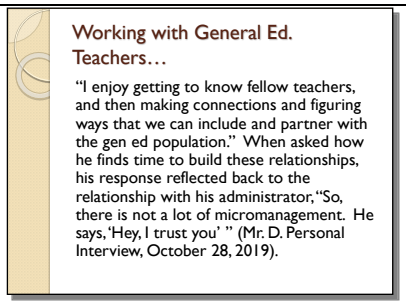
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The session was organized.					
2. The session was applicable and easy to follow					
3. The meeting room was conducive to learning					
4. The depth of the material presented was sufficient					
5. As a result of attending today's session, I have a better understanding of IDEA guidelines for creating, implementing and evaluating IEP progress.					
Please describe the part(s) of the session that were valuable.					
Please provide any suggestions for future workshops					

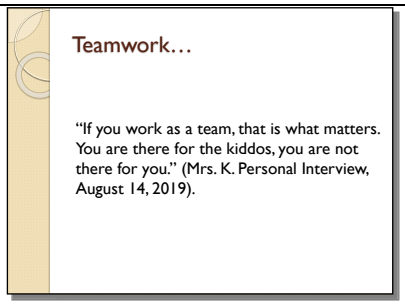
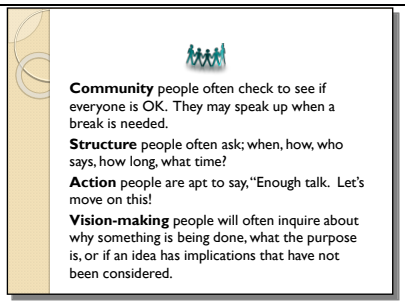
Day 3: Presenter Notes

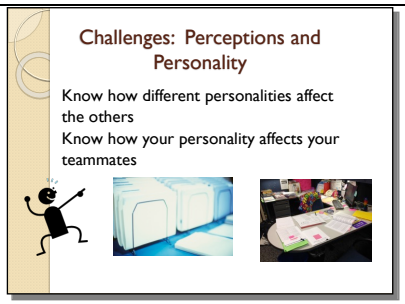
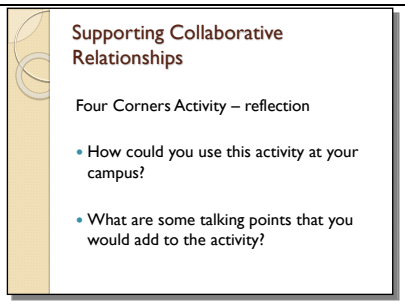
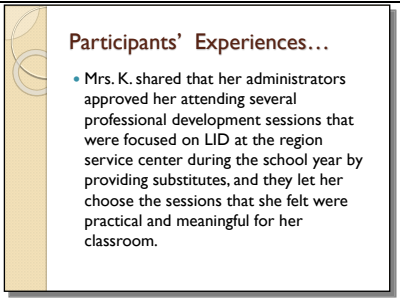
Slide 1		
Slide 2		These standards align with Chapter 149 of the TAC. These standards serve as a guide for improving school productivity, increasing student learning and improving a leader's effectiveness through reflection. This three-day workshop is designed for reflection on current practice and improving practice in regard to providing effective support and professional development to increase beginning LID teacher retention.
Slide 3		In Day Three, we will be discussing elements of active leadership that teachers in the study identified as being important for retention. We will explore the current research in active leadership, collaborative relationships, and specialized professional development to support beginning teacher learning and to build a school culture that is inclusive of all teachers. We will wrap up the day and the workshop series by reflecting on the three days' learning and develop an action plan to move forward when you return to your campuses.
Slide 4		Active leadership was described by participants in the study and current research as intentional actions such as being visible on campus, taking the time to get to know students and visit the classroom to watch a lesson (Bjorklund, and Spillane, 2019; Kozleski et al., 2015). Discussion: Option 1: Go back to the title slide and have participants describe what they think is happening in the picture of a principal shadowing. Facilitate discussion about the different ways principals can be visible and how they can fit it into their busy schedules.

		Option 2: Have charts on wall: "Ways to be visible" "How do I fit visibility into my schedule" Have participants find partners or form groups of 3-4 to discuss both topics and list ideas. The scribe from the group will add their ideas to each chart. Gallery-walk of ideas. Final whole group discussion about visibility – its importance, feasibility of implementation.
Slide 5		Participants in the study indicated that when the administrators took interest in their students and asked questions, they felt respected and empowered to advocate for students and to build relationships with classroom staff, general education colleagues and students' parents.
Slide 6		In the study, teachers shared stories of leadership visibility that was an important experience for retention. Let's take a look at some of those experiences. Review comments from teachers in the study over the next few slides
Slide 7		
Slide 8		

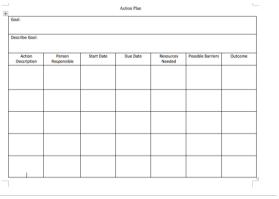
Slide 9	**Teachers said…** "So, I love that my admin. is wanting to come and visit and hang out in the classroom. That is exciting to me because I did not have that last year, which made me sad" (Mrs. H., Personal interview, August 16, 2019).	This summarizes the overall consensus of the participants in the study. Each teacher expressed that they understood that their principals are very busy, and they did not expect them to stay in the classroom for hours at a time. Many of them shared that 10-15 minutes during a lesson periodically was enough for them to feel as if they mattered and their students mattered. These are the benefits that teachers need and receive from visibility, but what about the benefits to the principals?
Slide 10	**Visibility – Administrator Benefits** • Increase knowledge about unique needs in the LID classroom • Gain a better understanding of how the team works together • Observe the the teacher workload and how it is managed ◦ Ballard and Dymond, 2018; Bettini, Jones et al., 2018; Gee and Gonsier-Gerdin, 2018	Participants in the study and current research both indicated that campus leaders want to support teachers, but they do not know how. By visiting the classroom, principals and assistant principals will get to know the adults and the students in the classroom, gain insight into the additional job responsibilities of teachers. This leads to teacher trust and open communication. Wrap up this section with a stand up, hand up, pair up activity and have participants reflect in pairs. Offer opportunity for sharing thoughts with the whole group.
Slide 11	**Supporting Collaborative Relationships** 	
Slide 12	**Working as a Team** • Beginning LID teachers interact with multiple adults throughout the school day including… ◦ Paraprofessionals ◦ Related Services (OT, PT, SLP, VI) ◦ General education teachers As the classroom leader, communication skills and leadership skills are imperative.	Teamwork and collaborative relationships were highly valued as influential intrinsic motivators because it made beginning special education teachers feel like they belonged to the school community, and extrinsic experiences of working with people with whom they "clicked" was also a strong influence for retention. However, these positive experiences were not the status quo for many of the participants in the study who found that building a collaborative team was an unexpected job responsibility. Communication skills and leadership skills do not always come naturally to many people. Also, teachers indicated that they did not attend any class on collaborating and communicating, only to be put

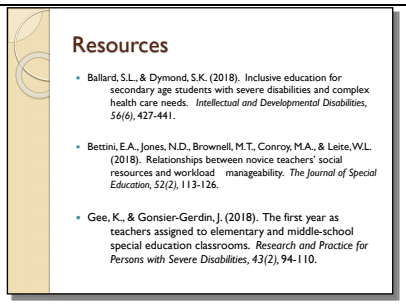
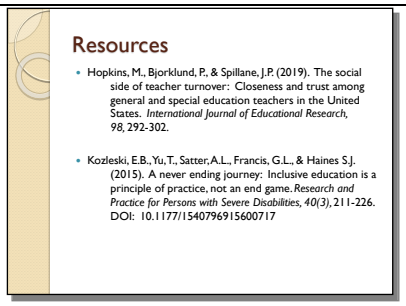
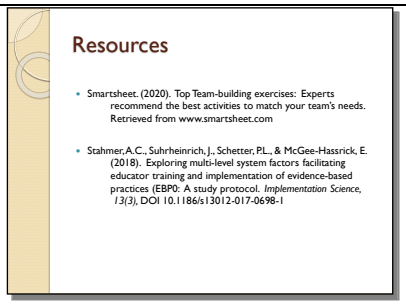
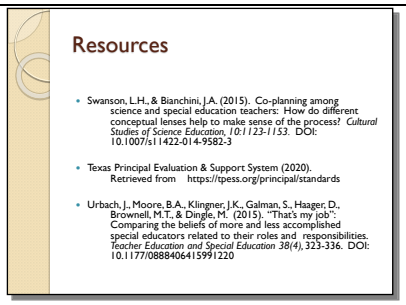
		into a position of leadership for collaboration when they were assigned the LID classroom. Let's take a look at what some of the teachers had to say about working with paraprofessionals…
Slide 13		
Slide 14		
Slide 15		There were very few experiences with general education teachers shared in the study, yet it was identified as another highly valued experience for retention. Mr. D. shared his experience with his general ed counterparts, and the principal's management style that allowed him to figure out how to make the relationships work. Have participants discuss at their tables Mr. D.'s quote. Listen for comments about… Mr. D. taking the initiative Administrator's trust Reflection question, How would you facilitate building collaborative relationships among all teachers on your campus? Have participants share out

Slide 16		Mrs. K. sums up the essence of team-building that is a highly influential factor for retention. As a principal, supporting beginning LID teachers as they become classroom leaders and build collaborative relationships within the school community. One way to bridge this gap for teachers on your campus is through an activity called "Four Corners"
Slide 17		Instead of explaining the activity, presenter will lead the activity and have the whole group reflect on the activity and its benefits for team building.
Slide 18		**Directions:** Each of the corners of the room have posters with these groups. Read the descriptors of the groups and decide which group you fit in the most. Many of you may say that you fit into 2 of the categories but decide which one you are most like and go to that corner. Once everyone is in their selected corner, you will have 2 minutes to talk about the characteristics that drew you to that particular group. You will also choose a mascot…it can be a real person, a fictional person, a person in history, or even a cartoon character. When time is up, stay in your groups, select a speaker who will report your conversation and who you chose for your mascot. **Reflection:** Once all groups have reported out and everyone has returned to their seat, discuss the following: • Think about your significant other, or child, or friend – Do they fall in the same category? What is that like? • Think about your work colleagues – can you identify the categories different people fall under? • How does that affect staff meetings?

		• Collaborative efforts? • What is the benefit of having people from different groups working together? • What are the disadvantages? • As a leader, how would you handle a team that is not working collaboratively due to the different personalities?
Slide 19		Like an arranged marriage – people are put together and expected to collaborate easily with no training or consideration of personality theory, collaboration or negotiation. Recognize that everyone has different experiences – levels of training
Slide 20		
Slide 21		Professional development that was specific to the job responsibilities of the LID teacher was the highest ranking experience teachers in the study expressed would have a large impact on their decision to keep returning to the LID classroom in the future. In this section, we will take a look at what the teachers in the study said, and what current research also says about identifying and providing appropriate professional development to build teachers skills which leads to increased feelings of competency which was the predominant intrinsic motivator for teacher retention.
Slide 22		

Slide 23	**Participants' Experiences…** Mrs. M. also shared how she felt that her administrator trusted her decision-making regarding professional development choices when she made the request to get a substitute to attend a specific behavior workshop that she felt was necessary to attend to build her professional skills.	
Slide 24	**Research Indicates…** Generic professional development that is focused on management needs and processes has been found to be ineffective for special education teachers and learning opportunities that are powered by teacher needs is suggested to increase their knowledge and skills (Kozleski, Yu, Satter, Francis, and Haines, 2015; Urbach et al., 2015).	
Slide 25	**Research Indicates…** Malleability of professional development elements such as specialized topics, blended with organizational information, use of social support networks and providers across district administration, regional services and state services has also been recommended for consideration when designing professional development that is meaningful for all teachers (Stahmer, Shyrheinrich, Schetter, and Hassrick, 2018; Swanson and Bianchini, 2015).	Key Discussion Points: • Teacher choice based on their assessment of personal skill level and progress. • Use of agencies, universities, and other sources of experts can be used to provide the specialized professional development teachers request. Based on participants' stories and recent research, a professional development framework of topics that teachers mentioned during their interviews was created.
Slide 26	**Professional Development Framework** • Special Education 101* • Writing Standards-Based IEPs* • Writing PLAAFPs* • Writing IEP goals and objectives* • Evidence Based Strategies for LID • Alternate standards – Essence Statements and Prerequisite Skills • *Topics also mentioned important for general education teachers and campus leaders.	The topics in the next three slides were suggested by participants in this study. These lists represent the high-interest topics that teachers mentioned they wanted more in-depth training. This is just a tool to get you started in thinking about the types of trainings that would be beneficial in supporting beginning special education LID teachers To learn about more topics that are preferred for your teachers, a survey about professional development would help pinpoint appropriate and meaningful trainings. Sharing the results of the surveys with the special education director in your district will help them in planning for districtwide professional development Local colleges and your regional service center are two places that have experts in the Special Education field that can help you support your beginning special education teachers.

Slide 27	**Professional Development Framework -Instruction** • Classroom Management – Managing students, other adults and paperwork requirements • Developing Lessons that Align to Grade Level Content at the Prerequisite Skill Level • Orientation to District-required curriculum tools • Schedule-building for students, paraprofessionals and related services • Visual supports • Data collection strategies that are easy and streamlined • Medical issues and how to manage in the classroom (seizures, lifting and transferring students in wheelchairs, diaper changing, etc. • Differentiation – planning and using during instruction • Content pedagogy basics and strategies for students with LID	
Slide 28	**Professional Development Framework - Collaboration** • Working as a team • Leading a team • What to do when there is conflict • Working with parents	
Slide 29	Action Plan 	Provide 45 minutes for reflection and work
Slide 30	Developing an Action Plan • Reflect on what you have learned over the past three days • Identify the practices you believe you are doing well • Prioritize the areas of need • Create an action plan for the areas of need you want to begin improvement.	Provide 45 minutes for reflection and work
Slide 31	Reflection • What did you already know? • What was new information? • How will you use what was learned today when you return to your campus?	Have participants reflect on the day's information and work. Participants can then share with a partner or the whole group: New information Action plan

Slide 32		
Slide 33		
Slide 34		
Slide 35		

Day Three: Handout Note-Taking Guide

Day 3: Supporting Beginning LID Teachers for Retention		
Section Title	Key Elements	Questions
Active Leadership		
Supporting Collaborative Relationships		
Specialized Professional Development		
Creating an Action Plan		

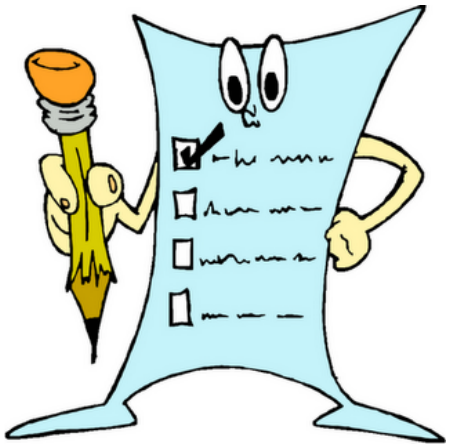
Day Three Activity: 4 Corners

Community

Community people often check to see if everyone is OK. They may speak up when a break is needed.

Structure

Structure people often ask; when, how, who says, how long, what time?



Action

Action People are apt to say, “Enough talk. Let’s move on this!

Vision-making

Vision-making people will often inquire about why something is being done, what the purpose is, or if an idea has implications that have not been considered.

Day Three: Session Evaluation

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT TODAY'S WORKSHOP

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The session was organized.					
2. The session was applicable and easy to follow					
3. The meeting room was conducive to learning					
4. The depth of the material presented was sufficient					
5. As a result of attending today's session, key factors for retention of beginning special education LID teachers.					
6. As a result of attending today's session, I have an action plan of support that I will begin implementing on my campus.					
7. Please describe the part(s) of the session that were valuable.					
8. Please provide any suggestions for future workshops					

Three-day Overall Workshop Evaluation

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 3-DAY WORKSHOP SERIES:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The workshop was organized.					
2. The workshop was comprehensive.					
3. The depth of the material presented was sufficient					
4. As a result of attending this 3-day workshop, I have better understanding about beginning special education teachers in LID classrooms and what specialized support is needed to retain these teachers.					
Please describe the part(s) of the workshop that were valuable.					
Please provide any suggestions for future workshops					

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Project: Special Education Teacher Retention in the Early Years: Why do they stay?

Participant Name: _____ Date: _____

District: _____ School: _____

Class size: _____ Student Grade Levels: _____ Student Ages: _____

Purpose of Interview:

This is a project study to learn more about why beginning special education teachers continue to teach in the self-contained classroom for students with low incidence disabilities (LID). Annual turnover for this group of teachers is high, resulting in a lack of relationship building and consistency of instruction, which is necessary for increased student achievement. Studies on attrition have provided evidence of why teachers leave this setting, but do not provide solutions that have proven to be successful in affecting retention. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the experiences, beliefs and supports that led to the beginning special education teachers' decision to continue teaching in the self-contained classroom for students with LID. To protect confidentiality, the participants' names will be replaced with fictitious names in the reporting of findings, and all notes and recordings will be destroyed after publication. This interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Do you have any questions before the interview begins?

[Have the interviewee read and sign the consent form.]

[Turn on the video or digital recording device and test it before beginning the interview.]

Probes	Questions
1. What do you mean? 2. I'm not sure that I am following you. 3. Would you explain that? 4. What did you say then?	1.What are the challenges of teaching your students?
5. What were you thinking at the time? 6. Give me an example. 7. Tell me about it. 8. Take me through the experience. (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 104)	2.What are the rewards in teaching your students?
Other:	3. What do you want other educators to know about your students?
	4. What are the challenges of your work environment regarding teaching your students?
	5. What are the positive attributes of your work environment in teaching your students?
	6. What do you want other educators to know about working in a LID classroom?

Thank the participant for their participation and cooperation in this interview. Reiterate that this interview is confidential and that the participant will have the opportunity to review the draft findings for accuracy of the documentation of their answers.

Appendix C: The Data Analysis Protocol

1. Transcribe interviews and complete member checks by sending draft findings to participants for verification or correction.
2. When member checks are complete, create an electronic file titled, “Clean Data” and place in the desktop “Data” file. Place the original transcripts in this file.
3. Create a sub-file within the “Clean Data” file titled, “Interviews”.
4. Create individual folders labeled by the pseudonym and organize these files in alphabetical order. Place copies of the interview transcripts in each folder to be used during the coding and analysis phase.
5. Read thru data twice and begin listing potential coding categories that are based on similar vocabulary, phrases, and viewpoints. Make additional notes, diagrams, etc. that come to mind.
6. Make note of unusual terms, ideas that arise during the review and may become areas for additional exploration and research.
7. Create identifiers that describe these initial coding categories and apply to a print copy of the data during the next review. The rest of the coding process will occur on print copies.
8. Develop a coding system based on the most common themes, and unexpected themes that warrant further study.
9. Identify levels of codes into major codes for big ideas, and sub codes to describe specific details within the major codes, and list alphabetically within correlated categories.
10. Assign numbers to each code.
11. Review data and add the code number to the identifiers.
12. When coding is completed, scan print copies to a desktop file labeled “Final Data”.